



## SAFETY MEASURES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS IN MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated the safety measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 10,094 respondents (330 principals and 9764 teachers) in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size of 481 respondents (33 principals and 448 teachers) was drawn for the study using proportionate sampling technique. Researcher-developed questionnaire titled ‘‘Safety Measures of Principals for School Management Questionnaire (SMPSMQ)’’ was used for data collection. The instrument was duly validated by three experts and using Cronbach alpha method for test of internal consistency, reliability indices of 0.80 and 0.77 were obtained for Parts I and II respectively with an overall coefficient index of 0.79. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that safety measures are adopted by principals for personnel management of public secondary schools in Enugu state. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Ministry of Education should organize regular professional development programme for principals on the safety measures for personnel management to enable them acquire up-dated skills and knowledge to safeguard the lives of students and members of staff.*

**Keywords:** Safety Measures, Principals, Personnel Management, Facilities Management, Secondary Schools

### Introduction

Secondary school education comes after primary and before the higher education. Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020) asserted that it serves as the link between primary and tertiary education as well as provides opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge, skills and traits beyond the primary level. Secondary education provides opportunity for students to acquire fundamental knowledge which prepare them for higher education. In the same vein, Nnorom, Okonkwo, Ezeanolue and Nwankwo (2020) noted that secondary education develops the individual’s mental capacity, character and

behaviour for higher education and useful living within the society. The objectives of secondary education can be attained through effective school management. School management is a goal-oriented activity that involves utilization of the available resources in educational institutions. Onwuchekwa and Onwuchekwa (2018) defined school management as the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the effort of organization members and using all other available resources to achieve stated objectives. School management is systematic planning, organizing and combining human and material resources to executive the



school programme toward the attainment of pre-determined educational goals and objectives. Secondary school is managed by chief executive officer called principal. The school principal has a responsibility to ensure that the school environment is safe for effective teaching and learning.

Safety is the state of being free from hazard, risk, threats, injuries and loss of properties. Ngara and Obiamaka and Enyi (2020) defined safety as a situation where students and educators are not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident theft or deterioration. Safety is the condition of being free from risks, injury, fear and danger. According to Yusuf and Idoghor (2016), safety is all about keeping the school environment free of hazardous situations that could put at risk the lives of students and staff. Importantly, Maslow's needs hierarchy sees safety as one of the basic needs of human being. Asodike and Nwabueze (2017), school safety could be defined as a situation in which the teachers and learners feel at home, develop confidence, maintain a positive state of mind, and do not show any signs of withdrawal from the school, but work towards the achievement of their personal goals. According to Ugwulashi (2016), school safety is essential in all ramifications for efficient and effective academic pursuit, because teaching and learning cannot take place in situations of fear and suppression. Schools that are safe and responsive have plans and procedures in place to deal with violent and disruptive behaviours that may occur (Ronoh, 2018). School safety is being protected from psychological and physical dangers. The principal can attain this through some certain safety measures.

Safety measures are the means and ways of ensuring that administrators, teachers, students, parents, visitors and facilities in educational organization are free from danger, threats and destruction. Safety measures in schools involve obeying rules and regulations, reading meaning to sign post and labels on chemicals, laboratory equipment, wearing safety gadgets, having fire

extinguisher in classrooms and laboratory, observing road signs and highway code, etc. (Olaleye cited in Hamilton-Ekeke, 2017). Safety measures are means of preventing crisis, and reacting to violations of existing rules that prohibit bad behaviour which is likely to cause safety risk (Ronoh, 2018). Ssekamanya, Mastura, Khamsiah and Dayang (2016) asserted that a well-functioning school is not only a school that promotes learning, but also attends to safety of personnel and available facilities.

