



Effect of Environmental Insecurity on Students' Academic Achievement in Mathematics among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara North Senatorial Zone

Dr. Umar Sodangi^{1*}, Ibrahim Adamu¹

¹Department of Science Education, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Umar Sodangi

Department of Science
Education, Federal University
Gusau, Zamfara State

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of environmental insecurity on students' academic achievement in mathematics among senior secondary school students in Zamfara North Senatorial Zone, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all the senior secondary school students in Zamfara North Senatorial Zone, which is 22,797. From the population, a sample of 150 students was randomly selected for the study from the entire senior secondary schools in the study. Three objectives, three research questions, and corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Kuder-Richardson formula (KR21), and the coefficient was found to be 0.87. The major instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire with items on a 4-point Likert scale, which was validated by three experts. The data collected was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to answer research questions, and chi-square statistics were adopted in testing the hypotheses. The findings of the study show that environmental insecurity has negatively affected the students' academic achievements in mathematics, especially for students from rural areas in the zone. It was recommended that government and non-government organizations provide a new security strategy to schools in the area to reduce its effects on the mathematical academic achievements of students.

Keywords: Environmental Insecurity, Academic Achievement, Mathematics, Senior Secondary Schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of education has been appreciably demonstrated the world over. However, due to the identified gap between the establishments of favourable learning conditions in many environments, the goal of education is unlikely to be achieved. These objectives could only be met with the availability of effective teaching and learning equipment, a conducive educational environment, and a favourable societal context. If there is any uncertainty about the school's internal or external

environment, it may be considerably more difficult for learners and teachers to function effectively. This is because teachers, students, and their parents might be the target of an attack by unknown gunmen (Zareen, 2020). Literature reports have suggested that a sense of insecurity may have an impact on students' academic achievement in mathematics at all levels of teaching and learning.

The northern part of Nigeria is currently besieged by endemic poverty, religious and cultural

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practices that do not bode well for qualitative education, and prevalent crises such as communal clashes among communities and insurgency activities like boko haram, kidnapping, banditry, cattle rustling, and other gender-based violence in the Nigerian educational system that can affect their achievements and retention, especially in science and mathematics subjects such as physics, chemistry, and biology because of their need as laboratory-inclined subjects (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Thus, the advent of kidnapping school children for ransom is an ominous gathering cloud, and this is also one of the results of insecurity in Nigeria, whose fore coming rains may have adverse effects on students' achievement, not only in Northern Nigeria but also the entire country (Dakuku 2021).

According to available statistics, the northern part of Nigeria is the most educationally disadvantaged region. Also, the relatively low cut-off marks for entrance into unity schools and the JAMB admission requirements may not overall encourage competitiveness and hard work in the affected students. The insecurity in the Zamfara State Senatorial Zone North area will further depress educational standards and interest. It is on record that of the estimated 10.5 million out-of-school children in the country, sixty-nine percent (69%) come from the northern part of Nigeria. Females are mostly affected due to some cultural practices and economic issues, limiting their active participation in school (Lawal *et al.*, 2018a). Bandits kidnapping school children for ransom is only a part of the prevalent insecurity that threatens to collapse the economy, thereby affecting educational standards directly and indirectly (Dakuku, 2021; Isma'il & Abubakar, 2023).

The insecurity problems happening in Zamfara State have greatly affected the school attendance and academic achievement of secondary students and, in some cases, led to the temporary closure of some schools in the state. According to Akinkuolie (2019), the massacres, kidnappings, and insecurity in Zamfara State have been underreported until some concerned citizens of the state came out recently to raise the alarm. According to the senator representing Zamfara North, since the escalation of the activities of banditry in 2017 through 2023, at least 11,000 people have been killed in the states where these insurgents are carrying out these deadly activities so far. The citizen students, inclusive, are gripped with fear because of kidnapers, cattle rustlers, and armed bandits who have turned the state into a war zone (Isma'il & Abubakar, 2023). Zamfara State registered fewer than 60 candidates for the last common entrance examination for the 104 federal government unity schools in Nigeria. Lagos State alone registered over 25,000 candidates.

Zamfara has consistently remained the most educationally backward region in Nigeria, and that has greatly affected the achievement of the students in schools, especially in mathematics. It is also one of the states with the most out-of-school children (Adams *et al.*, 2021).

