SAFE, SECURE, VIOLENCE-FREE SCHOOL POLICY: KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE AMONG PUBLIC RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KATSINA STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined knowledge and practice of Safe School Policy (SSP) among public rural secondary schools teachers (PRSST) in Katsina State. A sample of 210 teachers was selected using multistage sampling techniques from all (PRSST) in Katsina State. Descriptive survey design and structured questionnaire were adopted in collecting data on threats forms, awareness, practice, and constraints. Frequency counts, percentages, means, PPMC, ANOVA and multiple regression were employed in data analysis. The results revealed that teachers were at prime age with adequate education and experience. Threat level was lower in Katsina Central (KC) than Katsina South (KS) and Katsina North (KN). Overall, awareness was high though higher in KS than KN and KC. Radio and television dominated as information sources. KS had a higher practice level than KC and KN. Overall constraint level was high with corruption, poor funding, and government inefficiency being severe. Significant differences existed in threat, awareness, practice, and constraint. Positive correlation existed between awareness and SSP in KN, moderate in KC. Also Multiple regression analysis revealed experience and knowledge sources as determinants of levels of knowledge and practice of SSP.*

KEYWORDS: Safe school policy, Threat, Practice, Constraint.

INTRODUCTION

The provision of a safe, secure, and violence-free learning environment is crucial for effective delivery of education and overall well-being of students and teachers. In Nigeria, as in many developing countries, ensuring such an environment in schools particularly in rural areas remains a significant challenge. Notably too is the fact that policy implementation that aims at creating safe schools is essential, but their success largely depends on the knowledge and practices of teachers who are at the forefront of the educational system.

In recent years, Nigeria, particularly the North-West which consists of Katsina State, has faced numerous security challenges that have directly impacted educational institutions. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2022), over 1,500 schools were closed due to insecurity between 2020 and 2021, affecting more than 1.3 million children. Rural areas, in particular, have been disproportionately affected by the menace, with incidents ranging from kidnappings to terrorist attacks on schools (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government, in collaboration with international organizations, have developed policies and initiatives to promote safe and secure schools. The Safe Schools Declaration, which Nigeria endorsed in 2015, and the subsequent National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021) are instances of such efforts. These policies aim to protect students, teachers, and educational facilities from violence and attacks.

However, the effectiveness of these policies as earlier stressed largely depends on their implementations at the school level, with teachers playing a pivotal role. As noted by Olatunji and Ajayi (2022), teachers' awareness, understanding, and application of safety policies are critical factors in creating and sustaining a secure learning environment. This is particularly true in rural areas, where resources are often limited and external support may be scarce.

Despite the importance of teachers' roles in implementing safe school policies, there is a dearth of research on teachers' knowledge and practices levels, especially in public rural secondary schools. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a comprehensive study to assess the current state of teachers' awareness and practice of safe school policies in their distinctive schools. This research therefore aims to investigate the knowledge and practices safe school policy measures by public rural secondary school teachers in Katsina State. It is, however, believed that the findings will contribute to the development of more effective strategies for safe, secure and violence free learning environments in rural schools as well as inform future policy decisions on teacher training programmes in the state.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of school safety has become increasingly critical in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas where security challenges are often more pronounced. Despite the existence of a national policy aimed at creating safe, secure, and violence-free schools, the practice has remained problematic, especially in rural secondary schools. Such a gap between policy and practice poses significant risks to the educational process and the well-being of students and teachers.

Recent studies have exposed the severity of the situation. According to UNICEF (2022), over 1.3 million children in Nigeria were affected by school closures due to insecurity between 2020

and 2021, with rural areas being disproportionately impacted. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2023) also reported that Nigeria experienced 504 attacks on schools between 2020 and 2022, with 62% of these incidents occurring in rural areas.

While laudable policies such as the National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021) provide a framework for action, their effectiveness largely depends on implementation at the school level. It is obvious that teachers play a crucial role in this regard, yet their knowledge and practices regarding the policy remain understudied, particularly in rural contexts. Oluwadare and Ojo (2021) found that only 28% of rural secondary school teachers were aware of national school safety policies, indicating a significant knowledge gap. Adegbite (2023) also noted that even among teachers who were aware of these policies, practical implementation was often hindered by limited resources, inadequate training, and insufficient support from local authorities.

This disconnect between policy awareness and practical implementation is further exacerbated in rural areas due to unique challenges. Nnamani and Okeke (2022) have identified geographic isolation, limited access to information, and inadequate infrastructure as key constraints to effective policy implementation in rural Nigerian schools.

Despite the critical nature of this issue, a dearth of comprehensive research examining the knowledge and practice of safe, secure, and violence-free school policy among public rural secondary school teachers in Katsina State Nigeria prevails. This gap in the literature hinders the development of effective strategies to improve policy implementation and, ultimately, school safety in rural areas. Therefore, putting into consideration that earlier findings were location specific, this study aims to address this research gap by investigating the current state of knowledge and practice of safe, secure and violence free among public rural secondary school teachers in Katsina State.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out rural teachers' knowledge and practice of safe, secure, violence-free school policy in public rural secondary schools in Katsina state. The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the forms of threats to safe and violence-free rural secondary schools in Katsina State;

2. find out teachers' level of knowledge of safe, secure, violence-free school policy in public rural secondary schools in Katsina state;

3. determine teachers' level of practice of safe, secure, violence-free school policy in public rural secondary schools in Katsina state;

4. find out government' level of intervention to ensure safe, secure, violence-free school policy practice in public rural secondary schools in Katsina state; and to

5. find out the constraints to practice of safe school policy in public rural secondary schools in Katsina State

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of safe, secure, and violence-free schools has become increasingly critical in the global educational landscape, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. This focus has intensified due to various factors, including rising insecurity, terrorism, and the recognition that a safe learning environment is sacrosanct for better educational outcomes. In Katsina State, located in Northwestern Nigeria, these concerns are particularly pronounced, especially in rural areas where resources and awareness may be limited.

