
**FUNCTIONAL BASIC EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY
IN SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA: THE ADMINISTRATORS' ROLES**

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This paper examined the roles of school administrators in curbing the security challenges facing functional basic education in Nigeria. The data were sourced from print materials and online publications by recognized institutions and individual authors. Sustainable and functional education thrives better in a healthy environment. Generally, learning environment that is characterized by insecurity would not only threaten effective learning but it is also liable to exacerbating other factors such as the destruction of available facilities, scaring qualified teachers/trainers and learners away and eroding quality. The need for a secure and safe life among others is the next most basic category of needs. Pupils/students are expected to learn in a safe, supportive and protective learning environment devoid of physical harassment, violence, rape, kidnapping among others through proper security. Challenges identified include non-challant negative/ attitude of some school administrators towards security matters, lack of comprehensive and well disseminated school security policy to guide actions, non execution of security duties by incompetent guards among others. Recommendations include having well formulated guidelines on security issues in schools and policies and guidelines aimed at protecting the pupils, students and staff; regular training and retraining of school administrators on their administrative roles including contemporary security issues, employing/posting of well-trained and armed security guards to schools, providing adequate facilities in schools including perimeter fencing, burglary proofs and having a network of school internal security to check and monitor abuse and harassment of students.

Keywords: Basic Education, Security challenges, School Administrator.

Introduction

Nigeria as a nation has witnessed a lot of insecurity in recent times and this has adversely affected different facets of the country namely political, social, economic and more especially the education sector. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) specially stated that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Unfortunately, Offem and Ichoku (2015) observed that government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the educational institutions. Over the years, the Nigerian education school system has been under attack leading to kidnapping and killings of students, teachers and school administrators among others. Measures have been taken by government to curb these attacks like the Safe School Initiatives. The Safe School initiatives which was launched in Nigeria in May, 2014 (Tukur, 2014) was aimed at making schools safe for children across Nigeria and ensuring that about 10 5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria return to school. It was set up in response to the growing number of attacks on schools. However, Lawal (2018) lamented that there has been unending attacks on school children despite the Safe School Initiatives. Forced by insecurity, Ogwo (2022) observed that schools especially in parts of Northern Nigeria has been shutting down in recent years without requiring express directives from government as safety would not be guaranteed by school management. A new dimension is where the government at both Federal and state levels are ordering school closure due to security concern.

In the south, the Indigenous People of Biafra distorted learning in the South East to a point that students in one of the schools where not allowed to write some of their papers in the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (Ogwo, 2022) The United Nation's Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) had in April, 2022 said that insecurity had caused the closure of 11, 536 school in Nigeria since December, 2020. According to UNICEF as cited Ogwo, (2022) the security challenges has affected the education of 1.3 million children in less than two years. Insecurity continues to threaten the educational sector especially basic education to the extent that students, teachers and the government are being frustrated leading to educational decay and affecting quality.

Education is a critical economic sector that drives long-term economic growth, spurs, innovation, strengthens, institutions, hence many stakeholders believe it remains an imperative tool in the development of the country; and the starting point is basic education. No country will ever achieve sustainable development in the face of widespread insecurity of lives and property and more especially in schools.

A safe and secure school environment is vital for students of all ages and also contingent for the achievement of educational objectives. This is so because it helps them

develop and maintain their focus towards studies. In case of violence or threats, students would not be able to pay attention to their studies. It is in the light of the imperatives of secured and conducive environment that this paper identified some of the challenges facing the school administrators security roles and suggested strategies towards maintaining a conducive learning environment so that the objectives of schooling will be achieved.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Security and Insecurity

Security embraces all measures designed to protect the resources of individuals, groups, business and the nation against sabotage or violence occurrence (Ogunlaye, Adewale, Alese&Ogunde 2011). Francis (2005), in Alli (2010) defined security as a state of being safe and the absence of fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression. It is the preservation of core values and the absence of threat to those values (Alli, 2010). On the other hand, Beland (2005) sees insecurity as a state of fear, or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack of adequate freedom from danger. Insecurity is the absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safe. It is a state of being exposed to risk and anxiety and this breeds a level of uncertainty. School security encompasses all measures taken to combat threats to people and property in educational environment (Wikipedia)

Theoretical Framework: Safety Needs in Abraham Maslow's Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy theory of Needs (1943) is a theoretical framework comprising a tiered model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical level within a pyramid. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is an idea in psychology proposed by American Psychologist Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A theory of Human Motivation". Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a model for understanding the motivation for human behaviour. It maps different motivation onto a pyramid, with each level representing a different human needs. These include physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the best known theories of motivation. Maslow's theory states that our actions are motivated by certain physiological and psychological needs that progress from basic to complex.

How does Maslow's theory explain the importance of safety and security in ensuring that learning will take place?

The answer is that being able to feel safe and secure is a primal need that all will face and that must be met before one can face other higher level needs. Safety needs include

protection from elements, security, order, law and stability safe schools promote the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapon and threats, theft, bullying and harassment among others.

A safe and secure environment is vital for student of all ages. It is so because it helps them develop and maintain their focus towards their studies. In case of violence or threats, Odoemenam and Ominyi (2014) noted that students would not be able to pay attention to their studies and this will affect the quality of education.

Functional Basic Education

Functional education (Asaju, 1999) in Umah (2017) is an education for which there is an anticipated application that the learner has immediate meanings, transferable into action of his learning activities. Functional education is a kind of education that equips the recipients with the knowledge and skills to enable them function effectively in the society. Basic education is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitude that will enable them to live meaningful and fulfilling lives, contribute to the development of the society among others. Basic education is the base or starting point on which all other levels or forms of education develop. UNESCO (2007) considered it as the base for lifelong learning for children, youth or adult.

