



School security management techniques as correlate of sustainable development goal 4 (SDG4) in public secondary schools in rivers state

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Abstract

This study examined school security management techniques as correlate of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was guided by 2 objectives with corresponding research questions and null hypotheses. The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprised 7,184 principals and teachers in 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 378 respondents were drawn from the entire population using Taro Yamane formula. The sampling technique was a proportionate stratified random sampling. The instruments titled: School Security Management Techniques Scale (SSMTS) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 Scale (SDG4S). The instruments were validated and reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.88 for School Security Management Techniques Scale and Sustainable Development Goal 4 Scale respectively were derived using Cronbach alpha. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), while same statistics was used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 significance level with the help of statistical package in social science (SPSS). Findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between provision of school fence/gate, good school-community collaboration as school security management techniques and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Hence, the study recommended among others that the school management should continue to device means to maintain the physical conditions of the school fence/gate for the attainment of sustainable development goal four.

Keywords: School, Security Techniques, Sustainable Development Goal 4

Introduction

Education could be seen as an instrument for achieving socioeconomic and technological growth and development of any nation. It is an instrument par-excellence and the means of developing human intellect, technical skills, character and effective citizenship for self-reliance and effective national development (FRN, 2014). In other words, it is the most effective tool for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of a country, it constitutes the single largest enterprise in Nigeria. The educational policy of any nation is to ensure all her citizen embrace basic education. The priority is to ensure equitable access and improvement in the quality and efficiency of all level of education. Therefore, it is typical for an educational institution to sufficiently provide quality education for its clients (parents, students, society, employers of labour, and other stakeholders), through the teachers and other staff, who are the direct channels through which educational objectives can be transmitted. The school management is saddled with the task of overseeing the activities of students, and teachers for the actualization of quality education which is the focal point Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) is geared towards all-inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. The emphasis under this goal has worldwide coverage of quality education from pre-school through at least secondary education, and then on to more advanced, skills training (Hanachor & Wordu, 2021)^[9]. The ambition of the goal is to build a nation that will facilitate a realization of the full potential of each child in order that he/she can contribute to building a just, tolerant and egalitarian society. The vision of an inclusive quality education reflect on the idea of education for all, principally for those groups who are seen to be vulnerable. Particular emphasis is on equal access to all and lifelong education. It then means that those who lead education in several countries must give attention to all forms of education, both formal and non-formal. To ensure the achievement of SDG4, scholars have pointed out that management of security in the school should be taken seriously.

Security has been defined as the degree of protection against danger, damage, loss and crime (Dwyer & Osher, 2020)^[6]. Security is a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat. Security is the precaution taken to safeguard an environment from impending danger or injury. It is a measure taken to prevent dangers and threats. A place where there is security is a place of safety (Dwyer & Osher, 2020)^[6]. The evidence of a secured school is the existence and execution of security measures which are well drawn policies of protection that should be given to the stakeholders within the school, be it learners, teachers and managers. Security in school can be explained as a situation where students and teachers as well as other school users are not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident theft or deterioration. Campbell as cited in Ike (2015)^[11] opined that security are the strategies and procedures required to coordinate the diverse activities of the school, protect and manage school violence, reduce security risks and ensure that the school environment is safe for teaching and learning. In other words, they are the school security management techniques adopted by schools authorities to keep the school environment safe.

School security management techniques are protective strategies and procedures that ensure a state of inviolability from hostile act or influences (Aryu, 2020)^[3]. They are the plans for the protection that is given to the stakeholders within the school. The school is an organisation that needs to have planned security techniques to protect its components so that the culture of learning and teaching is enhanced to guarantee SDG4. Stephen as cited in Ike (2015)^[11] saw security management techniques in school to include policies, guidelines and procedures required to co-ordinate the diverse activities of the institution in order to achieve safety. One of the central duties of the school manager is to ensure that security programmes are effectively implemented and that necessary steps are taken whenever situation arise which could be possibly unsafe. This is to say that school security techniques are to be reinforced to keep the school stakeholders and the environment free from harm and danger. Creating and maintaining secure environment needs clear understanding and techniques by all stakeholders. The school need to adopt all necessary and proactive measures to ensure that its environment is safe. Stephen as cited in Ike (2015)^[11] asserted that it is essential that scholars and members of staff feel safe at school and it is for this reason that schools should have security techniques in place which would be reviewed

regularly. Schools that have clear norms and expectations, fair procedures and involves members of the community (educators, parents, learners, principals, administrators and community service) are less likely to experience high level of security threats (Aryu, 2020)^[3].

