Safety Measures Adopted in Management of Public Secondary Schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the assessment of safety measures in the management of public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Four research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey was adopted and questionnaire was used for the study. The population comprised all the six area councils in the FCT with 56 senior secondary schools and 3339 teachers. A random sample of 270 teachers was used. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation .The findings showed that electronic and human safety measures are not adequately employed in schools. Physical safety measures such as fencing, lightening of dark areas and clearing of bushes among others are in use in FCT schools. Recommendations include; provision of security resources by the government; frantic efforts by the principals in attracting support from government, NGOs and the community and teachers' good relationship with students towards information gathering.

Key Words: Safety, Measures, Schools, Students, Environment

Introduction

Insecurity is a major challenge confronting our educational system today. There have been records of series of threats and violent attacks on schools leading to loss of lives and properties mainly in rural schools. [Oladunjoye & Omemu (2013); Joda & Abdulrasheed (2015]. O'Mallay (2007) observed that schools where children are expected to be safe have increasingly become the prime target of attacks by armed parties. School safety involves provision of an environment where teaching and learning are carried out effectively

without threat to the safety and wellbeing of children and other stakeholders. This type of environment promotes students' overall physical, emotional, social, and academic development.

Ensuring adequate safety and security in secondary schools should be a combined responsibility of the government, teachers, school, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and the community. Igbuzor(2011) observed that security calls for safety from chronic threats and offering an all-round protection.

A school is said to be safe when its physical environment creates an emotionally, psychologically and socially secured atmosphere to members of the school community thereby bringing about improved and effective teaching and learning. This therefore calls for the need to plan for the prevention and intervention of any form of natural, physical, social and technological threats to the school and the entire school community.

Students easily develop a sense of belonging and confidence; maintain a positive state of mind in a school where they feel safe and secured. Akubue (1991) noted that good learning environment fosters desirable behaviour and attitude, problem-solving skills and creative thought; encourages students' interrelationship and learner-centred methods. Children should be safe at school as a result, all stakeholders including government, school, teachers,

community, Parents, NGOs have responsibilities in ensuring this safety.

In the opinion of Akpobibibo (2003), the smooth running of the educational system is achieved when security is assured. Health and Safety Advisers of Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards (1997) classified safety measures into: electronic, physical and human measures.

Electronic Measures which includes the use of alarm, surveillance camera, metal detectors and cell phones. Use of these devices makes it easier to detect intruders and to spread information about emergency situations. Azazi (2011) highlighted the Federal Government's efforts of installing security devices in the different parts of the country to enhance surveillance and thus ameliorate the incidence of crime.

Physical Measures include fencing of the school compound, increasing the height of existing fence if need be, use of well protected doors and windows. In the view of Safe School Initiative (2014), strengthening the physical protection of schools enables staff and students to be shielded and also provides a means of self-defence. Closure of all entrances into the school premises and maintaining the use of one makes it easy for proper monitoring of staff, students and visitors' movement in and out of the school compound.

According to Massachusetts Task Force Report on School Safety and Security (2014), positive, safe and

clean school environment is essential for sound development of the child and high level learning leading to improved students' academic performance. Regular clearing of bushes within and around the school premises and adequate and functional security lightings prevent hideout for intruders.

Human Measures involves the use of guards and security patrols, planning educational programmes on security, community involvement in school security, effective management and "school watch" initiative for school premises (Health and Safety Advisers of Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards, 1997). In the view of Alabi, Oduwaiye & Fasas (2012) staff quality and quantity in the school system and their regular motivation determine their performance on the job, hence the learning environment. The various ways the school can ensure safety through the application of human measures are:

Use of information: School administrators should inform members of the school community, community members and parents of the school's safety and security policy, and encourage them to assist the school in its actualization. The Massachusetts Task Force Report on School Safety and Security (2014) stated that schools should be a safe place for students to learn and teachers to teach. For this to be achieved, all school and community stakeholders must be committed to the course.

