SECURITY AWARENESS PRACTICES AND THE ATTAINMENT OF SAFETY ENVIRONMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to investigate security awareness practices and the attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all final year students in the four public tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The total population stood at 2002 drawn from the four tertiary institutions in the state. Taro Yamane and proportionate sampling procedure was used to sample 200 which participant which represent 10% of the entire population of the study. Further breakdown shows Unical with 100, Unicross50, FCE Obudu 25 and COE Akamkpa 25. One null hypothesis were formulated and tested using simple linear regression at .05 level of significance. The questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection. It consists of three sections, section A elicited demographic data of respondents, B measured security awareness practices, while the section C measured attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions. The instrument was given a face validity and was subjected to a test retest procedure which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.89. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between security awareness practices and the attainment of a safe environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Based on the finding, it was recommended among other things that, management should make concerted in introducing programmes that will inform staff and students about security around them.

Keywords: Security, Security awareness, safe environment, Tertiary institutions

Security refers to the sum total of all the measures put in place in ensuring the protection of live and property is guaranteed. Ozoemena (2019) opined that security entails the coordination of efforts in guaranteeing protection from threats and bodily harm. Odekunle (2012) sees security as the protection or defence of people against all kinds of threats. This include preventing one from being attacked, victimized, exploited and criminalized. One similar aim of all organisations, is the harmonisation of all resources towards the actualization of organisation's objectives. However, without a secured environment that promoted the safety of individuals and property, members of the organisation may not be able to render their services effectively and effectively. Studies, such as Cheung (2008) and Al-Qudah (2013) all affirmed that security is crucial to the attainment of organisational objectives. Thus, security has an important role to play in humans lives as they need to live in tranquility and be free from the threats, stress and anxiety, and to feel loved amongothers.

Tertiary institutions as organisations are set up to train and equip individualswith relevant skills needed for political, social and economic development of a nation.For some time now due to the general insecurity ravaging the country, the tertiary institutions in the country appears to be the most hit. This is because of reports of incessant attacks, kidnapping and killing of students and staff of some tertiary institutions across the country. Akpan (2021) maintained that Life-threatening anti- social activities like human trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic violence, terrorism, armed robbery and murders, to mention but a few, are becoming recurrent headlines on news desk globally. Security in tertiary institutions across the country has degenerated to a more worrisome state and it is already affecting teaching and learning activities. AJayi (2007) stressed that tertiary institutions just like other organisations in the country are faced with a lot of security challenges. These challenges include building collapse, fire incidences, stampedes, kidnapping, robbery, theft, rape, assaults and so on. In the last five years, there have been reported cases of students' abductions, staff kidnapping and cultism related violence across campuses in Nigeria. These scenarios do not appear to guarantee a conducive environment that fosters the actualization of goals and objectives of tertiary education in the country.

In the light of these developments, there is the need for security awareness to be integrated into tertiary education system across the country. Sani (2018) maintained that security threats in school environment include riots, demonstrations,cult related activities, harassment, rape,etc. which has overtime culminated intobreach of peace, breakdown of law and order, loss of lives, destruction of school properties and public disturbances. Thus, one of the ways to check insecurity in tertiary institutions is through building of capacities for security consciousness andawareness among school community members.

Ozoemena (2019) asserts that security awareness involves developing attitudes and values among staff and students in line with the current security realities. It also entails making deliberate policies that will help create awareness and conscientize staff and students on how to protect themselves from security threats within and outside the school environment. Longman (2019) stated that creating security awareness in tertiary institutions entails everything and anything an individual need to learn about security or how to respond to security threat with the aim of protecting himself and properties. It is a way of getting people to be alert to danger and respond promptly to situation that may threaten their lives or prevent them from living their normal lives. Okunola (2011) held that being security conscious of one's environment helps the individual to know more on how to protect himself and environment from harmful threats. It equip us with relevant information and skills needed in tackling any form of threat to our lives or properties. Al-Basheer (2005) sees security awareness as a set of methods, activities, experiences and preventive measures that lead to the protection from falling into the crime of all kinds. Al-Ayed (2009) definition security awareness as the strengthening of national belonging and national identity and establishing of principle of social responsibilityand the ability to test, compare, and contrast ideas.

