



Security Awareness as a Panacea for Effective Management of Safe Schools Initiative and Students Academic Achievement in Unity Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined security awareness as a panacea for effective management of safe school Initiative and students' academic achievement in unity schools in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises 104 principals of unity schools in Nigeria. There was no sampling technique adopted since the entire population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was structured questions developed by the researchers titled: "Safe School Initiative Questionnaire (SSIQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one in the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability yielded a co-efficient of 0.83 using Cronbach Alpha techniques. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the rationale for launching safe school initiative was to protect Nigeria students in school from being attacks, to reduce the dropout rate, to enable the students to be conscious of security situation in schools, prevent future attacks on schools, and general protection of education sector in Nigeria. The findings of the study also revealed that school based management strategies can be adopted for safe school initiative implementation in unity schools in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation were made, among other that, federal government should provide safety facilities especially perimeter fencing in unity school in Nigeria.

Keywords: Security; Security awareness; Management; Safe school initiative; Academic achievement.

1. Introduction

The security of life and properties in a given nation are the primary responsibilities of the government due to its importance to nation's growth and development in all spheres of life. Security can be seen as absence of threats in all forms – political, economic, religious and socio-cultural. Edison (2018), asserts that, security is the first basic necessities of human beings and the society at large. Joseph (2014), explains that, security is an encompassing phenomenon that is paramount to individuals, entitles, communities and nations. Joseph further states that, security is a condition in which states consider that there is no danger of military attack, economic political and socio-cultural depression by another that they develop within their own pace. Eket (2019), observes that, security is an absence of harm, danger, fear or any type or aspect of one's or groups or nations activities as they operate freely. According to Wulf (2006), absence of threats to a state, safety of individuals, properties, and absence of tyrannical government encapsulates security.

In recognition of the importance attached to security, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Section 14 (1) (b) observes that, the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. The above assertion shows that, security has a prime place in the life of individuals and the society in general. Operationally, security can be defined as a condition where citizens of a state are protected from danger, hurt, fear, and harm, which is capable of inhibiting personal growth and development in the society. Thus, it is necessary that

citizens of a given society be aware of their security status in terms of the protection of lives and properties or their general welfare.

Security awareness refers to, the knowledge which citizens of a state or society have concerning the protection of their lives and properties. According to Joseph (2014), security awareness is the knowledge and attitude which members of an organization possess regarding the protection of their physical and informational assets. Scott et al further explains that, many organizations require formal security awareness and management for all workers when they join the organization, and periodically thereafter, usually annual. The need for security awareness in organizations such as Unity Schools in Nigeria makes it imperative for its efficient and effective management due to its adverse effects on the academic achievement of the students, and the enrolment rate in general.

Management as used here refers to, the utilization of human, material and financial resources of organization through planning, organization, staffing among others, in order to attain the objectives or goals of organizations. Morgan (2012) posited that these resources are utilized by the school administrators in a manner that will enhance the attainment of the school objectives. Ezenta (2018), avers that, the Principles of Unity Schools in Nigeria are expected to plan, organize, coordinate and utilize the available staff in schools in order to create awareness to the students and school about the security issues that borders on the protection of the whole school environment from attack to enhance the academic achievement of the students. Ezenta (2018), further stated that the awareness of the students on security matters is fundamental to the attainment of the educational goals of Unity School in Nigeria.

The Unity Schools were established in Nigeria by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1966 as an avenue to galvanize the different ethnic groups with different religion, cultural and political affiliations as one through education. But it seems that this lofty objective is illusive due to the incessant violent attacks from insurgents in form of Boko Haram, armed robbers, kidnappers and Fulani Herdsmen on schools (Shaba, 2015). The fright created by these insurgents paved way for security awareness of the school authority and the students alike. According to Damian (2016), the Boko Haram was founded in 2002 to seek the establishment of an Islamic state and fight against the westernization of Nigeria which the group maintains is the root cause of criminal behaviour in the country. From 2009 to 2013, violence, kidnapping, rape and other atrocities created by the Boko Haram insurgency resulted in 3, 600 deaths, including 1, 600 civilians (Shaba, 2015). These attacks and other forms of vices were rife in schools especially female ones. This has untold effects on the academic achievement of the students and the enrolment rate of schools. It is therefore pertinent that, the School authority creates security awareness campaign or enabling environment among the teachers, students and other non-teaching staff to enable teaching and learning to take place seamless manner.

