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# SCHOOL SAFETY MEASURES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN PREVENTING SCHOOL ABDUCTIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** The study investigates the safety measures and their effectiveness in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna state. A descriptive survey design was proposed for the study. The population of the study comprised all principals, vice principals, teachers, and school security personnel in public secondary schools located in the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Kaduna State the population of 17,718 According to Kaduna State Ministry of Education records (2025), the target population consisted of Principals 512, Vice Principals 1,024, Teachers 14,856, Security Personnel 1,326 respectively total 17,718. A sample size of 1,200 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "School Safety Measures and School Abduction Prevention Questionnaire (SSSAPQ)". The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Educational Management, Educational Administration, and Measurement and Evaluation from a recognized Nigerian university. The mean and standard deviation was used to analyzed the research questions while t test was used to analyzed the hypotheses. Findings from previous studies indicate that schools with adequate fencing, surveillance systems, trained security personnel, emergency response plans, and active community participation experience lower vulnerability to security threats than schools without such measures. The study concluded that effective implementation of comprehensive school safety measures significantly contributes to reducing the risk of school abductions and enhancing educational continuity. The study recommended increased government investment in school security infrastructure, deployment of trained security personnel, strengthening of community-school partnerships, and regular security audits of schools.

**Keywords:** School safety, school abduction, security measures, secondary schools, Kaduna State, safe schools initiative.

## Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right and a critical instrument for national development, social transformation, and economic growth. The provision of safe and secure learning environments is essential for the realization of educational goals and the achievement of sustainable development. Schools are expected to provide an atmosphere that promotes learning, personal development, and the overall well-being of students. However, the growing incidence of insecurity in Nigeria has increasingly threatened the safety and security of educational institutions, particularly in the northern region of the country (UNESCO, 2023).

In recent years, Kaduna State has experienced a significant rise in security challenges associated with banditry, kidnapping, armed attacks, and school abductions. School abduction refers to the forceful seizure and detention of students, teachers, or other school personnel by armed groups for ransom, political objectives, or other criminal purposes (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2022). These incidents have resulted in the disruption of academic activities, closure of schools, psychological trauma among students and staff, and reduced public confidence in the educational system (Afolabi & Yusuf, 2021). The phenomenon of school abduction gained global attention following the abduction of over 270 schoolgirls from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, in 2014. Since then, similar incidents have occurred across several states in Northern Nigeria, including Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Niger, and Sokoto (Adamu, 2021). Kaduna State has recorded several attacks on educational

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institutions, leading to the abduction of students and staff and prompting temporary closure of schools in affected communities (Kaduna State Ministry of Education, 2023).

School safety has become a critical concern for educational administrators and policymakers due to the increasing threats facing educational institutions. School safety refers to the implementation of policies, procedures, infrastructure, and practices designed to protect students, teachers, and school property from harm, violence, and security threats (Furlong et al., 2020). Effective school safety measures include perimeter fencing, surveillance systems, trained security personnel, emergency preparedness plans, visitor management systems, collaboration with security agencies, and community participation in school protection (Safe Schools Declaration, 2022). The effectiveness of school safety measures depends on their adequacy, implementation, sustainability, and adaptability to emerging security threats. According to Ojukwu and Nwanma (2020), schools that maintain comprehensive security systems are better positioned to prevent security breaches and respond effectively to emergencies. Similarly, Adeyemi and Ogunode (2022) argue that proactive security management contributes significantly to creating safe learning environments and reducing students' vulnerability to criminal activities. Physical security measures constitute one of the most visible dimensions of school safety. These measures include perimeter fencing, controlled entry points, security lighting, alarm systems, surveillance cameras, and access control mechanisms. Research has shown that physical security infrastructure serves as a deterrent to criminal activities and enhances the protection of educational institutions (Borum et al., 2021). However, many public secondary schools in Kaduna State lack adequate security infrastructure due to funding constraints and poor maintenance culture (Mohammed & Ibrahim, 2023). Personnel-based security measures involve the deployment of trained security personnel, collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and regular security training for school staff. Security personnel play a vital role in monitoring school environments, detecting suspicious activities, and responding to emergencies. According to Eze and Nwankwo (2021), schools with dedicated security personnel experience fewer security incidents than those relying solely on informal security arrangements.

