PERCEIVED ROLE OF COMMUNITY ON SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PREPRIMARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was tagged "Perceived Role of Community on Safety and Security in the Management of Preprimary and Primary Schools in Awka South Local Government". The objectives were to assess the perceived role of community on safety and ascertain the perceived role of community on security in the management of preprimary and primary schools. Descriptive survey was used. The population was 890 with 178 samples. A multistage sampling technique was used. Thirty-four self-designed structured-items questionnaire was used. Reliability of the Instrument was ascertained through test re-test method using PPMC to correlate the two results and 0.85 was obtained which implies the instrument was reliable. Mean was used for data analysis. The findings were that communities were not represented in safety and security committees, inadequate training on safety and security issues, inadequate qualified medical personnel and security personnel to services, inadequate materials and equipment were issues discovered. Also, it reveals that funds were limited to provide adequate facilities/equipment for effective safety and security measures among the schools. The recommendations were that head teachers should through SBMC include community members in safety and security committees, enhance adequate training for teachers and community members on safety and security measures and management. Through such means also, adequate funding should be made available to provide qualified medical and security personnel to render professional services as well as provide materials and equipment to boost safety and security services in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government.

Keywords: Perceived, Role, Community, Safety, Security, Management

Introduction

Preprimary education is the type of education designed to prepare children for primary school while primary school education is the first formal education given to children before secondary school. Both preprimary and primary school education plays vital roles in the development of a child physically, socially and intellectually. According to Iwogbe, Awwal& Elechi (2021), pre-primary and primary school education is at the base of educational system and therefore constitutes the foundation or bedrock of the nation's educational and economic development. Similarly, Nkechi (2015) opines that pre-primary education is a common practice in most societies; they make provision for early childhood education programs of various types for children below the official school age (usually 6 years) mainly to prepare them for the rigors of primary education and beyond. Children experience the most rapid growth in their lives during the first five years of life and a supportive environment is needed for their optimal development (Mungai, Mwangi &Digolo, 2017).

Safety and security are crucial in one's life. Nothing positive can be achieve or realize in the absence of safety and security. In preschool setting, safety and security are required for effective teaching and learning process to take place. Every person especially young children need and deserves a safe place to learn and have normal growth. Looking at safety and security challenges in Nigeria today, it seems the management of schools especially preprimary and primary schools need to collaborate with the community to ensure adequate safety and security of the children and school resources. The community should contribute resources into schools to ensure safety and security of school environments for pupils, teachers and facilities. (Mwoma, Begi, &Murungi, 2018).

Safety and security is a collaborative effort, that includes all the stakeholders. Supporting this assertion; Bal (2020) states that working with school leaders, teachers and communities in school site coordinate and implement key initiatives that improve school climate, resolve conflicts and prevent violence and help students cope with trauma. He further emphasized that it has become imperative that pupils and teachers felt safe as they walked through school doors each morning. According to Mwoma, Begi and Murungi (2018), accidents if not prevented can cause disability or death, while emotional and psychological trauma can lead to lack of self-esteem leading to poor performance. They stressed that ensuring that children in their early years are protected from unsafe conditions will enhance their holistic development. Mwoma and Pillay (2016) asserted that exposing children to negative conditions and experiences during early years negatively impact all aspects of children's lives.

The most successful approaches are those that see the school within their community and that it focused not just on aggressive or violent incidents but also on health, use a range of policies and programs and consider not only the roles and needs of individual pupils but also those of teachers, support staff, administrators, school operations, families and the community around the school (John, 2001). According to National Association of School

Psychologists (2013), **c**risis and emergency preparedness plans must be consistently reviewed and practiced, which is more easily facilitated by an actively engaged team that links the school to the broader community. The association states further that not only does such comprehensive prevention and preparedness strengthen the immediate response to crisis events it facilitates short- and long-term recovery for students and staff.

To John (2001), community-based approach to management promotes school safety and security. Safety and security in school is a microcosm of safety in society: in the surrounding streets, community and neighbourhood, in the home, in other social institutions and beyond (Shaw, 2004). This is an indication that to have effective and adequate secured and safe school environment, there is need to collaborate and partner with stakeholders within the school-community. National Association of School Psychologists (2013)pointed out that schools are at the center of most communities, and pupils and families do better when relevant resources and services are coordinated and that on a day-to-day basis, safety and mental health programming are guided by school personnel including administrators, school-employed mental health professionals, and school security officers.