School remains one of the safest environments for children. However, in far too many schools in the country, security challenges threaten the teachers as well as the rights of students, which in turn affect delivery of quality education. Increasingly, students are victimised in school by fellow students, teachers as well as insurgency. Such security threats need to be defined, acknowledged and prevented. If drastic action is not taken, there will be a continuous rise in school security threats such as cult related activities, kidnapping, bullying, theft, arson and extortion, sexual harassment and violence, bombing and many others. Thereby limiting the chances of increase in literacy level for the actualization of sustainable development goal (Gauster, 2018).

Children who are students in various schools spread across the country are important to the country's human capital and can be developed to an optimum level by providing a safe and conducive school environment. Safe and conducive teaching and learning environment of a school is dependent on security management techniques adopted in the school. Some of these techniques as identified by Arop and Owan (2018)^[2] and Aryu (2020)^[3] are provision of fence/gate guards and school-community collaboration. Provision of school fence/gate is technique that schools adopt to manage security threat and issues. Provision of school fence/gate is defined as a comparatively structure or simple measure that restrict unwanted persons or criminals from gaining access to school premises and to ensure that only people who are supposed to be inside the premises are to enter or gain access. It helps to prevent criminal element from entering the school to harm school users or school plants, thereby promoting an atmosphere for quality service delivery (Arop & Owan, 2018)^[2].

On the other hand, school-community collaboration is defined as a shared vision between the school and the community for learning and developmental outcomes for students and other members of the school. It is a process of working together between schools, parents and members of the community in ensuring that schools meet their goals. In other words, it is a shared responsibility with schools and other community organisations committed to engaging families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways for achievement of school goals such as security (Arop & Owan, 2018)^[2]. Concerns regarding school security have risen tremendously, consequently something needs to be done to ensure that violent acts and security issues such as kidnapping, vandalism, harassment, bullying, sexual molestation and harassment, use of drugs, possession weapons, formation of gangs, shooting in schools and many others are minimized, and totally eradicated if possible. It is on this premise that this study examined school security management techniques as correlate of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of Problem

In the period between 2012 and 2020, over 800 teachers were reportedly killed in attacks, while more than 19,000 students were displaced. Statistics revealed that 1 in every 5 of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria. This has been

attributed to insurgency, poverty, crime and violence perpetrated against schools by hoodlums and criminals as reported by media houses and eyewitnesses. Media reports indicate that crime, violence, disorder, bombings, unknown gunmen invasion are the major problems facing public secondary schools in Nigeria. More so, fire outbreak, flood, drug addiction and abuse, gender-based violence, physical and humiliating punishment, bullying, exploitation, child trafficking; gang violence, cyberbully, abductions/kidnappings, hazardous materials in school environments and unsafe school facilities have left 2.8 million school students in need of education-in-emergencies support, with over 1,392 classrooms damaged. Engagement in these activities sometimes have led to killings, destruction of properties and threats posed to individuals within the setup. The consistent attacks and external invasion of criminals into secondary schools have put teachers and students into fear, and the damages caused is an indication that most of our secondary schools are not safe anymore. These problems not only endanger students and teachers but they also prevent quality education is the fulcrum SDG4. Hence, this study intend to examine if there is a relationship between school security management techniques and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine management of security and achievement of sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will guide the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public

secondary schools in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlation survey design to ascertain if there is a relationship among the variables using a quantitative method of research. The population of this study was made up of all the 7,184 academic staff (i.e. 291 principals and 6,893 teachers) of 291 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. (Source: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Rivers State, 2022). A sample of three hundred and seventy eight (378) respondents was drawn from the entire population using Taro Yamane. The sampling technique was a proportionate stratified random sampling. This ensured that all members of the population are given equal opportunity of being selected. Questionnaire was the research instrument for the study and it was titled: School Security Management Techniques Scale (SSMTS) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 Scale (SDG4S). The questionnaire is two, with two sections (A and B). Section A elicited demographic information from the respondents, while section B elicited information on SSMTS and SDG4S. The two instruments were coded in line with the modified four-point Likert rating scale as follows; Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 Points, Agree (A) = 3 Points, Disagree (D) = 2 Points, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 Point respectively. Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics was used to test the reliability of the two instruments. The reliability coefficients of School Security Management Techniques Scale and Sustainable Development Goal 4 Scale are 0.84 and 0.88. For the data that were analyzed, research question 1 to 3 were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), while same statistics was used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 significance level with the help of Statistical Package in Social Science (SPSS). The researcher designed and distributed 378 copies of questionnaire to the respondents, 365 copies were retrieved and found suitable for analysis resulting in 96% retrieval rate.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis (Ho₁): There is no significant relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between Provision of Fence/Gate and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variables	n	df	r	Sig. level	p (Sig.)	Decision
Provision of Fence/Gate	365	363	0.654	0.05	0.000	Rejected Ho ₁
Sustainable Development Goal 4	365					(Significant) P < 0.05

