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Principals' Management Strategies for Secondary Education Students' Security and Governance Beyond Covid-19 Pandemic in Anambra State, Nigeria

Faith Ogechukwu Okoye¹

¹Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, PMB 5025, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria Email:fo.okoye@unizik.edu.ng

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Abstract

The study investigated principals' management strategies for secondary education students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Anambra State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 1002 secondary school teachers from 10 public secondary schools in Onitsha North L.G.A of Anambra State. 120 respondents were sampled using a multi-stage sampling procedure which involved simple random and accidental sampling techniques. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The instrument was a 23-item questionnaire validated by experts, and with reliability index of 0.87 using Cronbach Alpha. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that principals' management strategies like communication and use of technological devices engender good governance and adequate students' security. The gender of teachers has no significant difference on the management strategies adopted by principals among others. The study recommended that principals should adopt advanced technologies and communication strategies which ensure adequate secondary education students' security and good governance.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Governance, Management Strategies, Secondary Education, Students' Security, Principals

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic is a contemporary phenomenon which virtually all sectors of human existence has been abreast of. The disease caused by corona virus mysteriously injected fears into many nations, affected lives with visibly dastardly impacts including the education system. The import of education remains a sine qua non to national development of any nation. Hence, Nigeria considers education as an instrument "par excellence" (FRN, 2014) and as such upheld education as primus inter pares in her developmental strides.

In view of the foregoing, education being a veritable tool that pilots the pendulum of any nation's growth and development must not be handled with kids' glove. Thus, the postulation of the Nigerian National Policy on Education stipulates that, education should continue to be rated highly in the National Development Plan (FRN, 2014). Cognizance is also taken that education is the bedrock for achieving the socio-economic, technological, and developmental vision of any nation. Having been accepted as such education remains a form of investment in humanity which ultimately contributes to a nation's growth, wealth, and development.

Consequently, education is a social service that contributes greatly to national development. Nigeria needs requisite education that will transform her abundant natural human resources into economic development; hence the need for funding to ensure the required quality education (Akingbola, 2009). In keeping with what gives education a formidable stand and sustainability, Okebukola (2011) asserts that education in a nation requires serious attention to save it from total collapse. The collapse of education cannot be averted especially with the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic which impinges and disrupts academic exercises.

In order to mitigate the negative effects facing the management of education, the role of secondary education, an arm of the three tiers of Nigerian education must be brought to fore. Secondary education (years 11-17 plus) is a type of education given to Nigerian children after primary education and before tertiary stage with two main broad goals which include:

- a. Useful living within the society and
- b. Higher education

From 1986 secondary education is a six-year course of study segmented into two stages of three each. The first three years named junior secondary education should encompass vocational training aimed at positioning the students to establish trade or skill of their choice and become self-reliant. Unfortunately, the aim of students' self-reliance had not truly been realized. The second stage of secondary school education called senior secondary education avails students the opportunity of taking their final external examination into tertiary education. At this stage, students' areas of specialization are defined based on their choice of subjects in Science, Arts or Vocational subjects, leading to the student's desired career or vocation later in life. However, the desired goals and objective of secondary education were disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic.

Consequently, the looming pandemic on its third wave disadvantaged many secondary school students in Anambra state who were being exposed to online education adopted as a panacea by the government. The exercise is bedeviled with myriads of challenges that demand principals' management strategies geared towards students' security and good governance. It is when secondary school principals implement effective management strategies for students' security and good governance that the nation can realize the objectives of secondary education beyond COVID-19 pandemic. Note, no credible education can thrive in an unsafe school environment. These drew the attention of the researcher to the aim of the Nigerian government for institution of secondary schools. Thus, the Federal Republics of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) described secondary schools as institutions responsible for developing sound intelligent learning societies, fit and relevant for the 21st century.

Secondary education therefore prepares individuals for higher education. Given the responsibilities of secondary schools, which have been set up to achieve certain objectives which include providing Nigerian citizens with opportunity for higher level of education irrespective of one's gender, social status, religious or ethnic affiliations. Secondary education offers diversified curriculum to carter for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles. It provides trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at the sub professional grades; and provides, entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (FRN, 2013). The objectives of secondary education cannot be achieved if the schools are not well governed with effective management strategies by the principals.

