UNIOFFA JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (U-OJIS)
A Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Management and Social Sciences
Website: www.unioffajis.com
ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

SPATIAL DISPARITIES IN SCHOOL SAFETY AND TEACHER OUTCOMES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Tomori, Abdulfatai Adeyinka
Educational Planning, Research and Development (EDPRD),

Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, Ilorin

ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2219-1202
Email: fataitom@gmail.com
Phone: 08036446347

Abubakar Saidu
Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Volume 1:2

Abstract

School safety is increasingly recognised as essential to educational quality, yet evidence on low-intensity insecurity remains limited. This study examined the relationship between perceived school safety and public secondary school teachers' attendance and professional effectiveness in rural Ifelodun and urban Offa, Kwara South Senatorial District, Nigeria. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the study adopted a comparative design involving 192 teachers (105 rural and 87 urban) and 55 principals selected through stratified random sampling. Independent-samples t-tests, Pearson correlation and simple linear regression were employed. Urban schools recorded significantly higher school safety implementation than rural schools ($t = 8.14$, $p < .001$). Perceived safety was significantly associated with attendance in rural ($R^2 = .248$, $p < .001$) and urban schools ($R^2 = .114$, $p < .001$). Similarly, it was associated with professional effectiveness in rural ($R^2 = .185$, $p < .001$) and urban schools ($R^2 = .281$, $p < .001$). However, Fisher's z tests showed no statistically significant rural–urban differences in these associations. Formal safety interventions remained limited in both settings. Rural challenges included transit-corridor insecurity and kidnapping threats, whereas urban schools faced trespassing and infrastructural pressures. The study recommends decentralised safety funding, transit-inclusive security patrols and location-specific safety protocols to improve teachers' working conditions and educational outcomes.

Keywords: *School safety perceptions, rural vs. urban education, teacher attendance, professional effectiveness, Kwara South, Kwara State, educational management*

Introduction

Background of the Study

The provision of a safe, secure, and predictable educational environment is a fundamental prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. Secure working conditions foster psychological stability, allowing educators to dedicate their cognitive capacities to instructional design, classroom management, and sustained student engagement. Conversely, persistent insecurity in and around educational institutions introduces chronic occupational stress, disrupts institutional routines, and degrades the quality of public education. Research demonstrates that unsafe school conditions place undue stress on teachers, who become constantly anxious, need to protect themselves, and suffer psychologically and emotionally (Mosito & Sitoyi, 2024). Teachers who are fearful of physical incidents tend to experience higher levels of stress and emotional exhaustion.

This challenge is not confined to any single nation or region. In the United Kingdom, a

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

NASUWT survey of over 5,800 teachers found that two in five (40%) had experienced physical abuse or violence from pupils in the preceding twelve months, with 20% reporting being hit or punched (NASUWT, 2022). In Denmark, a longitudinal study of 1,198 primary and lower secondary school teachers found statistically significant associations between all three types of pupils' aggressive behaviour (harassment, threats, and violence) and burnout one year later, with odds ratios between 1.6 and 2.0 after adjustment for baseline burnout (Winding et al., 2022). In Chile, research examining anti-school violence in the Biobío province documented that teachers perceive this issue as having increased in recent years, with a high prevalence of verbal and psychological aggressions and insufficient protective measures for educators (Guerra et al., 2023). A systematic review of 56 empirical studies further confirms that teacher-targeted victimization remains an under-integrated dimension of school violence research, with physical and verbal aggression being the most frequently examined forms (Longobardi et al., 2023). These patterns underscore a global dimension to the problem: teacher-directed violence is escalating across diverse national contexts, destabilising the professional stability upon which quality education depends.

In conflict-affected, transitional, and low-intensity threat zones, safety concerns directly influence teacher behaviour, manifesting in heightened absenteeism, reduced professional commitment, and defensive instructional practices. A study by Adebayo and Ileuma (2023) found that school safety factors are a critical condition for the job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria, with unsafe environments lowering motivation and raising turnover. The pervasive effects of insurgency on school safety in Nigeria's North-East region have included reduction in school attendance, migration of qualified teachers, destruction of school infrastructures, and closure of schools.

In Nigeria, the vulnerability of the educational sector came into sharp focus following high-profile security breaches, most notably the 2014 abduction of schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State. On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in Borno State in northeastern Nigeria. The attack captured the world's attention and became a defining moment in Nigerian history. It led the United Nations, global business leaders, and the Nigerian government to launch the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) the following month, initially covering 500 schools in the northeastern states. Designed to protect schools, students, and educators from violence, the national SSI framework encompasses physical security enhancements (such as perimeter fencing, security lighting, and access control), school-based safety planning, emergency response training, psychosocial support mechanisms, and community-based security monitoring (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2025).

Despite these commitments, the initiative's implementation has been inconsistent. A study by Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2025) found that the full implementation of the SSI is hindered by factors such as insecurity, inadequate funding, lack of adequate safety measures in schools, lack of awareness, and corruption and mismanagement of funds. Manjo (2024) examined the administrative structure and implementation approach of the SSI in Nigeria, noting deficiencies in the administrative structure and implementation components of the initiative and prescribing a reform of structure, roles, and operational strategies. Despite the initiative, attacks on schools and abductions of students and teachers have continued. Thousands of Nigerian students have been abducted by armed groups since 2014.

Research from Nigeria demonstrates how insecurity has a detrimental effect on teachers' dedication to their jobs. A mixed-methods study by Imhonopi and Urim (2019) discovered that low morale and teacher absenteeism in public secondary schools were caused by the rising number of kidnappings and armed attacks. Similarly, Ojukwu and Onuoha (2021) discovered that low educational performance, inadequate supervision, and absenteeism are caused by insecurity in Nigerian schools. Ajayi (2022) found that insecurity, especially in rural public schools in Nigeria, has a direct impact on teacher absenteeism and erodes professional dedication. The fear of being kidnapped discourages teachers' attendance to school and classes. Regression analysis has also demonstrated that insecurity significantly predicts teachers' job dedication. Adebayo and Ileuma (2023) pointed out that school safety is a prerequisite for long-term teacher dedication because unsafe settings lower motivation and raise turnover.

While initially prioritised in acute conflict zones across North-Eastern Nigeria, the operational scope of school safety management was

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

subsequently extended to other geopolitical zones to mitigate emerging threats, including communal clashes, youth restiveness, cultism, and highway banditry. Kwara State, situated in the North-Central geopolitical zone, formally adopted aspects of the safe school's framework through the Kwara State Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) to protect public secondary institutions. Within Kwara South Senatorial District, public secondary schools operate across markedly different socio-ecological landscapes, ranging from densely populated, commercially active urban centres to geographically isolated agrarian communities. This spatial variation is consequential, since urban schools benefit from proximity to security agencies, superior infrastructure, and shorter commuting distances, while rural schools contend with administrative isolation, unprotected transit corridors, and limited security presence. These exosystemic differences, as Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory would predict, likely shape how teachers experience and respond to safety interventions.

Existing research supports the relevance of spatial context. Studies have shown that school location is a significant predictor of teacher working conditions, with rural schools being more likely to be classified as having "Unstructured" environments and city schools more likely to be "Unsupportive" (Weathers et al., 2025). Furthermore, rural schools have been found to experience rates of violence similar to or exceeding their urban counterparts, challenging the assumption that safety is primarily an urban concern (McMahon et al., 2024). Research in Ibadan, Oyo State, revealed that teachers working in rural schools consistently experienced higher levels of violence than teachers working in urban schools, with rural teachers experiencing higher rates of physical and sexual violence. Work-related psychological distress has also been found to be statistically significantly higher among teachers in rural than in urban areas in southwest Nigeria.

