

## Managing Security Challenges for Sustainable Secondary Education in Northern Cross River State

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### Abstract

The study investigated the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in Northern Senatorial District, Cross River State. The need for the study had risen out of escalating insecurity situation arising in the country, which poses a substantial threat to both students and teachers' safety within schools' campus, disrupts educational activities and undermines successful achievement of educational outcomes. There were three specific objectives for the study: to establish the existing security challenges affecting secondary schools, to assess the strategies used by school administrators in addressing these challenges and to determine whether or not security management affects sustainability of secondary education in this area. It was a descriptive survey study. The population consisted of all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Northern senatorial district, sample 200 was through stratified random sampling process. Data was collated using a structured questionnaire called *Security Challenges and Sustainable Education Questionnaire* (SCSEQ). The data were treated with mean score and standard deviation, and the hypotheses were tested with the help of t-test independent sample at 0.05 level of significance. The study showed that vandalism, robbery, abduction and cultism are the most prevalent security challenges in secondary schools. Effective security management practices as perimeter walling, community policing, and involvement of the government agencies ensured continuity and successful operation of schools. The study recommends that proactive security management is a necessity for the attainment of sustainable secondary education in the area. This study suggested public, school authorities and stakeholders work together to fortify security network in schools and upgrade school surveillance systems and introduce peace education programme to protect learning centres to achieve the right of learners to have non disrupted access to education all time.

### **Background to the Study**

Security is a basic requirement for education system to operate effectively as it gives a secure and suitable environment for learning, teaching, and management work. In recent times, security threat on secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River state has taken a notorious dimension ranging from vandalism, cultism, and stealing, kidnapping and sporadic attacks by hoodlums. These threats have disrupted academic pursuit, instilled fear in the minds of students and teachers, with a decline in enrolment and absenteeism in school. According to Adams and Uzoigwe (2023) and Agbongiasede and Ololube (2021), insecurity in schools undermines teaching effectiveness and reduces students' concentration, leading to poor academic outcomes. Similarly, Agbongiasede (2024) observed that weak security infrastructure and lack of surveillance systems make rural and semi-urban schools particularly susceptible to intrusions and violence. Ategwu (2025) observed that lack of security settings has contributed to creating unconducive environment for learning achievement therefore management of security through education is acquired a secured and stable environment which is vital for sustainable national development Ategwu et al (2023) opined that the security of the school has become a growing concern due to change in the society including terrorism, gun fire and vandalism. Therefore, for security to be sustained government must provide security infrastructure for the safety of staff and students. In some communities, poor security infrastructure, inadequate fencing, lack of trained security personnel, and delayed government response to threats have made schools vulnerable to persistent insecurity. Uzoigwe and Adams (2023) further emphasized that such unsafe conditions negatively impact not only the academic environment but also the psychological well-being of teachers and learners. This development has generated a lot of fear in many educational sectors across the region because their lives and properties are threatened which jeopardizes the quality and sustainability of secondary education.

The growing prevalence of these security challenges has serious implications for the educational and socio-economic development in the region. Oftentimes teachers are in an atmosphere of fear and under threat, and students can't focus on learning when they feel afraid. According to Ekpenyong, Uzoigwe, Onabe and Onwochei (2020) continuous insecurity leads to teacher absenteeism, discouragement and failure on the part of students among other factors all of which result in poor quality education. Administrators in schools cannot do much to ensure proper safety measures are taken because of inadequate funding, lack of cooperation from the community and the government. Ukpong and Uzoigwe (2020) posit that a failure of community engagement and poor coordination among institutions are causes of school insecurity. These problems lead to some critical questions on the capacity of school authorities, in vulnerability risk management and how these efforts help in maintaining continuation of education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Consequently, this work will attempt to assess the security management of challenges for sustainable secondary education in Umuchinemere Pro-egg table and establish gaps and modalities towards enhancing a much safer and resilient school system.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Security is a key factor in the sustainability of education but many Secondary Schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State are under threat which undermines safety and educational stability. In the past few years, there has been an increase in incidents of burglary, vandalism, cultism, armed robbery and sometimes kidnapping on schools within and outside school premises. Such incidents are not only threats to students and teachers, but also involve damage or destruction of instructional materials and property on campus. Poor security architecture like fence walls, CCTV and armed guards have also left schools open to external attacks that are disrupting academic activities.

