



Correlation Between Emergency Response Strategies and Administration of Public Secondary Schools in North Central, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated emergency response strategies and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate relationship between emergency response strategies and administration of public secondary schools. Seven research questions guided the study, while seven hypotheses were formulated and tested. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 42,235 teachers from 6,601 public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria with a sample of 1255 respondents which was using multi-stage sampling procedure involving stratified, purpose and simple random sampling techniques. The instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires titled "Emergency Response Strategies Questionnaire (ERSQ)" and "Administration of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (APSSQ)". The questionnaires were structured on four-point rating scale. A trial test of the instrument was conducted on 30 teachers in two public secondary schools in Plateau and Kwara States using Cronbach Alpha statistic. The result yielded a grand co-efficient of 0.93 for ERSQ and 0.90 for APSSQ. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the three research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed emergency response strategies such as emergency preparedness plans, community participation, monitoring and evaluation, strategies have a strong significant positive relationship with administration of public secondary schools in North Central, Nigeria. The study concluded that effective application of emergency response strategies brings about improvement in administration of public secondary schools. It was recommended among other things that the Ministries of Education should mandate and monitor comprehensive emergency preparedness plans, standardized procedures and regular safety drills in public secondary schools to enable principals to respond effectively to emergencies and ensure continuity of teaching and learning. Principals of schools should also actively engage community stakeholders, including PTAs and local leaders in school safety and emergency management through structured involvement and resource mobilization in order to promote collaborative decision-making, enhanced coordination and improved support for school activities.

Keywords: Emergency responses, Strategies, Administration

Introduction

Administration of public secondary schools worldwide has become a central theme of general concern by education stakeholders such as government, union leaders, teachers, parents and students. This may be due to the fact that schools are simultaneously places of learning and the engine room for producing competent individuals for national development while challenges seem to thwart these objectives. For instance, in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom challenges of managing multicultural classrooms, ensuring equity in resource distribution and coping with increasing accountability demands from standardized testing and performance evaluations hinder effective administration of public secondary schools (Ilori & Sawa, 2020). Similarly, Finland which is often praised for its education system, many school leaders grapple with balancing teacher autonomy and national curriculum expectations. Also, in many developing nations like Nigeria and Kenya, public secondary school administrators struggle with inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and shortages of qualified teachers, which hinder effective teaching and learning (Okendu, 2012). In North Central Nigeria, Ilori and Sawa (2020) observe that public secondary school administrators seem to continuously struggle with administrative challenges relating to safety and security of school environment. It is not out of place to imagine that, series of activities taking place in the school may not be devoid of accident, an injury can occur during practical session in laboratory or in physical education and co-curricular physical activities. The school may not be an exception of general insecurity that bedevils the country. Ali and Fatima (2016) state that Nigeria in our current democratic dispensation is faced with different kinds of threats such as armed robbery, kidnapping, political thugs, ethno-religious conflicts, organized



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violent groups, economic based violence, gender-based violence, sexual abuse, trafficking and recently the menace of Boko Haram. All of these issues appear to be negatively affecting effective and smooth administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Administration is the process of planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and supervising activities of an organization in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives (Yawe & Ivagher, 2016). Therefore, administration of public secondary schools refers to the systematic process of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling human, material and financial resources within government-owned secondary schools to achieve educational objectives effectively and efficiently (Bua, 2020). It involves the formulation and implementation of policies, supervision of teaching and learning activities, management of staff and students, provision and maintenance of facilities, as well as fostering collaboration with stakeholders such as parents, communities and government agencies (Yawe & Ivagher, 2016). The ultimate goal of administration of public secondary school is to ensure quality education delivery, promote discipline, enhance students' academic performance and contribute to national development. However, this may not be effectively achieved when schools are not safe places to live where there is always attack causing harm or injuries to staff and students. This underscores the need for emergency response strategies. An emergency is a sudden, unexpected situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment and requires urgent action to prevent worsening consequences. Emergencies can result from natural events (such as floods, earthquakes, or fires) or human activities (such as accidents, violence, or equipment failure) (Adeyemi, 2018). Emergency response refers to the structured actions and procedures undertaken immediately after an unexpected incident or crisis such as accidents, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or security challenges with the aim of minimizing harm, protecting lives and property and restoring normalcy (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). It requires rapid and coordinated interventions by individuals, organizations, or government bodies to meet urgent needs, including medical assistance, evacuation, firefighting, rescue operations, and securing affected areas (UNICEF Nigeria, 2022). Emergency response strategies are organized frameworks, plans and procedures designed by institutions, communities or organizations to ensure effective preparedness, response, and recovery from sudden or disasters that threaten people, property, or operations (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). Within school administration, such strategies are crucial for safeguarding students, staff and facilities during unexpected events like fires, health crises, natural disasters or security risks. Thus, the Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria (2021) emphasizes the importance of emergency preparedness plans, community participation, monitoring and evaluation, as strategies closely linked to effective school administration in Nigeria.