The Safe Schools Initiative, launched in 2014, was a response to the increasing attacks on educational institutions, particularly in the northeastern part of the country (UNICEF, 2018). This initiative was followed by Nigeria's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015, an inter-governmental commitment to protect students, teachers, and schools during armed conflict (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2020). Also, in 2021, the Federal Ministry of Education introduced the National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools, which provides a framework for creating safe learning environments.

However, Olowoselu and Bello (2022) argue that while these policies are well-intentioned, their implementation, especially in rural areas remains a significant challenge. According to the author, urban schools tend to have better access to resources, information, and training, leading to more effective implementation of safety measures compared to rural schools, which often struggle with limited resources and inadequate support systems.

The role of teachers in implementing school safety policy is crucial. Asiyai (2020) conducted a study on teachers' awareness of school safety measures in Delta State, Nigeria, finding that while most teachers were aware of basic safety measures, there was a significant gap in their knowledge of comprehensive safety policy and emergency response procedures.

The study by Ibrahim, Usman and Yusuf (2021) also offers valuable insights into the role and level of awareness among teachers regarding school safety policies. Ibrahim et al. (2021) revealed that approximately 75% of urban teachers were aware of national school safety policies, while 30% of rural teachers demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of these policies. The authors attributed this knowledge gap to several factors including limited access to professional development opportunities in rural areas, inadequate dissemination of policy information by local education authorities and language barriers, as some policy documents are not available in local languages.

Added to this chain of constraining factors, limited resources and infrastructure are insufficient security personnel, geographic isolation, lower awareness of national policies among local communities (Adebayo, 2023). Umar and Bello (2022) also noted inadequate basic security infrastructure (such as perimeter fencing, proper lighting, and secure entry points), lack of funds to implement safety measures or provide necessary training to staff on school safety and violence prevention as part of the challenges. Abdullahi's (2023) therefore believes that a holistic approach comprising community engagement, peer mediation programmes and improved teacher-student relationships, enhanced physical security measures among others are germane initiatives that could mitigate the menace. A nuanced view of rural teachers' approaches to school safety has also been pointed out. The findings of Yusuf and Abubakar (2024) indicate that although most teachers recognize the importance of a safe learning

environment, only few actively implemented safety measures in their schools attributing the laxity to lack of support and resources.

Unfortunately, the scenario has continued to negatively affect students' attendance, academic performance, teacher motivation, students' mental health and gender balance (Amadi & Urho, 2022; Lawal, Bello & Sani, 2023). Sani and Ibrahim (2022) therefore offered a set of evidence-based interventions that are crucial to improving the knowledge and practice of safety policies among rural teachers. Such interventions should among others include regular training and workshops for teachers, provision of adequate resources, allocating a specific percentage of the education budget to school safety measures, establishing partnerships with NGOs and international organizations for additional funding, integrating safety education into teacher training curricula and technology integration.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Katsina State located in North-Western zone of Nigeria. The state, covers an area of 23,938 sq. km and is located between latitudes 11°08'N and 13°22'N and longitudes 6°52'E and 9°20'E (Adewale, Olowu & Ladele, 2005). It has 34 LGAs from three senatorial districts, sharing a common boundary with Niger Republic in the north, Jigawa and Kano States in the east, Kaduna State in the South and Zamfara State in the West. All public rural secondary schools teachers formed the study population. Multistage sampling procedure was in selecting a sample size of 210 teachers. First, 30% (10) of the LGAs (Katsina, Jibia, Batsari and Dutsinma, Daura, Mashi, Baure, Funtua, Malumfashi and Bakori) were selected from three senatorial districts using proportionate sampling technique . Second, 3 schools from each LGA were selected using systematic sampling procedure. Also using systematic sampling technique, seven teachers were selected from each school to form the sample size for the study.

A descriptive survey design was adopted due to its high propensity of inclusiveness and ease with which participants' opinions were obtained. A structured questionnaire was developed, validated and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha. A reliability index of .086 was obtained and judged good for the instrument. The questionnaire comprised sections A, B, C, D and E based on the study's objectives (forms of threats, knowledge, practice, intervention and constraints).