The principals of secondary schools are stakeholders that run the daily affairs of the schools. The principal ensures that teachers execute their task with utmost performance in order to achieve educational goals. Hence, Chike-Okoli (2007) posits the principal as one who controls the human and material resources of the school and occupies the top administrative ladder in any secondary school. The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for matters concerning implementation of the school curriculum, sees to the smooth running of the school to achieve high productivity from staff which requires effective and efficient management strategies to ensure students security and good governance.

Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2014) opine that management strategies entail management plan focusing on improved performance of organization from a present position to where it is desired to be. Literarily, management strategies within the scope of this research hinge on principals' implementation of plans, programmes, and policies that will engender students' security and good governance.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 pandemic compounded the security lapses of secondary schools in Anambra state. During COVID-19 pandemic secondary schools experience various security lapses such as cybercrime, extortion, fighting, kidnapping, rape cases, bullying, and vandalism among others. Khoury, Astor and Zena (2005) identify and categorize some school security threats to include: demographic factors such as school sizes, level of poverty, neighborhood crimes and school locations. On his part

Maduagwu (2006) states that school security threat emanates from dilapidated school buildings, outlived flowers with wild branches, bushes around the school, broken classroom floors, damaged school laboratory equipment.

Security challenges day by day rear ugly head in the affairs of secondary schools in Onitsha LGA in Anambra state, Nigeria. In effect, kidnappings, hostage-taking, murder, cultism, youth restiveness among others disrupt academic programmes of schools. In some cases, the traumatized experiences of students, teachers and parents remain serious challenge to school enrolment and jeopardize learning experiences, effective management of security and governance in secondary schools.

Good governance in line with this study depicts the principals' obligations, responsibilities and procedural implementation of institutions curriculum plans, programmes and policies to attain the educational objectives. Khalique (2010) elucidates that good governance in education is concerned with how a school system composes policies, produces and expends funds, teacher preparation for teaching, scheming curricula and administration of school population. Although the formulation or composition of policies as mentioned by Khalique is not solely before the school principal but the aspect of implementation, teaching, fund raising can aid good governance or effective leadership of the school. Effective leadership is all about accountability of both human and material resources entrusted to the care of the secondary school principals. Moreso, it engenders the management to ascertain extent of realization of the goals and objectives of education. In the same vein, Okunamiri and Ajoku (2010) opine that accountability demands sound management of decision, constant policies supervision and monitoring of education system. By dint of Okunamiri and Ajoku's assertion, it may be deduced that accountability aids good governance which must be propelled by effective management strategies of the education sector. Thus, Kadir (2019) notes that effective management of education depends on the availability and management of resources, accountability and participatory decision-making (good governance) towards the realization of educational goals.Principals' management strategies for secondary school students' security and government:

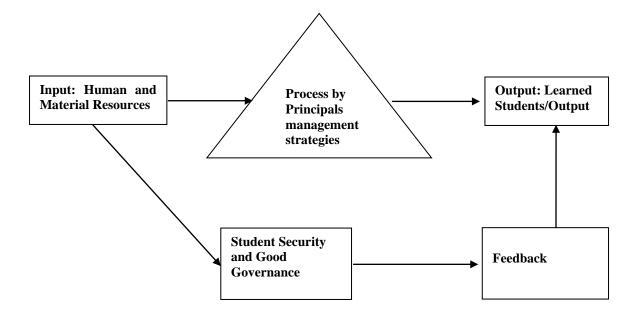


Figure 1: Theoretical framework adapted from General System Model

Every secondary school is equipped with both human and material resources which require principals' management strategies geared towards students' security and good governance. In most cases when the school lives and property are devoid of security threat and poor governance, the feedback will yield credible output (students learning outcome). Conversely, insecurity encompassing threat to life, uncertainty and danger bedevil the activities of secondary education in the country for which the study area is a part. Hence, the need for principals' management strategies. According to (DeWet 2003, Netshitahaime and Van, 2002) for schools to be a safe environment, schools should have safety programmes and strategies and those preventive strategies should be implemented by all relevant authorities. DeWet (2003) further stated that creating a safe school environment involves designing various safety awareness programmes and strategies as well as mobility school support networks. Principals ought to have knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and also have skills to implement those legislations and policies. Otherwise, the views of Trump (2010) may come to bare. Trump opines that if learners do not feel safe to learn and teachers do not feel safe to teach, the focus shifts from academic discipline to personal safety.