Community participation has also been identified as an essential component of school safety. Community-based security approaches encourage collaboration between schools, parents, traditional leaders, youth groups, and local vigilante organizations in protecting educational institutions. Such collaborative efforts enhance information sharing, early warning systems, and collective responsibility for school safety (Abubakar & Hassan, 2022). In many rural communities in Kaduna State, local security arrangements have complemented government efforts in safeguarding schools against attacks. Despite various interventions by government agencies, international organizations, and community groups, school abductions continue to pose significant threats to educational development in Kaduna State. The persistence of these incidents raises concerns regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of existing school safety measures. Consequently, there is a need for empirical investigation into the effectiveness of school safety measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

**Statement of the Problem**

The increasing incidence of school abductions in Kaduna State has become a major challenge to educational development and national security. Educational institutions that should serve as safe environments for teaching and learning have increasingly become targets of criminal attacks by armed groups. The consequences of these attacks include disruption of academic activities, closure of schools, psychological trauma among students and staff, declining school enrolment, increased dropout rates, and loss of public confidence in the educational system. In response to these challenges, governments, security agencies, international organizations, and community stakeholders have implemented various school safety measures aimed at protecting schools from attacks and abductions. These measures include construction of perimeter fences, deployment of security personnel, establishment of emergency response systems, provision of surveillance equipment, and promotion of community participation in school security management.

Despite these interventions, incidents of school abductions continue to occur in Kaduna State. This situation raises concerns regarding the adequacy, implementation, and effectiveness of existing school safety measures. While several studies have examined the causes and consequences of school abductions in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been devoted to evaluating the effectiveness of specific school safety measures in preventing such incidents in Kaduna State. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate school safety measures and their effectiveness in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

**Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the availability of school safety measures in secondary schools in Kaduna State.
2. assess the effectiveness of personnel-based security measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.
3. examine the effectiveness of community-based security measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions raised, guided the course of this study:

1. What school safety measures are available in secondary schools in Kaduna State?
2. How effective are personnel-based security measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State?
3. How effective are community-based security measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance were formulated for this study.

1. Physical security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.
2. Personnel-based security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.
3. Community-based security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

## Literature Review

**Concept of School Safety**

School safety refers to the protection of students, teachers, school administrators, and educational facilities from threats, violence, criminal attacks, and other forms of insecurity that may disrupt teaching and learning activities. A safe school environment is one in which learners can pursue education without fear of physical harm, psychological intimidation, or security threats. According to UNICEF (2024), school safety encompasses the existence of physical infrastructure, emergency preparedness mechanisms, security governance structures, early warning systems, and community participation aimed at protecting educational institutions from attacks and violence. Recent monitoring reports indicate that only 37 percent of schools in selected Nigerian states have functional early warning systems for detecting security threats, highlighting significant gaps in school safety implementation.

School safety has become a major educational concern in Nigeria due to the increasing incidence of attacks on schools, kidnappings of students, destruction of educational infrastructure, and threats posed by armed groups. The concept extends beyond physical security to include emotional, psychological, social, and environmental protection that promotes conducive learning conditions. UNESCO emphasizes that schools must remain safe spaces where children can access education without exposure to violence, conflict, or fear. According to the Safe Schools Declaration, school safety involves deliberate efforts by governments, communities, and educational stakeholders to prevent attacks on educational institutions and ensure continuity of learning during periods of insecurity. Effective school safety systems typically include perimeter fencing, surveillance technologies, trained security personnel, emergency communication mechanisms, access control systems, and collaboration with security agencies.

**Concept of School Abduction**

School abduction refers to the unlawful seizure, detention, or kidnapping of students, teachers, or school personnel from educational institutions by criminal groups, insurgents, terrorists, or armed bandits. School abduction has become one of the most disturbing manifestations of insecurity affecting education in Nigeria. The phenomenon gained international attention following the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014. Since then, several attacks have occurred in Northern Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Niger, Sokoto, and Kebbi States. UNICEF reports that attacks on schools and student abductions continue to threaten educational development and children's rights to education. These attacks often result in prolonged school closures, psychological trauma, disruption of learning, and increased school dropout rates.

**Concept of School Safety Measures**

School safety measures refer to the policies, structures, facilities, procedures, and practices implemented to prevent security threats and protect educational institutions from attacks. These measures are designed to safeguard students, teachers, school administrators, and educational infrastructure. School safety measures can be classified into three broad categories:

**Physical Security Measures**: Physical security measures involve tangible infrastructure and equipment designed to prevent unauthorized access to schools and enhance protection against attacks. Such measures include; perimeter fencing, security gates, CCTV surveillance cameras, security lighting, alarm systems, watchtowers, controlled access points, emergency exits

Physical barriers reduce opportunities for criminal activities by increasing the difficulty of unauthorized entry into school premises.

**Personnel-Based Security Measures**: Personnel-based measures involve human resources deployed to ensure school security. These include: security guards, school protection officers, collaboration with police and military personnel, security training for teachers, emergency response teams, school security committees. Security personnel play critical roles in surveillance, intelligence gathering, threat detection, and emergency response.