These variables were measured as follows: data on threats were captured and ranked across the selected items. The score obtained was used to categorize the threats into high, moderate and low levels of occurrences using the Mean±SD criterion. Knowledge of school safety policy was determined using aware (1) or not aware (0) for each of the awareness statements. The mean awareness obtained was used to categorize respondents' knowledge level into high (≥ mean score) and low (< mean score). For practice level, a three-point Likert-Type scale was implored. A score of 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to each adequately practiced, fairly practiced, poorly practiced and not practiced for positively worded statements and a reverse for negatively worded. The mean score was obtained and used to categorize respondents' level of safety policy practice into high (≥ mean score) and low (< mean score). Constraint to practice was measured using a three point scale of Not a challenge = 1, Mild challenge = 2 and serious challenge = 3. The mean scores and standard deviation obtained were used to categorize the

constraints into low (< mean ± 1SD), moderate (within mean ± 1SD) and high (> mean ± 1SD) levels of severity. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation and percentages. The inferential statistical tools used included PPMC, ANOVA and Multiple regression

RESULTS

Personal Characteristics

Table 1 presents results on respondents' personal profile. The results show that overall, 53.73% of respondents were between 31-40 years old. Across the three senatorial districts (SDs), the youngest age group (<=30) is most prevalent in Katsina South (KS) (30.2%), while Katsina Central (KC) and Katsina North (KN) had the highest percentage of teachers (9.5%) of over 50 years. On the respondents' educational status, NCE holders form the largest group overall (48.03%), in KN (55.6%) and KS (49.2%). MEd holders were the second largest group (37.93%) and are most prevalent in KC (44%). BEd holders made up 14.03% overall, with the highest percentage in KS (17.5%), while there are no PhD holders across the districts. Overall, the majority of teachers (86.83%) had 1-10 years of experience while only 2.53% of teachers have more than 20 years of experience, with KN (4.8%) having the highest percentage (4.8%).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on personal profile

Item	Level	Overall	KC	KNh	KS
Age	<=30	17.73	7.1	15.9	30.2
	31-40	53.73	54.8	54	52.4
	41-50	24.37	28.6	27	17.5
	>50	4.23	9.5	3.2	0
Educational status	NCE	48.03	39.3	55.6	49.2
	M Ed	37.93	44	36.5	33.3
	B Ed	14.03	16.7	7.9	17.5
	PHD	0.00	0	0	0
Teaching experience	>20	2.53	1.2	4.8	1.6
	11-20	10.30	11.9	9.5	9.5
	1-10	86.83	85.9	85.7	88.9

Forms of Threats

Table 2a presents various forms of threats in schools across the state. Overall, bandits/terrorist attacks (51.9%), abduction/kidnapping (51%), armed conflict (34.8%), sexual and gender-based violence (31.9%) and physical (15.2%), power shortage (49%) were most frequent threats. Humiliating punishment (56.2%), bullying (52.9%), child abuse (54.8%), peer-to-peer violence (83.8%), laboratory accidents (58.1%) and corporal punishment (67.6%) were somewhat frequent. Using the mean scores, both bandits/terrorist attacks and abduction/kidnapping (2.3), and power shortage (2.3) were the most severe concerns across the state. Peer-to-peer violence (2.1), armed conflict, and sexual and gender-based violence (both 2.0) were relatively high threats. Moderate threats included physical and humiliating

punishment (1.9), bullying and corporal punishment (1.8), playground accidents (1.8), laboratory accidents (1.7) and child abuse (1.6). Communal clashes (1.5), flood (1.4), civil unrest (1.2), and wildfire (1.0) had the lowest means, suggesting they were less frequent across the state.

Across the senatorial districts, banditry activity was consistently high in KC (2.33), KN (2.49) and KS (2.30). Similarly, abductions were common in KC (2.30), KN (2.54) and KS(2.30). Power shortage was significant in KC (2.54), KN (2.35) but less in KS (1.98). Sexual and gender-based violence was also a big issue across all districts, with KN showing highest mean (2.17). Armed conflict showed an increasing trend from KC (1.82) to KS(2.22) while physical and humiliating punishment was predominant in KS (2.19). Peer-to-peer violence was significant in KN (2.24) with wildfire, civil unrest, and flood showing lowest mean values across all districts. Communal clashes were slightly higher in KS (1.70) and lower in KC and KN. Laboratory accidents significantly occurred in KS (2.05) compared to KC and KN. Bullying is prevalent in KN (1.89), while child abuse was highest in KS (1.76). The result on Table 2b showed the level of threats across the districts. Overall, 56.86% of the total areas surveyed experienced a high threat level. KS showed a worrisome scenario, with 100% of the area experiencing a high threat level. The situation in KN appeared balanced, with 50% experiencing high threat level and 50% low. Interestingly, KC showed that 87.5% experienced a low threat level.

Table 2a: Distribution of respondents based on forms of threats

Forms of threats	Mostly frequently	Somewhat	Never	KC	KN	KS	Overall
Armed conflict	34.8	28.1	37.1	1.82	1.94	2.22	2.0
Sexual and gender based violence	31.9	37.6	30.5	1.80	2.17	2.14	2.0
Bandits/terrorists attack	51.9	20.5	27.6	1.99	2.33	2.49	2.3
Abduction/kidnapping	51	21.9	27.1	1.96	2.30	2.54	2.3
Physical/humiliating punishment	15.2	56.2	28.6	1.60	1.90	2.19	1.9
Bullying	10.5	52.9	36.7	1.57	1.89	1.81	1.8
Child abuse	4.3	54.8	41	1.55	1.62	1.76	1.6
Playground accidents	4.8	65.7	29.5	1.56	1.75	2.02	1.8
Communal clashes	2.9	47.4	49.8	1.46	1.44	1.70	1.5
Flood	2.9	47.4	49.8	1.44	1.37	1.32	1.4
Wildfire	0	3.8	96.2	1.02	1.02	1.08	1.0
Civil unrest	0	22.4	77.6	1.14	1.24	1.32	1.2
Laboratory accident	4.8	58.1	37.1	1.54	1.49	2.05	1.7
Corporal punishment	3.3	67.6	29	1.56	1.76	1.97	1.8
Peer-to-peer violence	11	83.8	5.2	1.94	2.24	2.03	2.1
Power shortage	49	33.3	17.6	2.54	2.35	1.98	2.3

