

**COMMUNITY - SCHOOL POLICING AND SCHOOL CLIMATE AMONG PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM NORTH EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN
AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

School violence, indiscipline, and insecurity continue to affect learning outcomes in many public secondary schools in Nigeria. This study investigates the relationship between community-school policing and school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The population comprises all teachers and students in public secondary schools in the Senatorial District. The population of the study comprised 3904 teachers in the nine Local Government Areas in 89 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The sample size of this study comprised 423 teachers representing 11% of teachers' population. The study adopted multi stage sampling approach. The Local Government Areas were grouped into clusters (Nine Local Government Areas); Proportionate approach was used to select 45 schools (50%), and 423 teachers (11%) selected from each Local Government Area in the District. Simple random sampling technique of Hat and Draw method is use for the selection of teachers from the 45 schools earmarks for the study. The questionnaire was entitled "School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ) having fifteen items and Community and School Policing Questionnaire (CSPQ) having ten items". Four point rating scale was adopted for both questionnaires. The options in the questions were; Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)- 3, Disagree(D) - 2,Strongly Disagree(SD) - 1. The instrument (SCQ) and (CSPQ) were subjected to face validation by two experts in the department of Curriculum studies, Educational Management and Planning, Faculty of Education, and one expert from the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences both in the University of Uyo. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was used to test the reliability coefficient indices which yielded 0.923 for Community and School Policing Questionnaire (CSPQ) and 0.822 for School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ). The instrument were administered to the school teachers (respondents) using two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation (SD) was used to answer the research questions, while the independent t- test was used in testing all the three null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significant. When the accompanying P- value of the t-calculated values are less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypotheses were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted. The result showed that there is a significant influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. That is, community and school policing positively influence school climate. Based on the above findings the study recommends that, the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Nigeria Police Force and community leaders, should institutionalize community-school policing frameworks and train school personnel on security management to sustain a safe and supportive school climate.

Keywords: Community-school policing, School climate, Public secondary schools, Akwa Ibom State, School safety

Introduction

Education plays crucial role in the development of nations. As a major investment in human capital development, it enhances productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. This explains why the positive school climate should be enhanced to the achievement of these educational set goals and objectives. The concept of school climate has to do with the prevailing atmosphere, relationships, and overall environment within a school. It encompasses the collective perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour

of students, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, as well as the social and physical aspects of the school. Spillane (2014) sees school climate as the prevailing social, emotional, and professional tone, or 'feel,' of a school. He emphasizes that it is influenced by the interactions, relationships, and shared experiences of individuals within the school community. Also, school climate influences the social and emotional well-being of students, the quality of relationships among school members, and the overall functioning of the school. A positive and supportive climate fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and engagement, which can enhance student learning, motivation, and overall school effectiveness.

Bauman (2016) noted that promoting the school climate is essential for creating an environment that supports student well-being, engagement, and achievement. It requires collaboration and commitment towards nurturing a positive and inclusive culture that enhances the overall educational experience of all members of the school community. Bauman see school climate to include: physical infrastructure, resources, and safety measures in the school that can contribute to a positive climate. This means a safe and conducive physical environment promotes a sense of security and well-being among students and staff. Also positive relationships among students, teachers, administrators, and staff are essential for a healthy organizational climate. Meaning supportive interactions, effective communication, and collaboration with community will create a sense of connectedness and foster a supportive learning community. Again, a positive climate values celebrates diversity, promote inclusivity and respect for all students and staff regardless of their backgrounds, cultures, abilities, or identities. An effective school climate was also noted to provide clear expectations and high standards for academic achievement, behaviour, and social interactions that will promote a culture of excellence, encouraging students to strive for success. The study further reveals that a strong climate is characterized by a shared vision, mission, and core values. Effective leadership was seen to play crucial role in shaping the school climate. This means that school leaders who promote shared decision-making, provide support, and create a positive work environment contribute to a positive climate within the school.