Personnel Training: It is imperative that regular training programmes on security be organised for staff, students and security personnel in school. The training could be on how to escape during attacks, dissemination of information during emergency, techniques of screening visitors and technical ways of handling visitors suspected to be harmful among others. According to Health and Safety Advisers of Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards (1997), school safety officers need to be able to "identify legitimate visitors, monitor their arrival as well as their movement around the school, and their departure time"

Community Involvement: According to Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor - Robaro (2013), "communities should be vigilant of strangers in their localities to ensure that criminals do not have easy access to their communities". Involving the community in this task makes the school to be recognised as a part of the community it serves, this attracts support. As stated by Safe School Initiative (2014), " communities have specialised knowledge about their particular context and conflict dynamics, and may even know the individuals involved, they may be the best suited to devising practical solutions for protecting education from attack and for helping negotiate schools as peaceful zone". The

community serves as the eye of the school; they occupy good position to inform the law enforcement personnel and the school of strange movements or activities of people through the introduction of the "school watch system". The school watch system encourages neighbours living around the school to report any suspicious person or unusual events to the police (Health and Safety Advisers of NI Education and Library Boards (1997).Other ways the school can employ human measures include; the use of religious leaders, quick response approach and counselling. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (2013), "studies have shown that the presence of security guards and metal detectors in schools negatively impacts students' perceptions of safety and even increase fear among some students". Counselling therefore serves a great purpose in this regard.

The findings in Amanchukwu (2012) revealed that the challenges in ensuring safety and security in schools include; inadequate manpower, erratic power supply, corruption, inadequate funds and lack of training for staff and students.

The success of an educational system depends on the nature of the learning environment. Massachusetts Task Force Report on School Safety and Security (2014) stated that "No child will be able to succeed academically if they do not first feel safe in school. No teacher will be able to teach at their best if they are not

confident there is a plan in place to ensure their school is well prepared for an emergency."

A safe learning environment naturally motivates both staff and students to always be in school. Recent threats and attacks on schools, conflicts between cults, cases of rape among others vices in secondary schools have resulted to increased dropout rate and poor academic performance. O'Mallay (2007) noted that schools have become the target of attacks instead of a place of safety for children. These may have led to irregular school attendance by students and teachers, poor academic performance and subsequently increased dropout rate.

The studies of Oladunjoye & Omemu (2013); Joda & Abdulrasheed(2015) revealed the incessant attacks on schools by insurgents with illustrations of the abduction of 200 school girls in government secondary school, Chibok, Borno State in 2014, killing of 49 students, injuring 69 students and 6 teachers in government secondary school Potiskum, Yobe State 2014, and bombing of school of agriculture, Yobe State in 2013 killing 60 students. There are also records of attacks in other areas of the Federal Capital Territory other than schools in 2011 and 2014 (Ibange 2015) . This has led to panic by parents concerning their children in schools in the FCT. Attacks on schools in other states could probably be as a result of inadequate security measures in the schools. It therefore becomes

necessary to ensure that safety measures are adopted in the management of public secondary schools in the FCT.

Purpose of the Study
The study focussed on the safety measures adopted in the management of public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Specifically, the study
1. determined ways electronic safety measures are used in public secondary schools in FCT
2. determined ways physical safety measures are provided in public secondary schools in FCT
3. determined ways human safety measures are employed in public secondary schools in FCT

Methodology
Area of Study: The area of study was the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The study covered three area councils of Bwari, Kuje and Gwagwalada in the Federal Capital Territory.
Design of the Study: The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This involves collecting data from a representative sample of the population for intensive study and making analysis in order to answer questions, and then generalize the result to the population (Asika 1991).
Population for the Study: The population comprised all the teachers (3,339) in the 56 public senior secondary schools in the six Area Councils in the FCT.

