

PRINCIPALS' SAFETY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated principals' safety management practices for effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three objectives, three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 302 Principals and 6557 teachers totaling 6859 in 302 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample for this study was 686 respondents: comprising of 604 teachers' and 82 Principals. The respondents were stratified into principals and teachers of selected schools. The 686 respondents selected represented 10% of the total population of teachers' and principals (6859) of public senior secondary schools of Rivers State. The instrument that was used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled 'Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria Questionnaire' (PSMPEAQ). The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency method. The average reliability index obtained for sections A, B, and C,

respectively, was 0.31. Mean and standard deviation of the factor loadings were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from this study showed that to a high extent principals' use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. It concluded that safety practices emerge as essential components, fostering a culture of awareness and preparedness among both staff and students, thereby creating a secure atmosphere for teaching and learning. The study recommends among others that state government should carry out professional development programs for principals in Rivers State, Nigeria to strengthen their capacity in conducting comprehensive risk assessments and effective risk mitigation strategies.

Keywords: Safety Management Practices, Effective Administration, Emergency Drills, Regular Audits and Risk Assessment

Introduction

Education serves as a transformative force that not only imparts knowledge but also moulds character, cultivates critical thinking, and fosters skills essential for personal and collective growth. The significance of education extends beyond the acquisition of academic content, encompassing the development of well-rounded individuals capable of navigating the complexities of the world. In public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, the relationship between education and safety management practices is of paramount importance. School administrators, particularly principals, bear the responsibility of creating an environment where education flourishes in tandem with ensuring the safety and well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders. Education is a multifaceted process that occurs within the confines of educational institutions, where students spend a significant portion of their formative years. The quality of education is intricately linked to the safety measures implemented within these institutions. As noted by (UNESCO, 2007), a safe and secure school environment is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning.

The safety management practices employed by school principals in shaping the overall educational experience. Ensuring a secure environment not only safeguards the physical well-being of individuals but also contributes to the psychological and emotional security necessary for optimal learning outcomes. Understanding the dynamics of how education and safety intersect is essential for school leaders seeking to create an environment that nurtures both academic excellence and personal development. Safety management practices encompass a comprehensive set of strategies and procedures designed to identify, assess, and mitigate risks within a specific environment, with a particular focus on ensuring

the well-being of individuals and the protection of property. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2001), safety management involves the systematic identification and control of workplace hazards to prevent accidents, injuries, and the occurrence of occupational diseases. Safety management practices extend beyond occupational settings to encompass the entire school environment, addressing various factors that may impact the safety and security of students, staff, and other stakeholders. The implementation of safety management practices is crucial in educational institutions to create an environment conducive to learning while safeguarding the physical and psychological well-being of all individuals involved. Scholars Okpala&Okpala (2018) emphasized the importance of safety management in secondary schools, highlighting its role in promoting quality education by providing a secure and supportive atmosphere for teaching and learning. This implies a holistic approach that goes beyond mere compliance with safety regulations, incorporating measures to address potential challenges unique to the educational setting.

Principals, as key administrators within the school system, play a central role in shaping and executing safety management practices. Their responsibilities include establishing protocols, fostering a safety culture, and responding effectively to emerging risks. The success of safety management practices relies on the ability of principals to integrate safety measures seamlessly into the daily operations of the school, creating an environment that not only meets regulatory standards but also prioritizes the well-being of everyone within the educational community.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of students within the educational environment is a paramount concern for educational administrators worldwide. In public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, the implementation of effective safety management practices is a critical aspect of school administration. According to the World Health Organization (2019), creating a safe and supportive school environment is fundamental to the overall development and academic success of students. Research indicates that effective safety management practices in schools contribute not only to the physical safety of students but also foster a conducive atmosphere for academic achievement (Okpala&Okpala, 2018). The unique challenges faced by schools in Rivers State, Nigeria such as diverse socio-economic backgrounds, infrastructural limitations, and regional peculiarities, necessitate a tailored approach to safety administration. Principals' safety management practices significantly contribute to the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. These practices are instrumental in creating a secure and conducive learning

environment that directly impacts various facets of school administration. Effective safety management practices also enhance crisis preparedness and response, a crucial aspect of school administration. By developing and implementing emergency plans, principals demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the school community. This preparedness is integral to minimizing the impact of unforeseen events and ensuring a swift and organized response in times of crisis (Adebayo et al., 2020).