The government at different occasions has made several attempts to address the problem of school climate by giving an order that students with antisocial behaviours be arrested by Nigerian Police Force and also should be made to sign an undertaking not disrupt the activities of school again. The policy has gone a long way to put checks and balances on the students and schools. The government has also enhanced the fencing of school compounds with gate to avoid breaking in during and after school hours all with enhancing positive school climate. Researchers have also tried to solve this problem using other variables, for instance, Hoy and Miskel, (2013) conducted a study to examine the influence of trust, efficacy, and collective responsibility on school climate. It explored how these factors contribute to the development of a positive school climate within schools. From the foregoing, it is necessary for public secondary schools to engage in community and school policing to establish a safe, secured, peaceful and conducive environment for teaching and learning. . This is because security is an important aspect of school climate.

Security issues have been a global issue for some times. For instance, Ndahi (2014) reported a case of the kidnapping of over 200 senior secondary school girls in Chibok town which is between Borno and Adamawa states. Issue of bombing students by unknown gunmen, bandits and the Boko Haram group in 2010 was also reported by Akintokumbo (2011). Recent cases also reported on National news include abduction of staff and students of Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe state on February, 24th, 2014. Abduction of 110 students of Government Girls Science Technical college, Dapchi, Yobe state on February 19th, 2018; abduction of 303 students of Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina state on 11th December, 2020; abduction of 41 persons in Government science college, Kagara, Niger state on 17th February, 2021: abduction of students at Federal Government college, Birium Yauri Local Government Area, Kebbi state on June 17th, 2021; abduction of 317 school girls of Government Girls Science Secondary School, Jangebe, Zamfara state on February 26th, 2021 amongst others. (Punch News Paper 4th May 2026)

Though most of these cases are recorded in the northern part of the country, other parts of the country also experience insecurity cases. For instance, Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District experienced insecurity challenges as reported by Akwa Ibom State Broadcasting Television on Thursday June 24, 2021. It was reported that some students cultists in Uyo High School threatened to kill the school principal for arresting and detaining some of the cult members in the police station. The television also reported case where a Senior Secondary School 3 student stabbed his school mate in SS 2 to death during a fight at Aka Community Secondary School on March 10th, 2022. Again, on 31st March, 2022, the station reported the stealing and wanton destruction of property at the Government Primary School, Aka Offot, Obio Imo, in Uyo Akwa Ibom State headquarters. From the above overview, positive school climate could be achieved in secondary schools, particularly in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District if there is community - school policing.

Community - School Policing

Community policing is defined by the federal office of community- oriented policing services as a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that gives rise to public safety issues such as crime, social order, and fear of crime (Office of community-oriented policing service, 2013). There is a wealth of international evidence that demonstrates how community policing reduces crime and improves public confidence in policing, particularly when the public is involve in priority setting and problem solving. An example of this is Dorset Police, who redesigned their neighborhood policing model in August 2013 under Project Genesis, in order to strengthen their commitment to support community policing in urban and rural communities. Their project acknowledged that policing is a dynamic operation that has continued to face a variety of challenges across police forces in England and Wales since its national implementation in 2008 and in order to capture, examine and analyze those aspects at Confidential different levels within a single police force, Project Genesis focused on the three main roles within a NPT namely the sergeant, police constable and PCSO.

Community policing is not foreign or new to Africa, because long before the European colonized in Africa, the traditional Igbo society, for example, already had this model in place where the age grades and masquerade society among other roles performed the role of law enforcement, Okeke, (2013). Every adult male citizen was a member of the age grade and masquerade society, suggesting that policing or security was the duty of the entire society. Community and school policing is perceived as an effective way of promoting school safety and to enhance the quality of life in a community. It was this search for an effective strategy to control crime and gain public confidence in the Nigeria Police which was hitherto in a sour relationship that necessitated community policing in Nigeria. To do this, the post-colonial policing in Nigeria have since witnessed numerous policing reforms. It is noted that in recent years, police departments have experimented new forms of law enforcement including community policing. Preventing crime and reducing fear of crime are both closely related to rebuilding strong communities, acknowledging that good police/public relationships are vital to successful policing.

