



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among Public Primary Schools in North-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the safety status of primary schools; determined the productivity status of primary school teachers; and assessed how safety training and transportation safety contribute to teachers' productivity. The study has two objectives and two research questions. The study was anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943). A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised all teachers and head teachers in public primary schools in the North East, totaling 153,866. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to purposively select three states (Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe), forty-five primary schools, and 381 respondents consisting of 336 teachers and 45 head teachers. Two validated instruments titled the Primary School Safety Questionnaire (PSSQ) and the Primary School Safety and Teacher Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ) with reliability index of 0.70 and 0.81 respectively, were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were employed to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that the safety status of primary schools in the North East is critically low across all measured indicators. The study revealed positive impact of safety training and transportation safety. The study recommends urgent government investment in safety training and transportation safety in the North East.

Keywords: Safety, Training, Transportation, Primary Schools, Teachers, Productivity

Introduction

Safety is a condition of being protected from harm or attack. It relates to the absence of threats to human life and dignity. It is the state of being free from hazard, risk, injuries and loss of properties. Safety is the condition of being free from risks, injury, fear and danger (Okaforcha & Okeke, 2023). In this regard therefore, safety is a concept that includes all measures and practice taken to preserve the life, health and integrity of individuals. Essentially, these measures and practices include among others, the safety training for teachers and transportation safety for both teachers and pupils. Safety training refers to the formal process of equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent, manage, and respond to risks and emergencies. In the educational sector, this includes training in emergency preparedness, first aid, psychosocial support, and threat assessment, particularly for teachers in insecure environments (Dominguez, Mares & Hernández, 2021). In this conviction therefore, safety training in the educational sector has its origins in the broader discipline of occupational health and safety, which emerged in the early 20th century during the industrial revolution when the hazards of workplace conditions demanded systemic regulation. By the mid-20th century, educational institutions, particularly in high-risk or densely populated regions, began adapting these frameworks to safeguard both learners and teaching staff. In postcolonial African states like Nigeria, educational safety began to take shape through health inspections, fire drills, and basic first-aid training (Anokam & Ipem, 2022). However, in many parts of the world, especially in fragile or conflict-affected contexts, the notion of safety training for



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

educators remains either underdeveloped or entirely absent, despite overwhelming evidence that teachers frequently operate under high-risk conditions, especially in volatile regions (UNICEF, 2021). In an area like North East zone of Nigeria that is plagued by insurgency and other emergencies, safety training serves a dual function. These are preserving life and sustaining pedagogical continuity. As noted by Duchi, Shaibu and Orebiyi (2023) the role of safety training is especially necessary in the zone where insecurity has led to significant teacher attrition, absenteeism, and declining classroom performance. Global Business Coalition for Education (2015) advocates for training of every staff in each school on security measures. The training should incorporate procedures for evacuation of school buildings and communicating with security officials. According to Uloko and Ada, (2022) schools and their relevant stakeholders acquire wide range of opportunities on training in the knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them to fully implement critical measures of school safety and security in their respective schools. The training should be on key competencies that teachers and school managers require to carry out their duties as safety providers in schools; for the successful implementation of the Minimum; ensuring learners and school personnel are kept safe and supported to overcome traumatic situations resulting from violence in schools. The intricate relationship between safety training and primary school teachers' productivity in North East cannot be overemphasizing. Several studies (Duchi, et al (2023); Uloko and Ada, (2022) revealed that safety training significantly enhances teacher performance by improving attendance, emotional resilience, lesson delivery, and classroom management in a region plagued by insecurity and educational disruption. Schools that adopted comprehensive safety and psychosocial training have recorded reduced attrition, better learner outcomes, and increased job satisfaction among teachers. Ultimately, integrating safety training into the education system is not just a protective measure but a strategic investment in human capital development and the sustainability of education in conflict-affected regions.

