Application of Intelligence Indicators on Secondary School Safety and Security as a Measure of Learning Enhancement

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Abstract

There have recently been a number of violent public attacks in Nigeria and school children have not been spared. This study examines the perception of relationships between staff and students in the application of security measures in secondary schools and the setbacks between teachers and students in the enforcement of educational policy in schools. This study looks at the situation in two Local Government Areas in the Riverine area of Rivers State, Nigeria where the story is the same in terms of the safety and security of school children. This study found fear among students and staff, anxiety, uncertainty, low morale, and absenteeism as a result of bullying and violence. This study identified a number of challenges, which include the absence of electricity, the uncooperative attitude of some Nigerians towards innovation, and lack of funds. This paper echoes the voices of concerned Nigerians and notes that if stringent measures are not put in place to ensure safety in schools, Nigeria risks not producing the men and women it needs (with adequate skills and education) to guide the country in the coming years. This study recommends that federal, state and local governments have emergency notification systems mounted in strategic locations in schools. Governments should provide the infrastructures and control needed to make these systems work.

Keywords: School safety; school security; intelligence indicators; learning environment

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INTRODUCTION

Safety in Nigerian schools is the concern of teachers, parents, and school administrators alike, all of whom see school systems as the incubators of great Nigerians who will soon pilot the affairs of the nation. Unfortunately, the violent reality of schools today makes one wonder how and if students are actually able to learn in such volatile environments. In addition, children and students are often very much in danger of being harmed, it is often simply the perception or fear of violence that influences how people act and behave. These perceptions can affect learners' school attendance, cause poor school performance, and affect the general wellbeing of learners. This situation must be remedied immediately if Nigeria is to produce the type of future citizen who will be able to hold their own as an equal among the community of nations.

This study was necessitated because of insecurity and violence in schools, resulting in the poor performance of candidates on the West African Senior Scondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO). This study focuses on schools in the Riverine area of the Rivers State: Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) and Okirika Local Government Area (WALGA). For the most part these are geographies that are quite far from most law enforcement officials. Amanchukwu (2010) reports that 29.93% of the May/June 2009 WASSCE candidates obtained a minimum of grade six in at least five subjects, including English Language and General Mathematics. School insecurity, including fear of being attacked by senior students, may have affected student performances on these examinations.

The VISION 20: 2020 redefines the scope of Nigeria's National Policy on Education and makes it more relevant to the needs of the present, stressing the development of skills and the need to unlock the ability and potential of every Nigerian child. One may wonder how such a feat is to be achieved in a context of intense physical insecurity. The results of this study can undoubtedly assist education managers, stakeholders, policymakers, teachers, and researchers as they work towards VISION 20: 2020 given that students must first be and feel safe before their potential can be unlocked (Briggs et al., 2012).

Research Questions

The following constitute the research questions for this study:

1. Is there a strained relationship between staff and students in the application of security measures in schools?
2. Are there any setbacks between teachers and students in the enforcement of educational policy schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

School safety could be defined as a situation in which the learner feels at home, develops confidence, maintains a positive state of mind, and does not show any signs of withdrawal. The opposite, a sense of insecurity at school, can have considerable ramifications including anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and confusion. When insecurities in the physical environment (perhaps brought about by bullying) are internalized, they can lead a child to develop a poor "self-concept," low self-esteem and a lack of belief in his or her own goodness, skills or abilities. Nigeria can be seen as "a nation at risk" given its widespread physical and consequently emotional/intellectual insecurity. Insecurity can be distressful and threatening to the psyche and is often accompanied by some degree of withdrawal and isolation.

Studies conducted in various contexts have shown that if violence is left unchecked over time in school settings, it can have a detrimental impact on both teaching and learning. Even those who are not directly affected come to feel a heightened sense of school insecurity as a result of the media panic that tends to magnify isolated incidences of school violence (Thompkins, 2000). Research has also shown that in most sub-Saharan African countries, violence is often perpetuated in schools by the state, where the later uses its repressive mechanisms to quell student rioters and imprison and torture student leaders (O'Malley, 2007). Other studies have emphasized the risk and consequences of sexual abuse in schools (Leach & Humphrey, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001). O'Malley (2007, p. 7), who has studied and written about violence and its effects in Middle Eastern schools (Iran, Palestine and Afghanistan) notes that "schools and places that should be safe for children have increasingly become the prime target of attacks by armed parties".

