


The management of secondary school security and safety practices in Nigeria: School managers' perspectives

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Abstract: In this empirical study, we examined the perspectives of school managers on the management of security and safety practices in secondary schools. The study is grounded in securitisation theory, which advocates for proper management of security in politics, the provision of security in policies, and the implementation of such policies to create safe schools. This study is qualitative in nature, involving purposefully conducted individual interviews with six school managers from three rural secondary schools in Nigeria, using semi-structured interview techniques. The findings indicated that school managers employ a variety of strategies to ensure the security and safety of their respective schools. In light of these findings, the study recommends improvements in school safety and security management practices, including the need for increased collaboration among school administrators, local police, and other stakeholders. The study also highlights that school managers should consider various ethical considerations when implementing security and safety initiatives. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the perspectives of school managers on the management of security and safety practices in secondary schools.

Keywords: Interpretivist paradigm, rural schools, safety, securitisation theory, security.

1. Introduction

Schools across the world face safety and security challenges in both developed and developing countries (Adewale et al., 2023). Safety and security are paramount concerns in any educational institution (Uwaezuoke, 2023). When schools are confronted with issues of safety and security, they may divert attention and resources away from their core mission of providing effective teaching and learning environments (Ogunode and Odo, 2023). Ensuring a safe and secure environment is crucial for the overall well-being of learners, teachers, and staff, as well as for fostering a conducive atmosphere for learning and growth (Owoyale-Abdulganiy et al., 2023).

Various examples of violence exist in schools. Gbesoevi et al. (2022) noted that effective safety practices in schools often arise from proper planning by school leaders, concluding that safety and security planning promotes effective management of public secondary schools in Nigeria. Developed countries have also struggled with various issues in managing safety and security in schools during school hours (Maclean & Ogonda, 2023). The United States has faced challenges with gun violence, where learners have been attacked during school hours (Jensen, 2023). In Africa, South Africa has grappled with various forms of violence, where learners attack teachers and bring firearms to schools (Chauke, 2023; Mangena and Matlala, 2023). Similarly, Nigerian secondary schools face their own security and safety challenges for both learners and teachers (Ogunode et al., 2023). It has been established that the security of teachers and the safety of learners in schools are of utmost importance to school managers. The lack of security in schools often leads to dangers for learners, and it is the responsibility of school managers to create a comfortable environment for teaching and learning.

As such, policies like the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 aim to enhance safety for learners in schools (UNGA, 2020). Nigeria was one of the 37 nations that

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adopted a policy for school safety. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in 2021 approved a national policy to guide the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD). The National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools was established to ensure that learners are safe and that teaching and learning can proceed smoothly. The Constitution of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999), the Universal Basic Education Act (2003), Safe School Initiatives (SSI), and the Safe School Common Approach (SSCA) are in place to ensure the safety of learners in schools, free from hazards, violence, and other problems (Amuchie, 2015). However, despite the introduction of both international and national legislative measures, the ongoing concerns regarding security and safety in schools continue to worry education stakeholders in the country.

In Nigeria, 276 girls were kidnapped in Borno State in 2014. At least 120 learners are still held captive out of the more than 1,500 schoolchildren who have been abducted in northern Nigeria since the Chibok raid (Olukayode, 2023). These instances of kidnappings and murders in Nigeria are a tragic reflection of the complex security and social issues faced by certain areas in northern Nigeria (Abdullahi et al., 2013; Iyekekpolo, 2016; Nnam et al., 2018; Suleiman et al., 2020; Nte et al., 2023; Adegbola & Okunloye, 2023). It is distressing to see that despite efforts to address these concerns, many learners remain in captivity or have lost their lives. The alarming trend of kidnapping incidents targeting learners and teachers in Nigeria is disheartening. The first incident, which occurred in Ekiti, southwest, on January 30, 2024, involved gunmen kidnapping six learners and three teachers. This event highlights the vulnerability of schools and the safety concerns faced by learners and educators. Similarly, the kidnapping of 300 learners in Kuruga, Kaduna State, on March 7, 2024, further emphasises the severity of the situation, highlighting the need for urgent action to address the security challenges facing schools in Nigeria. These incidents have sparked widespread concern and calls for increased security measures to ensure the safety of learners and teachers across the country.

