



# ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGIES TO ENHANCING PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES: A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS SITUATED IN SOUTH EAST STATES, NIGERIA.

\*Emeruwa, H. I., Ogonna, R. N. O. & Afianmagbon, B. E.

*Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Abia State University Uturu.*

\*Corresponding Author Email: [hilyke77@gmail.com](mailto:hilyke77@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

The study examined Secondary School Principals' Strategies and Physical Security Measures in South East States, Nigeria. A total of 1500 teachers were sampled in 272 secondary schools. The technique used in the selection was the disproportionate random sampling technique. The school principal's strategies and physical security questionnaire (SPSAPSQ) was the instrument used for data collection. It was validated and the reliability test yielded 0.79 Cronbach Alpha coefficients. Mean statistics were used to answer the two research questions while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the two hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Results indicate a large concurrence of teachers that the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets and deployment of security barriers by principals impacted positively on enhancing security measures in schools. For enhancing school safety, planning and adequate security measures such as provision of first aid kits, fumigating the environments, covering of gutters, ensuring the perimeter of the school is fenced, provision of lighting materials, installation of CCTV to cover blind spots, liaising with community, security agencies and stakeholders for supports.

**Keywords:** *Secondary School, Principal-ship, School Principals' Strategies, Physical Security.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is “the second and third levels of education system in Nigeria” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN, 2013). Basic education which is the second level comprises “kindergarten, 6 years primary school, and 3 years post-primary studies in junior secondary schools” (FRN, 2023); the third level is the 3 years post-basic studies in senior secondary schools and technical colleges. Secondary education is “the total process of human learning by which knowledge and faculties are trained, and different skills are developed’ (Adesemowo and Sotonade, 2022). In Nigeria, the two broad aims of secondary education are to prepare individuals for useful living within the society and higher education. The objectives of secondary education are “to inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence and to raise a generation of people, who can think for themselves, respect the dignity of labour, and live as good citizens” (FRN, 2013). These objectives are achievable in a safe, secure, and conducive environment.

Secondary schools are academic and vocational institutions that provide education to students between the ages of 11 and 18 years, typically from grade 6 to grade 12 (International Standard Classification of Education, 2011). Secondary school is designed to provide a learning environment and spaces for students to acquire knowledge, skills, and values (UNESCO, 2022). Secondary school is of two types viz government schools and private entities schools. The government controls all secondary schools through the Federal Ministry of Education (for unity schools), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), State Universal Education Boards (SUBEB), and Secondary Education Management Boards (SEMB). It is through government control of education that individuals could be influenced to accept their roles in society and enhance national integration and unity (Anuna and Ofoeze, 2002). The schools that are being owned and administered by the government are funded through the taxpayer’s money and the extent of funding is dependent on the competition between education and other sectors of the economy (Mbadiwe and Nwokocha, 2018).

A principal is described in Onye, Anugom, and Obizue (2019:282) as “an intermediary and interpreter of policy, aims and objectives between his school and community, government, and other public and private agencies”. At the secondary level of education, school principals are the custodians of secondary schools. As custodians, they are responsible for school resources and materials as well as school programmes and their implementation which cover day-to-day activities. In other words, a school principal is the chief executive officer who is responsible for the effective management of school resources for the actualization of education's stated goals and objectives. The principal is a school manager. He is the administrative head of a secondary school and he is also called a school administrator. Isiozor and Ononiwu (2019) insinuate that a principal carries out administrative tasks to create a safe, secure, and conducive learning environment for the achievement of the aims of secondary education. Okunamiri (2010) emphasized that the principal is a key player in the achievement of school objectives because the success of the school in implementing educational programmes and policies depends largely on him (Okunamiri, 2010). He coordinates tasks to achieve goals (Ndom-Uchendu and Ogbonna, 2022). School Principals’ strategies are the planned and systematic approaches employed by school administrators to achieve specific objectives. In other words, School Principals’ strategies are the actions and measures that the school administrators have put in place for the achievement of specific objectives such as a safe, secure, and conducive learning environment. School principals’ strategies can also be described as management strategies in secondary school. Karami (2022) defined management strategies as a concept that describes the specific measures being