Another strategy that the principal may adopt to ensure secondary school students' security and good governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic is the Response Monitoring Tool called 5W Matrix (who is doing what, where, when and to whom. This

is a COVID-19 response monitoring plan by UNICEF for monitoring the education sector. Here, teachers could be used as monitors who should turn in their reports to the principal on a weekly basis.

Regarding the physical security of the school, the principal needs to devise plans, mount technological devices with trained personnel for implementation with video surveillance cameras, the closed-circuit television (CCTV) in the school environment. This strategy can help the school detect security challenges and track all unwholesome behaviours. Computer assisted design programme in 3-D will equally be of immense help and an effective strategy that can detect the number of persons in a location at a given time. Trump (2010) corroborated the use of advanced technological strategy in school's safety when he states as follows: to ensure safe school compounds, by placing cameras throughout the school buildings and possibly video tape recorders will allow personnel to see films of anyone within the area.

Consequently, access control device is another strategy if employed by the principal will prevent unauthorized movement in educational institutions. Concurring with the views of the researcher, Xaba (2015) writes that access control device helps to prevent unauthorized access to school building, enables remotely controlled lockdown to isolate safety incident and reduce personnel requirements for monitoring. In addition, the incident response device is another high-powered communication gadget which can be employed as a strategy. Adopting this strategy gives a detailed documentary on peoples interoperability with both digital and analogue radio device.

Beyond COVID-19 pandemic, with the readiness of the federal government to fund Nigeria secondary education, other strategies that can ensure adequate security networking adopted as the principals' management strategies for the safety and good governance of the students include desktop video, notification services, visitor management system, mobility and wireless unified communication, digital signage, smart connected building and defense network.

Among the numerous management strategies, this study focuses on the principal management strategies using advanced technologies such as incident response security device to monitor communications, mounting of CCTV cameras for video surveillance, computer 3-D assisted design program and use of 5W matrix, which is a Response Monitoring Tool, that tracks who, what, where when and whom in secondary school security challenges especially beyond COVID-19 contingency period.

Security of secondary school students is entrusted to the care of the principals across board irrespective of gender affiliation. Therefore, gender of principals may not determine the type of management strategies or provision of technological devices for effective management of students' security and governance hence, the study investigated whether the gender of principals affect these areas of security challenges.

There is no gainsaying that various security challenges face secondary schools in

Onitsha North LGA during the period of COVID-19 pandemic. Failure to match secondary school security threats with adequate principals' management strategies may mar the cause of education. Hence, the researcher is poised to investigate principals management strategies for secondary school students security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Management strategies adopted by secondary school principals would impart the security, governance and the educational outcome of students. However, it appears that the spate of insecurity across the nation, especially in Onitsha North LGA secondary schools in Anambra State is a matter of concern.

The conventional management strategies adopted by principals such as building of perimeter fencing, mounting of security men at the school gate, teachers monitoring and supervision of school environment, learning experiences, core curricular activities among others had been taken as mere exercises and easy hurdle manipulated by miscreants and dropouts with mischievous behaviours. Thus, the student's security and governance seem to be in a state of quagmire. Security in its strictest sense may be said to have eluded some secondary schools in the study area. As a result, there are reports of missing, kidnapped students, cybercrime, theft, extortion, bullying, rape, sexual assaults and molestation, high profile examination misconduct, cultism, murder, youth restiveness among other disruptive behaviours that hinder the academic exercise, as well as impinging on the educational outcome especially security-wise.

Worrisome too, are the diverse methods perpetrators of the heinous exercise carry out the dubious activities without qualms. The rising insecurity in the country, especially in secondary schools, demand proactive steps geared towards securing lives, school plants and protection of the students from hoodlums who were presently having a field day. Obviously, fencing schools in Onitsha North LGA, Anambra State is not a guarantee that stealing and kidnapping will no longer occur, instead among other conventional strategies adopted, the principal's management strategies using technological gadgets will address security threat squarely. Disillusionment of some parents over the security threat in secondary schools, sometimes result to poor enrolment of their wards in schools. Some even spend their last penny to train their wards outside the shores of Nigeria due to security challenges.

In view of the foregoing, management strategies for regeneration of secondary school students' security and governance must adopt principals use of technological devises beyond COVID-19 pandemic. Bearing in mind that the key that unlocks the fruitfulness of secondary school students' safety hang on the innovation. There is no doubt that funding of the education sectors to enable the provision of the needed gadgets may be a hindrance. The need for better funding of secondary education to avert

insecurity should be at the front burner in all tiers of Nigerian government. Till date, irrespective of conventional management strategies used by principals to curb and avert insecurity in the school system, installation of advanced technological devices remains a panacea to security challenges. Gadgets like CCTV surveillance cameras mounted in different locations of school can pin down any criminality.

