Existing Crime Prevention Practices on Student Safety in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County

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Abstract: - **The study examined security preparedness of the schools since there were recurrent safety problems in public boarding secondary schools even after release of the safety standards manual by the Kenyan Ministry of Education in the year 2008.The study sought to examine the effect of existing crime prevention practices on student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The study was modeled on Invitational theory developed by William Watson Purkey (1999). The study used descriptive survey research design. The study targeted principals, teachers, students and security officers in 39 secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. Questionnaires, focused group discussion and interview schedule were used as data collection instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical that were frequencies and percentages. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study established that most schools had not complied with the ministry of education safety standards, crime prevention measures were not very effective because cases of crime still prevailed in the schools therefore the schools were not fully prepared for student safety. The study recommends that schools should comply with Ministry's safety standards to guarantee students safety, crime prevention practices like instituting crime prevention committee, training and putting structures in place for prevention of crime.**

Key Words: **Crime, Prevention, Safety, Boarding Schools**

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the focus of this study is not uniquely crime and related details, the term serves as the threshold for how it relates to school violence. The simple definition of "crime" is presented by O'Brien (2005) "as any act or omission prohibited by public law for the protection of the public and made punishable by the state in a judicial setting in its own name." Michael (2013) using the same definition explain that crime is "any behavior which is prohibited by the criminal code". Bulhan (1985) explains violence as "any relation, process or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social or psychological integrity of another person or group". From this explanation violence interferes with proper progress of people. It also deters students' talents from being manifested, suppresses productivity in life and worse off, result into loss of lives. Violent victims are put down and undermined and their well-being is generally affected. Bulhan's meaning of violence

points out five basic characteristics of violence; to begin with, violent individuals do not carry out their activities in isolation or without prior plan, they include having knowledge about the other party. Violence is a process that involves state of disrespecting, molesting and interfering with the peaceful condition of the other person.

Makenzi (2010) observes that bullying and harassment are often considered as separate crimes. In critical analysis, the two concepts have the characteristics that stronger persons or parties humiliate less stronger ones due to a disagreement of some kind. The difference are mainly caused by cultural factors, undermining due to ethnic origin, gender, sexual difference, religious values, physical body deformities, size of the body, facial looks, personal attributes, difference in the number of years, state of marriage, type of family the ability in wealth accumulation. The social skills are similar to the life skills introduced in Kenyan secondary schools curriculum after the post-election violence in the year 2007. These are given as pro-active safety procedures. The school management has a sole responsibility of administering safety measures rather than being glued only to use of producing academic results.

UNICEF (2006) recommends that the relationship between child-friendly schools with the society around the school should be reflected in the achievements of the school. It was found that most schools had sour relationship with the communities. Schools do not operate in a vacuum. They are part of the social society in which they are located. To avoid cases of insecurity from the external forces, schools should have cordial relationship with the communities. If the outside school community values the existence of the institution, they will be free and willing to report cases of threats such as penetration of drugs, sneaking of the students and planned attacks from outside the school which they may know. Major purpose of developing systems that facilitate safety and good health in the learning institutions is to make sure that the students, teachers and the support staff stay in an environment that is inviting. An inviting school climate is regularly assessed and mechanisms put in place to keep off intended threats.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The safety of students in boarding schools has become a major concern in the current school setting where violence and arson are common. In the recent past, there have been numerous reports on violence, fire outbreaks, destruction of property and student loss of lives across schools in the country with reports indicating that schools are not safe from destructive violence. This brings about the need to look for better ways of addressing the issue of student safety in a comprehensive manner (Ronoh & Kyalo, 2009). The school management, parents and the education stakeholders should put in place good plans and procedures to ensure preparedness to prevent and deal with violent and disruptive behaviors that may arise. The life-threatening incidences in schools have serious implications that may endanger the supportive environment for students and learning in general (Ronoh, 2018).The Kenyan government has put in place the basic safety standards for all schools to comply with as stated by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008). This study therefore examined the effect of existing crime prevention practices on student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the Study

To examine the effect of existing crime prevention practices on student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between existing crime prevention practices and student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.

1.4 Research Question

What is the effect of existing crime prevention practices on student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County?