Students' academic achievement is defined as their ability to maintain a satisfactory academic record while also meeting the requirements of the courses in which they are enrolled (Ojukwu & Nwanma 2015; Umar *et al.*, 2020). Academic achievement is a type of educational outcome that demonstrates how well a student completed the educational goals. In other words, good academic achievement is the student's personal comportment and commitment to actualizing his or her academic goals, which may include concentrating on one's studies, having confidence in success-oriented academic activities in school, and so on, in order to maximally actualize his or her life career or dream (Olofintoye, 2005). Academic achievement, whether good or bad, can make or break a student's life ambitions, as well as national goals and growth. An excellent academic achievement would provide the student with the drive and passion required to achieve a high academic standing when compared to his or her contemporaries. It fosters resilience and encourages students to strive for achievement (Ojukwu, 2017).

In another development, Alam (2020) and Umar *et al.*, (2020) opined that the quality of education in the classroom is of great importance to students and that creating an environment that respects diversity and appreciates individual differences contributes to academic achievement and success. "Academic" refers to those activities related to studies in a learning context, be it formal, non-formal, or informal. "Achievement" is obtaining some specific outcomes from learning activities. Students require proper education, training, an appropriate environment, and healthy relationships with their known persons, such as family members, friends, teachers, and their community, in order to achieve good academic achievement. School and family should provide a safe and healthy environment for students so that they can develop their personalities holistically. Insecurity is the most common psychological error that occurs in humans. It happens to almost everyone at some point. It is a feeling of not being good enough to meet the challenge of a situation you face in life. A sense of helplessness prevails in the face of problems, conflict, and concerns. It is a feeling that makes one believe that he is inadequate or incompetent to handle life's challenges. Others suffering from insecurity have the perception that life is unpredictable and burdened with meeting a lot of expectations. Insecurity gives a

sense of a lack of support or reinforcement where you live, work, or play. It makes you under confident and nervous in all situations. Insecurity often develops in people from a sense of being unaccepted, disapproved of, or rejected. Inner turmoil comes from a lack of direction or bewilderment about where you are going, what your goals are, and what responses are appropriate for events in life (Alam, 2020).

It is clearly shown from the statistics of the West African Examination results that students who sat for the general mathematics examination in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 in Zamfara State performed very poorly compared to those of students from other states in Northern Nigeria. Based on the report of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2019), out of the 2,8481 students who sat for the 2018 WAEC exams from Zamfara State, only 11.95% of these students were able to obtain 5 credits or more, including mathematics. The same applies to the achievement of students in the 2019 and 2020 examinations in the state. Most of these low achievements in mathematics can be traced to issues of insecurity, a lack of commitment from the government side, and other issues. The concern of this study is the impact of insecurity on the achievement of students in mathematics in the northern part of Zamfara.

Ofongo (2016) investigated the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. What were the possible causes and precursors? Indeed, it demonstrates that various underlying reasons contributed to the insurgents' development and radicalization. Poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, in particular, are demonstrated to have exacerbated the radicalization of ethnic and religious identities in the country, including the inclusion of the Mallams, to whom the Almajirai and their parents are accustomed as a result of the high expenses of military battles. Other underlying elements that motivate insurgencies are economic and political factors. The compulsion for violent conduct can be lessened as a result, and the Boko Haram insurgency, as well as other insurgency group activities in the country, can be minimized.

Boko Haram was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno State, by an Islamic scholar named Mohammed Yusuf, the then Boko Haram leader, after which Abubakar Shekau took over the mantle of the sect in 2009. The Boko Haram sect's ideology under Mohammed Yusuf was essentially a rejection of western education and manners of life. The political ideology of Boko Haram was intended to overthrow the government and impose sharia law throughout the country. According to Yusuf, the 'western values'-based system of government has resulted in increased corruption, poverty, unemployment, and the continuous persecution of true Islam (Bartolotta,

as reported in Imasuen, 2015). The abduction of schoolgirls from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, on the night of April 14, 2014, remains Boko Haram's most disastrous mass abduction. School attendance has been greatly affected in areas prone to violence, according to studies on the effect of the Boko Haram insurgency on education, because parents have restricted their children from attending school for fear of attacks and possible abduction (Lawal *et al.*, 2018b; Williams & Istifanus, 2017).

