CHAPTER 6

Challenges of Principals' Managerial Effectiveness in Safety and Security in Public Secondary Schools in Imo State

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ABSTRACT

Safety and security of life of people have been the primary concern of stakeholders in education. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the challenges of principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security in the public secondary schools in Imo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was guided by three research questions. The population of the study consisted of 463 principals from which a sample size of 50 respondents (principals alone) were drawn. A researcher made instrument titled "Challenges of Principals′ Managerial Effectiveness in Safety and Security in Public Secondary Schools Imo State Questionnaire (CPMESSPSSQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three specialists. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach alpha statistics and a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that there are challenges in the principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that government should ensure that public secondary schools in Imo State are properly funded to enable the principals perform their roles effectively and curb challenges affecting their managerial effectiveness in safety and security in Public secondary schools in Imo State.

Keywords: *Challenges, principals' managerial effectiveness, safety and security.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a very crucial aspect of human existence. It plays an important role in human development in particular and national development generally. Hence, for a country to perform exceedingly well in terms of national development, there must be a strong and thriving education system as it is the source of growth of any nation. UNESCO in 2001, for this reason, declared education as a standard setting instrument for the implementation of national development policies (UNESCO, 2001).

According to the national policy on education (2014), Nigeria intends to achieve her national educational objectives/goals through the four levels of her education system of which secondary education is one of them. Secondary education in Nigeria occupies a central or prominent position in human and national development. It is therefore important that adequate safety and security measures be put in place in the schools. This confirms why UNESCO (2014), realising the importance of education in human and national development, stressed the need for the safety of the individual child while in school.

Safety is a condition of being protected from harm or attack. Safety is a concept that includes all measures and practice taken to preserve the life, health and body and integrity of individuals (Kaiko, 2021). On the other hand, security is related to the presence of peace, safety and protection of people and their resources. It also relates to the absence of threats to human life and dignity. Security is generally agreed to be about feeling safe from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression and damage (Emmanuel, 2019). Achuba (2013) defined insecurity as the state of being vulnerable to harmful risk or anxiety. The call by UNESCO in 2014 for the safety of all the students while in school is a proof that there are tendencies of insecurity in schools. It is also evident that insecurity affects effective teaching and learning in schools and hinders the attainment of educational objectives. Also, insecurity leads to loss of lives and destruction of school properties.

In the secondary school administrative structure, the principal is the leader/manager of the school. He is tasked with the responsibility of leadership and accountability of which areas of safety and security are part of. Njoku (2021) asserted that the role of principals in the management of schools with regards to safety and security includes: introduction of security education, PTA involvement, good fencing of school compounds, presence of strong gates, employment of well-trained security personnel, organising

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training and retraining of security personnel by expert security organisations. In addition, the principal is tasked with the maintenance of school-community relations, supervision and provision of adequate infrastructure and facilities, provision of conducive learning environment to checkmate activities of infiltrators in the school compound etc.

Ali and Fatima (2016) opined that the principal as the manager of school should ensure that enough entrance and exit doors be provided in the laboratories in case of emergency. Chimneys should be provided particularly in the chemistry laboratories for the discharge of dangerous gases and enough windows be provided to achieve good ventilation of laboratories.

According to Wilson (2021) and Asochike and Abraham (2011), Managerial effectiveness of the principal is often assessed in terms of the output. This in other words, means what the manager (principal) is able to achieve in the school. Iyang (2008) describes managerial effectiveness as the leaders' ability to achieve desired results/goals. Cunha and Mangar (2019) defined principal managerial effectiveness as planning of curriculum, organisational procedures, style and resources, arranging the environment to maximise efficiency, monitoring of students and teachers' progress, anticipating and finding solutions to problems arising in the school. Bello (2016), stated that there are linkages between governance of school, possibilities of achieving stated goals and effective management. She stressed further that the primary goals of principals should be on how to enhance smooth running of the school with emphasis on handling pressures and challenges adequately.

Challenges of managerial effectiveness of principals imply the hindrances to the process of school administration. They are the problems encountered by the principals in the course of discharging their duties in school. These hindrances could affect the attainment of school goals, particularly safety and security in the school which should be the hallmark of principals' school administration.