However, to ensure this goal is realize, the head teacher need to establish cordial and healthy school-community relationship. Schools provide an important environment for care and development of children at the nursery/primary level (Ogunyemi, 2019). Barret, Treves, Shmis, Ambasz and Ustinova (2019) reported that the major environmental factors that contribute to pupils' progress in learning include good "natural" conditions such as lighting, air quality, temperature control, acoustics and links to nature; age-appropriate learning spaces that offer flexible learning opportunities that pupils can adapt and personalize; connections between learning spaces that are easy to navigate and that may provide additional learning opportunities; a level of ambient stimulation using colour and visual complexity; schools that are designed from the inside out (classroom to school) so that each space meets the needs of its inhabitants and designs that take into account local climatic and cultural conditions.

Therefore, one may argue that the above elements of ideal school cannot be realized without partnership with the community. National Association of School Psychologists (2013) states that **s**chool safety is not achieved with a single program or piece of security equipment and that rather, effective school safety starts with prevention; provision for pupils' mental health; integrates physical and psychological safety; and engages schools, families and communities as partners. School-community partnership enhances the realization of educational goals as stated in the National Policy on Education (Awwal, & Waziri, 2019).

Moreso, management is the coordination and control of human and material resources to achieve organizational goals as such the head teacher is expected to link the community

and the school for effective safety and security of the school. He needs to provide and ensure adequate utilization human (teaching and non-teaching staff) and material (the school plant) resources to ascertain maximum result from the school. Awwal and Munir (2020) asserts that the management of security issue is paramount to the effective running of schools and that with effective security management strategies in primary schools, quality teaching and learning thereby enhances teachers' productivity, promoting attendance and high academic performance among pupils at any level. It was on this basis that this study aimed at assessing the perceived role of community on safety and security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem
Safety and security being the most paramount requirement for individual and societal development as well as well-being survival of human must be provided especially for children within the age of preprimary and primary school. Presently, the issue of safety and security is a big challenge across the globe but particular reference to Nigeria and specifically Awka South Local Government Area. With the recent rampart cases of missing and kidnapping of school children one begins to wonder the level of insecurity and lack of safety in our schools. This normally occurs within the period of home to school or school to home movement. In this situation, parents blame the school management for not playing their roles as expected by providing adequate and effective safety and security strategies for their young children. On the other hand, the schools blame the community for not participating and contributing to identification and resolving security threats in the school-community. Also, it could be that the schools are not involving communities through School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) in the safety and security meetings and committee or the community/parents are ignorant of their roles in the management of schools within their communities. As a result of the above reasons, this study assessed the perceived role of community on safety and security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study
   Specifically, the aim of the study includes the following:
   1. Assess the perceived role of community on safety in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.
   2. Ascertain the perceived role of community on security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.

Research Questions
   The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perceived role of community on safety in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State?

2. What is the perceived role of community on security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State?

Method

This study is on perceived role of community on safety and security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka Metropolis, Anambra State The study adopted descriptive research survey. Two research questions guided the study. Population of the study was 890 as received from Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB, 2020). The population comprised of 45 head teachers, 665 day caregivers/teachers and 180 School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) in Awka South Local Government Area. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 178 respondents (15 head teachers, 150 teachers and 13 school based management committee) which formed the sample size. To determine the number of respondents as sample size, 20% of the total population was used. This was in accordance with the opinion of Gay and Diehl (1992). According to them, sample size for descriptive research should be 10% but if the population is too small, then 20% may be required. Instrument used for data collection was self-designed structured items questionnaire. The instrument titled "Perceived Role of Community on Safety and Security in the Management of Preprimary and Primary Schools". It comprises of 34 structured items. Section "A" of the questionnaire seeks for respondents' information demographically while section "B" was item statements to answer the research questions. However, the items were structured on a four pointlikert scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

Context and face validity of the instrument were ascertained. In order to ascertain reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on 30 members of the population from five (5) pre-primary and primary schools in Awka Local Government. The instrument was administered on 5 head teachers and 25 teachers. A test re-test method was used to carry out the pilot study at an interval of ten days and the two results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance. The coefficient r value result of 0.85 was obtained which implies the instrument was reliable. Mean was used to answer the research questions. Method of data analysis was analyzed using mean. Any item of mean score 2.50 and above was agreed while any iten with mean score below 2.50 was disagreed.

