

REFOCUSING RESEARCH ON SECURITY TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AS A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING SCHOOL SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the possibility of refocusing research on security training for school administrators as strategy for enhancing school security in West Africa in an uncertain future. This is necessary because schools around the world have become targets of attacks by terrorists and other violent criminals in society. In spite of this ugly trend, many school administrators do not, pay attention to the issue of providing adequate security to their schools. In some cases their acts of omission or commission tend to compromise and complicate the insecurity problem in school environment. However, since the school administrators are the Chief Security Officers in their schools, it becomes necessary to refocus research towards equipping School Heads with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that will empower them to reasonably cope with providing and maintaining minimum security in their schools both for the present and for the future.

Keywords: School Security, Training, School Administrators, Strategy, Refocusing Research

INTRODUCTION

Historically, security issues are as old as human existence and have remained of paramount concern throughout human history (Nwankwo, 2013). Every era of human existence has contended with its unique security concerns. The early man was challenged by security from threats of wild animals; the hostility of the weather and the threat of mystical forces. The medieval age is awash with stories of wars, conquests, annexations and domination between nations, in addition to natural disasters, famine, and plagues (Nwankwo, 2013). In traditional African context, security was defined according to the principle of religion, divination, mysticism and cults.

The explosion of scientific and technological inventions of the 19th and 20th centuries have brought unlimited elements in the national security portfolio and thereby, have compounded conventional security agenda in all nations. In the current era, the world is faced with novel and unprecedented security issues based on weaponization in terms of physical, terrestrial, radiological, chemical, nuclear, biological, industrial and electronic weapons among others (Nwankwo, 2013). The world today can be said to be facing a security nightmare characterized by unseen enemies and threats without borders (Nwankwo, 2013).

In the face of global security challenges, every institution that man has developed for the advancement of civilization has come under attack. Destruction of lives and properties in educational institutions that was hitherto unknown has become a common occurrence in many nations of the world. Attacks on schools appear to have taken the center stage in the

deadly drama of arson, kidnappings, bombings and other barbaric acts of terrorism. Thus there is a growing concern by educational administrator on what role they can play in order to contribute meaningfully in the provision and sustenance of security of schools under their care.

School administrators are not immune from the poisonous sting of insecurity that is afflicting communities in which their schools are located. For example Njoku (2012) reported that on Wednesday August 15, 2012 the Vice-Chancellor of Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria Professor Cyprian Oniji was kidnapped by a five man gang at the very gate of the institution in broad day light. Similarly, the Provost of the Federal College of Education Eha-Amafu Professor Benjamin Mbah was abducted on his way home from school. Similarly, Adebayo (2012) reported that the Principal of Patoko Junior High School in Ogun State, Nigeria, Mr. Olatanji Ogundele was beaten to stupor when he tried to stop land speculators from illegally constructing a building in his school premises. In another unfortunate incidence, Otuchi Kere (2014) reported that a gang of four members abducted the Proprietress of Chelson Group of schools, Dr. Edith Aliyu, in Gwagwalada, Nigeria and murdered her after she recognized one of them.

In some cases school administrators may not be the direct victims of terrorist acts but they are forced to suffer the psychology and trauma of helplessly witnessing their staff and students being massacred and their school properties destroyed by heartless terrorists. For example, Agbo, Adamu and Nwamu (2014) reported that a Boko Haram bomber disguised as a student bombed the Kano School of Hygiene in Nigeria during which eight people were killed and more than 70 people injured. In Bornu State of Nigeria, within the last two years, more than 120 schools have been bombed and thousands of students and teachers have lost their precious lives. The worst case was in April 14, 2014, in which more than 200 teenage girls were abducted from Government Girls Secondary School Chibok in Bornu State of Nigeria. This has rebuilder in more than 15,000 children to stop attending school since February 2013.

There are also cases in which the acts of omission or commission by school administrators could constitute a security threat not only to their person but to the institution itself. Bachino (2013) reported a case where an eight year old boy was blinded in one eye after being beaten by the head teacher because his father could not pay the child's school fees. In another case Obahopo (2013) reported that the principal of Baptist High School in Kogi State of Nigeria impregnated one of his female students and tried to abort the pregnancy. All these unworthy actions by school administrators could generate terrible violent reactions from parents and relations of the victims with disastrous consequences on school security.

Justifications for Security Training for School Administrators

Security training is the process of imparting the night knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable an individual to be security conscious as well as to take proactive measure towards protection of lives and property. School administrators are the Chief Executives of schools and as such they need security training for the following reasons:

- i. School administrators are responsible for the security of all lives and properties in their schools.
- ii. School administrators need to be familiar with all aspects of security of operation. This will enable them to regularly assess and evaluate the quality of security services in their schools. It enables them to pinpoint areas of security lapses for improvement.
- iii. School administrators should have a good knowledge of school security system so as to be able to correctly teach and motivate staff and students on matters of school security

- iv. School administrators are largely responsible for the provision of security devices and other apparatus in these schools. They need to have a good grasp of security activities to be able to determine the types of security equipment that will be procured for school as appropriate.
- v. School administrators need to have a clear understanding of security theories, practices and challenges so as to be able to generate, formulate and implement school security policies.