Transportation safety refers to the systematic protection of commuters from physical, psychological, and environmental harm during movement via roads, rail, air, or waterways (Orolade, 2024). It encompasses not only vehicle conditions but also road quality, regulation enforcement, and threat mitigation in transit environments. Yet, in regions afflicted by insecurity, such as the North East of Nigeria where insurgencies and other vices have persisted since 2009, transportation has become not just a logistical challenge but a life-threatening endeavor (Anokam & Ipem, 2022). Primary school teachers' ability to travel to and from work without physical or psychological harm is indispensable. Their productivity is influenced by various internal and external factors, among which transportation stands as a vital yet often underemphasized determinant. The deterioration of roads, vehicular inadequacies, and pervasive insecurity has converged to render daily commutes for primary school teachers not only burdensome but often traumatizing. In this context, transportation safety becomes a decisive factor in determining the extent to which teachers can be physically present, mentally stable, and professionally effective in the classroom. Teachers travelling across the Northeastern region frequently encounter military checkpoints, damaged roadways, and ambush threats, making safe, reliable commuting a persistent challenge (Jummai, 2022). Poor transport access or safety, often makes productivity to be compromised due to fatigue, absenteeism, or psychosocial stress (Anokam & Ipem, 2022; GBCE, 2015). Productivity in the context of teaching is not limited to instructional hours or output alone; it encompasses preparedness, creativity, emotional stability, and sustained motivation (UNESCO, 2020). This study is anchored on two theoretical frameworks: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory posits that human behaviour is driven by the desire to fulfil a set of hierarchical needs, beginning with physiological



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)
needs and progressing through safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The theory holds that safety needs including protection from harm, security, and stability must be satisfied before individuals can pursue higher-level goals such as productivity, creativity, and professional development (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023). Applied to this study, Maslow's framework provides insight into how the disruption of basic safety needs undermines teacher productivity in conflict-affected regions. For teachers in North East Nigeria, persistent insecurity directly inhibits their ability to concentrate, innovate, and remain present in school, thereby affecting their effectiveness and long-term professional engagement. In recent times, studies that bear relevance with the current one have been conducted globally. For instance, Masath, Mattonet, Hermenau, Nkuba, & Hecker (2023) investigated the effectiveness of the preventative intervention Interaction Competencies with Children—for Teachers (ICC-T) in reducing violent discipline by teachers in a two-arm matched cluster-randomized controlled trial. The sample comprised teachers ($n=173$, 53.7% female) and students ($n=914$, 50.5% girls) from 12 public primary schools from six regions in Tanzania. Finding of the study revealed that ICC-T may positively change teachers' violent disciplining behavior and their attitudes towards violent discipline. The reviewed study is relevant to the present one since it tested the effectiveness of the preventative intervention Interaction Competencies with Children—for Teachers. However, the study adopted a two-arm matched cluster-randomized controlled trial as a design while, the present study adopts a descriptive survey design. Furthermore, only 12 public primary schools from six regions in Tanzania were used studied, against the present study which covers ninety schools.

Another study was carried out by Nkuba, Hermenau¹, Goesmann and Hecker (2018) on reducing violence by teachers using the preventative intervention interaction competencies with children for teachers (ICC-T): a cluster randomized controlled trial at public secondary schools in Tanzania. The study adopted a cluster randomized controlled trial to assessed attitudes towards and use of violence by teachers (self-reported and reported by students) at eight schools in four regions in Tanzania. Participants' acceptance was high and they reported a good integration of the core elements in their working routine. The significantly stronger decrease in the use of emotional and physical violence reported both by teachers and students as well as the stronger decrease in positive attitudes of teachers towards physical and emotional violence in the intervention schools at follow-up provide initial evidence of the efficacy. The reviewed study is relevant to the present one since it tested the effectiveness of the preventative intervention Interaction Competencies with Children—for Teachers. However, the study adopted a two-arm matched cluster-randomized controlled trial on only 8 public secondary schools from eight regions in Tanzania as a design while, the present study adopts a descriptive survey design. The present study will be carried out in ninety primary schools in a crisis affected North East, Nigeria. Similarly, Fountas, Olowosegun and Basbas (2022) in a study provided an empirical analysis of the factors influencing the injury severities of the accidents that occurred on trips to or from school in Scotland. Using 9-year data from the STATS19 public database, random parameter binary logit models with allowances for heterogeneity in the means were estimated in order to investigate injury severities in urban and rural areas. The results suggested that factors such as the road type, lighting conditions, vehicle type, and age of the driver or casualty constitute the common determinants of injury severities in both urban and rural areas. The study revealed further that, School travel has been a significant source of safety concerns for children, parents, and public authorities and it will continue to be a source of concerns as long as severe accidents continue to emerge during pupils' commute to school. The findings of this study can inform future policy interventions with a focus on traffic calming in the proximity of schools. The reviewed study is