In view of the above, there is the need for security awareness in the Unity School system to protect the students and the staff alike. According to Vimeo (2018), security awareness in school is essential aspect in the first line of defense against security risks. By this, schools will be unable to protect itself against unseen security problems if they are oblivious of its existence. Thus, schools are expected to be aware of threats to the physical and informational security needed for the defense of the school if security peace is breached. Vimeo further argues that, security awareness in schools saves the teachers and the students from personal risks, as well as, enlightens others about security issues or problems as they arise within and outside the school environment.

The threats to life, rape, kidnapping and allied vices in Nigeria schools led the Federal Government of Nigeria to launch a programme tagged "Safe School Initiative (SSI)." According to Idris (2018), the Safe School Initiative (SSI) was launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in May, 2014 to protect Nigeria children in schools from the insurgent attacks in form of kidnapping, hostage taking, rape and outright killing by the hoodlums. To affirm the insurgency effects on Nigeria schools, Adebayo (2018) explains that, Nigeria Safe School Week Initiative was launched in response to alarming rate of violence and insecurity across Nigeria schools especially in the North East, which is particularly targeted at children and female students in schools. Adebayo further observes that, the awareness campaign would among other things; step up actions on how to better protect the nation's schools against all forms of violence, as well as, potential threats which may not well be articulated by school administrators in order not to endanger the attainment of the stipulated educational objectives. This led the government and other stakeholders in education sector to step up to the challenge to save the children from violent attacks through appropriate safe school management strategy.

The management of Safe School Initiative (SSI) in Unity Schools in Nigeria involves a synergy approach between the school authority, parents, government, and other stakeholders in the school system. Based on this, the school administrators or principals are expected to make adequate use of human, material and functional resources available through planning, organizing, coordinating, provision of adequate staff, among others by devising policy framework on how to control the violent attacks on Nigeria children in schools. United Nations International Children's Education Fund (2014), affirms that, the global community has now focused its attention to the recent kidnapping of over 200 Nigeria girls and the horrific attacks on innocent children for their urge to obtain western education which the Boko Haram abhors

These incessant attacks on school children have generated a call for the international intervention. The Bureau of Management of the United Nations Development Programme (2018) observes that, it is useful to initiate the Safe School Initiative (SSI) within the context of education in Nigeria based on the fact that: almost one of three primary school age children is out of school, and roughly one of four junior secondary age children, is out of school; nearly 6.3 million or 60% of the 10.5 million Nigerian out of school children live in the Northern Nigeria; and huge geographical disparities exist, the percentage of children out of school in the Northeast is 30 times greater than the percentage of the Southeast. 60% of the out of school children are girls from northern Nigeria.

Based on the above figures or percentages of out of school children, there is an urgent need for the protection of education sector and the Nigeria children. The Safe School Initiative entails a combination of three main management systems. According to the Bureau of Management ([United Nations Development Programme, 2018](#)), the three management approaches are the school based management or interventions, community based management to protect schools and the special measures for some risk populations. Furthermore, from the UNDP memo, a general framework for the initiative (security awareness) based on global best practices and standards of the SSI initiative highlighted the school, community activities and special practices for schools in high-risk areas, as the basic parameters to curbing incessant attacks of Nigerian children in schools. But, the stress of the present study will hinge on school practical measures or strategies to protect Nigerian students/ pupils in Unity Schools through security awareness from horror posed by hoodlums in the recent times.

