

MANAGEMENT OF UNSAFE SCHOOL SECURITY AND POOR HAZARDS COMMUNICATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE.

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Abstract

This study investigated ways of managing unsafe school security and poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique and Taro Yamen's formular were used to obtain a sample of 145 principals and 400 teachers of the Junior and Senior Secondary Schools for the study. The researcher utilized a 33-item self-designed instrument titled Management of Hazards in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (MHSSQ). Face and content validities were ensured. The reliability index was 0.79 obtained through Cronbach alpha method. The instrument was a modified Liked type scale of SA, A, D, SD. Mean, weighted mean and rank order statistics were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested with z-test statistics at 0.05% alpha level of significance. The results among others included training school employees on appropriate security procedures and safety induction training to offer general information about inherent hazards in the school system as ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security and poor hazard communication respectively. The hypotheses tested revealed that: There was no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security and poor hazards communication. It was recommended that there is need for the establishment of safety (Hazard) Management system in mitigating hazards in the schools for the improvement of the school climate and the entire administration.

Introduction

Secondary school education is a stepping stone to higher education. The importance of secondary school education could be examined through its laudable objectives and goals, which hope to offer education for human relationship, self and national efficiency, national consciousness, unity, social and political progress, self-realization, effective citizenship, scientific and technological awareness.

To attain such desirable goals and objectives, there is dire need for effective school climate instructional processes and administration, where there would be safety consciousness and discipline imbued in the students and staff of the institution. A conducive school security and skilled communication are among the key elements in the enhancement of positive school climate, instructional and effective administration. It has been noted that school climate is a predominant factor for administrative successes (Okorie, 1999, Roy & Miskel 2008).

However, the contemporary issues in the secondary school climate, instructional and administrative processes are the unsafe acts and unsafe conditions which are potential sources of hazards in the school environment. The effects of these hazards are often detrimental to effective functioning and successes of the school organization. In essence hazards could cause malfunctioning of the entire school system resulting in sub-standard output. This is because hazards are things that have the potentials to cause harms to people, equipments, systems and environment.

In a universal application, university of Waikato-Occupational Health and Safety in Employment (n.d.), considers hazard as an “activity, engagement, circumstances, event, occurrence, phenomenon, process, situation or substance (whether arising from or cause within or outside a place of work) that is an actual or potential cause or source of harm”.

In order to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace ensuring that hazards associated with the workplace are carefully identified, assessed and properly controlled, hazard management becomes imperative. Safework (2013) considers hazard management as “essentially a problem-solving process aiming at defining hazards, assessing the risks, controlling the risks, evaluating the process and review the process after a period of time or when something change. In the same vein, Dictionary Sense Agent (n.d.) conceptualizes hazard management as the development of systems to prevent accidents, injuries, and other adverse occurrences in an institutional setting.

Safety and security have been confirmed by many analysts as needs that dominate human behaviours. Many people are highly motivated and productive when they are protected or secured. Also, many people are often happy and highly committed to work when they are free from dangers, anxiety, fear, tension and other forms of threats and intimidations. Therefore, security embraces protection of lives, properties and psychological well being of human behaviours. Durant Independent, School District (n.d.), comment that school security also assists the school with truancy issues among other things. National school safety and security (n.d.) observes that there are number of documented cases of threatening and disruptive behaviours by irate parents, disgruntled employees and other adults who target school administrators, teachers, and students. Therefore, safety of the school personnel is unquestionably a priority.

Obasi and Asodike (2007), maintain that “it is difficult to learn under tension” which could be caused by security lapses. Amirize (2000), also notes that the most important issue in school plant operations is the management and control of school environment and its facilities in a most efficient manner to enhance the goals of education. This could be accomplished through standard school security.

Effective communication could be considered as the life wire to growth, development and survival of every social system. It is pertinent to note that effective school climate, teaching-learning and administration are the functions of

skilled communication. In this context, communication is the means whereby the school as a social institution coordinates human efforts in achieving individual and organizational goals and objectives. Hoy and Miskel (2008), commend communication as important because it underlies the instructional, interpersonal, administrative processes and structures of the schools organization. Hence, school administrators must realize the implications and importance of communication in educational institutions.

In the same vein, Nnabuo(as cited in Agabi, Okorosaye-Orubite; Ezekiel- Hart & Egbezer 2005), describes lack of effective communication as the root of all strikes demonstration and students unrest, indiscipline and malpractices in our schools. The above elements are potential hazards because it could results in casualties; fatalities disrupting the safety and proper functioning of the school organization. Hence, hazards in the school environment need to be identified; assessed and control measures determined and communicated to parties involved to ensure proper mitigation of the hazards that may threaten the school community and environment.

