

School-Hedging and Out-of-School: Explaining the Role of Insecurity, and Terrorism in the Contemporary Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically investigated the impact of insecurity on school attendance. It also examined the socio-economic consequences of insecurity and terrorism on children's access to education following the SDG goal of education for all by 2030. The study adopted secondary sources of data collection from relevant and related documents, including the United Nations and its sub-agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF and other extant literature. Data was thematically analysed. The findings showed that insecurity has a lasting impact on learners' behaviour, emotions, mental health, academic performance, and stability at school. Maintaining that the culmination of these factors leads to school hedging by school-age children. Also, the study revealed that insecurity and kidnapping incidents can exacerbate and sustain the dynasty of poverty since education is one of the ways of breaking the chains of poverty, stating the need for targeted policy interventions to increase school enrolment and reduce the number of out-of-school children. It also confirmed that insecurity leads to a significant loss of human capital development and reduces a nation's ability to build a skilled and competitive workforce. Mitigating insecurity, closing the gap of gender equality, granting scholarships, therapy sessions and infrastructure development among others were identified as factors that would improve school enrolment and attendance. The study recommends the importance of holistic efforts: the society, government, international organizations, civil society organizations and all stakeholders of peace and security to work in tandem towards the realization of peace and security and a safe and conducive learning environment for every child.

Keywords: school-hedging, out-of-school, insecurity, terrorism, nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

A literate society remains one of the most critical indicators of a developed country in contemporary modern society. An educated citizenry that is highly motivated and well-informed remains an index of societal progress and national development at large. Education is a veritable tool for a country's political and economic transformation (Emordi & Olufemi, 2023). Education helps to tame social tensions in society. It emancipates the minds of men to be creative and enables them to think without much hindrance. Education also creates an opportunity for individuals to become assets to society. The absence of quality education prepares a child to grow up in unpleasant circumstances (Ikiyei, Donkemezuo, Precious e & Seribofa, 2022). The continuous rise of causes related to insecurity and kidnappings across the world has been argued to be a great threat to global literacy and educational development in general (Mahmud, 2020). It is believed that without peace and security, no meaningful development would occur hence peace is a precursor to development.

There have always been renewed calls for the eradication of illiteracy at the end of countless number of failed decades set as targets for 'Education for All' without achieving the target. At various periods, there have been a series of conventions, conferences, and workshops all over the world i.e., Education for All – EFA, Millennium Development Goals – MDGs (2006-2015), Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs (2015-2030), to institute chart and formulate various educational or literacy development policies. In Nigeria, such activities have included free meals to students in basic classes, incentives for students, and collaboration with international education bodies. Worth noting is that among the major causes of not achieving and unfulfilling targets of education for all have been challenges posed by insecurity and kidnapping bedeviling Nigeria in recent times. The outbreak of insurgencies resulting in a high level of insecurity has thwarted children's access to all forms of education (Adio & Adio, 2021). Due to insecurity, schools have been disrupted, destroyed, burnt, and broken down. The

systems of education in many countries globally have been adversely affected. Communities are scattered and displaced and placed or killed.

Insecurity is a major problem that humanity is faced with today. This challenge is so rampant that it dominates the mass communication media all over the globe and is not peculiar to African countries (Obarisiagbon & Akintoye, 2019). For instance, the Middle East has become a focal point of violence since the attack on The World Trade Centre in New York, United States of America on September 11th, 2001, by the leader of Al-Qaeda; Osama Bin Laden (Adio & Adio, 2021). War and threats of wars have become the order of the day since the occurrence of the incidents. The pervading incidences are not limited to developing nations but manifest in various intra-national wars (Atai & Ita, 2021). Nigeria as a nation has been faced with several forms of insecurity since its independence ranging from the civil war of 1967 -1970, Fulani herders' crises, Boko-Haram insurgencies, kidnapping, and political/religious crises (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019). The activities of perpetrators of insurgencies and kidnappings culminate in attacks on school pupils and students, teachers, other education personnel and education holistically across the globe. The effects of insecurity on literacy development in the contemporary world cannot be accurately estimated for the degree of its immensity.