Ali and Fatima (2016), viewed the principals' administrative challenges with regards to safety and security as a result of obsolete security technology and lack of promptness in handling security issues by the government. Furthermore, in a situation where the security conditions of a school is porous, the lives of student and staff are prone to danger as a result of youth restiveness, killings, theft, kidnapping and hostage taking for monetary

ransom, cult related activities, vandalisation of properties and above all, terrorism and insurgent attacks (Phenson, Ojie, Esin&Atai, 2014). Not only that, poor communication gap between principals, teachers and students, poor relationship between schools and host communities and poor infrastructural facilities constitute challenges on safety and security in secondary schools (Wilson, 2019). These incidences have negative implications on principals' managerial effectiveness as the chief security officer of the school.

Alimba (2018) opined that insecurity in secondary schools can be reduced and safety ensured by investing in new technologies and developing appropriate strategies that will physically enhance the development and implementation of safety and security policies in schools. Some of these technologies include but not limited to: installation of CCTV cameras in the school, fencing the school premises, installation of alarm systems, lighting system and metal detectors. The principal should also see it as a point of duty to promote community partnership between the school and community. Obialor (2021) viewed that allocation of more funds to education sector to help the principal in acquisition of cutting-edge security gadgets to forestall attacks, should be a primary concern of the government.

Statement of the Problem
Public secondary schools are established with the aim of giving students sound and qualitative education that will enable them function effectively and becomes more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualisation. Records show that public secondary schools are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve the goal because of insecurity problems amounting in school environments. Over the years, there has been security challenges bedeviling principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools. There have been reports of hazards in school playgrounds, laboratories etc. In schools where security conditions are porous, the lives of students, teachers and even the principals are prone to danger. There are also increased incidences of theft, rape, killing and kidnapping for ransom in public secondary schools recently which makes the environment unconducive for teaching and learning and attainment of educational goals much more impossible. These have negative implications on the managerial effectiveness of principals being the chief security officer of secondary schools.

It is on this premise that the researchers sought out to investigate the challenges of principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the challenges if principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security inn public secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1.   Determine the principals′ roles in ensuring effective safety and security measures in public secondary school principals in Imo State,

2.   Ascertain the factors inhibiting principals′ effectiveness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State,

3.   Identify strategies or measures for improving principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State.

Research questions

1.   What are the principals′ roles in ensuring effective safety and security measures in public secondary school in Imo Stateۣ

2.   What are the factors inhibiting principals′ effectiveness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo Stateۣ

3.   What are the strategies for improving the managerial effectiveness of principals in safety and security of secondary school in Imo Stateۣ

Methods

The design adopted for the study is a descriptive survey design. The study is delimited to Imo State in Nigeria. The population of the study comprises 463 principals in Imo State. A sample size of 50 principals was drawn from the population using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection is titled "Challenges of Principals′ Managerial Effectiveness in Safety and Security in Public Secondary Schools Imo State Questionnaire (CPMESSPSSQ)" structured by the researchers. The instrument was validated by three specialists; one in Measurement and Evaluation and the other two from Educational Management. Cronbach alpha statistics was used to test the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

The researchers, with the aid of two research assistants, administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research question 1: What are the principals′ roles in ensuring effective safety and security measures in public secondary school in Imo State?

Table 1: Principals′ role in ensuring effective safety and security measures in Public secondary schools in Imo State.

S/N	Items Principals' roles in ensuring safety and security measures include:	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Timely checking of activities of infiltrators in school compound	21	13	6	10	2.90	Agree
2.	Repairing of damaged infrastructure and facilities	30	15	3	2	3.46	Agree
3.	Provision of adequate financial resources for safety and security purposes	17	19	10	4	2.98	Agree
4.	Provision of conducive learning environment	27	15	4	4	3.30	Agree
5.	Good relationship between principal, students and teachers	30	10	6	4	3.32	Agree
	Grand mean					3.19	

Data on table 1 revealed that all the items had mean scores of 2.90, 3.46, 2.98, 3.30 and 3.32 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence the respondents majorly agreed that the principals have roles to play in ensuring safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State such as timely checking of activities of infiltrators in school compound, repairing of damaged infrastructure and facilities, provision of adequate financial resources for safety and security purposes, provision of conducive learning environment and promotion of good relationship between principal, students and teachers.

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Research question 2: What are the factors inhibiting principals′ effectiveness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State？

Table 2: Factors inhibiting principals' effectiv eness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State.