**Community-Based Security Measures**: Community participation has become increasingly important in school protection, particularly in rural communities vulnerable to attacks. Community-based measures include: Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), Community vigilance groups, Traditional rulers, Religious leaders, Community security committees, Early warning networks. Research indicates that community participation enhances local ownership of school security and improves intelligence sharing regarding potential threats.

Effectiveness of School Safety Measures: Effectiveness refers to the extent to which school safety measures achieve their intended objectives of preventing attacks, reducing vulnerabilities, and protecting students and educational personnel. Effective school safety measures are characterized by: Reduction in security incidents, Improved perception of safety among students and staff, Increased school attendance, Reduced school closures, Enhanced emergency preparedness and Strengthened collaboration between schools and communities.

UNICEF's Minimum Standards for Safe Schools emphasize that schools with functional security governance structures, early warning systems, and community participation mechanisms demonstrate greater resilience against security threats.

Afolabi and Yusuf (2021) examined insecurity and educational development in North-West Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving 540 teachers and school administrators. Findings revealed that insecurity significantly disrupted academic activities and increased school closures. The study recommended strengthening school security infrastructure and community participation. Abubakar and Hassan (2022) investigated community participation in school security management in Northern Nigeria. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 420 respondents. Findings showed that schools with active community security networks experienced fewer security incidents than schools without community participation mechanisms. Ogunode and Adah (2022) examined the implementation of the Safe Schools Initiative in selected Nigerian secondary schools. The study found that inadequate funding limited the implementation of critical security measures such as perimeter fencing, surveillance systems, and emergency communication facilities.

Bello and Ibrahim (2023) assessed school security infrastructure and educational continuity in Kaduna State. The researchers employed a correlational design involving 380 teachers. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between school security infrastructure and uninterrupted academic activities. Mohammed and Ibrahim (2023) investigated the adequacy of security facilities in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. Findings revealed that many schools lacked functional fencing, surveillance equipment, and trained security personnel, thereby increasing their vulnerability to attacks. Eze and Nwankwo (2021) studied the role of security personnel in school protection within conflict-prone communities. The study reported that schools with trained security personnel experienced significantly lower rates of security breaches than schools without trained personnel. Yakubu and Ahmed (2023) examined emergency preparedness and school security in North-West Nigeria. Findings showed that schools with established emergency response plans demonstrated higher levels of preparedness and resilience during security emergencies.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that school safety measures significantly contribute to reducing vulnerabilities associated with school attacks and abductions. Studies consistently indicate that physical security infrastructure, trained security personnel, emergency preparedness systems, and community participation enhance school protection. However, evidence also reveals persistent gaps in implementation, funding, and monitoring of safety measures across many Nigerian secondary schools. Consequently, there remains a need for empirical investigation into the effectiveness of school safety measures in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large population. The population of the study comprised all principals, vice principals, teachers, and school security personnel in public secondary schools located in the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Kaduna State the population of 17,718 According to Kaduna State Ministry of Education records (2025), the target population consisted of: Principals 512, Vice Principals 1,024, Teachers 14,856, Security Personnel 1,326 respectively. Total 17,718. A sample size of 1,200 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “School Safety Measures and School Abduction Prevention Questionnaire (SSSAPQ)”. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Educational Management, Educational Administration, and Measurement and Evaluation from a recognized Nigerian university. The mean and standard deviation was used to analyzed the research questions while t test was used to analyzed the hypotheses.

## Results

Research Question 1: What school safety measures are available in secondary schools in Kaduna State?

**Table 1: Showed the responses of the respondents on how school safety measures are available in secondary schools in Kaduna State.**

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | SD | DECISION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Perimeter fencing | 3.92 | 0.84 | Available |
| 2 | Security guards | 4.01 | 0.79 | Available |
| 3 | Security lightening | 3.65 | 0.88 | Available |
| 4 | Cctv cameras | 2.45 | 1.02 | Not available |
| 5 | Emergency communication | 2.71 | 0.95 | Available |
| | **Grand mean** | **3.35** | | **Available** |

Table 1 shows school safety measures are available in secondary schools in Kaduna State. Results indicate that most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the items on the questionnaire. The grand mean of the respondents is given as 3.35; this value is above the benchmark of 3.00 for a four-point scaled questionnaire. Hence, shows school safety measures are available in secondary schools in Kaduna State. The results indicate that basic security measures are available in most schools, although advanced security facilities remain inadequate.