The Nigerian government, along with international organisations and partners, has been working to address these security challenges, rescue abducted learners, and prevent future incidents (Eze, 2022; Adegoke & Akaholu, 2023). These efforts include improving security measures around schools, increasing collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and addressing the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to these incidents (Mahaye & Ajani, 2023). This situation underscores the importance of prioritising the safety and security of learners and educational institutions, as well as addressing the broader societal issues that contribute to these vulnerabilities (González-Arnaiz, 2023). Education is a fundamental right, and every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment (van Reeuwijk et al., 2023). Indeed, the safety and well-being of learners within educational settings are the foundational pillars upon which the entire fabric of effective education is woven (Adebayo et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential for both national and international stakeholders to continue supporting efforts to ensure the safety of learners and to work towards a stable and secure environment that enables quality education for all children in Nigeria (Enemuo & Okafor, 2023).

In the pursuit of providing a secure and nurturing environment for learning, educational institutions face a dual challenge regarding safety-threatening incidents (Ibrahim, 2023). These challenges can be categorised into two distinct yet interconnected realms: those that schools can effectively manage through the implementation of stringent safety and security measures in accordance with established legislation, and those that transcend the school's sphere of influence, such as community-based crime and the complex ramifications of poverty and socioeconomic disparities (Zubairu, 2020). This intricate interplay between internal safety practices and external socioeconomic factors underscores the multifaceted nature of the safety landscape within which schools operate (MacAlex-Achinulo, 2022). While schools can play a pivotal role in fortifying their premises and procedures to mitigate risks, they are equally confronted with the realities of broader societal issues that can significantly impact the safety and well-being of their learners and staff (Ohazuruike, 2020).

The pursuit of a safe and secure learning environment is a paramount concern for educational institutions worldwide (Bamigboye, 2023). In the context of Nigeria, as in many other regions, ensuring school safety and security encompasses a multifaceted challenge that extends beyond mere intentions (Ojewale and Balogun, 2022). While cultivating the right attitudes, knowledge, and a steadfast commitment to safeguarding schools is crucial, a critical lens reveals that the primary obstacle often resides in the effective implementation of comprehensive safety measures (Ossai & Nwabuwe, 2023). The importance of this issue gains further prominence when examining existing research on school safety and security matters in Nigeria, which presents an intricate web of factors contributing to the vulnerability of school environments, including disparities between planned safety strategies and their tangible application. This disparity underscores a pivotal junction where theory meets practice, raising pertinent questions about the root causes of this implementation gap and potential avenues for rectification.

This study focuses on school managers, specifically principals and vice-principals, as their primary role is to ensure the safety and security of the school community (Mashford-Pringle et al., 2023; Okwuwada, 2023). Their decisions, policies, and practices directly influence the overall well-being of learners and teachers. Exploring their perspectives can provide valuable insights into the challenges they face and the strategies they adopt to manage security and safety concerns effectively. While various studies have examined school safety and security in Nigeria, limited research specifically delves into the viewpoints of school managers (Olokooba et al., 2017). Understanding their perspectives is crucial for identifying gaps in current practices, barriers to implementation, and potential areas for improvement. At the heart of our enquiry are the challenges and insights revealed by research conducted in Nigeria concerning the practical execution of safety measures. By examining the findings and implications of this research, we aim to illuminate the intricacies of the school safety landscape and pave the way for a comprehensive understanding of how schools can effectively transform theoretical commitments into tangible, secure environments for learners and teachers.