One of the major challenges to the increasing security challenges is the shortage of manpower among security operatives in the country. As a result, less security personnel are expected to cover a large number of people. This gap has further made individual more vulnerable to attacks especially in school environment. Thus, for tertiary education to thrive in the midst of the security challenges facing the country, school heads ought to deliberate introduce measures such sensitizing students and staff on the need to be cautious of the

security situation around them. Al-Maliki (2006) stated that creating security awareness among organisational community seeks to consolidate the prevailing community values that call for the protection of people. Thus, the essence of security awareness is in the protection of individuals and properties, to fight against the crimes and accidents, and fortify the students from deviant ideas which affect the different social, psychological,economic and cultural aspects.

Longman (2019) investigated the perspectives of educational administrators on the need for security education in the Niger Delta. The study was descriptive survey research in which the quantitative data were collected through 14-item questionnaire titled: Need for Security Education in the Niger Delta: Perspective of Educational Administrators (NSENGPEA).The population for the study consisted of two hundred and fifty-seven (257) Public Senior Secondary School Principals and Vice Principals in Rivers State. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation on a modified 4 point rating scale for research questions and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the two hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that; level of insecurity in Nigeria contributed to the inclusion of security education in the basic education curriculum; security education will make Nigerians to view national security as everybody's business. Also, findings from the hypotheses revealed that; there is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals, vice principals (administration) and vice principals (academics) on rationale for inclusion of securityeducation in school curriculum; there is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals, vice principals (administration) and vice principals (academics) on relevance of inclusion of security education to learners and the Nigerian society at large. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that: There is the need to sensitize teachers, parents, students and the general public on security matters, as this would help to prevent various forms ofterror acts in the Nigerian societies.

The call for people to become more security conscious of their environment is gradually receiving much needed publicity. This is because of the prevailing security circumstance in the country, which put security not only in the hands of security agencies, but as everyone's business. One of the fundamental need of a citizen is to be protected from harm or threat. When threats are minimized, the environment becomes more conducive for social and economic activities. Longman (2019) maintained that security of life and freedom from harms of all kinds are fundamental rights of all people. Both students and staff deserve to understand what could potentially lead to crime, riot, violence and eventual breakdown of law and order or abuse of rights of others within the institution. Longman (2019) stressed that there is the need to teach school community members on how to avoid unlawful and or abusive behaviours; and to seek non—violent measures to resolve conflicts. In the case of accident, fire outbreak, building collapse and other disasters prevalent in tertiary institutions, there is need for proper sensitization on how to tackle this disasters when they effectually occur. Recent happenings in the country, showed that several attacks by terrorists and bandits have been targeted at schools. Therefore, students and other members of the institutions deserved to be educated on the operation of these elements and how to protect themselves especially when the services of security agents are not readily available.

Unfortunately, security agencies in the country seem to overwhelm by growing insecurity in the country. Thus, school management must make efforts in filling the security vacuum created by insufficient security agents by introducing programmes that create

awareness about security issues within the institution. These programmes ought to address issues such as what constitute security threats and how to neutralize or eliminate it. Also, such security awareness programmes should include basic knowledge of security rules and regulations which are needed to keep the school environment safe and secure for students, staff and the general public.

