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School-Community Security Partnership and School Climate among Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research which was conducted to examine the influence of school-community security partnership on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria was based on two objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 3904 teachers in the 89 schools in the area of study. The study adopted multi stage sampling approach to obtain 423 teachers which constituted 11% of the sample size. The researcher made instruments entitled ‘School -Community Security Partnership Questionnaire (SCSPQ) and School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ)’ were utilized to elicit information. The overall reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics which gave reliability coefficient of .923 for School-Community Security Partnership Questionnaire and .822 for School Climate Questionnaire. The study used mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions and independent t-test to test the two null hypotheses at the significant level of 0.05. The finding showed that there is a significant influence of school-community security partnership on school climate. It was recommended that the management of schools should establish school-community based security partnerships to foster a positive school climate.

Keywords: School- Community, Security, School Climate, Emergency plans and alert, system, Security agencies.

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Introduction

The school is a social and formal organization where teaching and learning activities are carried out. A school is any public or private owned educational institution established for the purposes of offering instructions to learners. These educational institutions are of different strata and they include daycare, kindergarten or nursery, primary or basic education, secondary and any other higher or tertiary educational institutions. The main motive of the school as an educational institution is to provide training that will lead to the achievement of both educational and national goals/objectives for sustainable national development. Given the disposition of the school as a social institution, the school needs to partner other stakeholders like their immediate community members to ensure a secured environment for teaching and learning.

From the foregoing, it shows that the school as an academic institution is also part and parcel of the immediate community where it is located. Ogbonnaya (2006) stated that many educational institutions like the primary and secondary schools cannot function on their own without the support of their immediate environment. According to the author, the community provides inputs and resources for the continual growth and development of schools in their locality. Therefore the school cannot operate in an isolation without support from external sources like the community. Many leaders in education, business and community development have come to realize that schools alone cannot prepare the youth for productive adulthood so any school that is located in the community must involve the immediate community stakeholders for effective management and establishment of positive school climate in order to accomplish its goals and objectives.

Zullig, *et al.* (2010) refers to school climate as the perceptions and attitudes of students, parents, and staff members regarding the quality and character of the school environment. It includes dimensions such as safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the physical environment. According to Allan, *et al.* (2013), school climate is a set of measurable characteristics of a work group that is perceived by its members, and that affects their behavior. Similarly, Spector (2019) also refers to climate as the shared perceptions among members of an organization about the prevailing conditions in their work environment, including the policies, practices, and interpersonal dynamics. This means that school climate includes the norms, values, teaching-learning practices, and the physical environment. It emphasizes the experiences and perceptions

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of students, teachers, parents, and staff members within the school community. Emediongokon (2016) observed that the climate of a school influences member's perceptions about the school and in turn influences their behavior towards the school. School climate in this study refers to a school environment that is peaceful, safe, secured and conducive for teaching and learning. A positive school climate promotes a sense of belonging, safety, and well-being for all students, staff, amongst others, while a negative school climate may lead to negative experiences, bullying, and low academic achievement.

The government at different occasions has made several attempts to remedy the problem of school climate by making a policy that no child above the age of 12 years should be admitted to JS1 class. The policy has gone a long way to curtail the school from having matured students that are violent and could be initiated into cult groups that triggers fight and insurgencies in secondary schools. The government has also enhanced the fencing of school compounds with gate to avoid breaking in during and after school hours all with enhancing positive school climate. Researchers have also tried their bits in solving this problem of school climate using other variables, for instance Emediongokon, (2016) conducted a research on institutional climate and job performance of university lecturers in south- south geo political zone of Nigeria. She envisaged that a school climates relate significantly to job performance of the universities lecturers. Hoy and Miskel, (2013) conducted a study to examine the influence of trust, efficacy, and collective responsibility on school climate. It explored how these factors contribute to the development of a positive school climate within schools. From the foregoing, it is necessary for public secondary schools to engage in school-community security partnership to establish a safe, secured, peaceful and conducive environment for teaching and learning. . This is because security is a very important aspect of school climate.