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

relevant to the current study in many respects. However, it differs in terms of methodology. The study uses 9-year secondary data from the STATS19 public database and random parameter binary logit models with allowances for heterogeneity. The current study uses primary data and adopts descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in an advanced and relatively peaceful environment. But the current study is in the North East, Nigeria – a region battling with security challenges.

Statement of the Problem

School safety encompasses a wide range of factors that include physical security, emotional well-being, environmental cleanliness, safety training, transport safety and digital safety. Safety in all aspects is paramount to the attainment of set objectives of primary schools. School is regarded as safe when it is devoid of any form of threat to life or danger and it possesses all the basic needs for its operation. Safe school is a situation in which the teachers and learners feel at home, maintain confidence and positive state of mind and are always at ease and happy towards the achievement of educational goals. North East zone has been afflicted with insurgency, kidnapping, school attacks and poor school infrastructure. These challenges not only expose teachers to threats on professional concerns but, extend to personal survival. Despite increasing recognition of the importance of safety training and transportation safety, many primary schools in the North East remain unsafe for operation. Negative reports, such as underdeveloped or entirely absent of safety training as well as low transportation safety (UNICEF, 2021) are some of the leading reasons for teacher absenteeism, poor instructional delivery and decline learning outcomes. A wide gap exists in the implementation of several government policies that seek to address school safety, such as the National Policy on Safety and Security in Schools. Teachers' productivity is to a large extent depended on the conditions under which they operate. Teachers cannot deliver effectively, if they operate in an unsafe, unsuitable and unpredictable environment. Teachers are demoralized and get involved into reduced attendance due to unsafe environment. It encourages attrition and lower performance. These realities prompted this study in order to investigate the extent to which various aspects of safety training and transportation safety contributes to teacher productivity in primary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out how school safety contributes to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Examine how safety training contributes to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria.
2. Determine how transportation safety contributes to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions are set in order to guide the research toward achieving its objectives:

1. How does safety training contribute to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria?
2. How does transportation safety contribute to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria?

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enables the systematic collection of data from a large population in order to describe existing conditions, perceptions and practices as accurately as possible, without manipulation of variables (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). Thus, the design would allow the researcher



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)
 to obtain quantitative data on various dimensions of school safety and their implications to primary school teachers' productivity.

Table 1: Population

S/N	State	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Head teachers	Number of Teachers
1.	Adamawa state	2, 599	2, 599	26, 862
2.	Bauchi state	3, 401	3, 401	24, 419
3.	Borno state	702	702	21, 356
4.	Gombe state	1, 911	1, 911	17, 847
5.	Taraba state	2, 797	2, 797	26, 124
6.	Yobe state	1, 965	1, 965	10, 418
	Total			
	Grand Total	13,375	13,375	127,116 153,866

Sources: UBEC: *Digest of Basic Education* (2018).

