



Research Article

Safety Management Strategies and Students' Learning Behaviours in Public Secondary Schools in Calabar Education Zone

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between Safety Management Strategies and Students' Learning Behaviour in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. Two objectives and two research questions were raised while two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 1,813 teachers in the 94 public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. The sample size was 328 teachers. Two sets of researcher's developed instruments entitled: 'Safety Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ) and Students' Learning Behaviour Questionnaire (SLBQ)' were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by two experts from the Department of Curriculum Studies, Educational Management and Planning and one expert from Psychological Foundation Department, all from the Faculty of Education. The inter-item reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78 and 0.88 respectively. The research questions were answered using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that safety management strategies such as; safety programmes and safety supervision significantly relate to students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State. It was recommended amongst others that safety supervision should not be left for administrators alone, but should be carried out by teachers as well since they are closer to the students. This may help modify students' learning behaviors in a positive direction.

Key words: Safety Programmes; Safety Supervision; Students' Learning Behaviour; Public Secondary Schools; Teachers; School Safety

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely accepted to be the primary and a mother industry in every nation of the world. As such, any defect in this industry may have a spiral effect on every other sector of the economy (Okoi *et al.*, 2022). Among other factors, the safety of the school is sacrosanct and non-negotiable as compromise of any kind may adversely inhibit student's learning behaviours. Regrettably, the seeming growing rate of school violence, social vices, gross student's maladjustment, high rate of student's failures in examinations such as National Examination Council (NECO) and West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE),

half-baked graduates, corruptions and insecurity which are prevalent in schools particularly, secondary schools may be attributed to an unsafe environment. To corroborate this point, Akeke *et al.* (2015), opined that many Secondary School leavers in Cross River State cannot contribute meaningfully to the economic development of our country as they find it difficult to gain admission into higher institutions of learning due to their lackadaisical attitudes towards studies.

Secondary education occupies a strategic position in the national education system as it provides the middle level manpower in the labour market, prepare individuals for better living; by so

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doing, it contributes to the overall economic growth and development of the nation (Okoi *et al.*, 2025). The secondary school is a social and learning institution whose environment should provide a child with opportunities to be formally educated, skilled and cultured in order to be productive. Specifically, secondary education system according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2014) shall: provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background and in the preparation of students for useful living in the society.

Students' learning behaviours convey the psychological readiness of the students to learn. This brings about their ingenuity, creative thinking, imaginative activities, love for their learning, high interest for studies and also having a positive social adjustment within and outside the school environment to bear. Thus, students' learning behaviours involves the total characteristic responses that students exhibit before, during and after teaching experiences. Learning behaviour in this context, is the ability of the students to approach the three sets or ethos of learning behaviour namely: relationship with self, relationship with others and the relationship with the curriculum. The aim is to improve on their academic pursuits due to the presence of safety management strategies. Northampton Centre for Learning Behaviour (2016) defined learning behaviour as the crucial link between the way in which children (students) and young people learn and their social knowledge.

Safety management in the school settings are proactive steps or measures taken by the school principals to prevent or mitigate any kind of accident, hazards, injuries and threats. The aim of school safety management is to promote organizational effectiveness and efficiency. It assists managers in better discharging of their responsibilities in operational system design and implementation through the prediction of system's deficiencies before error emerges. Safety Management in the word of Ike (2015), are strategies and procedures required to coordinate the diverse activities of the school, protect and manage school violence, reduce security risks and ensure that the school environment and the facilities are safe for teaching and learning. However, as obvious and critical as these priorities are, it is oftentimes compromised and overlooked by the stakeholders.

In an attempt to provide a safe school environment, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Education in 2021 drafted a National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-free schools (NPSSV) with its implicating guidelines in order to ensure a zero-tolerance approach to any threat to the security of lives and properties in the schools (FRN, 2021). A school principal may therefore ensure safety management strategies in the school through the following: safety programmes and school safety supervision.

Safety programmes are well-structured plans or strategies designed to protect the health and well-being of the staff and students within an organization or community. These programmes include training, risk assessment, emergency response plans and safety audit. Considering a comprehensive school safety programmes may not only inculcate the right attitude in the students and staff, but also in improving their safety knowledge and precaution for the development of oneself and the society at large. Such programmes improve individual's level of awareness, increase individual's safety skills in one or more areas of expertise and increase overall productivity and performance.

