



Research Article

Crisis Management Practices and Secondary School Stability in Insecurity-Prone Areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined crisis management practices and their relationship with secondary school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria. Persistent insecurity arising from banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence has continued to disrupt school operations, making effective crisis management essential for sustaining educational activities. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 3,812 principals and teachers in

public secondary schools within insecurity-affected areas of Zamfara State, from which a sample of 346 respondents was selected using the Research Advisors (2006) sample size determination table. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that crisis management practices were implemented to a high extent overall, with safety drills and collaboration with community leaders being more prominent than formal planning, staff training, and communication systems. The study also found that challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient safety equipment, high community insecurity, and limited funding significantly hinder effective crisis management. Furthermore, a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship was established between crisis management practices and school stability ($r = 0.564$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that strengthening crisis management frameworks can enhance school stability in insecurity-prone contexts. It therefore recommends improved funding, comprehensive crisis planning, regular staff training, and stronger collaboration with security agencies and community stakeholders.

Keywords: Crisis management, Insecurity, School stability, Secondary education, Zamfara State

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji praktik manajemen krisis dan hubungannya dengan stabilitas sekolah menengah di daerah rawan gangguan keamanan di Negara Bagian Zamfara, Nigeria, di mana ketidakamanan akibat aksi bandit, penculikan, dan kekerasan komunal terus mengganggu operasional pendidikan. Menggunakan desain penelitian survei deskriptif, studi ini melibatkan populasi 3.812 kepala sekolah dan guru dengan sampel sebanyak 346 responden yang dipilih melalui tabel Research Advisors (2006). Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur skala Likert 4 poin dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif serta Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa praktik manajemen krisis telah diimplementasikan secara luas, terutama pada aspek latihan keselamatan dan kolaborasi tokoh masyarakat, meskipun perencanaan formal, pelatihan staf, dan sistem komunikasi masih kurang menonjol. Tantangan utama yang menghambat efektivitas manajemen krisis meliputi infrastruktur yang tidak memadai, kurangnya peralatan keselamatan, tingginya tingkat ketidakamanan masyarakat, dan keterbatasan dana. Hasil uji korelasi menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif moderat yang signifikan secara statistik antara praktik manajemen krisis dan stabilitas sekolah ($r = 0,564$, $p < 0,05$). Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kerangka kerja manajemen krisis dapat meningkatkan stabilitas sekolah, sehingga direkomendasikan adanya peningkatan anggaran, perencanaan komprehensif, pelatihan staf berkala, serta penguatan kolaborasi dengan lembaga keamanan dan pemangku kepentingan masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen krisis, Ketidakeamanan, Stabilitas sekolah, Pendidikan menengah, Negara Bagian Zamfara

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity has emerged as a significant obstacle to the functioning of education systems across Nigeria, particularly in northern states such as Zamfara. Persistent threats, including banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence, have repeatedly disrupted schooling by causing school closures, displacing both teachers and

students, and interfering with regular classroom activities (Sheu & Sule, 2025). These security challenges compromise the stability of schools and restrict students' access to consistent learning opportunities. Specifically, in Zamfara State, the escalation of armed violence has not only disrupted teaching and assessment processes but has also weakened teacher–student interactions and overall school performance (Sheu & Sule, 2025). This situation underscores the urgent need for educational institutions to implement adaptive crisis preparedness and response mechanisms capable of sustaining schooling functions in insecurity-prone areas.

Crisis management in education involves a combination of proactive planning, rapid response, and recovery strategies aimed at maintaining institutional stability during disruptions. Research highlights that effective crisis management requires strong leadership, clear communication channels, collaboration among stakeholders, and comprehensive preparedness measures (Ofangbonmu, Isabu, & Okosun, 2024). Such strategies help minimize negative impacts on student safety and learning by enabling school administrators to anticipate, respond to, and recover from emergencies. For example, coordinated planning and teamwork among school leaders and community partners have been identified as essential for fostering resilience and safeguarding learners' rights during crises (Ofangbonmu et al., 2024). These studies emphasize the pivotal role of school administrators in ensuring stability through organized and context-sensitive management practices.

Despite the growing body of research on crisis management in education, few empirical studies specifically focus on insecurity-prone areas in Nigeria. Research from other contexts suggests that teachers and school leaders often adopt diverse strategies including collaboration with local security agencies and informal information sharing to cope with violent disruptions in schools (Oladejo, Ekundayo, & Fakokunde, 2025). However, there is still limited understanding of how these practices contribute directly to maintaining school stability in regions like Zamfara, where insecurity has heightened educational vulnerabilities. Examining these practices locally is therefore crucial for developing evidence-based policies that promote school stability, enhance safety, and ensure continuity of education in communities most affected by insecurity.