Table 2b: Distribution of respondents based on level of threat

Senatorial District	Level	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
				28.410	6.122	16	41
Katsina Central:	High	5	31.2				
	Low	14	87.5				
Katsina North:	High	8	50				
	Low	8	50				
Katsina South:	High	16	100				
	Low	0	23.5				
Total:	High	29	56.86				
	Low	22	43.14				

Awareness of safe, secure and violence-free school policy

Table 3a presents respondents' awareness on various school safety measures. The results show that overall, reporting of suspicious vehicles and persons (95.2%) and proper identification/vetting of service personnel (95.2%), training procedures for handling bomb threats, hostage situations, and kidnappings (75.6%), CCTV and other technological security measures (69.3%), ensuring that vehicles are properly registered (63.2%) were mostly known to teachers. These were followed by ensuring that classroom, windows and doors are secured (59.8%), teaching students security approaches (56.7%), reviewing with other stakeholders security procedures (46.7%) and maintaining synergy with law enforcement agencies (44%).

Overall, using mean scores, the results revealed awareness on reporting suspicious vehicles and persons (90.5) and proper identification/vetting of service personnel 100%. In KN, most respondents were aware of ensuring that parking lots are properly supervised (100%) unlike KS with 9.5%. Awareness of CCTV and other technological security measures varies significantly among KC (100%), KN (25.4%) and KS (82.5%). Also teachers were aware that training procedures for handling bomb threats, hostage situations, and kidnappings varied across the districts of KC (100%), KN (57.1%) and KS (69.8%) respectively. Reviewing specific security responsibilities and procedures with stakeholders showed lower and varying awareness with 26.2%, 54% and 54% in KC, KN and KS respectively. Respondents in KC (51.2%), KN (71.4%) and KS (47.6%) were aware to teach students security approaches and violence and threatening issues. Table 3b further shows that overall, 62.75% of teachers had a high awareness level. In KS, awareness level was highest (76.5%) followed by KN (58.8%) and KC (52.9%).

Table 3a: Distribution of respondents based on awareness of safe school policy

Policy measures	KC	KN	KS	Total
Reporting of suspicious vehicles and persons around school buildings including those taking photographs or videotaping, and packages.	95.2	100	90.5	95.2
Proper identification and handing over individuals seeking suspicious information to appropriate authority.	35.7	74.6	82.5	64.3
Proper identification/vetting of service personnel/vendors entering the school premises	95.2	100	90.5	95.2
Ensuring that security officers reduce the number of access routes from outside to one designated entrance while also ensuring security of emergency exits.	29.8	69.8	58.7	52.8
Ensure that parking lots in and outside the premises are properly supervised and monitored.	95.2	100	9.5	68.2
Ensure that vehicles are properly registered	83.3	81	25.4	63.2
Ensure that routine inspections of school building/grounds are done by trained personnel	32.1	69.8	31.7	44.5
Ensure that classroom windows and doors are secured at the end of the school day	81	74.6	23.8	59.8
Ensure heightened awareness during break, physical education classes, and other outside activities	15.5	76.2	61.9	51.2
Review with other stakeholders security procedures from time to time.	46.4	57.1	36.5	46.7
Be involved in the training procedures for handling bomb threats, hostage situations, and kidnappings, chemical and biological terrorism.	100	57.1	69.8	75.6
Teach students security approaches and awareness on violence and threatening issues.	51.2	71.4	47.6	56.7
Be conversant with call signs and plans in advance before an emergency or crisis occurs and how best to communicate such to students for safety.	2.4	44.4	69.8	38.9
Review specific security responsibilities and procedures with relevant stakeholders from time to time.	26.2	54	54	44.7
Identify back-up team leaders in case normally assigned leaders are not available and never hesitate to get in touch with professionals when in doubt of any security procedures.	100	47.6	71.4	73.0
Ensure CCTV surveillance system, protective lighting, alarm, security gate are on to deter attacks	100	25.4	82.5	69.3
Maintain synergy with law enforcement agencies and private security officers posted in schools	46.4	36.5	49.2	44.0

Table 3b: Distribution of respondents based on level of awareness on safe school policy

Senatorial District	Level	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
				8.843	4.310	2	17
Katsina Central:	high	9	52.9				
	low	8	47.1				
Katsina North:	high	10	58.8				
	low	7	41.2				
Katsina South :	high	13	76.5				
	low	4	23.5				
Total:	high	32	62.75				
	low	19	37.25				

Sources of information on safe, secure and violence-free school policy

Table 4a presents results on various information sources regarding safe, secure and violence-free school policy. The results revealed that overall; radio (50.5%) and television (42.4%) "always provided information. The Ministry of Education (75.2%), supervisors (77.6%), friends (69%) and associations were used occasionally. On overall also using mean scores, radio (3.36) and television (3.32) still emerged predominant information sources. Friends (3.07) as an information source underscored the role of informal networks. The low score for internet usage (2.52) is an indication that despite the global digitization trend, many rural teachers in the state still faced barriers in accessing online resources. Printed media (2.69) and associations (2.94) showed relatively lower scores compared to other sources.

