ASSESSMENT OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKURE NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

IYIOLA, FAUSAT IBIRONKE
Department of Kinesiology Health Education and Recreation,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria
Email: iyiolaibironke@gmail.com

&

MUILI, MUHAMMED ADEWALE
Department of Kinesiology Health Education and Recreation,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria

Abstract
This study assessed emergency preparedness in public and private secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, with the objectives of examining the level of awareness of emergency preparedness among teachers and students and determining if there was a significant difference between the two groups.
Methodologically, the study employed a descriptive survey research design, using a structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection from 850 respondents comprising 250 teachers and 600 students from twenty-five (25) schools that were sampled using a multi-stage sampling (stratified sampling, random sampling and convenience sampling techniques) procedure. The data were descriptively analysed using frequency count, percentages and inferential statistics.
The study found no significant difference in the teachers' and students' awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness, with a relatively good awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness among both teachers and students in secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area.
This study concluded that there is a good awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness, with some schools having functional security gadgets. However, there are gaps in comprehensive security coverage, with certain gadgets like cell phones, school ambulances, and security guards being less available or functional. The study recommends that authorities should leverage the relatively good awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness among teachers and students to develop targeted training and drills. Additionally, schools should combine awareness with tangible infrastructure to ensure a secure and supportive educational setting.

Keywords: *Safe School Environment, School Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Secondary Schools, Awareness.*

Introduction

The importance of safety and well-being cannot be overemphasized, especially in a setting such as schools where children spend most of their daytime. Numerous emergency incidents have been reported in schools, and varies across the globe. Critical incidents in or involving schools include shootings, stabbings, other forms of homicide, terrorist activity, suicide, road traffic accidents, major fires and natural disasters, which result or might result in death and/or serious injury to students and staff. In Nigeria, secondary schools are vulnerable to various emergencies, including natural disasters, building collapse, fires, kidnapping, child violence and violent attacks, which have left a significant number of school age children out of school (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023).

Conceptually, emergency preparedness involves proactive measures to anticipate and plan for potential emergencies, while emergency response refers to the actions taken during and after an emergency to minimize harm and restore normalcy (CDC, 2023). Emergency situations can arise at any moment, posing significant threats to human life, property, and the environment. Thus, emergency preparedness and response are crucial components in mitigating the impact of such situations. Effective emergency preparedness and response require a well-coordinated effort, involving individuals, communities, organizations, and governments. This includes identifying potential risks, developing response strategies, conducting regular drills and training, and establishing communication networks (SchoolSafety.gov., 2022; Navigate360, 2024).

In addition to vulnerability to various emergencies including attacks on the school and kidnapping, public schools in Nigeria face significant challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and insufficient training for teachers and staff. While private schools may be better resourced, they often prioritize academic achievement over emergency preparedness. In an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of students, the Nigerian government, in collaboration with the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, and a coalition of Nigerian business leaders, launched the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) in 2014 (Baron & Calaycay, 2024; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ], 2016). This €2.5 million, two-year program (December 2014 to 2016) aimed to enhance school security infrastructure through community-oriented security measures, transfer vulnerable students to safer schools, provide trauma counselling, and deliver education for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps and communities (GIZ, 2016).

The initiative was a response to escalating attacks on schools in northern Nigeria, including kidnappings and violence by Boko Haram, which had severely disrupted education. The SSI sought to create safer learning environments by establishing community security groups, deploying trained school safety officers, and rehabilitating damaged school facilities. Additionally, it provided psychosocial support to affected students and arranged school transfers to safer locations, enabling continued education

51

without interruption. There is a dearth of literature, if at all any, on how these initiatives have influenced the state of safety, emergency preparedness and response in secondary schools across the nation. This study aimed to comparatively explore the state of emergency preparedness in public and private secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area, Ondo State.

Objectives of the Study
The objective of this study is to:
  i.   Examine the level of awareness of emergency preparedness among teachers and students in secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area, Ondo State;
  ii.   Determine if there is a significant difference between the awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness among teachers and students in the study area.
  iii. Explore the availability and functionality of security and emergency preparedness gadgets in secondary schools in the study area

Research Hypothesis (H_0)
There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness between teachers and students in Akure North Local Government Area, Ondo State.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Procedure
This study involved 850 respondents comprising of 250 teachers and 600 students from twenty-five (25) schools, comprising of ten (10) private schools and fifteen (15) public secondary schools in Akure North local government area in Ondo State. A multi-stage sampling (stratified sampling, random sampling and convenience sampling techniques) procedure was used involving, stratifying the schools into public and private categories (strata). Selecting 10 private schools and 15 public schools using simple random sampling. Subsequently, convenience sampling was employed in selecting 30 students and 10 teachers from each public school, and 15 students as well as 10 teachers from each private school. This approach aimed to ensure that both public and private schools are adequately represented in the study.

Data Collection
The study employed a descriptive research design, using a structured questionnaire tagged "Security Emergency Preparedness Assessment for Secondary School (SEPASS)" as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was structured to demographic information, measures adopted in managing security emergency preparedness among secondary school students and teachers. The instrument contain items which are rated as strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree.

