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# APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY-SCHOOL SECURITY INTELLIGENCE NETWORK AND ONLINE SECURITY RESOURCES FOR CURBING SCHOOL INSECURITIES IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

by

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**Abstract**
This study titled 'Application of Community-School Security Intelligence Network and Online Security Resources for Curbing School Insecurities in North Eastern Nigeria' is an attempt by the researchers to find an enduring solution to the challenge of insecurity prevailing against schools especially in North Eastern Nigeria where the quantum of terrorism and other threats to livelihood has become alarming and overwhelming. The study devised an instrument buffer that is meant to harness online and offline resources to curb insecurity in schools. The researchers utilized two (2) major instruments; the Insecurity History Dictation (InHD) index and the School online security (SOS) Intelligence Buffer. Data collected through the use of the former was used to study and analyse the situation before applying the School Online Security (SOS) Intelligence Buffer. The study area was two Local Government Areas of Gombe State. Four (4) public Senior Secondary Schools were strategically and purposively sampled together with their host communities. From these, 80 Heads, Teachers and Students (HTSs) as well as 20 Traditional Heads Leaders (THLs) were sampled from two local government areas totalling 100 for the study. The Cronbach alpha, means, percentages, and standard deviations were employed for the data presentation interpretation and analysis. The study recommended among others that there should be an active and efficient online and offline network using modern-day social dynamics and ICT to curb the menace of insecurity plaguing schools in the region.

**Keywords**: Insecurity, Government , Traditional Head Leaders,  Gombe State, School& Modern- Day

## Introduction

Nigeria, especially the northeastern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Yobe have witnessed and are witnessing unprecedented security challenges by either Boko Haram insurgency or herdsmen attacks. Many lives are lost and residential houses and properties are destroyed. The surviving populace takes refuge with either relatives or living in internally displaced persons' camps.  The Internally Displaced Monitoring Center (IDMC, 2013) in the report lamented that, continuing attacks in the north-east Nigeria has displaced not less than 63,000 people. The report went on to say that the attacks has led not only to loss of lives but also destruction of properties worth billions of money, damage to infrastructure, and loss of investment and income. Schools are established to provide education and skills that will ensure effective productivity of individuals who will in turn impact positively on the society. It is

expected to be a place of socialization where attitudes and values necessary for the survival of individuals and society are imparted. Effective learning is expected to take place in a threat-free atmosphere and a conducive environment. It is not supposed to be a place of fear, apprehension and anxiety. However, schools in Nigeria has become a target of attacks leading to kidnappings, abductions, maiming and killings. Many students, teachers and other staff are victims of these incessant attacks. The government has made concerted efforts in ameliorating this menace but the problem is not solved. Other means are expected to be employed to complement the effort of the government. That is why the school administrators, staff, students, community and online sources are expected to be employed to add to the already existing measures (if any) to bring a lasting solution to the negative trend. According to the United States Department of Education. (n.d.). Various educational websites and portals offer comprehensive guidelines, toolkits, and best practices for improving school security. For instance, the United States Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) website provides valuable resources on emergency planning, crisis response, and threat assessments that can be adapted to the Nigerian context.

Interestingly, Training Modules, Webinars and Online platforms host training modules and webinars specifically designed to equip educators, administrators, and security personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively to security threats. These resources cover a wide range of topics, including threat recognition, crisis communication, and emergency drills (Safe Schools Alert 2021). The Safe School Alert also emphasizes and prioritizes training or stakeholders on mobile applications, and offers practical solutions for enhancing school security by facilitating communication, reporting incidents, and conducting risk assessments. Applications such as Safe Schools Alert enable stakeholders to report safety concerns anonymously, thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

To further buttress this point, the National Center for Education Statistics. (2020) advocated Social Media and Online Communities. According to the Center, Social media platforms and online communities serve as valuable channels for disseminating timely information, sharing best practices, and fostering collaboration among educational stakeholders. By engaging with these digital communities, schools can stay informed about emerging threats and proactive security measures. This can be a proactive step towards solving the insecurity problem in the region.