Despite government and key stakeholders' efforts to curtail the issue, the challenges of insecurity, and the unpalatable situation have resulted in an alarming rate of out-of-school children globally and Nigeria in particular. Reports from UNESCO (2022) recorded about 224 million out-of-school children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 globally. The organization also submitted that India, Nigeria, and Pakistan have the highest figures for out-of-school children globally (Raliyat, Umma, & Aisha, 2022). For example, India has taken concrete steps to improve the literacy of its citizens, but illiteracy is still a major problem for the country. The adverse effects of out-of-school children are felt in the increased levels of crime rates, child labour, early marriages, psychological breakdown, and wide social and economic disparities in society. The rise of the trend across the world has also hindered the attainment of educational development. It is imperative to elicit further study to understand the interconnection between insecurity, kidnapping and school hedging in the expansion of out-of-school children globally in the 21st century. This paper investigated the impact of insecurity on school attendance and examined the socio-economic consequences of insecurity and terrorism on school enrollment attendance and hedging in Nigeria. The paper used secondary collected from relevant and related documents, including the United Nations and its other sub-agencies such as the United Nations Education Scientific and Development Goals (UNESCO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), as well as thematic analysis of relevant literatures from journals, articles, and annual reports. Data collected was thematically analysed to reveal some targeted interventions to increase school enrolment and reduce the number of out-of-school children, as well as show how insecurity and terrorism aid school hedging, and the scope of out-of-school children in Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE AND THEORETIC BEDROCK

Over time, several research works have been concentrated on the challenge of insurgency and insecurity. Most of these research works have examined the effects of insurgency and insecurity on literacy development in society. Some have similarly investigated the social problem to identify its impact on education vis-a-vis school administration in countries across the globe. For instance, Atai and Ita (2021), used a qualitative method hinged on historical and descriptive analysis to examine the impact of global security and socio-economic development in terrorist-prone areas. Findings from the study revealed that terrorism breeds insecurity and impedes sustainable national development. The authors argued that terrorism engenders loss of lives, a threat to public safety, economic sabotage, capital and investment flight, and perception of terrorist' prone states on the international scene with negative consequences on trade, tourism, and foreign direct investment (FDI). The findings also showed that several factors such as funding, ideology, religion, and idleness promote global terrorism which in turn endangers the prospects of progress resulting in economic misfortunes, closure of businesses and unemployment across the globe as well as destructive reflections on national security.

Furthermore, Haraki and Drwish (2023), employed a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the impact of the Syrian conflict on the educational and behavioural development of students in the city of Homs, as perceived by teachers. Findings also revealed that the way teachers perceive terrorism also affects students' education and behavioural development in areas bedevilled by terrorism. The authors argued for an extra effort to facilitate the integration of students into schools. Additionally, the involvement of both local and international organizations in providing financial support to students' families and the implementation of rehabilitation and psychological counselling programs for students is crucial to alleviate the trauma resulting from the war. Also, Assefa et al., (2022), used a mixed-method design to explore the impact of the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) armed violence on educational institutions, students' attainment, and the role of actors playing in school governance and redirecting the education process. They found that the TPLF armed violence instigated the destruction of school infrastructures and generated substantial impediments to accessing quality education. As a result, students'

educational attainment and learning outcomes were significantly reduced as compared to before the violence. Also, dropout rate, out-of-school student rate, and related educational wastage have been amplified.

Similarly, Amakiri (2023), examined the dilemma of insecurity on the educational system in Nigeria, the causes of insecurity and the effects of insecurity in the administration of Nigerian educational institutions. The study revealed the effect of insecurity despite the loss of manpower in the educational institutions is the poor quality of education, increase in education spending, destruction of infrastructural facilities, and brain drain among others. The author emphasized the need for the federal government of Nigeria to provide security in the insurgency-ravaged areas and other parts of the country as soon as possible to ensure a safe and secure state for a sustainable education system in Nigeria. Abubakar et al. (2023), used a survey method to examine the impact of insecurity on schools in Northern Nigeria. They discovered that death, low enrolment, disruption of an academic programme, and destruction of basic schools' infrastructural facilities were some of the negative impacts of insecurity in the region. Also, Okanezi and Ogeh (2023), in their paper on insecurity in Northern Nigeria and its effect on the education of the populace, submitted that bandits, terrorists, killer herdsmen and unknown gunmen hold sway over northern parts of Nigeria and their nefarious activities have caused immense havoc in several parts of the area. The authors argued that the education institutions were not spared in the attacks. According to them, the impact of insecurity includes alteration of the academic calendar, increased out-of-school children, and daunted academic achievement or attainment.

