

Safety and Security Measures Adopted by Principals in Management of Public Secondary Schools in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the safety and security measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses, tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 10,054 respondents (296 principals and 9,758 teachers) in public secondary schools in Imo State. The sample size of 481 respondents (30 principals and 451 teachers) was drawn for the study using proportionate sampling technique. Researcher-developed instrument titled “Safety and Security Measures of Principals for School Management Questionnaire (SSMPSMQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument has 20 items in two clusters, prepared along four points likert rating scales of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with their corresponding points of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was duly validated by three specialists and using Cronback alpha method for test of internal consistency, reliability indices of 0.80 and 0.76 were obtained for cluster I and II respectively with an overall coefficient index of 0.78. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that safety and security measures were adopted by principals for staff and student management of public secondary schools in Imo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others that Secondary Education Management Board (SEMB) should be contracting private security organization to promote safety and security of staff, students and facilities in secondary schools.

Keywords: Safety, Security, Principals, Management, School Facilities, Secondary Schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

Management can be defined as the field of human behaviour in which managers plan, organize, direct, staff and control human, material and financial resources of an organized group. Aptly put, Anyaogu (2021) defines management as the art of getting things done through people. In the same vein, Uwazuruike (2019) sees management in its classical sense as being in charge or being in control.

School management is a goal-oriented activity that involves utilization of the available resources in educational institutions. Onwuchekwa and Onwuchekwa (2018) defined school management as the process of planning, organizing, leading, reporting, budgeting and controlling the effort or organization members and using all other available resources

to achieve stated objectives. School management is a systematic planning, organizing and combining human, financial, time, and material resources to execute the school programme toward the attainment of pre-determined educational goals and objectives. Secondary school education comes after primary and before the higher education. It is the bridge between the primary and tertiary levels.

Principalship involves the control of human and material resources for the achievement of the school goals and objectives. The management of secondary school is an arduous task of the principals. The principal is the chief executive officer in the Nigerian secondary school. He is the leader, who strives to realize the school aims, safety and security of the school and maintain its atmosphere (Onye and Amaechi, 2016). The principal has a responsibility to ensure that the school environment and facilities are safe for effective teaching and learning.

Safety is the state of being free from anxiety, hazard, risk, threats, injuries and loss of property (Ogbo, Aligwe and Chidi, (2021). However, safety is all about keeping the school environment free of hazardous situations that could put at risk the lives of students and staff. According to Asodike and Nwabueze (2017), school safety could be defined as a situation in which the teachers and learners feel at home, develop confidence, maintain a positive state of mind, and do not show any signs of withdrawal from the school, but, work towards the achievement of their personal goals. To Ugwuashi (2016), school safety is essential in all ramifications for efficient and effective academic pursuit, because teaching and learning cannot take place in situations of fear, anxiety and suppression. According to Ronoh (2018), schools that are safe and responsive have plans and procedures in place to deal with violent and disruptive behaviours that may occur. Aptly put, school safety is being protected from psychological and physical dangers. The principal can attain this through some certain safety and security measures.

Security is the state of being free from danger or threats. It is the activity involved in protecting an individual, building of a country against attack, danger, fear, anxiety etc. To Ike (2015), security entails a stable, relatively predictable environment in which an individual or a group may pursue its

end without disruption or harm and without fear of disturbance or injury. Elucidating further, Ike (2015) defined school security as a measure taken for the protection of students, staff and facilities from attacks or dangers. School security are those measures taken to protect and manage school violence, reduce safety risks and liability, and improve on school community relationship. Safety and security measures are the means and ways of ensuring that administrators, teachers, students, parents, visitors and facilities in educational institutions are free from danger, threats, and destruction.

Re-iterating, Ronoh (2018), safety and security measures are means of preventing crisis, and reacting to violations of existing rules that prohibits unruly behaviours which are likely to cause security and safety risks. In consonance to Ronoh (2018), Hamilton-Ekeke (2017), states that safety and security measures in schools involve obedience to rules and regulations, reading labels on chemicals, laboratory equipment, wearing safety gadgets, having fire extinguisher in required places, observing road/path signs and highway codes, etc. Hence, a well-functioning school is not only a school that promotes teaching and learning, but also cares for safety and security of personnel and the available facilities. As opined by Ike (2015), school safety and security management measures/techniques are the strategies and procedures required to coordinate the diverse activities of the school, protect and manage school violence, reduce security risks and ensure that the school environment and the facilities are safe for teaching and learning. School principals embark on safety and security measures to protect students, staff and facilities in the event of dangers.