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. In Stage 1, three states Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe were purposively selected based on their status as newly created states carved from Bauchi, Gongola/Adamawa, and Borno respectively, and their documented prevalence of safety challenges. In stage 2, fifteen primary schools per state were selected using purposive sampling from one education zone and one local government based on prevalence of safety challenges, bringing a total to forty-five (45) schools. In Stage 3, a sample of 381 respondents was drawn proportionately across the three states based on the corresponding percentage of number of teachers per state. And in each state, teachers are selected based on their experience. Table 2 presents the sample distribution.

Table 2: Sampled Number of Respondents

S/No.	State	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Sampled Schools	Number of Head Teachers	Sampled Number of Head Teachers	Number of Teachers	Sampled Number of Teachers
1.	Gombe	1,911	15	1,911	15	17,847	110
2.	Taraba	2,797	15	2,797	15	26,124	161
3.	Yobe	1,965	15	1,965	15	10,418	65
	Total	6,673	45	6,673	45	54,389	336
	Grand Total						

Source: Fieldwork 2026

Two instruments were used for data collection: these are the Primary School Safety Questionnaire (PSSQ) and Teachers Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ) administered to both the head teachers and teachers. PSSQ was made to generate information on four (4) objectives of the study that relates to safety in primary schools. Whereas TPQ was used to generate information on one (1) objective that relates to teacher productivity. Both instruments were structured on a four-point modified Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 4) and were validated by three experts, one each from Science and Vocational Education, Adult Education and Extension Services and Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology departments in the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, UDUS. Reliability index was established using the test-retest method, yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 for PSSQ and 0.78 for TPQ. Based on these coefficients, the instruments were considered reliable and suitable for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive

Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)
 statistics (mean and standard deviation) for the research questions, with a benchmark mean of 2.50 serving as the decision criterion.

Presentation of Results

The result was based on the two research questions raised and answered in the study;

Research Question 1: How does safety training promote primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Safety Training contribution to Primary School teachers' productivity

S/N	Safety Training Items	X	Std	Remarks
1.	Regular safety training gives me the confidence to focus on any given task without constant fear of workplace hazards.	2.46	1.04	Disagree
2.	Knowledge of first aid allows me to handle minor injuries quickly, minimizing disruptions to instructional time.	2.50	1.15	Agree
3.	Training on emergency evacuation protocols (e.g., fire or security threats) helps to maintain better school order.	2.60	1.14	Agree
4.	Security awareness training specifically tailored to the Northeast context reduces my work-related anxiety.	2.62	1.11	Agree
5.	Participation in safety workshops has reduced my rate of absenteeism caused by stress or safety concerns.	2.49	1.13	Disagree
6.	Safety training has improved my ability to identify and report potential risks before they escalate into accidents.	2.63	1.13	Agree
7.	Overall, the safety skills I have acquired make me feel more professional and competent in my role as a head.	2.61	1.15	Agree

Source: Field work. 2026

Table 3 revealed how safety training contributes to the productivity of primary school teachers in North East, Nigeria. The data indicates mixed results regarding the perceived contribution of these training programs on teacher productivity which was considered in terms of performance and confidence. Notably, respondents disagreed that regular safety training provides the confidence to focus on tasks without fear of hazards with a mean score of 2.46 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.04 and a mean score of 2.49 (standard deviation of 1.13) on question that says participating in safety workshops has effectively reduced absenteeism caused by stress or safety concerns. Conversely, the study found that specific, practical safety skills are perceived as beneficial for productivity. Teachers agreed that training on emergency evacuation protocols helps maintain better school order with a mean score of 2.60 (standard deviation of 1.14) and they reported that security awareness training tailored to the North East context reduces work-related anxiety with mean score of 2.62 and corresponding standard deviation of 1.11. Additionally, respondents agreed that possessing knowledge of first aid allows them to handle minor injuries efficiently, which minimizes disruptions to instructional time with a mean score of 2.50 and corresponding standard deviation of 1.15. Teachers agreed that such training has improved their ability to identify and report potential risks before they escalate into accidents with a mean score of 2.63 (standard deviation of 1.13). Furthermore, there is a consensus that the overall safety skills acquired through these programs make teachers feel more professional and competent in their roles with mean score of 2.61 (standard deviation of 1.15). The findings highlight a positive contribution of safety training to teachers' productivity with 2.56 grand total of mean with corresponding standard deviation of 1.12.