Emergency preparedness plans are documented procedures and guidelines developed to enable organizations, institutions, or communities to respond promptly and effectively to unforeseen events that may endanger lives, property, or the environment (SchoolSafety.gov, 2022). In the school administration, these plans involve creating and implementing a holistic framework that covers prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Such plans are designed in collaboration with community stakeholders including law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical personnel to guarantee a coordinated response during crises (U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security & Justice, 2019). Given the growing safety and security risks schools face, administrators must actively engage school leadership, emergency experts, staff, parents and local responders to sustain a safe environment. Neglecting measures such as routine tabletop exercises, practice drills for lockdowns, evacuations and shelter-in-place situations, along with annual plan reviews for ongoing improvement, may heighten vulnerabilities in the school environment (Sharp, Tan, & Burke, 2025). School administrators may adopt this strategy to ensure a safe school environment, as well as explore other approaches such as community participation. Community participation as an emergency-response strategy in school administration refers to the proactive involvement of community stakeholders such as parents, local leaders, school-based management committees (SBMCs), parent teachers associations (PTAs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and faith-based groups in planning, executing and monitoring measures designed to address crises such as pandemics, security challenges, infrastructural breakdowns (Amie-Ogan & Elenwo, 2024). It emphasizes the use of local knowledge, resources, trust networks, and decision-making capacity to enhance resilience, ensure swift coordinated action and sustain educational continuity under emergency conditions (for example, mobilizing support for hygiene protocols, school feeding, community-led security and awareness campaigns) to enhance school administration (Adeyemi, 2018). Lack of community participation in school emergency response may undermine preparedness and coordination. This may lead to delayed interventions, increased vulnerability of students and staff, mismanagement of resources, weak trust between schools and



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stakeholders. This may further lead to higher risks of casualties and long-term disruptions to learning especially when school administrators neglect community participation and monitoring and evaluation of emergency response process. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of emergency response is the systematic, ongoing collection and analysis of data regarding preparedness and response activities such as evacuation drills, incident reports and communication protocols to ensure interventions are implemented effectively and that lessons learned inform future (Education in Emergencies Working Group – North-East Nigeria (EiEWG-NE), 2023). As attacks, damages or injuries occur in school, many Nigerian schools need to deploy structured incident-reporting instruments to document safety and security incidents, capturing key elements like the date, type of event and reporting party to enable timely review and response (school safety tool) (EiEWG-NE), 2023). Moreover, recent innovations in digitized Nigerian schools demonstrate how M&E of emergency response is being enhanced through real-time communication tools, automated alerts and digital evacuation planning, offering administrators rapid data access, improved stakeholder coordination, and more effective evaluation of emergency systems (innovations in digitized schools) (NICEF Nigeria, 2024). Ineffective monitoring and evaluation of emergency response in school administration endangers students' safety, hinders timely decision-making and weakens preparedness for future crises. Establishing a strong monitoring and evaluation system may be significant to address emergency issues affecting administration of public secondary schools in North Central, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate emergency response strategies as correlates of administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to

1. examine the relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria,
2. ascertain the relationship between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria
3. determine the relationship between monitoring and evaluation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between monitoring and evaluation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Research Methodology

The study adopts a Quantitative research methodology. The study was conducted in North Central, Nigeria. North Central Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. It is part of the middle belt which bridges the Northern and Southern Nigeria. North Central Nigeria is the geographical area located at latitude 77^o11 and longitude 44^o23. North Central Nigeria has about 6,601 public secondary schools and many private secondary schools which offer secondary education to the children in Nigeria. It also has other educational institutions such as primary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities which provide quality education for the teeming population in Nigeria.

Research Design

The design adopted for this study is correlational research design. A correlational research design is a design that establishes associative relationship between two or more variables (Emaikwu, 2021). This research design is suitable for the present study because it helped to determine the relationship or degree of association between two or more variables without manipulating them. It is also suitable for this study because it can enable the researcher to determine the relationship that exists between emergency response strategies (emergency preparedness plans, community participation, monitoring and evaluation, strategies) and administration of public secondary schools.

Population of The Study

The population of the study comprises 42,235 teachers from 6,601 public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria (Ministries of Education from North Central States)



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Sample and Sampling

The sample size for the study comprises 1,267 teachers from 198 public secondary schools, representing 3% of the sampled population

Instrumentation

Researcher-structured questionnaire was used for data collection for the study; one questionnaire for emergency response strategies and the other for administration of public secondary schools.

Validation of the Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to three experts who read through and made inputs for face and content validity.