In the light of the above, the study is poised to investigate principals' management strategies for secondary school students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Onitsha North LGA, Anambra state.

Method

Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1002 secondary school teachers from 10 public secondary schools in Onitsha North LGA of Anambra State. 120 respondents were sampled using multi-stage sampling procedure which involved simple random and accidental sampling techniques. The instrument was a 23-item questionnaire validated by three experts with reliability index of 0.87 using Cronbach Alpha. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Mean and t-test were used to answer the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the security challenges that demand principals' management strategies for students' security and good governance?

	management strategies for students' security and good governance									
S/No	Items	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	Remarks							
А	The following are various security challenges in your									
	school that demand principals' management strategies.									
1.	Fighting	3.08	Agree							
2.	Extortion	2.94	Agree							
3.	Cybercrime	3.03	Agree							
4.	Vandalism	3.13	Agree							
5.	Bullying	3.44	Agree							
6.	Kidnapping	3.13	Agree							
7.	Banditry	3.03	Agree							
8.	Neighborhood crimes	2.98	Agree							
9.	Murder	2.98	Agree							
10.	Cultism	3.13	Agree							
11.	Rape	3.21	Agree							

Table 1:Mean ratings of responses on security challenges that demand principals' management strategies for students' security and good governance

The mean scores recorded in Table 1 for items 1 to 11 are above 2.50 for all the

investigated security challenges. This indicates that fighting, extortion, cybercrime, vandalism, bullying, kidnapping, banditry, neighbourhood crimes, murder, cultism and rape demand principals' management strategies for students' security and good governance in secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What are the available technological gadgets for managing security threats by principals in secondary schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of responses on available technological gadgets for managing security threats by principals in secondary schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Anambra State

S/No	Items	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	Remark
B.	Available technological gadgets for managing security		
	threat by principals in secondary schools beyond COVID-		
	19 pandemic		
12.	Video surveillance (CCTV)	1.75	Disagree
13.	Security lightening	2.18	Disagree
14.	Access control gadgets	1.74	Disagree
15.	Electrocuted wire on perimeter fencing	1.78	Disagree
16.	Central communication centre (ICT)	1.82	Disagree
17.	Electrical powered bell signals	1.85	Disagree
18.	Computer 3-D assisted design programme	1.96	Disagree
19.	5W Response Monitoring tool	1.68	Disagree
20.	Desktop video	2.09	Disagree

Table 2 reveals that the mean scores of all the items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20), are below 2.50 indicating poor provision of technological gadgets for managing security threats by principals in secondary schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Onitsha North LGA, Anambra State.

Research Question 3: What management strategies should the principals adopt as strategies for adequate security and good governance of schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic?

Table 3: Mean ratings of responses on management strategies that principals should adopt as strategies for adequate security and good governance of schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic

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Mean scores of 3.16, 2.89 and 2.97 presented for items 21, 22 and 23 (Table 3) were agreed as management strategies that should be adopted by principals for adequate security and governance of schools beyond COVID-19 pandemic.

Testing the Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female principals responses on the management strategies for secondary school students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4a: Group statistics forMean scores of male and female principals responses on the management strategies for secondary school students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic

Group Statistics									
Gender N Mean Std. Std. Err									
				Deviation	Mean				
Management	Male	17	3.0588	.99738	.24190				
Strategies	Female	103	3.1165	.85484	.08423				

Table 4b: Independent sample T-test statistics for Mean scores of principals on the management strategies for secondary school students security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic

	Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means							
F			Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differe nce	959 Confic Interval Differ Lowe r	lence of the	
Mana geme nt	Equal variances assumed	.445	.506	.252	118	.802	05768	.22920	- .5115 6	.396 20	
Strate gies	Equal variances not assumed			.225	20.069	.824	05768	.25615	- .5918 8	.476 51	

The results on Table 4 reveal that there was no significant difference between male and female principals in the responses on the management strategies for secondary school students security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic, t (118)= -0.252, p

= 0.802. That is, the average response score of females (f = 3.12, SD = 0.855) was not significantly different from that of males (m = 3.06, SD = 0.997), indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted.