executed by the administrator to achieve his responsibilities. The application of some management strategies by the school administrators such as emergency preparedness, provision of surveillance-communication gadgets, and deployment of security barriers are essential for the safety and protection of human, material, and financial resources from being bullied, intimidated, assaulted, maimed, wounded, harmed, killed, defaced, vandalized, burnt or destroyed. The concept of physical security is defined as safety, security, and protection from harm and danger. Payne (2023) describes physical security as a concept that involves the safety and protection of human, material, and financial resources from being bullied, intimidated, assaulted, maimed, wounded, harmed, killed, defaced, vandalized, burnt, or destroyed. In schools, human resources are human beings and include the staff, students, and school visitors. Material resources include facilities (such as school buildings), equipment (such as generators), and raw materials (such as textbooks and chalk). To determine how the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets and the deployment of security barriers of principals impacted physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria.

The study aims to ascertain how strategies of school principals impacted physical security in Secondary Schools situated in Southeast states, Nigeria.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study assesses secondary school principals' strategies and physical security measures in South East States, Nigeria. The content scope is confined to how indices of utilization of security budget and School-community collaboration employed by school principals impacted physical security effectiveness in secondary schools. The independent variable of the study is school principals' strategies while the dependent variable is physical security in Secondary School. Geographically, this study is limited to Abia Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States of Nigeria. The population of the study embraced all the public secondary school teachers in Southeast states, Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- a. How much does the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets to principals impact physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria?
- b. To what extent have deployments of security barriers of principals influenced physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria?

### **HYPOTHESES**

- a.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on surveillance-communication gadgets of principals and physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria.
- b.  $H_{03}$ : There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on deployments of security barriers of principals and physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to explore the opinions of teachers in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria towards school principals' strategies and physical security. This allows for efficient collection of data using standardized questionnaires. This design enables quantification of the extent of agreement of teachers on how strategies employed by school principals impact physical security in secondary schools.

## **AREA OF THE STUDY**

Southeast Nigeria is one of the six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria and lies between latitudes 4°20' and 7°25' North and longitudes 6°37' and 8°28' East (Onyeneke *et al.*, 2019). The geopolitical zone is bordered by Benue and Kogi States to the north, Cross River to the east, Akwa Ibom and Rivers to the south, and Delta State to the west. There are 27 education zones in Southeast Asia. The average population density is 450 – 520 people per square kilometer. Christianity is the predominant religion of the people and they are predominantly Igbo by tribe. The economy of South East Nigeria depends primarily on agriculture and commerce. They cultivate and merchant various crop produce, most especially palm oil. The Southeast also has crude oil deposits and attracts investments in oil and gas exploration, hydroelectric plants, gas-fired plants, education, etc. The choice of this area was because of the prevalence of physical security threats to the educational administration of secondary schools. The achievement of the noble goal of secondary education is being threatened by increased cases of flooding, building collapse, vandalizing of school equipment and facilities, fire incidents, banditry, terrorism, threats by violent non-state actors, destruction of school facilities, rape, kidnapping for ransom, murder of school teachers and students, armed robbery, violent cult, and cult-related activities, etc. The prevalence of these security threats undermines the learning environment, fostering fear, anxiety, and distraction among staff, students, and parents. The situation is compromising the safety and academic performance of students.

This study can inform policy and practice, helping education authorities and school administrators have data on how management strategies employed by principals influence physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states. South East States, Nigeria is a significant geo-political zone, with many primary, and secondary schools, and other higher institutions, making the findings of this study relevant to the administration of other levels of education.

## **POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The study's target population consisted of 28, 573 teachers from the 942 public secondary schools of South East States, Nigeria.