Furthermore, community and school policing in Nigeria presumes that there is need for better communication and understanding between the police and the school. Okeke (2013) noted that community and school policing is more effective in preventing offending and encouraging more liberal and tolerant attitudes towards offenders. According to him, it is presumed that the central theme of the Nigerian policing is that community model of policing is not only meant for uniform patrol or specific community policing units rather the potential rewards cannot be fully realized unless there is a shared understanding of the community towards that approach throughout police organization. Olarewaju et'al (2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between community-school relationships and principal's administrative effectiveness of secondary schools in Kwara State. It was found that high significant relationship exist between community – school relationships and principals administrative

effectiveness. It was recommended that school- based management committee should be set up to foster the community – school relations effort in the interest of enhancing principals’ administrative effectiveness in Kwara State.

Furthermore, community and school policing main goal is to assist the schools in establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly learning environment. While apprehending criminals is one important goal of community and school policing, it is not the only goal, community and school policing is also concerned with solving the crimes that the community is concerned about in school and vice versa. Research indicates that the most effective methods include dialogue between police, government resources, citizens, and local business to address the problems affecting the community and schools situated therein. Police communicate with the community and the school in a variety of ways, including polls or surveys, town meetings, call-in programs, and meetings with interest groups. The structure of the community and school policing organization differs in that police assets are refocused with the goals of specific, written rules to give more creative problem-solving techniques to the police officer to provide alternatives to traditional law enforcement.

Community and school policing is a strategy of policing that focuses on developing relationships between the school and community members. It is a philosophy of full-service policing that is highly personal, where an officer patrols the same area for an extended time and develops a partnership with school members to collaboratively identify and solve security problems in schools in particular and the community at large. The goal is for police to build relationships with the community and the schools therein, through local agencies to reduce antisocial behaviour and low-level crime, as the broken windows theory proposes that this can reduce serious crimes as well.

The theory opined that the Common methods of community and school policing include: School administrators encouraging the community on the need to prevent crime by providing neighborhood watch groups, increased patrols in and outside the school by security personnel, increased officer accountability to the school administrators and communities they serve, creating teams of officers to carry out community policing in schools and designated neighborhoods, and clear communication between the police and the communities about their objectives and strategies.

Statement of the problem

The current school climate in some schools is worrisome having faced with an unprecedented wave of different but overlapping security related crises. There is a state of fear or anxiety and threats to life in schools as a result of lack of protection. The absence of community and school policing increases the risk of crimes, riots which has increasingly creates a negative and unsupportive atmosphere, leading to temporary closure of schools and absenteeism in students and teachers in some public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial district in particular and Akwa Ibom State in general. With the lingering security challenges in schools, there is need to establish community and school policing measures to enhanced positive and conducive learning environments that foster positive school climates.

However, the Akwa Ibom State government had tried to address this issue by giving order that the age bracket for admission into JS1 should be below 12 years of age and so forth. It is therefore not enough to leave it just at that. Hence, the need to see to the establishment of a positive school climate that will leads to the actualization of the educational set goals and objectives. The researcher seeks to examine the influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant influence of Community and School Policing on School Climate among Public Secondary Schools?

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Research Questions

How does Community and School Policing influence School Climate among public secondary school?

Literature Review

Udo and Emah (2026) examined the relationship between insecurity and the operational capacity of health facilities in Oruk Anam Local Government Area (LGA) of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the effects of insecurity on health facilities and personnel in Oruk Anam LGA and to specifically examine the prevalence of insecurity around health facilities in the Local Government, assessed the effect of insecurity on healthcare service delivery in the area, determined the relationship between insecurity and patient attendance rates, evaluated the impact of insecurity on staff performance and retention in local government and analyzed the influence of insecurity on infrastructure and medical supplies in area. This study was a quantitative study that used a cross-sectional survey of 640 health workers and facility users across primary and secondary health facilities in Oruk Anam Local Government of Akwa Ibom State. It used a random sampling technique to select the health facilities and personnel in the local government area that were affected by the activities of insurgency. A structured questionnaire known as Effect of Insecurity on health services in the local government area (EIHS) was developed and administered to respondents to collect data for the study. Responses to the questionnaire were summarized using quantitative analysis (Pearson Correlation and Regression Analysis) to evaluate the impact of insecurity on assessing health services in the area. The results of the study showed that prevalence of insecurity had negatively affected health facilities, healthcare service delivery, patient attendance rates, staff performance, other infrastructures and medical supplies in the area. The results indicated a statistical significant relationship between insecurity and independent variables. Meaning insecurity had negatively affected health care facilities and personnel in the area.