However, McKinney and Farrar (2023), in their paper on the impact of armed conflicts on school education, examined the effect of armed conflict by discussing school closures displacement, child soldiers and the education of girls during armed conflict. The authors argued that armed conflict has a damaging effect on the lives of children and young people and affects their school education. Easar et al. (2023), submitted that the encountered fragility following the Taliban's return to power in 2021 has deprived a large stratum of the population, especially females of access to quality education. This resulted in academic freedom, and negative psychological and emotional effects on the students.

Scholars have studied the effects of insecurity on the educational system from different perspectives and contexts. However, these existing studies have not examined the impact and socioeconomic consequences of enlarging the scope of out-of-school children globally in the 21st century. Also, there exists a dearth of literature on the psychological effect of insecurity on children. Just like other studies, the gaps left behind by these and other existing studies on the concept under discussion engendered the thematic focus of this study. Access to quality education is a right that is crucial to the development of a child and the nation, and it is one of the top priorities of the SDG agenda of 2030. It is therefore important to ensure that no child is deprived of this right.

III. BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL MODEL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The ecological theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex interplay between individual and environmental factors that contribute to a child's well-being, including their educational attainment (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). In the context of insecurity and kidnapping, this theory sheds light on how these issues can push children out of school. Bronfenbrenner's theory proposes levels of the ecological system that influence a child's development. They include the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem and macrosystem. The microsystem refers to the child's immediate environment, including the family, school, and peer group. Fear of kidnapping can turn the school environment (school) into a perceived danger zone for children. Responding to security concerns schools tend to implement stricter rules and heighten security measures, potentially creating a more restrictive and stressful atmosphere. The mesosystem represents interactions between the child's microsystems. Worries about kidnapping can strain the mesosystem by leading to overprotective parenting behaviours. Parents, fearing for their children's safety, may restrict their movements and social interactions, hindering their development of independence and social skills.

The exosystem encompasses settings that indirectly influence the child, such as the neighborhood and community. High crime rates, poverty, and a general sense of insecurity within the society (exosystem) can make education seem less important compared to the immediate need for safety. The macrosystem system refers to the broader cultural and societal factors that influence all the other levels. Weak law enforcement, lack of social safety nets, and a culture of violence within the macrosystem create a breeding ground for insecurity and kidnappings. This contributes to the climate of fear that permeates all other levels, ultimately impacting children's education. Therefore, in line with this theory, every government policy is expected to be channelled towards addressing these identified factors across all levels, curtailing the level of insecurities in society, and ensuring a safe environment for learning. However, given the persistence of the issue, it appears that there's a need for the government and other relevant stakeholders to intensify their efforts to address the menace of out-of-school children across the globe. This is way beyond what the government can do alone; there's a need for joint efforts across the worldwide

IV. IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The impact of global insecurity on the mental well-being of children is deeply distressing. Children, regardless of their educational stage, remain the most fragile and vulnerable victims of the nemesis of modern warfare, inflicting psychological scars that can lead to profound psychological breakdown. The unpleasant security conditions resulting from wars in countries like Iraq and Syria have made children exceptionally vulnerable to violence, with terrorist groups like ISIS and various armed militias. However, the consequences have lasting impacts on learners, impacting their behaviour, emotions, mental health, academic performance, and stability (Omer & Drwish, 2023). About 426 million children and nearly 200 million of these are children living in the most lethal war zones in the world (Save the Children, 2023).