School facilities comprise land, buildings, equipment and furnitures. It includes physical facilities for teaching, spaces and ancillary rooms. In other words, school facilities are the material and infrastructural resources or physical assets of the school. To Ogbo, Aligwe and Chidi (2021), these resources include classroom and administrative blocks, staff offices, furniture, electrical fixtures, sports equipment, library, laboratory, water supply amenities, sanitary, refectory and recreational amenities among others. Other crucial resources in school are the personnel, time and financial resource. As these school facilities are used on daily basis, they are exposed to wear and tear and as such bound to deteriorate and depreciate. In order to ensure uninterrupted usage, safety, security and maintenance of school facilities becomes imperative. Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020), pointed out that some of the safety and security measures in personnel management (staff and student) could include guards, community or parental participation, security officers, private security personnel on contract who might also offer a rapid armed response service or police officer, town vigilante group. There have been hues and cries over the safety and security of students, staff and facilities in Nigerian secondary schools. The situation has become a source of worry to several schools and researchers especially to Imo State,

Nigeria. The senseless killings, raping, kidnapping for ransom, herdsman destruction of farms, the sit at home on Mondays in the South East of Nigeria and the unknown gunmen have instilled and infused fear, tension, anxiety, uncertainty, grief into students, pupils and staff. The perception of insecurity or fear of violence has often influenced peoples act and behaviour. This fear can affect learner's school attendance, cause poor school performance and the general wellbeing of students.

Nwobodo and Udebunu (2018) stressed that secondary school students in Nigeria are often very much in danger of being harmed and the perception can lead to withdrawal from school. In the same vein, Obiamaka and Enyi (2020) lamented on the adverse effect of insecurity on the students, parents and the community. On the issue of school facilities, Ugwulashi (2017), observed that many educational facilities in Nigerian secondary schools recently are sources of hazards (dilapidated structures, classrooms, furnitures, bushy environment) to mention but a few. Yusuf and Idoghor (2016), stated that a large percentage of secondary schools in Nigeria are unsafe, there are no fire extinguishers, poor water supply and there is general lack of knowledge about safety and security measures among students and staff. The above scenarios have made school security and safety an issue in secondary schools. It is against this backdrop that the researcher (study) investigated the safety and security measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the safety and security measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. The safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students (personnel) management in public secondary schools in Imo State Nigeria.
2. Safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and student management in public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria?
2. What are the safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management in public secondary schools in Imo State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Imo State.

II. METHOD

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Imo State public secondary schools. The population of the study comprised 10,054 respondents (296 principals and 9758 teachers) in public secondary schools. The sample size of 481 respondents (30 principals and 451 teachers) were drawn for the study using proportionate sampling technique. A researcher developed instrument titled "Safety and Security Measures of Principals for School Management Questionnaire (SSMPSMQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument contains 20 items arranged in two clusters. Cluster 1 contains 12 items on safety and security measures for staff and students management, while cluster II has eight items on safety and security measures for facilities management. All the items in the instrument were structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was duly validated by three specialists. Two of them from Educational Management and Planning and one from Measurement and Evaluation in Faculty of Education of Imo State University, Owerri. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.76 for cluster I and II respectively with an overall coefficient of 0.78.

The researcher with the aid of three trained research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Imo State used direct approach for data collection. Copies of 481 rating scales were administered, 30 for principals and 451 for teachers respectively. A total of 473 copies were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 98% percent return rate. Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, any mean rating that fell below 2.50 was taken as disagreement and any mean rating of 2.50 and above was taken to indicate agreement. Standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents mean ratings. For decision on the hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was significant, but if otherwise, it was not significant.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students

management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Safety and Security Measures Adopted by Principals for Staff and Students Management