1.1: Statement of the problem

Major stakeholders in education, for example, the government, industries, communities, parents, schools, even students, and many others, have been lamenting over the poor quality of the achievement of Nigerian secondary school students. Researchers such as Sa'ad *et al.*, (2014), Suleiman *et al.*, (2020) and Zakariya and Bamidele (2015) have speculated on the causes of Nigerian secondary school students' poor academic achievement, especially in mathematics. This includes students from Zamfara State, Nigeria, who failed to acquire the necessary social, psychological, and academic skills to cope with the demands of life and live in and out of school. Zamfara north senatorial zone is made up of five local government areas, which include Birnin Magaji, Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi, Tarlatan Mafara, and Zurmi. The media has continued to highlight and discuss incessant cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, bombings, abductions, rape, cultic activities, and a high rise in ethnic and communal clashes, which have become regular occurrences and have characterized life in Nigeria (Nwangwa, 2014).

The news is awash with reports of the number of lives lost as a result of terrorist, insurgent, and other heinous attacks. Ahmed (2021) reported that over 10,000 armed bandits were operating across different parts of Zamfara State. These gangs have so far killed over 12,000 people and stolen about 250,000 livestock from 2011 to 2021. The diffidence area that seems to have been neglected and needs to be looked into by the researchers is the impact of insecurity on schools, which brings about the poor academic achievement of secondary school students in mathematics and other science subjects. Educators have long emphasized that many students struggle in school not because they lack the mental ability to succeed but because they lack motivation. An area that seems to have been neglected by researchers is the issue of insecurity in the school environment and the effect it could have on the academic achievement of secondary school students. With the lingering insecurity issues that Zamfara State is facing, which have led to the closure of schools in the past, this has directly or indirectly impacted on students' academic progress in schools, as evidenced by the mass failure

recorded in WAEC examination results of 2018, 2019, and 2020 as reported by the national bureau of statistics. This is why this study is being conducted to determine the effect of environmental insecurity on students' academic achievement in mathematics in Zamfara North Senatorial Zone.

1.2: Research objectives

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the general impact of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone.
2. To determine the extent of the effect of environmental insecurity on mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone.
3. To determine the extent of the impact of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone.

1.3: Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the general impact of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?
2. To what extent does environmental insecurity affect mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?
3. To what extent does environmental insecurity affect the mathematics achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?

1.4: Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students' in Zamfara north senatorial zone.
2. There is no significant effect of environmental insecurity on mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone.
3. There is no significant effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of rural and urban

senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone.

2. METHOD

2.1: Research Design: The Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for the study.

2.2: Population of the Study

The Population of the study comprises of all the Senior Secondary Schools students in Zamfara north Senatorial Zone which is made up of 22, 797 from Birnin Magaji, Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi, Tarlatan Mafara, and Zurmi local government areas of Zamfara State. According to Nwankwo (2011) descriptive surveys aim at collecting data from a given sample of population and described probably certain features of the sample as well as generalizing them to the entire population.

2.3: Sample and Sampling Techniques

One hundred and fifty (150) Students were randomly selected from the entire senior secondary school students in Shinkafi and Zurmi local government areas. Stratified randomly sampling approach was adopted for the research work.

2.4: Research Instrument

The major instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire with items on a 4-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed.

2.5: Validity of the Instrument

The structured questionnaire was validated by the experts two from Department of Science Education and one from Department of Educational foundations.

2.6: Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability coefficients were determined after the trial testing. Kuder-Richardson formula (21) was used to estimate the reliability without splitting the test. The reliability was found to be 0.87.

2.7: Data Collection Instrument

The data obtained for this study was analysed using t-test statistic method. A total of number of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were administered to the respondents from the sample population.

3. RESULTS

In answering the research questions, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed, and the decision cut-off response mean is set at 2.50. This indicates that the mean obtained from 2.50 and above is acceptable and agreed with, and the mean below 2.50 is rejected and disagreed with. N = 150, and for hypothesis testing, a

Chi-Square test was used at $\alpha = 0.05$ significant level.

3.1. Research Question One: What are the general impact of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?

Table 1: Impact of environmental security on students' achievement in mathematics

S/N	Item	N	Mean (\bar{X})	SD	Decision \bar{X}
1	There has been a reported case of an armed robbery and banditry attack in or near the school compounds.	150	3.21	.914	Accepted
2	Students miss certain lessons due to the fear of being kidnapped by bandits.	150	3.11	.959	Accepted
3	The closure of schools for some months due to banditry activities drastically deteriorates the achievement of students in schools.	150	3.15	.888	Accepted
4	When students feel secure, they're more attentive in class and perform better in examinations.	150	3.39	.874	Accepted
5	Lack of adequate security personnel on the school premises also increases insecurity issues in the schools.	150	3.23	.845	Accepted