Onaolapo and Makhasane (2025) revealed that secondary school managers implement a combination of proactive planning, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with local authorities to protect students and staff, which is critical for maintaining learning during periods of insecurity. Similarly, Oladejo, Ekundayo, and Fakokunde (2025) found that teachers in Borno State rely on partnerships with security agencies, community vigilance networks, and informal information-sharing mechanisms to safeguard school operations, highlighting the importance of both formal and informal crisis management practices. Adewale (2025) also reported that schools with documented crisis management plans, regular emergency drills,

and strong communication systems demonstrate higher institutional effectiveness and resilience during disruptions. Additionally, Bellibaş and Karaferye (2025) conducted a meta-synthesis showing that adaptive leadership, structured decision-making, and stakeholder collaboration are key factors enabling schools to operate effectively amid crises. These findings collectively reinforce the importance of implementing comprehensive crisis management practices to sustain both teaching and learning in insecurity-prone contexts.

Nevertheless, several challenges hinder the effective implementation of crisis management in schools. Onaolapo and Makhasane (2025) identified inadequate resources, weak policy frameworks, and poor stakeholder coordination as major constraints. Similarly, Adewale (2025) highlighted limited training for school leaders, insufficient funding, and lack of technological infrastructure as barriers to effective security and safety measures. Bellibaş and Karaferye (2025) further observed that abrupt transitions and gaps in preparedness, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbate these challenges, indicating that schools must address both structural and operational limitations to maintain stability.

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity represents a critical threat to educational stability in northern Nigeria, particularly in Zamfara State, where banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence frequently disrupt school operations. Schools have faced repeated closures, displacement of teachers and students, and interruptions in teaching and learning activities, all of which have adversely affected educational outcomes and overall institutional stability (Sheu & Sule, 2025; Oladejo, Ekundayo, & Fakokunde, 2025). Although crisis management practices are globally recognized as a strategy to mitigate the effects of such disruptions, there is limited empirical evidence regarding how these practices are applied in Nigerian schools facing persistent insecurity, and whether they effectively support school stability.

Furthermore, challenges such as inadequate funding, limited leadership training, poor coordination among stakeholders, and weak policy frameworks hinder the successful implementation of crisis management strategies (Onaolapo & Makhasane, 2025; Adewale, 2025). These gaps raise concerns about the readiness of schools in insecurity-prone areas to respond to crises and protect students' right to education. Consequently, there is an urgent need to investigate the types of crisis management practices employed, their effectiveness in sustaining school stability, and the challenges influencing their implementation. This research is therefore necessary to provide evidence-based recommendations that can strengthen school resilience, ensure educational continuity, and guide policy development in communities affected by insecurity.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to examine how crisis management practices influence school stability in areas affected by insecurity. SCCT posits that organizations must align their communication strategies and responses with the type and severity of a crisis to reduce its impact and maintain trust among stakeholders (Coombs, 2007). In educational settings, this suggests that school leaders' timely communication, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement are critical for sustaining school operations during disruptions. By effectively applying SCCT principles, schools can mitigate the adverse effects of insecurity on teaching, learning, and student safety (Bellibaş & Karaferye, 2025).

Complementing SCCT, SCT emphasizes the importance of leadership traits, self-efficacy, and modelling behavior in shaping how teachers and students respond to crises. Principals and school administrators who demonstrate confidence, adaptive decision-making, and proactive leadership encourage staff and learners to follow structured crisis management strategies, thereby enhancing institutional resilience (Exploratory Study on Principal Traits and Crisis, n.d.). Empirical research supports the view that combining structured crisis management practices such as preparedness plans, emergency drills, and community collaboration with effective leadership enhances school stability in contexts of insecurity (School leadership fostering mental health in times of crisis, 2024; Adewale, 2025). By integrating SCCT and SCT, this framework provides a lens for understanding the interplay between leadership approaches, crisis management practices, and school stability. It conceptualizes that effective crisis management in schools depends not only on formal strategies, such as planning and stakeholder engagement, but also on the leadership behaviors that influence the implementation and success of these strategies.