In a study by Hawa *et al.* (2021) who determined the Influence of Principals' Involvement in Staff Awareness Safety Strategies on Disaster Management in Public Secondary Schools in Nyeri County, Kenya the objective of the study included to: assess the influence of staff awareness of safety strategies on disaster management in public secondary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study established that staff awareness of safety was significant. The findings showed a significant association between principals' staff awareness and disaster management ($p<.05$). The study recommended that sensitization on disaster management ought to be done more frequently to ensure teachers are well aware of the importance of preventing disasters in order to promote learning and save lives. This study is related to the present study on safety programmes but differ with the present study in the designs and statistical tool for data analysis and study area.

Also, Nkiruka and Sunday (2019) to examine school members behaviour management and security training as a correlate of quality secondary school environment in Rivers State. Two (2) research questions and two (2) hypotheses were answered and tested in the study respectively. The

findings of the study showed a positive high correlation between school members behaviour management strategies and quality secondary school environment and moderate correlation between school members security training and quality secondary school environment. The study also shows significant correlation between school members behaviour management, security training and quality secondary school environment in Rivers State.

Safety supervision is a systematic process of overseeing the activities of staff, students, school plant thereby, taking cognizance of their well-being/ conditions for improved educational programmes. Both staff and students need a safe and secure environment to thrive in their life and learning process. This is because, safety supervision is integral to creating environments that are safe and responsive to the needs of the recipients and the society at large. Safety supervision helps to protect from hazards that may arise from their play and daily routines. Supervision also helps educational managers in the identification of hazards and risks within and outside the school environment and taking appropriate actions. In the view of Toledo (2021), it is required that all children (students) be within a teachers' range of vision and that the teacher be near enough to respond when redirection or intervention strategies are needed. Ogunode *et al.* (2021), conducted a study to investigated the challenges preventing effective supervision of universal basic education programme in Kuje Area Council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of all the 50 teachers (male and female) in five (5) selected public primary schools and ten educational Supervisors in Kuje Area Council of FCT. Fifty (50) teachers and ten (10) supervisors were selected using purposive sampling technique, which gave a total of 60 respondents as sample size for the study. The Questionnaire used for the study had two sections. Section (A) collected information on bio-data while Section (B) collected information on the subject matter. The result produced that inadequate supervisors, inadequate supervision materials, insecurity, logistics problem, inadequate funding and poor capacity development of supervisors are the challenges preventing effective supervision of universal basic education programme in Kuje Area Council of FCT.

Arop and Owan (2018), carried out a study to examine institutional variables and the supervision of security in secondary schools in Cross River State. The study specifically sought to determine whether there was a significant influence of school population, school type and school location, on the supervision of security in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Three null hypotheses were formulated accordingly to guide the study. 360 students and 120 teachers resulting in a total of 480 respondents, constituted the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire while Independent t-test was used to analyze data and test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance using Microsoft Excel version 2013. The results of the findings revealed that school population, school type and school location, all have an influence in the supervision of security in public secondary schools of Cross River State. It was also revealed that lowly populated, mixed-gender, and urban public secondary schools were more efficient in the supervision of security than their counterparts such as highly populated, single-gender and rural secondary schools. Based on the findings of this study, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made. This study is related to the present study on effective safety supervision but differ with the present study with the design and statistical tool for data analysis.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching and learning require an atmosphere that is devoid of threat, tension, abuse and hazards of any kind. As such, it is the desire of every stakeholder in education to see that the school is conducive and capable of cultivating values for intellectual fecundity. Students' learning behaviour should be of absolute importance, especially in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State where many youths hardly advance their skills beyond the secondary level of education. Regrettably, the once free, conducive, accommodating and inviting school atmosphere at the secondary school level, seems to have given way to an atmosphere filled with the practice of deadly and deep-rooted violent practices. Sadly, schools are no longer seen as safe and secure environment where both the students and staff can think and also feel protected. In today's secondary schools, student's violence appears to be an order that determines the supremacy in strength rather than creativity and productivity.