Security Functions of School Administrators

School administrators discharge security functions within the framework of their traditional managerial functions. These include:

- a. *Planning*: School administrators have the responsibility of planning all the security programmes and activities of the school. They plan what security activities need to be performed who is to perform them, when, where and how they are to be carried out
- b. *Organizing*: They ensure orderly arrangement of men, money and materials required for the smooth operation of security activities. They ensure that security activities are done at the right time, in the right way, at the right place and by the right person.
- c. *Directing*: School administrators are expected to issue commands and directives as what is to be done and how it should be done. They give instructions on security decisions taken in the school.
- d. *Supervising*: School administrators supervise all security activities conducted in their schools. They inspect the condition of security equipment and monitor the activities of staff in the discharge of their security duties.
- e. *Coordinating*: School administrators coordinate various aspects and activities of school security. They help to ensure unity of purpose and harmonious cooperation in the provision of security in the school. They also coordinate the security activities of their schools with those of other security agencies in the community.
- f. *Budgeting*: School administration ensure the allocation of finances for the running of security activities. They are expected to explore alternative sources of funding to take care of security matters. They ensure proper utilization of funds budgeted for school security programmes.
- g. *Staffing*: School administrators help in attracting, recruiting and selecting security staff to be deployed for security operations. They ensure the retention, training, discipline and welfare of security staff. They are expected to motivate security staff for optimum task performance.

Problems Affecting School Administrators Provision of Security

The performance of school security duties by school administrators in West Africa is faced with so many problems. Basic among them include:

- a. Some school administrators do not make proper planning of school security activities. Some schools do not have any plans on maintenance of school security at all.
- b. There is poor organization of school activities by some school administrators. Security duties are done haphazardly with following an orderly determined procedure. For example security staff may change duty without handing over report.

- c. Some school administrators do not give clear directives to security staff on what they need to do. Staff are left to do things without clear instructions on what is expected of them.
- d. There is lack of regular supervision of security activities by some school administrators. In most cases do not know when security staff are doing their duties and when they neglect to do their work.
- e. There is no coordination of security activities within the school. There is also lack of synergy and networking of joint security activities between the schools and security agencies in the community.
- f. There is inadequate budgeting of funds for school security operations. In some cases nothing is budgeted by the school administrators for school security.
- g. There is lack of staffing of schools with qualified and competent security staff. School administrators in some cases do not adequately cater for the training, discipline and welfare of security staff.

The Need for Research on Security Training for School Administrators

Considering the challenges faced by school administrators in respect of their performance of security duties and responsibilities, there is the need to refocus research on providing them with adequate training on school security service delivery. There is the need for research to identify the security training needs of school administrators so as to enable them take appropriate security measures in their schools.

Research is needed in the area of security training for school administrators so as to generate a data bank that will provide accurate and reliable statistical data required for security research purposes. Availability of statistics will make it possible to take scientific decisions on security matters based on empirical evidence. There is the need to find new ways and means of improving the quality of security training for school administrators. But this is not possible without intensive research that will come up with innovations that will uplift the quality of training and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of school administrators towards providing security in their schools.

There is the need for research on ways of inculcating security consciousness among school administrators so as to enable them imbibe best practices in school security provision. It will also equip them to transmit security consciousness to their staff and students. There is the need for research and innovation on security training for school administrations as to acquit them with the latest technology in the area of school security and how they can adapt to global trends.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are provided on are refocusing of research on security training for school administrators.

1. There should be researches on school security policy for school administrators. This will help to provide security regulations to be enforced by school administrators in their schools.
2. There should be research on minimum security standards expected will schools. This will help school administrators to gear their efforts towards meeting up with the minimum security standards and possibly going beyond them.

3. Research is required to equip school administrations on the use of security devices and other modern technologies for efficient security service delivery.
4. There should be research in the area of joint security collaboration between schools and others security agencies. This will help school administrator to improve on their security networking capacity and cooperation for the improvement of security in their schools.

CONCLUSION

School security is an important aspect of overall security provisions provided in any nation. High level of insecurity in schools could lead to destruction of lives and property as well as closure of schools, with disastrous consequences to the present and the future. School administrators have a significant role to play in the management security in their schools. However due to lack of adequate security training many school administrators are unable to discharge their statutory security responsibilities satisfactorily. There is a need to refocus research and innovation on ways of providing high quality security training for school administrators. This will empower them to boldly take proactive measures to provide school security for the present and for an uncertain future.

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