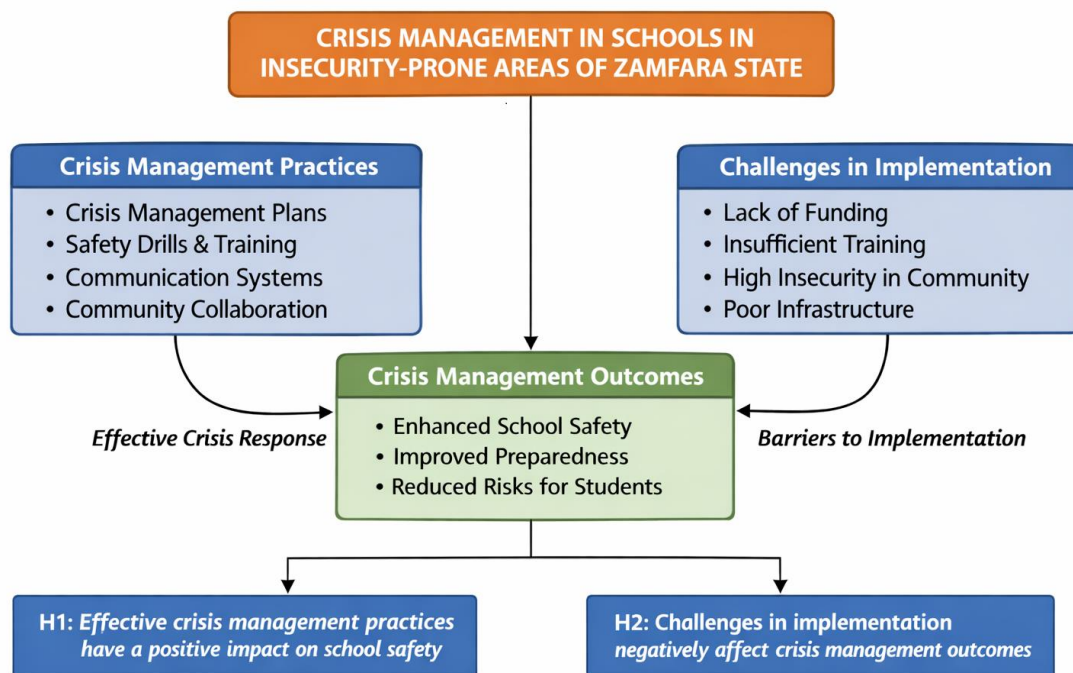


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Objectives

1. To examine the types of crisis management practices employed in schools located in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the relationship between crisis management practices and school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State.
3. To assess the challenges affecting the implementation of crisis management practices in schools within insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What types of crisis management practices are employed in schools located in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between crisis management practices and school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State?
3. What challenges affect the implementation of crisis management practices in schools within insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between crisis management practices and school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State.

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine crisis management practices and secondary school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The population comprised 3,812 principals and teachers in public secondary schools located in identified insecurity-affected areas of the state.

Using the Research Advisors (2006) sample size determination table, a sample of 346 respondents was selected through a combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure fair representation of schools and respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, organized on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, and covering crisis management practices, school stability, and implementation challenges. The instrument was validated by experts in educational management and measurement, while its reliability was established through a pilot test using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding an acceptable reliability coefficient. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Mean scores were interpreted using an established decision benchmark to determine levels of agreement. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the types of crisis management practices are employed in schools located in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria

S/N	Crisis Management Practices	Mean	Std Dev.	Level
1	My school has a clear and written crisis management plan.	3.08	0.87	Moderate
2	Teachers are trained to respond effectively to emergencies caused by insecurity.	3.01	0.88	Moderate
3	Regular safety and evacuation drills are conducted in the school.	3.51	0.77	High
4	The school has established communication channels to inform students, staff, and parents during a crisis.	2.94	0.85	Moderate
5	My school collaborates with local authorities or community leaders to manage insecurity-related crises.	3.88	0.83	High
Total		3.28	0.84	High

The descriptive analysis in Table 1 indicates that schools in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State employ crisis management practices to a high extent overall ($\bar{x} = 3.28$, $SD = 0.84$). Specifically, regular safety and evacuation drills ($\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 0.77$) and collaboration with local authorities and community leaders ($\bar{x} = 3.88$, $SD = 0.83$) were practiced at a high level, suggesting strong emphasis on preparedness and external support. However, practices such as having a clear written crisis management plan, teacher training for emergency response, and effective communication channels during crises recorded moderate levels of

implementation. This implies that while some proactive crisis measures are well established, there is still room for improvement in formal planning, staff capacity building, and crisis communication mechanisms in the schools.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of the challenges affect the implementation of crisis management practices in schools within insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria

S/N	Challenges affect the Implementation of Crisis Management Practices	Mean	Std Dev.	Ranking
1	Lack of adequate funding limits the implementation of crisis management practices in my school.	3.57	0.87	3 rd
2	Insufficient staff training affects the school's ability to manage crises effectively.	3.53	0.88	4 th
3	High levels of insecurity in the surrounding community hinder the execution of crisis management practices.	3.60	0.77	2 nd
4	Limited infrastructure and safety equipment negatively impact crisis management in my school.	3.86	0.85	1 st
5	Resistance from staff, students, or parents affects the adoption of crisis management practices.	3.49	0.83	5 th
Total		3.61	0.81	High