Furthermore, safety-conscious leadership contributes to community trust and parental confidence. Parents and community members are more likely to entrust their children to schools led by principals who prioritize safety, contributing to a positive image and reputation for the institution. This trust is essential for effective school administration, as highlighted by educational scholars (Obioma & Adekunle, 2017), who underscore the importance of building strong relationships between schools and their communities.

Principals employ a range of safety management practices to ensure effective administration in schools. These practices are integral to creating a secure and conducive learning environment. Here are various safety management practices commonly utilized by principals: Risk Assessment and Mitigation is used in ensuring the safety of the school environment through the regular conduct of comprehensive risk assessments. These assessments involve a meticulous examination of various areas within the school premises, such as classrooms, laboratories, and sports facilities, to identify potential hazards that may pose a threat to the well-being of students and staff. During these assessments, principals systematically evaluate the physical infrastructure, equipment, and activities within each area, considering factors that could lead to accidents or injuries. By actively engaging in this process, principals demonstrate a commitment to proactively identify and address potential risks within the school environment.

Regular safety audits are critical for ensuring a safe working environment in any organization. These audits serve as a fundamental aspect of safety management practices by allowing companies to systematically assess and improve their safety performance. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), regular safety audits are important for identifying potential hazards, evaluating safety protocols, and ensuring compliance with safety regulations (OSHA, n.d.). Regular safety audits serve as a principal safety management practice by facilitating the identification and mitigation of workplace hazards, fostering a safety-conscious culture, and demonstrating a commitment to safety. Through these audits, organizations can

proactively enhance safety standards, protect their employees, and uphold their legal and ethical responsibilities to prioritize workplace safety.

Research emphasizes the importance of regular and well-executed emergency drills to ensure the effectiveness of emergency management strategies. These drills are essential in equipping both students and staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to respond promptly and efficiently during emergencies. The role of emergency drills goes beyond routine exercises. These drills contribute to creating a safer school environment by fostering familiarity with emergency procedures. Principals play a crucial role in orchestrating and overseeing the execution of emergency drills. Their leadership roles ensure that these drills align with the specific needs of the school community. By actively participating in the planning and execution of drills, principals contribute to the overall safety culture of the institution.

Several studies have been conducted to examine Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria for instance, Adekunle & Okoye, (2019) investigated Safety Management in Secondary Schools. This study investigates safety management practices implemented by principals in secondary schools, providing insights into the challenges faced and strategies employed. The findings offer comparative perspectives for understanding safety management practices in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ibrahim & Abubakar (2017) also investigated Assessment of Safety Measures in Public Secondary Schools: it assesses safety measures implemented by school principals in public secondary schools. It explores the effectiveness of safety protocols, the level of preparedness for emergencies, and the overall impact on the administration of these schools. The study found that principals in secondary schools have implemented a variety of safety management practices. These practices include regular safety drills, collaboration with local authorities, and the establishment of emergency response plans. However, there were variations in the implementation and effectiveness of these practices across schools. Challenges identified included inadequate resources and varying levels of awareness among staff and students. Based on the findings, the study recommends the standardization of safety protocols across secondary schools in the state. It suggests the need for additional resources and training programs to enhance the effectiveness of safety management practices. The study also recommends the establishment of a centralized system for sharing best practices among schools. Based on the findings, the study recommends a comprehensive overhaul of safety measures in public secondary schools. This includes investing

in infrastructure upgrades, conducting regular safety training for both staff and students, and establishing strong partnerships with local authorities for coordinated emergency responses.