52

Data Analysis

Data collected in the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage counts were used to describe the respondents and aggregate the data, while t-test was used to determine the difference between public and private secondary schools' level of emergency preparedness. All analysis was done using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS ver. 25).

Result

Table 1: Summary of Teachers and Students' Emergency Preparedness Awareness

	Students		Teachers	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am aware of certain suspicious activities that can cause insecurity in my school.	2.0721	.86179	2.0364	.97253
I am aware of the availability of security personnel in my school.	2.6616	1.08347	2.8185	1.11092
I am aware of how to obtain security information in my school.	2.4925	1.00643	2.6988	1.02471
I am aware that visitors are to be allowed to enter school except with official permission in my school.	2.4758	.99615	2.2530	.98591
I am aware of the various security tips that can prepare me for emergency situations of my school.	2.6962	1.03831	2.3815	1.14080
I am aware of the school policies, training activities for security consciousness and school-community safety planning processes in my school.	2.7679	.94563	2.6948	.89983
I am aware of activities that can threaten or endanger safety of life and property in my school.	2.6577	1.08324	2.4980	1.19517
I am quick to notice any changes in my environment in my school.	2.6476	1.04408	2.6331	1.01329
I can be able to make emergency call in a situation where there is a security breakdown within my school environment	2.6807	1.05356	2.5887	1.14540
I can be able to prevent assaults, fighting, aggressive behaviour, victimization and related threats in my school	2.4590	1.04612	2.5462	1.01146
Awareness	**25.5610**	**10.363**	**25.148**	**11.1042**
Valid N (listwise)				

Table 1 shows the summary of the descriptive analysis of the teachers and students awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness in the study area.

The result showed that there were good awareness of emergency preparedness including security challenges, banditry and kidnapping in the study area with a mean score of 25.6101 (64.03%) among the students and 25.1489 (62.87%) among the teachers' level of awareness.

Table 2:   Summary of Teachers and Students' Emergency Preparedness Awareness Comparison

Groups	n	Mean ± S.D	Df	t	Sig.	Remark
Students	600	2.5610 ± 1.0180	451			
				5.96	0.0001	Significant
Teachers	250	2.5149 ± 1.0537				

P < 0.05

Table 2 showed the summary of the calculated t-test of teachers and students' awareness of emergency preparedness for insecurity, under a degree of freedom (df) = 451. The mean (x) score of the students and teachers preparedness were 2.5610 ± 1.0180 and 2.5149 ± 1.0537, respectively. No statistically significant difference was found between teachers and students' emergency preparedness awareness; (df=451, t= 0.5954, p> 0.05). Thus the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the teachers and students' awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness is therefore not rejected.

Table 3: Summary of the availability and functionality of security and emergency preparedness gadgets in secondary schools in the study area

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranks
Video surveillance (CCTV)	1	4	3.05	0.93	1st
Visitors guidelines	1	4	2.87	1.01	11th
Burglar bars on the windows	1	4	2.90	1.0	10th
Iron doors	1	4	2.92	0.98	9th
Security lightening, illuminating paths.	1	4	2.99	0.92	3rd
Armed response service	1	4	2.99	0.92	3rd
Secured car parking	1	4	2.96	0.95	6th
School security guards	1	4	2.67	1.09	12th
Phone cell	1	4	2.17	1.14	15th
Perimeter fencing of the school	1	4	2.96	0.91	6th
Emergency response team	1	4	2.99	0.90	3rd
School ambulance	1	4	2.61	1.06	13th
Emergency medical bags	1	4	3.01	0.90	2nd
Fire extinguisher	1	4	2.93	0.95	8th
Security post	1	4	2.58	1.04	14th

Table 3 presents a summary of the descriptive analysis on the availability and functionality of security and emergency preparedness gadgets in secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area. The findings reveal a generally moderate to high

level of gadget functionality, with mean scores mostly close to or above 3 on a 4-point Likert scale. This suggests that many schools report gadgets as "Functioning" to "Highly Functioning," indicating a positive state of security preparedness in the district. Notably, video surveillance (CCTV), perimeter fencing, emergency response teams, and emergency medical bags scored some of the highest mean values (around 3.0 or above), reflecting an emphasis on modern and critical security infrastructure. Conversely, gadgets like phone cells, school ambulances, security posts, and school security guards show comparatively lower mean scores (2.17 to 2.67), indicating relative under-functionality or availability, which might represent gaps in comprehensive security coverage. The standard deviations, mostly below or around 1, reflect moderate consistency in responses but also suggest variability in how fully these gadgets are functioning across schools.

