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ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INSECURITY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF AKKO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the role of school administrators in managing insecurity in public secondary schools in Akko Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive survey design to examine the major forms and root causes of insecurity, administrative strategies for threat prevention and response, levels of emergency preparedness, and key obstacles limiting effective security management. A sample of 248 respondents comprising principals, vice principals, and teachers was selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with 80 items and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that infrastructural deficiencies particularly inadequate school fencing and insufficient security personnel constituted the primary security vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, common school-based issues including theft, vandalism, and bullying were significant concerns which lead to insecurity in school. The study find out that administrators predominantly employed reactive, authority-based strategies focusing on rule enforcement and supervision, with limited implementation of preventive measures like security drills and community partnerships due to their mean score (Mean=2.75). Similarly, the extreme external threats like kidnapping were perceived as less immediate. Emergency preparedness was moderate for basic measures but deficient in comprehensive planning and regular drills. Thus, recommendations include School administrators must be equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to effectively manage school security. Regular professional development workshops and training sessions should be organized for school leaders, focusing on conflict management, crisis resolution, risk assessment, and communication skills. Training should also include the use of modern security technologies, such as surveillance systems and data management, to support the administration in ensuring a safer school environment. School administrators should also be provided with access to resources that enhance their leadership capabilities, such as security management. Local Government and Educational Authorities should prioritize the construction and maintenance of physical barriers around school premises

Keywords: Administrators, insecurity, public Secondary School

Introduction

In recent years, insecurity problems have emerged as one of the most serious challenges affecting the educational sector in Nigeria. Public secondary schools, in particular, have increasingly become targets of various forms of violence, including armed attacks, vandalism, student abductions, cult-related clashes, and other criminal activities. These threats do not only disrupted academic activities but also erodes the feeling of safety and stability

which is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place. In many affected areas, fear and trauma have become the order of the day for both students and staff, leading to declining enrolment, reduced teachers' performance, and weakened school-community trust (Abdullahi & Bala, 2023).

Akko Local Government Area in Gombe State is not exception to this growing concern. Schools in this region have experienced different dimensions of insecurity, ranging from theft and trespassing to more serious threats like physical assault and community unrest. These security threats affecting the learning environment and disrupts the realization of educational goals, particularly in public secondary schools that often lack adequate protective infrastructure and formal security presence. Within this context, school administrators hold an important leadership role. Administrators such as principals and vice-principals are responsible for not only overseeing academic activities but also ensuring the safety of students, staff, and school properties. Administrators' roles extend to implementing safety policies, coordinating emergency preparedness plans, supervising the school physical infrastructure, and fostering strong partnerships with the law enforcement agencies and community leaders. Effective administration in this regard requires strategic planning, resource mobilization, team coordination, and decisive action in times of crisis.

However, the task of managing insecurity in schools is not without significant obstacles. Most public secondary schools operate under tight financial constraints, making it difficult to install security facilities such as perimeter fencing, surveillance cameras, or alarm systems. In addition, there is often a lack of trained personnel to handle emergencies, and most administrators have not received formal training in security management or conflict resolution. The absence of clear government policies on school safety, combined with weak enforcement of existing regulations, further complicates the administrator's efforts to maintain a secure environment (Adebayo & Bako, 2019).

Moreover, emotional and psychological pressures on administrators continue to grow, as they are expected to perform the dual functions of academic leadership and security enforcement, often with little or no support. This heavy burden can lead to fatigue, frustration, and in some cases, resignation, particularly in high-risk communities where the threat of violence is persistent.

Given the critical role of administrators and the complex environment in which they operate, it becomes necessary to examine how they manage insecurity in public secondary schools. This study therefore aims to explore the specific roles school administrators play in mitigating security challenges in Akko Local Government Area, the strategies they employ, and the difficulties they encounter in ensuring that schools remain safe spaces for education.

Statement of the Problem
In recent years, public secondary schools in many parts of Nigeria have increasingly faced various forms of insecurity such as students' violence, cult-related activities, theft, vandalism of school property, trespassing, and threats to the safety of learners and school personnel. In Akko Local Government Area of Gombe State, these security challenges have raised serious concerns among parents, teachers, community members and educational

authorities, as they directly affect the safety of the school environment and the effective delivery of teaching and learning. A school environment that is not adequately secured makes it difficult for students to concentrate on learning and for teachers to carry out their professional responsibilities effectively.

