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## **Strengthening Teacher Quality in Nomadic Schools as A Tool For Combating Rural Insecurity In Nigeria: A Sociological Viewpoint**

**LADAN, Sirajo Alhaji<sup>1</sup>**

email: [sirajoshu@gmail.com](mailto:sirajoshu@gmail.com)

07031044541

**IBRAHIM, Muhammad Lawal<sup>2</sup>**

[Ibrahimlawal67@gmail.com](mailto:Ibrahimlawal67@gmail.com)

**MUSA, Abubakar Sadiq<sup>2</sup>**

[Mabubakarsadiq10@gmail.com](mailto:Mabubakarsadiq10@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto-Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Educational Foundations, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto

### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the crucial role of strengthening teacher quality in nomadic schools in northern Nigeria as a strategy for combating rural insecurity, framed within Émile Durkheim's Anomie Theory. Rural insecurity, largely driven by socio-economic deprivation and limited access to formal education among nomadic populations, exacerbates social instability and alienation. The paper argues that improving teacher quality is essential for addressing the educational marginalization of nomadic children, which contributes to normlessness and social disintegration. Using Durkheim's theory, it explains how the absence of stable educational structures fosters a breakdown in societal norms, increasing vulnerability to deviant behaviors, including violence and criminal activity. The paper highlights the importance of well-trained, motivated teachers in restoring social cohesion and fostering integration by equipping nomadic children with the skills and values necessary for economic and social participation. It presents a framework for improving teacher quality, emphasizing specialized training, professional development, financial incentives, and community involvement. Given the persistent challenges in the nomadic education system such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and frequent teacher transfers, the paper offers targeted recommendations, including enhancing teacher training programs, refining multigrade teaching strategies, increasing the recruitment of female teachers, and ensuring job stability in nomadic schools. By investing in teacher quality and addressing systemic educational deficiencies, this paper asserts that nomadic schools can serve as a tool for fostering social stability and reducing rural insecurity. Strengthening the education system in these communities will not only improve learning outcomes but also contribute to broader societal cohesion, ultimately promoting a more stable and secure northern Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Nomadic Education, Teacher Quality, Rural Insecurity, Anomie Theory,

### **Introduction**

Rural insecurity in Northern Nigeria, particularly the violent conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farming communities, has been a persistent issue. Competition for resources such as land and water has escalated tensions, leading to violent clashes that result in deaths, displacement, kidnapping, and property destruction. Between 2011 and 2021, over 12,000 deaths occurred, along with significant displacement, livestock theft, and substantial ransom payments. Banditry, driven by the financial rewards of kidnapping, remains a thriving criminal enterprise involving numerous armed groups. Economic deprivation, criminality, and foreign interference are key factors contributing to this crisis, but the lack of formal education in nomadic and rural communities is often overlooked. Émile Durkheim's Theory of Anomie provides a valuable framework for understanding this issue. Anomie, a state of normlessness and social instability, can be applied to



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nomadic communities in rural Nigeria. The transient nature of nomadic life disrupts access to consistent education, leading to social disintegration. The fragmented educational infrastructure in these communities exacerbates this issue, resulting in a lack of stability in education, which in turn contributes to the erosion of social norms and values. This breakdown of societal cohesion creates an environment conducive to deviant behavior, including violence and insecurity (Akinmoladun et al., 2022; Adewale, 2021). Durkheim argued that societal breakdown leads to deviance, as individuals, particularly youth, lack clear guidance and structure (Durkheim, 2013; Haralambos & Holborn, 2018). Education plays a central role in restoring social order. According to Durkheim's concept of collective conscience, shared values and norms bind society. In nomadic communities, improving the quality of education can restore social cohesion by integrating both academic knowledge and societal norms. Quality teachers, trained in cultural sensitivity and conflict resolution, can reinforce a collective identity among nomadic children, providing them with a sense of belonging and stability. This process of moral integration, where students are taught academic content alongside values of peace and cooperation, can help integrate them into the larger societal framework, making them more resilient to external threats such as extremism (Durkheim, 2013; Tella & Tella, 2020; Baker & Keegan, 2021).