The world declaration on education for all (EFA) at Jomtien in 1990 made education a basic need of every child and set goals for achieving education for all within the next ten years. Nigeria being a signatory to these declarations on education for all launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme on 29th September, 1999. The UBE was Nigeria's answer to the objectives enumerated in the Dakar (2000) Framework for Action. Odoemenam (2017) noted that the UBE was conceived as a response to the need to reinforce participatory democracy in Nigeria by raising the level of awareness and general education of the populace. The goal of UBE in Nigeria in achieving functional education maybe under threat unless efforts are made to ensure the safety of students and the environment.

School Administrators Roles: Security in Focus

School administrators oversee administrative tasks in schools, colleges and other educational institutions. They ensure that the organisation runs smoothly and also manage human and material resources including facilities (Odoemenam, 2017). Children are expected/required legally to attend school. The school heads have a corresponding duty to provide peaceful environment in which learning occur. Odoemenam and Ominyi (2014) posited that the school administrator should ensure that schools are safe for learning and should protect students from physical harassment, violence, rape and kidnapping among

others. As the school primary safety officer, the school administrator/principal is responsible for creating a sense of security by implementing policies that ensure that students, teachers and parents feel safe.

Betterteam (n.d) identified the following as the headteacher' role in maintaining school environment:

- Establishing security and safety committee which will comprise staff members of the PTA, school board. They are expected to aid in formulating, exercising, monitoring and appraising the security and safety operations of the school'
- In assessing the safety of the school, the headteachers are expected to conduct a detailed school safety assessment to determine the state of safety within the school, through proper security, physical surveillance and monitoring of school buildings to secure pupils school personnel. It must be noted that these security duties are not without challenges on the part of the school administrator.

Challenges

The school administrator/principal is a key player in the safety and security of the school. As the school safety officer, the school administrator is responsible for creating a sense of security by implementing policies and procedure ensuring that students, teachers and parents feel safe. Unfortunately, sometimes, some school administrators exhibit non-challant attitude partly as a result of lack of training. In a study, Abiodun and Oyebanji (2013), found out that some school administrators have knowledge of security issues in the system but they possess little management strategies/skills to handle issues. This underscores the need for training and retraining of school administrators to enable them acquire requisite management skill to enable them cope with contemporary security issues.

Also in a related study, Manga (2019) identified lack of a comprehensive and well - disseminated school security policy and lack of execution of security duties by school guards who have little or no training. This is a pointer to the need for the government and school policy makers to formulate wellarticulated policies to guide actions and minimize the security challenges faced by school administrators.

Effects of Insecurity in Schools Management

Insecurity not only impede education but also keeps children and teachers at home, shut down schools and prevents the government and non-governmental organizations from opening new schools. According to Akintude and Musa (2016), insecurity in the school environment influences the effective learning of children. Situations of insecurity triggers traumatic disorder and toxic stress that affect learning negatively. While calling for the

safety of learners in schools, UNICEF, Nigeria (Njoku 2022) says attacks on learning institutions render the learning environment insecure and discourage parents and caregivers from sending their wards to school while the learners themselves become fearful of the legitimate pursuit of learning. This is even as the out-of-school population children hits 20 million as poverty and insecurity worsen (UNICEF, 2022).

In extreme cases, insecurity has led to the closure of schools. For instance, schools in Borno State of Nigeria were shut down as a result of insurgency (Ameh, 2015). These attacks on schools usually lead to vandalization and outright destruction of school facilities which discourage the establishment of new school. Other effects of insecurity in schools include attack, abduction and killing of staff and students, school structure set ablaze or destroyed.

Effective learning by the Nigerian child can only be achieved in UBE in a secured, safe and conducive environment that necessitate emotional stability. Dibia in Obi (2012) posited that the academic success of students depend largely in their emotional stability. Insecure learning environment puts the Nigerian students in stressful state that also impedes learning. There is therefore the need to minimize these security problems for effective learning by the Nigeria child.

Strategies for Improving Security in Schools

The following strategies are suggested for adoption to enhance school security

- School administrators should identify peculiar forms of insecurity in their schools and device preventive measures to protect the lives and properties of staff and students.
- Safety workshops should be organised for school administrators and officials of the State Universal Basic Education where they will be exposed to training on safety and security skills so as to be prepared for emergencies.
- A safe school programmes should be drawn for all states to provide teachers, parents and students with comprehensive information on safety skills and provide schools with skills and information required during emergency situations.
- Security survey should be carried out by expert before schools are opened or established so that they can advice/guide on where classroom, hostels, access and control gate can be located. Also there is need to have perimeter fencing that students cannot cross.
- Having well-lit compound at night and the use of solar-powered CCTV cameras could be beneficial to school administrators especially in boarding schools to help in security situation.
- Unarmed security guards within the premises should have periodic drills and have the abilities to quickly report any emergencies to the nearest police response team. In

addition, armed security operatives can carry out random patrols and inspections outside the school walls to ensure there have been no breaches.

- There is the need for all schools to have students safety committee especially in senior secondary schools. They should be given the authority to periodically audit the school premises and report issues to the school principals leading to immediate solutions.
- School administrators should promote school community partnership and make staff, students and parents aware of all safety policies.
- The school administrators should have a network of internal security to help check abuse and harassment of students especially from fellow students or staff.

Conclusion

School safety is an essential part of a school hazard management. Therefore, the school administrator should ensure that there is conducive and safe environment for learning. There is also the need for school administrators and government to intensify efforts and provide adequate security for the staff and students in schools. Having a plan for dealing with dangerous situations will instill confidence in parents, students and teachers that the school administrator has their best interest in mind.

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Functional Basic Education and the Challenges of Insecurity in Schools in Nigeria: The Administrators' Roles - **Dr. Roseline Ijeoma Odoemenam**

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