One of the ways to create security awareness for school children and the staff in Unity Schools in Nigeria is based on school management strategy. According to [Badmus \(2019\)](#), the SSI based on the school management is where the principal is expected to initiate plans and implement such plans that prevent or control the incessant attacks of school children by the insurgents. Badmus further explains that, it may take the form of reinforcement of school facilities or the employment of armed guards. By this booster, enhancing or reinforcing the physical protection of schools is necessary to shield staff and students and provide an avenue for self-defense by them when attacked. According to [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack \(GCPEA \(2016\)\)](#), this involves the use of boundary walls and or installation of barbed wire as basic and cost-effective mechanisms for the protection of the children and staff in school from horror attacks which may be kidnapping, rape, hostage-taking or instant killing of the victims. The Global Initiative further observes that, additional measures could be providing protective housing accommodation for students and staff. Thus, the construction of boundary walls to prevent or control attacks such as kidnappings of children in schools especially the female folk who are vulnerable to attacks can be prevented. The Principals of Unity School in Nigeria are therefore expected to use barbed wires or other barricades or have a perfected perimeter fencing of schools to protect the children from attacks from hoodlums that want to take the advantage of their vulnerability.

Another school-based management strategy that will protect the children in schools is the use of armed guards. The Principals of Unity Schools can opt for the use of armed guards in the protection of children from attack in schools. [Ademola \(2019\)](#), affirms that, the use of armed guards requires collaboration with the law enforcement agents or military personnel for the security of the students in schools. This may take the form of the employment of military or state – assisted para-military, police, or private hired guards. This will in no small measure ward-off miscreants within and outside the walls of the school environment. Furthermore, the school administrators or Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria can opt for the training and retraining of staff as safety officials in schools. [Okon \(2018\)](#), observes that, staff at each school level should train and retrain their staff on security awareness procedures and measures to forestall security branches. Okon further states that, the security measures include procedures for evacuation of school buildings and communicating with security personnel, ensuring that each classroom has emergency pack containing scrapples that must accompany each class when an evacuation occurs. The Principal of each Unity Schools in Nigeria must ensure that all safety personnel should have a way to communicate with local authorities in case of school attack. This measure will ensure the protection of the school children and the staff during a planned attack

The visit by school counsellors has a stake in the protection of school children. By this, counselors can be based in each school or appointed to carryout regular school visits to several schools on security awareness in towns and communities. [Adesina \(2018\)](#), explains that, the school counselors assist students who have experienced attacks in addressing the trauma which the students are exposed to after the attacks so as to enable them focus on teaching and learning. In the appreciation of the role of the school counselors, [Obi \(2019\)](#) explains that, counselors may also help students cope with the perceived militarization of their schools that can suddenly emerge during or perceived attacks from the hoodlums or the terrorists. This measure has a long run effect on enhancing the academic achievement of the students of Unity Schools in Nigeria. The implementation of school security plans and the use of rapid response team can be opted for by the principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria for security awareness and education strategies to prevent insurgency attacks. According to [Adeleke \(2019\)](#), the Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria with a synergy with local school authority can plan for school safety so that all the students and staff are made aware of the security problems and what to do in cases of emergency. [Adeleke \(2019\)](#) further states that, all staff and students must be conversant with the plans and corresponding routines or procedures or intricacies involved in detecting security challenges in schools which should be communicated to the families of staff, students and the broader society. More so, the Principals of Unity Schools can make use of rapid response teams. [Okoro \(2018\)](#), explains that, rapid response intervention team are to help in stemming the tide of security problems in Unity Schools in Nigeria. By this, in event of school attack, the principals of Unity Schools should make sure of the existence of response unit to repair or rebuild all the educational materials destroyed during insurgency attacks. Other measures for Safe School Initiative reform for the protection of children in schools are the need of the community and the special provision with the government to improve the overall security apparatus to ensure the safety of children in schools which is above the scope of this study. The basis of these measures is to enhance the academic achievement of the students in schools.

Academic achievement of students is explained in terms of the educational goals attained by a learner over a given period of time. [Okoro \(2018\)](#), defines academic achievement as, the accomplishment in academic area after undergoing a programme or course of study. [Ugbor \(2018\)](#), observes that, academic achievement is measured in terms of examinations, tests or continuous assessments which the students are given at period of time. This may be

influenced by the changes in the school environment especially, due to attacks by the insurgents as in case of the security issues in North – east Nigeria. The academic achievement of the students in Unity Schools in Nigeria may be influenced by the safe or otherwise of the school environment, hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiative to introduce the Safe School Programme in 2014 to protect school children from the adverse effects of attacks by hoodlums. According to Adelabu (2018), the attacks on schools in North-east Nigeria, for instance, has brought untold hardships to students, staff, families and the government at large. Adelabu further observes that, the attack on schools have led to death of students and staff, high drop-out rate, increased number of dis-placed persons, unemployment, and essentially, students’ academic achievement, among others. Thus, these affects in totality education sector and the academic achieving of students in Unity Schools in Nigeria.