Notwithstanding the state government's quest to develop education in Cross River State, the insecurity situation at the Northern Senatorial District has impeded effective academic activities. Morale among teachers has suffered as many are reluctant or feel unsafe to work in vulnerable areas. Pupils also have fear and psychological distress, which results in absenteeism, inability to concentrate and fall off school performance. In a few instances, schools have been closed for short periods of time because of violent confrontations or threats, interrupting the school-year and decreasing the overall quality of instruction offered. These safety lapses have also led to parents refusing to send their wards to some public schools seen as unsafe.

It has been a matter of concern that the school management and the local authority appear unable to devise an effective approach in dealing with these security challenges and matters, which have aggravated. Lack of funds, passive community participation and poor coordination between schools and the security sectors are key barriers to systems of sustained safety. The ongoing volatile situation persists. The ongoing insecurity continues to threaten public confidence in the secondary education system and the fulfillment of educational targets in the region. It is on the basis of the forgoing consideration that this research has become inevitable as an inquiry into the management of security challenges to sustainable secondary education in Cross River State Northern Senatorial District which seeks to find out way's security matters will be received and tackled so as to promote safety, effective school community and long-term educational stability.

### **Literature Review**

Security is still one of the key aspects for quality education and for chances to secure development, particularly in developing countries where schools are under threats of environmental and socio-political risk. Research indicates that insecurity is now on the high increase in the Nigeria educational sector especially at higher secondary which is a crucial stage where students are more prone to attacks. A lot has been the impact of insecurity on education in Cross River State Northern Senatorial District as activities of theft, cultism and violence had caused interruptions in teaching and learning. Insecurity in schools' results to irregular attendance, teacher absenteeism and destruction of school facilities with an eventual effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of education delivery

Adams & Uzoigwe (2023). Likewise, Agbongiasede (2024) found out that some schools situated in the rural and semi-urban areas could be exciting potential target for security threats because of lack of perimeter fencing and inadequate surveillance system.

School resource officers are certainly not the most important part of the security threat, and it's the frontline school administrators who have to make these and all other decisions. Ensuring and protecting the safety of staff and students is primarily the responsibility of school leaders, who are duty bound to develop, implement and monitor safety policies. According to Ekpenyong, Uzoigwe Onabe and Onwochei (2020), the management of security challenges rests considerably on water-right awareness, administrative leadership initiative and availability of institutional facilities. Principals at a few schools have developed crisis plans and struck relationships with local security companies in hopes of preventing attacks. But not so, according to Ukpong and Uzoigwe (2020) who noted that many school heads are not strictly security managers by academic training and they react rather than take a proper proactive measure on how their institution can combat security challenges. This indicates that training of school leaders is important in managing security problems in education.

As insecurity takes its root, students' attendance is drastically affected as well as their academic achievement and teachers' productivity. Findings from Uzoigwe (2023) revealed that when school environment is constantly under consistent threat or chaotic due to violent attack pupils tend to be unwilling to keep good attendance in schools and this may affect their academic performance. Psychological stress, fear and demotivation are also experienced by teachers which leads to low instructional productivity. Furthermore, with schools becoming unsafe, parents and teachers lose faith in the education system leading to low enrollment rate and high drop-out ratio. Agbongiasede (2024) stressed that insecurity promotes teacher turnover indirectly, as teachers look for safety condition in other places. Therefore, the vicious cycle of fear and uncertainty does not auger well for a sustainable secondary education framework in such regions.

So, the extent to which schools and other institutions are able to respond to evolving threats is partly determined by what resources they can bring together at any point in time. Adams and Uzoigwe (2023) believe that facilities to guarantee security such as surveillance cameras, security personnel, alarm systems of public secondary schools in Nigeria; which are essential for effective management in securing them against unauthorized enter part of the common physical resources. In Cross River, Northern Senatorial District, poor funding and minimal government presence has brought about inadequate fencing of buildings and unskilled guards thereby making schools vulnerable to sporadic invasions. In addition, Uzoigwe and Adams (2023) expressed that a lack of contemporary security technology coupled with poor maintenance of the available infrastructure compromise schools' ability to detect and quickly respond to security incidents. Therefore, adequate security facilities are a necessity for the safety and continuity of educational settings.

