

INSECURITY AS PREDICTOR OF STUDENTS' LEARNING IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria is alarming to wonder Nigeria is listed as the second most terrorized nation in the world. The study examined the effect of insecurity on students' learning in Zamfara state. The study employed to survey and cross-sectional research designs. Data were retrieved from 273 respondents utilizing snowballing sampling technique. Preliminary analyses such as multicollinearity test, normality test, common method bias and non-response bias test were assessed on the retrieved data while structural equation modelling (SEM-PLS) was used to test the hypothesized relationship. The finding revealed that personal insecurity has a negative and significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara state. In the same vein, community insecurity has a negative and significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara state. The study recommended that the Government across all tiers should take the personal security of its citizens seriously as it adversely affects the learning of students. This can be practically done by putting laws into effect that can assure the citizens of their safety.

Keywords: Insecurity, Personal Insecurity, Community Insecurity, Learning, Student Learning

Introduction

Education is universally believed to be crucial for the survival and success of individuals in the emerging global environment (Louis et al., 2010). It is vital because it has a positive effect on human capital, which leads to an increase in productivity and an elevated level of economic growth (Divine, 2018). Idris et al. (2012) noted that economic and social status depends on education obtained by the individual since education contributes to individual capability in managing quality of life. This implies that education is a tool used to nurture and develop the individual overall capacity to be efficient in the growth of the nation. Towing the same light of thought, Amodu et al. (2016) opined that education is a hub on which the development of every nation revolved, it is also remarkably beneficial in terms of the institutionalization and promotion of culturally inclusive behaviour. Sadly, these benefits of education cannot be achieved in a vacuum, they would be achieved in a peaceful and conducive environment (Ojukwu, 2017).

Insecurity has been a bane of the problem experienced in Nigeria in recent years, especially in Zamfara state. The concept of insecurity connotes the state or quality of being insecure (Ojukwu, 2017). Insecurity challenges range from civil war, election-

related mayhem, riots and protests, militancy, insurgency, herdsmen/farmer clashes and abduction (Nwosu et al., 2019). However, frequent occurrence of insecurity has been reported in Zamfara state. For instance, on 26th February 2021 gunmen abducted over three hundred (300) students of Government Girls Junior Secondary School Jangebe in Talata-Mafara Local Government Area as reported by (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2021). Similarly, Premium Times (2021) reported that in Government Secondary School Kaya over seventy (70) students were kidnapped on September 1st, 2021 released twelve (12) days later. In addition, on 23rd November 2021, the police command in Zamfara state reported that it rescued twenty-four (24) persons, including five (5) students kidnapped while writing their senior secondary school certificate in the Shinkafi Local Government Area of the state as reported by (Daily Post, 2021). Furthermore, Salaudeen (2021) reporting for Channels Television reported that some staff and students Consequently, resulting in the shutting down of academic activities across the Primary and Secondary Schools in all the Fourteen (14) Local Government Areas of the state as declared by the state government on 1st September 2021. State Governor Bello Matawalle in his briefing announced that all schools in the state must be closed with immediate effect as the activities of the gunmen have made the schools across the state a soft target (Salaudeen, 2021). The Governor further stated that only when peace is restored that school activities will resume.

Imagine a state without functional educational institutions to build its future leaders to propel economic development and growth. Imagine a state with thousands of out-of-school children. The data published by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in its 2020 report showed that Zamfara state is among the state with the highest number of out-of-school children with 422,214. Furthermore, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2020) also reported that Zamfara state has the lowest school enrollment in the federation for three (3) years consecutive with 40.71%, 39.5% and 45.04% in 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 respectively. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2022) asserted that a high rate of out-of-school children has serious implications on society ranging from interrupted learning, confusion and stress for teachers, parents unprepared for distance home schooling, increase in school dropout to high economic cost as working parents are more likely to miss work when schools close to take care of their children thereby resulting in wage loss.