Across SDs using mean scores also; radio (3.30) and television (3.38) consistently scored high. KS showed higher scores for printed media (3.35) and associations (3.33) compared to other districts. Supervisors (2.95) and Ministry of Education (3.17) moderately provided information. Internet usage (2.27) was consistently low while friends ((3.00) was moderate. The result on Table 4b further revealed that overall (75%) had a high information level. Similar scenario occurred in KC where 100% of the teachers had a high information level. In KN, an even split occurred between high and low information levels (50% each). In KS, 75% showed a high information level.

Table 4a: Distribution of respondents based on sources of information on safe, secure and violence-free school policy

Information Source	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	KC	KN	KS	Overall
Radio	0	1.9	47.6	50.5	3.38	3.35	3.35	3.36
Television	0	1	56.7	42.4	3.30	3.33	3.33	3.32
Supervisors	0	6.7	77.6	15.7	3.11	2.95	2.95	3.00
Friends	0	7.6	69	23.3	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.07
Printed media	7.1	45.2	41.9	5.7	2.35	2.37	3.35	2.69
Association	1	21.9	70	7.1	2.91	2.57	3.33	2.94
Internet	22.4	23.8	41.4	12.4	2.33	2.27	2.95	2.52
Education Ministry	0	7.6	75.2	17.1	3.17	3.16	3.00	3.11

Table 4b: Distribution of respondents based on level information sources

Senatorial District	Information level	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
				5.262	1.933	1	12
Katsina Central	High	8	100				
	Low	0	0				
Katsina North	High	4	50				
	Low	4	50				
Katsina South	High	6	75				
	Low	2	25				
Total	High	18	75				
	Low	6	25				

Teachers' practice of safe school policy

Table 5a presents results on practice of various school safety measures. The results revealed that 49%, 40.5%, 41.9% and 38.6% respondents adequately practiced reporting suspicious vehicles and persons around school buildings, proper identification of individuals seeking information and vetting of service personnel and ensured limited access routes to school premises respectively. Monitoring (31.4%) and supervision (37.1%) also were adequately ensured. Similarly, while 66.7% adequately secured classrooms at day's end, only 26.2% ensure routine inspections by trained personnel. Also only 15.7% adequately involved in training for handling serious threats like bombings or kidnappings, teach students about security awareness (35.2%) while 24.8% reviewed security procedures with stakeholders. Adequate use of CCTV and other security technologies (2.9%) and maintaining adequate synergy with law enforcement (21.4%) were also practiced.

Using mean scores, overall, the result shows that securing classroom windows and doors (3.58), reporting suspicious activities (3.45), proper identification/vetting of service personnel/vendors entering the school premises (3.35) were highly practiced. These were followed by access control (3.29), vehicle registration and monitoring (3.19), routine inspections (3.11), teaching students about security (3.15), and teaching students about security awareness (3.15), reviewing procedures with stakeholders (3.06), were fairly practiced. CCTV and technological security measures (1.47), training for severe threats like bomb threats and kidnappings (2.37), identifying backup teams (2.67), and synergy with law enforcement (2.69) were poorly practiced. Other measures that were poorly practiced included reviewing procedures with stakeholders (3.06).

Securing classroom windows and doors in KC (3.85), KN (3.35) and KS (3.56) were strongest. Also, reporting suspicious activities in KC (3.50), KN (3.27) and KS (3.59) were strongly complied. Identification and vetting procedures in KC (3.46, 3.48) and KS (3.44) were also strongly practiced. CCTV and technological security measures usage in KC (1.49), KN (1.35) and KS (1.57) were low just as compliance to training for severe threats like bomb threats and kidnappings in KC (2.18), KN (2.03) and KS (2.89) was not strong. Reviewing procedures with stakeholders showed moderate compliance in KC (3.21), KN (2.71) and KS (3.11). Maintaining synergy with law enforcement KC (3.07), KN (2.71) and KS (2.27) showed an interesting

reversal of usual compliance pattern, with KS scoring lowest. Table 5b showed that despite specific measures and disparities in compliance, level of practice was both high overall and across the senatorial zones.

Table 5a: Distribution of respondents based on safe, secure and violence-free school policy

Safety Policy Practice	Not At All	Poorly	Fairly	Adequately	KC	KN	KS	Overall
Reporting of suspicious vehicles and persons around school buildings including those taking photographs/videotaping.	0	3.3	47.6	49	3.50	3.27	3.59	3.45
Proper identification and handing over Individuals seeking suspicious information to appropriate authority.	0	4.3	55.2	40.5	3.48	3.13	3.44	3.35
Proper identification/vetting of service personnel/vendors entering the school premises.	0	5.7	52.4	41.9	3.46	3.03	3.56	3.35
Ensuring that access routes from outside are reduced to one entrance while ensuring security of emergency exits.	0	8.1	53.3	38.6	3.42	3.06	3.40	3.29
Ensure that parking lots in and outside their premises are properly supervised and monitored.	0	11	57.6	31.4	3.33	2.89	3.35	3.19
Ensure that vehicles/movements are properly registered.	0	12.9	50	37.1	3.40	2.84	3.43	3.22
Ensure that routine inspections of school buildings/grounds are done by trained personnel.	0.5	13.3	60	26.2	3.20	2.87	3.25	3.11
Ensure that classroom windows and doors are secured at the end of the school day.	0	5.7	27.6	66.7	3.85	3.35	3.56	3.58
Ensure heightened awareness during break, physical education classes, and other outside activities.	0.5	13.3	56.7	29.5	3.25	2.87	3.30	3.14
Review with other stakeholders security procedures from time to time.	1	17.6	50	31.4	3.33	2.84	3.11	3.10
Be involved in training procedures for handling bomb threats, hostage/kidnappings, and chemical/biological terrorism.	31.4	18.1	34.8	15.7	2.18	2.03	2.89	2.37
Teach students security approaches and awareness on violence and threatening issues.	0	17.1	47.6	35.2	3.49	2.59	3.37	3.15