| S/N | Items | Mean | SD | Decision | X | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|------|------|----------|------|------|----------|
| 1 | Prompt provision of first aid treatment in the case of injury | 2.67 | 1.02 | Agree | 2.61 | 1.08 | Agree |
| 2 | Orientating of staff and students on security tips to safeguard their life | 2.86 | 0.07 | Agree | 2.71 | 1.08 | Agree |
| 3 | Stationing of security guard at school gate to minimize suspicious people entering into the school. | 2.83 | 0.96 | Agree | 2.74 | 1.14 | Agree |
| 4 | Making available fire extinguishers in the case of fire outbreaks in the school | 2.42 | 1.07 | Disagree | 2.43 | 1.10 | Disagree |
| 5 | Offering counselling and Guidance to staff and Students on various security issues | 2.61 | 0.99 | Agree | 2.57 | 1.00 | Agree |
| 6 | Providing school ambulance for emergency | 2.36 | 1.12 | Disagree | 2.35 | 1.12 | Disagree |
| 7 | Formulation of strict school Safety and security rules and regulations | 3.10 | 0.76 | Agree | 3.21 | 0.81 | Agree |
| 8 | Instruct teachers to be serious with students roll calls at specified times for Child accounting | 2.53 | 1.02 | Agree | 2.52 | 1.06 | Agree |
| 9 | The issuance of identity cards to staff and students to distinguish them from intruders. | 3.32 | 1.10 | Agree | 3.15 | 1.06 | Agree |
| 10 | Enlightening of staff and students on regular safety updates. | 2.91 | 1.05 | Agree | 2.93 | 1.02 | Agree |

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|----|--|------|------|----------|------|------|----------|----|---|------|------|--------------|------|------|----------|
| 11 | Expulsion of students threatening other students safety | 2.47 | 1.11 | Disagree | 2.41 | 1.16 | Disagree | | ensure safety and security of facilities after school | | | | | | |
| 12 | Provision of facilities for security personnel for utilization to ensure safety and security of students and staff | 2.56 | 1.11 | Agree | 2.54 | 1.01 | Agree | 16 | Replacing damaged doors and windows to safeguard school facilities | 2.62 | 1.10 | Agree | 2.59 | 1.10 | Agree |
| | Cluster Mean | 2.72 | 1.03 | Agree | 2.68 | 1.05 | Agree | 17 | Seek the services safe guarding consultant on issues related to safety of school facilities | 2.54 | 1.11 | Agree | 2.51 | 1.16 | Agree |
| | | | | | | | | 18 | Installation of closed circuit television cameras to monitor movement of facilities within the school | 2.46 | 1.03 | Disagreement | 2.41 | 0.97 | Disagree |
| | | | | | | | | 19 | Renovating cracked walls To prevent collapse of school building | 2.45 | 1.14 | Disagree | 2.43 | 1.16 | Disagree |
| | | | | | | | | 20 | Recruit of right watchmen To guard school plant during night time | 2.37 | 0.97 | Disagree | 2.40 | 1.13 | Disagree |
| | | | | | | | | | Cluster Mean | 2.47 | 1.04 | Disagree | 2.45 | 1.12 | Disagree |

Data analysis presented on Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of both principals and teachers for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management. On the other hand, mean ratings of both principals and teachers for items 4, 6 and 11 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items safety measures adopted by principals for staff and students management.

The cluster mean of 2.72 and 2.68 for principals and teachers respectively which are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicated that safety and security measures are adopted by principals for staff and students management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The cluster standard deviation score of 1.03 and 1.05 for principals and teachers respectively indicated that their responses are homogeneous.

Research Question 2: What are the safety and security measures adopted by principals for facility management in public secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Safety and Security Measures adopted by Principals for Facilities Management?

| S/N | Items | Principals (N=30) | | | Teachers (N=443) | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|------|----------|------------------|------|----------|
| | | X | SD | Decision | X | SD | Decision |
| 13 | Ensuring the school premises are fenced to prevent stealing of school facilities (plant) | 2.51 | 1.01 | Agree | 2.50 | 1.09 | Agree |
| 14 | Establishing security audits for checking faulty facilities that needed repair | 2.42 | 0.87 | Disagree | 2.40 | 1.15 | Disagree |
| 15 | Collaborate with local vigi- lante groups to | 2.40 | 1.12 | Disagree | 2.37 | 1.20 | Disagree |

As shown on Table 2, the mean scores of both principals and teachers for items 13, 16 and 17 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management. On the other hand, mean ratings of both principals and teachers for items 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management. The cluster standard deviation scores of 1.04 and 1.12 for principals and teachers respectively indicated that their responses are homogeneous (similar).