It is said that the school community partnership is a key requirement for effective management of security in schools. Schools are not items in isolation, but part of wider communities of which the relationships ensure both safety and viability for education. Uzoigwe and Adams (2023) posited that community involvement improves sharing of information, early warning and surveillance systems, particularly in rural area. Where parents, community leaders and local vigilante groups work hand-in-glove with schools, threats are detected – and solutions found – more easily. But Ukpong and Uzoigwe (2020) opine that poor community-school relationship, absence of trust in school management by the people account for the reduction of security cooperation. It is for this reason that working on establishing trust and fostering a sense of collective responsibility is essential in order to make learning environments safe.

Some of the studies suggest a holistic approach including training, infrastructure and policy with stakeholder involvement for better handling security issues. Adams and Uzoigwe (2023) advocate for the development of ongoing security audits, risk assessments, and training exercises in schools to train attendees to effectively respond in a crisis scenario. Likewise, Ekpenyong, Uzoigwe, Onabe and Onwochei (2020) recommended that security education should be part of school curriculum to increase students' awareness and response to threats. Technology such as CCTV and biometric access control systems, have also been suggested for improving campus' security. Adequate support and monitoring from governmental and donor agencies are similarly essential to maintain this kind of programs. (Adams & Uzoigwe, 2023; Agbongiasede, 2024; Uzoigwe, 2023).

The literature reviewed pinpoints that the tackling of security challenges in order to have credible secondary education system in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River state demands all-embracing approach. Attendance, performance and teacher productivity are impacted by insecurity aggravated by lack of security resources, low capacity for enforcement and poor management. It is imperative that school administrators, local government and community work together for safe and sustainable education. Upon the review of these studies, it is apparent that stronger policy frameworks, and coordinated funding, capacity building are imperative strategies to confront security issues in secondary schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which security challenges are affecting secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.
2. Assess the strategies employed by school administrators in managing security threats in secondary schools.
3. Examine the influence of insecurity on students' attendance, academic performance, and teachers' productivity in secondary schools.

4. Identify the adequacy of security resources available for safeguarding lives within secondary school environments.
5. Investigate the role of community's collaboration in promoting safe secondary school environment.
6. Propose effective strategies for improving the management of security challenges to ensure the sustainability of secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to direct the study:

1. To what extent are security challenges affecting secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?
2. What strategies are employed by school administrators in managing security threats in secondary schools?
3. How does insecurity influence students' attendance, academic performance, and teachers' productivity in secondary schools?
4. How adequate are the security resources available for safeguarding lives and property within secondary school environments?
5. What role does community collaboration play in promoting a safe and secure secondary school environment?
6. What strategies can be adopted to improve the management of security challenges for the sustainability of secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their mean ratings on the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

### **Methodology**

This research used the descriptive survey design. The design was deemed more suitable as it enables the gathering, analyzing and interpretation of data from a scheduled sample in order to describe extant states, practices and views pertaining to the management of security challenges that affected sustainable secondary education. The study area is in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria and includes five Local Government Areas (LGA) - Ogoja, Bekwarra, Obanliku, Obudu and Yala. The area was chosen as the activities were in a crisis state, occasioned by theft, cultism, vandalism and sometimes community clashes which have destabilized educational environment and safety in secondary schools. The design allowed the researcher to explore an in-depth study on the nature, causes and management of security threats and their attendant consequences for the sustainability of secondary education in the context studied. The target population of the study was all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Northern senatorial district of Cross River State. These types of respondents

were chosen because they are responsible for the school's management, safety supervisory and / or policy execution in their respective schools. Data Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2024) showed that the principal and teachers' population in this district is 1,935.

The study used multistage sampling method to select a sample of 386 respondents. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select the five Local Government Areas in the district. In the second stage, a two-stage proportional stratified random sampling procedure was used to select secondary schools from urban and rural areas for representative purposes. The last step was then to obtain the respondents (principals and teachers) proportionally from each school using simple random sampling. This strategy helped ensure that the sample represented well the range of school contexts and administrative experiences in the study area. The study instrument was the School Security Management Assessment Questionnaire (SSMAQ) developed by the researcher, 4.0 Data Analysis and Presentation The data collected were analyzed using percentages. The questionnaire contained 36 items organised in six sections based on the objectives of the study: nature and extent of security challenges, strategies adopted by administrators, effects of insecurity on academic programme, adequacy of security resources, community participation and measures for enhancing security. The hoarding-related items are scored on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree [4] to Strongly Disagree [1]).