Some students seem not interested in their studies; some exhibit poor learning behaviour such as lateness to school, noise making, disregards to deadlines, indulgence in examination malpractice, giving sniping remarks, bullying and raping. Others are students' indulgence in cultism, destruction of school plants, violation of school dress code, loitering, irregular attendance to classes, low degree of completion of class work, defiance to school authorities among others. Folasade *et al.* (2023) averred that disruption of school programs and classes is also caused by students' actions such as assaults on colleagues, damage of school property, and flouting of school regulations. These behaviours negate the principle of decency and promote an atmosphere that is unfavorable to learning.

The aforementioned incidents highlight the vulnerability of both staff and students, as well as the learning environment to dangers caused by students with questionable character. The consequences of these are that, upon graduation, students may not be able to contribute positively to the development of the society, while some lack survival instinct. All these have prompted the contemplation and asking whether safety management strategies could lead to unacceptable behaviours as observed in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. These incidents and others have created the expectation gap, thus the need for the study. The point in question is; does safety management strategies relates to students learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone? And if it does, what is the relationship?

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of this study were to determine the relationship between:

- i. Safety programmes and students learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.
- ii. Safety supervision and students learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between school safety programmes and students' learning behaviours in Calabar Education Zone?
- ii. What is the relationship between safety supervision and students' learning behaviours in Calabar Education Zone?

- ii. What is the relationship between safety supervision and students' learning behaviours in Calabar Education Zone?

Research Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following null hypotheses:

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between school safety programmes and students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between effective safety supervision and students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

Safety Management

The word "safety" comes from Latin word "salvus" which means "uninjured" and in good condition. It connotes freedom from danger, risk, hazard and threats (natural and man-made). Asodike and Nwabueze (2017) defined school safety as a situation in which the teachers and learners feel at home, develop confidence, maintain a positive state of mind, and do not show any signs of withdrawal from the school, but, work towards the achievement of their personal goals. Safety management is an organized and a formalized approached undertaken by the school management to mitigate and control risk, threats and violence in the school system. It is a multifaceted endeavour which is guided by the principle of identification, prevention, protections and recovery. Safety management is a systematic identification of hazards, assessment and control of risks, evaluation and review of risk control measures to ensure that they are effectively implemented and maintained (Bluff as cited in Byebunu, 2016). Ronoh (2018), posited that schools that are safe and responsive have plans and procedures in place to deal with violent and disruptive behaviours that may occur.

Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020), pointed out that some of the safety and security measures in personnel management (staff and student) could include guards, community or parental participation, security officers, private security personnel on contract who might also offer a rapid armed response service or police officer, town vigilante group. The most common safety slogans

are; mind the glass, no seat belt no entry, no smoking, shortcut-short life, a careless man's wife is a potential widow, no personal protective equipment (PPEs), clean as you work, highly inflammable (catches fire easily), hot surface, children/Zebra crossing, keep out of reach of children, hoot before overtaking. Thus, the hues and cries over safety and security of students, staff and facilities in public secondary schools in Calabar Education zone. The perception of insecurity or fear of violence, building collapse and threats has often influenced student's act and learning behaviour. This fear may affect learner's school attendance, cause poor school performance and the general wellbeing of students.

Students' Learning Behaviour

Student's learning behaviour could be defined as the student's willingness to learn. The willingness could be seen through their responses to teaching and learning activities. It also involves all the actions that students take to access the new information being taught to them while also behaving in a responsible manner. Ashford Hill Primary School (2018), posited that learning behaviour include resilience, risk taking, thinking, respect, efforts in learning, students' outlooks, independence, active, motivation and creativity as well as how students relate to the people that make up the school community. Positive learning is about personal development with a focus on individual learners and their ability to develop the kind of behaviour and skills that allow them to respond effectively to the ever-changing world (Aspire Academy, 2016). Conway (2012), presented three sets of relationship which contribute to the culture/ethics of learning behaviour. These are: relationship with self, relationship with others and relationship with the curriculum

Victoria State Government (2012) however, posited that there are much potential that influence students' behaviour and many factors that could lead to behaviour that is challenging for schools to deal with. These include: biophysical factors (medical conditions or disabilities); psychological factors (emotional trauma or lack of social skills); social factors (consequences of adaptation to social practices); historical factors; family experiences of schools; government agencies; students' group dynamics (level of classroom noise); classroom organization (inadequate learning materials); teachers'

behaviours (boring and disorganized lessons and over reactions to misbehaviours). Alfred (2017) therefore, presented seven strategies that can be combined to improve positive (classroom) learning behaviours of students such as making learning relevant, creating a classroom code of conducts, teaching positive actions, instilling intrinsic motivation, reinforcing positive behaviours, engaging positive role models and always being positive. The students should be meaningfully engaged to enhance active learning.