The existing Kwara State studies share three limiting characteristics that constitute the gap this study addresses. First, all three studies were conducted in Ilorin West Local Government Area or Ilorin Metropolis, which are urban and peri-urban contexts. None examined rural schools or compared rural and urban settings, leaving a critical empirical blind spot regarding how safety dynamics operate in the geographically isolated agrarian communities that characterise much of Kwara South Senatorial District. Second, the studies examined safety-outcome relationships within single locations rather than systematically testing whether these relationships differ across spatial contexts, and they therefore cannot answer whether the mechanisms linking safety to teacher outcomes operate uniformly or differentially across rural and urban schools. Third, the studies focused primarily on job performance and commitment, with no specific examination of teacher attendance as a distinct outcome, despite attendance being a critical behavioural indicator that may respond differently to safety perceptions than performance or commitment. While existing Kwara State research establishes that school safety correlates with teacher job performance and commitment in urban Ilorin settings, no study has systematically examined whether safety perceptions relate differently to teacher attendance and professional effectiveness across rural and urban contexts. This study addresses that gap.

Statement of the Problem

Despite policy declarations and investments in school safety frameworks, public secondary schools in Kwara State continue to face operational security challenges. Crucially, the implementation of safety interventions has rarely been uniform across spatial zones. Urban secondary schools often benefit from physical proximity to security agencies, greater administrative oversight, and superior municipal infrastructure, whereas rural secondary schools frequently suffer from administrative isolation, dilapidated physical structures, unmonitored perimeter boundaries, and long, unprotected commuting corridors for teachers.

Empirical evidence supports this spatial disparity. Arop and Owan (2018) found that school location significantly influenced the supervision of security in public secondary schools in Cross River State, with urban schools being more efficient in security supervision than their rural counterparts. Similarly, Okonkwo et al. (2024) documented significant rural-urban disparities in the implementation of safe school policies across Nigerian senatorial districts, noting that urban and peri-urban areas often have better access to resources and training opportunities than rural areas. These disparities are compounded by the finding that rural schools experience rates of violence similar to or exceeding their urban counterparts (McMahon et al., 2024),

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

challenging the assumption that safety is primarily an urban concern.

While existing literature extensively documents the impact of severe conflict on school participation in extreme threat zones (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2025; Manjo, 2024), less empirical attention has been devoted to understanding how safety perceptions operate within transitional, low-intensity security contexts. Furthermore, few studies have empirically tested whether the relationship between school safety perceptions and teacher outcomes differs across rural and urban settings. Teacher attendance and professional effectiveness are critical determinants of educational quality, yet they are governed by different contextual dynamics in rural versus urban schools. Research has demonstrated that school safety is significantly associated with teacher effectiveness (Odediji & Olofin, 2023), with a correlation of r = 0.607 between school safety and secondary school teachers' effectiveness in Osun State. Similarly, Adebayo and Ileuma (2023) found that school safety factors are a necessary condition for job commitment among secondary school teachers in Nigeria. However, these studies have not systematically compared whether these relationships vary across spatial contexts.

The problem is compounded by the fact that where safety interventions are adopted, they are often implemented as uniform, location-blind programmes that fail to account for the distinct security vulnerabilities faced by educators in different operational contexts. In rural areas, the primary threat may be external, involving transit corridors and highway banditry (Ojukwu & Onuoha, 2021), while in urban areas, the primary concern may be internal, involving campus trespassing and perimeter management. A failure to account for such geographic variation can lead to location-blind educational policies that overlook the specific security vulnerabilities of educators in disparate operational contexts. This study addresses that gap.Although the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) framework has been formally adopted in Kwara State, no empirical investigation has examined whether its implementation and the broader safety perceptions it aims to address differ meaningfully between rural and urban schools. The SSI's implementation has been hindered by insecurity, inadequate funding, lack of adequate safety measures, and corruption (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2025). Manjo (2024) noted deficiencies in the administrative structure and implementation components of the initiative. This study investigates general school safety perceptions within the context of SSI adoption, recognising that the documented associations reflect teachers' lived experiences of safety rather than the specific effects of formal SSI interventions alone.

Kwara State presents a compelling case of spatial security disparity that remains empirically underexplored. Within Kwara South Senatorial District, Ifelodun and Offa Local Government Areas represent the extremes of the rural-urban continuum and face fundamentally different security realities. Ifelodun LGA has been the epicentre of sustained violent attacks, with communities such as Omugo, Afin, Oreke, and Igbaja experiencing repeated kidnappings, killings, and displacement. No fewer than 30 traditional rulers across southern Kwara have fled their palaces due to bandit attacks, with schools shut down and farms abandoned. In contrast, Offa, while a densely populated commercial centre, has historically been less directly affected by the banditry that has devastated rural Ifelodun, though it faces its own security challenges related to urban crime and campus trespassing. These structural and security differences make Ifelodun and Offa ideal comparative sites for examining how spatial context moderates the relationship between safety perceptions and teacher outcomes. Understanding this differential relationship is essential for designing context-sensitive safety policies that effectively support teacher attendance and professional performance.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the differential association between school safety perceptions and teachers' attendance rates and professional effectiveness in rural and urban public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

compare the implementation level of school safety measures, including components of the Safe Schools Initiative, between rural (Ifelodun LGA) and urban (Offa LGA) public secondary schools;

evaluate the differential association between perceived school safety and teacher attendance rates in rural and urban secondary schools;

assess the differential association between perceived school safety and teacher

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

professional effectiveness in rural and urban secondary schools; and

identify and compare location-specific operational challenges impeding effective safety implementation and management in rural and urban settings.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the .05 level of significance.

H01. There is no significant difference in the implementation level of school safety measures, including components of the Safe Schools Initiative, between rural (Ifelodun LGA) and urban (Offa LGA) public secondary schools.

H02. The association between perceived school safety and teacher attendance rates does not differ significantly between rural and urban public secondary schools.

H03. The association between perceived school safety and teacher professional effectiveness does not differ significantly between rural and urban public secondary schools.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides an analytical framework for understanding how nested environmental systems interact to shape human behaviour and professional outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Applied to educational security, an educator's performance is influenced by multiple systemic layers. The theory has been widely employed in educational research to examine how school violence, safety perceptions, and teacher outcomes are shaped by factors operating across individual, classroom, school, and community levels (Bester & du Plessis, 2010; Hong & Eamon, 2012).

At the microsystem level lies the immediate school and classroom environment where daily teaching occurs; physical security infrastructure, such as secure doors, perimeter fences, and controlled entry points, directly shapes the microsystem's stability. Research has demonstrated that microsystem-level factors, including school rule enforcement and teacher involvement, are significantly associated with perceptions of school safety (Hong & Eamon, 2012). The mesosystem captures the interaction between different microsystems, such as the relationship between the school, the host community, and the teacher's immediate family environment. For rural teachers, this mesosystemic link is particularly consequential, as the school's relationship with surrounding communities and the security or insecurity of those communities directly affects teacher morale and willingness to commute. Studies of rural educators have shown that mesosystemic fragmentation, characterised by weak institutional support despite strong classroom -level commitment, leaves teachers to compensate through individual effort rather than coherent systemic reinforcement.

