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# Towards Safer Learning Environments: An Assessment of Security Measures for Staff and Students in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

This study assessed the security measures implemented to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. In light of the rising insecurity affecting educational institutions nationwide, particularly the abductions and violent invasions of schools, this research aimed to evaluate the types, frequency, and effectiveness of current school security strategies. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving a sample of 513 principals and teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests. The findings revealed that traditional security measures—such as perimeter fencing, security guards, and controlled gate access—are the most commonly implemented and perceived as most effective. In contrast, technological interventions like CCTV surveillance and emergency drills are rarely used. Results also showed no significant difference in the perceptions of staff and students regarding the implementation, usage, and effectiveness of school security measures. The study concluded that while traditional security strategies offer immediate physical protection, there is a critical need for a more coordinated, well-funded, and technology-integrated approach to ensure safer school environments. It recommends consistent funding, capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration to enhance the security of public secondary schools in the state.

**KEYWORDS:** Security measures, School fencing, Surveillance systems.

### Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in the development of any society, serving as the foundation for individual growth, national progress, and societal stability. In Nigeria, secondary education forms a critical stage in the academic journey of students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for future success. However, in recent years, the safety and security of both students and staff in Nigerian public secondary schools seems to be increasing. Disturbing cases of abductions, armed attacks, and violent invasions of schools have created fear and instability within the education sector. In Northern Nigeria, where insurgency and banditry are most rampant, public secondary schools have been direct targets of organized attacks (Ojewale, 2024). A notable example is the February 2018 abduction of 110 schoolgirls by Boko Haram militants from Government Girls Science and Technical College, Dapchi in Yobe State (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021). Similarly, in December 2020, bandits stormed Government Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State, and kidnapped over 300 boys in a high-profile incident that shocked the nation (Odalonu & Egbogu, 2023).

The trend continued in February 2021 when gunmen attacked Government Science Secondary School in Kagara, Niger State, abducting 27 students, three staff members, and 12 family members (Al Jazeera, 2021). In the same month, another mass abduction occurred at Government Girls Science Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara State, where 317 female students were kidnapped (Reuters, 2021). Most recently, in March 2024, 287 pupils were abducted from LEA Primary and Secondary School, Kuriga, Kaduna State, further demonstrating the continued vulnerability of schools in the region (Associated Press, 2024). While Northern Nigeria bears the brunt of these high-profile school attacks, Southern Nigeria is not exempt from security threats. In November 2020, a teacher was kidnapped near Erho Secondary School, a public school in Abraka, Delta State, and held for ransom, raising concerns about the safety of school personnel in the South (Vanguard, 2020). In August 2024, three students were abducted during an armed invasion of the Enugu State College of Health Technology in Oji River, Enugu State, highlighting growing security risks even in educational institutions in the South-East (Vanguard, 2024). Moreover, a 2021 report by Vanguard warned that the trend of student abductions was spreading to Southern states, prompting Enugu and other southeastern states to increase fencing and security surveillance in boarding schools (Vanguard, 2021).

In response to these alarming developments, the concept of school security measures has gained prominence as a necessary strategy to protect students, teachers, and school infrastructure from both internal and external threats. Security measures refer to the deliberate actions, policies, infrastructure, and technologies implemented to prevent, reduce, or respond to threats within the school environment. These measures aim to create a safe learning atmosphere where educational activities can proceed without fear of violence, abduction, or disruption. In Nigerian public secondary schools, such

strategies include physical barriers like perimeter fencing and controlled gate access, the deployment of security personnel such as vigilantes or officers from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), as well as technological tools like CCTV cameras and emergency alert systems. Additionally, some schools have adopted safety protocols including lockdown drills, student and staff safety training, and coordination with local law enforcement. These interventions are not only critical to preventing potential attacks but also play a role in rebuilding trust in the education system, especially in regions frequently targeted by violence. However, the effectiveness of these security measures varies widely across states and schools, depending on available resources, level of government support, and institutional capacity.

Despite the introduction of various security measures by both federal and state governments, there is growing concern that many of these interventions may be insufficient or inconsistently applied across regions. While efforts such as fencing school premises, especially boarding schools, aim to control access and deter intruders, the adequacy and maintenance of these structures remain in question. For example, in Enugu State, although fencing and controlled gates have been introduced in some schools, others remain exposed due to limited funding or delayed government action (Vanguard, 2021). This raises a serious worry: are these protective measures reaching all public schools equally, or are some still dangerously vulnerable? Moreover, while the deployment of vigilante groups, local security personnel, and NSCDC operatives has become common in some high-risk areas, there is concern over the professionalism, training, and consistency of these personnel. In many schools, especially in rural or underfunded zones, the security presence is either too minimal or entirely absent. Even in areas where military or paramilitary forces provide escorts, this solution is reactive rather than preventive (UNICEF Nigeria, 2022). This raises another troubling question: can school environments truly be considered safe if they depend on external forces that may not be permanently stationed or equipped for school-specific protection?