Effective hazards communication increases personnel involvement and commitment in establishing safety and health culture and standard. It also supports leadership at all levels, creates awareness to all parties involved, in understanding the goals and objectives of the organizations' safety and their roles to achieve these goals and objectives. Hazards and risks inherent in the workplace and all the control measures, precautions, rules and procedures are made known and properly carried out through effective hazards communication, (Organization for Safety and Health Administration-OSHA 2009; & National Examination Board for Safety and Health-NEBOSH n.d)

Statement of Problem

Researchers have shown that there are hazard implications in the secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. These phenomena establish the unsafe acts and unsafe conditions which are potential hazards in the secondary schools organization. Therefore, the problem of this study is; what measures could be taken to mitigate these hazards in reducing the adverse effects on the secondary schools organizational climate, instructional and administrative processes in Akwa Ibom State.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine measures in managing hazards arising from unsafe school security and poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. Investigate ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What are the ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% alpha levels of significance:

H0₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

H0₂: There is no significance difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

The design for this study was descriptive survey. The population consisted of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) junior and senior public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Six thousand eight hundred and forty-one (6,841) respondents comprising two hundred and twenty-eight (228) principals and six thousand six hundred and thirteen (6,613) class teachers from the public junior and senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State composed the population of the study (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education 2013). The sample of this study comprised one hundred and forty-five (145) principals being 63.59% of the target population and four hundred (400) class teachers representing 6.04% of the population drawn using “Taro Yamen’s formula and proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The researcher developed an instrument titled Management of Hazards in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (MHSSQ), structured after a modified four point likert scale type of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity were ensured.

Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability co-efficient of MHSSQ at 0.79. Mean and rank order were statistics used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05% alpha level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1:

What are the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4.3: Mean and rank order scores of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security for effective secondary school administration (N₁ = 145 and N₂ = 389).

S/N	Items	N=145 Principals	N=389 Teacher	Mean Set	RAN K
		\bar{x}_1	$\bar{s} x_2$	$\bar{x} \bar{x}$	

1.	Training the school employees on appropriate security procedures can assist in improving the school security standard.	3.57	3.79	3.68	3 rd
2.	The use of safety procedure will encourage restriction of access by visitors to the school premises.	3.51	3.53	3.52	7 th
3.	School office layout design should have reception areas where every visitors will be required to report to help control movement of strangers within the school premises.	3.66	3.90	3.78	2 nd
4.	Provision of batches to be worn by visitors can assist in identifying unknown individual within the school compound.	3.27	3.36	3.32	11 th
5.	Provision of safeguards for school property will prevent vandalization of the school property.	3.26	3.49	3.38	10 th
6.	Lone working in an isolated part of the school premises should be prohibited to avoid attack.	3.21	3.41	3.31	12 th
7.	Locked school gates will help in restricting access by visitors to the school.	3.49	3.80	3.65	4 th
8.	Monitoring school gates will help in checking truancy among students.	3.26	3.24	3.25	13 th
9.	Electrical surveillance metal dictator will help screen out persons with metal weapon.	3.57	3.61	3.59	5 th
10.	The use of security cameras for surveillance will help detect behaviours that appear to be threatening the safety of the school.	3.21	3.68	3.45	9 th
11.	Door locks should be placed on the entrance doorways to prevent unauthorized use of the building.	3.64	3.49	3.57	6 th
12.	Hiring security professionals is essential to provide appropriate resources to keep the school personnel and others safe.	3.60	3.40	3.50	8 th
13.	Strengthening partnership with public safety officials such as the police will help in improving the	3.27	3.35	3.31	12 th

	school security standard.				
14.	School security should be given priority in the school budget plan to enable the school acquire necessary security equipment.	3.09	3.19	3.14	16 th
15.	Fencing should be mandatory to prevent trespassing the school by the public.	3.69	3.93	3.81	1 st
16.	Enforcement of strict dress code will provide easy identification of students in the school.	3.20	3.44	3.32	11 th
17.	Enforcement of vigilante group is essential for proper security report in the school.	3.31	3.45	3.38	10 th
18.	Visitors screening such as finger prints will provide good security checks for clearance.	3.26	3.03	3.15	15 th
19.	Keeping shrubs trimmed will promote natural visibility.	3.33	3.07	3.20	14 th
		6437	66.16	65.31	
	Grand Mean	3.39	3.48	3.44	

Table 1 show that items with serial number 1-19 have their various mean and grand mean values above the criterion of 2.50 and were therefore agreed by the respondents as the ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2:

What are the ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4.4: Mean and rank order scores of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State (N₁ = 145 and N₂ = 389).