Reliability

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument for the study, the validated instrument was administered to 30 teachers who were part of the study population, but not part of the sample population in two public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria

Method of Data Collection

The researcher collected a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Educational Foundations, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi which enabled him to collect data for the study. With the geographical wide spread of the respondents in different states of North Central Nigeria, the researcher engaged five research assistants who helped in administering and collating of the questionnaire in the sampled secondary schools.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for answering research questions according to Emaikwu (2021) is that if r value is 0.00–0.19, there is a very weak relationship. If it is 0.20–0.39, there is a weak relationship. If it is 0.40–0.59, there is a moderate relationship. If it is 0.60–0.79 there is a strong relationship and if it is 0.80–1.00, there is a very strong relationship

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1:

Correlation between Emergency Preparedness Plan Strategy and Administration of Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	R	Decision
Emergency Preparedness Plan Strategy	1255	2.90	0.98	0.76	Strong Positive Relationship
Administration of Public Secondary Schools	1255	2.88	0.98		

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Sources: Researcher's Field Work, 2026

The results presented in Table 1 indicates that the mean score for emergency preparedness plan strategy ($M = 2.90$) is slightly higher than that of administration of public secondary schools ($M = 2.88$). The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.76$) indicates a strong positive relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 2:

What is the relationship between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?



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Table 2:

Correlation between Community Participation Strategy and Administration of Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	Decision
Community Participation Strategy	1255	2.77	1.00	0.86	Very Strong Positive Relationship
Administration of Public Secondary Schools	1255	2.92	0.93		

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Sources: Researcher's Field Work, 2026

The results presented in Table 2 indicates that the mean score for community participation strategy ($M = 2.77$) is slightly lower than that of administration of public secondary schools ($M = 2.88$). The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.86$) indicates a very strong positive relationship between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 3:

What is the relationship between monitoring and evaluation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3:

Correlation between Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and Administration of Public Secondary Schools in North Central Nigeria

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	Decision
Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy	1255	2.80	1.01	0.87	Very Strong Positive Relationship
Administration of Public Secondary Schools	1255	2.81	1.02		

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

(Sources: Researcher's Field Work, 2026)

The results presented in Table 3 indicates that the mean score for monitoring and evaluation strategy ($M = 2.80$) is slightly lower than that of administration of public secondary schools ($M = 2.81$). The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.87$) indicates a very strong positive relationship between monitoring and evaluation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The first finding of the study revealed that there is a strong significant positive relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This finding implies that schools with well-developed emergency preparedness plans such as clearly defined policies, regular drills, availability of safety equipment and staff training tend to experience more effective administration. Such preparedness enhances principals' capacity to plan, coordinate and respond promptly to emergencies, thereby ensuring continuity of school activities and the safety of staff and students. This finding is in line with the study of Wang, Han, and Li (2023), whose findings revealed that school-level preparedness plans, including policies, drills, infrastructure, and training, had a significant positive relationship with students' preparedness and disaster education in provinces in China. The finding further agreed with Fazeli (2024), who reported that emergency preparedness plans such as the availability of fire equipment and safety awareness positively correlated with disaster risk reduction in secondary schools in Kenya. The researcher observes that there is a strong significant positive relationship between emergency preparedness plan strategy and the administration of public secondary schools because effective emergency preparedness plans provide administrators with structured guidelines for decision-making, reduce uncertainty during crises, and promote orderly management of



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school resources and personnel. The second finding of the study revealed a very strong significant positive relationship between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This finding implies that active involvement of community stakeholders such as parents, traditional leaders, PTAs and SBMCs enhances school administration by strengthening support systems, mobilizing resources, and improving compliance with safety and emergency measures. This finding aligns with the findings of Rabo (2019), who found that community participation in safety management had a positive impact on the administration of secondary schools in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate of Kano State. This finding also agreed with Mairo (2024), whose findings showed that community participation strategies including advocacy, PTA/SBMC engagement, fundraising and stakeholder meetings had significant relationships with the administration of public secondary schools in post-basic institutions in Kano State, Nigeria. The researcher observes that the very strong relationship exists between community participation strategy and administration of public secondary schools because community participation fosters shared responsibility, improves trust between schools and their host communities and enhances administrative effectiveness through collective problem-solving during emergencies. The third finding of the study revealed a very strong significant positive relationship between monitoring and evaluation strategy and the administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This finding implies that regular monitoring and evaluation of emergency response strategies contribute to effective administration by enabling school managers to assess preparedness levels, identify gaps, and implement corrective measures. This finding is consistent with Agbili and Ogbuene (2024), who found a significant positive impact of monitoring and evaluation of fire emergency preparedness on the safety of selected public and private secondary schools in Awka Capital Territory, Anambra State, Nigeria. The finding also agreed with Hussain, Juman and Khan (2024), whose findings showed that monitoring and evaluation of emergency response strategies had a significant positive relationship with the administration of secondary schools in Pakistan. The researcher observes that the strong relationship exists between monitoring and evaluation strategy and the administration of public secondary schools because monitoring and evaluation promote accountability, informed decision-making, and continuous improvement in emergency management practices within schools.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that emergency response strategies such as emergency preparedness plans, community participation, monitoring and evaluation strategies have a strong significant positive relationship with administration of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. The Ministries of Education should mandate and monitor comprehensive emergency preparedness plans, standardized procedures, and regular safety drills in public secondary schools to enable principals to respond effectively to emergencies and ensure continuity of teaching and learning.
2. Principals should actively engage community stakeholders, including PTAs and local leaders in school safety and emergency management through structured involvement and resource mobilization in order to promote collaborative decision-making, enhanced coordination and improved support for school activities.

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