Discussion

The findings of a high level of awareness about security challenges among the teachers and students is consistent with Atolagbe (2010) who posited that security awareness involves safety measures that protect people and their properties. Atolagbe's (2010) study found that security consciousness starts with simple household security mechanisms. Buzan's (1997) research revealed that safety can be relatively guaranteed through preparedness and adopting safety measures. Additionally, Akunne et al.'s (2014) study and Isaac's (2022) research emphasized the importance of security awareness and special knowledge in security for Nigerian schools to guard against terrorism. However, the study's results contradict those of Muniandy, Muniandy, and Samsudin's (2017) research, which found that higher education students didn't exhibit adequate security behaviour despite being aware of potential hazards. Furthermore, the finding of no statistically significant differences in teachers and students' emergency preparedness in this study, is in contrast with the study of Muniandy, Muniandy & Samsudin (2017) that was carried out among higher education students, whereby they found out that the student participants unlike the staff did not exhibit adequate security behaviour, and several of the hazards they faced would have been avoided had they been aware of them.

The findings on the availability of functional security gadgets in some schools, and a gap in comprehensive security coverage, with certain gadgets like phone cells, school ambulances, and security guards being less available or functional align with several previous studies emphasizing the critical role of modern security devices in enhancing school safety (Ekwueme, Abua & Inah, 2025; Okorafor, 2025). For instance, research by Ekwueme, Abua & Inah (2025) observed that the presence of perimeter fencing and CCTV cameras significantly influenced students' learning experience and safety in Nigerian secondary schools, advocating for more government-supported workshops and maintenance of such technological tools to optimize security outcomes. The moderate to high functionality of these gadgets in Akure North Local Government Area suggests strides toward this recommendation. This finding is also consistent with Okorafor (2025) which revealed the presence of the security and emergency preparedness gadgets in public secondary schools in Nigeria particularly in Rivers State, and posited that the presence of school security guards, installation of security gadgets, and adherence

55

to security tips does not significantly predict effective administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. However, the finding is in contrast with Mohammed and Isa (2019) that posited, schools in Nigeria neglected the place of modern security devices in planning safe schools. Notably, Mohammed and Isa (2019) laid emphasis on the northeastern part of Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study found no significant difference in the teachers and students' awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness, with a relatively good awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness among both teachers and students in secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area, with some schools having functional security gadgets. However, there are gaps in comprehensive security coverage, with certain gadgets like phone cells, school ambulances, and security guards being less available or functional.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this, the following recommendations are made:

- Educational authorities should prioritize phone cells, school ambulances, and security guards to bridge gaps in comprehensive security coverage.
- The authorities should leverage the relatively good awareness of security challenges and emergency preparedness among teachers and students to develop targeted training and drills.
- Schools should combine awareness with tangible infrastructure to ensure a secure and supportive educational setting.

References

Akunne, A., Chiamaka, U., Umeobi, G., Godwin & Okoye (2014).Impact of emotional intelligence and sex on security consciousness of university undergraduates. British Journal of *Psychology Research, 2*(2), 1-10.

Atolagbe, A. M. (2010). *Security consciousness in indigenous Nigerian houses: A preliminary survey of Yoruba Ethno-Medical devices*. Osogbo: Fatiregun Press.

Baron M., & Calaycay L. (2024). Safeguarding education: Policy and data landscapes for the protection of education from attack in Nigeria. Paper commissioned for the Section for Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388820

Buzan, B. (1997). Rethinking security after the cold war. *Cooperation and conflict Journal, 32*(1), 5-28.

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). School preparedness. https://www.cdc.gov/orr/school-preparedness/index.html

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ]. (2016). Supporting the Nigerian Safe Schools Initiative (SSI). https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2016-en-SSI_Factsheet.pdf.

Ekwueme, C. Ó., Abua, D. Ó., & Inah, L. (2025). Impact of secondary school facilities on security measures and students' learning outcome in Mathematics in Ogoja

Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. Global journal of pure and applied sciences special issue vol. 31, 2025: 363-372. https://globaljournalseries.com.ng/storage/app/public/articles/314caf509b2bc7a95 6e557399d2a38eb.pdf

Isaac A. A. (2022). *How to Protect Nigerian Schools from Terrorists, Bandit*. This Day— https://www.thisdaaylive.com Retrieved January 21, 2023.

Mohammed, I., & Isa, M. G. (2019). Application of modern security devices in senior secondary schools: A tool for addressing safety schools management under insurgency. International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD), 3(2), 1059-1063. Retrieved from https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd21613.pdf

Muniandy, L., Muniandy, B., & Samsudin, Z. (2017). Cyber security behaviour among higher education students in Malaysia. Journal of Information Assurance & Cybersecurity, 2017, 1-9. Doi: 10.5171/2017.800299

Navigate360. (2024). 5 steps to improve emergency procedures in schools. https://navigate360.com/blog/5-steps-to-improve-emergency-procedures-in-schools/

Okorafor, P. Ó. (2025). School Security Measures as Correlate of Effective Administration in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State. International Journal of Innovative Education Research, 13(1):145-153, Jan.-Mar., 2025

SchoolSafety.gov. (2022). Emergency preparedness and school safety for K-12 schools [Infographic]. U.S. Department of Education. https://www.schoolsafety.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/Emergency%20Preparedness%20and%20School%20Safety%20for%20K-12%20Schools_SchoolSafety.gov%20Infographic_2022.pdf

UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown. (2014). Safe Schools Initiative press release. [Information on Nigeria Safe Schools Initiative, 2014-2016].