The cluster mean of 2.47 and 2.45 for principals and teachers respectively which are below the cut off mean of 2.50 indicated that safety and security measures are not adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management in public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Rating of Principals and Teachers on Safety Measures adopted by Principals for Staff and Students Management.

| Respondents | N | X | SD | t.cal | t.crit | Df | Level of Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------|-----|------|------|-------|--------|-----|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Principals | 30 | 2.67 | 1.05 | 0.16 | 1.96 | 471 | 0.05 | Not significant (Accept HO) |
| Teachers | 443 | 2.63 | 1.08 | | | | | |

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of 0.16 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 471 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis is not significant. This concludes that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management in public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principal and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary school in Imo State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management

| Respondents | N | X | SD | t-cal. | t-crit. | Df | Level of Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------|-----|------|------|--------|---------|-----|---------------|-----------------|
| Principals | 30 | 2.47 | 1.04 | 0.10 | 1.96 | 471 | 0.05 | Not significant |
| Teachers | 443 | 2.45 | 1.12 | | | | | |

As shown on Table 4, the t-calculated value of 0.10 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level at significance and 471 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that safety and security measures are adopted by principals for staff and students management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management include the issuance of identity cards to staff and students to distinguish them from intruders; formulation of strict school safety rules and regulations; orientating staff and students on security tops

to safeguard their life, stationing of security guard at school gate, enlightenment of staff and students on regular safety and security updates among others. The finding was in congruent with Ogbo, Aligwe and Chidi (2021) who revealed that principals promote learning environment free of fears and dangers among staff and students through safety measures for personnel management, the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management prevent physical attacks, violence and emotional disorder among staff and students of secondary schools in Enugu State. They concluded that safety measures are very necessary to support academic success of students by creating orderly learning environment devoid of risks, fear of danger. However, the findings was contradicted by Ike (2015) whose finding revealed among others that some security devices for the improvement of security situations as well as the emergency response plans for managing secondary schools were not available in most schools. The disagreement in findings could be attributed to difference in geographical locations of the studies, and the period they were carried out.

It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety and security measures adopted by principals for staff and students management in Imo State public secondary school. This is in agreement with the finding of Obiamaka and Enyi (2020) which revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on safety measures for personnel management in secondary schools. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the same time span in which the two studies were carried out.

The findings of this study showed that safety and security measures were not adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. This is in conformity with the finding of Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) who reported that there was gross neglect of facilities safety measures in the schools. This was in consonance with Obasi and Madu (2016) who revealed among others that most school facilities are in bad condition and therefore unsafe for the users. The similarity in findings could be attributed to the time span in which the two studies were conducted. The safety and security measures that are not adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Imo State include among others establishment of security audits for checking faulty facilities that needed repair, recruit of night watchmen to guard school plant during night time, renovating cracked school walls to prevent collapse of school buildings, installation of closed circuit television cameras to monitor movement of facilities. The safety measures that are not adopted by principals for facilities management could account for the breakdown and deterioration of material resources in Imo State secondary schools. Public secondary schools in Imo State are characterized by frequent lost of school properties, dilapidated buildings, broken furniture and other deplorable condition of facilities. The states of these facilities pose a threat to lives of staff and students.

Further result showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Imo State. This finding supported the finding of Ogbo, Aligwe and Chidi (2020) who reported that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on safety measures for facilities management in secondary schools. The possible explanation for agreement between the two studies could be the fact that the two studies were conducted in the country Nigeria and almost the same year.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that secondary school principals in Imo State have not adopted safety measures for facilities management. This could account for infrastructural decay in secondary schools. However, it is evident that principals adopted safety and security measures for personnel management which promote learning environment free of fears and dangers among staff and students. The safety measures prevented physical attacks, violence, emotional disorder and absenteeism among students and staff. It becomes apparent that safety and security measures are very necessary to support academic success of student by creating orderly learning environment devoid of risks, fear of danger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Secondary Education Management Board (SEMB) should contract private security organization to promote safety and security of staff, student and school facilities.
2. Principals should collaborate with local vigilante groups and the host community to secure safety and security of personnel and facilities in secondary school.
3. Ministry of education should organize regular seminars for principals on the safety and security measures for staff and students management to enable them acquire updated skills and knowledge to safeguard lives and facilities.

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