

Safety and Security Measures in the Management of Secondary Education in Okigwe Education Zone II of Imo State

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Abstract

The study investigated Safety and Security measures in management of secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State, Nigeria. Based on the purpose of the study, two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 167 principals in the 65 public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone. A sample size of 100 respondents made up of principals was selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was rating scale titled 'Security and Safety Measures for Management of Secondary Schools (SSMMSS)' which was validated by an expert in measurement and evaluation and one expert in educational management. The reliability index of 0.72 was obtained using cronbach Alpha reliability index. Data collected were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. The results of the study indicated that cultism, kidnapping, militant group, invasion of Fulani Herds, violent attack from the village youths, drug addiction is prevalent in the management of public secondary schools. It was recommended among others that the school management and the host communities should form a synergy and always be at alert to tackle insecurity in the school environment .

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Background to the Study

Education is a social process that brings positive change in the behaviour, character and knowledge of the students, citizens and the entire nation. This is why a responsible government invest heavily in the education of her citizens and this investment is noticed in the establishment of schools with adequate infrastructural facilities and its maintenance for achieving educational goals Agaobi (2022).

School is a place where learners come together to acquire knowledge, values, skills. School is designed to provide learning spaces and learning environment for teaching of students under the direction of teachers. However, for teaching and learning to effectively take place in the school, there must be an effective school management with adequate security and safety measures to secure lives and properties. Security is a necessary precondition for development of human beings and the nation. Realizing the need for security as a basic condition for the survival of the society and the people, the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria provided in section 14(1) (b) that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government. This assignment has been insubstantially dis-charged, judging the high levels of insecurity in the state and country as a whole (Ibrahim,2021).

Our society today is highly plaque by various forms of9 insecurity especially in our secondary schools and there is need to tackle them in order to promote and protect human beings and societal development. This high rate of insecurity has so much spread down to our secondary education system with grave consequences especially in the areas of teaching and learning which this has brought a great source of concern among educators and stakeholders.

Secondary education system is that level of education that lies between the primary and tertiary levels of education its objective is to prepare the youths to acquire basic education and skills for self-employment and happy adult life as well as preparation for university education. The secondary education has two section (JSS1-3) Junior Secondary School (SSS1-3). Ahaebi and Igwebuike (2018) observed that the age range of senior secondary school students is between 14-18 years. This teen age of secondary covers pre-adolescent, adolescent and early adulthood expose them to series of delinquent behaviors which may cause insecurity within and around the school environment. Recently the crises of violence and extremism have been on the increase in both tertiary and secondary levels of education. Also, political and tribal crises have contributed to the growing cases of cultism, theft and other forms of insecurity activities within and around our schools. The existence and activities of unknown gun men, Fulani herds men, organ harvesters, kidnapping, steal and other violent activities are no longer new to our communities where our schools are located. All these have led to closing down of schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 especially on Mondays. Also, the state of infrastructures in our public schools have contributed to insecurity in the schools, due to lack of perimeter fencing, iron gates, and other security measures that may help protect lives and properties within the school and environment. Almost all the schools have no security personnel attached to

them, this makes the school compound to be a through fare for community members and intruders at all times. With this situation, the school students and teachers become vulnerable during these violent attacks due to lack of security personnel in the schools. Even the government security agencies are never available during the violent attacks.

Adebayo (2020) is of the view that schools in the violence prone areas should be attached with armed security agents in order to protect lives of vulnerable students, teachers and other workers in the school even the community host. The principal being the executive head of secondary school education system oversees the activities of student, teachers and other workers in the school towards achieving educational objectives as well as school objectives. So, it is her duty to provide adequate security in order to protect lives and properties in the school environment. Nwankwo and Okafor (2022) expressed that school security management is the process of creating conducive environment for teaching and learning free from intimidation and fear of violence from within or outside the school. The principal may achieve this through the use of technologies, infrastructure and security personnel capable of mitigating any security threats in the school. The trend of insecurity in the schools these days demand that the school heads and the government should be at alert and also provide adequate security measures in the school by installing security gadgets such as CCTV cameras, alarm bells, guide sinage at the gate and within the school environment. There should also be presence of armed police men who have effective communication with the local government department, the school counseling unit should counsel indiscipline problems and anti-social behaviors.

However, security management in secondary schools mostly in Okigwe Education Zone of Imo State is not just the whole responsibility of the principals and teachers but that of the entire stakeholders like government host communities, security agents, parents, students and the society at large.

Statement of the Problem

Public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State have become deport or centers for insecurity activities due to its dilapidated state and porous nature which has posed a serious threat to students, teachers, other workers and host communities. Security challenges such as cultism, kidnapping, killings by herds men, abduction of students by organ harvesters, armed robbery, village violent crises which are on the increase have now become a great worry and concern to the school management and stakeholders as teaching and learning are being disrupted regularly (Mune and Kalam,2021). All efforts by the school management to put a stop to it proved abortive.