However, children and their families are often displaced due to armed conflict. This displacement can either be external or internal. Data from the European Commission revealed that there were 89.3 million forcibly displaced. Out of this 53.2 million people are internally displaced at the end of 2021 (European Commission, 2023). The figure rose to 100 million at the beginning of 2022 and then 103 million by mid-2022 as a concomitant of the Ukraine war (UNHCR, 2023). Reports from the United Nations showed that approximately 37 million children are displaced worldwide. It includes 13.7 million children who are refugees and asylum seekers and approximately 22.8 children who have been displaced due to conflict and violence (United Nations, 2022).

Also, there is a high tendency for physical and sexual violence for women and girls during periods of armed conflict (Singh et al., 2022). It has been used as a weapon in many conflicts including Afghanistan, Somalia, and Sudan. Young girls are often forced into child marriages in situations of armed conflict, and this affects their school attendance and educational attainment. The Boko Haram terrorist group in (Nigeria) executed another example of denial of quality education for boys and girls. and the Taliban in (Afghanistan). In this case, the girls were forcibly ousted from school. the Boko Haram group abducted 276 girls from their school in Chibok in April 2014 under their will (Ebubedike et al., 2023). The actions of the Taliban and Boko Haram are based on their social construct about girls and women that relegates them to the roles of domestic chores and childcare (Adeyanju, 2020). Despite the Taliban's assurances of having a moderate interpretation of Islam during the Doha agreement negotiations vis-à-vis girl education, girls beyond grade six were denied access to education (Reuters 2021). The denial of education for female students has caused substantial cognitive and emotional damage, including distress, and depression, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

V. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF INSECURITY AND TERRORISM ON CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The attainment of security has continued to be a major concern on a global scale. No country or community can claim to be immune to the issues brought on by insecurity. Only in the past 20 years have nations such as Israel, North Korea, Russia, the United States, and South Korea encountered various types of transnational violence; insurgencies, terrorism, kidnapping, and socio-ethnic-religious conflicts have surfaced in nations such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Kenya; and political violence and tensions sparked by politics have affected nations such as Myanmar, Pakistan, and the Gambia. Bombings that result in suicide as well as other crimes have increased and are spreading quickly. Understanding the causes and effects of insecurity is changing along with its intensity. As opposed to earlier, when its effects are reduced to the loss of merely lives and property: Researchers, security specialists, and a host of additional stakeholders concur that insecurities pose many hazards in the modern world. Despite this, the connection between insecurity and education has received little study (Isaactamson, 2022).

Insecurity and terrorism pose significant threats to access to education, particularly in regions plagued by conflict, political instability, and organized crime (Salih, 2022). The fear of violence and abduction creates an environment that discourages school attendance, disrupts learning, and undermines the fundamental right to education (Balan, 2022). This issue has far-reaching consequences, not only for individuals but also for entire communities and nations. One of the most direct impacts of insecurity and kidnapping is the closure of schools due to safety concerns. In areas where abductions or attacks on educational institutions have occurred, many schools are forced to shut down temporarily or indefinitely. For instance, in Nigeria, It is claimed that, as of 2022, Boko Haram has killed over 530 teachers, orphaned more than 50,000 children, and destroyed over 5,000 primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions (Fatumole, 2022). Similarly, in Afghanistan, the ongoing conflict has resulted in the closure of hundreds of schools, depriving thousands of children, especially girls, of their right to education (UNICEF, 2022).

Even when schools remain open, insecurity and the threat of kidnapping can deter students and teachers from attending classes. Parents may choose to keep their children at home, fearing for their safety. According to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in Cameroon's Far North region, "fear of attacks and abductions has caused more than 80 per cent of schools to be closed leaving over 700,000 children out of school. (OCHA, 2019). Teachers, who are often targeted for abduction or attacks, may also be reluctant to work in insecure areas, which

exacerbates the shortage of qualified educators. A Report by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack on Schools, Universities, their Students and Staff was conducted between 2015 and 2019. It discovered that there were more than 11,000 reported attacks, harming more than 22,000 students and educators in at least 93 countries. In the 37 countries profiled in this report, at least 10 attacks on education occurred over the last 5 years (Education Under Attack 2020). The report showed a list of incidents for each country.