Be conversant with call signs and plans before an emergency crisis occurs and how to communicate such to students.	1	24.3	44.3	30.5	3.20	2.57	3.30	3.03
Review specific security responsibilities and procedures with relevant stakeholders from time to time.	0.5	16.7	58.1	24.8	3.21	2.71	3.24	3.06
Identify the back-up team when assigned leaders are not available nor hesitate to get in touch with professionals.	2.4	39	47.6	11	2.67	2.35	3.00	2.67
Ensure CCTV surveillance system, protective lighting, alarm, security gate are on to deter attacks	66.7	22.4	8.1	2.9	1.49	1.35	1.57	1.47
Maintain synergy with law enforcement agencies and private security officers posted in schools	12.4	24.3	41.9	21.4	3.07	2.71	2.27	2.69

Table 5b: Distribution of respondents based on level of school safety practice

Senatorial District	Safety practice level	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
				51.380	6.748	32	68
Katsina Central	High	17	100				
	Low	0	0				
Katsina North	High	17	100				
	Low	0	0				
Katsina South	High	17	100				
	Low	0	0				
Total	High	51	100				
	Low	0	0				

Constraints to teachers' safe school policy practice

Table 6a presents results on constraints to teachers' practice of safe school policy. The results show that overall; poor funding (82.9%) severe), corruption (83.8%), poor monitoring and supervision (58.1%) and government's inability to meet up its responsibilities (78.1%) were severe constraints. Also poor cooperation from principal (47.6%) and poor cooperation from parents (64.3%) were mild while lack of awareness (44.8%) constituted no constraint.

Using mean scores also, the results still show that overall; poor funding (2.76), corruption (2.77), government's inability to meet responsibilities (2.68) and poor monitoring and supervision (2.53) were severe followed by poor cooperation from parents (1.98), lack of awareness (1.91) and poor cooperation from principal (1.83). Across the senatorial districts;

poor funding is consistently high across with KC (2.96) and KN (2.95) experiencing it most severely than KS (2.37). 2. Corruption showed similar pattern being highest in KC (2.95) and KN (2.95) than KS (2.41). The constraint of monitoring and supervision was slightly higher in KN (2.71) than (2.68) and slightly higher than in KC and KS (2.21). Poor cooperation from principals showed more variation, with KN (2.17) experiencing it more than KC (1.51) and KS (1.81). Poor cooperation from parents was highest in KN (2.35) than in KC (1.75) and KS (1.84) while awareness varied significantly, with KN (2.48) experiencing it more acutely than KC (1.64) and KS (1.60). Government's inability to meet responsibilities was perceived as a severe constraint, especially in KC (3.00) than in KN (2.84) and KS (2.21). Table 6b further provides results on constraint level. The results show that in KC, 57.1% had high constraint levels. Strikingly, in KS 100% had high constraint levels with 71.4% high in KN.

Table 6a: Distribution of respondents based on constraints to safe school policy practice

Constraint	Not a constraint	Mild	Severe	K.central	K.North	K.south	overall
Poor funding	4.8	12.4	82.9	2.96	2.95	2.37	2.76
Corruption	4.8	11.4	83.8	2.95	2.95	2.41	2.77
Poor monitoring and supervision	3.3	38.6	58.1	2.68	2.71	2.21	2.53
Poor cooperation from principal	36.2	47.6	16.2	1.51	2.17	1.81	1.83
Poor cooperation from parents	20	64.3	15.7	1.75	2.35	1.84	1.98
Lack of awareness	44.8	22.4	32.9	1.64	2.48	1.60	1.91
Government' inability to meet up its responsibilities	6.7	15.2	78.1	3.00	2.84	2.21	2.68

Table 6b: Distribution of respondents based on level of constraints

Senatorial District	constraint level	F	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
				16.470	2.852	7	21
Katsina central	High	4	57.1				
	Low	3	42.9				
Katsina South	High	7	100				
	Low	0	0				
Katsina North	High	5	71.4				
	Low	2	28.6				
Total	High	16	76.19				
	Low	5	23.81				

Test of variance on threat forms

The ANOVA result on Table 7a shows a significant difference in forms of threat among the senatorial districts ($F(2, 207) = 8.8688$, $p = 0.0002$). This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in forms of threat perceptions across the three SDs. The post-hoc analysis result (Table 8b) provides more information about the differences between SDs. While the KN district has highest mean threat score ($M = 28.7937$, $SD = 6.7134$), KS has a slightly lower mean threat score ($M = 30.5873$, $SD = 3.8631$) and KC has lowest mean threat score ($M = 26.4881$, $SD = 6.4891$). The 'groups' column indicates that there are significant differences between KN (a) and KC (b) districts while KN (A) and KS (b) districts. However, there is no significant difference between KS and KC (both labeled b).