Design of the Study

The study adopted the correlational research design. According to Beck (2014), correlational research design describes the relationship among variables rather than to infer cause.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 1,813 teachers in the 94 public secondary schools spread across Calabar Education Zone.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of this study comprised 328 (18%) teachers representing the entire population. Proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting 48 schools out of the 94 schools representing 53% of the school population. The rationale for this was based on Hazirika (2014) who posited that, a small proportion of sample could be used when the population is larger and a larger sample in small population. To draw the sample, simple random sampling technique was used to select sample schools and sample teachers using balloting method of pick and drop. This was to give every member equal opportunity to be selected.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed instruments entitled "Safety Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ)" and "Students' Learning Behaviour Questionnaire (SLBQ)" were used for data collection. SMSQ comprised 30 items while

SLBQ comprised 20 items. All items on both instruments were rated by the teachers on four points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). They instruments were scored as follows: SA - 4points, A - 3points, SD -2points D – 1point for positively worded items.

Validation of the Instruments

The two instruments were given to three educational experts for face – validation. Two experts were from the Department of Curriculum Studies, Educational Management and Planning, and one expert from Psychological Foundations Department all from the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo.

Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure that the Safety Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ) and Student's Learning Behaviour Questionnaire (SLBQ) are reliable, they were subjected to test of internal consistency. By this method of reliability, the instruments were administered to 30 teachers in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State who were not part of the sample. Data collected was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Analysis. The reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.88 were obtained for SMQ and SLBQ

Coefficient (r)	-	Nature of the relationship
$\pm .00$ to $\pm .20$	-	Negligible, weak or none
$\pm .21$ to $\pm .40$	-	Low
$\pm .41$ to $\pm .59$	-	Moderate or fairly high
$\pm .61$ to $\pm .79$	-	High
$\pm .81$ to $\pm .100$	-	Very high

The extent of relationship (R^2 coefficient of determination) was explained in relation to the contribution of each sub-variable of Safety Management and Students' Learning Behaviours. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated r is greater than the p -value at .05 level of significance. If not, the null hypothesis is upheld.

respectively which were considered high enough to ascertain the reliability of the instruments.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher with the help of two research assistants visited the sampled schools and obtained permission from the authorities of different schools to carry out the research. The instruments were then administered on the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were properly briefed and instructed on how to distribute the instruments and guide the respondents. A total of 328 copies of the instrument were distributed out of which 319 copies were retrieved representing 95% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the data. The coefficient r -value was used to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The package used for data analysis was Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

3.8 Decision Rule

The nature of the relationship between variables were classified using the classification for correlation coefficient (R) as provided by Uzoagulu (2015), p 283), as follows:

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between school safety programmes and students' learning behaviours in Calabar Education Zone?

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between safety programmes and students learning behaviour**N =319**

Variable	ΣX	ΣX^2	Σxy	Cal.-r	Remark
	ΣY	ΣY^2			
Safety programmes	4818	274852		41195	. 350 Low Relationship
Students learning behaviour	18034	1042684			

The entries in Table 1 reveal the type and strength of relationship between safety programmes and students learning behaviour. The results reveals that the calculated r-value of .350 is low in nature and in a positive direction. Hence, the result means that there is a strong and positive relationship between safety programmes and students learning behaviour

in public secondary school in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between safety supervision and students' learning behaviours in Calabar Education Zone?