To achieve this, we aim to provide an approach to school safety and security that emphasises a solid foundation of knowledge about the safety and security of the school environment, the fundamentals of school security and safety, and crucial measures to guarantee school safety and security. Based on this, the following research question was raised to guide the study:

- How do school managers in Nigeria perceive and manage security and safety practices in secondary schools, and what factors and challenges influence the implementation of these practices?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is examined through the lens of securitisation theory. Originating from the field of international relations, securitisation theory offers a unique perspective for analysing the management of safety and security in Nigerian schools (Masua, 2022). While traditionally applied to issues of national security and global politics, securitisation theory can be adapted to explore how safety and security concerns in educational settings are framed, prioritised, and addressed (Trombetta, 2023). Securitisation theory suggests that certain issues can be "securitised" through a speech act, where a political actor (or, in this case, school managers) frames an issue as an existential security threat that requires extraordinary measures (Bag et al, 2023; Bond et al, 2023; Elliott et al, 2023). In the context of Nigerian schools, the theory can be used to analyse how school managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders frame safety and security concerns. Are these concerns portrayed as urgent and exceptional threats that warrant securitisation, or are they treated as routine matters?

Securitisation theory helps examine how schools in Nigeria adopt security practices and policies in response to perceived threats (Somogyi, 2022). This allows for an exploration of whether these

practices stem from genuine concerns or if they are driven by a desire to securitise the issue for political or resource allocation purposes (McGillen, 2022). For instance, the deployment of security personnel, surveillance systems, and emergency protocols can be assessed in terms of whether they are proportional to the perceived threat or if they are exaggerated due to securitisation. The theory can be used to analyse the potential consequences of securitising safety and security in Nigerian schools (Soares, 2022). By examining how securitisation affects the educational environment, it is possible to understand whether an excessive focus on security measures might hinder the primary educational mission, restrict academic freedom, or create a climate of fear and mistrust among learners and staff. Securitisation theory also highlights the role of public perception and acceptance in the process (Neo, 2023). It can be used to explore whether the securitisation of school safety is accepted and endorsed by the broader community, including parents, learners, and local residents (Chambers, 2022).

Securitisation theory also introduces the concept of "de-securitisation," which refers to the process of moving an issue from the realm of exceptional security concerns to routine politics (Somogyi, 2022). This perspective can help analyse how schools in Nigeria can strike a balance between ensuring safety and security while maintaining a conducive and open educational environment. Incorporating securitisation theory into the analysis of managing safety and security in Nigerian schools offers a framework for critically examining how issues are framed, resources are allocated, and policies are enacted. With an understanding of the dynamics of securitisation, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can make more informed decisions that prioritise both safety and the core educational mission.

3. Research Methodology

The study is located in qualitative research, which allows the researcher to have an in-depth enquiry into the phenomenon of school safety and security for learners and teachers in the school (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). To undertake this exploration, we delved into the two-fold nature of safety threats that school communities encounter. First, we examined the proactive measures that schools can adopt to create a secure environment, encompassing the implementation of well-defined safety protocols, comprehensive training, and strategic partnerships with law enforcement. Subsequently, we also delved into the intricate challenge posed by external factors beyond the immediate control of schools, such as crime rates within the community and the complex web of consequences stemming from poverty and socioeconomic disparities. It is critical to maximise the effectiveness of procedures designed to guarantee that schools are secure and that safety precautions are taken seriously at all times. Individual interviews were conducted with six school managers, including the principals and vice principals of three rurally located schools. The schools were represented by white, red, and orange. One principal and one vice principal from the three sampled schools were purposefully chosen (Thomas, 2022). Multiple case study research was employed to obtain in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon. The schools were purposefully selected because they have a scare of terrorism and kidnapping in recent times (Remenyi, 2022; Glette & Wiig, 2022). The study is located in an interpretive paradigm because it allows for in-depth examinations of the phenomenon based on the assumptions and reality of the school managers' world (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). The schools represented a good geographical stratum that covered the state. The interviews were face-to-face, and informed consent was obtained before the semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, and anonymity was ensured during the process. This study is part of a larger Ph.D. study from the University of the Free State, with ethical approval number: UFS-HSD2021/1003/21. The ethical procedure was followed to ensure the rights of the participants were respected. The state Ministry of Education granted permission before going to the schools. The participants were given pseudonyms, and the right to withdraw from the research was provided. The rights of the participants were respected and protected against any harm. Thematic