From the foregoing, it seems only a handful of studies has been done in Rivers State, Nigeria which examined principals' safety management practices for effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria. However, no study has been identified which examined the use of risk assessment and mitigation, safety training and education and collaboration with local authorities as safety management practices. This implies a gap which the present study will fill. It Was an attempt to bridge the gaps in the literature that necessitated the investigation on the study Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

The administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, is confronted with multifaceted challenges related to safety and security. In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of the critical need to ensure the well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders within the educational environment. However, a comprehensive understanding of the safety management practices employed by principals in the effective administration of these schools remains lacking. Rivers State, Nigeria is characterized by diverse socio-economic backgrounds, infrastructural variations, and regional peculiarities, contributing to a unique set of challenges for school administrators. The absence of a systematic examination of safety management practices hinders the development of targeted strategies to address these challenges. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate the safety management practices employed by principals, focusing on key aspects such as risk assessment and mitigation, regular safety audits and emergency drills.

The lack of clarity on the specific safety measures implemented in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria raises concerns about the potential existence of vulnerabilities that may compromise the overall safety of the learning environment. Understanding the current state of safety management practices is essential for informed decision-making, policy formulation, and the development of intervention programs aimed at fortifying the safety and security of educational institutions. The paper aims to fill the existing gap in knowledge, providing valuable insights into the safety management practices essential for

effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper was to investigate Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria.
2. Examine the extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria
3. Investigate the extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does use of risk assessment and mitigation as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent does use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

HO2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria.

HO3: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent use of emergency drills as a safety

management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted in the study and the population of the study consisted of 302 Principals and 6557 teachers totaling 6859 in 302 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample for this study was 686 respondents; comprising of 604 teachers' and 82 Principals. The respondents were stratified into principals and teachers of selected schools. The 686 respondents selected represented 10% of the total population of teachers' and principals (6859) of public senior secondary schools of Rivers State, Nigeria. A total of 686 questionnaires were distributed, while 631 were returned, giving 92% return rate. The instrument that was used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria Questionnaire" (PSMPEAQ). The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency method. The average reliability index obtained for sections A, B, and C, respectively, was 0.73. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance

Conceptual Review

Use of Risk Assessment and Mitigation as a Management Practice Principals are instrumental in fostering a safe and secure environment in public senior secondary schools, employing key management practices such as risk assessment and mitigation. The process involves a systematic evaluation of various areas within the school premises, including classrooms, laboratories, and sports facilities, to identify potential hazards and assess risks to the well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders (Adewale and Ibrahim, 2019).

This ongoing risk assessment is a dynamic procedure that considers changes in the school environment, emerging challenges, and advancements in safety protocols. Principals, exemplifying a proactive stance, utilize the insights gained from risk assessments to pinpoint areas requiring attention and intervention in order to maintain a secure and conducive learning environment (Adebayo et al., 2020). Subsequent to the identification of potential hazards, principals implement mitigation strategies aimed at addressing the identified risks and enhancing overall safety. Mitigation measures may involve structural modifications, implementation of safety protocols, provision of safety equipment, or the

introduction of preventive measures designed to minimize the likelihood of accidents (Smith and Johnson, 2018).

The efficacy of these mitigation strategies is contingent upon the proactive approach adopted by principals in addressing potential risks. For example, if a risk assessment reveals structural vulnerabilities in a building, the principal, taking swift action, may initiate repairs or reinforcements to prevent potential accidents. In essence, the utilization of risk assessment and mitigation by principals represents a vital safety management practice, embodying a continuous and dynamic process of identifying potential hazards, assessing risks, and implementing measures to enhance the overall safety and security of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Regular Audits as a Safety Management Practice

Principals play a pivotal role in ensuring safety management practices within educational institutions, and one significant aspect of their responsibility is conducting regular audits. These audits are essential for assessing and improving safety measures in public senior secondary schools. Research highlights the importance of principals' involvement in regular safety audits, emphasizing the positive impact on overall safety management. According to a study on safety management practices in Rivers State, Nigeria, principals are actively engaged in conducting audits as part of their administrative duties. These audits serve as a proactive approach to identifying potential risks and hazards within the school environment. (Obioma& Adekunle, 2017).