Apart from sexual abuse suffered by students at school, the majority of the world's poor living in inner-city neighbourhoods and slums endure various degrees of violence that can have a negative influence on educational attainment and schooling outcomes. Mugisha (2006) and Magadi, Zulu and Brockerhoff (2003), found that a large proportion of the urban poor in third world countries live in "life and health threatening neighbourhoods". Consequently, this paper is designed to show how physical security threats can hinder educational attainment and to examine a number of intelligent safety indicators that might be applied to reduce this violence.

High levels of crime, victimization and violence in any community are strong indicators of insecurity. Feelings of insecurity may also emanate from the fact that those entrusted with student security in schools are not able to ensure it or are, in some cases, the source of the insecurity. Hudson (1999:26) emphasized that the head teacher, senior teachers and caretaker of any school are seen as responsible for school safety and security. He further notes that this responsibility should be extended to the individual teachers who are to some extent responsible for the safety and security of those they teach.

Feelings of insecurity can increase student drop-out rates. Sterns and Glennie (2006), for instance, found that boys (as compared to girls) are more likely to drop out of school because of harsh disciplinary measures meted

out on them by teachers. At the same time, twelve percent of girls and eleven percent of boys in slum schools worried about being harassed by teachers at their schools. Unfortunately, this study did not ask students to specify the type of harassment experienced or feared and so it is not possible to determine whether girls and boys endured different types of harassment.

Given the gendered and patriarchal nature of society, it seems likely that the school environment today is more insecure for female students. According to Leistikow (2003), Kenya's Ministry of Education identified teachers' negative attitudes towards female students as a factor in this insecurity noting that teachers often and openly allowed boys to bully girls in class. While in Nigeria, parents shy away from reporting sexual harassment meted out on their daughters at school, as shown in Table 1 below Kenya parents seem to be much more aware of sexual advances by teachers.

Table 1: Teachers try to have sex with pupils and sometimes do have sex with them

Response	Non- slum	Non-slum (%)	Slum	Slum (%)	Total	Total (%)
Strongly agree	14	2.06	280	12.52	294	10.09
Somewhat agree	26	3.83	184	8.23	210	7.2
Neutral	28	4.13	95	4.25	123	4.22
Somewhat disagree	68	10.03	84	3.76	152	5.21
Strongly disagree	528	77.88	1,554	69.47	2,082	71.42
Don't know	2	0.29	39	1.74	41	1.41
Not applicable	12	1.77	1	0.04	13	0.45
Total	678	100	2,237	100	2,915	100

Source of data: ERP

As Table 1 highlights, children and students who live and attend schools in slums are more likely to experience sexual harassment (heightened insecurity) by teachers when compared with non-slum students. In this instance, if security detectors were mounted and monitored throughout the school, these types of behaviours would fade over time.

Apart from sexual harassment, Amanchukwu (2005) has noted that a series of killings in both secondary and tertiary institutions have likewise invaded these once sacred learning spaces. Schools have long been seen as the safest place for children while their parents are engaged in other activities. Unfortunately, the crime rate in today's schools renders this shared cultural belief suspect. Recognizing this contradiction, the National Crime Prevention Council (2002) in collaboration with the national parents teachers asociation (PTA), and its national crime prevention partners (the All State Foundation, the ASSA ABLOY Group, Nextel Communications and the Security Industry Association) initiated the "Be Safe and Sound" campaign to mobilize parents, policy makers, school officials and students to take action to prevent violence in schools.

The story of violence is the same in developed countries, even among secondary school and middle school students. A study performed by Caty (1998) found that more than 6000 American students were expelled during the 1996-97 year for bringing guns to public schools. Dwyer (1999, p. 3) likewise stated that "250,000 or more weapons were brought to school each year by students". Amanchukwu (2005, p. 157) concluded that "no school can honestly claim to be violent-proof" as everything depends on how the school manages its affairs on a day-to-day basis.