analysis was employed to analyse the data collected for the study. The three-analysis process of Thomas and Hardy (2008) was employed to identify related themes that recurred in the data.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study highlight several key themes that emerged through thematic analysis, shedding light on critical aspects of security and safety practices in the selected schools. Four prominent issues have been identified and explored in this section, showcasing their impact on the overall safety of learners and the challenges faced by school managers in effectively managing school security. The themes that emerged from the data are: the lack of implementation of technologies, the absence of surveillance cameras, a lack of effective communication mechanisms, and the challenges faced by school managers in addressing the security and safety of staff and learners in schools.

4.1 The lack of implementation of technologies

The findings of this study illuminate a critical issue that significantly impacts the safety and security of learners within the selected schools. The participants identified a notable concern regarding the absence or inadequate implementation of advanced technologies specifically designed to enhance school security. This deficiency included a lack of surveillance cameras, access control systems, and effective communication systems, all of which collectively contribute to potential vulnerabilities in the security infrastructure. The integration of technology can be achieved if schools and the government take securitisation theory seriously and enable school managers to be more aware of their environment. The participants (P1, P2, P3, VP3) highlighted the vulnerability of learners, the lack of resources, and the absence of technology in schools during the following conversation:

"Ensuring the safety of our children while they are at school should be our top priority. Without these technologies in place, I worry about the vulnerability of the school environment."

"In today's rapidly evolving world, where threats can come from various sources, it is crucial that schools use the latest advancements to create a secure atmosphere for learning, but we lacked [the] resources to implement such criterion."

"These technologies could help in quickly identifying unauthorised individuals on school premises and preventing potential threats. Additionally, communication systems that allow immediate alerts to parents and authorities during emergencies would provide peace of mind."

"It's disheartening to think that our schools are lagging behind in adopting these measures, potentially putting our children's safety at risk. ...investing in advanced security technologies is an essential step towards creating a secure and conducive learning environment for our children."

Consistent in the three schools, participants VP1, VP2,

"As educators, our primary focus should be on teaching and nurturing learners, but in the absence of robust security measures, it is challenging to concentrate on these core responsibilities. The lack of such technologies creates an environment of insecurity and distraction."

"I feel that the implementation of advanced security technologies should be seen as an investment in the well-being of everyone within the school community. It's not just about security; it's about creating an environment that allows us to focus on what truly matters: educating and nurturing our learners."

Having advanced security technologies in place would undoubtedly contribute to a more focused and productive teaching environment. For example, controlled access points and surveillance

systems would not only deter potential intruders but also alleviate concerns about unauthorised individuals entering the school premises. Moreover, these technologies could aid in efficiently managing emergencies. Quick communication systems and panic buttons could help teachers alert authorities promptly in critical situations, leading to faster response times and better coordination, thereby ensuring the safety of both learners and staff. This is consistent with the findings of Mutu (2023) and Nkedishu (2023), which indicate that the introduction of technology in schools will enhance safety in Nigerian secondary schools.

The participants' concerns about the vulnerability of learners, lack of resources, and absence of advanced security technologies in schools can be linked to securitisation theory, which explores how certain issues are framed as security threats and prioritised for urgent action. Securitisation theory, introduced by the sampled schools, argues that an issue becomes a security concern when it is portrayed as an existential threat, thereby justifying extraordinary measures to address it. In this case, the participants (P1, P2, P3, VP3) perceive the lack of security technologies as a significant threat to the safety and well-being of learners. They frame this deficiency as an existential risk to the school environment, which demands immediate attention and resources.

For instance, the participant who highlights that "ensuring the safety of our children... should be our top priority" is engaging in a securitising move, where the safety of learners is positioned as a critical concern. The repeated emphasis on vulnerability and potential threats from "various sources" reinforces the idea that the school environment is at risk, further supporting the need for prioritising investments in security technologies.