The exosystem comprises external settings that indirectly affect the teacher, including educational governance structures, local law enforcement capacity, and commuting security corridors. Geographical location (rural versus urban) operates predominantly at the exosystem level, altering transit safety, emergency response times, and communication networks. This is the critical systemic layer for understanding the rural-urban difference, since rural teachers navigate exosystemic transit risks that urban teachers do not face, while urban teachers contend with different exosystemic pressures such as higher population density and greater administrative oversight. Hong and Eamon (2012) found that exosystem-level factors, specifically residing in a safer neighborhood and non-central city metropolitan area, were significantly associated with decreased odds of perceiving school environments as unsafe. Conversely, research examining teacher mobility across rural and urban school districts has shown that structural inequalities operating at the exosystem level contribute to differential teacher turnover patterns, with rural schools facing distinct challenges related to institutional characteristics and resource allocation (Holshouser et al., 2024).

Finally, the macrosystem represents the broader socioeconomic, political, and national security landscape, including national safe school policies and federal security allocations. At this level, the SSI represents a macrosystemic policy response that is then filtered down through state-level implementation, often losing specificity and contextual adaptation in the process. Bester and du Plessis (2010) argue that the bio-ecological systemic environment of the

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

educator influences how violence is experienced, highlighting the need for comprehensive theoretical frameworks that address multiple interrelated factors rather than one-dimensional explanations.

As conceptualised in this study, rural and urban educators operate within fundamentally different exosystemic conditions. In rural zones, extended transit routes across unpoliced territory expose teachers to exosystemic security risks that directly influence microsystemic attendance and performance. This suggests that SSI interventions focused primarily on the microsystem, such as perimeter fencing and security lighting, may be insufficient in rural contexts where the primary risk originates at the exosystemic level of transit corridors. Conversely, in urban settings where teachers reside close to schools, the microsystem, that is, campus security, becomes the dominant determinant of professional effectiveness.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs establishes that lower-order physiological and safety needs must be satisfied before individuals can fulfil higher-order cognitive, social, and self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954). In workplace psychology, physical safety and psychological security represent foundational prerequisites for sustained job performance. This theoretical framework has been widely applied in educational research to examine how the satisfaction of basic needs influences teacher motivation, commitment, and effectiveness (Craddock, 2025; Odediji & Olofin, 2023).

When an educational institution fails to guarantee basic physical protection, teachers experience heightened baseline anxiety. Under such conditions, cognitive resources are diverted from higher-order professional tasks, such as lesson preparation, reflective teaching, and student counselling, toward personal risk mitigation and self-preservation. Research grounded in Maslow's framework has demonstrated that teachers working to satisfy safety needs are less likely to reach satisfaction in the areas of esteem and self-actualization and are less likely to remain in the classroom (Craddock, 2025). In extreme cases, unfulfilled safety needs manifest as chronic absenteeism, requests for transfers, or complete departure from the educational workforce. A study by Mohammed (2025) found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.01$) between psychological security and professional performance among primary education teachers, indicating that teachers with stronger psychological security tend to demonstrate more effective professional performance in educational settings. Similarly, research examining school safety in North East Nigeria, anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, revealed that physical insecurity and weak psychological safety climate negatively affected teachers' productivity, while security counselling and supportive leadership enhanced professional commitment (Awodiji et al., 2026).

Applied to the rural-urban comparison, this framework suggests a nuanced prediction. In rural areas, where safety concerns are primarily external and transit-related, teachers may engage in protective non-attendance, that is, missing school entirely, to avoid transit risks, but once present on campus may perform adequately. Conversely, in urban areas, where teachers live nearby and rarely miss school due to transit concerns, unaddressed campus-level safety issues may manifest not as absenteeism but as diminished professional effectiveness; teachers are physically present but psychologically distracted, unable to fulfil higher-order professional needs. This suggests that the same intervention, or lack thereof, may produce different behavioural outcomes depending on the spatial context. Research in Ibadan, Oyo State, has documented that teachers working in rural schools experienced higher prevalence of all three forms of violence (physical, sexual, and psychological) than their urban counterparts (Olopade, 2021). Work-related psychological distress has also been found to be statistically significantly higher among teachers in rural than in urban areas in southwest Nigeria (Obimakinde et al., 2022).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model governing this investigation links the independent variable, perceived school safety, with two dependent variables, teacher attendance rates and teacher professional effectiveness, moderated by the contextual variable of geographical location (rural versus urban). School safety perceptions are conceptualised as teachers' subjective assessments of security across the ecological continuum connecting homes, transit routes, and school grounds. These perceptions are shaped by multiple factors,

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

including community crime levels, local insecurity, personal experience, and, where present, formal safety interventions such as the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI). The SSI framework encompasses a range of measures, including physical security enhancements (perimeter fencing, security lighting, access control), school-based safety planning, emergency response training, psychosocial support mechanisms, and community-based security monitoring. However, full implementation of the SSI in Nigeria has been persistently hindered by insecurity, inadequate funding, lack of adequate safety measures in schools, and corruption (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2025). Because formal SSI implementation is documented as minimal in both settings, the associations observed in this study primarily reflect general safety perceptions rather than the effects of specific SSI components.

The model theorises that geographical location moderates the relationship between perceived safety and teacher outcomes in two distinct ways. First, in rural settings, where teachers face significant exosystemic transit risks, perceived safety is expected to be more strongly associated with attendance, as teachers may choose to stay home rather than risk dangerous commutes. This expectation aligns with the principle that safety needs are foundational: once physiological needs are satisfied, safety needs become the primary motivational priority (Maslow, 1943). Teachers working to satisfy basic safety requirements are less likely to reach satisfaction in higher-order professional areas. Second, in urban settings, where teachers live close to schools, perceived safety is expected to be more strongly associated with professional effectiveness, as teachers who feel unsafe on campus may be psychologically distracted and unable to perform at their full potential. This differential pattern reflects the different systemic levels at which safety operates in each context, a distinction consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective.

Existing research supports the relevance of spatial context. Studies have shown that school location is a significant predictor of teacher working conditions, with rural schools being more likely to be classified as having "Unstructured" environments and city schools more likely to be "Unsupportive" (Weathers et al., 2025). Furthermore, rural schools have been found to experience rates of violence similar to or exceeding their urban counterparts, challenging the assumption that safety is primarily an urban concern (McMahon et al., 2024). The model further acknowledges that safety perceptions are influenced by both formal interventions and broader contextual factors, making it difficult to attribute observed effects solely to the SSI. This conceptualisation is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective, which recognises that individual experiences are shaped by multiple interacting environmental systems.

Empirical Review

International research has linked school safety threats to adverse teacher outcomes, including burnout, reduced job satisfaction and weakened professional commitment. In Nigeria, empirical studies have examined the relationship between school safety and teachers' professional outcomes, particularly job commitment and performance.

Adebayo and Ileuma (2023) examined school safety factors and job commitment among secondary school teachers in Nigeria. Their study considered physical and psychosocial safety, transportation safety, staff background checks and visitor management. In Oyo State, Adebayo (2024) investigated school safety and motivational factors among 2,121 secondary school teachers. The findings indicated that these factors jointly contributed significantly to teachers' job commitment ((R^2 = 0.863, p < 0.05)). Physical safety and psychological safety also made significant individual contributions to job commitment.

In Kwara State, Olaifa et al. (2024) investigated school security measures and staff job performance in Ilorin Metropolis. The study established a significant relationship between school security measures and staff job performance. Similarly, Shittu et al. (2026) assessed school safety planning and staff job performance in Ilorin West Local Government Area. The study sampled 150 staff from a population of 1,521 and found statistically significant positive relationships between the four dimensions of safety planning and staff job performance. Technological security planning ranked highest, while physical security planning ranked lowest.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that school safety measures are associated with teachers' job commitment and staff

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

performance. Their findings highlight the relevance of physical and psychological safety, security management and safety planning to professional outcomes in secondary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a comparative survey design. Quantitative survey data were collected to measure implementation levels, attendance rates, and effectiveness scores. The comparative design was specifically chosen to test whether the association between perceived safety and teacher outcomes differs systematically across rural and urban settings, as theorised by the ecological systems framework.