In the Unites States, most school crime is theft. In 2001 there were 42 thefts for every 1,000 students ages 12 to 18 and thefts accounted for about 62 percent of all crime against students at school that year (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004/2004.pdf). In 2001, 36 percent of students also saw hate-related graffiti at school and 12 percent reported that someone had used hate-related words against them (De Voe et al., 2003:40). Students are not the only ones affected by school crimes. Teachers, at times, can also be the victims of these crimes, especially in rural schools where law enforcement is not as readily available or visible. Studies in Washington, DC from 1997 to 2001 found that teachers were the victims of some 1.29 million non-fatal crimes in schools, including more than a million thefts and 473, 000 violent crimes such as rape, robbery and assault.

It is important to note that the perception of crime can be as debilitating as crime itself. In 2001, 6 percent of students reported fears that they were going to be attacked or harmed at school and almost 5 percent said that they avoided one or more specific areas at school for their own safety (De Voe et al., 2003). A 1996-97 study carried out by the United States Department of Education revealed that 84 percent of public schools were considered to have a low degree of security. According to the report, however, the situation is changing. Educators have come to realize that the foundation of all learning is safety and security and that attendance and academic performance are closely linked to how safe students perceive the school environment to be. It is hard for young

people to concentrate on learning or have a desire to learn when they feel vulnerable, and a climate of fear forces teachers to shift their focus from teaching to policing (United States Department of Education, 1998).

A survey on youth bullying conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide for National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in 2002 revealed that six out of ten students witnessed 'bullying or taunting' on a daily basis. Although further studies showed that as many as 75% of children had been victims of bullying, only 20% of parents surveyed in 2000 saw bullying as a serious problem for their children (National Crime Prevention Council, 2001, p. 32). Bullying has long been an issue in Nigerian secondary schools and requires the attention of law enforcement before the situation gets out of hand.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

The concept 'learning environment' refers to the classroom and all other places in the school that offer an opportunity for or affect learning. The school is set up by the society to inculcate knowledge and skills in individuals with the aim of personal and societal improvement. Along these lines, Nwagwu in Okonkwo and Ozurumba (1989) sees education as the formation of character, the development of intellectual capabilities of the individual, the improvement and transmission of cultural heritage, and the equipping of individuals with the knowledge and skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to earn a living in a rapidly changing world, and in turn contribute to the improvement and welfare of society.

These goals can only be achieved in the classroom if the classroom environment is conducive to learning. One of the preconditions for effective learning is a cordial relationship between teachers and learners. According to Tibilisi-Batumi (2011), teacher/student relations can develop in the following ways: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved. He noted that authoritative teachers tend to support students in their endeavors and in their risk-taking, even when it produces mistakes. Thinking and seeking out new strategies are important skills for these teachers and so their students tend to persist until they find the right solution.

Atkinson and Feather (1966), in their Expectancy X Value theory, suggested that people are motivated to engage in an activity to the extent that they expect to succeed times the value they place on the success (that is they expect to succeed and value the success and so are motivated to engage in activity). Apart from relation style, Atkinson and Feather stated that the care shown by authoritative teachers and which tends to be lacking in uninvolved teachers, is key to student success. This care is generally expressed by giving time and attention to students and by showing respect to individual students. Uncaring attitudes can create insecurity in the student and consequently affect learning.

According to Ezeocha, Nosiri and Eferakeya (1990, p. 32), teachers should strive to maintain a satisfactory level of humanness by creating a conducive setting where lessons can take place. This is achieved by accommodating students' opinion, stimulating and reinforcing students, observing students so as to detect and support slow learners, and avoiding favouritism. Aggarwal (2007, p. 154) likewise states that in order to maintain the emotional climate of the class, students should be openly praised when they show good results. This encourages them to achieve more and develops their confidence, hope, self-reliance and self-respect.