## **SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Using a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique, 1500 teachers from 272 public secondary schools were sampled in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. A population of 300 teachers from 41 public secondary schools, 200 from 47 schools, 150 teachers from 39 schools, 450 teachers from 56 schools, and 400 teachers from 89 public secondary schools respectively were sampled.

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

### **Development of the Instrument**

The instrument was a researcher's self-constructed questionnaire titled "School Principals' Strategies and Physical Security Questionnaire (SPSAPSQ)". It has two (2) sections. Section A obtained information on the personal data of the respondents, while section B comprised 10 items in two (2) clusters and contained information on school principals' strategies and physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria. The instrument was structured along a four (4) point modified Likert-type scale of strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 points respectively.

### Validation of the Instrument

The face and content validity were done by three (3) experts. One (1) from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning, while the others were from the Department of Curriculum and Teacher Education and the Measurement and Evaluation unit, all from the Faculty of Education, Abia State University, Uturu. The reliability of the 10-item instrument yielded 0.79 Cronbach Alpha coefficients.

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The SPSAPSQ was distributed in 1500 copies, but the researcher only managed to retrieve 1000 of them with the assistance of 10 assistants who had received training. A total of 1500 copies of the questionnaire were administered, but only 1000 copies were retrieved by the researcher with the help of 15 assistants who were trained on how to define words that seemed unclear and unintelligible.

### METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

To address the research questions, the collated data was analyzed using mean, and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

### DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Although 1500 copies of the instrument were sent to the 27 education zones, only 1000 of them were properly completed and compiled. A return rate of 66.67% is represented by this.

### RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

How does the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets by principals impact physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria?

**Table 4:** Mean Score Analysis of Principal’s Responses on Provision of Surveillance-Communication Gadgets and Physical Security in Secondary Schools in South East States, Nigeria

S/N	Items		SA	A	D	SD	$\Sigma x$	$\bar{X}$	Decision
	Provision of security-communication gadgets by my principal								
1	help in the reduction of vandalism, stealing, and damage to school properties	ABIA	620	120	20	2	762	3.68	
		ANAMBRA	600	114	16	2	732	3.70	
		EBONYI	612	117	14	2	745	3.71	
		ENUGU	680	129	18	6	836	3.66	
		IMO	512	96	10	1	619	3.73	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3024</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3691</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
2	help in monitoring and recording happenings in blind spot areas, the video can serve as data for management decision on security	ABIA	608	126	22	2	758	3.66	
		ANAMBRA	592	120	16	2	730	3.69	
		EBONYI	604	123	14	2	743	3.70	
		ENUGU	676	132	18	6	832	3.65	
		IMO	504	99	12	1	616	3.71	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2984</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3679</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

3	help in identifying	ABIA	616	120	20	3	759	3.67	Agreed
	unauthorized access and potential threats to lives and properties in the school	ANAMBRA	596	117	16	2	731	3.69	
		EBONYI	608	120	14	2	744	3.70	
		ENUGU	684	129	16	6	838	3.68	
		IMO	508	96	10	2	616	3.71	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3012</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3685</b>	<b>3.69</b>	
4	have boosted confidence of teachers in the protection of lives and properties in the school.	ABIA	612	123	22	2	759	3.67	Agreed
		ANAMBRA	600	114	16	2	732	3.70	
		EBONYI	604	120	16	2	742	3.69	
		ENUGU	680	132	18	5	837	3.67	
		IMO	512	99	10	0	622	3.75	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3008</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3689</b>	<b>3.69</b>	
5	enhanced communication and situational awareness in the school.	ABIA	620	120	18	3	761	3.68	Agreed
		ANAMBRA	592	120	16	2	730	3.69	
		EBONYI	612	117	14	2	745	3.71	
		ENUGU	676	129	18	7	834	3.66	
		IMO	504	99	12	1	616	3.71	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3004</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3682</b>	<b>3.68</b>	
<b>Pooled Mean 3.68 (92% agreement)</b>									

Table 4 revealed that the principals from Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States secondary schools agreed with all the items on the table. The pooled mean of 3.68 mark which is above the criterion mean mark of 2.50 indicates stronger agreement that the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets impacted positively physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

How much have deployments of security barriers of principals influenced physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria?

