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Perceived Safety Measures in Primary School among Administrators and Teachers in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria: Counseling Implications

Ngwu, Maria Enemeba
mariangwu01@gmail.com,

Arop, Lucy Obil
lucyarop1@gmail.com,
&
Okpechi, Philip Abane
philipokpechi2@gmail.com

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Department of Guidance and Counseling
University of Calabar
Calabar

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Correspondence Email:
mariangwu01@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focused on the perceived safety measures in primary schools' among administrators and teachers in primary schools in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The primary purpose of the study is to appraise the awareness level of security measures and safety among administrator and teachers within schools in Calabar Metropolis. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and forty teachers (140) and forty (40) school administrators in primary schools to guide the study. The instrument used for data collection was an adopted Smith (2001) Security Measures for Students in Schools (SSMSS). The descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The result revealed that both schools had security measures in place like perimeter fence, CCTV camera, security personal and that both teachers and school's administrators had high security awareness. It was recommended among others that school security information should form part of the school curriculum. Government and school administrators should provide security gadgets in schools. Constant and continuous teachers and administrators training on security

	awareness should be carried out by the government. School management should strategies on school security to prevent being caught unawares.

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has been going through a period of unprecedented security challenges, which has affected national, economic and development in Nigeria. Safety of lives and property is not guaranteed. Some reports of school shooting, Boko Haram insurgency, outbreak of violence, teachers being murdered, school buildings set ablaze across the country and abduction of school children. These are serious events that teachers and administrator should be concerned. The purpose of Early Child Care and Basic Education shall be to provide adequate supervision and security for children while parents are at work (NPC, 2000). Safety in Nigerian schools is therefore the concern of teachers, parents, school administrators and government and security men and all who see school system as incubator of great Nigerians, who will later pilot the affairs of the nation.

Nzewi (2015) concluded that no school can honestly claim to be violent proof as everything depends on how the school manages its affairs on day-to-day basis. Some schools are left porous and unprotected. With the heightened terrorist threat and alert, schools need to create and prepare pupils and teachers on awareness plans. Security awareness is the knowledge and attitude members of an organization poses regarding the protection of physical and especially information asserts of organization by reducing the likelihood of security incidence and breeches.

Best (2011) defines security as the condition or feeling safe from arm, defence, protection and preservation of core values, absence of threat to acquired values. Simply put, security is about survival and the condition of human existence. Security implies that stable, relatively predicable environment in which an individual or group may pursue his/their studies without disruptions or harm and without fear of disturbances or injury. Children require protection at all cost in our schools. Child Protection according to UNICEF refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse of children, sexual exploitation, trafficking and child labour, harmful traditional practices, such as genital multination and child marriage. These issues create emotional tensions in the life of the child. Hence, security of the child need to be fostered through supervision, and security measures as the child pass through stages of life, they encounter many emotional and physical insecurities in schools and home environment. Emotional insecurities include child labour, child abuse, bullying, fighting and sexual exploitation while physical insecurities include, child kidnapping, abduction, unhealthy competition among children such as jealousy, envy, dishonesty, lying and impatience (Opara & Uwezurike, 2015). Children must learn some rules of personal safety to aid them safeguard themselves, from dangers. Security is not limited to protection from physical harm but also involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in order to empower him function effectively.

Effective security according to Lawas, Hamsatu and Amos (2015), are activities geared towards protecting a country, person's material, building, attack or danger. Safe school initiatives was envisaged to start by building community security groups to promote safe zones for education, consisting of teachers, parents, police, community leaders, and young persons (Nzewi, 2015). Childhood security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the children, protection of the school, awareness of security measures in case of any threat of security. Shaibu (2015) submitted that a safe school and environment is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among pupils, teachers and administrators. Nwafor (2013) highlighted that consciousness of security involves the absence of conflict or evidence at a particular time and place which evokes the climate of freedom from fear, intimidation and harassment, oppression and brutalization by external forces or agents. Being aware of the importance of peace and security is vital for national development. The function of security is to protect students and staff members within the school.