Learning is seen as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills and having them readily available from memory so you can make sense of future problems and opportunities (Brown et al., 2014). To Nielsen (2016) it is the process by which relatively permanent changes occur in behavioural potential as a result of experience. Learning is about effecting change in an individual consequently, Sequeira (2017) perceived learning to be a relatively permanent change, usually brought about intentionally. It can therefore be insinuated that lasting change cannot occur in a vacuum or is effective when there is frequent interruption as in the case of Zamfara state occasioned by violence, kidnapping, insecurity and banditry.

The insecurity of life and property of citizens in any nation can drag the sustainable development and educational advancement of such a nation. Nwosu et al. (2019) argued that an insecure school environment affects children; situations of insecurity trigger traumatic disorder and toxic stress that affect learning negatively. As such,

given the importance of education and human capital towards sustainable socioeconomic development, there is a need to explore the effect of insecurity on students learning particularly in Zamfara state. Consequently, the study aimed to explore the effect of insecurity on learning among students in Zamfara State. As such, the study aimed to investigate whether the period the students stayed at home caused by insecurity affected their learning capacity.

Based on the above objective, the study's hypotheses are stated below

- H₀₁: Personal insecurity has no significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara state
- H₀₂: Community insecurity has no significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara state.

Review of Related Literature

The section reviewed the concept of student learning, insecurity, the theoretical framework that underpinned the study and the conceptual framework.

Concept of Student Learning

Learning is seen as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills and having them readily available from memory so you can make sense of future problems and opportunities (Brown et al., 2014). To Nielsen (2016) it is the process by which relatively permanent changes occur in behavioural potential as a result of experience. Schunk (2019) sees learning as an enduring change in behaviour, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience. Towing the same line of thought, De Houwer et al. (2013) sees learning functionally as changes in behaviour that result from experience or mechanistically as changes in the organism that result from experience.

IGI Global (2022) viewed student learning as the measurable skills, attitude and knowledge of the learner as a result of participation in an educational activity. This can be presumed to mean that students learn better by engaging in studying and collaborating with teachers in learning activities, sharing ideas with classmates and effective supervision and assessment. Based on the aforementioned, the study defined student learning as the modification of students' behaviour as a result of adequate teaching, instructions and exposure to new ideas which are quantifiable through the teacher/learner relationships.

Concept of Insecurity

The word insecurity has myriads of connotations, crosscutting and multi-dimensional concept which has been subject to debates (Obi, 2015). It signifies danger, hazard, uncertainty lack of protection, and lack of safety (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019). To Obarisiagbon and Akintoye (2019) insecurity generally refers to the absence of resistance to or protection from harm, peaceful co-existence and development at large. Obi (2015) defined insecurity as a chronic threat to human life, territories, states, religious beliefs, properties and institutions among others. Achumba et al. (2013) identified two sources of insecurity; remote factors and proximate factors.

The remote factors include lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure; pervasive material inequalities and unfairness; ethnoreligious conflicts; conflict of perceptions between the public and government; weak security system; loss of socio-cultural and communal value system. On the other hand, immediate and proximate factors include porous borders; rural/urban drift; social irresponsibility of companies; unemployment/poverty; terrorism. This study defines insecurity as the presence of danger, lack of safety and source of livelihood owing to external aggression, coercion and abnormalities in society.

Extent literature (*e.g.*, Ezemenaka, 2021; Otolorin, 2017; Onime, 2018; Oloyede & Ogunfolaji, 2021) have discussed different dimensions of insecurity ranging from food insecurity, health insecurity, environmental insecurity, economic insecurity, political insecurity, human insecurity to personal and community insecurity as outlined in United Nation Developmental Programme (UNDP) Report. However, this study is only limited to two dimensions identified as critical to students' learning namely community and personal insecurity. Personal insecurity is defined as the lack of protection of an individual from physical violence, harm and chronic threat (Orhero, 2020) while community insecurity is a threat, violence and lack of safety claiming hundreds of lives in a particular society over some time (Eneji & Agri, 2020).