School administrators, particularly principals and vice principals, are expected to play a central role in preventing, controlling and managing insecurity in schools through effective supervision, enforcement of school rules, collaboration with community leaders, guidance counsellors and security agencies, and the development of proactive safety policies. However, despite the strategic position of school administrators in school security management, cases of insecurity continue to be reported in public secondary schools within Akko Local Government Area. This situation raises concerns about the adequacy, effectiveness and consistency of administrative strategies being used to manage security-related challenges in these schools.

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence specifically examining how school administrators in Akko Local Government Area respond to insecurity and the extent to which their administrative roles contribute to creating a safe and supportive school environment. Without clear information on the roles, practices and challenges of school administrators in managing insecurity, policy makers and education stakeholders may find it difficult to design appropriate interventions and support systems. It is against this background that this study seeks to assess the role of administrators in the management of insecurity in public secondary schools in Akko Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the school safety and security problems through the roles of administrators in managing insecurity in public secondary schools in Akko LGA. Specifically, this research study seeks to:

1 Determine the root causes of insecurity affecting public secondary schools in Akko Local Government Area.
2 Examine the administrative strategies adopted by school leaders in preventing and responding to security threats.

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated by the researcher based on the objectives to guide the study:

1 What are the root causes of insecurity affecting public secondary schools in Akko LGA?
2 What specific strategies are school administrators adopted to prevent and respond to school security threats?

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable for investigating the roles of administrators in managing insecurity in secondary schools, as it allows for the collection of data on the perceptions and experiences of principals, vice principals, and teachers.

Research Question 1: What are the root causes of Insecurity affecting Public Secondary Schools in Akko LGA?

Table 1: Showing Mean Responses of the root causes of insecurity affecting public secondary schools

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Remarks
1	Theft and burglary are common forms of insecurity in my school.	3.82	0.41	1	Strongly Agree
2	Vandalism of school property occurs frequently in my school.	3.78	0.48	2	Strongly Agree
3	Cultism poses a major insecurity challenge in secondary schools.	3.65	0.56	3	Strongly Agree
4	Bullying among students contributes significantly to insecurity.	3.60	0.62	4	Strongly Agree
5	Drug abuse by students is a major factor leading to insecurity.	3.58	0.61	5	Strongly Agree
6	Armed robbery around the school environment affects safety.	3.55	0.65	6	Strongly Agree
7	Kidnapping incidents pose serious threats to school security.	3.52	0.67	7	Strongly Agree
8	Political unrest in the community influences insecurity in schools.	3.48	0.70	8	Agree
9	Religious intolerance among school community contributes to insecurity in schools.	3.45	0.72	9	Agree
10	Lack of effective school fences or gates contributes to insecurity.	3.42	0.75	10	Agree
11	Unemployment among youths in the community increases insecurity.	3.40	0.78	11	Agree
12	Parental negligence increases the vulnerability of students leading to insecurity	3.38	0.80	12	Agree
13	Poor school-community relationship heightens insecurity risks.	3.35	0.82	13	Agree
14	Poverty in the community contributes to insecurity in schools.	3.32	0.85	14	Agree
15	Peer pressure imitation among students is a root cause of school insecurity.	2.95	0.92	15	Agree
16	Inadequate security personnel contributes to insecurity in schools.	2.88	0.95	16	Agree
17	Teachers' laxity in supervision encourages insecurity incidents.	2.85	0.98	17	Agree
18	Criminal infiltration into school premises causes insecurity.	2.75	1.02	18	Agree
19	Lack of moral upbringing among students from home contributes to insecurity.	2.68	1.05	19	Agree
20	Students from violent-prone homes are more likely to cause insecurity.	2.45	1.10	20	Disagr

Source: Field Survey, (2025) Overall Mean = 3.27, Standard Deviation = 0.75

Table 1 above shows the mean responses, standard deviations (SD), and rankings for various security concerns in secondary schools within Akko Local Government Area. The data provides insight into the perceived root causes of insecurity, as ranked by respondents. The table reveals a clear prioritization of issues, with some concerns viewed as more urgent than others.

The table shows that respondents strongly agree with the significance of internal security issues such as theft, vandalism, cultism, and bullying. These factors received the highest mean scores, ranging from 3.55 to 3.82, indicating that respondents view them as the most immediate and widespread threats to school security. Theft and burglary (Mean = 3.82) ranked as the most significant concern, followed by vandalism of school property (Mean = 3.78), which suggests a strong awareness of everyday criminal activities within the school environment. Other common internal issues, like cultism (Mean = 3.65) and bullying (Mean = 3.60), also received high agreement, highlighting the importance of addressing student behavior and peer-related violence as key aspects of school safety.