Another initiative emergency preparedness drills and safety training for staff and students has been implemented in some regions. However, there is significant concern about the sustainability and coverage of these programs. In numerous cases, drills are conducted only once or without proper follow-up, leaving schools ill-prepared for real emergencies. Worse still, some schools have never conducted any such exercises due to a lack of trained personnel or support (Human Rights Watch, 2021). This creates a worrying gap in school safety: what happens when staff and students must respond to danger but have never been adequately trained? Although technological solutions such as CCTV, emergency alert systems, and GPS tracking are being piloted, particularly in urban centers and in partnership with NGOs, most public secondary schools especially in rural areas seem to lack access to these innovations. The digital divide and high cost of technology limit the scalability of these tools. This raises a pressing concern: are the benefits of security technology being restricted to a privileged few while the majority of schools remain exposed? Despite all these efforts, there remains a deep and persistent challenge: the lack of funding, skilled manpower, and coordinated planning across various levels of government and school administration. Many rural schools cannot afford even the most basic security interventions, and the absence of stakeholder synergy often leads to fragmented or duplicated efforts. This raises a final and central worry: without a coordinated and inclusive approach, can any security strategy truly ensure safe learning environments for all students and staff?

It is against this backdrop of uneven implementation and persistent risk that this study seeks to assess the effectiveness of current security strategies in public secondary schools in Enugu and Imo States. By comparing the strengths and weaknesses of existing measures, the research aims to uncover practical, context-specific solutions that can ensure schools become safe havens for learning rather than targets of violence. By doing so, the research aims to offer practical solutions that can be adapted and scaled to improve school security nationwide.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Education remains a powerful tool for national development and personal growth. However, its full potential can only be realized in environments that are safe and secure for both students and staff. In recent years, rising insecurity across Nigeria has heightened concerns about the safety of public secondary schools. Although many of the widely reported attacks have occurred in Northern Nigeria, there is growing evidence that schools in the South, including Enugu State, are increasingly exposed to security threats such as abductions, armed intrusions, vandalism, and physical assaults on school personnel. In response to these threats, several security measures have been adopted in public secondary schools across Enugu State. These include the construction of perimeter fencing, deployment of security guards, installation of CCTV surveillance systems, organization of safety drills, and collaboration with local law enforcement agencies. These efforts are aimed at creating a protective environment that ensures students can learn and teachers can work without fear.

Despite interventions by both the federal and Enugu State governments, concerns remain about the adequacy, consistency, and sustainability of these security measures. Some schools are well equipped with physical infrastructure and personnel, while others continue to face security gaps due to limited funding, poor maintenance, or lack of community involvement. These disparities pose challenges to achieving uniform safety standards across all public secondary schools in the state. This study, therefore, focuses on evaluating the school security strategies currently in place in Enugu State. It investigates the types of measures implemented, their frequency of use, and their perceived effectiveness in protecting students and staff. By identifying areas of strength and gaps in current practices, the research aims to provide practical recommendations for improving school security in Enugu State and ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study is to assess the security measures currently implemented to protect staff and students in public secondary schools across Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to identify the types of security strategies in place, examine how frequently they are used, and evaluate their perceived effectiveness in ensuring safety within school environments.

### Research Questions

1. What security measures are currently implemented to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu States?
2. What security measures are commonly used to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
3. What security measures are most effective to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures currently implemented in public secondary schools in Enugu States.
2. There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures are commonly used in public secondary schools in Enugu States.
3. There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures most effective in public secondary schools in Enugu States.

### Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to systematically collect, describe, and compare data on existing school security measures within the state. The population of this study comprise of 7,584 principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Enugu. According to records from the State Ministries of Education, Enugu State has 17 local government areas with 298 and 7,286 public secondary school principals and teachers respectively. To ensure adequate representation and manageable data collection, the researcher drew a sample of 513 respondents using the stratified random sampling technique. Specifically, 149 respondents which represented 50% public secondary school principals and 364 respondents which is 5% of the total population of teachers. The sample was drawn using the stratified random sampling technique. This method was adopted to ensure that both states were proportionally represented based on their respective number of public schools. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: section A: Demographic information of the respondents and section B items measuring the types, availability, and extent of implementation of school security measures for staff and students. The items were based on a four-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree. The instrument was validated by three experts two from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Suggestions and corrections provided were used to revise and improve the final version of the instrument. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using 20 public secondary school principals and teachers from neighbouring state, Anambra. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha method, and a reliability index of 0.82 was obtained, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The researcher, with the help of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires physically to the selected respondents in their respective schools. The participants were given ample time to respond to the items before collection. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics: Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Independent sample t-tests were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