Table 1: shows countries and the number of incidents of school attacks in 2020

Countries	Number of incidents
<i>Afghanistan</i>	1000+
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	20+
<i>Burundi</i>	20+
<i>Cameroon</i>	1000+
<i>Central African Republic</i>	20+
<i>China</i>	20+
<i>Columbia</i>	20+
<i>DRC</i>	1000+
<i>Egypt</i>	20+
<i>Ethiopia</i>	500+
<i>Guinea</i>	20+
<i>India</i>	1000+
<i>Iran</i>	20+
<i>Iraq</i>	20+
<i>Kenya</i>	500+
<i>Libya</i>	20+
<i>Mali</i>	20+
<i>Myanmar</i>	20
<i>Nepal</i>	20+
<i>Nicaragua</i>	20+
<i>Niger</i>	500+
<i>Nigeria</i>	500+
<i>Pakistan</i>	1000+
<i>Philippines</i>	1000+
<i>Somalia</i>	500+
<i>South Africa</i>	20+
<i>South Sudan</i>	20+
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	20+
<i>Sudan</i>	1000+
<i>Syria</i>	1000+
<i>Thailand</i>	20+
<i>Turkey</i>	1000+
<i>Ugandan</i>	20+
<i>Ukraine</i>	20+
<i>Venezuela</i>	20+
<i>Yemen</i>	1000+

Source: Education Under Attack 2020: A Report by Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack

VI. POVERTY AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Insecurity and terrorism incidents exacerbate poverty levels in affected communities by disrupting educational opportunities for children. Education is widely recognized as a crucial pathway out of poverty, as it equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for better employment prospects and higher earning potential (UNESCO, 2019). However, when children's access to education is compromised due to security concerns, it can trap families in a cycle of intergenerational poverty. One of the direct economic burdens faced by families is the increased costs associated with ensuring their children's safety. In areas plagued by insecurity and kidnapping incidents, parents may incur additional expenses for transportation,

private security measures, or enrolling their children in schools perceived as safer (Amnesty International, 2021). For low-income households, these costs can strain their limited resources, forcing them to make difficult trade-offs between education and other essential needs. For instance, in Nigeria's northeastern region, where the Boko Haram insurgency has disrupted education for years, families have reported spending up to 25% of their monthly income on transportation and security measures to send their children to school (Human Rights Watch, 2020; Abdulrahim et al., 2023). In some cases, some parents have been forced to withdraw their children from school due to insecurity and financial insecurity (UNICEF, 2022).

The disruption of education due to insecurity has long-lasting consequences on future earning potential and economic prospects for affected children. According to a World Bank report, each additional year of schooling can increase an individual's earning potential by approximately 9% (World Bank, 2024). Contrarily, children who drop out of school or experience significant gaps in their education are more likely to face limited employment opportunities and lower lifetime earnings, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In conflict-affected regions, such as parts of Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen, years of insecurity and displacement have resulted in a significant increase in the number of out-of-school children. For example, in Yemen, where ongoing conflict has severely disrupted education, 2 million school-age girls and boys were out-of-school in 2021 (UNICEF, 2021). These children face a high risk of being trapped in poverty due to the lack of educational opportunities.

VII. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Education benefits not only the individual but society at large. Graduates of tertiary institutions are more environmentally conscious, have healthier habits, and have higher civic participation. Also, increased tax revenues from higher earnings, healthier children, and reduced family size build stronger nations. A literate population who passes through tertiary institutions are better prepared for adequate and relevant job skills to become active members of their communities and societies. The economic returns for tertiary education graduates are the highest in the entire educational system – an estimated 17% increase in earnings compared with 10% for primary and 7% for secondary education. These high returns are even greater in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 21% increase in earnings for tertiary education graduates (World Bank, 2024). However, when children's access to education is compromised due to security concerns, this can lead to a significant loss of human capital development thereby, becoming a clog to a nation's ability to build a skilled and competitive workforce. According to Hanushek and Woessmann (2020), each year of schooling lost may lead to a 3% decrease in future earnings for students, impacting national GDP by 1.5% annually. For instance, in parts of Nigeria affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, an estimated 952, 029 children have been made to drop out of school (Tafida et al., 2023). This massive disruption in education can undermine the country's long-term economic development, as a significant portion of the population may lack the necessary skills and qualifications to participate fully in the labour market.