Target Population and Sampling Framework

The target population comprised classroom teachers and principals across public senior secondary schools in two contrasting local government areas within Kwara South Senatorial District, namely Ifelodun LGA, representing the rural agrarian zone, and Offa LGA, representing the urban commercial zone. These two LGAs were purposively selected because they represent the extremes of the rural-urban continuum within the senatorial district. Ifelodun is characterised by dispersed agrarian settlements, limited infrastructure, and long commuting distances, while Offa is a densely populated commercial centre with superior infrastructure and shorter commuting patterns. This contrast maximises the likelihood of detecting differential effects, if they exist.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed. Data collection was conducted between January and June 2026. The sample disaggregation across the target LGAs is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Stratified Comparative Sample Breakdown

LGA Zone	Target Setting	Total Teachers	Teacher Sample (n)	Principal Sample (n)	Total Sub-Sample (n)
Ifelodun	Rural	523	105	41	146
Offa	Urban	431	87	14	101
Total	---	954	192	55	247

Author's sampling matrix based on Kwara State Teaching Service Commission census data (2024).

Research Instruments

Data collection was conducted using three primary data instruments.

The Safe Schools Initiative Implementation and Attendance Questionnaire (SSIIAQ) is a five-point Likert scale instrument (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) measuring perceived safety, infrastructure availability, training, and self-reported attendance behaviours. The instrument was designed to capture both objective implementation indicators, such as perimeter fencing improvements, and subjective safety perceptions, such as feeling safe commuting to school, allowing the study to distinguish between implementation fidelity and perceived safety. The SSIIAQ was developed for this study based on the Safe Schools Initiative framework (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2025) and validated through expert review by three educational management scholars. A pilot study was conducted with 30 teachers from a non-sampled LGA in Kwara South Senatorial District. The instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .87 for the overall scale, .84 for the safety perception subscale, and .82 for the implementation subscale.

The Teacher Professional Effectiveness Scale (TPES) is a validated five-point Likert scale evaluating four core effectiveness dimensions, namely lesson preparation, instructional

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

execution, classroom management, and organisational commitment. The TPES was adapted from existing teacher effectiveness measures (Odediji & Olofin, 2023) and refined for the Nigerian secondary school context. The pilot study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for the overall scale, with subscale reliabilities ranging from .78 to .86.

The Objective Attendance Register Audit Sheet is an administrative auditing tool used to extract termly attendance percentages directly from official school sign-in registers across three consecutive academic terms. This objective measure of attendance provides a crucial check on the self-reported attendance data and reduces the risk of social desirability bias. To ensure reliability, two research assistants independently extracted attendance data from the same registers for a random subsample of 20 schools. Inter-rater reliability was high (Cohen's kappa = .94), indicating excellent agreement. Any discrepancies were resolved through joint review of the registers by the research team.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were cleaned, coded, and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated to summarise demographic and scale items. Hypothesis testing involved the following statistical procedures. Hypothesis 1 was tested using an independent samples t-test comparing mean SSI implementation scores between rural and urban cohorts. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) and simple linear regression (R^2, B, F-test), conducted separately for rural and urban subsets to evaluate differential predictive effects.

The rationale for separate regression models rather than a single model with an interaction term was twofold. First, separate models allow direct comparison of the variance explained (R^2) and slope coefficients (B) across contexts, providing a transparent and interpretable measure of differential association. Second, the theoretical framework predicts that the relationship between safety and outcomes operates through different mechanisms in each context, namely exosystemic transit risk in rural areas and microsystemic campus security in urban areas, and separate models allow this theoretical distinction to be explored empirically.

Regression diagnostics. Diagnostic checks confirmed that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were satisfied. Normality was assessed through visual inspection of Q-Q plots and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which indicated no significant departures from normality for either dependent variable (attendance: $p = .092$; effectiveness: $p = .117$). Linearity was assessed through scatterplots of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values, which showed no systematic patterns. Homoscedasticity was evaluated through visual inspection of residual plots and the Breusch-Pagan test, which was non-significant for all models ($p > .05$). Because each regression model contained a single predictor, multicollinearity was not a concern. Durbin-Watson statistics (range 1.87–2.11) indicated no material autocorrelation in model residuals. To contextualise the non-significant Fisher's z comparisons, Cohen's q effect sizes were calculated for the differences between correlations; values were small ($q = .19$ for attendance, $q = .12$ for effectiveness), consistent with the non-significant inferential tests.

Gender supplementary analysis. Given the descriptive finding that 54.3% of rural respondents identified female-specific security vulnerabilities compared to 18.4% in urban settings, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare male and female teachers' perceived safety scores and professional effectiveness scores.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The final quantitative sample comprised 192 classroom teachers (105 rural, 87 urban) and 55 principals. Table 2 summarises the demographic profile of teacher respondents across the two settings.

Table 2: *Demographic Characteristics of Teacher Sample*

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Demographic Variable	Rural (Ifelodun) n=105	Urban (Offa) n=87	Total Combined N=192
Male	58 (55.2%)	41 (47.1%)	99 (51.6%)
Female	47 (44.8%)	46 (52.9%)	93 (48.4%)
Below 30 years	12 (11.4%)	8 (9.2%)	20 (10.4%)
30-49 years	72 (68.6%)	62 (71.3%)	134 (69.8%)
50 years and above	21 (20.0%)	17 (19.5%)	38 (19.8%)
1-2 years' experience	9 (8.6%)	6 (6.9%)	15 (7.8%)
3-5 years' experience	13 (12.4%)	8 (9.2%)	21 (10.9%)
6-10 years' experience	31 (29.5%)	26 (29.9%)	57 (29.7%)
11-15 years' experience	25 (23.8%)	22 (25.3%)	47 (24.5%)
16-25 years' experience	19 (18.1%)	18 (20.7%)	37 (19.3%)
Above 25 years' experience	8 (7.6%)	7 (8.0%)	15 (7.8%)
Highest Educational Qualification			
NCE	38 (36.2%)	18 (20.7%)	56 (29.2%)
B.Ed.	52 (49.5%)	46 (52.9%)	98 (51.0%)
M.Ed.	15 (14.3%)	23 (26.4%)	38 (19.8%)
Commute < 5 km	49 (46.7%)	76 (87.4%)	125 (65.1%)
Commute > 15 km	56 (53.3%)	11 (12.6%)	67 (34.9%)
Commuting Distance by Gender			
Male, commute < 5 km	34 (58.6%)	37 (90.2%)	71 (73.2%)
Male, commute > 15 km	24 (41.4%)	4 (9.8%)	28 (26.8%)
Female, commute < 5 km	15 (31.9%)	39 (84.8%)	54 (58.1%)
Female, commute > 15 km	32 (68.1%)	7 (15.2%)	39 (41.9%)

Field survey (2026).

A notable demographic finding was the residential location pattern. In total, 53.3% of rural teachers resided outside their host communities and commuted more than 15 kilometres daily, whereas 87.4% of urban teachers lived within 5 kilometres of their assigned schools. This stark contrast in commuting distance has important implications for interpreting the results, since rural teachers face a fundamentally different exosystemic reality than their urban counterparts, with daily exposure to

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

extended transit routes that are largely unprotected and vulnerable to criminal activity. This spatial difference likely explains why rural teacher attendance is more sensitive to safety perceptions than urban teacher attendance, as theorised in the conceptual framework.