4.2 The absence of surveillance cameras

The study revealed that a significant number of selected schools lacked surveillance cameras within their premises. Surveillance cameras play a pivotal role in monitoring and recording activities in and around the school environment. Their absence raises concerns about the ability to maintain continuous visual oversight and gather crucial evidence in the event of security incidents. Without this technological resource, schools may be hindered in their capacity to detect and deter potential threats, ultimately affecting the safety of learners. Participants (VP1, P2, VP3, P3) highlighted these issues in the following section:

VP1: "Knowing that there are no cameras to monitor the premises raises concerns about the safety of our children while they are at school. In today's world, where incidents can happen unexpectedly, having surveillance cameras is a fundamental step in ensuring the safety of learners."

P2: "I believe that the absence of surveillance cameras is a missed opportunity to enhance the overall security of the school. While I understand concerns about privacy, finding a balance between safety and privacy should be a priority."

VP3: "I have mixed feelings about the absence of surveillance cameras in schools to enhance security. While I acknowledge the potential benefits in terms of security and accountability, I also have concerns about the impact on the learning environment and the privacy of both learners and staff"

P3: "Learners might feel uncomfortable knowing that they are being watched all the time, which could hinder their ability to express themselves freely and learn in a relaxed environment."

The participants revealed in the findings above that the absence of surveillance cameras in schools contributes to the general safety of learners and staff. If surveillance cameras are to be introduced, it is essential that they are used responsibly and transparently. Clear guidelines for camera placement, data storage, and access should be established. Moreover, educators and parents should be part of the discussion to ensure that the implementation of surveillance technology aligns with the values of

the school community. This contrasts with the submissions of Javvaji (2023), Dalbø (2022), and Hankerson et al. (2022) that surveillance cameras in schools violate the privacy of learners. The application of securitisation theory in the management of safety in schools enables school leaders to enact measures that promote safety and security. In summary, while surveillance cameras have their merits in enhancing security, their implementation should be approached with careful consideration of their potential impact on the overall learning environment and the privacy of those involved.

The next section discusses the lack of effective communication systems. Securitisation theory in school management supports the need for school leaders to enact policies that ensure the safety of all individuals within the educational environment. Introducing surveillance cameras as a securitising measure extends the traditional view of school security by moving beyond physical barriers and guards to include technological tools. This indicates that the securitisation process is evolving, incorporating modern security technologies into school management practices to mitigate perceived risks. However, the participants' call for parental and educator involvement in the discussion of surveillance cameras reflects a nuanced understanding of securitisation. Instead of unilaterally imposing security measures, the participants suggest a community-centred approach, where all stakeholders are part of the decision-making process. This reflects a participatory model of securitisation, where consensus is sought to ensure that security measures do not alienate or discomfort those they are meant to protect.

4.3 The lack of effective communication systems

Another significant revelation from the study pertains to the absence of effective communication systems within the selected schools. Communication systems play a crucial role in disseminating timely and accurate information during emergencies, allowing for swift response and coordination. The lack of such systems could hinder schools' ability to promptly alert stakeholders, including law enforcement and parents, during security incidents. The incorporation of securitisation theory into the management of safety in schools enables school managers to implement safety policies effectively. This deficiency in communication mechanisms poses a potential impediment to schools' capacity to respond effectively and mitigate security threats. This is evident in the following submissions from the participants (P3, VP3, VP2, P1):

"Timely and clear communication is essential during emergencies to ensure the safety of our children."

"Having a reliable communication system would allow parents to be quickly informed about any incidents or emergencies at the school."

"Whether through text messages, phone calls, or a dedicated mobile app, knowing that we can receive real-time updates would provide much-needed peace of mind."

"Effective communication systems would not just benefit parents; they would also aid teachers and school administrators in coordinating responses and managing situations efficiently."