Research Question 2: How does transportation safety contribute to primary school teachers' productivity in North East, Nigeria?

Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

Table 4: Ways by which transportation safety contributes primary school teachers' productivity

S/N	Transportation Safety Items	X	Std	Remarks
1.	Safe and secure transportation makes staff arrives to school early enough to start duties on time.	2.61	1.15	Agree
2.	Reliable and safe transport options encourage high rate of daily school attendance.	2.58	1.09	Agree
3.	Frequent road safety hazards in this region cause physical exhaustion that negatively impacts on daily service delivery.	2.54	1.11	Agree
4.	Improved transportation safety allows me to stay back for after-school meetings and extracurricular activities.	2.56	1.27	Agree
5.	Knowing that transportation is safe enhances overall job satisfaction and motivation.	2.66	1.19	Agree
6.	I am more likely to remain committed to my current posting if the transportation routes are guaranteed to be safe.	2.50	1.10	Agree
7.	A calm and safe journey to school helps me maintain better emotional balance and patience when managing staff and pupils.	2.63	1.11	Agree

Source: Field work, 2026

Table 4 indicates a generally positive contribution of transportation safety to teachers' productivity as respondents expressed agreement with all seven items presented. This suggest that safe transportation is viewed as a significant factor in facilitating teachers' professional duties. Specifically, majority of the respondents agreed that safe and secure transportation enables them to arrive early for duties with mean scores of 2.61 (standard deviation of 1.15) and encourages a high rate of daily school attendance with mean of 2.58 (standard deviation of 1.09). Furthermore, the results highlight how transportation challenges impact the physical and professional capacity of educators in the region. Majority of the respondents also agreed that frequent road safety hazards contribute to physical exhaustion, which negatively impacts their daily service delivery (mean: 2.54 corresponding to standard deviation 1.11). They also agreed that having improved transportation safety provides the flexibility to stay back for after-school meetings and extracurricular activities (mean: 2.56 and standard deviation: 1.27). Participants agreed that knowing transportation is safe enhances their overall job satisfaction and motivation (mean: 2.66 and standard deviation: 1.19), and they are more likely to remain committed to their current postings if routes are guaranteed to be safe (mean: 2.50, standard deviation: 1.10). Additionally, teachers noted that a calm, safe journey helps them maintain the emotional balance and patience necessary for managing staff and pupils effectively (mean: 2.63, standard deviation: 1.11). Grand total mean stood as 2.58 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.14 demonstrates the psychological and motivational benefits of safe transit in contributing to teacher productivity measured in terms of their commitment and performance.

Summary of Findings

The following are summaries of findings:

1. Safety training in North East Nigeria shows limited impact on reducing general stress-related absenteeism or broad anxiety, teachers recognize its value in contributing to professional competence, improving risk identification, and providing practical skills such as emergency protocols and first aid that directly minimize classroom disruptions.