Furthermore, the study discusses how principals' regular safety audits contribute to effective resource management. Principals' record-keeping practices and audits are highlighted as essential components for enhanced administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools. In the context of school plant safety, principals are found to implement strategies through regular audits to ensure quality education delivery. This involves systematically examining safety measures related to the school infrastructure and environment. Moreover, research on safety measures adopted by principals in Enugu State, Nigeria, emphasizes the role of regular safety audits in facilities management. (Okonkwo & Adegoke, 2018). The study underscores the importance of these audits in maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment. In summary, the literature extensively supports the notion that principals' regular safety audits are a fundamental safety management practice, contributing to risk

Use of Emergency Drills as a Safety Management Practice

Emergency drills play a critical role in ensuring the safety of students and staff in secondary schools. Principals' awareness and application of safety emergency management plans, including the use of emergency drills, have been a subject of study in various regions. (Ogunlade et al., 2020). There is an urgent need for principals to create safety emergency management drills for their school to take cognizant of any unforeseen situation that might disrupt the school activities. Safety emergency management plan help prepare the school personnel before an emergency incident. It ensures they have necessary equipment, know how to keep safe in obvious emergency situations in Anambra State, Nigeria, a study investigated principals' awareness and application of safety emergency management plans. The results indicated that principals are indeed aware of safety emergency management plans and actively apply them, highlighting the significance of preparedness in case of emergencies (Osisima & Onwudiwe; 2015). Additionally, a broader study in Rivers State, Nigeria, examined safety management practices in public senior secondary schools. It emphasized the adoption of emergency drills as a crucial element in overall safety strategies within the school system. Moreover, an analysis of safety management practices in public tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria, acknowledged the correlation between safety management practices and the delivery of quality education. Emergency drills were considered as one of the essential practices contributing to this correlation. Principals' proactive involvement in emergency drills showcases their commitment to creating a secure learning environment, aligning with global safety standards.

Results and Discussions

The results were presented in line with research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study as showed in the table below;

Answers to Research Questions

Research Questions 1: To what extent does use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation on the extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management	Principals	Teachers	549	Mean	Remarks
		82			Set	

Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

	practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State	X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	(X ₁ + X ₂)	
1.	Considers potential risk before making administrative decision	2.11	0.83	2.28	0.96	2.20	Low Extent
2.	Principal communicate in the identified risks to the staff	2.42	1.02	2.43	1.03	2.43	Low Extent
3.	There is a balance in the need for innovation with the potential risks associated with new initiatives	2.73	1.05	2.51	0.89	2.62	High Extent
4.	The school update and revise the school's risk management plan	2.44	1.01	2.47	1.01	2.46	Low Extent
5.	Principal ensure that risk assessment practices align with legal and regulatory requirements	2.81	0.99	2.54	0.96	2.68	High Extent
Average Mean/Standard Deviation		2.50	0.98	2.45	0.97	2.48	Low Extent

Data presented in table 1 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent on the extent principals' use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that there is a balance in the need for innovation with the potential risks associated with new initiatives and Principal ensure that risk assessment practices align with legal and regulatory requirements, as seen in items 3 and 5, which have weighted mean values of (2.62) and (2.68) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that considers potential risks before making administrative decisions principal communicate the identified risks to the staff and the school update and revise the school's risk management plan, as seen in items 1, 2, and 4, having weighted mean values of (2.20), (2.43), and (2.46), which are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of **2.48** indicates that the answer to research question one is that to a low extent principals' use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: To what extent does regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