Teachers are critical social anchors who provide moral direction, particularly in nomadic schools where educational structures are weak or inconsistent. High-quality teachers can reduce feelings of alienation and foster social cohesion, helping mitigate the risk of violent conflict and integrate nomadic students into the broader societal framework (Olaniyan et al., 2018; Akinmoladun et al., 2022). The poor quality of teachers in nomadic schools—due to inadequate training, cultural insensitivity, high turnover, and policy shortcomings—results in subpar learning experiences and limited opportunities for nomadic children. This lack of educational opportunity perpetuates cycles of poverty and instability, further contributing to insecurity (NCNE, 2023). Durkheim's theory suggests that when people feel disconnected due to unequal opportunities, it leads to higher rates of deviance and insecurity. In the context of nomadic communities, addressing educational inequalities by improving teacher quality can bridge this gap, fostering social cohesion and reducing feelings of anomie. By investing in teacher quality, nomadic children are provided with equal opportunities for social integration and success, helping to build a more stable society (Akinmoladun et al., 2022; Baker & Keegan, 2021). In conclusion, improving teacher quality in nomadic schools can address the issue of anomie by providing stability and fostering shared values. Teachers not only impart academic knowledge but also teach the values of peace, cooperation, and social integration, which can reduce involvement in criminal activities and contribute to the reduction of rural insecurity. By investing in education and strengthening teacher quality, Northern Nigeria can reduce social disintegration and violence, contributing to a more cohesive and peaceful society (Tella & Tella, 2020; Olaniyan et al., 2018).

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Teacher Quality**

In the context of the theoretical framework, teacher quality plays a crucial role in addressing the root causes of insecurity, as framed within Durkheim's theory of anomie. Durkheim's concept of anomie, which refers to the breakdown of societal norms and values, can be applied to nomadic communities in Northern Nigeria where poor educational quality and lack of social cohesion contribute to normlessness. Teacher quality, as identified through key dimensions, helps counter this breakdown by offering a structured, cohesive learning environment that provides the guidance and stability needed to combat anomie.



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**Subject Matter Expertise:** According to Durkheim's theory, when individuals are not properly socialized into the norms and values of society, they are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors. Teachers with strong content knowledge help provide a stable structure in the learning environment. By addressing misconceptions and deepening understanding, they contribute to restoring social norms, fostering a sense of order and stability in students' lives. Research suggests that strong subject knowledge positively impacts student outcomes (Hattie, 2009), which, in turn, can lead to greater societal cohesion and a reduction in deviant behavior linked to insecurity.

**Pedagogical Skills:** Effective teaching strategies, such as differentiated instruction and formative assessments, align with Durkheim's argument that education is key in restoring societal values and norms. Teachers who are adept at meeting diverse student needs can reduce feelings of alienation, a core component of anomie. These strategies engage students and reinforce social integration through methods that cater to different learning styles and speeds (Tomlinson, 2001), which promotes societal solidarity by preventing students from falling into deviant behaviors or social isolation.

**Classroom Management:** Effective classroom management is a direct application of Durkheim's notion of social order. By maintaining an orderly environment, teachers provide students with a stable and predictable atmosphere, essential for promoting discipline and social conformity. As classroom disruptions are minimized, students are better able to focus on learning, which, according to Durkheim's theory, prevents the breakdown of social norms and encourages cooperative behavior. Studies indicate that good classroom management is linked to better student outcomes and fewer behavioral problems (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015), aligning with Durkheim's assertion that effective social systems help reduce deviant behaviors.

**Professionalism and Continuous Learning:** Durkheim emphasizes the role of social institutions in ensuring stability. Continuous professional development, as highlighted in the conceptual framework, is a way to keep teachers connected to evolving educational norms and practices. Lifelong learning for teachers equips them to adapt to changes in society, reinforcing social values that foster cohesion. Teachers who embrace professional growth contribute to long-term societal stability by ensuring that education remains responsive to social changes and community needs (OECD, 2020).

**Nomadic Education:** The challenges faced by nomadic education in Northern Nigeria are rooted in the exclusion of these communities from the broader educational system. As highlighted in the theoretical framework, this exclusion leads to feelings of anomie and normlessness. Durkheim's theory helps explain how the lack of stable education exacerbates this issue. The federal government's establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) addresses these challenges, aiming to integrate nomadic children into the educational system. This integration, facilitated by improved teacher quality, is essential for restoring social cohesion, as it brings marginalized communities into the broader social fold. However, as the framework indicates, this integration is hindered by barriers such as poor infrastructure, low-quality teachers, and cultural resistance (NCNE, 2017). Improving these aspects can address the feelings of alienation described in Durkheim's theory and ultimately reduce insecurity.

**Rural Insecurity:** Rural insecurity, primarily caused by armed groups such as bandits, is closely linked to the anomie experienced in nomadic and rural communities. Durkheim's theory suggests that the breakdown of societal norms leads to deviant behavior, such as violent crime. The lack of effective education in these communities can foster an environment where lawlessness and violence thrive. The activities of armed groups, including cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, and raids on villages (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2024), can be seen as manifestations of anomie, where the breakdown of social norms and values contributes to criminal behavior.