Theory of Educational Productivity

The theory of education productivity was propounded by Walberg et al. (1986) discussed extensively factors that affect students learning and academic performance. It is an exploration of academic achievement wherein Walberg used a variety of methods how to identify the factors that affect academic performance. Walberg identified nine factors that require optimization to increase student achievement of cognitive and affective outcomes. These are; ability or prior achievement, age, motivation or self-concept as indicated by personality tests or willingness to persevere on learning tasks; the instructional variables of, the quantity of instruction, and quality of the instructional experience; and educationally stimulating psychological aspects of the home environment, the classroom or school environment, the peer group environment, and the mass media (especially television). This study posited that environmental and personal factors *i.e.*, personal and community insecurity can influence students' learning since students are the product of their environment (Ojeleye, Bakare & Kareem, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

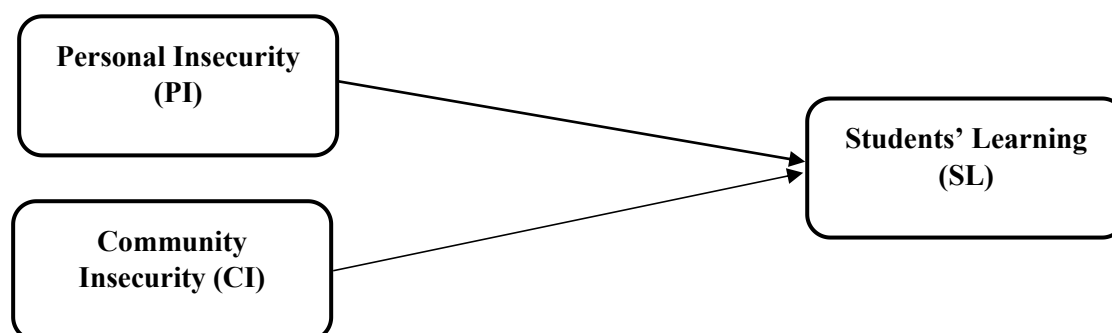


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The model in figure 1 above depicts the research framework. The predictor variables are community insecurity and personal insecurity predicting the criterion variable of students' learning.

Research Methodology

The paper employed cross-sectional and survey research designs. In cross-sectional research also referred to as one-shot research, data are collected just once from the respondents, to respond to a research question (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Meanwhile, the survey is defined as a system for collecting specific information from and also on some people to describe, compare, and explain their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Hair *et al.*, 2016). A survey research design is used because the study used a well-structured questionnaire to solicit a response from the respondents. The use of a questionnaire is quick, reduces bias and is less costly (Ojeleye & Bakare 2020). It encourages privacy and the respondent's willingness to respond truthfully and sincerely to sensitive issues.

The domain of the study selected secondary schools in Zamfara State Nigeria. Zamfara state is located in the North-West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria comprising fourteen Local Government Areas namely: Anka, Bakura, Bukkuyum, Bungudu, Birin Magayi/Kiyaw, Chafe, Gummi, Gusau, Kaura-Namoda, Maradun, Maru, Shinkafi, Talata-Mafara and Zurmi. Furthermore, the study employed a multi-stage sampling technique which involves taking samples in stages using the smaller and smaller unit at each stage (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In the first stage, Zamfara state was clusterised based on the fourteen Local Government Areas. In the second phase, fourteen clusters were stratified based on the official population as per the 2006 census population (National Population Commission of Nigeria, 2006). The first four Local Government Areas in terms of the population were selected namely: Gusau 383,162; Zurmi 293,837; Maru 291,900 and Kaura-Namoda 281,367 Local Government Areas. The third phase of the study utilised Taro Yamane sample finite sample formula to determine the same size.

Where n = Sample Size, N = population for finite population and e = margin error (assume 5%)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad n = \frac{1,250,266}{1 + 1,250,266(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,250,266}{1 + 3125.665} \quad n = 400$$

Furthermore, to reduce non-response errors which may arise as a result of failure to obtain information from several respondents included in the sample which is capable of introducing bias to the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Hence, Israel (2013) suggested an increase in sample size by 30% to compensate for non-response errors. Therefore, the derived study sample size of 400 was increased by $(1.30 \times 400 = 520)$ to 520 sample size.