School facilities are the material and infrastructural resources or physical assets of the school. These resources include classroom blocks, administrative blocks, staff offices, furniture, electrical fixtures, sports equipment, library, laboratory, water supply amenities, sanitary and recreational amenities among others. As these school facilities are used on daily basis, they are exposed to wear and tear and bound to deteriorate and depreciate in order to ensure uninterrupted usage, safety of school facilities becomes imperative. Another crucial resource in school is the personnel. The personnel are the human resources and work force of the school organization. There are two types of personnel viz staff and student personnel. Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020) pointed out that some of the safety measures in personnel management could include guards, community and/or parental participation, school personnel, security officers, private security company personnel on contract who might also offer a rapid armed response service or police officers.

The safety situations of personnel and facilities in secondary schools in Enugu State in particular and Nigeria at large have become a source of worry to the researchers and several scholars. Yusuf and Idoghor (2016) observed that a large percentage of secondary schools in Nigeria are unsafe, there are no fire extinguishers, fire drill is not a culture, and there is general lack of knowledge about safety among students and staff. The incidents of kidnapping of a principal in Ugwuoba of Oji River Local Government area, riot and



other life threatening upsurge in secondary schools in Enugu State in recent time have seriously jeopardize learning environment. According to Onochie cited in Nwobodo and Udebunu (2018), a clash sometime ensued between the students of Government College and Command Secondary School both in Enugu State. As a result of the clash, Nwobodo and Udebunu asserted that 15 students were seriously injured while properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. Some staff rooms and classrooms have no doors, windows, burglary proof and broken chairs and desks littered in some secondary school environment in Enugu State. In the same vein, Ugwulashi (2017) observed that many educational facilities in Nigerian secondary schools today are sources of hazards (dilapidated structures, classrooms, desks, chairs, tables, blackboards, beds, shelves, and windows) to mention but a few. In the same vein, Asodike and Nwabueze (2017) observed that in some secondary schools in Nigeria, classrooms floors are very rough, with broken desks and seats, with no electricity supply, light and fans installed are constantly vandalized. Insecurity in secondary schools in Enugu State appears to contribute to destruction of school property and injuries/loss of life. Amanchukwu (2015) stressed that secondary school students in Nigeria are often very much in danger of being harmed; it is often simply the perception or fear of violence that influences how people act and behave. These perceptions can affect learners' school attendance, truancy/absenteeism, cause poor school performance, and affect the general wellbeing of learners. These scenarios have made school safety an issue in secondary schools. It is against this background that the study investigated the safety measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain safety measures adopted by principals in management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to find out:

1. Safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.
2. Safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria?
2. What are the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria?

#### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

#### **Method**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The population of the study comprised 10,094 respondents (330 principals and 9764 teachers) in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size of 481 respondents (33 principals and 448 teachers) was drawn for the study using proportionate sampling technique.

Researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Safety Measures of Principals for School Management Questionnaire (SMPSMQ)" was used for data collection. SMPSMQ contains 23 items arranged in two Parts namely: I and II. Part 1 contains fifteen items on safety



measures for personnel management, while Part II has eight items on safety measures for facilities management. All the items in the instrument are structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was duly validated by two experts in Educational Management and Policy Department and a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation in Educational Foundations Department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha which yielded coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.77 for Parts I and II respectively with an overall coefficient index of 0.79.

The researchers with the help of three research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Enugu State used direct approach for data collection. A total of 481 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 33 copies for principals and 448 for teachers respectively

and 473 were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 98% percent return rate. Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, any mean rating that fell below 2.50 was taken as disagreement and any mean rating of 2.50 and above was taken to indicate agreement. Standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents mean ratings. For decision on the hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was significant, but if otherwise, it was not significant.

#### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria?