Sample and Sampling Technique: Three Area Councils were selected from the six Area Councils in the FCT. From each of the three Area Councils, six schools were selected and fifteen teachers each giving a total of 270 teachers. The multi stage and simple random sampling were used for the selection.
Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire titled Teachers Questionnaire on Safety Measures in Secondary Schools(TQSMSS) was used to collect data. A four-point Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was adopted. The instrument was validated by experts. A reliability index of 0.84 was obtained after pilot testing using split-half method and then Pearson Product Moment Correlation.
Data Collection Technique: The research instrument was administered to the respondents in their various schools and collected on the spot. The respondents are teachers in public secondary schools in Bwari, Kuje, and Gwagwalada area councils of FCT
Data Analysis: The data collected were analysed statistically using mean and standard deviation. Mean scores above 2.5 were regarded as agreement while those below 2.5 were considered as disagreement.

Results and Findings
Research Question One
In what ways are electronic safety measures in use in public secondary schools in FCT?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Use of Electronic Measures in Secondary Schools in FCT

S/N	Use of Electronic Measures	Mean	STD DEV.	Decision
1	There are alarms against fire in the School building	1.40	1.62	Disagree
2	There are surveillance camera in the gate and school premises	1.09	0.30	Disagree
3	Security guards are equipped with panic buttons for emergencies	1.46	0.84	Disagree
4	Security guards have effective cell phone for communication	2.27	1.17	Disagree
5	Security guards have metal detectors for screening visitors entry the school	1.41	0.77	Disagree
	Sectional Mean	**1.53**		**Disagree**

N= 270

Table 1 indicates a general disagreement on all the items on the use of electronic safety measures in schools. The sectional mean of 1.53 shows that electronic safety measures are not used in public secondary schools in the FCT.

Research Question Two

How are physical safety measures provided in public secondary schools in FCT?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Provision of Physical Safety Measures in Secondary Schools in FCT

S/N	Indicators of Physical Safety Measures	Mean	STD DEV.	Decision
1	The School compound is fenced with high walls	2.40	1.15	Disagree
2	All dark areas within and around the school are properly lit at night	2.14	1.10	Disagree
3	Bushes within and around the school premises are always cleared	3.60	0.57	Agree
4	Door frames and hinges are in good conditions and strong	3.32	0.87	Agree
5	Doors and windows have strong burglary	2.05	1.02	Disagree
	Sectional Mean	**2.70**		**Agree**

N=270

The Table 2 shows agreement on the use of physical safety measures in the areas of bush clearing and good condition of doors. Conversely, there was disagreement on fencing of school compound, lighting of dark areas at night, and provision of burglary for doors and windows. The sectional mean yielded 2.70 showing that physical safety measures are provided

in public secondary schools in the FCT.

In what ways are human safety measures employed in public secondary schools in FCT?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Human Safety Measures Employed in Secondary Schools in FCT

S/N	Human Safety Measures	Mean	STD DEV.	Decision
1	Staff and Students have identity cards and always put it on	2.40	1.03	Disagree
2	Visitors are thoroughly screened before allowed into the school premises	2.55	1.08	Agree
3	Visitors are required to wear the school tag before allowed access into the compound	1.45	0.58	Disagree
4	Students and staff entering and leaving the school compound are monitored	2.73	1.09	Agree
5	There is adequate number of security guards in schools	2.14	1.06	Disagree
6	Safety and security training program is organised for members of the school community	1.54	0.84	Disagree
7	Visitors are not allowed to come into the school premises with cars	2.05	1.07	Disagree
	Sectional Mean	**2.12**		**Disagree**

N=270

Table 3 shows agreement that visitors' are screened also students and staff monitored. All other items recorded disagreement. Generally a sectional mean of 2.12 indicates that human safety measures are not employed in public secondary schools in FCTSS