In the fourth phase, the study employed a proportionate stratified sampling design to distribute the questionnaire among the selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Zamfara state depicted in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Proportionate Stratified Sampling Technique

S/N	LGAs	Population	Proportional Sampling	Returned & Valid Questionnaire	% of Returned Questionnaire
1	Gusau	383,162	159	79	50
2	Zurmi	293,837	122	63	52
3	Maru	291,900	122	59	48
4	Kaura-Namoda	281,367	117	72	62
Total		1,250,266	520	273	53

The total number of questionnaires administered to the students was 520 pieces out of which 273 (53%) were returned valid and used for the study. Although low response rate raises a serious question about data quality which in turn seriously affects research findings, generalization and validity. Ali et al. (2020) noted that there is no "generally accepted rule" as to what constitutes an acceptable response rate. Malhotra and Grover (1998) opined that a 50% response rate is acceptable and appropriate to make relevant generalizations.

The fifth and last phase of the paper used snowballing sampling technique in which a viable contact is used to identify others who may be willing to provide information on the topic of the study, who are then used to establish further contacts (Bryman & Bell, 2019). This was employed to ensure that students and teachers of both Islamic and Western education in the selected LGAs were reached.

Measurement and Instruments

The study utilized a self-developed questionnaire to assess personal insecurity, community insecurity and student learning. Specifically, personal insecurity was assessed using an eight-item personal insecurity scale measured on a four-point Likert Scale (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 agree and 4 strongly agree). A sample item for the instrument is: "I work alone in the community without feeling threatened". Community insecurity was assessed using a six-item community insecurity scale measured on a four-point Likert Scale (1 strongly agree to 4 strongly agree). A sample item for the instrument is: "My environment is unsafe" Finally, student learning was assessed by employing a ten-item student learning scale measured on a four-point Likert Scale (1 strongly agree to 4 strongly agree). A sample item for the instrument is: "the students learn a lot in the classroom".

Data Analysis Technique

Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was utilised to conduct necessary preliminary analyses such as; tests of normality, multicollinearity, non-response bias and common method bias. Harman's one-factor test equals 18% variance indicating that no common method bias. In addition, the value Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for personal insecurity and community insecurity was 1.138 showing that multicollinearity was not a concern for the study. Lastly, Levene's test of equality of variances confirmed that non-response bias was a concern for the study as the analyses confirmed equality of variance. Consequently, the data was certified clean and useable for further analysis. The SmartPLS 3.2.8 was used to analyse and compute the two-basic models of PLS path modelling which are the measurement model and structural model. As stressed by Haenlein and Kaplan (2004), one of the

reasons for the use of PLS is its edge over others in the item of flexible restriction in respect of distribution and population of the study and it has the chance of providing a more reliable and accurate computation.