**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Safety Measures Adopted by Principals for Personnel Management**

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (N =31 )			Teachers (N =442 )		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Stationing of security guard at school gate to minimize suspicious people entering the premises	2.83	0.98	Agree	2.74	1.14	Agree
2	Prompt provision of first aid treatment in the case of emergency	2.67	1.02	Agree	2.61	1.08	Agree
3	Making available fire extinguishers in the case of fire outbreaks in the school	2.42	1.07	Disagree	2.43	1.10	Disagree
4	Enlightening of personnel on regular safety updates through bill posts	2.91	1.05	Agree	2.93	1.02	Agree
5	Orientating of personnel on security tips to safeguard their life	2.86	1.07	Agree	2.71	1.08	Agree
6	Offering counseling and guidance to personnel on various security issues	2.61	0.99	Agree	2.57	1.00	Agree
7	Expulsion of students threatening other learners safety	2.47	1.11	Disagree	2.41	1.16	Disagree
8	The use of visitors' book to monitor movement in or out of the school	2.50	1.14	Agree	2.47	1.06	Disagree
9	Formulation of strict school safety rules and regulations	3.10	0.76	Agree	3.21	0.81	Agree
10	The issuance of identity cards to personnel distinguish them from intruders	3.32	1.10	Agree	3.15	0.14	Agree
11	Instruct teachers to conduct roll call for students at specified times to monitor their movement for safety purpose.	2.53	1.02	Agree	2.49	1.12	Disagree
12	Reaching out to the community members for volunteers of security personnel to promote safety of students and staff	2.41	1.10	Disagree	2.44	0.91	Disagree
13	Provision of sufficient facilities for security personnel to utilize to ensure safety of students and staff	2.56	1.11	Agree	2.54	1.01	Agree
14	School ambulance for emergency	2.36	1.12	Disagree	2.35	1.12	Disagree
15	Emergency alarm system for responding to danger	2.44	1.15	Disagree	2.39	1.00	Disagree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.67</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>



Data analysis presented on Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of both principals and teachers for items 1, 2, 4-6, 9, 10 and 13 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management. On the other hand, mean ratings of both principals and teachers for items 3, 7, 14 and 15 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management. The mean scores of principals and teachers for items 8 and 11 indicated disagreement with each other. The cluster standard deviation scores of 1.05 and

1.08 for principals and teachers respectively indicated that their responses are homogenous. The cluster mean of 2.67 and 2.63 for principals and teachers respectively which are above the cut of mean of 2.50 indicated that safety measures are adopted by principals for personnel management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What are the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

**Table 2:** Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Safety Measures adopted by Principals for Facilities Management

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (N = 31)			Teachers (N =442 )		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
16	Ensuring the school perimeter are fenced to prevent stealing of school plant	2.51	1.01	Agree	2.50	1.09	Agree
17	Recruit of watchman to guard school properties mainly during night time.	2.37	0.97	Disagree	2.40	1.13	Disagree
18	Establishing security audits for checking faulty facilities that need repair	2.42	0.87	Disagree	2.39	1.15	Disagree
19	Renovating cracked walls to prevent collapse of school building	2.45	1.14	Disagree	2.43	1.16	Disagree
20	Collaborate with local vigilante groups to ensure safety of facilities after school hours	2.40	1.12	Disagree	2.37	1.20	Disagree
21	Replacing damaged doors and windows to safeguard school facilities	2.62	1.10	Agree	2.59	1.10	Agree
22	Seek the services of security consultant on issues related to safety of school facilities	2.54	1.11	Agree	2.51	1.17	Agree
23	Installation of Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) cameras to monitor movement of facilities within the school	2.46	1.03	Disagree	2.41	0.97	Disagree
<b>Cluster mean</b>		<b>2.47</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

As shown on Table 2 the mean scores of both principals and teachers for items 16, 21 and 22 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as

safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management. On the other hand, mean ratings of both principals and teachers for items 17-20 and 23 are below



the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management. The cluster standard deviation scores of 1.04 and 1.12 for principals and teachers respectively indicated that their responses are homogenous. The cluster mean of 2.47 and 2.45 for principals and teachers respectively which are above the cut of mean of 2.50 indicated that safety measures are not

adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Table 3: The summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on Safety Measures adopted by Principals for Personnel Management**

Respondents	N	X	SD	t.cal	t.crit.	Df	$\infty$	Remark
Principals	31	2.67	1.05	0.16	1.96	471	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers	442	2.63	1.08					

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of 0.16 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 471 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

**Table 4: The summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on Safety Measures adopted by Principals for Facilities Management**