The strong agreement with drug abuse (Mean = 3.58) and armed robbery (Mean = 3.55) further supports the notion that daily security challenges within the school and surrounding environment pose major risks. Kidnapping (Mean = 3.52) was also ranked relatively high, indicating that while it is a severe external threat, it is still considered a significant issue in the context of school safety. These results suggest that routine incidents, such as property damage and student violence, are prioritized over more extreme threats, which aligns with the findings of recent studies on school security.

The table also shows that respondents agree with the significance of socio-economic and infrastructural factors contributing to insecurity. Issues such as political unrest (Mean = 3.48), religious intolerance (Mean = 3.45), and lack of effective school fences or gates (Mean = 3.42) were ranked in the middle range. These factors point to the importance of the broader community context, with local tensions and inadequate physical infrastructure seen as contributing to insecurity. Furthermore, unemployment (Mean = 3.40), parental negligence (Mean = 3.38), and poor school-community relationships (Mean = 3.35) were also seen as important contributors, suggesting that external socio-economic pressures play a role in shaping the security environment of schools

At the lower end of the ranking, the table reveals that more extreme external threats, such as political unrest (Mean = 2.68) and students from violent-prone homes (Mean = 2.45), were seen as less immediate concerns. These factors had lower mean scores, indicating that respondents either perceive them as less frequent or less impactful in the context of school security. This pattern may reflect either a lower incidence of these severe threats or a differing perception of their severity within the local context of Akko LGA. The finding shows that the root causes of insecurity; theft and burglary, vandalism of school property cultism and bullying, and lack of effective school fences or gates.

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Research Question 2: Administrative Strategies for Preventing and Responding to Security Threats

Table 2 Showing the mean Responses on Administrative Strategies (N=248)

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Remarks
1	School leaders implement effective rules and regulations	3.70	0.52	1	Strongly Agree
2	Regular monitoring of students helps reduce insecurity	3.68	0.54	2	Strongly Agree
3	Principals ensure adequate supervision during school hours	3.65	0.57	3	Strongly Agree
4	Disciplinary committees effectively handle insecurity cases	3.62	0.60	4	Strongly Agree
5	Teachers are trained in maintaining discipline and order	3.58	0.63	5	Strongly Agree
6	Punishments deter acts of insecurity in schools	3.55	0.66	6	Strongly Agree
7	Principals collaborate with local security agencies	3.52	0.68	7	Strongly Agree
8	School assemblies sensitize students on security issues	3.48	0.71	8	Agree
9	Establishing school security committees helps manage insecurity	3.45	0.73	9	Agree
10	Principals engage in regular dialogue with students on insecurity	3.42	0.76	10	Agree
11	School leaders organize awareness campaigns against cultism/drugs	3.38	0.79	11	Agree
12	Guidance counselors are engaged to handle insecurity cases	3.35	0.82	12	Agree
13	Principals delegate responsibilities to staff to maintain security	3.32	0.85	13	Agree
14	Principals liaise with traditional rulers to prevent insecurity	3.28	0.88	14	Agree
15	Installing school fences and gates helps reduce insecurity	3.25	0.91	15	Agree
16	Administrators involve parents in managing insecurity	3.22	0.94	16	Agree
17	School leaders keep proper records of insecurity incidents	3.18	0.97	17	Agree
18	School leaders organize security drills for staff and students	2.95	1.02	18	Agree
19	Peer mentoring programs help reduce insecurity in schools	2.88	1.05	19	Agree
20	Collaboration with NGOs strengthens insecurity prevention	2.75	1.10	20	Agree

Source: field survey, (2025), Overall Mean = 3.38, Standard Deviation = 0.79

The data presented in Table 4.2 reveals a clear hierarchy in the implementation of administrative strategies for managing security threats in Akko LGA secondary schools. With an overall mean of 3.38, respondents generally agreed that various strategies are being employed, though significant variation exists across different approaches. The standard deviation of 0.79 indicates moderate consensus among respondents about strategy implementation. The top-ranked strategies reflect a traditional, rule-oriented approach to security management. The implementation of effective rules and regulations (mean=3.70, rank 1) emerges as the most prevalent strategy, followed closely by regular student monitoring (mean=3.68) and adequate supervision during school hours (mean=3.65).

