

# ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY PERSONNEL IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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***Abstract:** This paper highlights the urgent need to strengthen the security personnel in Nigerian tertiary institutions, identifying areas of weakness and the necessary tools to improve their operational efficiency. With the growing security challenges in Nigeria, academic environments, including schools and higher learning institutions, are not exempt from these threats. Institutions of higher learning are complex and sensitive environments, comprising thousands of students and staff from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds, all working towards academic objectives. Consequently, well-trained security personnel, equipped with modern security tools, are essential to protect the lives and property of students and staff. In addition to safeguarding human lives, security personnel are responsible for maintaining the integrity of infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, student hostels, staff quarters, and administrative buildings, as well as enforcing campus rules and responding to emergencies. This paper draws attention to the importance of improving the training and capabilities of security personnel in light of incidents such as the 2015 Chibok school kidnapping, the ongoing attacks on students and staff by Boko Haram, and the destruction of school facilities. These incidents underline the critical need for well-equipped and efficient security teams to ensure the safety of academic environments.*

***Keywords:** Enhancing, Effectiveness, Security, Personnel, Tertiary, Institutions.*

## Introduction

The security of Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri is one of the prime concerns. It involves students, staff, and every other individual who are leaving within Polytechnic premises or community. Hence, the duty of the security personnel is full of tough challenges, as different peoples, with different socio-economic background coming together to achieve the set goals and objectives that established the institution. The security guards have to stay alert always on their toes at all time. Even after the school closing period. An empty school building needs to be guided to protect the assets and ensure no illegal activities goes, as safety is an utmost priority.

However, the need for effective security is inevitable in our tertiary institution, as in the recent months and years the wave of attacks in various schools, or institutions of all level, were reported and too alarming. These waves of violence attacks including killings, and kidnapping of students and staffs as well as destruction of academic environment learning infrastructures, thereby instill panic and unnecessary fears among students and the staffs. Therefore, safety and protection of lives and properties of every academic environment paramount important.

As society is made up of many institution or structure that perform different functions but work harmoniously to support the whole system. If any part in the structure get

problem can lead to malfunction in another such that will result to general failure. (Nickerson and Evans, 2024). Therefore, the opinion of Durkheim, is relevant in explaining current school situation. The interdependency between academic institutions and operation of effective security system.

It is worthy to note that failure in the security architect to perform their duties effectively in the academic institution could generate insecurity and affect the education system and create a path to infiltrate of cultism within the school campus, possible kidnapping of students, and staff, destruction of learning facilities and other related crimes activities are probably manifest, lack of synergy between the institution and the security system has further aggravated the situation making the academic environment helpless and more vulnerable to attacks without much resistant and response from relevant security agencies (Gulesh, *et al.*, 2022).

However, Alimba, (2018). Is of the opinion that adequate and well trained security personnel are highly needed in every schools, primary, secondary and tertiary institution within the north east region to protect the lives and properties of both students and the lecturers/teachers. However, this appealed become necessary as 2013, no schooling of any sort was taking place in 22 out of the 27 local government of Borno State, out of fear Boko Haram attack. In 2014, no functional school existed in 7 out of 21 local government areas of Adamawa State and 2 educational zones out of the 3 in Yobe State. In fact, both in Yobe and Borno States, most school relocated to the capitals, Maiduguri and Damaturu. In Adamawa State, Boko Haram attacks led to the destruction of 115 schools in 8 local government areas thereby forcing 285,632 students and 8,150 teachers to stop attending schools (Alimba, 2018: Isokpani, and Durajayell, 2016). Besides, the abduction of 279 Chibok secondary school girls of Borno State by Boko Haram terrorists and abduction of 110 female's students in Dapchi Government Girl's Technical College by Boko Haram on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, has instil year in the mind both students and staff as well as those processing administrations. These and other related incidents influenced the researcher to embark on the need to train the security personnel to respond any impromptu incidents in our school. However, as the shadow of kidnapping, banditry, cultism and related criminal activities loom in Nigeria academic environment or communities informed the need for well-trained security personnel with modern day security facilities, or gadgets are essentials.