Decision Rule: 0.00 – 0.19 = Very Weak, 0.20 – 0.39 = Weak, 0.40 – 0.59 = Moderate, 0.60 – 0.79 = Strong, 0.80 – 1.00 Very Strong

To answer the research question 1, results from Table 1 revealed a correlation coefficient, 'r' of 0.654; which by percentage is 65%. This value shows there is a strong positive relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable

development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

For hypothesis 1 tested, it was revealed also from Table 1 that the correlation for hypothesis one shows a significant

correlation at $r = .654$ where $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ($P < 0.05$). Since the $p\text{-value} 0.000$ is less than the alpha level of 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis, thus, there is a significant relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between good

school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis (Ho₂): There is no significant relationship between good school-community collaboration and achievement of sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between Good School-Community Collaboration and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	df	r	Sig. level	p (Sig.)	Decision
Good School-Community Collaboration	365	363	0.601	0.05	0.001	Reject Ho ₆
Sustainable Development Goal 4	365					(Significant) $P < 0.05$

Decision Rule: 0.00 – 0.19 = Very Weak, 0.20 – 0.39 = Weak, 0.40 – 0.59 = Moderate, 0.60 – 0.79 = Strong, 0.80 – 1.00 Very Strong

To answer the research question 2, results from Table 2 revealed a correlation coefficient, 'r' of 0.601; which by percentage is 60%. This value shows there is a strong relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This means that an increase in good school-community collaboration will lead to an improvement in the achievement of sustainable development goal 4.

For hypothesis 2 tested, it was revealed also from Table 6 that the correlation for hypothesis two shows a significant correlation at $r = .601$ where $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ ($P < 0.05$). Since the $p\text{-value} 0.001$ is less than the alpha level of 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis, thus, there is a significant relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Provision of Fence/Gate and Sustainable Development Goal 4

The finding of the study revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding corroborates Mohammed (2017) [16] who in his study reported that school perimeter fencing has a positive significant relationship with school security and safety. Mohammed (2017) [16] stressed that the safety of staff, students, and visitors should be paramount, and every educational establishment should have different specific needs dependent on size, location, and more. Presence of school fence and gates are ideal measure in strengthening security solutions for any school. Schools must not only ensure that their students are protected from unauthorised intruders or vandals, but they must also monitor access to the site to avoid truancy.

Also in support of the above, Cornell and Mayer (2018) [5], Robinson and Espelage (2011) [18], Mayer Furlong (2010) [14] asserted that the presence of school fence is often viewed through the lens of school safety. The scholars noted that significant body of research posits that safe school environments are associated with presence of perimeter school fencing. A safe school environment is commonly described in relation to students' feelings of safety in an orderly environment with school fence/gate free from bullying, victimization and violence from external bodies. In other words, school safety is a social construction; its definition is often subjective and coloured by presence of school fencing (Cornell & Mayer, 2018) [5]. In the field of school safety research, school safety was initially defined as

the presence or absence of school fence (Skiba *et al.*, 2016) [19]. As the relationship between everyday disruptions and overall school safety became clearer, the understanding of school safety evolved. Currently, there exists a fairly comprehensive perception of school safety that not only focuses on reaction and response, but gives more attention to prevention and early identification/intervention (Skiba *et al.*, 2016) [19].

However, this finding contradict Chukwudi (2018) [4] who argued that fences in most Nigeria public schools does not guarantee safety and security for students and staff. According to Aguwa (2017) [1] and Chukwudi (2018) [4], most schools in Nigeria does not have any fence, while those with what is said to be called fence are in a horrible state such as hole in them, absent of gate, about to collapse and does not meet any standard to guarantee safe environment free from intruders or unwanted visitors. An effective school fencing solution requires careful thought and planning, as well as commitment to using qualified industry professionals and suitable products (Aguwa, 2017; Chukwudi, 2018) [1, 4].