1.5 Justification of the Study

There has been a public outcry over the state of safety in Kenyan schools due to the alarming rate of insecurity displayed by many reported cases of school unrests across the country (Muthuiya, 2013). The insecurity cases have resulted to loss of time, lives and resources. If the trend is not checked, cases of student deaths and destruction of property may continue rising making the attainment of school safety unattainable. In Trans-Nzoia County, there have been a number of cases compromising student safety in boarding secondary schools. For instance, complaints of insecurity by St. Patrick's Boys, Waitaluk in June 2018, dormitory burning at St. Joseph's secondary school- Kitale, Media houses reports on Tuesday, September 14, 2018, of the death of a form one student at St. Joseph's boys' school in Kitale just one and a half weeks after schools had reopened from the August holiday to mention just a few (CDE, Trans-Nzoia June, 2018). The researcher carried out the study to ascertain the extent to which schools have adhered to the Ministry of Education safety standards manual in Trans-Nzoia County. The study therefore sought to establish the existing security preparedness and explore the possible strategies to further enhance safety of students in schools.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study used descriptive survey research design as a blueprint for carrying out the study. Kothari (2008), views a research design as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure. The study employed a mixed design, which elicited qualitative and quantitative data to determine the study variables. Mixed method assisted in using multiple ways to explore the security preparedness and student safety. This study employed Questionnaires and interviews which made the design ideal.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on Invitational theory developed by William Watson Purkey (1999). The theory provides a number of assumptions that seek to explain phenomena and provide means of intentionally guiding and directing people to make their environments safe and appealing for habitation. The theory suggests that students should be provided enabling environment to facilitate learning that is optimally inviting. Invitational theory states that every individual and everything that exists in and around the schools have the ability to add to, or subtract from the general safety of the school (Purkey, 1999). It provides a framework for making schools more exciting, satisfying, and enriching experience for all the students, teachers, non-teaching staff and visitors. This framework goes beyond reforming or restructuring. Its goal is to transform the fundamental character of the school.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of existing crime prevention practices on student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with six statements measuring existing crime prevention practices. The responses were in a five-point Likert scale where: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-undecided, D-Disagree, SD-strongly disagree. The results presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Effect of Existing Crime Prevention Practices on Student Safety

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Any visitor is scrutinized and identified at entry and exit into the school compound and their purpose well established.	50	41.7	58	48.3	0	0.0	12	10.0	0	0.0	**120**	**100.0**
Risk assessment is regularly conducted in the school.	20	16.7	22	18.3	24	20.0	34	28.3	20	16.7	**120**	**100.0**
There are properly fitted and lockable exits and entrance manned by adequate personnel.	62	51.7	52	43.3	6	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	**120**	**100.0**
CCTV Cameras have been installed in the buildings and compound.	24	20.0	36	30.0	12	10.0	30	25.0	18	15.0	**120**	**100.0**
School rules have prevented crime in the school.	20	16.7	70	58.3	6	5.0	20	16.7	4	3.3	**120**	**100.0**
Principals and teachers stay within the school compound.	44	36.7	58	48.3	6	5.0	12	10.0	0	0.0	**120**	**100.0**

Source: Research Data 2019

From table 3.1, the highest number 58(48.3%) of the teachers agreed that every visitor is scrutinized and identified at entry and exit into the school compound and their purpose well established. The second highest number 50(41.7%) strongly agreed and the lowest 12(10.0%) disagreed. This implies that schools in Trans Nzoia scrutinize the visitors and establish their purpose of visit before letting them into the school grounds. This is a good gesture for it keeps away visitors who pose risk challenge to the school. The security guards have the mandate to perform security checks at entrance and exit points of the schools in order to deter unauthorized and questionable visitors from entry.

Highest number34 (28.3%) of the teachers disagreed that risk assessment is regularly conducted on the school grounds. The second highest number 24(20%) were undecided to that fact and lowest 20(16.7%) strongly agreed. This implies that risk assessment is never done on the school grounds and where it is conducted, it is on a very minimal percentage in Trans Nzoia County. This makes students vulnerable to risks. Regular assessment of school grounds help the schools to detect risks in advance hence prevent or handle them before they cause harm to the school. The Ministry of Education Safety Standards requires security officers to conduct regular patrols in the school to ensure the grounds are safe.

Interview schedule by the security officers revealed that;

> *"Regular patrols are not done due to the small numbers of the security officers. As a result the officers remain at the entrance most of the time. This implies that the whole school compound is not under constant regular assessment which puts the students at risk"*

Majority of the teachers 62(51.7%) strongly agreed that schools have properly fitted and lockable exits and entrance. The Second highest number 52(43.3%) agreed and the lowest number 6(5%) were undecided. This indicates that majority of the schools have lockable exits and entry points to the school. The teachers views agree with the results from observation which revealed that majority 16(80%) of the schools had lockable gates whereas least 4(20%) were not lockable. This implies that schools in Trans Nzoia have made remarkable effort to prevent crime that can penetrate through entry and exit points.