Woodruff, (2022), is of the opinion that the best practices an institution or school security guard should do to help prevent and maintain institution or school safety includes the following;

1. That maintaining a visible presence and building trust. Officers should maintain professionalism at all times, being friendly and impartial, but fair to all without judgment. Effective officers understand the nuances of the job and are capable of reacting at any moment to unpredictable events.
2. Touring the campus frequently. High-risk areas that have been identified—such as locker rooms, bathrooms, isolated hallways or stairways, portable classrooms, playing fields, other out-buildings, and/or isolated areas of the building grounds—are potential trouble spots. By varying the route, it creates unpredictability, thus strengthening the School Security Officer's effectiveness. Checking doors and windows for good repair and noting any security breaches on campus, as well as providing security during athletic and other after-school activities, are vital. Officers identify and plan for hazards in the parking lots and other areas of the campus, as well.
3. Being present at a variety of events is another effective deterrent to warding off potential problems. Officers should be visible during student lunches, breaks, assemblies, and passing periods between classes. This helps reduce problems during times when students are more likely to congregate.
4. Officers establish contact with students and enforce school rules. Determining and distinguishing those who have legitimate business from intruders who may be intent on causing harm or disruption is of paramount importance. Regular communication from office

staff and educators keeps the officers current with the pulse of what is going on in the school. Officers also brief school personnel on current security concerns and trends.

5. An essential responsibility is writing incident reports in a way that is consistent with the methodology established by the school/district security department. These reports document action taken during and after an incident or crisis. Photographs further detailing the incident are often included in the report. This helps protect all involved: the district, officer, staff, and students. (Woodruff, 2022).

## **7 Basic security factors that need to be implemented in all institutions or schools:**

### ***1. Install a CCTV System***

CCTV monitoring of school premises enhances campus safety by providing constant surveillance and deterrence against potential threats. The presence of cameras across the campus acts as a powerful deterrent, discouraging trespassers, vandals, and unauthorized individuals. Real-time monitoring allows swift identification of any security breaches, enabling immediate response and intervention, ultimately creating a secure learning environment.

### ***2. Outfit GPS And CCTV Systems on All the institution or school entrance and exit gates.***

The equipping the institution or school gates with GPS and CCTV cameras help allows school or institution management to understand some of the silent abnormalities' students perpetrating most often at the entrance and exit gates. For examples wilful refusal to cooperates with the security guard at the gate in relation to Tainted wind screen issue which most of the instruction management barred from entering a school compound, except with police headquarter permit. The head of the institution management have the opportunity to view the reality on his own eye at his/her convenience period. He However, in position to suggest the necessary standing order that benefit the entire students, staff and all those leaving in the compound. These approach is no doubt promoting a secure and worry-free environment for students, staff and parents respectively.

### ***3. Perform Thorough Verification on All Potential Employees***

Thorough verification of all staff, including non-teaching personnel, before hiring is crucial to keeping kids safe at school. Background checks and rigorous screening processes help identify potential risks or individuals with questionable backgrounds. This ensures that only trustworthy and qualified individuals are entrusted with the safety and well-being of students, fostering a secure and nurturing educational environment.

### ***4. Monitor All Visitors***

Monitoring visitors carefully when entering or leaving the school premises, including verifying authorization to pick up students, is essential for ensuring kids' safety at school. This precautionary measure prevents unauthorized individuals from gaining access to students and minimizes the risk of potential security breaches or abduction attempts. By diligently managing visitor access, staff or security personnel can create a secure environment where students' well-being is prioritized and protected.

### ***5. Have Washrooms Monitored by Staff***

Having attendants in the washrooms for safety monitoring enhances kids' safety at school. Attendants can deter bullying, prevent vandalism, and address any emergency situations promptly. Additionally, providing separate washrooms for school management ensures a clear division of spaces and minimizes the risk of unauthorized access, promoting a secure and comfortable environment for all students.

### ***6. All Unoccupied Lectures hall or Classrooms Should Be Locked***

Keeping empty or unused classrooms locked at all times ensures kids' safety at school by preventing unauthorized access and potential incidents. By maintaining strict access control, the risk of unauthorized individuals entering the premises is minimized. Additionally, the policy of not allowing any child to be alone with staff enhances protection against potential misconduct, prioritizing students' safety and well-being.