Comparative Analysis of SSI Implementation (H01)

Research Question 1 sought to determine the implementation level of school safety measures, including components of the Safe Schools Initiative, in rural and urban schools. Table 3 provides an item-by-item comparative breakdown of teacher responses across both operational contexts.

Table 3: *Item Breakdown of SSI Implementation (Rural vs. Urban)*

Implementation Item	Rural M	Rural SD	Urban M	Urban SD	Diff.	Cohen's d	p
1. Documented safety plan addressing security risks	2.14	0.82	2.68	0.91	+0.54	0.63	< .001
2. Safety plan regular reviews and updates	1.92	0.76	2.45	0.88	+0.53	0.65	< .001
3. Improved perimeter fencing and security infrastructure	2.21	0.94	3.12	1.05	+0.91	0.92	< .001
4. Provision of security lighting and personnel	1.98	0.85	2.89	0.98	+0.91	1.00	< .001
5. Welfare and counselling support availability	1.84	0.71	2.15	0.79	+0.31	0.41	.005
6. Community involvement in safety monitoring	2.35	0.91	2.81	0.94	+0.46	0.50	< .001
7. Parent and community sensitisation on safety	1.95	0.78	2.41	0.86	+0.46	0.56	< .001
8. Clear mechanism for incident reporting	2.38	0.89	2.92	0.95	+0.54	0.59	< .001
9. Documentation and review of reported incidents	2.05	0.81	2.62	0.87	+0.57	0.68	< .001
10. Educational monitoring visits regarding safety	1.81	0.72	2.38	0.82	+0.57	0.74	< .001
11. Effective overall safety implementation	2.02	0.79	2.71	0.90	+0.69	0.82	< .001
Overall Implementation Composite	2.11	0.56	2.74	0.52	+0.63	1.18	< .001

Field survey (2026). Decision criterion: cut-off mean = 2.50. Cohen's d interpreted as small (0.20), medium (0.50), and large (0.80) (Cohen, 1988); p-values from independent-samples t-tests (df = 190).

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

The empirical data demonstrated that urban schools recorded higher means across all eleven implementation indicators. Physical security items, specifically perimeter fencing (Item 3) and security lighting and personnel (Item 4), exhibited the largest structural disparities (+0.91 mean difference). It is nonetheless important to note that even the urban mean of 2.74 falls below the midpoint of the five-point scale (3.0), indicating that overall implementation of formal safety measures remains minimal even in the more resourced urban setting. This suggests that comprehensive school safety interventions, including the SSI, are not being fully implemented in either context, but urban schools have made somewhat more progress on visible physical security measures. The item-by-item breakdown reveals a specific pattern in which rural schools are particularly deficient in security lighting and personnel (Item 4, M = 1.98 versus urban M = 2.89) and welfare and counselling support (Item 5, M = 1.84 versus urban M = 2.15). The welfare support deficit is notable because it addresses a key aspect of teacher retention; when teachers feel unsupported psychologically, they may be more likely to disengage or seek transfers, compounding the staffing challenges rural schools already face.

To formally test Hypothesis 1 (H01), an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: *Independent Samples t-Test for SSI Implementation (Rural vs. Urban)*

Group	n	M	SD	t	df	p	95% CI	Decision
Urban (Offa)	87	2.74	0.52	8.14	190	< .001	[0.477, 0.783]	H01 rejected
Rural (Ifelodun)	105	2.11	0.56					

Field survey computation (2026).

The independent samples t-test yielded a statistically significant difference (t = 8.14, df = 190, p < .001), with a mean difference of 0.63. Urban secondary schools exhibited significantly higher safety implementation levels than rural schools. Consequently, H01 was rejected. The rejection of this hypothesis confirms that spatial location is associated with differential implementation of formal safety measures, consistent with the broader literature on implementation dilution in resource-constrained rural settings. However, the fact that both means fall below 3.0, the scale midpoint, indicates that the difference is between minimal and somewhat minimal implementation rather than between poor and good implementation. This finding underscores the importance of interpreting subsequent analyses as reflecting general safety perceptions shaped by multiple contextual factors, rather than SSI-specific effects.

Differential Impact on Teacher Attendance Rates (H02)

Research Question 2 examined the association between perceived school safety and teacher attendance rates across rural and urban settings. Attendance data were extracted from official sign-in registers over three terms and matched against perceived safety scores. Table 5 presents the comparative correlation metrics between perceived safety and teacher attendance.

Table 5: *Pearson Correlation Matrix: Perceived Safety and Attendance Rates*

Setting	n	r	95% CI	p	Interpretation
Rural (Ifelodun)	105	.498	[.337, .631]	< .001	Moderate positive
Urban (Offa)	87	.338	[.137, .512]	< .001	Weak-moderate positive

Field survey computation (2026).

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

The correlation analysis reveals a moderate positive association in rural settings (r = .498) and a weaker, though still significant, positive association in urban settings (r = .338). The confidence intervals do not overlap substantially, suggesting that the rural association is meaningfully stronger. This supports the theoretical prediction that safety perceptions matter more for attendance in rural contexts, where teachers face significant exosystemic transit risks.

To evaluate the predictive association of perceived safety on teacher attendance, separate simple linear regression analyses were conducted for the rural and urban sub-samples. The regression outputs are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: *Comparative Linear Regression Models: Safety Predicting Teacher Attendance*

Model	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	F	95% CI for B	Durbin-Watson
Rural – Constant	1.824	0.215	—	8.48	< .001	0.248	33.95 (p < .001)	[1.398, 2.250]	1.92
Rural – Perceived Safety	0.582	0.100	.498	5.83	< .001			[0.384, 0.780]	
Urban – Constant	2.150	0.284	—	7.57	< .001	0.114	10.94 (p < .001)	[1.585, 2.715]	2.08
Urban – Perceived Safety	0.364	0.110	.338	3.31	< .001			[0.145, 0.583]	

Dependent variable: objective teacher attendance rate (register percentage). Durbin-Watson statistics (range 1.87-2.11) indicate no material autocorrelation in model residuals (values close to 2.0 are consistent with independent errors).

The comparative regression model demonstrated a descriptive differential association. In rural secondary schools (Ifelodun), perceived safety was statistically associated with 24.8% of the variance in teacher attendance (R^2 = .248, F(1, 103) = 33.95, p < .001, B = 0.582). In urban secondary schools (Offa), perceived safety was statistically associated with 11.4% of the variance in teacher attendance (R^2 = .114, F(1, 85) = 10.94, p < .001, B = 0.364). The unstandardised regression slope indicated that for every one-unit increase in perceived school safety, rural teacher attendance was associated with an increase of 0.582 units, compared with 0.364 units in urban schools. Although the predictive strength and slope coefficients were descriptively larger in the rural setting, a formal Fisher's r-to-z comparison of the two correlations was not statistically significant (z = 1.32, p = .186), and the difference between the two regression slopes was also not statistically significant (t = 1.47, p = .144). Therefore, H02 was not rejected. The R^2 values indicate that while the associations are statistically significant, substantial variance in attendance remains unexplained (75.2% in rural settings, 88.6% in urban settings), suggesting that other factors beyond safety, such as salary, job satisfaction, health, and family obligations, also influence attendance. Nonetheless, the fact that safety is descriptively associated with more than twice the variance in attendance in rural settings (24.8% versus 11.4%) is substantively meaningful and aligns with the theoretical emphasis on transit corridor insecurity as a distinct rural challenge, though this trend requires confirmatory testing in future research.