Udo, Willie and John (2025) examined the effects of insecurity on Secondary school attendance in Ukanafun Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study used a survey method in the analysis. The research objectives and questions were set to guide the study. Questionnaire known as Effect of Insecurity on School Attendance (EISA) was developed to collate data for the study. A random sampling technique was used to select 107 parents in 10 Secondary Schools that were affected by the activities of insurgency in the study area. Responses to the questionnaire were summarized using percentages to study students' attendance in schools before and during the insecurity. The Queer Ladder theory proposed by Daniel Bell 2010 was adopted. It was observed that the level of school attendance before the crisis in the study Area was high and low during and after the crises. The result also revealed gender imbalance. Male student's attendance during the crisis was higher than female student's attendance. Furthermore, the result shows that parents who were willing to send their children back to the affected schools were 58 out of 107 and which was merely above 50% of the total population. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that education administrators should help students overcome emotional distress gotten during the crises through sensitization programmes, town hall briefings, and visit to churches in the affected communities. It was further recommended that teachers should embrace methods that will reduce emotional anguish instigated by the insurgency. Finally, government should tackle youth restiveness by providing employment give Special incentives to engage aggressive youths in the affected communities.

Research Method

Ex-post facto research design is adopted in this study. This research design is adopted in this study because according to Uyanga and Etudor-Eyo (2015), it attempts to trace the cause(s) of some observable behaviour and establishes the causal connections by searching for plausible causal factors. The study is conducted in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State. The Senatorial District is

one of the three Senatorial Districts in Akwa Ibom State, the others being Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District and Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District respectively.

Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District consists of nine Local Government Areas namely Uyo, Uruan, Nsit Atai, Ibesikpo Asutan, Itu, Nsit Ibom, Etinan, Ibiono Ibom, and Nsit Ubium Local Government Area. The Senatorial District is inhabited predominantly by Akwa Ibom people of Ibibio ethnic group extraction with a handful of settlers and visitors from neighboring states. The choice of Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District for this study was because the researcher work and resides in this area and has firsthand knowledge of the school climate situation in the area through observation and local news media reports.

The population of the study comprised 3904 teachers in the nine Local Government Areas in 89 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The sample size of this study comprised 423 teachers representing 11% of teachers' population. The study adopted multi stage sampling approach. This approach was adopted because it gives room for other sampling techniques in the study; so that all the Local Government Areas in the senatorial district can be equally represented since the populations of teachers of secondary schools in each Local Government Area were not the same. Firstly, Local Government Areas were grouped into clusters that is (Nine Local Government Areas); Proportionate approach was used to select 45 schools (50%), and 423 teachers (11%) selected from each Local Government Area in the District. Simple random sampling technique of Hat and Draw method was used for the selection of teachers from the 45 schools earmarked for the study. Names of schools were written on pieces of papers and were selected for the study. In selecting the teachers in these 45 schools, Yes or No were written on the pieces of papers and folded, teachers who picked Yes were selected and used for the study.

Data were collected with researcher's structured questionnaires designed based on the objective of the study. The questionnaire was entitled School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ) having fifteen items and Community and School Policing Questionnaire (CSPQ) having ten items. The instruments were designed to obtain information from teachers on the various aspects of community and school policing measures used by their principals. Four point rating scale was adopted for both questionnaires. The options in the questions were; Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)- 3, Disagree(D) - 2, Strongly Disagree(SD) - 1.

The instrument (SCQ) and (CSPQ) were subjected to face validation by two experts in the department of Curriculum studies, Educational Management and Planning, Faculty of Education, and one expert from the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences both in the University of Uyo. The experts were given the objective, research question, hypotheses, and questionnaire for vetting. The experts' comments and inputs were used for modification of the final copy of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was used to test the reliability coefficient indices which yielded .923 for Community and School Policing Questionnaire (CSPQ) and .822 for School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ). The instrument were administered to the school teachers (respondents) using two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation (SD) was used to answer the research questions, while the independent t- test was used in testing all the three null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significant. When the accompanying P- value of the t-calculated values are less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypotheses were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted.