Despite the launching of the Safe School Awareness Initiative by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2014, the programme is fraught with a lot of constraints or challenges in its management by Principals. According to Abel (2018), inadequate funds account for the major challenges to the Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria to manage the safe school initiative or programme. Abel further observes that, poor infrastructure, ethnic-religious coloration of the crisis in Nigeria also account for the problems of the management of the SSI awareness by the Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria. Apart from above, some other challenges have been identified by authors and scholars in the fields of education and security. Abel (2018) explains that, in as much as the SSI campaign by the Federal Government of Nigeria is imperative based on the prevailing circumstances; it has become difficult to implement it due to some problems such as, poor infrastructure in schools, inadequate security guards in schools, politics and corruption at the highest level, among others. Therefore, the management of Safe School Initiative (SSI) has become great source of concern to the Principal of Unity Schools in Nigeria and other stakeholders in the education sector due to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure in schools, corruption, politics, ethnic-religious coloration of the insurgency, among others. It is based on this premise that the study examined Security Awareness as a panacea for the effective management of Safe School Initiative which may impact negatively on the students’ academic achievement in Unity Schools in Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Safe teaching and learning environment are considered as very paramount to the attainment of educational aims and objectives through the imparting of the requisite skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to students in schools. This is usually attained where the students learn and the teachers teach in an environment free of fright. But, it seems there is a down turn in the academic achievements of students in Unity Schools in Nigeria due to the incessant, horrific attacks, killings, rape and kidnapping in schools. Meanwhile, schools have the primary duty to safeguard the students and staff in their care, while at the same time creating the “risk awareness”, but not risk adverse for leaders of tomorrow. This objective seems not to be realizable due to several challenges occasioned by several attacks on Nigerian Schools by insurgents, as no study known to the researchers has been carried out in this direction. It is based on this background that, the researchers embarked on the study to ascertain the potency of security awareness campaign as a panacea for effective management of Safe School Initiative, and its impact on students’ academic achievement in Unity Schools in Nigeria.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate security awareness as a panacea for the effective management of Safe School Initiative (SSI) and students’ academic achievement in Unity Schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study included to:

1. Investigate the rationale for the launching of safe school awareness initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria.
2. Find out school-based management strategies for the effective management of Safe School Initiative by the principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the challenges to the effective implementation of Safe School Initiative by Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the rationale for the launching of safe school awareness initiative in unity schools in Nigeria?
2. What are the school-based management strategies for the effective management of Safe School Initiative by the Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges to the effective implementation of Safe School Initiative by Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria?

2. Methods and Materials

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was all the principals of unity schools in Nigeria numbering 104. No sampling technique was adopted for the study as all the principals were used as sample. The researchers developed a 20 item structured questionnaire titled, “Safe School Initiative Questionnaire, (SSIQ)” to obtain relevant information for the study. Items 1 – 6 dealt with the rational for the launching of Safe School Awareness Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria. Item 7 – 12 concerned the school-based management strategies for the effective implementation of Safe School Initiative by Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria whereas, items 13 – 20 concerned on the challenges to the effective implementation of Safe School Initiative

by principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria. The instrument was structured on a modified 4-point Likert scale, which the respondents reacted to. The questionnaire was weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively.

The criterion mean is 2.50. The instrument was face validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning and another in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. It yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.83, which indicated that the instrument was reliable. A total of 104 copies of the instrument was administered and retrieved. The data was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. Any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted value whereas; item with a mean rating below 2.50 was not accepted.

3. Result and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the rationale for the launching of Safe School Awareness Initiative in Unity School in Nigeria?