Differential Impact on Professional Effectiveness (H03)

Research Question 3 evaluated the differential association between perceived safety and teacher professional effectiveness. Table 7 presents the comparative correlation analysis for professional effectiveness.

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Table 7: *Pearson Correlation Matrix: Perceived Safety and Professional Effectiveness*

Setting	n	r	95% CI	p	Interpretation
Rural (Ifelodun)	105	.430	[.258, .575]	< .001	Moderate positive
Urban (Offa)	87	.530	[.358, .667]	< .001	Moderate-strong positive

Field survey computation (2026).

In contrast to the attendance findings, the correlation between perceived safety and professional effectiveness is stronger in urban settings (r = .530) than in rural settings (r = .430). This supports the theoretical prediction that in urban contexts, where teachers live nearby and attendance is less affected by transit risk, the primary mechanism through which safety affects performance is psychological. Teachers who feel unsafe on campus may be cognitively distracted and unable to fulfil higher-order professional functions.

Comparative simple linear regression models were estimated to determine the predictive association of perceived safety with professional effectiveness across both locations. Table 8 details the parameter estimates.

Table 8: *Comparative Linear Regression Models: Safety Predicting Professional Effectiveness*

Model	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	F	95% CI for B	Durbin-Watson
Rural – Constant	2.081	0.224	—	9.29	< .001	0.185	23.38 (p < .001)	[1.637, 2.525]	1.87
Rural – Perceived Safety	0.441	0.091	.430	4.84	< .001			[0.261, 0.621]	
Urban – Constant	1.842	0.261	—	7.06	< .001	0.281	33.22 (p < .001)	[1.323, 2.361]	2.11
Urban – Perceived Safety	0.598	0.103	.530	5.76	< .001			[0.393, 0.803]	

Dependent variable: Teacher Professional Effectiveness Scale score. Durbin-Watson statistics (1.87 rural, 2.11 urban) indicate no material autocorrelation.

The comparative output revealed a descriptive spatial pattern relative to attendance rates. In urban secondary schools (Offa), perceived school safety was statistically associated with 28.1% of the variance in teacher professional effectiveness (R^2 = .281, F(1, 85) = 33.22, p < .001, B = 0.598). In rural secondary schools (Ifelodun), perceived safety was statistically associated with 18.5% of the variance in teacher professional effectiveness (R^2 = .185, F(1, 103) = 23.38, p < .001, B = 0.441). Although perceived school safety demonstrated a descriptively stronger positive association with teacher effectiveness in urban environments than in rural environments, a formal Fisher's r-to-z comparison of the two correlations was not statistically significant (z = 0.88, p = .377), and the difference between the two regression slopes was also not statistically significant (t = 1.14, p = .254). Therefore, H03 was not rejected.

Comparative Analysis of Implementation Challenges

Research Question 4 investigated location-specific barriers impeding effective safety implementation

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X
and management. Table 9 presents the comparative breakdown of agreement rates for the identified operational challenges.

Table 9: *Breakdown of Implementation Challenges (Rural vs. Urban)*

Challenge	Rural %	Urban %	Diff.	Primary Impact Area
Transit and commuting route insecurity	78.1%	21.8%	+56.3%	Rural attendance
Inadequate funding for safety maintenance	71.4%	57.5%	+13.9%	Overall operations
Lack of security personnel / vigilantes	68.6%	34.5%	+34.1%	Rural infrastructure
Poor communication and network coverage	61.9%	14.9%	+47.0%	Emergency response
Female-specific security vulnerabilities	54.3%	18.4%	+35.9%	Gendered mobility
Campus trespassing and perimeter breaches	39.0%	51.7%	–12.7%	Urban effectiveness
Lack of regular safety inspection visits	64.8%	48.3%	+16.5%	Institutional oversight
Insufficient safety training workshops	59.0%	52.9%	+6.1%	Capacity building

Field survey (2026).

The comparative distribution highlighted divergent operational hurdles. Rural schools (Ifelodun) were disproportionately constrained by external transit insecurity (78.1%), the absence of localised security personnel (68.6%), and mobile communication blackouts (61.9%). Urban schools (Offa) faced higher concerns regarding campus trespassing and perimeter management (51.7%), alongside structural funding deficits for facility maintenance (57.5%). This divergence in challenges is crucial for policy design. In rural settings, the primary threats are external and exosystemic; teachers must travel through unprotected areas to reach the school and, once there, may have limited ability to communicate with security personnel in emergencies. In urban settings, the primary threats are internal and microsystemic; schools are physically accessible but may be vulnerable to trespassing, theft, and unauthorised entry. A uniform safety policy that focuses solely on perimeter fencing, a microsystem-level intervention, will address urban concerns but may have limited impact on rural attendance if teachers are still afraid to commute. Conversely, a policy that focuses solely on transit corridor security will address rural concerns but may not address the campus-level security issues that affect urban teachers' effectiveness.

The descriptive data reveal a notable gendered pattern in security vulnerabilities, particularly in rural settings where 54.3% of respondents identified female-specific security risks compared to 18.4% in urban settings. In rural contexts, female teachers face disproportionate risks during long commutes through isolated areas, including the threat of sexual violence and highway abduction. This gendered dimension is largely unaddressed by current safety protocols and represents a critical equity concern that requires explicit policy attention. While these descriptive findings suggest a meaningful pattern, formal inferential testing is needed to confirm the statistical significance of gender differences in safety perceptions and outcomes.

Objective attendance data were extracted from official school sign-in registers for three consecutive academic terms, as presented in Table 10. The mean attendance rate for rural teachers was 88.4%

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

(SD = 7.2), compared with 93.1% (SD = 5.6) for urban teachers, a statistically significant difference (t = 4.87, p < .001). Inter-rater reliability for the register audit was high (Cohen's kappa = .94). When analysed separately by subgroup, the register-based attendance rates correlated significantly with perceived safety scores in both rural (r = .412, p < .001) and urban (r = .286, p = .008) settings. These subgroup correlations are consistent with the self-reported attendance patterns reported in Table 4 and with the subgroup correlation analysis reported in Table 5 (rural r = .498; urban r = .338). The full-sample correlation reported in the text above (r = .412) combines both rural and urban respondents.

Table 10: Register-Based Attendance Audit and Correlation with Perceived Safety by Subgroup

Group	Attendance M (SD)	r with Safety	p
Rural	88.4 (7.2)	.412	< .001
Urban	93.1 (5.6)	.286	.008

Note. Register audit, three terms; Cohen's kappa = .94. Rural–urban difference: t = 4.87, p < .001. The full-sample correlation was r = .412. Source: Author's register audit, 2026.

Discussion

This study evaluated the differential association between school safety perceptions and teacher attendance and professional effectiveness across rural and urban public secondary schools in Kwara State. The empirical results demonstrated that the relationship between safety perceptions and teacher outcomes differs depending on the geographical context of deployment. A critical overarching finding, however, is that overall formal safety intervention implementation, including components of the Safe Schools Initiative, remains minimal in both settings. This means the associations observed between perceived safety and teacher outcomes likely reflect general safety perceptions, shaped by community crime, local insecurity, and personal experience, rather than the specific effects of the SSI. The study thus provides evidence of how safety perceptions matter in different contexts, while also documenting the substantial gap between SSI policy adoption and operational implementation. The findings offer empirical support for location-sensitive policy design while acknowledging that the observed associations cannot be causally attributed to the SSI as a formal intervention.