Similarly, in Afghanistan, decades of conflict and instability have severely impacted the education system, with an estimated 3.7 million children - (60% of them are girls) out of school in 2022 (Wright, 2023). In addition to impeding individual opportunities, this educational gap is a major obstacle to the nation's attempts to rebuild and achieve sustainable economic growth. Not only does insecurity disturb the workforce, but it can also make a nation less appealing to both foreign and domestic investors. Companies look for places where they can operate in a stable and secure environment with a staff that is educated and skilled. Persistent insecurity and its effects on education can discourage potential investors, so reducing economic opportunities and growth prospects. Countries with higher levels of educational attainment and better learning outcomes typically have more productive workforces and faster economic growth, according to the World Bank's Human Capital Index (World Bank, 2024). On the other hand, nations or areas beset by instability and poor educational opportunities frequently have lower rankings on this index, indicating the possible financial consequences of underfunding the development of human capital. To mitigate the impact of insecurity on human capital development and economic growth, governments and international organizations must prioritize ensuring access to safe and quality education, even in conflict-affected areas (Runde, Bandura and McLean, 2023). This may involve implementing alternative education programs, such as remote learning or accelerated learning initiatives, as well as investing in teacher training and educational infrastructure (UNHCR, 2023). Additionally, addressing the root causes of insecurity through conflict resolution, peacebuilding efforts, and sustainable development strategies is crucial for creating an environment conducive to educational attainment and economic progress.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Reoccurrences of insecurity have always been a threat to global peace. The aftermath is felt in virtually almost every sphere of society, including education. Findings from the study revealed that these issues have great effects on children's mental well-being, emotions, academic performance, and disposition to life because of their fragility and vulnerability to the nemesis of modern warfare. This was corroborated by (Omer & Drwish, 2023), who argued that the consequences of insecurity have a lasting impact on learners' behavior, emotions, mental health, and academic performance. Additionally, because of

armed conflict, children and their families are often displaced; to him, there is a high tendency of physical and sexual violence for girls. Omer & Drwish, (2023), stretched that young girls are frequently forced into child marriages and are denied access to quality education in most cases. All these compounded in the reduction of school enrollment in affected areas. These findings align with prior reports and studies conducted by European Commission (2023), UNHCR (2023), United Nations (2022), Singh et al., (2022), Adeyanju (2020), and Reuters (2021), all of which highlight the adverse impact of insecurity on children's attendance in schools during challenging periods.

Also, findings from the study indicate that insecurity and terrorism pose significant threats to access to education, particularly in regions plagued by conflict, political instability, and organized crime. This effect is attributed to fear of violence and abduction which creates an environment that discourages school attendance, disrupts learning, and undermines their fundamental right to education. The direct impacts of insecurity and kidnapping are evident in the closure of schools, abduction of students and teachers, exacerbation of poverty levels in affected communities, and loss of human capital, all of which disrupts educational access for children and reduces a nation's ability to build a skilled and competitive workforce. These findings align with studies carried out by (Salih, 2022), (Balan, 2022), Fatunmole (2022), (Abdulrahim et al., 2023), Hanushek and Woessmann (2020), (Tafida et al., 2023), which underscore the socio-economic consequences of insecurity and terrorism on children's access to education.