Results

Research Question One: What is the perceived role of community on safety in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area, AnambraState

Table 1: Perceived Role of Community on Safety in the Management of Preprimary and Primary Schools in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Community influences school safety positively	172	3.8	Agreed
2	Community through SBMC is represented in the school-safety committee	172	2.3	Disagreed
3	Representative of the community in school-safety committee enhances effective and adequate safety in school	172	3.9	Agreed
4	There are accidents cases due to unsafe school environment	172	2.5	Agreed
5	Effective safety in the school influences pupils' attendance in the school	172	3.7	Agreed
6	Cordial school-community relationship enhances community participation in the safety affairs of the school	172	3.8	Agreed
7	School safety influences pupils' academic performance in the school	172	3.8	Agreed
8	Adequate safety management strategies enhances pupils' enrolement	172	3.5	Agreed
9	Teachers and community members are trained adequately on safety measures and management	172	1.1	Disagreed
10	School-safety positively influences pupils' participation in extracurricular activities	172	3.7	Agreed
11	There are adequate qualified medical personnel to treat accident cases in the school	172	1.3	Disagreed
12	There are adequate materials and equipment for treating accident cases in the school	172	1.2	Disagreed
13	There is adequate funding to enhance effective safety of the school	172	1.1	Disagreed
14.	Adequate funding enhances adequate provision of safety measures in the schools	172	3.8	Agreed
15	Safety facilities/equipment are adequately utilize in the school	172	2.3	Disagreed

Research question 1 of table 1 sought the opinion of respondents on the perceived role of community on safety in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka Local Government, Anambra State. The results indicated that item 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 14 were positively responded to (accepted) by the respondents with mean score 3.8, 3.9, 2.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.8, 3.5, 3.7 and 3.8 while item 2, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15 were rejected or disagreed with mean score of 2.3, 1.2, 1.3, 1.2, 1.1 and 2.3.

Research Question Two: What is the perceived role of community on security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka Local Government Area, Anambra State?

Table 2: Perceived Role of Community on Security in the Management of Preprimary and Primary Schools in Awka Local Government, Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Community enhances positive security in the school	172	3.5	Agreed
2	Adequate and effective security promote pupils' enrolement	172	3.8	Agreed
3	Effective management of school brings about effective school security	172	3.8	Agreed
4	Community participation in school decision making process will enhance positive school security	172	3.7	Agreed
5	Through SBMC, the community is represented in the school security committee	172	1.8	Disagreed
6	There are adequate security personnel in the school	172	2.1	Disagreed
7	Healthy school-community relationship enhances effective school security	172	3.8	Agreed
8	Security challenges affect pupils' enrolment in the school	172	3.4	Agreed
9	School-security related issues negatively affect pupils' participation school programmes	172	3.9	Agreed
10	Insecurity could lead to truancy among pupils	172	3.6	Agreed
11	Teachers and community members are adequately trained on security issues of the schools.	172	1.5	Disagreed
12	There are cases of missing children within school period	172	2.6	Agreed
13	There is adequate fund to provide effective security to the school	172	1.1	Disagreed
14	Adequate funding enhances effective security in the school	172	3.7	Agreed
15	Mismanagement of fund could affect security measures in the school	172	3.6	Agreed
16	Some children are picked from the school lately	172	2.6	Agreed

Research question 1 of table 1 sought the opinion of respondents on the perceived role of community on security in the management of preprimary and primary schools in Awka Local Government, Anambra State. The results indicated that item 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 were accepted by the respondents with mean of 3.5, 3.8, 3.8, 3.7, 3.8, 3.4, 3.9, 3.6, 2.6, 3.7, 3.6 and 2.6. On the other hand, item 5, 6, 11 and 13 were rejected with mean scores of 1.8, 2.1, 1.5 and 1.1.

Summary of the Findings

From the analysis of data collected, the following findings were revealed:

1. Through SBMC, communities are not represented in the school-safety committee, inadequate training for teachers and community members on safety measures and management, inadequate qualified medical personnel to treat accident cases in the school coupled with inadequate materials and equipment for treating accident cases as well as limited funds to provide adequate facilities/equipment for effective safety measures in the school.