Although teachers can face considerable disturbances and behavioural problems in the classroom, it is their responsibility to apply all of their own educational and classroom experiences to maintain respectful control of the classroom and to ensure that all students are able to come into an environment conducive to thinking and learning (Amanchukwu, 2005). It is important to note, however, that there are some instances in which teachers feel that they are or could be overpowered by violent students. An interview with teachers from the ONELGA and WALGA Local Government Areas in Rivers State in 2008 revealed that teachers are very often working in fear of students with the capacity to become extremely violent. The teachers themselves found it difficult to discipline these students for fear of retaliation. Meaningful learning cannot take place in such an environment.

Student-Student Relations

The classroom climate reflects the feelings that students generate and express in that environment. It is important that the classroom teacher initiate and encourage cooperative relationships among students. Fairness and equity must prevail in the school system as a whole and in the classroom in particular. Individual, collective and challenging tasks should be given to students to enable them develop attitudes that will help them excel in life. According to Amanchukwu (2007), students should be guided to practice civic skills such as problem solving, public speaking, consensus building, and discussion, writing, and reflection on controversial issues. These activities will help students to develop compassion and respect not only in their present relationships, but in their future relationships as well.

The "Be Safe and Sound" Campaign

The "Be Safe and Sound" campaign was a public education and awareness campaign launched in 2002 to involve parents in the issue of school safety and security. It encourages parents and school principals to actively evaluate the school's social climate and its physical environment. The campaign is based on the premise that while security devices such as locks and alarms are important, tighter security alone will not make a school safer. Preventative safety measures that focus on behaviour and environmental design, such as conflict resolution programmes, zero tolerance policies, bullying prevention programmes, visitor policies and community service programmes, are critical.

The "Be Safe and Sound" campaign encourages parents to partner with school principals to organize school safety and security committees or action teams. These action teams, comprised parents, school principals, teachers, students, law enforcement and other key players, have been charged with the following tasks:

- To assess local school safety and security needs;
- To identify and engage community leaders and other concerned citizens who can help set safety and security priorities;
- To create action plans mapping out goals and objectives for addressing specific safety and security problems;
- To promote and advocate for school safety and security in the community;
- To enact positive change in and around the school compound; and
- To evaluate the effectiveness of school safety and security improvements.

This campaign seems to suggest that serious attention is increasingly being paid to safety and security in schools. The campaign has been a considerable success in the Edwin Stanton Elementary School in Philadelphia where a schools safety and security action team conducted several kinds of safety and security research in January and February 2003. This research included surveys of students, faculty and parents to find out how each group perceived the school's current levels of safety and security. The school principal then worked with parents and other community leaders to evaluate the survey data and form a safety and security action plan. The action plan identified several major priorities including: to secure the building against potential intruders, to provide a safe corridor to and from school, and to launch a school wide anti-bullying campaign. This action plan also led to the adoption of a new school door bell, video camera surveillance equipment, a school safety and security resource center, and materials to help teachers detect signs of sexual abuse in students (www.safeschools.info/).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study involved a descriptive survey designed to identify various security risks experienced in ONELGA and WALGA in the Rivers State. The study population included eleven secondary schools in the ONELGA and eight secondary schools in WALGA Local Government Areas. These schools are located in the riverine area of the Rivers state and have similar topography.

Instrument for Data collection

This study employed a Questionnaire called, "A questionnaire on the Application of Intelligence Indicators on Secondary School Safety and Security". Questionnaires consisted of eighteen structured and open-ended questions written in simple English. Fifty-five questionnaires were administered to secondary schools in the ONELGA LGA and 40 were administered to secondary schools in the WALGA LGA. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 2: Surveys administered to secondary schools in the ONELGA

S/no	Names	Number of Questionnaires	
		Administered	Returned
1	Gov. Sec. Schl. Ngo	5	5
2	Gov. Sec. Schl. Asarama	5	5
3	Gov. Comp Sec. Schl. Ataba	5	4

4	Community High Schl. Egbormung	5	5
5	Community Sec. Schl. Iyonoroon (UBE)	5	5
6	Community Sec. Schl. Agwut obolo	5	5
7	Community Sec. Schl. Unyeada	5	5
8	Community Sec. Schl. Ebukuma	5	5
9	Community Sec. Schl. Ekede	5	5
10	Community Sec. Schl. Ibot-rren	5	5
11	Community Sec. Schl. Dema	5	5
	Total	55	54