Measurement Model

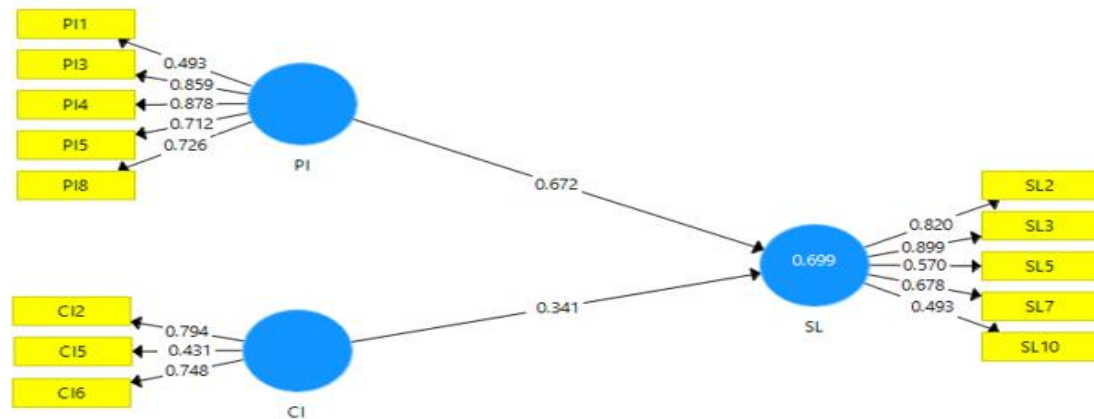


Figure 2: Measurement Model
Source: SmartPLS version 3.2.8

In the measurement model, the paper explored the loadings of the items, internal consistency and average variance extracted. The items' loadings were examined and only items that loaded 0.40 and above were retained (Hair et al., 2021). Items PI2, PI6, PI7, SL1, SL4, SL6, SL8, SL9, CI1, CI3 and CI4 were deleted because they loaded below the established threshold of 0.4. The internal consistency was measured using composite reliability and reached the satisfying criteria of 0.700, as the lowest is 0.701 and the highest is 0.859. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was examined to affirm the convergent validity and all met the 0.5 thresholds provided by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In other words, the values of AVE were greater than 0.5, as it ranges between 0.502 and 0.557. These are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Item Loadings, Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CR	AVE
Student Learning	SL3	0.82	0.711	0.502
	SL4	0.899		
	SL5	0.57		
	SL7	0.678		
	SL10	0.493		
Personal Insecurity	PI1	0.493	0.859	0.557
	PI3	0.859		
	PI4	0.878		
	PI5	0.712		
	PI8	0.726		
Community Insecurity	CI2	0.794	0.701	0.509
	CI5	0.431		
	CI6	0.748		

CR= Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted

Furthermore, to confirm the discriminant validity, the study employed the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio proposed by Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2015) due to the inability of Fornell and Larcker criterion and cross-loading to detect a lack of discriminant validity. As such, Table 3 below shows the HTMT ratio less than the conservative value of 0.85 for conceptually dissimilar constructs. The paper concludes that discriminant validity is confirmed.

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio for Discriminant Validity

Construct	CI	PI	SL
CI			
PI	0.534		
SL	0.476	0.396	

Structural Model

The structural model was used to test the hypotheses of the study. A total of 5000 bootstrapping was undertaken to test the hypothesised relationship. The effect size was examined likewise blindfolding was also assessed to determine predictive relevance.

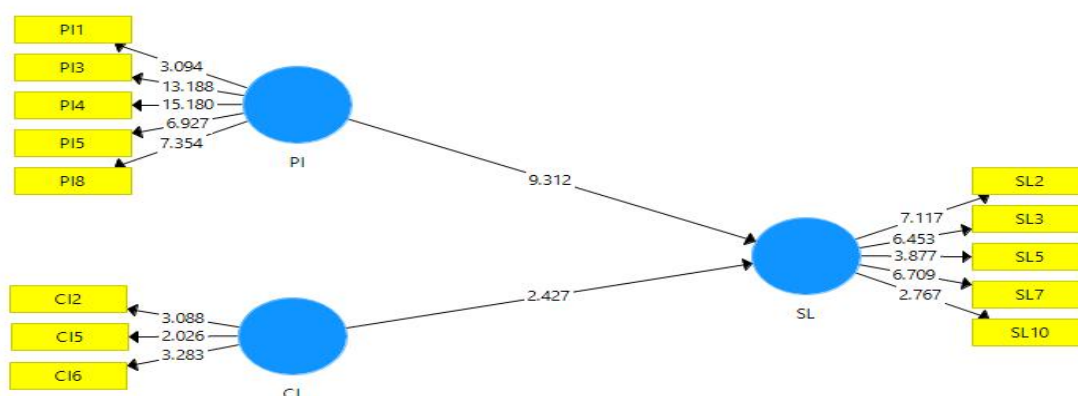


Figure 3: Structural Model
Source: SmartPLS version 3.2.8

Test of Hypotheses and Discussion

Table 4 below and Figure 3 above showed that personal insecurity has a negative and significant effect on students' learning. It implied that an increase in personal insecurity will lead to a decline in student learning in Zamfara state. Specifically, a 1% increase in personal insecurity will result in a 0.672% decrease in student learning. Therefore, the paper concludes that the first hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that personal insecurity does not have a significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara State is hereby rejected. The p-value of (0.000) is significant at 1% because the t-value (9.312) is greater than the stipulated threshold of 2.576 for the two-tailed test of the hypothesis.

In the same vein, the second hypothesis which states that community insecurity does not have a significant effect on students' learning in Zamfara state is also rejected. This is because community insecurity has a negative and significant effect on students' learning. This implied that an increase in community insecurity will result in

a decrease in student learning. Precisely, a 1% increase in community insecurity will lead to a decline in student learning by 0.341% at a 5% significant level.