The emphasis on disciplinary mechanisms including disciplinary committees (mean=3.62), teacher training in discipline (mean=3.58), and punitive measures (mean=3.55)—suggests a reactive security paradigm focused on addressing security breaches after they occur rather than preventing them proactively. Strategies involving external collaboration show moderate implementation levels. Collaboration with local security agencies (mean=3.52) and liaison with traditional rulers (mean=3.28) indicate some recognition of the need for community-based security partnerships. However, the relatively lower ranking of these collaborative strategies (ranks 7 and 14 respectively) suggests they are not yet central to security management approaches in the study area.

Interestingly, the engagement of guidance counselors in insecurity cases (mean=3.35) and regular dialogue with students about security concerns (mean=3.42) reflect some attention to psychosocial dimensions of security management. The most concerning finding relates to the limited implementation of proactive security strategies. Security drills for staff and students (mean=2.95, rank 18), peer mentoring programs (mean=2.88, rank 19), and collaboration with NGOs (mean=2.75, rank 20) are the least implemented strategies despite their recognized importance in contemporary school safety frameworks.

The moderate ranking of infrastructure-related strategies particularly installing school fences and gates (mean=3.25, rank 15) is noteworthy given that inadequate physical security measures were identified as a primary root cause of insecurity in Research Question 1. This suggests a disconnect between identified needs and implemented solutions, where administrators recognize security infrastructure deficiencies but have not fully addressed them. Similarly, the limited involvement of parents in security management (mean=3.22, rank 16) represents a missed opportunity for comprehensive security approaches. The relatively low implementation of proper incident record-keeping (mean=3.18, rank 17) has implications for institutional learning and evidence-based security planning.

Conclusion
This study has systematically examined the complex landscape of insecurity management in public secondary schools within Akko Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria. Through empirical investigation of root causes, administrative strategies, preparedness levels, and constraining obstacles, the research reveals a multifaceted security environment characterized by significant gaps between security needs and management capabilities.

The findings collectively demonstrate that school insecurity in Akko LGA is fundamentally a systemic challenge rather than merely an operational one. While administrators exhibit awareness of security threats and implement basic protective measures, their efforts are severely constrained by interconnected financial, institutional, and collaborative limitations. The dominance of reactive, rule-based security approaches coupled with inadequate preventive measures and emergency preparedness creates a security management paradigm that addresses symptoms rather than root causes.

Financial constraints emerge as the primary barrier, directly impacting physical security infrastructure, human resource capacity, and training opportunities. These economic limitations are compounded by institutional weaknesses in policy frameworks, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and governance structures that hinder timely and effective security responses. Furthermore, the isolation of schools from broader community and stakeholder networks represents a critical vulnerability, suggesting that security management cannot succeed as an institutional solo effort.

The study reveals a concerning preparedness paradox wherein schools maintain basic safety measures but lack comprehensive emergency readiness. This gap between recognition and implementation reflects not only resource constraints but also potential cultural and prioritization challenges within educational systems heavily focused on academic outcomes.

Ultimately, this research concludes that enhancing school security in Akko LGA requires integrated, multi-level interventions that simultaneously address financial constraints, institutional frameworks, human capacity development, and community engagement. Sustainable security improvements will depend on shifting from fragmented, reactive approaches to holistic, preventive security ecosystems that leverage both internal school resources and external stakeholder partnerships.

The security of educational environments is not merely an administrative concern but a fundamental prerequisite for quality education and national development. As Nigeria continues to navigate complex security challenges, the findings of this study underscore the urgent need for targeted investment, policy reform, and collaborative action to ensure that schools serve as protected spaces for learning rather than vulnerable targets in an insecure landscape. Through concerted efforts across government, educational institutions, communities, and development partners, the vision of secure, conducive learning environments in Akko LGA and similar contexts can transition from aspiration to achievable reality

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following comprehensive recommendations are made to improve the management of insecurity in public secondary schools in Akko Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria:

1 School administrators must be equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to effectively manage school security. Regular professional development workshops and training sessions should be organized for school leaders, focusing on conflict management, crisis resolution, risk assessment, and communication skills. Training should also include the use of modern security technologies, such as surveillance

systems and data management, to support the administration in ensuring a safer school environment.

2 School administrators should also be provided with access to resources that enhance their leadership capabilities, such as security management handbooks or guidelines that align with national school safety protocols.

3 Local Government and Educational Authorities should prioritize the construction and maintenance of physical barriers around school premises. This should include not just perimeter fencing, but also controlled entry points, where security personnel can monitor visitors and students.

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