Childhood education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2004) is the education given to children age 0-15 which is the foundation upon which higher education is laid. It encompasses early childhood (0-5) and 9 years of formal schooling. Early childhood education is segmented into 0-3years situated in daycare, nursery and kindergarten fully in the hands of private sectors and social development services.

Early childhood care and education is the care, protection, stimulation and learning given to children from 0-5 in daycare center, nursery and kindergarten. It is the foundation for life-long learning. The purpose of early childhood education is to effect a smooth transition from home to school. ERN (2013) among the objective is to provide adequate care, supervision and security for the children while parents are at work, business among others. The pre-school programme helps to keep the children under constant supervision with adult especially for parents who are workers, businessmen and among others. Nigeria adopted the National Economic Empowerments and Development Strategy (NEEDS) as a reform in (2004) which recognizes that the Nigerian child is a bridge to prosperous future. Therefore, it is imperative that provision must be made, actions taken to provide basic education to every citizen of the country. Conducive learning environment is necessary to achieve this feat. The consequences of insecurity in schools will result to failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Schools. The Federal Government of Nigeria in consolation with stakeholders in Education has made efforts to stem the tide of insecurity in school, but it still persists. It is as a result of the foregoing that this study seeks to find out the security awareness of schools administrators and teachers. Psychologists propose that security is crucial for human survival. This study is anchored on hierarchy of needs theory postulated by Abraham Maslow. The lower order needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education or intellectual/cognitive needs (Akintunde, 2015). In ability to satisfy the need for security may cause stress for an individual and hinder the pursuit of higher order needs. There is the need for pupils to live functional, meaningful and secure lives in

the school environment, since security is perceived as a basic human need that contribute to effective learning.

Nwachukwu (2007) opined that the major need of the child at the early childhood is love, care guide and counseling. Guidance and Counselling is a vital component of any level of education. The reason is that every human being experiences growth and development needs for help at one stage or another. Pupils need assistance to deal with obstacles to growth, development and educational progress.

The children encounter emotional and physical insecurities in schools. Counseling has a major role to play in offering guidance, counseling tips to aid the child when they face obstacles to their growth, such as abduction, kidnapping, sexual abuse. Umar (2013) identified the importance of utilizing counseling serves as coping strategy for inculcating the consciousness of peace, conflict resolution and national security.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the security consciousness of the school administrators and teachers who are overseer of the pupils and students in the schools and to enhance security of the pupils.

Statement of the Problem

Education of pupils will only strive in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. School is supposed to be one of the safest place for pupils to be as parent engage in work and other activities. In recent times, the educational sector has seriously been affected by spate of insecurity in the country with attendance grave consequences. Insecurity of school environment significantly affects the academic performance of the schools. School children now live in fear, not minding what will befall them. Teachers and pupils are no longer safe in some parts of the country, as schools are attacked, teachers and pupils abducted, schools are closed particularly in some northern states, rape, killing, are some of the activities is affecting the educational sector and performance of the pupils. This has drawn the attention of stakeholders in education, to as what to be done about this situation. Though government s has done it bits to arrest the situation but it still persists. It is in view of the above that the question is asked, what awareness has been created by teachers and schools' administrators in regards to the insecurity in school, and the need to provide new means of promoting peace and security in the schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the administrator's level of awareness of security measures in schools?
2. What is the teacher's level of awareness of security in schools?

Method of Data Analysis

The study adopted the descriptive survey design and percentages were used in analyzing the data collected. Research questions one and two were analyzed using mean and standard deviation of find out administrator's machinery put in place for security measures and teacher's awareness and safety tips in schools. The study was made of 200 subjects made up of 160 school administrators and 40 teachers selected from the primary schools in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. Twelve (12) structured questions adopted from Smith (2011) security measure and safety in schools was used to elicit responds from 160 school administrators and 40 teachers. The items were group in two clusters. The first cluster was to sought administrative awareness on the safety measures while the second cluster elicited information from the teachers on their security awareness in the school. The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counseling and Measurement Evaluation. The data obtained was analyze using descriptive statistic, mean and standard deviation.