### Presentation of Results and Discussion

#### Results

**Research Question 1: What security measures are currently implemented to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?**

**Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation on security measures currently implemented to protect staff and students.**

Security Measure Currently Implemented	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remark
Perimeter fencing	3.48	0.70	Implemented
Security guards/Vigilantes	3.42	0.81	Implemented
School gate control and ID checking	3.38	0.76	Implemented
Collaboration with police or NSCDC	2.95	0.85	Moderately used
CCTV surveillance cameras	2.34	0.90	Rarely used
Safety drills or emergency response training	2.28	0.88	Rarely used

The table shows that the most commonly implemented security measures are perimeter fencing (Mean = 3.48), presence of security guards (Mean = 3.42), and controlled access through gates (Mean = 3.38), all rated above 3.0. Technological interventions like CCTV cameras (Mean = 2.34) and safety drills (Mean = 2.28) are rarely implemented, indicating a heavier reliance on traditional security strategies.

**Research Question 2:**

**What security measures are commonly used to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?**

**Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation on security measures commonly used to protect staff and students**

Commonly Used Security Measure	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remark
Vigilante groups/NSCDC deployment	3.39	0.74	Common
Fenced school boundaries	3.51	0.66	Common
Gatekeeping/Visitors' registration	3.27	0.73	Common
Community security patrol involvement	2.92	0.80	Occasionally used
Use of technological devices (alarms/CCTV)	2.45	0.88	Not common

The most commonly used measures include fenced boundaries (Mean = 3.51), vigilante group engagement (Mean = 3.39), and gatekeeping protocols (Mean = 3.27). Less common measures include community patrols and technology-based tools, pointing to resource-based disparities in security practice.

**Research Question 3: What security measures are most effective to protect staff and students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?**

**Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation on security measures most effective to protect staff and students**

Security Measure Rated Most Effective	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remark
Fencing and controlled access	3.63	0.62	Highly effective
Trained security personnel	3.56	0.70	Highly effective
Collaboration with law enforcement	3.48	0.68	Effective
CCTV surveillance and monitoring	2.88	0.82	Moderately effective
Emergency drills and safety education	2.75	0.79	Moderately effective

Fencing and trained security personnel received the highest ratings for effectiveness (Means = 3.63 and 3.56 respectively), followed by law enforcement collaboration. This suggests that while some schools lack access to advanced security technology, basic structural and personnel-based strategies are viewed as most reliable.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures currently implemented in public secondary schools in Enugu State.**

**Table 4: t-test analysis on the difference between staff and students on security measures currently implemented**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Decision
Staff	150	3.42	0.59				
Students	150	3.33	0.61	1.55	298	0.123	Not Significant

Since the p-value (0.123) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of currently implemented security measures between staff and students.

**Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures commonly used in public secondary schools in Enugu State.**

**Table 5: t-test analysis on the difference between staff and students on security measures commonly used.**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Decision
Staff	150	3.37	0.60				
Students	150	3.29	0.63	1.28	298	0.201	Not Significant

The p-value (0.201) is greater than 0.05, so the hypothesis is retained. There is no significant difference in how staff and students perceive commonly used security measures in schools.

**Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures most effective in public secondary schools in Enugu State.**

**Table 6: t-test analysis on the difference between staff and students on security measures most effective**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Decision
Staff		150	3.54	0.65			
Students	150	3.47	0.68	1.03	298	0.303	Not Significant

Since the p-value (0.303) is also above 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Both staff and students hold similar views on what security strategies are most effective.

### Discussion

This finding suggests that traditional, physical security measures are more commonly prioritized over technological or procedural measures. The heavy reliance on fencing and human surveillance aligns with the findings of Ewa-Ibe (2021), which noted that many schools in Nigeria resort to basic infrastructure and manual gatekeeping as primary lines of defense due to limited resources and technical capacity. Moreover, this result is consistent with Makinde et al. (2025), which reported that most public schools in Nigeria, especially in under-resourced areas, lack access to sustainable safety drills and technological innovations. The study emphasized that although security cameras and alarm system\’s can provide early warning and evidence in cases of attacks, their adoption is minimal due to high costs and lack of trained personnel.