Security issues have been a global issue for some times. For instance, Ndahi (2014) reported a case of the kidnapping of over 200 senior secondary school girls in Chibok town which is between Borno and Adamawa states. Issue of bombing students by unknown gunmen, bandits and the Boko Haram group in 2010 were also reported by Akintokumbo (2011). Recent cases also reported on National news include abduction of staff and students of Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe state on February, 24th, 2014. abduction of 110 students of Government Girls Science Technical college, Dapchi, Yobe state on February 19th, 2018; abduction of 303 students

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of Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina state on 11th December, 2020; abduction of 41 persons in Government science college, Kagara, Niger state on 17th February, 2021: abduction of students at Federal Government college, Birium Yauri Local Government Area, Kebbi state on June 17th, 2021; abduction of 317 school girls of Government Girls Science Secondary School, Jangebe, Zamfara state on February 26th, 2021 amongst others.

Though most of these cases are recorded in the northern part of the country, other parts of the country also experience insecurity cases. In Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District for instance, some insecurity challenges reported on Akwa Ibom State Broadcasting Television are as follows: Thursday June 24, 2021, some students cultists in Uyo High School threatened to kill their principal, Mr. Micheal Etuk for arresting and detaining some of their members in the police station; Another reported case was that a Senior Secondary School 3 student stabbed his school mate in SSS 2 to death during a fight at Aka Community Secondary School on March 10th, 2022. On 31st March, 2022, stealing and wanton destruction of property at the Government Primary School, Aka Offot, Obio Imo, Uyo was reported. This is very pathetic and has continued for a long time now despite government's interventions. The researcher was an eye witness to unknown men breaking into the administrative blocks and principal's office at Community Secondary Commercial School, Ibiaku Itam in many occasions. From the overview, positive school climate could be achieved in secondary schools, particularly in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District if school-community security partnership is given utmost importance.

School-Community Security Partnership

Otwoma (2016) and Davies (2009) demonstrated that, school-community security partnership enables the school and the community to share the responsibility of running the schools without any traits of insecurity. This the author noted will help the students to achieve the aim of education without which neither the school nor the community can benefit. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP 2005- 2010) cited in Bwana and Orodho (2014) envisaged community involvement in providing support improving and maintaining existing infrastructure in schools which leads to their sustainable developments. School- community security partnership deals with establishing a good relationship between the school and the community where the school is situated. Before now, school community security partnership was not emphasized thereby seeing the school and the community almost operating in isolation. However, reasons for

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establishing school- community security partnership are as follows; most of the schools were established by the community themselves, before government took over so the community still owes the school the duty of protecting it. The school is a government property and for this reason, the community is to protect both human and material facilities. Government expects the community to support the day to day programmes of these schools so as to assist the school function effectively and one of those support is provision of security to ensure a safe place for teaching and learning.

Dimensions of School-Community Security Partnership

Emergency Plans and Alert System

Emergencies are events that cause huge losses to persons and properties and require communities to respond with routine procedures and resources. An effective way to ameliorate the impact of emergencies on schools is for school administrators to issue alert system to the school community before, during, and after emergencies. Emergency plan donate procedures for handling sudden unplanned happening. Emergency plan according to Adegoke (2013) is a method by which awareness and understanding (support by risk educators) can be translated into action, and can include a range of activities; developing contingency plans and participating in education and awareness programmes. Raii and Akanbi (2019) conducted a study to investigate the contribution of emergency risk management factors and effectiveness of public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The study found that Risk identification, Risk evaluation, Risk mitigation and risk analysis have significant contributions to school leadership while only Risk Evaluation made a significant contributions to Teaching Effectiveness and Risk Identification and Risk Evaluation have significant contributions to school climate. The study recommended that authorities should make adequate provisions for emergency risk management devices and be proactive in adopting risk identification, evaluation and mitigation measures in schools.

Security agencies (internal and external) Communication

Amiara (2016) observes that, the importance of communication in conflict situation entails making the parties to see each other, interact with each other, talking with each other about their problem, with a view to finding a workable solution to the issues. Communication is an important factor that promotes social relations among people and security agencies (both internal and external) Communication involves having a wide linking ecosystem between the school securities

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and the community securities. Effective communication improves school climate. The exchange of information between teachers or students, either within the school (internal) or the community (external) is communication.

Internal and external security communication in schools are the processes of exchanging security information and messages within or outside of the school to enhance cordiality in security management. Bakari (2021) conducted a study on the effect of internal security on educational challenges in Nigeria to investigate the development security trials threatening the Nigerian State in the 21st century. It was found that, the challenges are internally generated and that the conditions which support the growth and development of terrorism in Nigeria range from socio-economic factors such as poverty to religion. The study argues that terrorism has adverse implications for Nigeria's security, socioeconomic transformation, security awareness and sensitization. It was recommended that collaboration among security agents should be advocated as possible solutions to the menace, among others.