Table 7a: Distribution of respondents based on variance on threat forms

Model	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Senatorial Districts	2	618.2056	309.1028	8.8688	0.0002
Residuals	207	7214.5754	34.8530		

Table 7b: Post-hoc analysis on threats forms

Comparison	Threats scores	std	se	groups
North	28.7937	6.7134	0.7438	A
South	30.5873	3.8631	0.7438	B
Central	26.4881	6.4891	0.6441	B

Test of difference on practice of safe school policy

The ANOVA result on Table 8a shows a significant difference in practice scores among the senatorial districts ($F(2, 207) = 31.8078$, $p < 0.0001$). The post hoc analysis result (Table 8b) reveals that teachers in KN have significantly different practice scores compared to those in KS and KC. Whereas KN (46.3968) has lower mean score, KS (53.6190) and KS (53.4405) have higher mean scores.

Table 8a: Distribution of respondents based variance on safe school policy practice

Model	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Senatorial Districts	2	2236.8849	1118.4425	31.8078	0.0000
Residuals	207	7278.6389	35.1625		

Table 8b: Post-hoc Analysis on safe school policy practice

Comparison	Practice_scores	std	se	groups
North	46.3968	6.0416	0.7471	A
South	53.6190	6.3941	0.7471	A
Central	53.4405	5.4670	0.6470	B

Test of difference on constraint to practice of safe school policy

The ANOVA results for constraint (Table 9a) show significant differences among the senatorial districts. The F is 44.1120 with a highly significant p-value of $< 1.10E-16$) indicates that constraints differ significantly across the districts. Duncan's multiple range test result (9b) provides a detailed comparison of these differences. The results show that KN (mean = 18.4603 has the highest constraint compared to KC (16.5000)and KS (14.4444). The 'groups' information indicates that all three districts are significantly different from each other (A, B, and C) with KN (group 'a') facing the highest level of constraints, followed by KC (group 'c'), and KS (group ('b') experiencing the lowest level of constraints.

Table 9a: Distribution of respondents based on variance on constraints to safe school policy practice

Model	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Senatorial district	2	508.1222	254.0611	44.1120	1.10E-16
Residuals	207	1192.2063	5.7595		

Table 9b: Post-hoc analysis on safe school policy practice

comparison	Constraint scores	std	se	groups
North	18.4603	2.1540	0.3024	a
South	14.4444	3.3494	0.3024	b
Central	16.5000	1.5868	0.2618	c

Test of relationships between variables

Table 10 presents the PPMC results. The results show the correlation between practice of school safety practice and awareness scores across the three SDs. In KC, a significant moderate positive correlation occurred between awareness scores p-value = 0.0003, r = 0.3819 and level of school safety practices (r = 0.3819, p < 0.001). Also in KN, a significant strong positive correlation existed between teachers' awareness level (r = 0.5514, p < 0.001) and school safety practice level.

Table 10: Correlation between selected variables and safe school policy practice

Senatorial Districts	Variable	P = Value	r = Value
Katsina central	Awareness	0.0003	0.3819
Katsina North	Awareness	0	0.5514
Katsina South	Awareness	0.8527	-0.0239

The determinants of safe school school policy practice using multiple regression model

The regression analysis provides insights into the factors influencing awareness and practice of safe school policy in Katsina State. The intercept of the model, at β = 9.3823, p = 0.0705, represents the baseline level of safe school practice when every other variable is held at zero.

Age (β = 0.0549, p = 0.3677), threats (β = -0.0445, p = 0.4026), education (β = -0.0785, p = 0.8739) did not predict level of awareness and practice of safe school policy. On the other hand, years of experience (β = 0.1850, p = 0.0194), Knowledge sources (β = 0.5883, p < 0.0001), and constraints scores (β = -0.4219, p = 0.0007) determined teachers' levels of awareness and practice of safe school policy.

Regression analysis on determinants of safe school policy practice

Regression	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Intercept	9.3823	5.1590	1.8186	0.0705
Age	0.0549	0.0608	0.9029	0.3677
Threats	-0.0445	0.0531	-0.8388	0.4026
Experience	0.1850	0.0785	2.3572	0.0194
Knowledge	0.5883	0.1265	4.6498	0.0000
Constraints	-0.4219	0.1218	-3.4636	0.0007
Education	-0.0785	0.4937	-0.1590	0.8739

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

These results on age suggest that the typical public rural secondary school teacher in Katsina State is between 31-40 years old, holds an NCE or MEd, and has 1-10 years of teaching experience. The result further indicated that variations existed across SDs, with KS having a younger teacher population and KC having a slightly higher proportion of more educated teachers. The younger teacher population in the state may not be unconnected with recent recruitment by the state government. The results are in tandem with the findings of Olatunji et al. (2022), Nigerian Teachers Institute (2023), and Abdullahi and Mohammed (2021)

The results on level of threats indicated KC experienced a low level of threat with KS showing a worrisome scenario of highest threat level. This relatively better situation in KC could be due to increased security presence given the inclusion of the state capital in the district. The implications of these varying levels of threat include the possibility of having uneven access to education, closures of school and lower school attendance. This result aligns with the study of Olojo (2022) which noted the security threats in Northern Nigeria, have remained persistently high, with over half of the districts experiencing significant forms of threats.