**Statement of the Problem**

The high rate of insecurity has continued to destroy communities, schools and cities in north eastern Nigeria. The main source of insecurity has been terrorism typified by Boko Haram and other terror groups in the region, kidnappings, armed robbery and other forms of killings associated with herdsmen-farmers' animosity which has become prevalent in Nigeria. Insecurity has ravaged many communities and schools are not left out. Many students are taken as hostages and many staff and students have been kidnapped in many instances. Other forms of attacks such as violent behaviour, cultism, and rape are rampant. These do not cause only physical but also psychological discomfort among teachers and students.

When the school environment is not safe, uneasiness, fear and apprehension become the order of the day and learning cannot take place in such environment. School enrolment and attendance keep depleting. Parents too become apprehensive to enrol their children and wards in schools. The goal of education is being frustrated and defeated while on the other hand poverty, unemployment, prostitution, street begging and other social vices are increasing astronomically. It is on this ground that this research seeks to unravel the community-school and online security potentials for the involvement and maintenance of security in schools.

**Objectives of the Research**
1. To ascertain the rate of awareness and involvement of host communities in providing security to schools in their domains.
2. To ascertain the awareness and involvement of schools in curbing the insecurities within and around school's environments
3. To ascertain the effect of insecurity on school learning environment and programs
4. To determine security measures put in place by the government and other school owners for maintaining security in schools
5. To apply community-school security initiatives in curbing school insecurity in the region.
6. To apply online security strategies and gadgets in providing security to schools in the region.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research objectives and expected outcomes:
1. At what rate do host communities get awareness and are involved in providing security to schools in their domains?
2. In what ways do schools get aware and involved in curbing the insecurities within and around schools' environments?
3. What are the perceived effects of insecurity on the school learning environment and programs?
4. What security measure has the governments and other school owners put in place for maintaining security in schools?
5. Are there any community-school security initiatives put in place to curb school insecurity in the region?

**Literature Review**

**The Concept of Insecurity**

Insecurity in the context of this paper can be defined as the condition that threatens the safety, well-being, prosperity and the physical development of the students. When the environment is full of threats and the social interaction is no longer safe, we can say there is insecurity. According to Aliyu (2016) the environment is the external surroundings within which an organism lives; or any external factor that affects the organism's development or behaviour. He therefore emphasized that the learning environment of the learner includes the academic environment, psychological environment, social environment, emotional environment, physical environment, moral and spiritual environment. When the peace of these environments is threatened learning will be hampered. The focus of this paper is on the insecurity of the physical environment, and the attack which has affected the physical and social environment in schools resulting in deaths, kidnappings, and maiming of staff and students and subsequently led to the closure of schools.

These attacks have continued unabated in schools. Ojelu (2021) provided a summary of these school attacks and mass abductions in Nigerian schools thus: one night on 14th April, 2014, female students were kidnapped by the deadly terrorist group, Boko Haram from Government Girls' Secondary School Chibok, Borno State. On 19th February, 2018, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), an of shoot of Boko Haram kidnapped 111 girls from the Boarding school in Dapchi town of Yobe State. On 2nd November, 2019, Boko Haram killed at least 12 people including children and abducted 9 women and 6 children in Takulashi, 20 km from Chibok, Borno State. Like in the north eastern states, the North West and parts of the Middle- Belt

has had their own share of terrorism insurgency and high level criminality: On 11th December, 2019, gunmen on motorcycles stormed Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina State. In the attack, 344 students were reported to have been kidnapped. On 19th December 2020, gunmen abducted more than 80 Islamic school teachers in Katsina State. In another attack on 17th February, 2021, armed gunmen raided Government Science College Kagara, Niger State. The attack left one student dead, 24 kidnapped, 3 teachers and 8 relatives of staff were kidnapped. More so, on 1st March, 2021, an armed gang kidnapped 317 students from Government Girls' Secondary School Jangebe. Just to mention a few. The common denominator with all these security breaches is the destructive effect it has had on schools, school children and teachers, making insecurity in schools a major problem to contend with.