Discussions of Results

Research Question: What is the influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of community and school policing on school climate in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

Source of Variation	Community and School policing	N	Mean	SD
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	Effective	296	34.44	3.23
School climate	Ineffective	106	29.49	4.19

The entries in Table 1 reveal that schools which have effective community and school policing have the higher school climate mean score of 34.44 while schools which are ineffective in community and school policing have the lower mean score of 29.49 respectively. The result shows that community and school policing positively influence school climate in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Table 2: Result of independence t-test analysis on the influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District

	Community and School policing	N	Mean	Std.Dev	Df	t-cal	Decision P<05
School climate	Effective	296	34.44	3.23	400	12.458	.000
	Ineffective	106	29.49	4.19			

*significant at $P < .05$ level,

The result in Table 2 reveals the calculated t-value 12.458 with its corresponding P-value of 0.00 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance with 400 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which claims no significant influence of community and school policing on school climate is rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Discussion of Findings

The result of testing hypothesis two showed that there is a significant influence of community and school policing on school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. Equally, the finding on the research question two showed that community and school policing positively influence school climate. The significant influence in the hypothesis could be attributed to the availability of a two way security information channel, availability of joint security team from the school and community, the involvement of local vigilante, night security guards to protect the school properties and involvement of non- state actors. If these are effectively implemented, it will prevent bullying, harassment and violence thereby poised a safe buildings and surroundings for school activities to carry on.

The research questions indicates that schools that have a good rapport with the community security system and which partners the community for effective security yields a positive and effective school climate that enthusiast the school members. Invariably, this finding also implies that the reason why there is a negative and ineffective school climate in some schools may be due to lack of joint policing between the school and the community. This, therefore places a demand for school administrators to ensure that they do not live in isolation but partner the immediate community for security.

The findings that community and school policing significantly influence school climate of secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State North East Senatorial District is supported by the findings made by other

researchers, as earlier reported in this study. For instance, Kwaghbo, et'al (2019) who conducted a study on the impact of public-private partnership initiative (PPPI) on management of security in federal Government Unity Colleges in North-Central Nigeria. The finding of the study indicated no impact of PPPI on management of security in the Unity Colleges. Based on the findings, it was recommended that management of school security should not be left to the school administrators alone and that community members and other private organizations should be involved, particularly in the areas of information sharing, organized community watches, security threat alerts and donation of security equipment to the schools. More so, this findings also agrees with that of Olarewaju et'al (2012) who conducted a study to investigate the relationship between community-school relationships and principal's administrative effectiveness of secondary schools in Kwara State. It was found that high significant relationship exist between community – school relationships and principals administrative effectiveness. It was recommended that school- based management committee should be set up to foster the community – school relations effort in the interest of enhancing principals administrative effectiveness in Kwara State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that community and school policing significantly influenced school climate among public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The finding indicates that schools that have good rapport with the community security system and which partners the community for effective security yields positive and effective school climate that enthusiast the school members. Invariably, this finding also implies that the reason why there is a negative and ineffective school climate in some schools is due to lack of joint policing between the school and the community. This therefore places a demand for school administrators to ensure that they do not live in isolation but partner the immediate community for security.

Educational Implications of Findings

This study emphasized the need for security collaborations. A school system was first established by the community before handing over to the government and so can only be saved if it does not operate in isolation. Set goals and objectives of a school are only achievable in a peaceful, safe, secured, and conducive climate. If there is no community and school policing, they may be ill situations in and outside the school which threatens the attainment of school objectives. It is therefore pertinent that the school administrators should maintain and also service the protocol link for easy dissemination of security information. Security will be enhanced if communication process is carried out more effectively between the school security and community security agencies.

Recommendations

- i. School management should foster positive relationships with local law enforcement agents, implement a school resource officer programme that serves as a liaison between school, police department and the community.
- ii. They should also develop joint security teams and initiatives that is targeted at bringing collaborations between the community and school security agencies so they can be readily available to attend to security issues within and outside the school.

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