Field Survey, 2009

Table 3: Surveys Administered to Secondary Schools in the WALGA

S/no	Names	Number of Questionnaires	
		Administered	Returned
1	Okrika Grammar Schl. Okrika	5	5
2	Okrika National Sec. Schl Okrika	5	5
3	Community Sec. Schl. Kalio	5	5
4	Community Sec. Schl. Okujagu	5	5
5	Community Sec. Schl. Ogan	5	5
6	Sports Institute Isaka	5	3
7	Community Gov. Sec. Schl Okochiri	5	5
8	Gov. Girls Sec. Schl. Okumagba	5	5
	Total	40	38

Field Survey, 2009

RESULTS

Research Question One

Is there a strained relationship between staff and students in the application of security measures in schools?

Table 4: Perception of Relationships between Staff and Students in the Application of Security Measures in Secondary Schools (ONELGA)

Question Number	Names of schools	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	G.S.S. NGO	4	1	-	5
2	G.S.S. ASARAMA	4	1	-	5
3	COMP. S.S. ATABA	3	2	-	5
4	COMM.HIGH SCHL. EGBORMUNG	4	1	-	5
5	COMM. S.S. IYONOROON (UBE)	4	1	-	5
6	COMM.S.S. AGWUT OBOLO	4	1	-	5
7	COMM.S.S. UNYEADA	3	2	-	5
8	COMM.S.S. EBUKUMA	4	-	-	4
9	COMM. S. S. EKEDE	4	-	1	5
10	COMM.S.S. IBOT-RREN	5	-	-	5
11	COMM.S.S. DEMA	5	-	-	5
	Total	44	9	1	54

In ONELGA, 81.48% of teachers felt that there was a strained relationship between teachers and students, while 16.67% did not feel this way. These results would seem to suggest that relationships between students and teachers are overwhelmingly strained in this LGA.

Table 5: Perception of Relationships between Staff and Students in the Application of Security Measures in Secondary Schools (WALGA)

Question Number	No.of schools	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	OKRIKA G.S, OKRIKA	3	1	1	5
2	OKRIKA NATIONAL S.S.OKRIKA	2	2	1	5
3	COMM S.S. KALIO	2	2	1	5
4	COMM.S.S. OKUJAGU	2	3	-	5
5	COMM. S.S. OGAN	2	1	2	5
6	SPORTS INSTITUTE ISAKA	3	2	-	5
7	COMM.S.S OKOCHIRI	3	2	-	5
8	G.S.S. OKUMAGBA	3	2	-	5
	Total	20	15	5	40

In the WALGA, 50% agreed that relationships were strained while 35% felt that they were not strained. Although these results point to strained relationships again, the disparity in perceptions is not as great as it was in the ONELGA.

Research Question Two

Are there any setbacks between teachers and students in the enforcement of educational policy schools?

Table 6: Perceptions on setback between teachers and students in the enforcement of rules (ONELGA)

Question Number	Sec schools	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	G.S.S. NGO	3	2	-	5
2	G.S.S ASARAMA	3	1	1	5
3	G. COMP. SCHOOL ATABA	4	1	-	5
4	COMM. HIGH SCH. EGBORMUNG	3	2	-	5
5	COMM.S.S YONOROON(UBE)	5	-	-	5
6	COMM.S.S. AGWUT OBOLO	2	2	1	5
7	UNYEADA	3	-	2	5
8	COMM.S.S.EBUKUMA	3	1	1	5
9	COMM.S.S. EKEDE	2	3	-	5
10	COMM.S.S. IBOT-RREN	5	-	-	5
11	COMM.S.S DEMA	5	-	-	5
	TOTAL	38	12	5	55

With respect to this question, 69.09% agreed that there had been setbacks between teachers and students in the enforcement of school rules, while 21.81% felt that there had not been any setbacks.