**Table 5:** Mean Score Analysis of Principal's Responses on Deployment of Security Barriers and Physical Security in Secondary Schools in South East States, Nigeria

S/N	Items		SA	A	D	SD	$\Sigma x$	$\bar{X}$	Decision
	Security barriers deployment of my principal								
6	prevent unauthorized access into the school.	ABIA	560	135	30	7	732	3.54	Agreed
	For instance, students who were suspended from the school or were sent home will not have access to enter the school.	ANAMBRA	552	126	24	6	708	3.58	
		EBONYI	564	129	22	6	721	3.59	
		ENUGU	620	144	28	11	811	3.56	
		IMO	480	108	16	2	606	3.65	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3570</b>	<b>3.57</b>	
7	keep-off those who do not have any business in	ABIA	568	129	28	8	733	3.54	
		ANAMBRA	560	120	22	7	709	3.58	
		EBONYI	572	126	20	6	724	3.60	

	the school from	ENUGU	632	147	24	9	818	3.59	
	accessing the school	IMO	488	111	14	0	613	3.69	
	premises (trespassing)	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2820</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>30</b>	3591	<b>3.59</b>	Agreed
8	deter arson, vandals and	ABIA	620	114	20	4	758	3.66	
	school property burglars	ANAMBRA	612	108	18	0	738	3.73	
	control students' late	EBONYI	624	111	16	0	751	3.74	
	coming and loitering	ENUGU	692	129	18	3	842	3.69	
	outside the school	IMO	540	93	0	0	633	3.81	
	premises	<b>TOTAL</b>							Agreed
	enter the school.		<b>3088</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>7</b>	3722	<b>3.72</b>	
9	control students' late	ABIA	632	117	18	1	768	3.71	
	coming and loitering	ANAMBRA	580	111	16	8	715	3.61	
	outside the school	EBONYI	596	114	14	7	731	3.64	
	premises.	ENUGU	680	132	20	4	836	3.67	
		IMO	512	96	12	0	620	3.73	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>21</b>	3670	<b>3.67</b>	Agreed
10	provide a sense of	ABIA	580	126	26	7	739	3.57	
	security and safe	ANAMBRA	572	120	22	4	718	3.63	
	learning for students by	EBONYI	584	123	20	4	731	3.64	
	protecting the students	ENUGU	644	141	24	8	817	3.58	
	from distractions and the	IMO	500	105	12	0	617	3.72	
	female students from	<b>TOTAL</b>							Agreed
	sexual harassments.		<b>2880</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>23</b>	3622	<b>3.62</b>	
<b>Pooled Mean</b>			<b>3.64</b>	<b>(92% agreement)</b>					

Table 5 revealed that the principals from Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States secondary schools agreed with all the items on the table. The pooled mean of 3.64 mark which is above the criterion mean mark of 2.50 indicates very strong agreement that deployment of security barriers of principals broadly influenced physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria.

### HYPOTHESIS ONE

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets of principals and physical security in secondary schools in Southeast States, Nigeria.

**Table 6:** Analyses of significant differences between mean scores of teachers on the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets and physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F-Value	p-Value	Decision
Between Groups	0.0072	4	0.0018	0.186	0.946	Fail to Reject null hypothesis
Within Groups	0.583	15	0.0389			
Total	0.5902	19				

Table 6 shows a summary of analyses of significant differences between the mean scores of teachers on the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets and physical security. The p-value (0.946) is greater than the

significance level (0.05), indicating that the mean responses are not significantly different across the five states. The F-statistic (0.186) is relatively small, indicating that the variance between groups is not significantly greater than the variance within groups. The mean square between groups (0.0018) is much smaller than the mean square within groups (0.1764), further supporting the conclusion that the mean responses are not significantly different. In conclusion, based on the analyses using one-way Analyses of Variance results, the researcher fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets and physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria. The mean responses are not significantly different across the five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States).