Table 2 shows that the challenges affecting the implementation of crisis management practices in schools within insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State are high overall ($\bar{x} = 3.61$, $SD = 0.81$). The most severe challenge identified was limited infrastructure and inadequate safety equipment ($\bar{x} = 3.86$, $SD = 0.85$), ranked first, indicating serious constraints in physical and material preparedness. This was followed by high levels of insecurity in the surrounding community ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, $SD = 0.77$), which significantly hampers effective crisis response. Inadequate funding and insufficient staff training were also rated high, reflecting systemic and capacity-related barriers. Although resistance from staff, students, or parents ranked lowest, it still recorded a high mean score, suggesting that stakeholder acceptance remains a notable concern. Overall, the findings imply that structural, security, and resource-related factors critically hinder the effective implementation of crisis management practices in the schools.

Table 3. Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistics Analysis on the Relationship between crisis management practices and school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State

Variables		N	Mean	Std Dev	r	p-value	Decision	
Crisis Management Practices	School Stability	346	3.45	0.68	0.564	0.000	Reject (Significant)	H ₀
		346	3.21	0.72	0.564	0.000		

Table 3 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between crisis management practices and school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State. The result shows a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.564$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that schools with more effective crisis management practices tend to experience higher levels of school stability. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. Therefore, crisis management practices have a significant influence on school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this study reveal important insights into crisis management in insecurity-prone schools in Zamfara State. First, the descriptive analysis indicated that while some crisis management practices such as regular safety and evacuation drills and collaboration with local authorities were well-established, other critical components like formal written plans, teacher training, and effective communication systems—were only implemented at moderate levels. This pattern aligns with broader literature showing that although practical measures (e.g., drills) are often adopted in crisis contexts, comprehensive planning and capacity building remain uneven in resource-limited settings (Onaolapo & Makhasane, 2025). Scholars emphasize that well-developed crisis management plans that integrate planning, communication, and procedural protocols are essential for effective school crisis response (Bawalsah, 2020).

Second, the study identified significant challenges hindering effective implementation, especially limited infrastructure and safety equipment, and pervasive community insecurity, followed by funding and training constraints. These barriers reflect broader structural limitations in crisis-affected educational environments where schools often lack the resources and physical capacity to mount adequate preparedness initiatives, a challenge observed in conflict and insecure zones across Nigeria (Uwakwe et al., 2025). Research on school safety also highlights that inadequate funding and infrastructure markedly limit the adoption

of crisis preparedness and response systems, reinforcing the need for sustained investment and policy support (Uwakwe et al., 2025).

Finally, the correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between crisis management practices and school stability, suggesting that better-implemented practices are associated with higher levels of school stability in insecurity-prone settings. This finding supports the view that proactive crisis strategies not only address immediate risks but also contribute to organizational resilience and continuity. The literature on crisis leadership and school stability confirms that collaborative communication, shared planning, and stakeholder engagement bolster a school's ability to navigate disruption and sustain learning environments (Smith & Riley, 2024). Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of strengthening formal crisis management frameworks, investing in infrastructure and capacity building, and fostering collaborative relationships both within schools and with external partners to enhance stability and resilience in insecure contexts.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations are proposed: first, government and education authorities should provide adequate funding to schools in insecurity-prone areas to improve infrastructure, safety equipment, and emergency preparedness facilities; second, school administrators should develop and implement comprehensive, written crisis management plans that clearly outline roles, procedures, and communication strategies during emergencies; third, regular training and capacity-building programmes should be organized for teachers and school staff to enhance their skills in crisis prevention, response, and recovery; fourth, stronger collaboration should be encouraged between schools, security agencies, community leaders, and parents to support coordinated and timely crisis management efforts; and finally, policies aimed at improving school security and stability should be strengthened and consistently monitored by relevant authorities to ensure effective implementation in insecurity-affected areas.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that crisis management practices play a critical role in promoting school stability in insecurity-prone areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria. Although some schools have adopted practical measures such as safety drills and collaboration with community stakeholders, key components including formal crisis management plans, staff training, and effective communication systems remain only moderately implemented. The study also established that schools face serious challenges particularly inadequate infrastructure, insufficient safety equipment, high levels of community insecurity, and limited funding which significantly constrain the effective implementation of crisis management practices. Importantly, the findings revealed a significant positive relationship between crisis management practices and school stability, indicating that schools with stronger

crisis management frameworks tend to be more stable despite insecurity. This underscores the need for strengthened institutional capacity, policy support, and resource investment to enhance school resilience and ensure continuity of teaching and learning in insecure environments.

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