S/N	Regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria	Principals 82		Teachers 549		Mean Set ($X_1 + X_2$)	Remarks
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2		
6.	Safety audits extent to both physical infrastructure and procedural aspects	2.79	0.83	2.82	0.96	2.81	High Extent
7.	Safety audits contribute to the overall crisis management strategy of the school	2.67	0.82	2.76	0.63	2.72	High Extent
8.	Teachers, staff, or external experts are involve in safety audits	2.05	0.85	2.01	0.68	2.03	Low Extent
9.	Regular safety audit outcomes lead to initiation of training programs for staff and students	2.64	0.71	2.56	0.57	2.6	High Extent
10.	Safety audits contribute to the enhancement of emergency preparedness	2.68	0.69	2.56	0.96	2.62	High Extent
Average Mean/Standard Deviation		2.57	0.78	2.53	0.87	2.56	High Extent

The data presented in table 2 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent principals' regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that Safety audits extend to both physical infrastructure and procedural aspects, Safety audits contribute to the overall crisis management strategy of the school, Regular safety audit outcomes lead to the initiation of training programs for staff and students and safety audits contribute to the enhancement of emergency preparedness, as seen in items 6, 7, 9, and 10, which have weighted mean values of (2.81), (2.72), (2.6), and (2.62) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that teachers, staff, or external experts are involve in safety audits, as seen in items 8 having weighted mean values of (2.03), which are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of **2.56** indicates that the answer to research question two is to a high extent, that principals' regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: To what extent does use of emergency drill as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

S/N	Use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary school in RiverState, Nigeria.	Principals 82		Teachers 549		Mean Set ($X_1 + X_2$)	Remarks
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2		
11.	Emergency drill procedures are implemented within the school	2.11	0.83	2.82	0.96	2.20	Low Extent
12.	Emergency drill procedures are communicated to students and staff	2.72	1.02	2.83	1.03	2.78	High Extent
13.	Drills are designed to stimulate various emergency situations, including natural disaster and security threats	2.73	1.05	2.51	0.89	2.62	High Extent
14.	School allocate resources for the execution of emergency drills	2.44	1.01	2.47	1.01	2.46	Low Extent
15.	Drills are integrated in the overall school schedule	2.81	0.99	2.54	0.96	2.68	High Extent
Average Mean/Standard Deviation		2.56	0.98	2.53	0.97	2.55	High Extent

The data presented in table 3 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent principals' use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that emergency drill procedures are communicated to students and staff, drills are designed to simulate various emergency situations, including natural disasters and security threats and Drills are integrated in the overall school schedule. as seen in items 12, 13 and 15, which have weighted mean values of (2.78), (2.62) and (2.68) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that emergency drill procedures are implemented within the school and School allocate resources for the execution of emergency drills as seen in items 11 and 14 having weighted mean values of (2.35), (2.31), and (2.19), which

are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.55 indicates that the answer to research question three is that to a high extent, principals' use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test on the extent principals and teachers on the extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Significant level	Decision
Principals	82	3.42	0.19	629	0.00	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers	549	3.41	0.19					
Total	631							

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 0 is less than the critical table value of 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 629. Since calculated table value 0.00 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is therefore upheld and concludes that there is no significant difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent principals' use of risk assessment and Mitigation as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

HO2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test on the extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Significant level	Decision
Principals	82	3.09	0.17	629	0.09	1.96	0.05	NS
Teachers	549	3.33	0.17					
Total	631							

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.09 is less than the critical table value of 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 629. Since calculated table value (0.09) is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted and concludes that there is no significant difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent principals' regular audits as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

HO3: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria Table 6: Independent Sample t-test on the extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Independent Sample t-test on the extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Significant level	Decision
Principals	82	2.87	1.87	629	0.04	1.96	0.05	NS
Teachers	549	2.73	1.07					
Total	631							