Without proper communication channels, there is a risk of misinformation spreading, leading to confusion and panic. Teachers should be able to access immediate alerts and instructions to respond appropriately to various situations. Whether it is a weather-related emergency, a medical incident, or any other crisis, having clear communication tools can help us maintain order and keep everyone informed. Additionally, effective communication systems would foster a stronger sense of community and collaboration within the school. Teachers, administrators, and even learners need to be on the same page during emergencies. Being able to communicate seamlessly with colleagues and authorities can facilitate coordinated responses and better decision-making. It is essential for schools to invest in communication technologies that are user-friendly, reliable, and accessible to all stakeholders. With the infusion of securitisation theory, one can enhance school security and create an environment where everyone feels well-informed and prepared to handle various situations. In

summary, the lack of effective communication systems in schools hinders the ability to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies. Prioritising the implementation of reliable communication tools is crucial for the safety and well-being of the school community. The challenges of school managers in schools are discussed in the next section.

4.4 Budget constraints as a noteworthy barrier

This section highlighted budget constraints as a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of comprehensive security measures. School managers reported that limited financial resources pose a substantial challenge in procuring and maintaining advanced security technologies and systems. Budgetary limitations impact the ability to invest in surveillance cameras, access control systems, communication infrastructure, and other security-enhancing tools. As a result, schools are often compelled to make difficult choices between allocating resources for academic programmes and ensuring a secure learning environment. The participants underscored that budget constraints not only hinder the acquisition of security technologies but also impede the overall security preparedness of schools. The participants (P1, P3, P2, VP3, VP1, VP2) respectively revealed:

P1: "While we all understand that resources are limited, the safety of our children should always be a top priority. It is disheartening to see that schools struggle to allocate funds for security measures that could protect learners and provide them with a safe learning environment."

P2: "Investing in security measures is an investment in the future of our children. Without proper security measures in place, we are putting our children's well-being at risk."

VP3: "Learner safety is paramount, and the technologies to put learners in school require budget from the school."

VP1: "Security apparatus in schools requires money movement and security men in schools require money".

VP2: "I believe that both the government and private sector should step up their efforts to allocate sufficient funding for school security."

Adequate lighting, surveillance systems, trained security personnel, and emergency communication systems require financial investment. However, these investments are essential for creating a safe and conducive learning environment. In an ideal world, schools would have abundant resources to implement comprehensive security measures. This aligns with the submissions of Hauwa and Jacob (2022), which indicate that budget constraints contribute to the problem of adequately securing learners and teachers in schools. In reality, however, creative solutions are required. Although budget constraints pose a significant challenge, we must find ways to work within our limitations to ensure that our learners can learn in a safe and protected environment. The infusion of securitisation theory will encourage governments and school managers to invest in the security of lives and property. It is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders. Securitisation theory, which frames certain issues as urgent security concerns requiring extraordinary measures, can be applied to resource allocation in schools. The theory suggests that once a threat (such as school safety) is securitised, it justifies a reallocation of resources toward addressing that threat. In this case, the threat to school safety is seen as an existential risk, necessitating more security personnel and their continuous training.

4.5 Inadequate staffing compounding difficulties

Another critical challenge identified in the study pertains to inadequate staffing, which further compounds the difficulties faced by school managers in managing security practices. Insufficient staffing levels restrict the capacity of school managers to effectively oversee and coordinate security measures. With limited personnel available to monitor and respond to security incidents, schools may struggle to address emergencies promptly. Inadequate staffing may also hinder the

implementation of preventive measures and the enforcement of security protocols. The infusion of securitisation theory underscores the need for a balanced allocation of personnel resources to ensure that security practices are adequately managed and executed. The participants (P1, P2, VP3, VP2) demonstrated that:

P1: "Security measures, such as monitoring entrances, patrolling the premises, and responding swiftly to incidents, require dedicated personnel."

P2: "Training programmes should be implemented to equip security personnel with the necessary skills to handle various situations."

VP3: "Adequate staffing not only enhances security but also contributes to a more disciplined and organised school environment."

VP2: "As a teacher working in Nigerian secondary schools, the issue of inadequate staffing impacting the enhancement of school security and safety is a concern that affects both educators and learners."