As stated above, the mean cut-off was 2.50. All items with a mean of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreeable and accepted, while those with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreeable and rejected. In effect, the responses were either accepted or rejected as evidence of the impact of environmental insecurity on students' academic achievement in mathematics. Based on the analyses of the responses in Table 1, it appears that all items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have mean scores above the decision level of 2.50, which indicates that all the responses are accepted and that the activities of banditry and armed robbers have contributed to the issues of environmental insecurity in Zamfara north senatorial

zone. Going by the information displayed in Table 1, it is clearly shown that insecurity issues consisting of the activities of bandits, armed rubber, cattle rustlers, and kidnapers have, in one way or another, greatly negatively impacted the progress and achievements of students in mathematics in Zamfara North Senatorial Zone.

3.2. Research Question Two: To what extent does environmental insecurity affect mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?

Table 2: Effects of environmental insecurity on students' achievement in mathematics based on gender

S/N	Item	N	Mean (\bar{X})	SD	Decision \bar{X}
6	There have not been cases of sexual harassment or rape in school by teachers or senior students.	150	2.95	.947	Accepted
7	Gender inequality in schools, in the face of some teachers and school administrators, also contributes to the poor achievement of students in mathematics.	150	2.67	.973	Accepted
8	Sometimes kidnapers carried more female students away than male students when they attacked schools	150	2.95	1.128	Accepted
9	Religious influence has increased female students discrimination in schools, which leads to their poor achievement in mathematics.	150	3.05	.907	Accepted
10	Some boys join trading, and some girls get married early and leave school as a result of poor academic achievement in schools.	150	3.39	.865	Accepted

In table 2, the mean response of all items and the corresponding standard deviations show the highest level of responses that are above the decision mean response of 2.50. These imply that environmental insecurity has greatly affected the students' achievement in mathematics with regards to gender influence. Among the items in the table are cases of sexual harassment, gender inequality, the abduction or kidnapping of more female students

than male students during school attacks, religious beliefs toward girl child education, especially western education, and early marriage syndrome, which usually occurs in the northern part of Nigeria, among those factors that affected students' achievement in mathematics in Zamfara North senatorial zone with regards to gender segregation.

3.3. Research Question Three: To what extent does environmental insecurity affect the mathematics

achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone?

Table 3: Effects of environmental insecurity on students' achievement in mathematics based on location (Rural and Urban)

S/N	Item	N	Mean (\bar{X})	SD	Decision \bar{X}
11	Secondary school students from rural areas are mostly affected by the banditry/kidnapping activities.	150	2.88	1.023	Accepted
12	Students from urban areas are mostly less affected by the activities of banditry	150	2.95	1.092	Accepted
13	Some schools were burned down or destroyed by the bandits, and that has brought about a scarcity of schools due to the proximity of IDP camps in the zone.	150	2.95	.999	Accepted
14	Parents usually come to schools to confront teachers who have given students punishment due to their lateness to school.	150	3.30	.833	Accepted
15	The distance of school locations from the students' homes affects their attendance and punctuality at school.	150	2.60	1.147	Accepted

Items listed in Table 3 are all on the effects of environmental insecurity on students' achievement in mathematics among senior secondary school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone with regards to the location of the schools (rural or urban locations). In accordance with the mean and standard deviation of the responses in Table 3, all five items have a mean greater than the decision mean of 2.50. These show that school locations (rural or urban) also contributed to the highest level of environmental insecurity in schools, which by implication would have a great effect on the academic achievement of students in mathematics and all other subjects as

well. Going by the responses, it is clearly shown that schools located in rural areas are mostly affected by the activities of banditry, kidnapping, and school attacks in Zamfara North. It was also indicated that the distance between the school locations and the location of students, whether they are in permanent homes or IDP camps, affects their punctuality and daily attendance at school, which by implication can affect their progress in mathematics.

3.4: Effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students' in Zamfara north senatorial zone.

Table 4: Chi-Square analysis of significant effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students' in Zamfara north senatorial zone

	Value	df	Asymp Sig.	Exact Sig.	Exact Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	3.513 ^a	1	.041		
Continuity Correction ^b	2.760	1	.077		
Likelihood Ratio	3.526	1	.040		
Fisher's Exact Test				.087	.048
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.490	1	.042		
N of Valid Cases	150				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.60.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 4 clearly shows that the P (0.041) is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This indicates that the result of the chi-square is statistically significant. It implies that there is a significant effect and relationship between environmental insecurity and the mathematics achievement of senior secondary

school students in Zamfara north senatorial zone. Thus, the null hypothesis has been rejected.