Interestingly, the hypothesis test also supports these findings. The result of the independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between the responses of staff and students regarding the implementation of security measures ( $p = 0.123 > 0.05$ ). This indicates a shared perception across stakeholders that the most visible and accessible security interventions are indeed traditional such as fencing and gate control rather than high-tech systems. In agreement, Odalonu and Egbogu (2023) stressed the urgent need for more inclusive and well-funded security frameworks in Nigerian schools, noting that reliance on vigilante groups and school fencing without integrated digital surveillance leaves significant gaps in preventive safety. Similarly, Verjee and Kwaja (2021) criticized the uneven distribution of security interventions, pointing out that rural schools especially are left vulnerable due to minimal government investment in comprehensive protection systems.

Findings from Table 2 show that most schools depend more on basic physical and manual security structures than on digital or community-based interventions. The use of local vigilantes and fencing aligns with what (Egharevba & Atewe, 2024) described as reactive measures in high-risk areas, particularly in resource-limited states. The minimal use of technological tools again underscores the findings of Adebayo and Ileuma (2023), which stated that while technology can significantly boost school safety, most Nigerian public schools lack funding and skilled personnel for proper implementation. Similarly, Kanu et al. (2024) emphasized that schools in southern Nigeria, while not as targeted as those in the North, still lag behind in integrating technology into their school security plans. Thus, finding align with Nwaorgu (2025), that suggests that while some schools lack access to advanced security technology, basic structural and personnel-based strategies are viewed as most reliable by staff and students alike.”

The hypothesis tested alongside this question “There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures commonly used in public secondary schools” was accepted ( $p = 0.201 > 0.05$ ). This means both groups share a common understanding of which measures are most frequently used, validating the consistency of the findings. This consistency indicates that both staff and students are generally aware of and affected by the same security protocols, suggesting a shared school environment where the visibility and frequency of security efforts are evident. However, the relatively low usage of community security patrols also points to an underutilized opportunity for community engagement in school safety, something Uttam (2024) argue is critical in regions with limited police presence.

Finding also shows that respondents perceive human-led and structural security strategies as more reliable than technology-driven or procedural responses. These results align with the study by Osakwe (2019) in Delta State, which highlighted that most schools depend on basic safety mechanisms, and rarely use technology or collaborative intelligence measures. The limited rating for drills and technology, despite their global relevance in school safety planning, suggests that these measures are either underutilized or poorly executed.

Furthermore, the hypothesis tested “There is no significant difference between staff and students on security measures most effective in public secondary schools” was also accepted ( $p = 0.303 > 0.05$ ), indicating a shared perspective between both groups. The preference for visible and immediate safety structures over long-term preparedness drills or electronic surveillance may be due to the urgency and physical nature of the threats faced. King and Bracy (2019) had reported that after increasing abductions in the South, many schools prioritized fencing and the use of security guards over long-term investments in drills or electronic infrastructure. This prioritization is also supported by Nsiegbe and Gabriel (2024) which noted that communities often demand physical security interventions as an immediate response to threats.

### Conclusion

This study assessed the security measures implemented in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, with a focus on their availability, frequency of use, and perceived effectiveness. The findings revealed a clear preference for traditional security strategies such as perimeter fencing, gate control, and the use of vigilantes or security guards, which were rated as the most commonly implemented and effective. Technological interventions like CCTV

surveillance and emergency drills were less frequently used and rated as moderately effective. The study also found no significant difference in the perceptions of staff and students regarding the current, commonly used, and most effective security measures, indicating a shared experience of the existing school safety landscape.

Despite the efforts of the government and school authorities, security measures remain unevenly distributed, with many rural and underfunded schools lacking basic safety infrastructure. The limited use of technological tools, poor funding, and lack of coordinated planning further weaken the overall safety framework. While traditional methods provide immediate physical deterrence, they are insufficient in addressing evolving threats such as armed invasions and kidnappings. Therefore, a comprehensive and inclusive security strategy that combines both traditional and modern approaches is essential for ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment for all students and staff in Enugu State.

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## Recommendations

1. The government should ensure that all public secondary schools, particularly those in rural and under-resourced areas, have consistent access to essential physical security features such as perimeter fencing, trained security personnel, and controlled gate access. These were rated as the most effective and widely used measures by both staff and students.
2. Schools should be supported with funding and training to adopt security technologies such as CCTV surveillance and emergency alert systems. Additionally, regular safety drills and response training should be institutionalized to improve preparedness for potential threats, especially where traditional security measures may fall short.
3. Stakeholder collaboration—between school staff, students, parents, community leaders, and law enforcement—should be prioritized in developing and maintaining school safety strategies. A coordinated approach will ensure that security efforts are holistic, context-specific, and consistently applied across all public schools.

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