One effective intervention involves identifying and addressing the root causes of insecurity and kidnappings (Ibrahim, Ahmad and Shehu, 2021). This strategy helps in ensuring a safe learning environment for the students. McKinney & Farrar, (2023) maintained that the best way to prevent children from being put at risk is to deter conflicts and wars, and at least aim to ensure child safety and protection during the crisis (McKinney & Farrar, 2023). Another strategy is to uphold international laws and standards, and holding violators to account will go a long way in addressing these issues. Asokan (2021), argued that only very few perpetrators of crimes have been held to account. For example, mass kidnappings have been rampant, with over 3,620 people abducted between July 2022 and July 2023 alone. This includes the abduction of 400 internally displaced persons by Boko Haram in Borno state and 287 students and teachers in Kuriga, Kaduna state in March 2024 (Hairsine, 2024; Amnesty International, 2024). These incidents point to the pervasive insecurity and the failure of authorities to protect vulnerable populations. Furthermore, regions such as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) experienced a significant surge in kidnappings towards the end of 2023, with incidents continuing into 2024. For example, multiple kidnappings occurred in Bwari area council, and a musician along with his band were abducted, with ransom demands as high as N10 million (ICIR Nigeria, 2024). Despite these frequent abductions, accountability remains elusive. For instance, Amnesty International criticized the Nigerian government for its ineffective security measures and failure to bring suspected perpetrators to justice, as seen in the repeated mass abductions since the infamous Chibok kidnapping in 2014 (Bartlett, 2024). Additionally, targeted efforts to address gender disparities in education, such as equal access to education in countries that deprive female children of education, offering scholarships for girls and creating safe learning environments, can significantly impact enrolment rates, especially for marginalized groups.

Also, the use of technology like closed-circuit television (CCTV) and other comprehensive systems for monitoring and recording behaviours of students especially victims of the tragic incident, should be put in place by the government and relevant stakeholders in the society. Students displaying signs of psychological breakdown or behavioural issues should be promptly referred to rehabilitation centres when necessary (Haraki & Drwish, 2023). These programs should be tailored to help students cope with the psychological challenges arising from their exposure to insecurity and kidnapping-related trauma. This can be done by the establishment of rehabilitating centres, therapist sessions and support that can revive their psychological state of mind. Children who are victims of these unfortunate incidences are most times traumatized by the tragic events and are always scared of going back to their former way of life. Additionally, the importance of implementing flexible schooling options, such as remote learning, evening classes or online learning platforms, can accommodate children who face challenges attending traditional daytime schooling due to the tenacity of their environment (Save the Children, 2020). This approach is more effective in volatile areas prone to wars, terrorism, and insurgency.

Moreover, infrastructure development plays a pivotal role in ensuring access to education. Upgrading school facilities, destroyed during attacks can eliminate physical barriers that hinder regular school attendance. Most times, the depletion of buildings, learning facilities and materials can affect the enthusiasm of both teachers and students towards teaching and learning. Then, Financial incentives, such as scholarships, free textbooks, and school meal programs, can also significantly impact enrolment rates, especially for marginalized and affected areas. Collaboration with local and international organizations should be enhanced to provide financial support to families affected by conflict, thus relieving them of the economic burden associated with education.

IX. CONCLUSION

The paper has discussed the role of insecurity, and terrorism in contemporary Nigeria. The study focused on how insecurity and terrorism have led to the expansion of school hedging and out-of-school children. The study established that insecurity and terrorism are major deterrents to children's education. The consequence of these traumatic experiences can be devastating, not only for the child but also for society at large. These effects manifest in various ways, including the expansion of out-of-school children in the 21st century, neglect of the educational aspect, gender inequality and a de-sensitization to the unpleasant and traumatic experiences they witness during the crisis. Parents themselves are reluctant to enrol their children due to the unsafe environment and economic hardships brought about by insecurity. Overall, the study has unequivocally reflected that insecurity and kidnapping exert a significant influence on the academic achievement and behaviour of students, with broader societal repercussions. It is therefore germane to ensure that every child's right to education is protected, regardless of their background or circumstances. To achieve this, the government, international organization, stakeholders, and civil society organizations need to work in tandem towards achieving a safe and conducive learning environment. It is also important to ensure an inclusive learning system, leaving no child behind in achieving SDG goal 4 which centres on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Then the mental health of victimized children should be placed as a priority and addressed by experts, in integrating them back into society. The safety of a child matters.

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