3.5: Effect of environmental insecurity on mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students.

Table 5: Chi-Square analysis of the significant effect of environmental insecurity on mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior secondary school students

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Exact Sig.	Exact Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	7.931 ^a	1	.005		
Continuity Correction ^b	6.959	1	.008		
Likelihood Ratio	8.091	1	.004		

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Exact Sig.	Exact Sig.
Fisher's Exact Test				.007	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.878	1	.005		
N of Valid Cases	150				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.90.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 5 clearly shows that the P (0.005) is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This indicates that the result of the chi-square is statistically significant. It implies that there is a significant effect of environmental insecurity on mathematics achievement with regards to gender among senior

secondary school students. Thus, the null hypothesis has been rejected.

3.6: Effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students.

Table 6: Chi-Square analysis of the significant effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Exact Sig.	Exact Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	23.910 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	22.336	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	24.578	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.751	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	150				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 34.07.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 6 clearly shows that the P (0.000) is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This indicates that the result of the chi-square is statistically significant. It implies that there is a significant effect of environmental insecurity on the mathematics achievement of rural and urban senior secondary school students. Thus, the null hypothesis has been rejected.

cannot be overemphasized. According to Lehr (2004), the noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. They would be achieved in a conducive and peaceful school environment, and if there is a feeling of insecurity within and outside the school environment, both teachers and students are likely to be afraid, which may inhibit the academic achievements of the students in schools.

4. DISCUSSION

Findings from this study revealed that environmental insecurity significantly affects the academic achievements of secondary school students, which is in agreement with the finding of Consistent with these findings, the advent of Dakuku (2021), which showed kidnapping of schoolchildren for ransom, is an ominous gathering cloud, and this is also one of the results of environmental insecurity that effects students' achievement, not only in Northern Nigeria but also the entire country. The result also showed that the following are factors that could constitute environmental insecurity in the study area that affect the academic achievements of students in mathematics: kidnapping of students, banditry activities, cattle rusting, direct attacks on schools by terrorists, and parents' confrontation with teachers in school and outside as a result of teachers matting out punishment to the students. Other examples include sexual harassment, rape, and finally armed robbery attacks within and around school premises. The process through which these could affect the academic performance of the students

In another development, the findings show that school locations near the residence of students also influence their academic achievements in schools. Based on the result, it is clearly indicated that students who are far away from the school location tend to lose interest in attending the school. It has also been observed that students that are located in rural areas are mostly prone to the activities of the bandits in the area due to their location. This finding is in line with the findings of Nwangwa (2014) and Alam, (2020), which show that incessant cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, bombings, abductions, rape, cultic activities, and a high rise in ethnic and communal clashes negatively affect the academic achievement of students in schools where there are environmental insecurity issues. Finally, religious beliefs and values contribute to the low achievements of students in schools, especially among girls who are prone to early marriage and gender discrimination and inequality that are still taking place in the area. This finding is in line with the findings of Zareen, (2020); Williams and Istifanus (2017), who discovered from the issues that led to the abduction

of Chibbok schoolgirls by Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State in 2014 that parents restricted their children from attending school for fear of attacks and possible abduction.

5. CONCLUSION

It is heart-breaking that the banditry activities that disturbed the education system in Zamfara State are one of the causes of concern among various scholars in the state and in the nation at large. This study looked into the effect of environmental insecurity on students' academic achievement in Zamfara north senatorial zone. After rigorous investigations, the results established by this study indicated that banditry, kidnappings and abductions, cattle rustling, and armed robbery activities have negatively affected the area academically because some schools were destroyed, people from rural areas were displaced, and many were relocated to IDP camps. In addition to the aforementioned, there are also the issues of some school locations that are far away from the location of students, the issue of early marriage among schoolgirls, and religious and traditional values that influence the students' enrolment and attendance in schools.

RECOMMENDATION

This study recommends among others that;

1. Government and non-government organizations provide a new security strategy to schools in the area to reduce its effects on the mathematical academic achievements of students.
2. Parents should reduce girl child discrimination with regard to attending western education that will help bridge the enrolment gap between boys and girls and should encourage their wards to attend schools that will set students to have passion in school activities that will bust their achievement in school.
3. Government and non-governmental organisations should build schools near the residents of students and closed to the IDP camps in order to encourage them attend school regularly.

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