INFLUENCE OF SAFETY STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES ON SAFETY TRAINING IN PUBLIC BOARDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KITUI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Purpose: There is a contemporary anxiety on the increasing cases of catastrophes in secondary schools in Kenya. The aim of this research was to explore the influence of safety standards and guidelines on safety training in public boarding secondary schools in Kitui County.

Methodology: The study used securitization and disaster management theories. The investigation employed mixed methodology. The study embraced the concurrent triangulation design. This involved simultaneous data gathering but separate scrutiny of quantitative and qualitative data was done. The target population was 16,875 which included; 1,940 teachers and 14,903 students, 16 education officers and 16 senior police officers. The total sample was 650 participants. From 20 stratified sampled schools, 240 teachers and 400 students were used. From the education officers and police officers, 5 participants were used in each category. Principals and deputies were purposively sampled. Education officers and police officers were purposively sampled. Questionnaires with Likert scales were used. Interview schedules were used for education officers, police officers.

Findings: From the research findings, it was clear that there was need to beef up security training in the learning institutions by having all teachers, students and non-teaching staff trained and fully equipped with disaster management skills such that they are able to combat calamities when they strike their institutions.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The securitization and disaster management theories were used to warn and prepare for calamities consecutievely.The study established that training on catastrophe management was insufficient. The level of safety training was wanting. It was concluded that there was need to significantly implement training to enable security management in the schools. The theories were validated in that there was sensitization of disasters and the need to prepare in advance for calamities in schools. It was recommended that the government put in place curriculum for calamity training and schools prepare for disasters in advance.

Key Words: *Safety, Safety Guidelines, Secondary Schools, Security, Training*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The practice of safety standards and guidelines implementation leads to effective safety training among the school community members. If there is good sensitization and hence application of safety guidelines, there is going to be effective security management, something which would reduce risks in the learning institutions. The subject of security education as an academic accountability came to be when the World War II ended. It was commonly viewed as part of the International Relations undertaking. Till the ages of the Cold War it was a part of study and practice organized by Anglo-American thinking (Williams, 2008). This means safety guidelimes and training have a long history of relationship.

For instance, the police force were alerted to respond to school catastrophe instances in England more than 7,000 times as per the British schools' data. The frequency of these incidences that resulted to the police being involved was alarming (Janet, 2009). In the United States of America, it was witnessed the worst school gunfire whereby 20 pupils were heartlessly slain by a criminal. That occurred in the Sandy Hook Elementary School (The Independent, 2012). This shows the poor preparedness of the school communities in the United States of America.

Due to lack of safety implementation and training, twenty students perished in a dorm inferno in Uganda. It was said that the Ministry of Education had minimum security requirements which every school in the country had to follow strictly. Nonetheless, ninety three per cent of the Ugandan schools failed to possess fire extinguishing appliances then. The condition in the dorms was so pathetic such that students were found to be terribly congested. Some were sleeping in triple and quadruple beds (New Vision, 2008).

In the Republic of Kenya, according to Mburu (2012) the security of students and staff had occasionally been ignored. In September 2013, it was testified that Kisasi Secondary School dorm caught fire in the study county. In Kitui Central Sub County alone, three other schools had caught fire the previous week. These included Kitui High School, Tiva Girls' School and St Ursula Girls' Tungutu (The Star, 2013). Fire shattered down a Kitui High School dorm at 8 pm when the learners were in the night studies. Possessions valued millions of shillings went into flames in that shocking incident (Mutua, 2013).

 Statement of the Problem

The practice of safety standards and guidelines is expected to lead to improved security training in public boarding schools. However, the reality is that the level of safety training is poor. This is demonstrated by increased occurrence of catastrophes found in publications. For example, ten girls lost their lives and property worth millions of shillings was destroyed in a fire at the Moi Girls' School Nairobi (Daily Nation, 2017). The loss of lives caused untold grief to their parents. The government of Kenya failed to meet its objectives as far as Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 on learning was concerned.

Schools are supposed to be shelters of reconciliation and steadiness, which should be the ultimate situation, but not mixed up places. Looking at the media reports, safety managing is becoming a problem in the schools in Kenya. Learners being charged in

court, burning of schools and external weaponry attack threats among others have been witnessed and documented in the study county (Mutua, 2013; The Star, 2014; Daily Post, 2015; Ombati, 2015 etc).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section begins with the theoretical framework of the two theories use in the study. These are the securitization theory and disaster management theory.