It is good that schools need to be safe and properly secured for learning to take place. This is because insecurity in the school environment has a long-standing impact on the survivors of the attacks including the students at various levels of learning. According to Abdullahi and Atsua (2017), the survivors live in anxiety disorder characterized by intense fear of embarrassment, humiliation and negative evaluation by others in social situations and the tendency to avoid feared situations. In those attacks, some students are killed, maimed, and sexually abused and some lucky ones are later released but without mental scars of psychological trauma based on the horrific experiences they passed through. It is also worthy of note that apart from school attacks, there are other cases of mass attacks in communities outside school premises in which parents, guardians, siblings and loved ones of students are killed in their presence, their means of livelihood and economic power completely destroyed. Continuous reflection on these ugly experiences causes emotional instability and uneasiness among students even when they are taken out of the environment to another safe place. According to Balarabe (2003) such students are likely to develop Post-traumatic disorder which results in the inability to concentrate, settle down to learn and work, memory loss, nervous attacks, feeling frightened for no good reason, insomnia, heightened irritability and depression.

As a response to these attacks, both the government (State and Federal) schools and Non-Governmental Organizations have made several efforts to curb the attacks and rescue the kidnapped victims. Some of the steps taken include: the closure of schools, the launching of the Safe School Initiative (SSI), the holding of 2021 Fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration in Abuja, deployment of police and military personnel to provide protection for students, teachers and school infrastructure Olanrewaju (2021). All these efforts are good and in order but they have not provided a final solution to the menace and that is why the advocacy for the community-school security intelligence network and online security resources for curbing school security in north eastern Nigeria.

Community network intelligence according Innes and Roberts (2017) is information acquired either directly or indirectly from a community that when analysed, can be used to inform policing interventions. The information can come from a variety of sources that will inform about the views, needs and expectations of the community and the risks and threats posed to it or by it, either in terms of internal or external issues. This approach is aimed at bridging the gap between the school and the community integrating the community with the school and collaborating among themselves to bring about effective school-community policing to safeguard the schools and the community. It entails the utilization of the community and its resources (human and materials) to enhance the improved security of the school.

Online security sources on the other hand refer to the use of digital safety technology and electronic security equipment to protect the school inside and out with video surveillance, burglar alarms and access control systems among other security strategies connected to word wide web. This is an attempt if succeeded will go a long way to providing a more robust solution to the deadly challenge of insecurity in schools in the region in particular and Nigeria at large.

**Effects of Insecurity on Education**

There are numerous negative effects of insecurity on learning. Some of these effects are as follows.

1. **Destruction of lives and properties:** When schools are attacked, the lives of students, staff and members of the communities are greatly lost. Olamide and Adoga (2016) reported that in the attack at the College of Administration Potiskum, Yobe State, many students feared dead while a lot of students were abducted.

2. **Low school enrolment/Dropout:** Areas that witnessed insecurity have a low number of student's enrolment in school. This is either the survivors have relocated to areas they considered safe or they are afraid to enter the school. The research by Olamide Adoga revealed that in year 2012 alone, about 10, 000 students were out of school as a result of insecurity.

3. **Rustication of academic calendar:** Whenever there is an attack, schools are closed down or suspended. In fact, some of the schools have become internally displaced people's camps. Shallah (2012) also affirmed that more than 68 schools were closed down in Borno state alone.

**Theoretical framework**

One of the popular and interesting theories of motivation which has been found useful in teaching and learning is that of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Bododo and Okonkwo (2016), the theory was developed between 1943 and 1954 and widely published in motivation and personality in 1954. Maslow presented human needs in hierarchical order starting from lower needs to the highest level. According to the theory, for an individual to be motivated for any action, his needs must be satisfied. The theory also asserts that as one's needs are achieved, an individual strives for higher achievement until such an individual is self-actualized. In a situation where an individual's needs are not met, such an individual becomes fixated and cannot move to the next level of achievement. The human needs according to Abraham Maslow as cited by Bododo and Okonkwo (2016) are: Physiological needs, Safety and Security needs, Belonging needs, Self-Esteem needs, the need for intellectual or Cognitive achievement, Aesthetic needs and Self-actualization. Self-actualization is reached by first satisfying the lower needs before one is free to reach for higher ones.

