A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO RESOLVING THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract
The paper traces the historical ideology of school and school system from the ancient time through Islamic culture of the modern world to Commonwealth Nations. It identifies challenges to security from the physical, psychological, emotional, and financial obligation within a school setting. It examines measures of security such as; assurance, counter measures, exploits, risks, vulnerability etc. Challenges such as school health services, online school, school discipline and stress reveals the need for closer examination. Challenges in the Nigeria learning environment, importance of school security and a systematic approach to identifying and resolving security risks in schools are prioritised in this paper. The paper finally recommends effective and efficient maintenance and good managerial culture that will require constant school security evaluation.

Introduction

Dodge (1962) observed that the concept of grouping students together in a centralized location for learning has existed since classical antiquity. Formal schools have existed at least since ancient Greece, ancient Rome, ancient India and ancient China. The Byzantine Empire had an established schooling system beginning at the primary level. According to traditions and encounters, the founding of the primary system began in 425AD and military personnel usually had at least a primary education.

Falmer (2008) acknowledged that Islam was another culture that developed a school system in the modern world. Emphasis was put on knowledge which required a systematic way of teaching, spreading knowledge, and purpose–built structure. At first, mosques combined both religious performance and learning activities, but by the 9th century, the Madras was introduced, a proper school that was built independently from the mosque. They were also the first to make the Madras system a public domain under the control of the Caliph. The Nizamiyya Madras is considered by consensus of scholars to be the earliest surviving school, built towards 1066 AD by Emir Nizam Al-mulk. In Europe, universities emerged during the 12th century. Here, scholasticism was an important tool, and the academics were called schoolmen. During the middle age and much of the early modern period, the main purpose (as opposed to universities) was to teach the Latin language.
Greg (2006), cited that in most of the commonwealth of Nations (Nigeria inclusive), Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania etc, the term school refers primarily to pre–university institutions, where subjects taught included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Theology, Law, Astronomy, Metaphysics, Ethics, Medical science and Religion.

Security

Security applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, nation or organization. Security provides a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat (Wikipedia 2012).

It is a condition of not being threatened, especially physically, psychologically, emotionally, or financially. It secures an organization or department responsible for providing and enforcing laws, rules, and regulations as well as maintaining order. Security secures the fulfilment of an obligation and provides freedom from apprehension (Greg, 2006).

Categorizing Security

There is an immense literature on the analysis and categorization of security. Part of the reason for this is that, in most security system, the ‘weakest link in the chain’ is the most important. The situation is asymmetric since the defender must cover all points of attack while the attacker needs only to identify a single weak point upon which to concentrate (Wikipedia 2012).

As provided by Liddle and Scot (2013), this categorisation falls under the following realms:

1. **IT realm**
   - Application security
   - Data security
   - Aviation security
   - Computing security
   - Network security
   - Operation security (OPSEC).

2. **Physical real**
   - Airport security
   - Home security
   - Physical security
   - School security
   - Food security
   - Infrastructure security
   - Port security
   - Shopping centre security

3. **Political realm**
   - Homeland security
   - International security
   - Public security
   - Human security
   - National security

4. **Monetary real**
   - Financial security
With the provision above, this paper intends to look into the challenges the school system faces with regards to security within the school environ using Bentley and Jerry’s (2006) analysis in resolving related security challenges through the following security concepts.

1. **Assurance**: - It is the level of guarantee that a security system will behave as expected.
2. **Counter measure**: - It is a way to stop a threat from triggering a risk event.
3. **Defence in depth**: - Never rely on one single security measure alone.
4. **Exploit**: - A vulnerability that has been triggered by a threat.
5. **Risk**: - It is a possible event which could cause a loss.
6. **Threat**: - It is a method of triggering a risk event that is dangerous.
7. **Vulnerability**: - A weakness in a target that can potentially be exploited by a security threat.

### School Security

Wikipedia (2012) sees a school as an institution designed for the teaching of students (or pupils) under the direction of teachers. Most countries have systems of formal education, which is commonly compulsory. In most school system, students progress through a series of activities as categorized by naming such as primary school for young children and secondary school for teenagers who have completed primary education. An institution where higher education is taught is commonly called a university, college etc.