Securitization Theory

The safety manual is the actor by providing guidelines to secure the schools that are in danger. In so doing, the manual treats school safety as an emergency that needs speedy action. By using the securitization theory, the public boarding schools were sensitized that there was need to employ more energy in safety and security matters. The manual that was put in place in 2008 by the Ministry of Education is the single key document that mentions the word 'security' in secondary schools.

A Danish professor of Copenhagen school, Ole Wæver, was associated with the origin of the securitization theory. He formulated this theory in 1995 after which it was worked out further by Buzan *et al* (1998). The theory specified that without proper training in disaster management to all school community members, it meant danger to them.

Disaster Management Theory

The disaster management theory discussed security management in the institutions. To enable proper security, the school community must to be trained to combat disasters when they struck by engaging disaster integrated curriculum. It also discussed security on the infrastructure in that security of learners was only possible if the school community could handle situations by having skills on what to do. For example when a building collapses; there must be safety structural mitigations. According to this theory, improved student abuse protection was possible if the school community knew how to handle the menace through disaster sustainable practices. Disaster management theory calls for integrated curriculum so as to manage security in the learning institutions as it emphasizes on what school communities should do before, during and after disasters.

Influence of Safety Sandards and Guidelines on Safety Training in Schools

Safety standards and guidelines implementation needs training of the school community so as to enable safe institutions. During the year 2009, University of Pune in India was chosen to spearhead an extensive disaster controlling curriculum for the graduate learners. Some 300 teachers from colleges linked to the university were put on training by the National Disaster Management Authority. The trained teachers were to pass the information to the students of their institutions. The training was catapulted by flooding and horror attacks in India (Ashwathi, 2009).

Even though security working committees and safety procedures were established in South African schools, they had no information on disaster procedures. The schools did not have knowledge on evacuation techniques during tragedies and the post-emergency shock procedures among others. Drills to prepare teachers and students for such calamities were not there (Xaba, 2014).

In Kenya, a research conducted in Turkana by Kipngeno and Kyalo (2009) found that teachers and learners failed to have expertise to battle infernos. Institutions had not given sufficient training for staff and learners on how to handle calamities. Even a big proportion of teachers and 75 % of the students had no information on how to handle fire extinguishers. The present research believes that having firefighting equipment without the skills to use them is dangerous for significant controlling of catastrophes in the institutions.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used securitization and disaster management theories. The investigation employed mixed methodology. The study embraced the concurrent triangulation design. This involved simultaneous data gathering but separate scrutiny of quantitative and qualitative data was done. The target population was 16,875 which included; 1,940 teachers and 14,903 students, 16 education officers and 16 senior police officers. The total sample was 650 participants. From 20 stratified sampled schools, 240 teachers and 400 students were used. From the education officers and police officers, 5 participants were used in each category. Principals and deputies were purposively sampled. Education officers and police officers were purposively sampled. Questionnaires with Likert scales were used. Interview schedules were used for education officers, police officers.

Table 1 Sample grid

Category of population	Total population	Sampling procedure	Sample size
Boarding schools	70	Stratified	20
Principals	70	Purposive	20
Deputies	70	Purposive	20
Teachers	1,800	Random	200
F4 students	14,903	Random	400
Education officers	16	Purposive	5
Security officers	16	Purposive	5
Total	**16,875**		**650**

Source: the researcher, 2019

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data was set according to the research objective. This research examined how safety training was implemented in handling security in public boarding secondary schools in Kitui County. Two levels of analysis were employed namely: descriptive and thematic.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

In this analysis, the researcher used tables, frequencies and percentages and analyzed the data according to the study objectives as it is shown below.

4.1.1 Influence of Safety Standards and Guidelines on Safety Training in Schools

Under the descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages were established from variables based on five-point Likert scale seeking to examine disaster management training among secondary school principals and deputies. Table 2 provides the statistical analysis with refence to the variables.