Consequently, based on the research finding insecurity (personal and community) are serious negative antecedents of student learning which can be explained as having a negative psychological effect on the students' learning. For instance, a student who is physically insecure or whose life is being threatened will only be preoccupied with survival. This assertion is buttressed by Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of need theory which extensively discusses human motivation. Although learning is important, nonetheless it will assume a secondary role when a person's life is being threatened. Furthermore, Walberg et al (1986) theory of education productivity asserted that among the determinants of students' learning and academic performance, motivation and environmental factors are crucial. It is logical to assume that a student whose environment is unsafe will not be motivated to learn as his/her productivity will be hampered by happenings in the environment. Conclusively, this study as such confirmed the theory of educational productivity and advocated the need to consider personal and community insecurity as antecedents of students' learning in Zamfara state.

Table 4: Test of Direct effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	Standard Error	T-value	P-value	Decision
H ₀₁	PI-> SL	-0.672	0.072	9.312	0.000	Rejected
H ₀₂	CI>SL	-0.341	0.140	2.427	0.016	Rejected

$R^2 = 0.699$

$R^2 = 0.699$ shows that the exogenous variables personal insecurity (PI) and community insecurity (CI) jointly account for 70% variations in the endogenous variable; student learning (SL) while the remaining 30% is explained by other variables not included in the model. Chin (1998) suggested the R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19; to be regarded as substantial, moderate, and weak respectively. Thus, the R^2 value is substantially based on the aforementioned.

Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

The effect size of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable was also investigated using the f^2 . Cohen (1988) suggested that f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, to represents small, medium, and large effects respectively. Consequently, CI has a large effect size while PI has a small effect size. The predictive relevance (Q^2) of the exogenous variable was also examined. (Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014) asserted that the Q^2 value of 0 or negative showed that the model is irrelevant in predicting the endogenous variable. However, Q^2 1 between 100 shows the predictive relevance of the model. The study's Q^2 is 0.296 showing that the study has predictive relevance. The results are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Construct	R^2 included	R^2 excluded	f^2	Effect size
CI	0.699	0.533	0.551	Large
PI	0.699	0.671	0.093	Small

Q² 0.296

Conclusion and Recommendations

The security of life and property of teachers and students is paramount to the outcome of learning. The increase in insecurity has drastically affected the school management process, and the adequate number of teachers which has, in turn, affected students' learning outcomes. Among educationists, it has been realized that many students who perform badly in learning are not a result of mental incapacity but can be a result of other factors insecurity is one. Insecurity in Zamfara has made students develop a phobia to attend school as they skip lessons and school activities, they lose interest in academic activities which may eventually lead to students' dropout from school, boys moving into trade and early settling down in marriage in girls as such compounding to the educational challenges in Northern Nigeria. Teachers develop psychological torture of not knowing if they would be attacked if they come to school eventually affecting the academic assessment outcome of the students.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Government across all tiers should take the personal security of its citizens seriously as it adversely affects the learning of students. This can be practically done by putting laws into effect that can assure the citizens of their safety.
- ii. All levels of Government through collaborations with security agencies, community leaders, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community members should make the communities safe for citizens and conducive to learning and academic activities.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Despite the fascinating findings of the study, the study is not without limitations which are highlighted below:

- i. The study is cross-sectional by design as responses were solicited from the respondents once. Future studies can employ longitudinal research designs where data will be collected from respondents on more than one occasion. Consequently, variations in responses can be analyzed and adequately reported.
- ii. The study was entirely quantitative. Future studies can incorporate qualitative dimensions. This will enable research to obtain first-hand information from the respondents through interviews and observations.
- iii. The study is limited to insecurity and students' learning in Zamfara state. Future studies can increase the scope of Northern Nigeria since the issue of insecurity is not peculiar to Zamfara state alone.

- iv. Other antecedents of students' learning such as poor infrastructure, overcrowding, inadequate competent teachers and psychological capital can also be studied in future research to ascertain their effect on students' learning.
- v. The study used the snow-balling sampling technique a non-probabilistic sampling as such caution should be exercised when generalizing the study's findings.

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