Ho2: Mean response scores of principals on available technological gadgets for managing security challenges of secondary school students beyond COVID-19 pandemic did not differ significantly.

Table 5a: Group statistics for Mean scores of principals on available technological gadgets for managing security challenges of secondary school students beyond COVID-19 pandemic

Group Statistics									
Gender N Mean Std. Std									
				Deviation	Mean				
Available	Male	17	1.8562	.69140	.16769				
Technological	Female	103	1.8716	.85781	.08452				
Gadgets									

Table 5b: Independent sample T-test statistics for Mean scores of principals on available technological gadgets for managing security challenges of secondary school students beyond COVID-19 pandemic

				5	ident Sam	1				
	t-test for Equality of Means									
	of Variances F Sig.			t	(2- Differe Error Interval					Confidence val of the ference Upper
Available Technolo gical	Equal variances assumed	1.91 2	.169	.070	118	.944	01542	.21916	- .4494 3	.41859
Gadgets	Equal variances not assumed			.082	24.91 0	.935	01542	.18779	-4022 4	.37140

The results indicate that there was no significant difference in the responses on available technological gadgets for managing security challenges of secondary school students beyond COVID-19 pandemic by male and female principals, t (118) = -0.070, p

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= 0.944. That is, the average response of score of females (f = 1.87, SD = 0.878) was not significantly different from that of males (m = 1.86, SD = 0.691). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

Findings on Table 1 reveal that all the security challenges exist in the study area and such being the situation places the attainment of educational goals and objectives in a bad situation. Thus, Trump (2010) forewarns that if learners do not feel safe to learn and teachers do not feel safe to teach, the focus shifts from academic task to discipline and personal safety. The noxious effect of school security threats will thwart the developmental efforts of Nigeria to compete with advanced technological countries because once the education of a nation is threatened, development is hampered.

The results shown in table 2 indicate that the entire technological gadgets needed by principal for effective management strategies of secondary school students' security and governance were not provided. Without mincing words, poor funding of education in Nigeria will be the cause. However, if the government fails to address the incessant security lapses bedeviling Nigerian schools, the nation is simply seating on a keg of gun powder. Bringing to limelight the number of abducted, missing school children across the nation, the government's negligence to fund technological gadgets for protection of lives and properties in schools is truly worrisome. Previously, little efforts done by the government to secure some urban secondary schools cannot match the level of criminality experienced in the Nigerian schools. Unless proactive measures are taken by the government to equip the principals with relevant technological gadgets, the nation may face her waterloo. The mean scores above 2.50 in Table 3 affirm that 5W response monitoring tool, 3D assisted design program, electric bell signals are important technological devices that would aid the principals' management strategies for students' security and governance.

Null hypothesis in table 4 shows that gender has no significant effect on principals' management strategies for secondary school students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic in Onitsha North LGA. This scenario defies gender barrier because all secondary schools in the study area face similar security lapses. Hence, the indication that there is no significant difference in male and female principals' responses on the available technological gadgets for managing security challenges beyond COVID-19 pandemic as revealed in table 5. This calls for serious concern and a scenario that prevents school violence as a pressing educational issue. The finding in hypothesis 2 indicates that the mean responses of male and female teachers on the management strategies that should be adopted by the principals for students' security and governance do not differ significantly. This is a pointer that employing advanced technological gadgets can only solve the security challenges that impinge on schools'

security. Trump (2010), corroborated with the above views by asserting that, 'to ensure safe school compounds, by placing cameras throughout the school buildings and possibly video tape recorders will allow personnel to see films of anyone within the area.' Furthermore, there should be computer assisted design program in 3-D that can map how many people ... although underdevelopment and underfunding of Nigerian education may have been the causes of unavailability of these needed gadgets, the level of 'digital crime' in our secondary schools today must be matched with advanced technological security devices.

Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic has mitigated the aspirations of Nigerian education and the negative effects observed in the spate of security threats bedeviling secondary school students' security and governance are worrisome. Consequently, principals' adoption of technological management strategies remains a panacea to the unsafe educational environment, governance and secondary school students' security in Onitsha North LGA, Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1. Stakeholders in education should brace up with inculcation of the right norms and values in Nigerian children.
- 2. The government must enhance funding of education to ensure that the needed technological and communication gadgets for curbing crime are installed in secondary school environment.
- 3. All defaulters must be punished when technological monitoring devices are installed in schools to aid principals' management strategies for students' security and governance beyond COVID-19 pandemic.

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