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between safety supervision and students learning behaviour**N =319**

Variable	ΣX	ΣX^2	Σxy	Cal.-r	Remark
	ΣY	ΣY^2			
Safety supervision	5090	291220		46285	.570 Moderate relationship
Students learning behaviour	18034	1042684			

The entries in Table 2 reveal the type and strength of relationship between safety supervision and students learning behaviour. The results reveal that the calculated r-value of .570 is moderate in nature and in a positive direction. Hence, the result means that there is a moderate and positive relationship between safety supervision and students

learning behaviour in public secondary school in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school safety programmes and students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

Table 3 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between safety programmes and students learning behaviour

Variable	ΣX	ΣX^2	Σxy	Df	r-cal	Decision at P < 0.05
	ΣY	ΣY^2				
Safety programmes	4818	274852		41195	317	.350
Student's Learning behaviour	18034	1042684				*

*significant at P < .05 level, df = 317

Source: Field Work Survey (2025)

The entries in Table 3 revealed the r-value of .350 with its corresponding P-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance with 317 degree of freedom. The result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which claims that “There is no significant relationship between safety programmes and students learning behaviour in public secondary school in Calabar Education” is rejected. This result implies that there is a significant relationship

between safety programmes and students learning behaviour in public secondary school in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between effective safety supervision and students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

Table 4 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between safety supervision and students learning behaviour

Variable	ΣX	ΣX^2	Σxy	Df	r-cal	Decision at P < 0.05
	ΣY	ΣY^2				
Safety supervision	5090	291220		46285	317	.570
Students' Learning behaviour	18034	1042684				*

*Significant at P < .05 level, df = 317

Source: Field Work Survey (2025)

The entries in Table 4.12 revealed the r-value of .570 with its corresponding P-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance with 317 degree of freedom. The result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which claims that “There is no

significant relationship between safety supervision and students learning behaviour in public secondary school in Calabar Education” is rejected. This result implies that there is a significant relationship between safety supervision and students learning

behaviour in public secondary school in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study shows that:

- i. There is low relationship between safety programmes and student's learning behaviour in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.
- ii. There is moderate relationship between safety supervision and student's learning behaviour in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.
- iii. The relationship between safety programmes and student's learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone is significant.
- iv. The relationship between safety supervision and student's learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone is significant.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

School Safety Programmes and Student's Learning Behaviours.

The result of null hypothesis one revealed that the relationship between safety programmes and student's learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone is significant. This is an indication that safety programmes engender student's learning behaviours. This result agrees with the findings of Hawa *et al.* (2021) which revealed that sensitization on disaster management ought to be done more frequently to ensure that teachers are well aware of the importance of preventing disasters in order to promote learning and safe lives. Safety programmes is very vital in effective administration of schools. it makes the stakeholders aware of threats that can be harmful to their lives and helps inculcate in them safety spirits thereby, developing their capacities to assess and manage risks in any given environment. The result further agrees with the findings of Nkiruka and Sunday (2019) which revealed that Teachers Training Institutions and Ministry of Education should give priority to behavior management just as there should be continuous security training for school members in line with the exigencies of time. Safety programmes equips both staff and students including administrators with the knowledge on how

to navigate complexity towards safeguarding their personalities. When the students are grounded with safety knowledge, their behaviours towards academic pursuits will be positive.

Safety Supervision and Student's Learning Behaviours.

The result of null hypothesis two revealed that the relationship between safety supervision and student's learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone is significant. The finding is possible in view of the fact that safety supervision is designed to monitor and check student's progress, their interactions with one another thereby, preventing bullying from and amongst other students. When principals and teachers actively oversee student's activities, it creates a sense of belonging and as well, enhances their educational experience, thereby leading to desirable behaviours amongst students. The finding lends credence to the findings of Ogunode *et al.* (2021) who found that inadequate supervisors, inadequate supervision materials, insecurity, logistic problems, inadequate funding and poor capacity development of supervisors are the challenges preventing effective supervision of Universal Basic Education programmes in Kuje Area Council of FCT. Also, the finding agrees with the findings of Arop and Owan (2018) which revealed that school population, school type, school location, all have an influence in the supervision of security in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the study, the result revealed that safety management strategies and students' learning behaviour as measured by safety programmes and safety supervision significantly relate to students' learning behaviours in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

- i. The school management should work in synergy with members of the community in promoting decency amongst public secondary school students.
- ii. The school management should form a safety programmes committee that will

be in charge of creating awareness as this will draw student's and teacher's attention to demonstrate and abide by safety rules and regulations.

Safety supervision should not be left for administrators alone, but should be carried out by teachers as well since they are closer to the students.

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