Corroborating the above assertion, Blum as cited in Ihekononye (2020) [10] opined that there is no significant relationship between school fence and safe environment for sustainable development in Nigeria, considering the fact that many fences in schools are in a deplorable state. Students who attend schools without school fence, gate and respectful climate are unable to focus on learning and find it difficult to realize their academic, interpersonal and athletic potential. Such schools do not have clearly and explicitly communicated policies and procedures that set clear boundaries for respectful, non-violent treatment of school community members and support an environment that is free of negative and harmful physical, social, emotional and intellectual language and actions (Ihekononye, 2020) [10]. A positive and conducive school climate provides a solid foundation such as school fence and gate for supporting students' security, academic achievement and development of positive attitudes and behaviors for sustainable development goal.

Blum as cited in Ihekononye (2020) [10] further admitted that students who are in schools with presence of fence and other security measures feel safe, perceive themselves to be treated fairly by adults, are happy to be in school, feel they are a part of the school community and feel close to people at school, experience less distress and engage in fewer risk-taking behaviors. Students with high levels of school connectedness demonstrate lower levels of violence and report more factors that protect them from engaging in risky sexual and substance abuse behaviors. Teachers report that students in a school

with presence of fence and gate have high self-esteem. Nevertheless, Lauren and Wang (2019) ^[17] in their findings maintained that there is a strong relationship that exists between school fence and student self-concept, students' level of absenteeism, and suspension rates. Lauren and Wang (2019) ^[17] observed that students who feel safe, cared for, appropriately supported and sensitively encouraged to learn in challenging and meaningful ways experience increased academic achievement. This is apparent in the hypothesis tested which revealed that there is a significant relationship between provision of fence/gate and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Good School-Community Collaboration and Sustainable Development Goal 4

Lastly, the sixth finding of the study showed that there is a strong positive relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with McPartland and Nettles (2019) ^[15] who asserted that school and community-based collaboration hold the greatest significant potential for preventing violence and crimes in schools. Loeber and Farrington (2018) ^[12] in their study found out that involving the school and community in providing solution to violent or crime cases melted against students and staff are most effective in minimizing factors that contribute to serious violent and crimes. Pentz *et al.*, (2019) ^[17] submitted that school-community collaboration hold promise for preventing crimes and other security challenges in public schools or schools located in remote area because they address multiple risk factors in the community, schools, family, and the media by mounting a coordinated set of mutually reinforcing preventive interventions throughout the community. Given the above development, a study completed in this area was reported that the combined school and community efforts made toward management of security produced a significant reduction in crime and violence carried out among middle and high school youth (Luepker *et al.*, 2017).

Consequently, in order to prevent a significant trauma reaction and other insecurity issues, Dicken, *et al* (2017) opined that the school and the community should work in synergy to ensure a successful intervention in managing school security for achievement of sustainable development. Kelling *et al.* (2019) noted that in the cause of school-community collaboration in addressing security challenges, there seem to be some controversial issues considering the fact that individuals involved find it hard to define "reasonable cause" and sometimes solutions of violence and crimes in schools, thereby resulting to a poor significant impact on crime reduction. In view of this, Skolnick and Bayley (2018) ^[20] in their study asserted that school-community collaboration does not ameliorate risk factors that put students in an unsafe environment for learning, nor do they guarantee that students and staff will not become victims of or involved in schools, community or neighbourhood violence. However, they do provide students with greater support in avoiding maladaptive behaviour, supply them with safe heavens after school, and ensure that they can travel to and from school without harm. This is obvious in the hypothesis tested which showed that there is a significant relationship between good school-community collaboration and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between provision of school fence/gate, good school-community collaboration as school security management techniques and sustainable development goal 4 in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The school management should continue to device means to maintain the physical conditions of the school fence/gate for the attainment of sustainable development goal four. The school management should heighten the fence enough for preventing dangerous attacks and infiltration of unwanted persons.
2. The school management and community leaders should make sure that there is no communication gap or collaboration breach between the school and the community in order to provide a clear and appropriate techniques for school security management for sustainable development goal four. These measures should include; having crisis response team for emergencies, having constant school site surveys, building school safety expectations into the school programmes, and having a model school safety plan.

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