### ***7. Hold Regular Workshops***

Regular workshops and training sessions on safety protocols empower students, parents, and teachers to play an active role in keeping kids safe at school. By educating them on how to

recognize potential threats before they occur and providing specific action plans for various situations, the school community becomes better equipped to respond effectively to emergencies. (Cited in ASAP, 2024).

**Duties and responsibilities of a security personnel**

- ❖ Ensure the safety of property and people.
- ❖ Guard against damage and attacks.
- ❖ Work as a patrol officer always on the move.
- ❖ Work as a static guard at one location.
- ❖ Keep on a constant watch.
- ❖ Make sure everything is under control.
- ❖ Possibly perform as a patrol and static guard.
- ❖ Use electronic surveillance equipment.
- ❖ Know how to contact your supervisor.
- ❖ Be considered and polite.
- ❖ Ability to react fast in an emergency.
- ❖ Be in good physical shape.
- ❖ Be honest and have dedication to the job
- ❖ Safeguard against theft and violence.
- ❖ Be on the lookout for disturbances.
- ❖ Protect against physical and financial loss.
- ❖ Transport money and/or valuables.
- ❖ Direct vehicles and make sure vehicles are safe.
- ❖ Inspect and/or adjust controls of buildings.
- ❖ Make sure security equipment is in working order.
- ❖ Conduct checks inside of buildings you protect.
- ❖ Know where emergency alarms are located.
- ❖ Make detailed notes of anything unusual.
- ❖ Write details of accidents and damages.
- ❖ Observe every person within your guard area.
- ❖ Work with the police when required.
- ❖ Know what to do in case of emergencies.
- ❖ Have a working knowledge of first aid.
- ❖ Know how to operate lights in your area.
- ❖ Always be on the alert for acts of violence.
- ❖ Inspect bags, luggage and personal items.
- ❖ Stop the entry of unauthorized people.
- ❖ Be courteous to all people you deal with.
- ❖ Do not be late for assignments.
- ❖ Be alert for unusual situations.
- ❖ Prohibit certain items into restricted locations.
- ❖ Always act in the best interest of your employer.
- ❖ Answer general questions and give directions.
- ❖ Always represent yourself in a professional manner.
- ❖ Maintain knowledge of your electronic equipment.
- ❖ Make sure your personal equipment is always working.
- ❖ Know who to call in case of an emergency.
- ❖ Must have good communication skills.
- ❖ Have the ability to handle and resolve conflicts.
- ❖ Armed guards must know how to use their firearm.
- ❖ Know how to communicate on a phone.

*(Cited in Minooka CCSD, 201; Schmidt, 2015; Woodruff, 2022; Velvetjobs, 2024)*

**Physical and Mental Demands**

- ❖ Must have the ability to sit, stand, kneel, stoop, climb stairs and walk for extended periods of time, and run for short periods of time. Must have the ability to lift and move weight up to 50 lbs.
- ❖ Must not have any limitations of motion, and vision and hearing should be rated as acceptable to obtain the required driver's license.
- ❖ Exhibit manual dexterity to dial a telephone, key a two-way radio microphone, operate a keyboard, and use a lock and key devices.
- ❖ During an emergency, the ability to work in a fast paced and stressful environment while maintaining the ability to articulate and communicate in an effective manner.
- ❖ Have the visual acuity necessary to observe and comprehend student movement.
- ❖ Ability to operate a motor vehicle.

❖ Must have the ability to communicate verbally and in writing, comprehend, and perform functions from oral and written instructions and from observing others. Must have the ability to evaluate written materials.

*(Cited in Minooka CCSD, 201; Schmidt, 2015; Woodruff, 2022; Velvetjobs, 2024)*

## Conclusion

In conclusion, as education plays a pivotal role in national development, ensuring the safety of academic institutions is critical to maintaining an environment conducive to learning. The increasing wave of insecurity, including attacks on educational institutions, calls for urgent measures to strengthen security. This includes providing security personnel with the necessary training, equipment, and resources to prevent incidents and respond to emergency effectively when they occur. Collaboration between security agencies and institutional management is essential for building trust and ensuring the safety of the academic community. By strengthening security measures and promoting collaboration between all stakeholders, we can safeguard the future of education and ensure that institutions remain safe spaces for learning and growth.

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