## HYPOTHESIS TWO

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on deployments of security barriers of principals and physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria.

**Table 7:** Analyses of significant **difference** between mean scores of teachers on the deployment of security barriers and physical security in secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F-Value	p-Value	Decision
Between Groups	0.141	4	0.0353	0.0913	0.461	Fail to Reject null hypothesis
Within Groups	2.315	15	0.0387			
Total	2.456	19				

Table 7 shows a summary of analyses of the significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the deployment of security barriers and physical security in secondary schools in Southeast States, Nigeria. The p-value (0.461) is greater than the significance level (0.05), indicating that the mean responses are not significantly different across the five states. The F-statistic (0.0913) is relatively small, indicating that the variance between groups is not significantly greater than the variance within groups. The mean square between groups (0.0353) is smaller than the mean square within groups (0.0387), further supporting the conclusion that the mean responses are not significantly different. In conclusion, based on the analyses using one-way Analysis of Variance results, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the deployment of security and physical security in secondary schools in Southeast states, Nigeria. The mean responses are not significantly different across the five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the first research question showed that the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets widely impacted physical security in secondary schools. With a pooled mean score of 3.68, it implies that large numbers of teachers agreed that the provision of surveillance-communication gadgets by school administrators widely impacted physical security in secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with Vossekul *et al.* (2022) that surveillance-communication gadgets can improve incident reports, reduce vandalism and property damage. It also agrees with Kumar, *et al.* (2022) that deployment of surveillance-communication gadgets can deter



potential threats and enhance situational awareness in secondary schools. So, by leveraging surveillance-communication gadgets and technologies, school principals can create safer and more secure learning environments for students, teachers, and staff. Provision of surveillance-communication gadgets by school administrators should help in the reduction of vandalism, stealing, and damage to school properties; help in monitoring and recording happenings in blind spot areas, the video which can serve as data for management decisions on security; help in identifying unauthorized access and potential threats to lives and properties in the school; boost the confidence of teachers in the protection of lives and properties in the school; and enhance communication and situational awareness in the school.

The findings of the second research question showed deployment of security barriers by principals influenced physical security in secondary schools to a large extent. With a pooled mean score of 3.64, it implies that large numbers of teachers agreed that the deployment of security barriers by school administrators influenced physical security in secondary schools in Southeast States, Nigeria to a large extent. This finding is in agreement with the FBI (2022) that the deployment of security barriers in schools such as perimeter fencing, access control systems, metal detectors, secure entrance protocols, and surveillance cameras can improve physical security in secondary schools. So, by implementing security barriers, school principals can create a safer and more secure learning environment for students, teachers, and staff. Deployment of security barriers by principals should prevent unauthorized access to the school. For instance, students who were suspended from the school or were sent home will not have access to enter the school; keep off those who do not have any business in the school from accessing the school premises (trespassing); deter arson, vandals and school property burglars; control students' late coming and loitering outside the school premises; and provide a sense of security and safe learning for students by protecting the students from distractions and the female students from sexual harassments.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study showed that school teachers in South East States, Nigeria largely agreed that application of management strategies of school principals influenced physical security in secondary schools to a large extent. The study therefore noted that for effective secondary school administration, school administrators should intensify the application of some management strategies including the provision and deployment of surveillance-communication gadgets, the deployment of security barriers, ensuring effective utilization of the security budget of the school, and ensuring school-community collaborations. The study improves the understanding of school principals' strategies and physical security in secondary schools in South East, Nigeria.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. School principals in South East States, in Nigeria should be committed to identifying and mobilizing resources such as personnel, equipment, supplies, and facilities needed to ensure physical security.
2. School principals in the South East States, of Nigeria should be committed to the deployment of security barriers and monitor the school perimeter and entrance/exit routes regularly. Potential security weaknesses and vulnerabilities should be identified and enforcement of security protocols and barriers should be ensured at all times.

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