In this write-up, attention is focused on the 'safety and security needs' aspect of the theory and its application in schools in Nigeria. Safety and security needs are needs of being free from physical and psychological harm and threats. It is protection from danger, damage, abuse, embarrassment and ridicule. It also means not being afraid of physical attacks. Students need to be aware of security tips and measures so as to know what to do to be safe and secure in case of attacks. Students, parents and teachers should be trained on how to secure and protect themselves from danger. Most of these dangers are sporadic and unpredictable. In some schools and homes, intruders roam about the environment and the premises without any control. They easily gain access to the schools and therefore put the children and teachers at great risk. This calls for security education if students must be safe from physical and emotional harm.

In order to satisfy the safety and security needs of students and staff, security education must go hand in hand with the physical security structures put in place such as fencing the school premises, presence of security personnel at the gate and strategic places within the school premises and among other measures to prevent attacks on students. Security education is a learning initiative that is aimed at reducing the number of security loopholes that are likely to

occur. It encompasses awareness programmes which are notable in enforcing security alertness among students. In their view, Mbahi, Pur and Audu (2019) outlined the content of security education to include: Teaching students, parents and teachers to be vigilant and have an understanding relationship/conversation with strangers, channels of reportage of suspicious movements within the school. Training on security related subjects, teaching students to be in possession of their identity cards always, basic safety measures to be taken in case of school attacks and being familiar with the environment. Security education is of immense importance because it will equip the students with massive security knowledge about them and the environment. With this, they can protect themselves against attack and danger. They can also advise people around them on how to protect themselves against security risks. Students need to be aware of threats to physical security and the measures necessary to taken when the need arises. Doing this is possible only with security education.

## Methodology

This study employed the survey approach to conduct the research. The study area is the North–eastern part of Nigeria and specifically; the study was carried out in Gombe State which is one of the states in the region with multi-stage activities The southern part of Gombe state comprises four (4) Local Government Areas (LGA). Two LGAs were covered for the study through the following:

1. Two (2) public Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) in each of the two purposively selected local governments were selected through the purposively sampling strategy using the Insecurity History Related (IHR) criteria. These SSS were selected alongside their communities for the study.

2. Furthermore, the population of the study comprises two categories; the school community of Heads, Teachers and Students (HTS); and the host community specifically; Traditional Heads Leaders (THLs) and Opinion Leaders (OPLs).

3. The data for the study was sourced from schools' HTSs and host community's THLs and OPLs using two data collection instruments: The Insecurity History Dictation (InHD) index and the Schools Online Security (SOS) Intelligence Buffer.

4. From each of the two selected schools in each LGA, 20 HTSs, 5 THLs, and OPLs were sampled totalling 25 samples times two (2) schools which amounts to 50 respondents in each LGA. Hence, a total of 50 respondents' times the 2 LGAs totalling 100 was used for the study.

5. Data collection was done through the Direct Administration and Collation (DAC) method using researchers and researcher assistants who were trained purposefully for the data collection task.

6. The study utilize parametric analysis tools like the Cronbach's alpha coefficients, percentages, means, and standard deviations for the presentation and analysis of data for answering the research questions. A standard mean of 2.5 was used for measurement.

## Data presentation

The study involved several processes and stages. It was carried out in the space of 7 months. Below is the data presented where Agree and Strongly Agree were summed together while Disagree and Strongly Disagree were summed together?

**Research Questions 1 and 2:** At what rate do host communities get awareness and are involved in providing security to schools in their domains? In what ways do schools get aware and involved in curbing the insecurities within and around schools' environments?

**Table 1:** The awareness, purpose and involvement of schools and host communities in curbing insecurity

| S/N | STATEMENT | Strongly Agree | Strongly disagree | Mean | STD. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am not aware of the existence of the Schools Online/Offline Security (SOS) Intelligence initiative in North Eastern Nigeria | 71(71%) | 29(29 %) | 3.2 | .94 |
| 2 | I am not aware of the purpose of the Schools Online/Offline Security (SOS) Intelligence initiative in North Eastern Nigeria | 80(80%) | 20(20%) | 3.1 | .832 |
| 3 | I have received training or information on utilizing online/offline security resources to address school insecurities in my area | 70(70%) | 30(30%) | 2.9 | .968 |
| 4 | I have a good understanding and knowledge of Security protocols and resources available for Schools security in this area | 93(93%) | 7(7%) | 3.3 | .604 |

Table 1 presents information on the awareness and purposes of-school communities in curbi ng school insecurities, with percentages, mean and standard deviations presented for each; 71, 80, 70, and 93 as well as 3.2, 3.1, 2.9, and 3.3 means respectively. The data thereby answers research questions 1 and 2 on awareness, involvement and purpose.