The instrument was face validated by three experts two from Educational Administration and Planning and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the University of Calabar, to establish clarity, relevance content validity. For instrument reliability, a pilot study was performed with 30 respondents not associated to the study area that resulted in Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.86 which is considered high internal consistency. The researcher personally administrated the instrument to the respondents in the selected schools with the assistance of four trained research assistants. This system served powerful as orientation, accuracy and collection of completed copies. Ethical considerations including informed consent, anonymous and confidential data collection were followed throughout the period of data collection. They were told of the study, and that their questionnaire answers would be used only for academic reasons. They could also drop out of the study at any point without any repercussions. The approval of the Cross-River State Ministry of Education and the schools' authorities was obtained prior to conducting this study. Inferential data were arranged and analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27.

Research questions were answered using descriptive summaries including mean and standard deviation. A cut point of 2.50 was set for the mean, with items  $>2.50$  classified as Agreed and those  $<2.50$  classed as Disagreed. The null hypothesis indicating that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding management security challenges for sustainable secondary education was tested with independent t-test statistical instrument at 0.05 level of confidence. The selection of statistical methods was based on characteristics of the research questions and

hypothesis, aimed at describing what respondents perceive (questions 6,7) and also investigating quite the differences with respect to gender. There was fidelity in the design and analysis approaches to representation of reality on security management situation and practices in secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The procedure, therefore, laid the foundation for confidence that results of the study are dependable and trustworthy as they may be used to guide policy and administrative decisions to enhance school safety and ensure continuity of secondary education in the area.

## Results

### Research Question One

To what extent are security challenges affecting secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

**Table 1:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the extent to which security challenges are affecting secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on security challenges affecting secondary education	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	Incidences of kidnapping and armed attacks have reduced students' attendance in schools.	386	2.86	0.72	A
2	Teachers often avoid posting to schools in insecure communities.	386	2.91	0.70	A
3	Destruction of school infrastructure due to communal conflicts and violence disrupts learning.	386	2.78	0.75	A
4	Fear of insecurity among students negatively affects their concentration and academic performance.	386	2.84	0.73	A
5	Parental fear of safety discourages consistent school attendance by children.	386	2.88	0.69	A
6	Security challenges have led to irregular supervision and monitoring of schools by education authorities.	386	2.81	0.71	A
Grand Mean		386	2.85	0.72	A

The results in Table 1 shows that security. problems are serious threat to secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State with a grand mean of 2.85 which is greater than the criterion, means of = 2.50. This refers to high impact influence of insecurity on different aspects of educational sustainability. The best-rated statement, was "Teachers often avoid being posted to schools in insecure areas" ( $\bar{x} = 2.91$ ) which implies that insecurity impacts on the staffing and availability of teachers. Also, low school attendance ( $\bar{x} = 2.86$ ) and parental fear on level of safety ( $\bar{x} = 2.88$ ), indicate that insecurity discourages pupils' regular involvement. Our study highlights the structural and administrative effects (destruction of school structures;  $\bar{x} =$

2.78) (limited supervision by education authorities;  $\bar{x} = 2.81$ ) on schools following decades-long insecurity. The low standard deviation scores (0.69-0.75) imply a high degree of agreement among the respondents in relation to the fact that insecurity is seriously affecting sustainable secondary education in the area. In general, the results call attention to the critical importance of concerted security efforts and stakeholder cooperation in establishing a safe educational environment with opportunities for growth.

### Research Question Two

What strategies are employed by school administrators in managing security threats in secondary schools?

**Table 2:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the strategies employed by school administrators in managing security threats in secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on strategies for managing security threats	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	School administrators collaborate with community vigilante groups to enhance school safety.	386	2.82	0.73	A
2	Security awareness and emergency drills are regularly conducted for students and staff.	386	2.74	0.75	A
3	Perimeter fencing, gates, and controlled entry points are used to restrict unauthorized access.	386	2.89	0.70	A
4	Security personnel are stationed within the school premises during school hours.	386	2.66	0.78	A
5	Communication links with local police and security agencies are maintained for rapid response.	386	2.83	0.71	A
6	Students and teachers are sensitized on reporting suspicious activities and potential threats.	386	2.87	0.69	A
Grand Mean		386	2.80	0.73	A