The highest number 36(30.0%) of the teachers agreed that CCTV cameras had been installed in the buildings and compound while the second highest number 30(25.0%) disagreed and the lowest number 12(10.0%) were undecided. This implies that the rate of CCTV cameras installation is below average. This findings support the requirement of the Ministry of Education Safety Standards that all schools use CCTV surveillance in monitoring school events (ROK, 2008). School principals should use all available means to install CCTV cameras inside and outside buildings. This can be done if all the school stakeholders join hands with the support of the government and the Ministry of Education. CCTV surveillance will help to keep track of activities inside and outside the premises. This strategy should be given priority with reasons that; they can supplement the limited number of security guards, identify and capture any intruders or offenders, can assist in organizing evacuation in case of emergencies and reducing the response time when planning security drills and can keep track of attendance of students, teachers and support staff. With the rising bullying and crimes in the schools, CCTV cameras will act as deterrents and also help to bring justice to any offenders.

The findings further shows that the highest number (58.3%) of the teachers who participated in this study agreed that school rules had prevented crime in the school to some extent while the second highest were those who strongly agreed and those who disagreed 20(16.7%) and the lowest number 4(3.3%) strongly disagreed. This implies that with proper rules in place, crime can be prevented. This finding is in line with Lawrence (1998) found out that, major causes of crime in schools include poor managerial styles, strict rules, fear of exams, lack of guidance and counseling, strained teacher-student relationships, family background, fear of exams and influence of support staff. There is need to enhance guidance and counseling and peer education in schools. Schools should have proper regulations that guide interactions between students and teachers and together come up with rules which should be adhered to and the consequences of breaking them.

The highest number 58(48.3%) of the teachers stated that principals and teachers stayed within the school compound. The second highest number 44(36.7%) strongly agreed and the lowest 12(10.0%) disagreed. This implies that majority of the principals and teachers in Trans Nzoia County stay within the school compounds as required by the Ministry of Education. According to the safety standards manual, safety committees have the responsibility to perform periodical examinations of the safety standards and procedures to pick out possible limitations and develop plans to overcome these limitations (MOE, 2008).

During focus group discussion with the students and interviews with security officers and school principals, the respondents were asked to state the common crimes in their schools. The respondents were in agreement that in almost all the schools, the common crimes were theft, sneaking, drug abuse, fires, students' indiscipline, corporal punishment and bullying by prefects. This was similar with the findings of a study done by Matsoga (2003) who established that the most common threats to safety in schools include bullying, destruction of property, drug abuse, and indiscipline among students. On corporal punishment, one of the students who participated in the focus group discussion said:

> "*Some teachers use hockey sticks, blows, fists and gas pipes to punish students. More than one teacher cane one student in closed private rooms….. Students are threatened for expulsion if they report cases of corporal punishment or cause of death of a student to anyone including parents".*

It should be noted also that the Teachers Service Commission has outlawed the use of corporal punishment in school, in a statement released in 2017, the commission termed corporal punishment as a criminal and professional offence. Teachers were instructed not to keep canes in their offices; those found with rods shall be prosecuted in a court of law. School administrators should make plans for the periodic assessment of the school grounds. The principals should take up their role of making sure that a daily report about the state of the safety of the school is kept by the security committee. Students should be open to give feedback to the teachers and the administration about foreseen security threats. However, the respondents interviewed agreed that the measures put in place in the schools were not effective in prevention of crimes.

3.1 Hypothesis Testing

To establish if there was any correlation between existing crime prevention practices and safety of the students, a null hypothesis was formulated. The null hypothesis was:**HO$_1$;** There is no significant relationship between existing crime prevention practices and student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County.To test this hypothesis a Pearson correlation analysis was carried out and the results are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Relationship between Crime Prevention Practices and Student Safety

		Compliance level	Student safety
Compliance level	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Student safety	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The output presented in Table 3.2, reveals that there is a significant positive relationship(r=.842**, P<.01) between crime prevention practices and safety of the students. Therefore the null hypothesis that 'there is no significant relationship between existing crime prevention practices and student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County' was rejected since p<0.05. This implies that there was a significant relationship between existing crime prevention practices and student safety in public boarding secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. This is in line with the findings of Allison &Leah (2012) found out that well-lit compound, regular vetting of staff and well outlined policies on crime can prevent or detect crime beforehand. School managers should identify appropriate strategies, tools and resources that can be used to identify and prevent crime.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings on crime prevention practices indicate that the existing prime prevention practices have not effectively prevented crime. There is need to put in place exhaustive measures in order to prevent crime. Crime tactics by students and arsonists are sophisticated in current times with the advancing technology. The schools should also employ more sophisticated measures to prevent the advanced crimes in schools. As stated above CCTV surveillance, collaborative rules, enough security officers, proper fencing, cultivating good relationship with the surrounding communities and intensive guidance and counseling should be enhanced in order to prevent crime in schools. However, risk assessment was not regularly conducted in most of the schools where the study was done.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry of Education should consider,Crime prevention practices like instituting crime prevention committee, training of students and support staff and putting structures in place for prevention of crime should be established by the school administration in order to guarantee students safety. The existing crime prevention practices were not very effective and therefore schools should enforce new measures that can counter the current rising crimes especially with the growing global technology.

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