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

2. The findings indicate that safe and reliable transportation of headteachers and teachers is a critical factor for educators, as it positively contributes to their punctuality, daily attendance, physical well-being, professional motivation, and overall capacity to perform effectively in their school roles.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study indicates that while safety training in North East Nigeria shows limited impact on reducing general stress-related absenteeism or broad anxiety, teachers recognize its value in contributing to professional competence, improving risk identification, and providing practical skills such as emergency protocols and first aid that directly minimize classroom disruptions. This finding agrees with the study by Mutegi, Joshua and Kinyua (2023), who determined the effect of workplace safety on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Kenya which revealed that safety training statistically and positively affects employees' productive time, value-added output, and degree of accomplishment of tasks. This finding also agrees with the study by Younas, Farooq, Khalil-Ur-Rehman and Zreen (2018), who found a positive relationship between training, development, and employee performance in the banking sector of Pakistan. Similarly, Khan and Abdullah (2019) found strong positive correlations between training and development and teacher productivity in Kurdistan, specifically noting improvements in skills, morale, job knowledge, and proficiency as outcomes of training. However, the finding that safety training shows limited impact on reducing general stress-related absenteeism and broad anxiety is consistent with the study by Nkuba, Hermenau, Goesmann and Hecker (2018), who found in their cluster randomized controlled trial at public secondary schools in Tanzania that while a preventative intervention (ICC-T) significantly reduced physical and emotional violent discipline, there were no significant intervention effects on students' internalizing problems, suggesting that structured training does not automatically resolve the deeper psychological distress arising from chronic insecurity.

The second finding of this study reveals that safe and reliable transportation is a critical factor for educators, as it positively contributes to their punctuality, daily attendance, physical well-being, professional motivation, and overall capacity to perform effectively in their school roles. This finding agrees with the study by Nordfjærn and Rundmo (2018), who examined transport risk evaluations associated with past exposure to adverse security events in public transport among a representative sample of Norwegian urban residents and found that individuals previously exposed to adverse security events in public transport reported substantially higher risk perception and worry about experiencing injury. Their finding that elevated probability judgments of experiencing injury in public transport were related to a lower intention of using such transport directly supports the present finding's identification of transportation safety as a determinant of teacher attendance and punctuality, since fear-driven avoidance of unsafe transport inevitably affects teachers' ability to report to school regularly. This finding also agrees with the study by Fountas, et al, (2022), who analyzed injury severities for accidents occurring during school commutes in Scotland over a nine-year period and concluded that school travel has been a significant source of safety concerns for children, parents, and public authorities, and will continue to be so as long as severe accidents persist during the school commute. Furthermore, Kapatsila and Grisé (2025) investigated the impact of physical, social, and security factors on perceived safety on public transit in Canada, found that people who rate the importance of physical, social, or security factors higher tend to feel less safe on transit, with physical factors having the largest negative effect. However, this finding differs from the study by Simsek (2017), who examined transported education in Turkey and concluded that while transported education enhanced equal educational opportunities, transported children experienced



Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

fatigue and reduced academic performance due to long journey times. The difference may be attributed to contextual disparities: while Simsek's concern was with journey fatigue in a relatively secure environment, the present study's concern is with security-driven transportation risks in a conflict-affected zone, where the nature and severity of the transportation challenge is fundamentally different.

Conclusion

The study concluded that safety training positively enhances teacher productivity in the North East, particularly in terms of practical competence and professional confidence. However, general safety training has limited capacity to address deep-seated, trauma-related absenteeism and broad anxiety arising from chronic insecurity, suggesting that training must be complemented by broader psychosocial support systems. Transportation safety is also an essential but frequently neglected component of teacher welfare and productivity in the North East. The daily commute of teachers through conflict-prone, poorly maintained roads subjects them to physical exhaustion, psychological distress, and heightened risk of harm all of which negatively impact their attendance, punctuality, and classroom performance. Conversely, access to safe and reliable transportation directly enhances teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and professional commitment. Transportation safety must therefore be reconceptualized as a central dimension of educational planning and teacher welfare policy in conflict-affected regions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational authorities should strengthen safety training programs by making them more practical, regular, and context-specific. Training should cover emergency preparedness, conflict management, first aid, risk assessment, and stress management to further enhance teachers' competence and reduce disruptions to instructional activities.
2. Governments and educational stakeholders should improve transportation arrangements for teachers, particularly in rural and insecurity-prone areas. This may include providing staff buses, transportation allowances, or secure transport partnerships to ensure punctuality, regular attendance, and improved teacher performance.

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Assessment of Safety Training and Transportation Safety on Teachers' Productivity among ... Muhammad, A. K. & Zakari, A. S. (2026)

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