Table 2 Principals' and deputies' responses on safety training

Statements	D (1)	SD (2)	U (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
Principals, deputies and teachers have **always** been trained in disaster management skills	f16 45.7%	f03 8.57%	f00 0%	f14 40 %	f02 5.71%
School administrators and teachers **have adequate** training on firefighting and can handle any fire disasters	f22 62.8%	f03 8.57%	f00 % 0%	f06 17.14%	f04 11.43%
There has been **frequent trainings** on disaster management given to all school community members	f20 57.1%	f07 20 %	f01 2.86 %	f06 17.14%	f01 2.86 %
Safety and security training to principals, BoM members, teachers and students has **always been conducted** to minimize the negative impact of damage, save lives, and enhance security management	f24 68.5%	F 05 14.2%	F 00 0%	F05 14.29%	F 01 2.85 %
It is believed that teachers and students **are not well prepared** for disasters like fires when they strike at schools	f04 11.4%	f05 14.2%	f01 2.86%	f17 48.57%	f08 22.85%
Principals, teachers, BoM, school workers and students **are well prepared** to combat disasters when they strike at their schools	f27 77.1%	f02 5.71%	f02 5.71%	f04 11.43%	f00 0%

Source: the researcher, 2019

From the table, 54.28 % disagreed and strongly disagreed while 45.71 % agreed and strongly agreed that principals, deputies and teachers had always been trained in disaster management skills. This indicated that majority of them did not get the training. On the issue of adequate training for administrators and teachers, 71.43 % disagreed and strongly disagreed that they were adequately trained for disaster management. Only 28.57 % agreed and strongly agreed that they had adequate training. There were no frequent trainings as shown by the majority of 77.14 % who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Only 20 % agreed and strongly agreed with the statement indicating that in the case of majority, there were no frequent trainings on disaster management.

This is in agreement with Xaba (2014) who established that in South Africa, teachers and students had no drills to prepare them for disasters. They did not even have any

skills for emergency procedures in case of disaster occurrence. Circular G9/1/169 from the Ministry of Education Kenya suggested at least two fire drills per year.

Asked if safety and security training to principals, BoM members, teachers and students was always conducted to minimize negative impacts, majority disagreed and strongly disagreed by 82.86 %. Only 17.14 % agreed and strongly agreed. It was clear that teachers and students were not well prepared for disasters like fires as indicated by a majority of 71.42 % of the participants. Only 25.72 % seemed to be prepared for disasters. Again, a majority of 82.85 % indicated that the principals, teachers, BoM, school workers and students were not well prepared to combat disasters and only 11.43 % indicated preparedness. This was a similar case found in Turkana by Kipngeno and Kyalo (2009) that the school community did not have skills to fight fires and most of them did not even know how to use fire extinguishers.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

The investigator made some observations on safety trainings in the schools using an observation checklist. There was no single security warning or notice on the compounds, notice boards and the administration blocks. There were also no directions for fire evacuation points designated or safe points in case of fire. This was evidence that the school communities did not have practical training on disaster managing. Indeed the institutions were not disaster compliant through physical examinations.

From the interviews conducted among education officers and the security men, it was evident that training on disaster management had not been fully implemented in the efforts to ensure security of learners. According to one education officer, "*We cannot say for sure that we have planned trainings in our schools on disaster management.*" Another one went on to say, "*There are no enough resources to make training possible frequently.*" As another added, "*Fire drills are left to schools to organize them but they don't occur regularly.*" It was clear that the government did not have training calendar and curriculum for schools as one officer lamented, "*There is nothing official on disaster management training, the school authorities do as they wish to ensure security of the learners.*"

The security men had similar opinions, "*I don't think that learning institutions are well prepared for disasters from the few cases I have witnessed, and they even lack fire extinguishers and only buy them when the schools get burnt! Too late*" one officer said. It was established that the security men could assist in firefighting but the problem, "*The firefighting systems in schools are not established*" one of the officers said. Another one was critical, "*If schools were trained on disaster management, the type of damages witnessed could not be there.*" And another one assured, "*Disaster management in the police force was introduced way back in 2011 to help security of cictizens.*" Kukali (2009) pinpointed that the school community must possess adequate skills if they were to confront disasters such as fires effectively.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From the survey of the principals and their deputies, it was found that most of them did not obtain skills in catastrophe managing and for the few who said were trained, it was not satisfactory. There were no numerous trainings seen in the institutions. Most of the school managers were not even set for fire tragedies in case they confronted them.

Recommmendations

Recommendations for Practice

Founded on the research outcomes, the investigator suggested that:-

There is need to give skills to principals, teachers, and learners on calamity managing in institutions. Undergraduate teachers must be trained on disaster managing as part of their curriculum. It is also suggested that the BoMs and PTAs as well as the non-teaching staff be sensitized on disasters.

Recommendations for Policy

The Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development ought to plan curriculum for learners to be part and parcel of the syllabus in the usual education.

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