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**Armed Groups and Raids:** The presence of armed groups in rural areas, which prey on vulnerable communities, highlights the absence of a social framework that could prevent such criminal behavior. Durkheim's theory would argue that the lack of social integration and strong community ties contributes to the rise of these groups. By improving teacher quality and educational outcomes, these communities can experience better integration into society, reducing the appeal of joining criminal gangs.

**Kidnapping for Ransom:** Kidnapping, as a major crime in rural Northern Nigeria, is exacerbated by the lack of social cohesion and institutional support. According to Durkheim's theory, the breakdown of social structures, including education, increases the likelihood of deviant behavior. Enhancing education, and thus restoring a sense of order and belonging, can reduce the risk of young people being drawn into criminal enterprises.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Durkheim's concept of *anomie*, a state of normlessness and social instability, can be applied to nomadic communities in rural Nigeria. In these areas, the transient nature of nomadic life disrupts consistent access to education, leading to a breakdown of social cohesion. This fragmented educational infrastructure exacerbates the issue, resulting in instability and the erosion of social norms and values. Such social disorganization increases the potential for deviant behavior and insecurity (Akinmoladun et al., 2022; Adewale, 2021). Education is essential in restoring social order. Durkheim's notion of *collective conscience* emphasizes the importance of shared values and norms that bind society. In nomadic communities, improving education quality can help restore social cohesion by integrating academic knowledge and societal norms. Quality teachers can reinforce a collective identity, giving nomadic children a sense of belonging and stability. This moral integration, which includes teaching values like peace and cooperation, can help integrate students into the broader society and make them more resilient to external threats like extremism (Durkheim, 2013; Tella & Tella, 2020; Baker & Keegan, 2021). Durkheim argued that anomie occurs when individuals lack guidance and structure. Teachers play a critical role as social anchors, especially in nomadic schools with weak or inconsistent educational structures. High-quality teachers can reduce alienation and foster social cohesion, helping mitigate violent conflict and integrate nomadic students into the broader societal framework (Olaniyan et al., 2018; Akinmoladun et al., 2022). Educational disparities between rural and urban areas in Nigeria exacerbate feelings of alienation and insecurity. Durkheim's theory suggests that inequality in educational opportunities leads to higher rates of deviance and conflict. Addressing these disparities in nomadic communities can bridge the gap, promoting social cohesion and reducing anomie (Akinmoladun et al., 2022; Baker & Keegan, 2021). Improving teacher quality can provide nomadic children with equal opportunities for social integration and success. Social cohesion is key to stability, and Durkheim emphasized that its lack leads to insecurity. Improving education in nomadic communities can foster this cohesion. Teachers impart not only academic knowledge but also values promoting peace and cooperation, which can reduce involvement in criminal activities and contribute to reducing rural insecurity. Culturally competent teachers can serve as role models and help build resilience against threats like violent extremism (Baker & Keegan, 2021; Olaniyan et al., 2018). Durkheim's theory of anomie highlights the challenges faced by nomadic schools in Nigeria. Strengthening teacher quality can restore social cohesion, reduce alienation, and prevent the breakdown of norms that contribute to insecurity. Teachers, through stable, high-quality education, play a vital role in mitigating the causes of anomie and fostering shared values and community solidarity, ultimately helping to reduce insecurity in nomadic and rural communities (Tella & Tella, 2020).



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## Overview of the Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria

The Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria was introduced to address the unique educational needs of nomadic populations, including pastoral nomads, migrant fishermen, and other mobile communities. This initiative began in 1989 with the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), which was tasked with implementing the programme nationwide. The NCNE works in close collaboration with state and local governments, as well as local communities, to ensure that nomadic children have access to education. The programme is a crucial component of Nigeria's effort to provide equal educational opportunities to all citizens, particularly those who live in marginalized, mobile, or isolated communities (NCNE, 2013). The primary focus of the programme is to provide primary education for children in nomadic communities, ensuring that they can integrate into the broader educational system while also respecting their distinct lifestyles. Given the mobile nature of these populations, the education system has been adapted to meet their needs, incorporating flexibility in classroom structures and educational delivery methods. The Blueprint for Nomadic Education, as outlined by the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE, 2013), highlights the following objectives:

**Expose nomadic children to modern education** – Providing a foundation for nomadic children to access primary education and integrate into formal education systems.

**Instill a sense of belonging** – Educating nomadic children to recognize themselves as members of the broader Nigerian society, fostering national unity and understanding.