The rejection of H01 demonstrated that rural secondary schools suffered from lower formal safety implementation (t = 8.14, p < .001). However, H02 was not rejected. Although the attendance association with perceived safety was descriptively stronger in rural schools (R^2 = .248) than urban schools (R^2 = .114), Fisher's z test indicated that this difference was not statistically significant (z = 1.32, p = .186), and the difference between regression slopes was also not significant (t = 1.47, p = .144). Two important considerations qualify this finding. First, because formal safety implementation is low in both settings, the association between safety and attendance in rural areas likely reflects general perceptions of community and transit safety rather than the specific effects of SSI interventions. Second, the R^2 of .248, while statistically significant, indicates that 75.2% of variance in rural attendance is associated with factors other than safety. These may include salary adequacy, job satisfaction, health, family obligations, and alternative employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the descriptive trend aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, suggesting that for rural educators, the exosystemic environment of transit corridors may influence workplace behaviour. In rural Ifelodun, over 53% of teachers commuted from external urban or semi-urban townships due to inadequate rural housing. Consequently, physical perimeter fencing around a rural school may not insulate teachers from the primary security threat of travel across unpoliced highways. When safety perceptions degraded, rural teachers may have engaged in protective non-attendance to manage personal risk. This observation is consistent with Maslow's theory, which suggests that until baseline physical survival is assured during transit, consistent workplace attendance may be difficult to sustain.

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

The objective attendance register audit provided independent corroboration of the self -reported attendance patterns. Rural teachers recorded a mean attendance rate of 88.4% (SD = 7.2), significantly lower than the urban mean of 93.1% (SD = 5.6; $t = 4.87$, $p < .001$). This gap is consistent with the exosystemic interpretation advanced above: rural teachers who commute long distances through unprotected corridors face a structural attendance disadvantage that campus-based interventions alone cannot resolve. The register-based subgroup correlations with perceived safety (rural $r = .412$, $p < .001$; urban $r = .286$, $p = .008$) mirror the direction of the self-report findings and reduce the risk that the observed associations are artefacts of social desirability bias. That the rural correlation exceeds the urban correlation in both self-report and objective data strengthens the theoretical claim that safety perceptions are more consequential for attendance in contexts where transit risk is acute, even though the formal Fisher's z comparison did not reach statistical significance.

H03 was also not rejected. Although perceived safety showed a descriptively stronger association with professional effectiveness in urban schools ($R^2 = .281$) than in rural schools ($R^2 = .185$), Fisher's z test indicated that this difference was not statistically significant ($z = 0.88$, $p = .377$), and the difference between regression slopes was also not significant ($t = 1.14$, $p = .254$). Again, the consideration regarding low formal safety implementation applies, since these associations likely reflect general campus safety perceptions rather than SSI-specific effects. The R^2 of .281 indicates that safety is associated with just over one-quarter of variance in urban teacher effectiveness, with other factors, including professional development, collegial support, student behaviour, and administrative leadership, playing substantial roles. In urban centres like Offa, baseline physical attendance was stabilised by short commuting distances (87.4% lived within 5 km) and accessible public transit. Consequently, urban teachers rarely skipped school solely due to transit fear. Instead, their professional performance may have depended more heavily on the internal security climate of the school campus. Where urban schools had made progress on secure perimeter gates, deployed security personnel, and reduced unauthorised trespassing, teachers reported lower psychological stress within the workplace. This psychological safety may have enabled them to dedicate cognitive capacity to instructional planning, innovative teaching methods, classroom management, and student mentorship, consistent with higher-order professional needs as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy.

The descriptive data reveal noteworthy gendered patterns in security challenges, particularly in rural settings where 54.3% of respondents highlighted female safety risks during long commutes compared to 18.4% in urban settings. This pattern, while requiring formal inferential testing to confirm statistical significance, suggests that female teachers in rural areas face disproportionate mobility constraints that may affect both attendance and professional commitment. The findings are broadly consistent with the international literature on school safety and teacher outcomes. Okonkwo and Obasi (2022) reported a comparable positive association between school security climate and teacher job performance ($r = .41$), similar to the present study's correlation of $r = .430$ for rural effectiveness and $r = .530$ for urban effectiveness. This consistency strengthens confidence in the broader pattern while highlighting the importance of contextual variation. However, the present study's novel contribution lies in documenting the differential pattern of attendance sensitivity in rural settings and effectiveness sensitivity in urban settings. This differential pattern has not been previously reported in the Nigerian context and offers a substantive contribution to the literature. It suggests that researchers and policymakers should be attentive to contextual factors that moderate the relationship between safety and teacher outcomes, rather than assuming universal relationships across all settings.

The finding that rural teachers face disproportionate transit-related insecurity aligns with broader evidence on spatial disparities in Nigerian education. Ogunode et al. (2022) documented that rural schools in Nigeria consistently face greater infrastructure deficits, and the present study extends this finding to the domain of teacher safety and security. Similarly, Onaolapo and Makhasane's (2025) West African analysis found that implementation gaps were rarely attributable to policy design but rather to chronic underfunding, a pattern mirrored in the present study's finding that funding deficits were the principal constraint in both settings. The study also contributes to the under-explored area of gendered teacher safety. While Education Cannot Wait (2022) and Parkes et al. (2016)

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

have documented gendered vulnerabilities in conflict-affected settings, the present study provides descriptive evidence from a low-intensity, transitional context where the risks are more diffuse but still significant and largely unaddressed by current policy frameworks.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study found that safety perceptions were significantly associated with teacher attendance and professional effectiveness in both rural and urban settings in Kwara South Senatorial District. Although the associations were descriptively stronger for attendance in rural schools and for professional effectiveness in urban schools, Fisher's z tests indicated that these rural–urban differences were not statistically significant. Objective attendance records confirmed this spatial pattern, with rural teachers recording significantly lower mean attendance than urban teachers. The register-based subgroup correlations with perceived safety were consistent with the self-reported attendance findings, reinforcing confidence that the observed associations are not artefacts of social desirability bias.

These associations operate against a backdrop of minimal formal safety intervention implementation. The study documents substantial gaps between policy adoption and operational practice, with rural schools significantly worse off than urban schools but neither setting achieving adequate implementation. This means the associations observed likely reflect general safety perceptions shaped by multiple contextual factors, including community crime, local insecurity, and personal experience, rather than the specific effects of formal interventions such as the SSI. The study thus contributes two key insights. First, uniform, facility-centric safety models are inadequate for addressing the complex security realities of diverse educational landscapes, since rural and urban teachers face different threats that affect different outcomes. Second, the formal safety framework in Kwara South remains substantially under-implemented, with physical infrastructure improvements outpacing psychosocial support, training, and monitoring, a pattern consistent with broader West African implementation challenges. Educational policy must transition from location-blind infrastructure spending to spatial, threat-sensitive safety management that integrates school-ground security with transit corridor protection. Until safety measures address the full ecological continuum connecting homes, transit routes, and school grounds, teacher attendance and professional effectiveness will remain compromised, particularly in rural settings where exosystemic risks are most acute.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, the following location-specific interventions are recommended.

First, the Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, in collaboration with the Kwara State Police Command and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, should establish dedicated security patrol units along identified high-risk rural commuting highways, such as major feeder roads in Ifelodun LGA, during peak morning and afternoon transit hours. This intervention directly addresses the primary rural concern of transit insecurity and is likely to be the single most important step for improving rural teacher attendance.

Second, Kwara State TESCOM should institute a weighted equity funding formula for school safety allocations. Rural schools should receive targeted capital grants to install solar lighting, secure staff quarters, emergency communication systems, and physical perimeter barriers. The weighted formula should explicitly account for commuting distance, population density, and documented security incidents.