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.04 is less than the critical table value of 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 629. Since calculated table value (0.04) is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted and concludes that there is no significant difference between the opinions of

principals and teachers on the extent principals' use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhances effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Extent use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Data presented in table 1 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent principals' use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that there is a balance in the need for innovation with the potential risks associated with new initiatives and Principal ensure that risk assessment practices align with legal and regulatory requirements, as seen in items 3 and 5, which have weighted mean values of (2.62) and (2.68) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that considers. potential risks before making administrative decisions principal communicate the identified risks to the staff and the school update and revise the school's risk management plan, as seen in items 1, 2, and 4, having weighted mean values of (2.20), (2.43), and (2.46), which are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.48 indicates that the answer to research question one is that to a low extent principals' use of risk assessment and mitigation as a management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of balancing innovation and risk management in educational leadership (Smith, 2018; Johnson et al., 2019). Again, this finding is noteworthy, as it raises questions about the comprehensiveness of risk consideration in decision-making processes, aligning with the concerns raised by Smith (2021) regarding potential gaps in risk assessment practices in educational leadership.

Extent regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The data presented in table 2 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent principals' regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that Safety

audits extend to both physical infrastructure and procedural aspects, Safety audits contribute to the overall crisis management strategy of the school, Regular safety audit outcomes lead to the initiation of training programs for staff and students and safety audits contribute to the enhancement of emergency preparedness, as seen in items 6, 7, 9, and 10, which have weighted mean values of (2.81), (2.72), (2.6), and (2.62) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that teachers, staff, or external experts are involved in safety audits, as seen in item 8 having weighted mean values of (2.03), which are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.56 indicates that the answer to research question two is to a high extent, that principals' regular audits as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding resonates with the call for increased emphasis on hazard identification and mitigation in school safety training, as emphasized by safety experts in Nigeria (Oluwafemi, 2017; Arowolo, 2021).

Extent use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The data presented in table 3 above shows mean and standard deviation on the extent principals' use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that emergency drill procedures are communicated to students and staff, drills are designed to simulate various emergency situations, including natural disasters and security threats and Drills are integrated in the overall school schedule, as seen in items 12, 13 and 15, which have weighted mean values of (2.78), (2.62) and (2.68) that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed to a low extent that emergency drill procedures are implemented within the school and School allocate resources for the execution of emergency drills as seen in items 11 and 14 having weighted mean values of (2.35), (2.31), and (2.19), which are below the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.55 indicates that the answer to research question three is that to a high extent, principals' use of emergency drills as a safety management practice enhance effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This aligns with prior research in Nigeria emphasizing the importance of emergency drills and effective decision-making (Adeleye, 2017; Olayinka, 2019). Again, this finding is in line with concerns raised by Nigeria researchers about the

administrative challenges associated with bureaucratic processes in collaborative endeavors (Adegoke, 2018; Ize&Akinrinade, 2020).

Conclusions

Principals' Safety Management Practices for Effective Administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, sheds light on the pivotal role principals play in fostering a safe and conducive learning environment. Safety training and education emerge as essential components, fostering a culture of awareness and preparedness among both staff and students, thereby creating a secure atmosphere for teaching and learning. Moreover, the emergency drills and regular audits represent a strategic and community-driven approach to school safety management. Principals' engagement with law enforcement and emergency services enhances overall security and crisis response capabilities, establishing a framework for a coordinated and effective response to potential threats. In essence, the synergy of risk assessment and mitigation, safety training and education, and collaboration with local authorities serves as a cornerstone for effective administration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Principals, through these multifaceted safety management practices, not only create a secure educational environment but also demonstrate a commitment to the holistic well-being of the school community. This comprehensive approach is indispensable for the sustained growth, development, and success of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. Poor State Government should carry out professional development programs for principals in secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria to strengthen their capacity in conducting comprehensive risk assessments and effective risk mitigation strategies.
2. School principals should develop an integrated safety calendar that combines regular safety audits and emergency drills throughout the academic year
3. School Principals should establish programs to engage parents, teachers, and local communities in safety awareness campaigns and participation in emergency drills.

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