Table-1. Mean score and Standard Deviation of the Principals of Unity Schools on the Rationale for Launching Safe School Awareness Initiative in Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	To save the life of students in schools	3.00	0.68	Agreed
2.	To reduce the dropout rate of students in schools	3.50	0.60	Agreed
3.	Students are made to be aware of the security situation in schools	2.50	0.54	Agreed
4.	Prevention of the future attacks of schools	3.00	0.70	Agreed
5.	SSI enhances the general protection of education sector through the provision of conducive learning environment	2.86	0.70	Agreed
6.	Helps to reduce the spate of violence such as kidnapping, killings, rape and murder of school children	3.00	0.68	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3:00	0:65	Agreed

N = 104

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of principals of Unity Schools on the rationale for Safe School Awareness Initiative in Nigeria. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores above the mean criterion of 2.50. It was deduced that, the higher, the mean scores, the lower the standard deviation; the lower the mean score, the higher the standard deviation becomes. Therefore, from the findings on Table 1 above, with a grand mean of 3.00 and standard deviation of 0.65, it is established that these items are the rationale for the launching or introduction of Safe School Awareness Initiative by the Federal Government in Unity Schools in Nigeria. Therefore, it implies that, the rationale for launching Safe School Awareness Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria include: to save the lives of the students in school, to reduce the dropout rate of students in school, to make the students be aware of the security situation in schools, prevention of future attacks of schools, address the general protection of education sector, helps to reduce the spate of violence such as kidnapping, killings, rape, and murder of innocent school children. This shows that Principals agreed with all the item statements.

Research Question 2: What are the School-based Management Strategies for the Effective Implementation of Safe School Initiative (SSI) by Principals of Unity Schools to enhance the Academic Achievement of Students in Nigeria?

Table-2. Means score and Standard Deviation of the Principles of Unity Schools in Nigeria on the School-based Management Strategies for the Effective management of safe School Initiative to enhance the Academic Achievement of Students in Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation	Decision
7.	Reinforcement of the school infrastructure through the use of barbed wire	3.00	0.68	Agreed
8.	The use of armed guards in schools	2.50	0.54	Agreed
9.	The training of staff in school as safety officials	3.00	0.68	Agreed
10.	Constant visits by counsellors to schools	2.50	0.60	Agreed
11.	Synergy between the school and the local authorities in implementing school security plans religiously	2.50	0.54	Agreed
12.	The employment a rapid response team by schools	3.50	0.60	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3:1	0:64	Agreed

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of the Principals of Unity Schools on the rationale for Safe School Awareness Initiative in Nigeria. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores and above the mean criterion of 2.50. Thus, it is deduced that, the higher the mean scores, the lower the standard deviation, and vice versa. This shows the Unison of the respondents on the item statements. Based on the findings in table 2 above, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.1 and standard deviation of 0.64 respectively, it is

deduced that, these are the school-based management strategies used by the Principals of Unity Schools for the implementation of Safe School Awareness Initiative to enhance the academic achievement of students. Therefore, the school-based management strategies used by the principals of Unity Schools for the implementation of Safe School Initiative to enhance the academic achievement of students in Nigeria include: the reinforcement of the school infrastructure, the use of armed guards in schools, the training of staff as safety officials, constant visits by school counselors, synergy between the school authority and local communities in implementing school security plans, and the employment of rapid response team by schools among others.

Research Questions 3: What are the Challenges to the Effective Management of Safe School Initiative by Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria?

Table-3. Means and Standard Deviation on the Challenges to the Effective Management of Safe School Initiative by Principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation	Decision
13.	Inadequate funding of education	3.00	0.68	Agreed
14.	Poor infrastructure in schools	3.00	0.68	Agreed
15.	Ethnic religion bias of the principals and the parents	3.50	0.60	Agreed
16.	Corruption among political leaders	2.50	0.54	Agreed
17.	Influence of politics in education	3.00	0.68	
18.	Inadequate security personnel in schools	3.00	0.68	Agreed
19.	Sophisticated nature of the arms used by the insurgents	3.50	0.60	Agreed
20.	Poor perimeter fencing of schools	3.00	0.68	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3:0	0:64	Agreed