Discussion of Findings
Protection of lives and properties in school creates room for sustaining the educational system of a nation; the learning environment must be conducive to guarantee effective teaching and learning where teachers and students have assurance of safety within the school environment. Security is not just the absence of threat from the people, but also the ability to protect them from developmental inadequacies (Imobighe, 1998). There is a call for patience from people living in unsecured areas, just signing of peace accord may not be enough (Mathieu Bere, 2011). This therefore demands that all stakeholders should collaborate to find lasting solutions to the insecurity in the land. Education being a major tool for national growth

and development requires adequate finance and human resources (staff and students) for continuity towards the achievements of its aims. From the analysis of data collected, the following findings were made:

The findings on the use of electronic safety measures in public secondary schools revealed that these safety measures are not adequately in use in the FCT. This is in line with the findings of Amanchukwu (2012) who found that there are a number of challenges to the implementation of electronic safety measures. This implies that intruders cannot be detected and monitored electronically; school security guards will not be able to easily detect any visitor, staff or student who may come into the school with weapons, neither will they be able to pass information timely.

It was shown from the study that physical measures of safety are in use in public secondary schools in FCT. This corresponds with the findings of Oladunjoye & Omemu (2013) that found out that, even in the face of attack, some secondary school students still take the risk of attending school. This implies that there are physical safety measures put in place that give them assurance of safety. Akintoye (2010) opined that incidence of attack by insurgents result in absolute fear in survivors who are frightened to send their children to school especially when they are not certain of the provision of security measures.

Human safety measures were found not to be in adequate use in schools. However, a study carried out by Oladunjoye & Omemu (2013) revealed that schools in urban areas received protection from government security forces during insurgency. The challenge of insecurity is not peculiar to any nation rather the ability to manage the challenge is what makes the difference between developed and developing countries. According to Akintokumbo (2011), the success of these countries to manage the threats of insecurity depends on their level of information gathering, the extent to which they allocate resources against threats, and their level of patriotism and unity.

School administrators have important role to play in ensuring that lives and property within the school are well protected. Amanchukwu 2014, stated that there is no hope for a nation where the education of the child is negatively affected. Safety and security in school can be achieved through consultation with the community within which the school is located and seeking assistance from philanthropists, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to employ and train security personnel for the schools.

Conclusion
The study revealed that the bushes within and around school premises were always cleared, door frames and hinges are in good conditions while others physical safety measures are

not in use. It also found that visitors are thoroughly screened before allowed access into the school premises, and staff and students entering the school premises are monitored while other human safety measures were found not to be in adequate use. Finally, it was confirmed from the study that electronic measure of safety were not being employed in public secondary schools in the FCT.

The success of any educational system is hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate financing. Properly planned safety measures, backed up with adequate finance for its implementation is a gateway to successful safe learning environment. Amanchukwu 2014 was of the view that there is no hope for a nation where the education of the child is negatively affected.

School administrators, parents, government and all meaning Nigerian have enormous responsibility of ensuring safety and security in the school for the achievement of the broad goals of secondary education which include useful living within the society, and higher education. There is a call for patience from people living in unsecured areas, just signing of peace accord may not be enough (Mathieu Bere, 2011). This therefore demands that all stakeholders should collaborate to find lasting solution to insecurity in the land.

Recommendations

The consciousness of safety makes it easier for everyone to work towards making the school a safe haven for learning. Ensuring safety and security in schools is quite expensive; hence,

1. Government need to go back to the drawing board and make necessary plans for the provision of resources for school safety particularly electronic and human safety measures.

2. School administrators should put in tireless effort to make the school a safe and secured place for learning. They are not to relent in their quest for support from the government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Companies, and Parent Teachers Association (PTA) for the provision of adequate and well equipped security personnel in the school. They should organise sensitization programmes where members of the community will be well informed on the effects of threats and violent attacks in schools.

3. Teachers should endeavour to establish good relationship with students. Through this, they will be able to get necessary information from them on security matters.

4. Parents and other stakeholders should show high level of interest in ensuring safety and security in public schools. Through their little contributions, the physical safety measures in the school can be provided, and also educate their

children/ wards on issues of security.

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