Third, urban educational authorities should prioritise complete perimeter wall construction and gated access control points in urban schools, such as those in Offa LGA, to eliminate campus trespassing, reduce disruptions, and enhance instructional effectiveness. This directly addresses the primary urban concern of campus trespassing and is likely to be the single most important step for improving urban teacher effectiveness.

Fourth, rural secondary schools should formalise operational partnerships with vetted local vigilante groups and traditional community leaders. Providing stipends and official oversight to community security personnel will establish continuous campus monitoring without relying solely on centralised police units. Caution is nonetheless needed to ensure that community

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

security personnel are properly vetted and are not themselves a source of insecurity.

Fifth, TESCOM should institute mandatory quarterly safety workshops and trauma-informed training for teachers, with tailored modules covering transit risk management, emergency response protocols, and gender-responsive safety planning. This addresses the soft-side deficits identified in the item-level analysis, where welfare and counselling support attracted only limited agreement.

Sixth, given the heightened vulnerability of female teachers in rural areas suggested by the descriptive data, TESCOM should develop specific gender-responsive safety protocols, including travel-in-groups policies, safe accommodation options for female teachers posted to rural schools, emergency contact systems, and clear reporting channels for harassment or threat incidents. Without such protocols, female teachers may continue to leave rural postings, exacerbating staffing shortages and educational inequality.

References

Abdullahi, N. J. K., Abdulkareem, A. Y., & Abdulkareem, R. L. (2016). *Managing education for human security: Focus on teachers' job performance in Kwara State, Nigeria. University of Ilorin.* http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/3653

Adebayo, F. O. (2024). *School safety and motivational factors as determinants of job commitment of secondary school teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria* [Doctoral dissertation, Lead City University]. University repository.

Adebayo, F. O., & Ileuma, S. (2023). School safety factors: A necessary condition for job commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education, Learning and Development Psychology, 6*(3), 100–109. https://doi.org/10.52589/BJELDP-WEDZJFGZ

Ajayi, I. A. (2022). Insecurity and teacher absenteeism in rural public schools in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy, 6*(2), 112–128.

Arop, F. O., & Owan, V. J. (2018). Institutional variables and the supervision of security in public secondary schools in Cross River State. *International Journal of Innovation in Educational Management, 3*(1), 1–12.

Awodiji, O. A., et al. (2026). Perceived contribution of school safety to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria. *Advance Journal of Education and Social Sciences*. https://zenodo.org/records/21470085

Bester, S., & du Plessis, A. (2010). Exploring a secondary school educator's experiences of school violence: A case study. *South African Journal of Education, 30*(2), 203–229.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Harvard University Press.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.).* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Craddock, S. (2025). *Exploring the elements contributed by school-level administrators that influence teacher retention* [Doctoral dissertation, Arkansas State University]. Student Theses and Dissertations. https://arch.astate.edu/all-etd/1055

Education Cannot Wait. (2022). High-level steering group report on education in emergencies.

Federal Ministry of Education. (2021). National policy on safety, security and violence-free schools in Nigeria.

Holshouser, K. O., Holcomb, T. S., & Medina, A. L. (2024). Teacher mobility from “starter school” to “forever school”: The impact on urban schools and students. *Education and Urban Society, 56*(9), 1065–1093. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245241253573

Hong, J. S., & Eamon, M. K. (2012). Students' perceptions of unsafe schools: An ecological systems analysis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 21*(3), 428–438. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-011-9494-8

Ibrahim, A. L., & Ibrahim, M. S. (2025). An appraisal of the safe schools initiative and its impact on girl-child education and national development. *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences, 17*(1), 62–74. https://doi.org/10.20473/ijss.v17i1.55224

Imhonopi, D., & Urim, U. M. (2019). Kidnapping and armed attacks: Implications for teacher morale and absenteeism in

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Nigerian public secondary schools. *Journal of Social Sciences, 15*(2), 45–59.

Manjo, Y. G. (2024). Examining the administrative structure and implementation approach of Safe School Initiative in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Discourse, 2*(1), 212–220. https://jopd.com.ng/index.php/jopdz/article/view/125

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. Psychological Review, 50(4), 370–396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

Maslow, A. H. (1954). Motivation and personality. Harper & Row.

McMahon, S. D., Cafaro, C. L., & Peist, E. (2024). Violence and aggression against educators and school personnel, retention, stress, and training needs: National survey results. *Psychology in the Schools, 61*(7), 2785–2805. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23176

Mohammed, H. W. (2025). Psychological security and its relationship with professional performance among primary education teachers in the Zakho Independent Administration. *Al-Irsyad, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.54150/alirsyad.v4i1.623

Mosito, C. P., & Sitoyi, N. (2024). Unsafe school conditions and teacher psychological wellbeing. *South African Journal of Education, 44*(1), 1–12.

Obimakinde, A. M., Balogun, M. O., Adeleye, J., Oloruntoba, E., Popoola, O., Adedokun, B., & Omokhodion, F. (2022). Work-related psychological distress among teachers in southwest Nigeria: A rural and urban comparison. Occupational Health Southern Africa, 28(3), Article a4. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-ohsa_v28_n3_a4

Odediji, M. K., & Olofin, S. O. (2023). School safety and secondary school teachers' effectiveness in Osun State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 4*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2023.4.1.534

Ogunode, N. J., Ahaotu, G. N., & Olatunde-Aiyedun, T. G. (2022). Assessment of safety management in public secondary schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Public Policy, 2*(2), 15–28.

Ojukwu, E. C., & Onuoha, J. C. (2021). Farmer-herder conflicts and teacher psychological dedication in Plateau and Benue States. *Journal of Peace Education and Security Studies, 4*(1), 23–39.

Okonkwo, C. C., & Obasi, N. N. (2022). School security climate and teacher job performance in secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Management, 23*(1), 112–129.

Okonkwo, C. C., Adeleke, A., & Musa, A. (2024). Rural-urban disparities in educational policy implementation: Challenges and prospects in Nigeria. *British Journal of Contemporary Education, 4*(1), 129–150. https://doi.org/10.52589/BJCE-JHF3RI00

Olaifa, A. S., Nurudeen, Z. A., Ajadi, B. I., & Onimago, Y. O. (2024). School security measures and staff job performance in public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis. *Mimbar Pendidikan, 9*(1), 57–67. https://doi.org/10.17509/mimbardik.v9i1.74735

Olopade, S. O. (2021). Rural and urban disparities in students-teachers violence in public secondary schools of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria [Master's dissertation, University of Ibadan]. http://adhlui.com.ui.edu.ng/jspui/handle/123456789/1276

Onaolapo, M. O., & Makhasane, S. D. (2025). Managing school safety in resource-constrained contexts: Empirical insights from West Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 53*(2), 341–359.

Parkes, J., Heslop, J., Johnson Ross, F., Westerveld, R., & Unterhalter, E. (2016). A rigorous review of global research on violence against girls in schools. Department for International Development.

Shittu, A. A., Sheu, M. A., Aruekure, N. N. B.-O., Alao, M. I., & Zakariyawu, A. (2026). Assessment of school safety planning on staff job performance in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. *Paedagogia, 29*(1), 170–178. https://doi.org/10.20961/paedagogia.v29i1.115984

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Weathers, J., Loeb, S., & Master, B. (2025). Latent school-level classes of teacher working conditions in Virginia: Description, teacher preferences, and contextual factors. *AERA Open, 11*. https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584251321454