Statement of the problem

The current school climate is characterized by a negative and unsupportive atmosphere, leading to various negative outcomes for students, teachers, and overall school performance in some public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial district in particular and Akwa Ibom State in general. This issue arises from the need to create safe and conducive learning environments that foster positive school climates, as well as the recognition that effective community security collaboration among schools plays a vital role in achieving this goal. Situations of insecurity and their consequences abound in Nigeria today. For instance, Borno State schools were shut-down in major towns as a result of insurgency.

In Akwa Ibom State, some schools were temporary closed as a result of insecurity in 2021 and 2022, these schools are Uyo High School, Uyo, Etoi Secondary School, Uyo, Ewet Technical College. Uyo amongst others. These attacks on schools usually led to injuries, killings. Other victims were rendered handicapped, properties vandalized with outright destruction of school facilities thereby discouraging the establishment of new schools. Therefore, government security apparatus are overstretched as funds allocated for other developmental projects are diverted to tackling the aftermath of attacks. In the end, educational attainment in terms of quality of graduates and manpower suffer which impinge on overall national development aspirations. The prevalence

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of these insecurity creates a hostile and unsafe climate for students and staff hindering their social and emotional wellbeing to learn and teach.

However, the Akwa Ibom State government had tried to address this issue by fencing round schools and also giving order that the age bracket for admission into JS1 should be below 12 years of age and so forth. It is therefore not enough to leave it just at that. Hence, the motivation for this research in a bit to rewrite the narrative of school climate among public secondary schools. The researcher seeks to examine the influence of the emergency plans and alert system, security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of school-community security partnership on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Ascertain the influence of Emergency plans and alert system on School Climate among Public Secondary Schools.
- ii. Examine the influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school Climate among Public Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised:

- i. How does Emergency plan and alert system influence School Climate among public secondary school?
- ii. What is the influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on School Climate among Public Secondary Schools?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i. There is no significant influence of Emergency plans and alert system on School Climate among Public Secondary Schools?

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- ii. There is no significant influence of Security agencies (internal and external) communication on School Climate among Public Secondary Schools?

Significance of the Study

Government: It will be useful to the government as it will guide them in the formulation of policies on school security network and general state security systems like emergency plans and alert systems.

School Administrators: It will assist the school administrators in establishing and maintaining a safe, healthy, and orderly learning environment. It will also help them to identify the components of school internal security control that mostly influence the school climate.

Host Community: It will give the community a sense of ownership and an edge to protect what they have and also ensure security management externally in order to safe guard lives and properties in the school through such strategies as security agencies communication.

Research Method

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. This research design was adopted for the study because according to Uyanga and Etudor-Eyo (2015), it attempts to trace the cause(s) of some observable behavior and establishes the causal connections by searching for plausible causal factors. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District is one of the three Senatorial Districts in Akwa Ibom State, the others being Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District and Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District respectively. Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District consists of nine Local Government Areas namely Uyo, Uruan, Nsit Atai, Ibesikpo Asutan, Itu, Nsit Ibom, Etinan, Ibiono Ibom, and Nsit Ubium Local Government Area. The Senatorial District is inhabited predominantly by Akwa Ibom people of Ibibio ethnic group extraction with a handful of settlers and visitors from neighboring states. The choice of Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District for this study was because the researcher hails from, work and resides in this area and has firsthand knowledge of the school climate situation in the area through observation and local news media reports.

The population of the study comprised 3904 teachers in the nine Local Government Areas in 89 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The sample size of this study comprised 423 teachers representing 11% of teachers' population. The study adopted

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multi stage sampling approach. This approach was adopted because it gives room for other sampling techniques in the study; so that all the Local Government Areas in the senatorial district can be equally represented since the populations of teachers of secondary schools in each Local Government Area were not the same. Firstly, Local Government Areas were grouped into clusters that is (nine Local Government Areas); Proportionate approach was used to select 45 schools (50%), and 423 teachers (11%) selected from each Local Government Area in the District. Simple random sampling technique of Hat and Draw method was used for the selection of teachers from the 45 schools earmarked for the study. Names of schools were written on pieces of papers and were selected for the study. In selecting the teachers in these 45 schools, Yes or No were written on the pieces of papers and folded, teachers who picked Yes were selected and used for the study.