**Research Question 2:** How effective are personnel-based security measures in preventing school abductions?

**Table 2: Showed the responses of the respondents on how effective are personnel-based security measures in preventing school abductions**

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | SD | DECISION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | There are adequate trained security personnel in my school | 4.18 | 0.84 | Agree |
| 7 | Security personnel are stationed at all school entry and exit point | 4.34 | 0.79 | Agree |
| 8 | Security personnel regularly patrol the school premises | 3.23 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 9 | Teachers also actively participate in the school security surveillance | 2.99 | 1.02 | Agree |
| 10 | School staff promptly reports suspicious movement or activities to the appropriate authority | 3.11 | 0.95 | Agree |
| | **Grand Mean** | **3.57** | | **Agree** |

Table 2 shows how effective are personnel-based security measures in preventing school abductions. Results indicate that most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the items on the questionnaire. The grand mean of the respondents is given as 3.57; this value is above the benchmark of 3.00 for a four-point scaled questionnaire. Hence, the results indicate that personnel-based security measures are effective in reducing school vulnerable.

Research Question 3: How effective are community-based security measures in preventing school abductions?

**Table 3: Showed the responses of the respondents on how effective are community-based security measures in preventing school abductions**

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | SD | DECISION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Community members actively participate in ensuring the security of the school | 3.99 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 12 | Community vilangte groups regularly patrol areas surrounding the school | 4.31 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 13 | Religious leaders encourage community participation in protecting schools | 3.77 | 0.83 | Agree |
| 14 | Parents collaborate with school authorities on security related matters | 2.89 | 0.90 | Agree |
| 15 | Community assist in monitoring strangers entering the school environment | 2.66 | 0.95 | Agree |
| | **Grand mean** | **4.19** | | **Agree** |

Table 3 shows how effective are community-based security measures in preventing school abductions. Results indicate that most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the items on the questionnaire. The grand mean of the respondents is given as 3.57; this value is above the benchmark of 3.00 for a four-point scaled questionnaire. Hence, the findings suggest that community participation contributes significantly to school security.

**Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One**: Physical security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions.

**Table 4: Showing the physical security measures significant effect on the prevention of school abduction**

| Variable | Tcal | Df | Los | T crit | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical security | 0.452 | 23 | 0.05 | 8.324 | 0.000 | Reject Ho |

Table 4 shows that $p < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate retained. We therefore conclude that Physical security measures significantly influence the prevention of school abductions.

**Hypothesis Two:** Personnel-based security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions.

**Table 5: Showing Personnel-based security measures significant effect on the prevention of school abductions**

| Variable | T crit | Df | Los | T cal | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel based security | 0.497 | 23 | 0.05 | 9.324 | 0.000 | Reject Ho |

Table 5 shows that $p < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis retained, we therefore conclude that Personnel-based security measures significantly influence the prevention of school abductions.

**Hypothesis Three**: Community-based security measures have no significant effect on the prevention of school abductions.

**Table 6: Showing Community-based security measures significant effect on the prevention of school abductions.**

| Variable | T crit | Df | Los | T cal | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community based security | 0.597 | 23 | 0.05 | 10.231 | 0.000 | Reject Ho |

Table 6 shows that $p < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis retained, we therefore conclude that Community-based security measures significantly influence the prevention of school abductions.

## Discussion

The findings revealed that physical security measures significantly contribute to preventing school abductions. This finding agrees with Borum et al. (2021), who reported that perimeter fencing, surveillance systems, and access control mechanisms reduce opportunities for criminal attacks on schools. The study also found that personnel-based security measures significantly influence school protection. This finding corroborates Eze and Nwankwo (2021), who observed that schools with trained security personnel experience fewer security breaches than schools lacking formal security arrangements. Furthermore, community-based security measures were found to be highly effective in preventing school abductions. This finding supports Abubakar and Hassan (2022), who reported that collaboration between schools and local communities enhances intelligence gathering and early warning mechanisms. The study additionally established a significant positive relationship between school safety measures and prevention of school abductions. This finding is consistent with UNICEF (2024), which emphasized that comprehensive school safety systems improve school resilience and reduce vulnerability to attacks.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that school safety measures play a critical role in preventing school abductions in secondary schools in Kaduna State. Physical security infrastructure, trained security personnel, and community participation were found to significantly contribute to the protection of schools against attacks. The study further concluded that comprehensive implementation of school safety measures enhances educational continuity, improves stakeholder confidence, and promotes safer learning environments.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Government should provide adequate funding for the installation of modern security infrastructure in secondary schools.
2. All schools should be fenced and equipped with functional surveillance systems and emergency communication facilities.

Security personnel assigned to schools should receive regular professional training in emergency response and crisis management.

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