**Facilitate community development** – Ensuring that nomadic children can actively participate in the development of their local environments and the country as a whole.

**Improve living conditions** – Educating nomadic children to modernize their herding and animal management techniques, thereby improving their livelihoods and reducing hardship.

**Promote moral and religious values** – Teaching moral and religious practices to promote the overall well-being of the child.

**Support physical and intellectual development** – Providing opportunities for nomadic children to develop the skills necessary to thrive in the modern world, including both academic and practical knowledge.

To accommodate the distinctive lifestyle of nomads, various approaches have been integrated into the Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria:

**Regular Schools** – Designed for settled nomadic groups, with the inclusion of "helping teachers" who assist children struggling with unfamiliar curriculum or school systems.

**On-Site Schools** – Established for semi-sedentary nomads, typically located along common movement routes, enabling children to attend school while their families continue with their traditional activities.

**Mobile Schools** – Portable, flexible classrooms designed for families on the move. These schools incorporate models such as the Koranic Mallam Model, which is culturally relevant and adapted to the mobility of the students.

**Adult Education** – Offering basic literacy and numeracy programs for nomadic men and women to ensure that the entire community has access to educational opportunities.

**Radio and Distance Education** – A supplemental learning method that utilizes culturally relevant radio programs to reach nomadic children who may be geographically isolated or difficult to reach through traditional schooling methods.

The classroom structures within the Nomadic Education Programme are flexible and designed to accommodate the nomadic lifestyle. These structures include:



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- i. Permanent structures in settled communities.
- ii. Semi-permanent classrooms that can be adapted as needed.
- iii. Temporary classrooms that are easily moved to accommodate the mobile nature of nomadic communities.
- iv. Under tree-shade classrooms for areas where even temporary structures are difficult to establish.

### **Teacher Quality in Nomadic Schools in Nigeria**

Teacher quality is a critical factor influencing the overall quality of education in Nigeria's nomadic schools. Despite the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) implementing various programs to improve teacher training, there are still significant challenges in providing qualified and competent educators for nomadic communities. Many teachers who receive specialized training for nomadic schools are often transferred to conventional schools, leaving a shortage of qualified staff in these rural areas. Additionally, the reluctance of teachers to accept postings in rural and remote regions exacerbates the staffing crisis, which has been a major barrier to improving the quality of education for nomadic children (NCNE, 2018). One of the states most affected by this issue is Bauchi, where schools suffer from dilapidated infrastructure and insufficient qualified teachers. For example, in Mararaban Liman Katagum, a 14-year-old student struggles with algebraic equations, despite being taught by a social studies teacher who was reassigned to teach mathematics without the necessary background (UNICEF, 2023). This lack of subject-specific expertise highlights the broader issue of inadequate teacher preparation and mismatched assignments in nomadic schools.

In response to the teacher shortage, the NCNE has implemented a multigrade teaching method that allows a single teacher to manage multiple grade levels. While this approach is a necessary adaptation, it faces significant hurdles, including limited funding, insecurity, and a continued lack of teachers willing to serve in rural areas (NCNE, 2017). These challenges have led to low pupil enrollment, high dropout rates, and an increasing number of out-of-school children in nomadic communities. A 2023 report by the NCNE identified several persistent problems that impact teacher quality, including a shortage of qualified teachers, especially female teachers who could serve as role models for the nomadic girl-child. The report also noted that many trained teachers are indiscriminately transferred to conventional schools without replacement, further undermining efforts to improve education in nomadic communities (NCNE, 2016).

### **Sociological Viewpoint on Teacher Quality as a Tool for Combating Rural Insecurity in Nigeria**

Emile Durkheim's Anomie Theory provides a compelling framework for understanding the challenges of teacher quality in nomadic schools in northern Nigeria and how improving education in these communities can serve as a tool for combating rural insecurity. Anomie, in Durkheim's terms, refers to a state of normlessness, where the absence or breakdown of social norms and values leads to a disconnect between individual aspirations and societal expectations. In times of social change or instability, this lack of shared norms can result in alienation, frustration, and ultimately, social disintegration. When individuals feel disconnected from established societal norms, they may engage in deviant behavior, which, in the case of rural insecurity, can contribute to rising violence and criminal activity. In the context of nomadic schools in northern Nigeria, Durkheim's concept of anomie helps explain the consequences of poor teacher quality and its broader social implications. Nomadic communities are typically marginalized in terms of access to education, economic resources, and infrastructure. This educational deprivation results in a shortage of qualified and adequately trained teachers, perpetuating a cycle of educational anomie. Without proper standards,