S/N	ITEMS	N=145	N=389	Mean Set	RANK
		Principals	Teachers		
		\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}	
20.	Safety symbols should be used in identifying areas of potential hazards in the school premises.	3.65	3.37	3.51	5 th
21.	Safety induction training can offer general information about inherent hazards in the school system.	3.88	3.76	3.82	1 st
22.	Posters carrying safety information	3.61	3.49	3.55	4 th

	should be pasted in strategic positions in the school to speedily communicate the intended safety hazards information.				
23.	Hazards information can be communicated through memos within the school organization.	3.03	3.29	3.29	11th
24.	Safety briefings before commencement of any activity can create awareness on the control measures of expected hazards in the school premises.	3.55	3.75	3.65	2nd
25.	Issues of hazards can be discussed during Parent Teachers Association meeting to increased parent's involvement in hazard management in the school.	3.36	3.28	3.32	10th
26.	School personnel can obtain hazard information through their subject department to stimulate their morale in controlling hazards within the school.	3.38	3.42	3.40	6th
27.	Tannoy announcement can enhance effective hazards communication in cases of emergency.	3.48	3.16	3.32	10th
28.	Creating school safety advisory group will help in providing necessary advice on hazards matters to the school administration for effective safety planning.	3.49	3.74	3.62	3rd
29.	Provision of bulletins information in safety will serve as hazards alerts.	3.19	3.34	3.27	12th
30.	Lesson plans on common hazards around the school can greatly communicate appropriate knowledge in controlling those hazards.	3.19	3.03	3.19	13th
31.	Establishing safety club will help generate safety information among colleagues in fostering safety consciousness within the school organization.	3.13	3.62	3.38	8th
32.	Creating safety representative will encourage rapid flow of hazards information between Management	3.32	3.45	3.39	7th

Board and the Schools.				
33. The use of feed back in skilled hazards communication can assist the administrator in good decision making in controlling safety hazards in the school.	3.55	3.16	3.36	9th
	47.86	47.86	47.99	
Grand Mean	3.42	3.42	3.43	

Table 2 indicates that items with serial numbers 20-33 have their various means and grand mean values above the criterion mean of 2.50, and were therefore agreed by the respondents as the ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Z test analysis of significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Category	N	X	SD	Df	Zcal	Z-crit	Remarks
Principals	145	3.39	0.61	532	1.8	1.96	H ₀₁
Teachers	389	3.48	0.58				Accepted

Table 3 reveals that principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.39 and 0.61, while teachers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.48 and 0.58 respectively. At an alpha level of 0.05 with a degree of freedom (df) of 532, the z-calculated value of 1.8 is less than the z-critical of 1.96. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. By implication, there is no significant difference between principals and teachers means scores on the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between principals and teachers mean scores on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: z test analysis of significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Category	N	X	SD	Df	Zcal	Z-crit	Remarks
Principals	145	3.43	0.59	532	0.17	1.96	H ₀₂
Teachers	389	3.42	0.71				Accepted

Table 4 reveals that principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.43 and 0.59, while teachers have mean and standard deviation of 3.42 and 0.71 respectively. At an alpha level of 0.05 with a degree of freedom (df) of 532, the z-calculated value of 0.17 is less than the z-critical of 1.96. Therefore the null hypothesis accepted. By implication, there is no significant difference between principals and teachers mean scores on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Findings from the results of analyses of research question one identify various ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security such as fencing the school compound to prevent trespassing the school by the public, training the school employees on appropriate security procedures in improving the school security standard, the use of safety procedures to encourage restriction of access by visitors to the school premises; providing door locks to be placed on the entrance door ways to prevent unauthorized use of the school building, strengthening partnership with public safety officials such as the police in case of emergency threats to the school community etc.

Nevertheless the corresponding hypothesis testing finds out that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the strategies for managing hazards arising from unsafe school security in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This finding is in agreement with Amirize (2000), Obasi & Asodike (2007), Durant independent School District (n.d), and National School Safety and security (n.d) who are of the opinion that the need for safety and security is crucial in human behaviours. This is because humans can be highly motivated, happy and productive when they are secured, free from dangers, anxiety and fears.

The analyses of responses to research question 2 in table 2 reveals the various ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazards communication some of which are the use of safety symbols in identifying areas of potential hazards in the school premises, safety induction training to offer general information about inherent hazards and risks in the school premises,, safety briefings before commencement of any activity to create awareness on the precautions against the expected hazards and the use of posters carry safety information pasted in strategic positions in the school.

Also, the corresponding finding derived from hypothesis testing has it that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on ways of managing hazards arising from poor hazard communication in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

This finding is in confirmation with Hoy and Miskel (2008); Nnabuo (1992) (as cited in Agabi, Okorosaye-Orubite, Ezekiel-Hart & Egbezor 2005); OSHA (2009) and NEBOSH (n.d) who maintain that communication is integral in administration, whereby administrative functions, teaching learning processes, interpersonal relationship, objectives, goals, standard and individual roles are established and adequately carried out. This implies that the school administrators

and managers should seek for and utilize the available medium of effective hazards communication in an effort to adequately manage hazards arising from poor hazards communication in the school environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that the various ways of managing hazards arising from unsafe school security and poor hazard communication could actually mitigate hazards in these crucial aspects of secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following recommendations were provided:

1. A department of a sound safety (Hazard) management system should be established in the Secondary School Management Board as well as all the Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Fencing of all the secondary schools should be mandatory and safety trainings offered to the administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff and of course students in some cases on appropriate security and safety procedures.
3. All the school personnel should be encouraged to report hazards to the school authority whenever it is identified. Moreover, safety symbols should be used where hazards are found.

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