Statement of the problem

The problem that necessitated this study is the state of safety and security in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A safe and secure environment guarantees a peaceful atmosphere for work related activities. In recent times, the country has been hit by high rate of insecurity. This situation has not only crept into the tertiary education system, but has affected teaching and learning activities in these institutions. Reports abounds that shows incessant attacks such as kidnapping, robbery, violent demonstrations and other disasters which has in most cases lead to the closure of the institutions and halting academic activities for a while. It is a well-known fact that no meaningful activities can take place in atmosphere characterized as threat or harmful. It is in the light of the foregoing, that this study sought to find out how security awareness can be used in guaranteeing safety and secure school environment for effective teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The Main purpose of this study was to investigate security awareness practices and the attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the relationship between security awareness practices and the attainment safe environment intertiary institutions.

Research Question

To what extent does security awareness practices promote the attainment of safe school environment?

Hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between security awareness practices and the attainment of safe school environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Methodology

The goal of this study was to investigate security awareness practices and the attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all final year students in the four public tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The total population stood at 2002 drawn from the four tertiary institutions in the state. Taro Yamane and proportionate sampling procedure was used to sample 200 which participant which represent 10% of the entire population of the study. Further breakdown shows Unical with 100,Unicross 50, FCEObudu 25 and COE Akamkpa 25. One null hypothesis were formulated and tested using simple linear regression at .05 level of significance. The questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection. It consists of three sections, section A elicited

demographic data of respondents, B measured security awareness practices, while the section C measured attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions. The instrument was given a face validity and was subjected to a test retest procedure which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.89.

Results

RQ: To what extent does security awareness practices promote the attainment of safe school environment?

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression for the extent to which security awareness practices promote the attainment of safe school environment

Variables	R	R-Square	Adjusted R	St Err of Est
Security awareness practice				
	.189	.044	.032	8.675673
Attainment of safe environment				

Entries in Table 1 report the extent to which security awareness practices promote the attainment of safe school environment. The R coefficient (.189) is the linear correlation (regression) between security awareness practices and attainment of a safe environment in tertiary institutions. The coefficient of determination (.044) shows that security awareness practices contribute to (32%) variation in the attainment of safe environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

HO[1]: There is no significant relationship between security awareness practices and the attainment of safe school environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Table 2: Simple Linear regression of the prediction of security awareness practices on the attainment of safe school environment in tertiary institutions

Variables	Sources of Variation	Sums of Square	Df	Means Squares	F-Cal	Decision at P<.05
Decision making	Regression	70.251	1	70.251	8.43	Sign.
Job Perform	Residue	2357.673	198	64.257	2	
	Total	2427.924	199			

*p<.05 significant

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated F-value of 8.433 is greater than the p<.05 level of significance with 1 and 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between security awareness practices and the attainment of safe school environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State and the alternate hypothesis was however upheld. The result means that security awareness practices promotes the attainment of a safe school environment.

Discussion of Findings

Statistical analysis of research question and the hypothesis formulated to guide the study revealed that security awareness practices promotes the attainment of a safe school environment in tertiary institutions in Cross River State Nigeria. This result is related to that of Longman (2019) whose study to investigate the perspectives of educational administrators on the need for security education in the Niger Delta, found that the level of insecurity in Nigeria contributed to the inclusion of security education in the basic education curriculum and that security education will make Nigerians to view national security as everybody's business. Although this study was carried out in the secondary level of education, it findings are however relevant to the present study. The need to introduce security awareness to staff and students This result has shown that there are so much benefits in creating awareness about the security development in our environment in the face of continuous security challenges in tertiary institutions of learning, it has become necessary for staff and students to have adequate information about security of their environment and how to prevent harmful incidences from causing further.

Conclusions

Based on the result of this study, it was concluded that security awareness practices promotes a safe and secured school environment in tertiary institutions. Thus, the need to encourage security awareness among staff and students in tertiary institutions of learning in tackling insecurity.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:
1.	Security awareness programmes should be introduced to staff and students of tertiary institutions to equip them with knowledge and skills needed in protecting themselves and their environment.
2.	The need to introduce security education in the curriculum and programmes of tertiary institutions is very urgent.
3.	Management should ensure provision of security equipment and gargets in tackling insecurity in tertiary institutions.

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