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norms, or qualifications, the educational system in these regions fails to provide children with a strong foundation for societal integration, exacerbating feelings of alienation and disconnection. This dysfunction within the educational system has far-reaching social consequences. Nomadic communities face the unique challenge of constant migration, which undermines the stability of educational programs. Teachers in these areas are often undertrained and lack the necessary resources to effectively educate students. This situation fosters a sense of normlessness—children in these communities are not equipped with the skills or knowledge required to participate in the formal economy or integrate into broader society. Consequently, they may grow up feeling disconnected from mainstream society, increasing their vulnerability to recruitment by groups involved in criminal activities, such as armed banditry and kidnapping.

Enhancing teacher quality in nomadic schools can serve as a crucial countermeasure to the social dysfunction described by Durkheim. Addressing teacher shortages, providing professional development opportunities, and ensuring that teachers in nomadic areas are properly qualified can help re-establish educational norms and standards essential for social integration. High-quality education can act as a stabilizing force, giving children a sense of purpose and direction, thereby reducing the likelihood of social dislocation and insecurity. Education not only equips students with essential skills for economic participation but also fosters a shared understanding of societal values, contributing to greater social cohesion and peace within these communities. Durkheim's theory underscores the role of education as a mechanism for social integration. It helps establish common values and norms that promote social solidarity. In nomadic communities, providing quality education can mitigate feelings of alienation by equipping children with the tools necessary to build sustainable livelihoods. This educational empowerment can also strengthen community bonds, as children who are educated with a focus on shared values and community development are more likely to contribute positively to their society. Recent studies highlight the role of education in combating rural insecurity in Nigeria. According to a 2023 report, over 60% of children in nomadic areas lack access to quality education, and many of those who do attend school face high dropout rates due to inadequate teaching and resources (NCNE, 2023). As a result, educational institutions, particularly those in rural and nomadic areas, remain key sites for addressing the root causes of rural insecurity. As noted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2024), improving educational outcomes in rural areas can mitigate the socio-economic factors that drive violence and insurgency. From a Durkheimian perspective, improving teacher quality in nomadic schools in northern Nigeria is more than just an educational reform; it is a vital tool for combating rural insecurity. By restoring order and stability in educational systems, society can integrate marginalized groups into the broader social and economic fabric, thereby reducing the alienation that often fuels insecurity.

## **Conclusion**

Strengthening teacher quality in nomadic schools in northern Nigeria is essential not only for improving education but also for addressing rural insecurity. Poor teacher qualifications, inadequate resources, and social dislocation contribute to educational deprivation, reinforcing the normlessness and instability that fuel insecurity. From a Durkheimian perspective, investing in teacher training, professional development, and educational infrastructure can restore social cohesion, reduce alienation, and equip children with the skills necessary for economic and societal integration. By improving education in nomadic communities, society can mitigate the root causes of rural insecurity and promote long-term stability.



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## Suggestions

Based on the conclusion drawn on the basis of discussion, the following suggestions were put forward:

1. There is a need for the government, through the NCNE, to increase Teacher Training Programmes. This can be achieved by establishing specialized training programs for teachers in nomadic schools to ensure they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to teach effectively in these unique environments.
2. Considering the unique challenges faced while teaching in nomadic schools, there is a need to provide incentives for teachers. This can be done by offering financial and professional incentives, such as higher salaries and housing allowances, to attract qualified teachers to rural and nomadic schools.
3. To complement government efforts, there is a need for pastoralists to be willing to give up some control. To achieve this, the issue of the cattle tax (*Jangali*) needs to be revisited. However, this can only be possible when pastoralists make themselves known, register, and allow their movements to be monitored before any reasonable planning for the livestock sector can take place.
4. To achieve the above suggestions, there is a need for the NCNE to continue promoting community involvement. This can be done by encouraging local communities to actively participate in the education process, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of nomadic schools.
5. Since effective teaching and learning interactions require classroom infrastructure, which is lacking in nomadic schools, more emphasis should be placed on multigrade teaching models to improve teacher quality. Therefore, the NCNE should refine multigrade teaching strategies that allow teachers to effectively handle mixed-age classrooms often found in nomadic schools.
6. There is also a need to increase the recruitment and support of female teachers to serve as role models, especially for girls in nomadic communities, helping to address gender disparities in education.
7. The frequent transfer of trained teachers to conventional schools needs to be stopped while ensuring consistent deployment and job stability in nomadic schools.

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[des@fugusau.edu.ng](mailto:des@fugusau.edu.ng)

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