That the overall awareness of the policy was high was in line with a priori. However the results across the SDs presented an indication of the complex nature of school safety policy awareness in the State with significant variations. Whereas KS awareness level was highest in KS followed by KN, KC had lowest. This may be attributed to the magnitude of enlightenment programmes the teachers must have exposed. The results are in tandem with the report of the Nigerian government that reportedly acknowledged such regional variations in awareness (National Security Adviser's Office, 2023).

The results on information sources showed that traditional media such as radio and television were crucial and dominant information sources in the state. The results implied a clear need to strengthen digital platforms and enhance the role of print media and associations. Nwoke and Okafor (2022) had also found that in rural Nigerian settings, radio and television remain crucial

channels for policy communication due to their wide reach and accessibility. Overall, a high information level existed suggesting a generally good policy awareness. Similar scenario occurred in KC followed by KS while KN had an even split between high and low information levels. While these results in KC and KS suggest relatively effective policy dissemination strategies, that of KN is an indication of a significant knowledge gap that needs targeted interventions to improve policy awareness in the area. The result is in tandem with that of Okonkwo, Adeleke and Musa (2023) in their analysis of educational policy awareness across different geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

On safety policy practice, despite some areas showing adequate practice and others revealing remarkable nuanced pictures for improvement, especially more advanced or resource-intensive measures. Nevertheless, KS had the highest scores followed by KC with KN generally having the lowest scores in school safety practice echoing the serious concerns. Also, despite these variations in practice, levels of school safety practice were high overall as well as across the SDs. The result is consistent with the findings of Adamu et al. (2022) who noted significant improvements in school safety policy implementation across Northern Nigeria following intensified government and stakeholder efforts.

The results on constraints suggest that corruption, poor funding, and government inefficiency were the most severe constraints to teachers' practice of a safe school policy in the State. That the level of constraint was high in the state was expected. However, while it was strikingly highest in KS followed by KN, KC recorded moderately high levels. What these imply is that there are significant constraints to teachers' practice of safe school policy across the State, Southern district was the worst hit. This is consistent with that of (Adebayo et al., 2022; Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2021).

The prevailing high forms of threats in KN compared to those in KC and KS could be due to various variations in security challenges, resources allocation, training and preparedness for handling security threats while the lack of significant difference between KS and KC could be due to similar factors. The result is consistent with the report of Mustapha et al. (2023) which attributed the cause of such differences in resource allocation.

Similarly, the significant difference in practice scores among the senatorial districts suggest that despite the numerical differences, safe school policy practices in KN and KS are not statistically different from each other. Such variations may be due to the dichotomy in the rate urban and peri-urban areas in Nigeria often have better access to resources and training opportunities than most rural areas. The result is in tandem with Suleiman et al. (2023) who found that policy implementation can vary significantly across regions due to differences in local governance structures and community engagement levels.

The ANOVA results show that the level of constraint differs significantly across the districts. That KN has the highest constraint compared to KC and KN that experienced lowest level results suggest that teachers in all the three senatorial districts faced significant different levels of constraints in practicing safe, secure, and violence-free school policies. The differences may again be due to uneven distribution of resources and severity of insecurity. This result is in line with the findings by Omotayo and Adeyemi (2023) who admitted that even within the same state, districts can show localized differences in the obstacles faced by educators.

However, the strong positive correlation between awareness and school safety practice in KN, and the moderate positive correlation in KC, suggest that increasing teachers' awareness of safe policy could be an effective strategy for improving level of practice. This is consistent with the recent work of Yakubu and Aliyu (2023) who stressed the importance of awareness programmes in enhancing educational policy implementation. The lack of significant correlation between intervention scores and practice scores across all districts may be an indication that current intervention strategies are not effectively translating into improved practices of safety policy among teachers.

The multiple regression results indicated that years of experience and knowledge sources were the most significant determinants of levels of awareness and practice of safe school policy in the state. The significant negative effect of constraints was indicative of the need to address systemic barriers that may have impeded teachers' ability to engage with and understand these policies. This corroborates the findings by Olatunji and Ajayi (2021) that more experienced teachers tend to have higher awareness and practice of most school safety policies.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, it is concluded that the level of threats in the state was high. It is further concluded that a complex nature of safe school policy awareness prevailed, with significant variations across different measures and districts with traditional media remaining dominant awareness sources. Although the level of practice was high in the state, a rather nuanced picture was exposed with only basic security measures strongly adhered to compared to more advanced or resource-intensive measures that lag significantly behind. Despite constraints being high in the state, notable senatorial distinctions existed, with KN generally having more severe constraints. Poor funding, corruption, and government ineffectiveness dominated as the most severe constraints to school safety practices across all the districts. It is therefore recommended that:

1.   There is a need for targeted interventions and policy implementation by the government, particularly in KN district, to address the higher perceived threats to school safety and security. Further research could explore the specific factors contributing to these senatorial differences for more informed, effective and localized strategies for ensuring safe, secure, and violence-free schools in Katsina State.

2.   Government should explore a multifaceted approach to ensure comprehensive policy communication. However, addressing the digital divide, strengthening official channels, and leveraging both formal and informal networks could enhance teachers' access to and understanding of the Safe, Secure and Violence-Free School Policy.

3.   Targeted improved interventions by the government to address specific gaps, particularly in areas of technological security, advanced threat response, and consistent stakeholder engagement that should take into account resource constraints and local capacities are germane.

4.   Improving school safety practice in this state warrants that the government should particularly focus on addressing systemic constraints (corruption, poor funding, and

government inefficiency) while building on the relative strengths in community awareness and school leadership cooperation.

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