2. Community enhances positive security in the school, through SBMC, the communities are not represented in the school security committee and inadequate security personnel in the school coupled with inadequately trained on security issues, lately to pick children form the school as well as inadequate funding which negatively security management strategies of the schools in Awka Local Government.

Discussion of the Findings

Through SBMC, communities are not represented in the school-safety committee, inadequate training for teachers and community members on safety measures and management, inadequate qualified medical personnel to treat accident cases in the school coupled with inadequate materials and equipment for treating accident cases as well as limited funds to provide adequate facilities/equipment for effective safety measures in the school. A study was that of Saba and Awwal (2021) found that staff are not regularly trained through workshops and seminars on school safety, effective safety promotes quality teaching and learning process in the classroom and that there are inadequate qualified medical personnel to manage accident cases due to unsafe school environment. Mwoma, Begi and Murungi (2018) found that unsafe acts and unsafe conditions are indications of management failure that may affect the physical and mental conditions of human resources. Also, a study by Sabet, Aadal, Jamshidi and Rad (2013) indicated that the remedy to prevent accidents and injury, therefore, lies in the hands of management who should ensure that people's well-being in their institutions is protected against unsafe acts and unsafe conditions. This finding is in consistent with reports of Reeves, Priest and Poore (2012) which revealed that toilet facilities were deficient in some way for children's use suggesting that a significant number of children did not have access to high quality hygiene facilities at school. Nkechi (2015) asserts that an analysis of the current situation indicates that, to a great extent, the Nigerian child suffers deprivation from lack of good social

services in terms of poor nutrition, health care, and access to safe water and sanitation, general protection from environmental hazards and insecurity.

More so, with regards to the above finding, Ajala and Kilaso (2019) recommended that as a result inadequate training of personnel, safety and security education should be promoted in schools with individual parents complimenting such education by finding time to enlighten their wards about safety and security precautions. The government not maintaining ECECs facilities and infrastructures renders them irrelevant for continuous use as they could be the cause of minor or fatal accidents to school children. It was found in National Association of School Psychologists (2013) that school-community collaboration is critical to maintaining school safety.

More so, the study found that community enhances positive security in the school, through SBMC, the communities are not represented in the school security committee and inadequate security personnel in the school coupled with inadequately trained on security issues, lately to pick up children from the school as well as inadequate funding which negatively security management strategies of the schools. Similar, a study by Awwal (2018) revealed that there are inadequate qualified security personnel and as such more securities are needed in the senior secondary schools in Niger State. Also, Mwoma, Begi and Murungi (2018) found that some children also were reported to be picked up very late or when they got home they found no one at home to look after them. Sampson and Raudenbush (1997) reported that school-community neighbourhoods with high levels of collective efficacy have high levels of informal social control which should lead to lower levels of fear, delinquency, and crime as well as regulating the behaviour of their residents which will in turn enhance the security of all. Ajala and Kilaso (2019) suggested measures such as positioning safety and security operatives around the school corridor with adequate information system will improve the consciousness of school pupils. Again, Samuel (2014) opines that effective safety management systems require the implementation of core structures, processes and action by key players. Abdullahi, Igbaji and Sunusi (2017) stated that the use of non-professional security men who themselves are not safety cautious in ECECs only expose these children to unnecessary risks.

Conclusion

Based on finding of the study, it was concluded that communities are not represented in the school-safety and security committees, inadequate training for teachers and community members on safety and security measures and management, inadequate qualified medical and security personnel to render professional services in the school coupled with inadequate materials and equipment for treating accident cases as well as limited funds to provide adequate facilities/equipment for effective safety measures in the school.

Recommendations

Therefore, the following recommendations were made:

1. Through SBMC, the head teachers should involve community in the school-safety committees to facilitate training for teachers and other community members on safety measures and management, provide adequate qualified medical personnel to treat accident cases and provide adequate materials and equipment to enhance effective safety measures in the school.

2. The head teachers through SBMC should establish cordial school-community relationship to include community members in security committees, provide trained adequate security personnel, encourage parents to avoid late picking of children form the school as well as provide adequate fund security management strategies to enhance effective management among preprimary and primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area.

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