VP1: "Inadequate staffing can lead to situations where certain areas of the school are left unattended, making them susceptible to unauthorised access or incidents".

To address this issue, schools need to allocate resources not only for security personnel but also for training and professional development. Security staff should be well-trained in crisis management, conflict resolution, and emergency response. In addition, involving the wider school community, including parents and local authorities, could help find solutions to staffing challenges. While budget constraints and resource limitations might contribute to inadequate staffing, the safety of learners should always be a priority. This aligns with the submissions (Ojukwu & Ahaoma Chigozirim, 2015; Ekechukwu et al., 2022) that indicate school security and safety require more trained personnel to manage frightening situations effectively. Securitisation theory provides a framework for understanding how these security measures, including the professional development of security staff, become prioritised in school environments. This theory posits that when an issue—such as school safety—is framed as an existential threat, it becomes securitised, prompting the reallocation of resources and extraordinary measures to address it. In this context, the threat is framed around the vulnerability of schools to safety risks, and the response is to ensure that security personnel are not only present but also well-prepared to handle emergencies. The infusion of securitisation theory enhances collaborative efforts and effective resource allocation, which in turn contributes to a safer and more secure school environment.

4.6 The lack of perimeter fencing

This section discusses an important and recurring issue that emerged as a significant concern among the research participants: the lack of perimeter fencing in the selected schools. This study revealed that a notable number of selected schools lacked proper perimeter fencing around their premises. Perimeter fencing serves as a fundamental security measure that establishes a clear boundary between the school environment and its surroundings. Without an effective perimeter fence, schools are susceptible to unauthorised entry and unauthorised exit, potentially exposing learners and school personnel to security risks and external threats. During the interview sessions conducted as part of the research, a salient and recurrent issue emerged as a significant concern among a subset of research participants: the lack of perimeter fencing in the selected schools. The infusion of securitisation theory in the schools will create a budget for perimeter fencing to improve the security and safety of learners in schools. The perspectives shared by these four interview participants (P1, P2, P3, VP2) confirmed that perimeter fencing serves as the first line of defence.

P1: "Perimeter fencing serves as the first line of defence, preventing unauthorised individuals from entering the school premises and ensuring that learners are safe within school boundaries."

P2: *"Without proper perimeter fencing, schools are vulnerable to intruders, trespassers, and other potential threats. This compromises the safety of our children and raises worries about their well-being while they are at school."*

P3: *"Fencing not only deters unauthorised entry but also helps maintain a controlled environment in which learners can focus on their education without unnecessary distractions."*

VP2: *"This not only exposes learners to potential risks but also creates an environment in which it is difficult to maintain order and discipline."*

Perimeter fencing is not just about physical security; it also contributes to the overall atmosphere of the school. A well-fenced school provides a sense of containment and safety, allowing learners to focus on their studies without constantly worrying about their surroundings. Addressing the lack of perimeter fencing requires a multifaceted approach. School administrations should prioritise the allocation of resources for fencing projects. Collaboration with local authorities, parents, and the community can help gather support and resources for these initiatives. Moreover, raising awareness about the importance of perimeter fencing for learner safety is crucial in advocating for change. This aligns with the findings of Anho (2022), which indicate that the lack of perimeter fencing contributes to the safety and security of learners and teachers in the selected schools. In conclusion, the lack of perimeter fencing is a challenge that directly impacts school security and safety. This issue requires concerted efforts and cooperation to ensure that schools provide a secure environment for both learning and personal development. Securitisation theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how the absence of perimeter fencing can be viewed as an existential threat to school security. According to this theory, when an issue like inadequate fencing is framed as a threat to the safety of learners, it can be securitised, justifying the need for urgent action. Schools, therefore, have a basis for prioritising resource allocation toward fencing projects as a critical security measure. The findings extend securitisation theory by emphasising that physical barriers such as perimeter fencing play a dual role – they not only serve as a security mechanism but also contribute to the psychological sense of safety within the school. This supports the idea that securitisation is not only about addressing external threats but also about creating environments where the perception of security enables the core function of schools – education. A well-fenced school reassures both learners and staff, allowing them to focus on learning and teaching rather than constantly worrying about potential security breaches.