Table 7: Perceptions on setback between teachers and students in the enforcement of rules (WALGA)

Question Number	School	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
1	OKRIKA, G.SCH	4	1	-	5
2	OKRIKA, NATIONAL S.S.	3	2	-	5
3	COMM.S.S. KALIO	3	2	-	5
4	COMM.S.S. OKUJAGU	3	1	1	5
5	COMM. S.S. OGAN	5	-	-	5
6	SPORTS INSTITUTE ISAKA	4	1	-	5
7	COMM.S.S. OKOCHIRI	4	1	-	5
8	G. S. S. OKUMAGBA	5	-	-	5
	TOTAL	31	8	1	40

In the WALGA LGA, 77.5% believed that there had been setbacks in enforcement while only 10% did not perceive any such setbacks. A subsequent interview with teachers during a Teaching Practice Exercise revealed that students are often unruly in terms of their classroom behaviour and that this affects teaching and learning.

Having analysed the situation in both LGAS, coupled with the fact that there are serious security problems in the country in general, the author recommends that emergency notification systems be employed to help better ensure the safety, security and hence learning and advancement of students in school.

Application of Intelligence Indicators in Secondary Schools

In order to save students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders from insecurity and all of its ramifications, it is crucial that all tiers of government find a lasting solution to the school safety problem. Technology has improved considerably in the last decade; so much so that schools in the developed world have begun to employ different technologies to keep their students safe. Some of these include automated emergency notification systems – one of the fastest growing safety and communications applications in schools today. These systems make it possible for school administrators to send out an emergency message to parents, students and other stakeholders simultaneously through multiple channels. Some of these technologies are discussed below:

Honeywell's Instant Alert for Schools

This is a web-based notification service allowing school officials to deliver messages, both emergency and routine to parents within minutes at the click of a button. Parents are notified immediately of safety/security issues through their communication method of choice, such as telephone, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) and others. Parents can update their contact information online depending on how they would like to be reached. Teachers can also use this forum to discuss students' assignments, absences and academic performance with parents. Thus, the technology does not limit the system to emergency uses only. It can be used in day-to-day situations, including timely reminders of important events or deadlines. Schools pay varying subscription fees for the service based on their size.

For Broadview Middle school in Danbury, Connecticut, this application has allowed them to save up to $5,000 annually. By using Instant Alert to communicate with parents, the principal of Broadview Middle school notes that they are sure to reach parents within minutes, rather than hours or days, and so are able to redirect their human and monetary resources back to addressing their primary concerns, the safety education of their students**.**

National Notification Network (3N)

The National Notification Network (3N) includes sophisticated geographic targeting features and a new universal messaging interface. The targeting features allow users to hone in on message recipients based on geographical categories such as zip codes, neighbourhoods or a radius surrounding a specific point. The system is easy to manipulate mainly because of its self-administrative qualities. With this technology there is no hardware or software; instead an application service provider handles all of the data similar to a cell-phone service provider. The database containing parent contact information is secure in case of computer failure or breach and is hosted on multiple duplicate platforms.

This system can be used to inform parents of both emergency and non-emergency situations. The 3N system can help schools to set up a contact database for their system or it can integrate a pre-existing database. Parents are able to use a password-protected web-site to update their contact information and can prioritize multiple contacts or email addresses. The system will continue sending messages automatically until the recipient confirm they have received the message. School officials can then go online and view an administrative log that records who has confirmed receipt of a message and to whom a message has been sent.

Saf-T-Net ALERTNOW

The ALTERNOW system enables authorized staff to contact every emergency number provided to the school simultaneously with a single phone call. ALERTNOW can make 6,000 calls at once and is activated by calling a toll-free telephone number instead of using the Internet or a personal computer. Saf-T-Net ALERTNOW was designed to be simple in terms of use. This system can be used for everything from gas leaks and fires in classrooms to more serious emergency situations.

Video Surveillance Systems

Today video surveillance systems are most often Internet Protocol (IP)-based surveillance systems coupled with the use of digital video cameras making video surveillance a much more compelling option for schools and

colleges. Using their existing network infrastructures, school administrators can monitor high-risk areas of their buildings from a desktop or laptop computer through a live Internet feed. Networked security cameras and digital video feeds also offer a cheap and easier way to store and search archived material. Schools can also take advantage of today's surveillance systems by providing local law enforcement officials with access to surveillance camera images through a secure network link. With the presence of network and streaming video applications, first responders and emergency personnel can link up with schools to monitor crisis situations from afar.