Winsa (2012) states that safety of staff and students is increasingly becoming an issue for school communities, an issue most schools are addressing through improved security. Some have also taken measures such as installing metal detector or video surveillance, taking identification or door numbering in case of children boarding buses. Other security concerns faced by schools include:

1. Bomb threat
2. Gangsters
3. Vandalism
4. Bullying
5. Gun shorts

Winsa (2012) identifies the following as challenges to security in schools;

1. **School health services**: - School health services are services from medical, teaching and other professionals applied in or out of school to improve the health and well-being of children and in some cases whole families. These services have been developed in different ways around the globe but the fundamentals are constant i.e. the early detection, correction, prevention or amelioration of disease, disability and abuse from which school aged children can suffer.
2. **Online schools and classes**: - Some schools offer remote access to their classes over the internet. Online schools also provide support to traditional schools, as in the case of the
school net Namibia. Some online classes also provide experience in a class, so that when people take them, they have already been introduced to the subject and know what to expect, and even more classes provide high school credit allowing people to take the classes at their own pace. Many online classes cost money to take but some are offered free.

(3) **School discipline:** - Schools and their teachers have always been under pressure. For instance, pressure to cover the curriculum, to perform well in comparison to other schools. Practitioners of critical pedagogy maintain that disciplinary measures have no positive effect on student learning. Indeed, some argue that disciplinary practices detract from learning, saying that they undermine students’ individual dignity and sense of self-worth. Self-worth occupies a more primary role in students’ hierarchy of needs.

(4) **Stress:** - As a professional, teaching has levels of work-related-stress (IORS) that are among the highest in any profession. The degree of this problem is becoming increasingly recognized and support systems are being put into place. Teacher education increasingly recognizes the need to train those new to the profession to be aware of and overcome mental health challenges that may be faced. Stress sometimes affects students more severely than teachers, to a point where the students are prescribed stress medication. This stress is claimed to relate to standardized testing, and the pressure on students to score above average.

### School Security in the Nigeria Learning Environment

Guard (2012) sees school security and safety as an extremely important issue, especially in the light of recent kidnappings, vandalizing pipelines and the Boko Haram threat in the country. School officials and administrations should begin to take a pro-active approach to their school’s safety through a variety of different tools and methods that analyse potential risks. Keeping a school secure and safe is a very important task that should not be taken lightly. There are many ways to increase safety of schools and minimize risk of attacks and other dangers. Guard (2012) further emphasized that the importance of having a safe and secure learning environment for the academic development of Nigeria from the ever increasing menace sweeping across the country must be a thing of national interest to avoid failure through parents and the government so that our future can be protected.

### Importance of School Security in Nigeria

Below are some reasons as opined by Guard (2012) why the safety of Nigerian schools should no longer be treated as a luxury, but a necessity.

(1) **Security is a fundamental Human Right:** - For a school to achieve its educational mission, it is important for it to make students feel safe and secure.
(2) **Prevent terrorism:** - Today, there are cases of bombing and sporadic shooting in places of worships, and generally in the public, this may spread to schools (recent events of political and religious unrest have indicated this).

(3) **Facilitate learning:** - Creating an enabling environment means ensuring student safety throughout the school day and keeping them free from both physical violence and social or emotional violence.

(4) **Improve Quality of Education:** - As fear hinders a student’s ability to learn, so does it also affect a teacher’s capacity to impact knowledge.

(5) **Avoid legal issues and financial Losses:** - This is particularly directed to the school administrators and owners. Schools can be held liable if students are injured due to security negligence.

**Security Concepts & Operational Issues**

Toppo and Greg (2009) opined that schools and schools’ programs must work towards reaching out to students, to teach them to be good citizens, to identify potentially dangerous personalities, and to develop appropriate intervention strategies. Excellent programs that address the issues of bullying, anger, hate, abuse, drugs, alcohol, gangs, lack of role models, vandalism, etc must be incorporated into schools’ operational framework. Many security technologies via their products (e.g. cameras, sensors etc) can be excellent tools if applied appropriately, though they are not cost effective when it comes to the issue of maintenance. Conceptual issues raised by Bentley and Jerry in resolving security challenges can be utilized where security risk has been identified.