Respondents	N	X	SD	t.cal	t.crit.	Df	$\infty$	Remark
Principals	31	2.47	1.04	0.10	1.96	471	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers	442	2.45	1.12					

As shown on Table 4, the t-calculated value of 0.10 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 471 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

### Discussion

The result of this study indicated that safety measures are adopted by principals for personnel management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. This contradicted the findings of some scholars such as Hamilton-Ekeke (2017); and Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020) who reported there was gross neglect of human safety measures in the school. This is also in disagreement with the finding of Ngara and Magwa



(2015) who reported that there was no prompt provision of first aid to students needing the service, safety updates at schools and provision of counseling and guidance were not done regularly. The disagreement in findings could be attributed to difference in geographical locations of the studies. The finding could be the possible explanation for decreasing records of injuries and death among staff and students of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management include stationing of security guard at school gate to minimize suspicious people entering the premises, prompt provision of first aid treatment in the case of emergency, enlightening of personnel on regular safety updates through bill posts, orientating of personnel on security tips to safeguard their life, offering counseling and guidance to personnel on various security issues, formulation of strict school safety rules and regulations, the issuance of identity cards to personnel distinguish them from intruders and provision of sufficient facilities for security personnel to utilize to ensure safety of students and staff. The safety measures adopted for personnel management helps to combat threats to staff and students' life. It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. This is in agreement with the finding of Obiamaka and Enyi (2020) which revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on safety measures for personnel management in secondary schools. The agreement in findings could be attributed to the same time span in which the two studies were conducted.

The findings of this study show that safety measures are not adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. This is in conformity with the finding of Hamilton-Ekeke (2017) who reported that there was gross neglect of facilities safety measures in the school. This

refuted the finding of Ugwulashi (2017) who reported that the safety practices for educational facilities includes; constant inspection and audit of school facilities, participation of all stakeholders, provision of safe infrastructure and instructional facilities; removal of damaged facilities, provision of funds for day to day administration and preventive maintenance system in place. The difference in geographical locations and participants could be attributed to the dissimilarity between the findings. The safety measures that are not adopted by principals for facilities management of public secondary schools in Enugu state include recruit of watchman to guard school properties mainly during night time, establishing security audits for checking faulty facilities that need repair, renovating cracked walls to prevent collapse of school building, collaborate with local vigilante groups to ensure safety of facilities after school hours and installation of Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) cameras to monitor movement of facilities within the school. These safety measures that are not adopted by principals for facilities management could account for the breakdown and deterioration of material resources in secondary schools in Enugu State. Public secondary schools in Enugu State are characterized by broken furniture, cracked buildings, frequent lost of school properties and other deplorable condition of facilities probably due to the poor safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management. The states of these facilities pose a threat to lives of students and staff. Further result revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the safety measures adopted by principals for facilities management in public secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. This supported the finding of Obiamaka and Enyi (2020) who reported that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on safety measures for facilities management in secondary schools. The possible explanation for agreement between the two studies is the



fact that the two studies were conducted in the country and in the same year.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that principals have not adequately adopted safety measures in management of secondary schools in Enugu State. It is evident that secondary school principals in Enugu State have not adopted safety measures for facilities management. This could account for infrastructural decay in secondary schools in Enugu State. However, it is obvious that principals promote learning environment free of fears and dangers among staff and students through safety measures for personnel management. The safety measures adopted by principals for personnel management prevent physical attacks, violence and emotional disorder among staff and students of secondary schools in Enugu State. It becomes apparent that safety measures are very necessary to support academic success of students by creating orderly learning environment devoid of risks, fear or danger.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Ministry of Education should organize regular professional development programme for principals on the safety measures for personnel management to enable them acquire up-dated skills and knowledge to safeguard the lives of students and members of staff.
2. Secondary Education Management Board should contracting private security organization to promote safety of personnel and facilities in secondary schools.
3. School principals should collaborate with local vigilante groups to maintain safety of personnel and facilities in secondary schools.

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