In schools where video systems have digital recorders, they often also include duress/panic switches in various locations. When these switches are activated, the video systems will automatically begin steaming live video from their cameras to the police dispatch center along with an audible alarm. The dispatcher can then dispatch the proper authorities and begin to assess the situation inside of the school while attempting to make contact with school personnel. Knowing the situation in school, the police can then determine the best tactical approach to resolve the situation.

Likewise, in case of fire outbreak, the fire department can assess whether there is smoke in the building or if students or faculty are trapped and the extent of the emergency. This allows the fire department to respond to the appropriate area of the school and quickly determine what they need to do to save those in the most danger.

Employee, Student and Visitor Tracking

In many schools today, visitors and employees are tracked to ensure constant student safety. Raptor Technology has recently developed web-based software called **V-soft** to help keep schools safe by tracking students, faculty, visitors, school contractors, volunteers and others who enter the school building. This software scans a driver's license or other form of identification and visitors then receive a badge with their picture on it. Visitors can have their pictures scanned when they visit a school for the first time and then have that picture kept in the database so they do not have to go through the whole process on subsequent visits. This system also allows for visitors identities to be checked against state sex offender databases.

V-soft system can also be used to keep track of tardy students by having students sign into the system when they arrive late. The system then prints out a tardy slip for the student, and administrators are able to set a tardy level at which to penalize students, for example, three instances of late arrival. The system then automatically alerts school officials when a student reaches the designated level.

Challenges

Given the population (150 million), diversity, and financial and political challenges Nigeria faces today, there are a number of obstacles to the implementation of the above technologies worth noting:

1. The technologies recommended require electricity to operate. A stable supply of power to schools has been a serious problem that the federal government has been trying to tackle for some time, but has not yet resolved.

2. The uncooperative attitude of some authorities may make it difficult to implement these technologies. If one feels that he or she may not benefit personally from a project, or perhaps may suffer through the project, he or she is likely to impede its progress.

3. Nepotism is another factor that often hinders progress and new programs in Nigeria. One can predict a power struggle among authorities over who will supervise such a project on a large, possibly national, scale.

4. Insufficient funds, in a country that must make few resources meet the needs of many, represents another significant challenge to advancements in school safety and security. Many recent projects have been abandoned due to inadequate funds or the discovery that designated funds were being misappropriated.

5. Lastly, staff students and school administrators will require considerable education to be able to use the aforementioned systems. Without this type of training for all involved, it is likely that new technology-based security systems will be left unused as was the case with the first set of computers delivered to secondary schools by the federal government a number of years ago. Without proper training, these tools are of no use to the people of Nigeria.

Educational Implications

In order for public secondary schools in the Rivers State, and especially in Riverine Areas, to make a mark on the academic world, there must be adequate security to protect the teacher and the taught, otherwise effective teaching and learning cannot take place. The emergency devices discussed in this paper should be mounted in schools to aid in detecting and preventing violence. These communication systems could be used to move the state and nation forward, particularly as such advancement relates to achieving Vision 20:2020.

Managers of education must take it upon themselves to recommend to the federal government the best paths forward for making our educational institutions safe and secure. Teachers likewise should feel empowered to identify safety and security risks and to make recommendations for the elimination of those risks. Parents and other stakeholders must also take greater interest in what is happening in our educational institutions so as to have a say in the safety and the behaviours of their children.

CONCLUSION

The safety and security of students is paramount to education in Nigeria. The success of students in many ways depends on the commitment of the government (federal, state and local) to mounting automated emergency notifications in schools in addition to setting up curriculum programmes that would explicitly address safety and security. Though there is general insecurity in the country, it is important that our leaders today bear in mind the vulnerability of children and students in schools. School children must have a safe and secure environment in which to learn if Nigeria is to achieve its national goal and objectives. Vision 20:2020 will not be met if there is no peace in the land and if priority for implementing peacefulness is not given to underfunded and increasingly insecure educational institutions.

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