The results in Table 2 indicate that school Administrators in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State use numerous proactive actions for tackling security challenges in secondary schools as indicated by the grand mean score of 2.80 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. the participants had a moderate level of effectiveness in risk and preventive measures at their organizations. This ranking of the top-rated strategy "Perimeter fencing, gates, and controlled entry points" ( $\bar{x} = 2.89$ ) highlights the focus on physical security infrastructure to keep intruders out. Conversely, communication between vigilante groups ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ) and security agencies ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ ), in addition to collaboration with the police/vigilante groups ( $\bar{x} = 2.82$ ) demonstrate dependence on community relationships/ institutional linkages to enhance safety. Staff and students are sensitized to ( $\bar{x} = 2.87$ ) as well as drills ( $\bar{x} = 2.74$ ) periodicity, indicating administrators'

preparedness and awareness level of the potential danger inflicted by snipers. The mean score for stationed security personnel ( $\bar{x} = 2.66$ ) was moderate which implies that it may be difficult to maintain round-the-clock security due to financial or logistical reasons. The range of SD (0.69–0.78) reflected fair agreement among the respondents which corroborate that these indicators, although praiseworthy, need strengthening with improved harmony and funding by the government to have a permanent educational stability.

### Research Question Three

How does insecurity influence students' attendance, academic performance, and teachers' productivity in secondary schools?

**Table 3:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the influence of insecurity on students' attendance, academic performance, and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on the influence of insecurity	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	Frequent security threats and attacks cause irregular student attendance.	386	2.94	0.66	A
2	Insecurity contributes to declining academic performance among students.	386	2.88	0.72	A
3	Teachers' morale and productivity are negatively affected by persistent insecurity.	386	2.90	0.69	A
4	Fear of violence or abduction discourages teachers from attending school regularly.	386	2.85	0.74	A
5	Disruption of school activities due to insecurity leads to loss of instructional time.	386	2.92	0.68	A
6	The psychological stress associated with insecurity affects students' concentration and motivation.	386	2.89	0.71	A
Grand Mean		386	2.90	0.70	A

It can be observed from table 3 that insecurity has a strong negative effect on students' attendance, academic performance and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The grand mean recorded of 2.90 being more than the cut-off group mean of 2.50 shows that respondents generally agree insecurity is a threat to teaching and learning in the campus setting. At the top end of the scale, with a mean rating of 2.94 is "Frequent threats to security and attacks lead students to attend school irregularly" ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ ), indicating that student attendance becomes less stable as discussions about safety grow riskier. Likewise, "Disruption of school activities" ( $\bar{x} = 2.92$ ) and "Negative effects on teachers' morale" ( $\bar{x} = 2.90$ ) articulate insecurity's wide-reaching influence on institutional stability and staff motivation. The impact is not physical alone, but mental strain ( $\bar{x} = 2.89$ ) and fear of violence ( $\bar{x} = 2.85$ ), affects teachers together with students' state of mind through affecting their productivity

and engagement. The relatively low standard deviation (0.66–0.74) indicates that there was homogeneity among the data source of respondents. Generally, the results suggest that insecurity continues to be an obstacle towards achieving quality and sustainable secondary education in the area, which calls for a prompt intervention by those responsible for educational and security matters.

#### Research Question Four

How adequate are the security resources available for safeguarding lives and property within secondary school environments?

**Table 4:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the adequacy of security resources available for safeguarding lives and property within secondary school environments in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on adequacy of security resources	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	Schools are adequately fenced and gated to restrict unauthorized access.	386	2.42	0.73	D
2	Availability of trained security personnel for monitoring and surveillance is sufficient.	386	2.36	0.76	D
3	Functional security gadgets (e.g., CCTV cameras, alarms) are available and properly maintained.	386	2.28	0.79	D
4	Schools have adequate lighting systems for night-time visibility and safety.	386	2.40	0.72	D
5	Communication systems (e.g., radios, phones) are available for quick security alerts and response.	386	2.44	0.68	D
6	Collaboration with local law enforcement agencies for rapid response to threats is effectively maintained.	386	2.46	0.71	D
Grand Mean Score		386	2.39	0.73	D

The findings in Table 4 reveal that the safety facilities for protection of lives and property in secondary schools in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State are generally not sufficient as evidenced by grand mean score of 2.39 which falls below criterion for judging performance rating, which is a cut-off score of 2.50? This background may explain the widespread lack of the minimum necessary infrastructure and human resources for a safe learning environment. Indicators such as presence of trained security personnel ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.36) and working security gadgets,  $\bar{x}$  = 2.28) reported the lowest mean scores all these indicating that modern surveillance systems have not been deployed and kept functionalised optimally. Likewise, the poor ratings for adequate fencing and lighting ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.42 and 2.40, respectively) are evidence of physical frailties that serve to undermine safety from outside assailants. Communication systems ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.44) and collaboration with

the police ( $\bar{x} = 2.46$ ) had slightly higher ratings, but were also below the acceptance threshold, indicating a partial and inconsistent adoption of safety measures. The modest standard deviation (0.68–0.79) implies that in general, participants agreed on the low proportion of security facilities. This is a wake-up call which shows that there are systemic gaps in infrastructure for security at secondary level, and investment in physical and technological resources is overdue to develop safety, stability and certainty of learning in the Lower Townships Education District.