S/N	Items The following are factors inhibiting principals' effectiveness in providing safety and security:	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Lack of funds	35	15	-	-	3.70	Agree
2.	Lack of promptness in handling security issues by the government	25	18	5	2	3.32	Agree
3.	Obsolete security technology	29	19	2	-	3.54	Agree
4.	Youth restiveness: rape, thefts, killings etc	24	16	6	4	3.20	Agree
5.	Poor relationship between school and host community	18	21	7	4	3.06	Agree
	Grand mean					3.36	

Data on table 2 revealed that all the items had mean scores of 3.70, 3.32, 3.54, 3.20 and 3.06 respectively which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence the respondents majorly agreed that factors inhibiting principals′ effectiveness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State include lack of funds, lack of promptness in handling security issues by the government, obsolete security technology, youth restiveness: rape, thefts, killings etc and poor relationship between school and host community.

Research question 3: What are strategies for improving the managerial effectiveness of principals in safety and security of secondary schools in Imo State？

Table 3: s   trategies for improving the managerial effectiveness of principals in safety and security of secondary school in Imo State.

S/N	Items The following are strategies for improving managerial effectiveness of principals in safety and security:	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Increase of allocation of funds to education sector	24	16	6	4	3.20	Agree
2.	Provision of physical measures i.e CCTV, metal detectors and fencing of school premises	18	21	7	4	3.06	Agree
3.	Ensuring provision of security policies & guidelines	30	15	3	2	3.46	Agree
4.	Maintenance of good relationship between students, teachers & community	17	19	10	4	2.98	Agree
5.	Provision of adequate infrastructure & facilities for conducive learning	31	11	5	3	3.40	Agree
	Grand mean					3.22	

Data on table 3 revealed that all the items had mean scores of 3.20, 3.06, 3.46, 2.98 and 3.40 respectively which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence the respondents majorly agreed that strategies for improving principals′ managerial effectiveness in safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo state are: increase of allocation of funds to education sector, provision of physical measures i.e CCTV, metal detectors and fencing of school premises, ensuring provision of security policies & guidelines, maintenance of good relationship between students, teachers & community and provision of adequate infrastructure & facilities for conducive learning.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question one revealed a grand mean score of 3.19 for the items which is greater than the criterion mean/bench mark mean of 2.50. This by implication means that the respondents replied positively to the items bordering principals′ roles in ensuring effective safety and security measures in public secondary school in Imo State. The above finding is in consonance with the view of Njoku (2021) who pointed out that the role of principals in

managing safety and security in their various schools include maintenance of host community relationship with the school, providing well trained security guards. The finding is also in agreement with that of Wilson (2021) who opined that the principals' managerial roles in ensuring security include: provision of conducive learning environment by checkmating the activities of infiltrators in the school compound, provision of funds to maintain physical environment (infrastructure and facilities).

The second finding on research question tworevealed that the respondents agreed on the factors inhibiting principals' effectiveness in providing safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State. This finding is in line with the findings of Ali and Fatima (2016) who in their study, reported that the problems facing principals' managerial effectiveness include lack of funding, youth restiveness leading to theft and vandalisation of school properties, lack of promptness in handling security issues by the government. Phenson, Ojie, Esin and Atai (2014) also support this finding as they reported that cult related activities involving killing, kidnapping and hostage taking for monetary ransom are some of the challenges facing principals' managerial effectiveness in safety and security of schools in Imo State.

Findings on research question three revealed that the respondents all agreed on the strategies for improving principals' managerial effectiveness in safety and security in public secondary schools in Imo State. The findings are in line with Alimba (2018) who reported in his study that the major strategies which can be adopted by principals for security and safety in public secondary schools include: introduction of CCTV cameras in school, fencing the school premises, installation of alarms and lighting systems, use of metal detectors, promotion of cordial relationship between school and host communities and location of schools in areas which are not vulnerable to threats. Also supporting this finding, Obialor (2021) viewed that allocation of more funds to education sector could help the principals to effectively carry out their duties with regards to providing safety and security technologies in public secondary schools.

Conclusion
Safety and security problems need immediate response due to its significant implication on the growth and development of the education sector. Thus, a safe school simply put is a secured school. A secured school will promote safe academic exercise and easy mitigation of perceived security threats. Principals are hereby encouraged to show more concern and interest in their safety and security managerial measures by using skilled and professional personnel to handle safety issues in their various schools. This would in turn

bring about safe environments conducive for learning in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Allocation of more funds to the education sector by the government to help the principals in acquisition of cutting edge security gadgets to forestall attacks.

2. School administrators must ensure that they do not relegate their roles and responsibilities. They should be actively involved in ensuring that they contribute towards combating the state of violence and attacks on the public secondary schools in Imo state.

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