Observation have shown that absence of CCTV cameras, visitors' book at the gate entrance, high perimeter fencing, well trained security personnel have also posed great threats to the school's management in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State. This could be noticed in the regular closure of schools which led to high rate of kidnapping, stealing, organ harvesting, cyber-crime and school drop outs. This gap becomes a problem as students in Okigwe educational zone could not be exposure to adequate teaching and

learning. Consequently, the student becomes have baked in acquiring learning in school. This study therefore is set to investigate measures that will help ameliorate security challenges in public schools in Okigwe Educational Zone.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is:

1. To find out the security challenges prevalent in the management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State
2. To identify the sustainable security measures available for effective management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the security challenges prevalent in the management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State?
2. What are the sustainable security measures available for effective management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design seeks to collect detailed data that describes the nature of existing conditions. The population of the study comprised of all the 167 principals in all the 65 public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11. A sample size of 100 principals was selected using purposive simple random sampling technique constituting more than half of principals in okigwe education zone 11. The instrument used for data collection was research made rating scale titled 'Safety and Security Measures in the Management of secondary Schools' (SSMMSS). The instrument was rated on a four-point likert scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, strongly disagree with numerical values, 4 ,3 ,2 and 1 and face to face content validity of the instrument were established by two experts in measurement and evaluation and one expert from education management. They scrutinized the contents of the questionnaires and offered useful corrections and suggestions, which influenced the modifications. Based on such corrections and suggestions, the instrument was considered suitable for the research being conducted. The reliability of the instrument was established when it was administered to 30 principals selected from 10 schools which are similar with the people used in the main study. The instrument has reliability index of 0.72 cronbach alpha reliability coefficient and was considered high enough and suitable for use in this study. Data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation, average result of 2.50 and above is accepted while any below 2.50 was rejected.

Research Question 1: What are the security challenges prevalent in the management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 of Imo State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on security challenges prevalent in the management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone 11 secondary schools.

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Cultism	3.32	0.62	Agree
2.	theft and vandalism	3.35	0.58	Agree
3.	Attacks from village youths	3.57	0.94	Agree
4.	Invasion of Fulani herdsmen	2.81	0.83	Agree
5.	Kidnapping around school environment	2.91	0.57	Agree
6.	Militants groups terrorize the host community	3.44	0.49	Agree
7.	Drug addiction by students	3.09	0.50	Agree

Results in table 1 shows that the mean score of respondents in all the items 1-7 are more than the bench mark of 2.50 which indicated that the respondent agreed that all the security challenges mentioned in the items above are prevalent in the study area.

Research Question 2: What are sustainable security measures available for effective management of public secondary school Okigwe Education Zone II?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on security measures available for effective management of public secondary schools in Okigwe Education Zone.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Perimeter fancy with gates	1.88	0.91	Disagree
2	Presence of security personnel	1.92	0.33	Disagree
3	Presence of government security agent	1.34	0.59	Disagree
4	Visitors' guidelines	2.28	0.49	Disagree
5	Video surveillance camera (CCTV)	1.59	0.61	Disagree
6	Availability of iron gates	1.98	0.81	Disagree
7	Central communication system	1.89	1.19	Disagree
8	Iron doors	1.48	1.48	Disagree
9	Security lights	2.04	0.82	Disagree
10	burglary proof doors and windows	2.20	1.02	Disagree

Results in table 2 shows that all the mean score respondents in all the items are less than the bench mark 2.50 This showed that the respondents disagree that the measures are not available to manage security challenges in public schools in Okigwe education zone 11.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in the table 1 shows all the items and the mean are above the mean bench mark. This indicated that the respondents agreed that all the security challenges mentioned are prevalent in their school environment. This result agreed with finding of

Ibrahim (2021) who is of the view that schools in Nigeria have increasingly become targets of various security threats of cultism, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, cyber-crime and violent criminal groups. The responses to research question 2 above show that the entire item mean is less than 2.50 benchmark. It indicated that the security measures mentioned are not available for managing security challenges in the study area. The finding agrees with Nwankwo and Okogbue (2022) view that majority of public schools in Nigeria have no perimeter fencing, iron gates, technological devices (CCTV camera), burglary proof, doors and windows and absence of armed security agents.

Conclusion

Security challenges such as cultism, kidnapping, killings by herds men, abduction of students by organ harvesters, armed robbery, village violent crises which are on the increase have now become a great worry and concern to the school management and stakeholders as teaching and learning are being disrupted regularly

Recommendation

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school management and the host communities should form a synergy and always be at alert to tackle insecurity in the school environment.
2. The school's management through government intervention should be encouraged to adopt modern security measures like CCTV, surveillances etc. Provide security and safety seminars, counseling services and maintenance of high discipline as to enable them handle potential security challenges before it escalates more in the school environment

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