**Systematic Approach to Identifying the Security Risk at a School**

No two schools are alike and, therefore, there is no single approach to security that will work ideally for all schools. From year to year, a school’s security strategy will need revision because the world around it and the people inside it will always be changing. The following are systematic approach risk identification (Kenneth & David 2010);

1. **Defining a school’s assets:** - The protection of the students and staff is always at the top, but the measures taken to protect them will usually be driven by defined threats.

2. **Defining a school’s threat:** - How sophisticated or motivated the perpetrator seems to be, go a long way in measures taken to protect against threats driven by the characterization of the facility and its surroundings.

3. **Characterizing a school’s environment:** - Any security strategy must incorporate the constraints of its facilities so that all strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncrasies are realized and provided for. How risks are approached will largely be driven by facility constraints.
(4) **Evaluating a school’s security system design**:- The staff assigned to handle security concerns should plan to meet on a regular basis for collaboration on new problems, needed changes to existing approaches, and the exchange of information and intelligence. New problems and proposed solutions may sometimes be presented to school employees, the student council, the parent advisory group, the local police, or other schools in the area. Although including more people may lengthen the decision making process, making representatives of these groups a part of the security upgrade team for issues that would involve them will ensure buy-in.

(5) **Interface Of Dialog**:- consistency in deliberation of the progress made through outlined measures of development between the schools and its surrounding environs need to be adhered to.

(6) **Task and Policy Implementation**:- special consideration must be given to cultural diversity and plurality before indigenous strategy.

**Conclusion**
The need for improved school security should be a thing of necessity and priority. There is so much at stake to the individual, legally, financially, economically and even nationally since the product of the system in our schools are moving into the larger society. The security consciousness of the school system and administration, go a long way in influencing the products from the school. Education they say is the best legacy. Nigerian schools’ safety must be protected in order to reduce the menace of destruction through fear and ignorance. The design, evaluation and approach employed in a school security concept should always answer questions posed by assurance, counter measures taken, in-depth defence, exploit triggered by threat, risk involved, threat offered, weakness in a target, etc.

**Recommendations**
Security Management in Nigeria Schools
Maintenance is important for promoting the fact that the school is owned and cared for by someone. Tidy grounds, well maintained buildings, effective boundaries and obvious security measures will reduce attractiveness to vandals and destruction. Schools that have poorly maintained buildings demonstrate a lack of concern and loss of control and are prone to vandals and thieves. Managing a security system can either be through:

1. **Natural surveillance** - The school and its grounds are open to view by staff and pupils, neighbours and passers-by. Measures may include fencing, good external and security lighting, and landscaping that eliminates visual obstructions.

2. **Access Control** - Relates to directing traffic (car, buses or people) to specific entrance so that the traffic can be controlled and monitored.
In resolving the problems of security challenges in schools in Nigeria, the following may be put into practice:

1. **Gather information**: - This is the starting point for successful security management.

2. **Rank security issues**: - Rank your security issues in order of importance to one and another.

3. **Review and monitor**: - Review your risk management plan at least annually. Also regularly monitor security incidents to anticipate and respond quickly to changes in security risk.

4. **Draft specification for a security audit**: - Recognition and specified risk management method of analysis should be done through a comprehensive line.

5. **Recording and report security incidents**: - Record of all incidents of crime, vandalisms, trespass and arson in an incident should be noted.

6. **Security consultants**: - Licensed security consultants may be engaged in order to design, manage, install as well as commission and set up maintenance plans in school security system.

7. **Training and Retraining**: - Training for staff to manage both school and personal security should not be underestimated.
References


Dodge, B. (1962), *Muslim Education in the Medieval Times*; the Middle East institute: Washington D.C.


Wikipedia.org/school #school.security.