Data were collected with researcher's structured questionnaires designed based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire were entitled School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ) having fifteen items and School- Community security Partnership Questionnaire (SCSPQ) having twenty items, ten in each variable. The instruments were designed to obtain information from teachers on the various aspects of school-community security partnership used by their principals based on the sub variables of Emergency plans and alert systems and Security agencies (internal and external) communication. Four point rating scale was adopted for both questionnaires. The options in the questions were; Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)- 3, Disagree(D) - 2, Strongly Disagree(SD) - 1.

The instrument (SCQ) and (SCSPQ) were subjected to face validation by two experts in the department of Curriculum studies, Educational Management and Planning, Faculty of Education, and one expert from the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences both in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The experts were given the objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and questionnaire for vetting. The experts' comments and inputs were used for modification of the final copy of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was used to test the reliability coefficient indices which yielded .923 for School-Community Security Partnership Questionnaire (SCSPQ) and .822 for School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ). The instrument were administered to the school teachers (respondents) using two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation (SD) was used to answer the research questions, while the independent t- test was used

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in testing all the three null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significant. When the accompanying P- value of the t- calculated values are less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypotheses were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted.

Results and Discussions

Research Question One: How does emergency plan and alert system influence school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of emergency plans and alert system on school climate in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

Source of Variation	Emergency plans and alert system	N	Mean	SD
School climate	Effective	280	34.65	3.06
	Ineffective	122	29.65	4.16

The entries in Table 1 reveal that schools which have effective emergency plans and alert system have the higher school climate mean score of 34.65 while schools which are ineffective in emergency plans and alert system have the lower mean score of 29.65 respectively. The result shows that emergency plans and alert system positively influence school climate in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

Source of Variation	School Security Agencies Comm.	N	Mean	SD
School climate	Effective	285	34.90	3.08

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Ineffective 117 28.82 3.07

The entries in Table 2 reveal that schools which have effective security agencies (internal and external) communication have the higher school climate mean score of 34.90 while schools which are ineffective in emergency plans and alert system have the lower mean score of 28.82 respectively. The result shows that security agencies (internal and external) communication positively influence school climate in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of emergency plans and alert system on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District?

Table 3: Result of independence t-test analysis on the influence of emergency plans and alert system on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

	Emergency plans and alert system	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Decision P<05
School climate	Effective	280	34.65	3.06	400	13.406	.000
	Ineffective	122	29.65	4.16			

*significant at P < .05 level,

The result in Table 3 reveals the calculated t-value 13.406 with its corresponding P-value of 0.00 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance with 400 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which claims no significant influence of emergency plans and alert system on school climate is rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of emergency plan and alert system on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District?

Table 4: Result of independence t-test analysis on the influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

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	Security agencies communication	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Decision P<05
School climate	Effective	285	34.90	3.08	400	17.988	.000
	Ineffective	117	28.82	3.07			

*significant at $P < .05$ level,

The result in Table 4 reveals the calculated t-value 17.988 with its corresponding P-value of 0.00 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance with 400 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which claims no significant influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate is rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of security agencies (internal and external) communication on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicated that school-community security partnership of emergency plans and alert system, and security agencies (internal and external) communication significantly influence school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The finding obtained is attributed to the fact that in a country like Nigeria where insecurities, kidnapping, and violence abound, negative school climate is to be experienced and if these cases are properly communicated to the community security agencies and the there is adequate emergency plans and alert system such as fire alarms, extinguishers, emergency kits, and exit doors in schools, it will help establish a conducive school climate for positive teaching and learning as well as promote peace among staff and students.

Educational Implications of Findings

The implication of this study to education cannot be overemphasized due to the effects of negative school climate to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the secondary education. The study provides effective application of emergency plans and alert system in schools to curb or solve crises immediately in order not to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere of the school. Findings of

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this study is therefore very important to the school administrators as it will them to maintain and also service the security protocol link for easy dissemination of security information especially in emergency cases.

Recommendations

Based on these findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

- i. The Government and schools management should develop a comprehensive emergency plans for all schools, conduct regular emergency drills, provide training and resources for the implementation of the emergency plans and alert system to foster a safe, peaceful, secured and conducive environment for teaching and learning.
- ii. School management should develop a clear communication protocol, establish regular communication channels with internal and external securities, share critical security information and updates with both parties and provide access to necessary resources they need to effectively carry out their duties so to ensure the safety and wellbeing of schools and community members.

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