5. Implications of the Findings on School Managers

The administration of secondary school security and safety measures in Nigeria, as seen through the eyes of school administrators, provides interesting insights with implications for enhancing overall school safety. Viewing these measures through the lens of securitisation theory offers a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics at play, along with recommendations for improving school safety. Securitisation theory, commonly applied in the field of international security, can also shed light on how security issues are framed and managed in schools. Here are some consequences derived from this perspective: school administrators should understand that security and safety problems are not only practical issues but also inextricably linked to how they are articulated. By presenting safety as a major problem requiring immediate attention, school administrators may mobilise resources and collaborate to improve security methods. The application of securitisation theory emphasises the significance of increasing all stakeholders' awareness of security issues. School administrators should conduct communication campaigns to educate students, parents, staff, and the surrounding community about potential threats and the significance of proactive security measures.

This study highlights the need for securitisation in justifying budget allocation for security demands. School administrators may use this notion to lobby for more funding and resources for security

infrastructure, personnel training, and technology. School administrators should actively engage with diverse stakeholders to seek their support for securing school safety. School administrators may address security issues by forming a unified front with parents, students, instructors, and community leaders. The securitisation idea emphasises the importance of being prepared to respond to perceived security threats. School administrators should prioritise building detailed emergency plans and processes, conducting exercises, and ensuring that everyone understands their duties during emergencies. School administrators can utilise the notion of securitisation to push for governmental reforms and laws that assist schools' safety. They can influence policy decisions at the local and national levels by emphasising the importance of security. Furthermore, securitisation theory emphasises the multifaceted aspect of security. To effectively handle security issues, school administrators should take into account both physical security measures (fences, monitoring) and non-physical factors (mental health support, conflict resolution programmes).

While securitisation theory promotes urgency, school leaders must take a long-term and balanced approach to security. It is critical to avoid excessive security measures that have a detrimental impact on the learning environment. This idea emphasises the need for communication in securitising situations. School administrators should invest in clear and effective communication techniques to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged on security issues. Securitisation theory encourages school administrators to consider the local context and cultural sensitivity when articulating security concerns. Tailoring security methods to the community's individual requirements and difficulties is vital.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the perspectives of school managers on the management of secondary school security and safety practices in Nigeria offer valuable insights into the challenges, priorities, and opportunities that shape the current state of school security. This study has illuminated several key themes that highlight the complex interplay between security concerns, resource limitations, and the well-being of learners and staff. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of school security, extending beyond physical infrastructure to encompass effective communication, emergency preparedness, community engagement, and the careful balance between security measures and maintaining a conducive learning environment. School managers play a pivotal role in orchestrating these elements to create a safe and secure educational environment.

Budget constraints have emerged as a significant barrier, hindering the implementation of comprehensive security measures. This study underscores the need for collaborative efforts involving not only school managers but also parents, local communities, and government agencies. By pooling resources, advocating for increased funding, and fostering partnerships, schools can overcome these financial challenges and prioritise the safety of learners and staff. Communication has emerged as a critical component of effective school security practices. School managers should invest in clear and accessible communication channels that keep stakeholders informed during emergencies and enhance the overall awareness of security measures. Additionally, involving learners in safety discussions and initiatives empowers them to become active participants in creating a secure school environment.

Emergency preparedness was highlighted as an important aspect of school security. School managers should develop and regularly update comprehensive emergency response plans that are practised through drills. By ensuring that staff and learners are well-versed in these procedures, schools can minimise confusion and promote a coordinated response to crises. Furthermore, the study emphasised the significance of community engagement and advocacy. School managers can work alongside parents, local leaders, and government bodies to create a unified front for advocating improved school security policies and resource allocation. In conclusion, the insights gained from

school managers' perspectives provide a foundation for enhancing secondary school security and safety practices in Nigeria.

7. Declaration

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