### Research Question Five

What role does community collaboration play in promoting a safe and secure secondary school environment?

**Table 5:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the role of community collaboration in promoting a safe and secure secondary school environment in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on the role of community collaboration	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	Community vigilante groups assist in monitoring and reporting suspicious activities around school premises.	386	2.68	0.67	A
2	Parents and community leaders actively participate in school security meetings and planning.	386	2.64	0.69	A
3	Traditional rulers and local authorities mediate and resolve conflicts affecting school safety.	386	2.72	0.65	A
4	Collaboration with community-based organizations supports school safety campaigns and awareness.	386	2.70	0.68	A
5	Schools receive timely assistance from community members during emergencies or security threats.	386	2.66	0.70	A
6	Community members help safeguard school property and infrastructure against vandalism.	386	2.63	0.72	A
Grand Mean Score		386	2.67	0.69	A

From the findings in Table 5, community partnership is a potential instrument for enhancing safety and security in the secondary schools in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The grand mean of 2.67 where the criterion mean is 2.50 suggests that respondents fairly agreed with the role that community involvement plays in school safety management. The findings show that traditional leaders and local authorities ( $\bar{x} = 2.72$ ) are salient actors in mediating conflicts and peace at school communities. Likewise, working with community organizations ( $\bar{x} = 2.70$ ) and vigilante groups ( $\bar{x} = 2.68$ ) is an invaluable tool for surveillance, reporting of threats, preventive interventions. An active engagement of parents and the community leaders in school safety meetings ( $\bar{x} = 2.64$ ) and their willingness to get involved during emergency incidents ( $\bar{x} = 2.66$ ) also adds dimensions to the security infrastructure of schools. The relatively low approximate

standard deviation (mean 0.65-0.72) reveals those respondents generally agreed on the importance of community partnerships. These results highlight that the strength of rapport between schools and their communities has serious implications for trust, social response efficacy (i.e., confidence in the ability to rescue or relief behavior) and the maintenance of a culture of safety required to sustain quality education in this region.

### Research Question Six

What strategies can be adopted to improve the management of security challenges for the sustainability of secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

**Table 6:** Mean ratings and standard deviation on the strategies for improving the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

S/N	Indicators on strategies for improving management of security challenges	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	Decision
1	Government should increase funding for school security infrastructure and surveillance systems.	386	2.81	0.64	A
2	Schools should establish and train security committees to coordinate safety operations.	386	2.78	0.66	A
3	Deployment of modern security technologies such as CCTV cameras and alarm systems should be prioritized.	386	2.84	0.63	A
4	Strengthening partnerships between schools, communities, and law enforcement agencies is essential.	386	2.86	0.61	A
5	Regular security training and awareness programs should be organized for teachers and students.	386	2.79	0.65	A
6	Development of clear security policies and emergency response protocols should be implemented in all schools.	386	2.83	0.62	A
Grand Mean		386	2.82	0.64	A

Results in Tables 6 showed that the respondents agreed on a variety of effective strategies to address how security challenges can be effectively managed in order to sustain secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The overall mean of 2.82 higher than the criterion means of 2.50 indicate strong agreement among participants on the need for proactive and multi-stakeholder strategies toward sustainable school safety. Of strategies, collaboration of schools with community and the police ( $\bar{x} = 2.86$ ) was rated highest, emphasizing the need for working together in intelligence-sharing and responding to a crisis. Use of modern security technology ( $\bar{x} = 2.84$ ) and having succinct security policies ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ ) were also identified as important,

indicating the importance for technology-based and policy-based approaches to school safety. More government funding ( $\bar{x} = 2.81$ ), school security committee established ( $\bar{x} = 2.78$ ), and regular security training exercises conducted ( $\bar{x} = 2.79$ ) were the major determinants that will improve preparedness and response to security threats. Responses are not particularly varied (S.D = 0.61–0.66), indicating a high degree of agreement among respondents. On the whole, the implication of the result is that sound and sustainable secondary education in the region could be attained by adequate funding or finance, adoption of technology, cooperation amongst stakeholders, as well as persistently building capacity of all staff in schools.

### Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their mean ratings on the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

**Table 7:** Independent t-test analysis of the difference between male and female teachers in their mean ratings on the management of security challenges for sustainable secondary education in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State (N = 386)

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
Male	198	2.74	0.68	384	1.42	1.96	0.16	Not Significant
Female	188	2.67	0.71					

Result of table 7 indicates that the computed t-value (t-cal = 1.42) computed is lower than the known t-value (t-crit = 1.96) at P-Value > 0.05 and df value of 384 since it has to be their degree freedom from equations above. Likewise, the value of p (0.16) is above 0.05 showing that the difference in mean ratings of security challenges management between male and female teachers is not statistically significantly different. This means that both male and female teachers had the same perception about how security problems are addressed in secondary school education in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Such result indicates that there is no a gender-based determination on teachers' perception or assessment of school security management. As a result, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their mean rating on management of security challenges towards sustainable secondary education is accepted.

### Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that security threats such as kidnapping, cultism, and anonymous invasion greatly influence the quality and sustainability of secondary education. This is consistent with the position of Adams and Uzoigwe who reported that insecurity disrupts the learning process, demoralizes teachers, and diminishes students' enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, Agbongiasede noted that schools are often closed while attendance becomes erratic; students and teachers are often left psychologically traumatized. Shooting in some extreme cases

The results confirm that security remains a major obstacle to sustainable education in conflict areas. However, fear of violence continues to stifle schools' operations and overall learning environment. Secondly, the findings of this study show that school owners have employed a variety of strategies in response to security challenges, such as hiring security guards, restricting entrance into schools, and cooperating with local vigilante groups. This is consistent with the findings of Ekpenyong, Uzoigwe, Onabe, and Onwochei who discovered that preemptive administrative security measures make schools less vulnerable to external attacks. It has also been reported that leadership commitment in safety measures such as annual emergency evacuation drills, reporting protocol and regular security training for staff creates a safe milieu. Thus, there are interventions concerning the focus problem, but there is inconvenient finance and supportive leadership from the government.

Thirdly, the study revealed that insecurity affects students' attendance and academic performance as well as teachers' output. Many students are forced to remain at home for fear of abduction and violent attack, deleting participation in teaching invariant testimony. In addition, insecurity influences study mills, as Uzoigwe discovered that Unsecure areas cause teachers to become unattended, absent, or anthropologic. More students play an equal portion given to the prospects of statement. The study is another aspect of the finding; test for trade hypothesis implied zero difference between male and female teachers in the mean populations from the school management of security, it is concluded that school management at the same rate. This confirms Uzoigwe and Adams who further suggested that there was no significant difference in the perception and response of both males and females to trade insecurity in the school environment. Similarly, it is concluded that from the results of this study, school safety offices should be inclusive of gender and well-funded.

### **Conclusion**

The study recommended that viable security strategies should be employed in a bid to achieve sustainable secondary education in the Cross River State, Northern Senatorial District. Insecurity, mainly in form of communal fighting, kidnapping, and vandalism have grossly interfered with teaching and learning processes with attendant drop-out enrolled number of pupils and low academic performance. Thus, community policing, security infrastructure in schools and partnerships are useful mechanisms for the sustenance of education development in the region.

### **Recommendations**

The following were suggested to adopt according to the findings of this study:

1. The state also needs to upscale the security around secondary schools and deploy training personnel to work with local vigilantes for safety in school.
2. School officials should also create and manage a robust security policy as part of their protocol that includes routine drills, institutional sensitization of staff and students, and doable systems for reporting in order to get better prepared against threats.

3. State and local governments should provide adequate resources to purchase security infrastructure like perimeter fencing, video surveillance cameras monitor systems and emergency communication buttons in schools.
4. Parents, traditional rulers and youth leaders at the community level should take part in the monitoring and security surveillance of school environments via community-based security facilities.
5. Security management training should be incorporated into the professional development program put in place for principals and teachers especially by ministry of education to enable teachers manage, proactive and sustainable safe management of school.
6. An acceptable maintenance culture of this security outfit must be highly encouraged, to ascertain the sustainability.

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