Presentation of Results

Research question one

Does school administrators have security awareness in their schools? To answer this question, response to items 1-6 were analyzed. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Response of school administrators awareness of security measures in their schools.

S/N	School administrator's awareness of security measures	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Is CCTV cameras installed in the school?	3.7333	.44257	Significant
2.	Is the school compound fenced?	3.8000	.40032	Significant
3.	Are security personnel stationed at the school gate?	3.8683	.33848	Significant
4.	Are visitors given clearance from the gate before entering the school premises?	3.4667	.61873	Significant
5.	Are students and workers in possession of ID cards?	3.8683	.33848	Significant
6.	Was proper security check carried out before you were employed?	3.2714	.57309	Significant

Source field 2023

Table I presents the mean ratings of the school administrators security awareness in their schools. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging 3.27 to 3.86 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that school administrators have security awareness in their schools. The standard deviation ranged from 0.33 to 0.62 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses.

Research question two

What is the teacher's level of security awareness in school? To answer this research question, responses to items 7-12 were analyzed. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Response of school teacher's awareness of security schools

S/N	Teacher's awareness of security in their schools	Mean	SD	Remark
7.	Are teacher's trained on security related matters?			Significant
8.	Are teacher's bags checked from time to time?			Significant
9.	Are teacher's or workers encouraged to report suspicious movement?			Significant
10.	Are teachers in the primary or secondary allowed to use mobile phone within the school premises?			Significant
11.	Are teachers with identity card for easily identification?			Significant
12.	Are teachers taught to be vigilant in the school?			Significant

Source field 2023

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of the teacher's awareness of security in their schools. All the isolated items recorded mean rating from 2.27 to 3.85 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that teachers are aware of security measures in their schools. The standard deviation ranged from 0.25 to 0.85 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses.

The study revealed that teacher's awareness of security in schools in Calabar Metropolis was positive.

Discussion of Findings

The results o the study as seen in Table I shows that all isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 3.27 to 3.86 which were above the cut-off mark 2.50. Thus indicating that security awareness by the school administrator was positive. The standard deviation ranged from 0.33 to 0.62 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses. The finding is in consonance with the view of Fisher and Green (2004) which implies that stable, relatively predicable environment in which individual may pursue his or her studies without disrupting or harm or without fear of disturbances and injury. Furthermore, Nzewi (2015) assert that safety in Nigerian schools is the concern of teachers, parents, school administrators, government and security men and all who see school systems as incubator of great Nigerians.

Table 2 present the mean ratings of the teacher's awareness of security in their schools. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 2.27 to 3.85 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus indicating that teachers are aware of security measures in their schools. The standard deviation ranged from 0.25 to 0.85 which reveal that respondents were not too far from mean and each other in their responses.

The study revealed that teacher's awareness of security measures in schools in Calabar Metropolis was positive. The is in line with Umar (2013) who identified the important of counseling as a means of inculcating the consciousness of peace, conflict resolution and national security.

Counseling Implications

Based on the finding of the study the following counseling implications were made:

1. Counseling should be a major part of the school curriculum, with information and orientation regularly given to pupils to inculcate security consciousness.
2. Counseling services should be utilized as a coping strategy to inculcating consciousness to pupils, school administrators and teachers.
3. Counseling services will be used to inculcate value of peace, conflict resolution ad national security.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should be proactive in reducing threats of school violence.
2. Teachers should be trained to use reasonable method of diffusing and escalating security situations.
3. School administrators should have a plan action in dealing with crisis situations.
4. Develop and put in place appropriate security protocol that will regulate dropping and picking of children in schools.

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