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of Principals of Unity Schools on the challenges to the implementation of Safe School Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria. The respondents agreed on all the items in the table with mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. It was deduced that, the higher the mean score, the lower the standard deviation, the lower the mean score, the higher the standard deviation becomes. All these items were rated positive, hence, the respondents agreed with the item statements. Based on the findings in Table 3 above, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.1 and 0.64 respectively, it is deduced that they are the challenges faced by the Principals of Unity Schools in the implementation and management of SSI in Nigeria. Therefore, it implies that, the challenges to the implementation and management of Safe School Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria include: inadequate funds for the Principals to procure the necessary materials for the SSI programme, infrastructural decay in Unity Schools, ethno-religious bias of the Principals and the government, corruption among the political leaders who divert funds meant for Unity Schools, influence of politics in the education sector, inadequate security personnel in schools, sophisticated nature of the arms and ammunition used by the insurgents, and poor perimeter fencing, among others.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study showed that, the rationale for launching the safe school initiative (SSI) by the Federal Government of Nigeria include: to save the lives and properties of students in school, to reduce the dropout rate of students in schools, to keep the students abreast of the security situations in schools, to prevent attacks of school by hoodlums or the insurgents, to ensure the general protection of the education sector by the position of conducive environment for the students to learn, and to reduce the spate of violent attacks on students and schools. The above findings agreed with that of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), the constitution section 14(1) (b) Joseph (2014), Ezenta (2018), Ibrahim (2015), Vimeo (2018), and UNICEF (2014), on the rationale for the inauguration or launching of the Safe School Initiative in Schools for holistic approach by the government to protect the lives and properties of students and schools to enable learn in a conducive environment without threats or violence of any form.

Furthermore, the findings of the study showed that the school-based management strategies adopted by Principals to enhance the academic achievement of students under Safe School Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria include: reinforcement of school infrastructure, the use of armed guards in schools, the training of staff as safety officials, constant visits by school counsellors, synergy between the school and the local authorities in the implementation of the school security plan, and the employment of rapid response team by the principals of Unity Schools in Nigeria to douse the effects of attacks in schools. Their findings agreed with that of United Nations Development Programme (2018), Badmus (2019), Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA (2016), Ademola (2019), Obi (2019), Adeleke (2019) and Okoro (2018) who stated in different occasions that Safe School Initiative launched by the Federal Government in 2015 was meant to protect the school children from incessant attacks from hoodlums in Nigeria.

The findings of the study also showed that, the challenges to the implementations of Safe School Initiative in Unity Schools in Nigeria include: inadequate funding of schools by the Federal Government, infrastructural decay in schools, inability of school principals to undertake perimeter fencing due to inadequate funds, ethno-religious bias of the Principals and the government, corruption and ineptitude of the principals, political influence on school

administration, inadequate security personnel in schools, and the sophisticated nature of the arms and ammunition used by the insurgents in attacking schools among others. The above findings agreed with the studies of Abel (2018), who observe that, the constraints to the implementation of Safe School Initiative (awareness) programme in Unity Schools in Nigeria revolves around in adequate funding, corruption and ineptitude of the school Principals, political influence in the administration of Unity Schools and the sophisticated nature of the arms and ammunitions used by the insurgents in attacking schools.

5. Conclusion

Safe School Initiative was launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2014 to protect schools from insurgency attacks so as to create a conducive environment for teachers to teach and students to learn thereby, enhancing the academic achievement of the students. However, the SSI programme as launched by the government for Nigeria schools tend to run into series of challenges due to inadequate funding, political influence in school, and poor perimeter fencing of the schools, inadequate security personnel, among others. It is based on this background that the study made some useful recommendations.

Recommendations

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

1. Unity schools should be adequately funded by the government.
2. Recruitment of well-trained security guards in schools.
3. Unity schools administration should be shielded from partisan politics.
4. Principals of unity schools in Nigeria should sit up to their responsibilities and eschew corruption and other vices that undermine the attainment of academic excellence by students.
5. Sensitization programme inform of workshop, conferences and seminars should be organized for Principals, teachers, and students on security tips, its awareness and how best to avoid security threats.
6. Unity Schools should be provided with facilities especially the perimeter fencing of schools.
7. The military and para-military or outfits in Nigeria through the government should step up to the challenges posed by the insurgents especially the incessant attacks on school and students in Unity Schools in Nigeria.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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