**Research Question 3:** What are the perceived effects of insecurity on the school learning environment and programs?

**Table 2:** Perceived effects of insecurity on school learning environment and programs

| S/N | STATEMENT | Strongly Agree | Strongly disagree | Mean | STD. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Insecurity in schools and the community has serious negative effect on both school academics programs and learning environment | 94(94%) | 6(6%) | 3.5 | .671 |
| 6 | Insecurity in schools/communities has led to loss of lives and properties | 100(100) | 0(00%) | 3.5 | .502 |
| 7 | School insecurity has led to school drop outs in the area | 86(86%) | 14(14%) | 3.2 | .743 |
| 8 | School insecurity provides room for backwardness of youths in the north east | 98(98%) | 2(2%) | 3.5 | .535 |
| 9 | School insecurity increases the rate of illiteracy and ignorance in this area | 88(88%) | 12(12%) | 3.2 | .668 |

In Table 2, data on the perceived effects of insecurity on school learning environment and programs is presented showing percentages of 94, 100, 86, 98 and 88 respectively while means of 3.5, 3.5, 3.2, 3.5 and 3.2 respectively were recorded. Hence, research question 3 is being answered.

**Research Question 4:** What security measures have the governments and other school owners put in place for maintaining security in schools?

**Table 3:** Security measures taken by governments/school owners for maintaining security in schools

| S/N | STATEMENT | Strongly Agree | Strongly disagree | Mean | STD. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | There has been incidents of insecurity within schools in this region | 85(85%) | 15(15%) | 2.9 | .627 |
| 11 | The frequency of insecurity incidents occurring within schools in North Eastern Nigeria is alarming | 95(95%) | 95(%) | 3.1 | .464 |
| 12 | I am not aware of any measures taken by governments or other school owners for curbing insecurity in our schools | 87(87%) | 13(%) | 3.1 | .626 |
| 13 | Security education is not given to students through teaching and learning processes in this region | 77(77%) | 23(23%) | 3.0 | .745 |
| 14 | There is no school-community based security network dedicated to curbing insecurity in this area | 78(78%) | 22(22%) | 2.9 | .720 |

Similarly, table 3 shows responses on security measures taken by governments/school owners for maintaining security in schools, thus percentages of 85, 95, 87, 77 and 78 were obtained respectively while means of 2.9, 3.1, 3.1, 3.0 and 2.9 respectively were obtained. This answers research question 4.

**Research Question 5:** Are there any community school security initiatives put in place for curbing school insecurity in the region?

**Table 4:** Community-school security initiatives/strategies for curbing school insecurity in the region

| S/N | STATEMENT | Strongly Agree | Strongly disagree | Mean | STD. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | I believe there is a need for the creation of initiatives that can curb existing school insecurity in north east Nigeria | 100(100) | 00(00) | 3.5 | .502 |
| 16 | Schools and communities in this area are willing to collaborate and share information for the collective security of educational institutions | 96(%) | 4(%) | 3.3 | .562 |
| 17 | An online and offline school-community initiative against school insecurity will be a good measure to tackle insecurity in this area | 95(95%) | 5(5%) | 3.3 | .680 |
| 18 | Closed circuit Television cameras should be installed in schools for dealing with insecurity | 95(95%) | 5(%) | 3.4 | .684 |

Table 4 presents the dire need for community-school security initiatives/strategies for curbing school insecurity in the region. 100, 96, 95, and 95 were obtained as respondents' percentages respectively, while means of 3.5, 3.3, 3.3 and 3.4 respectively were obtained. This answers research question 5.
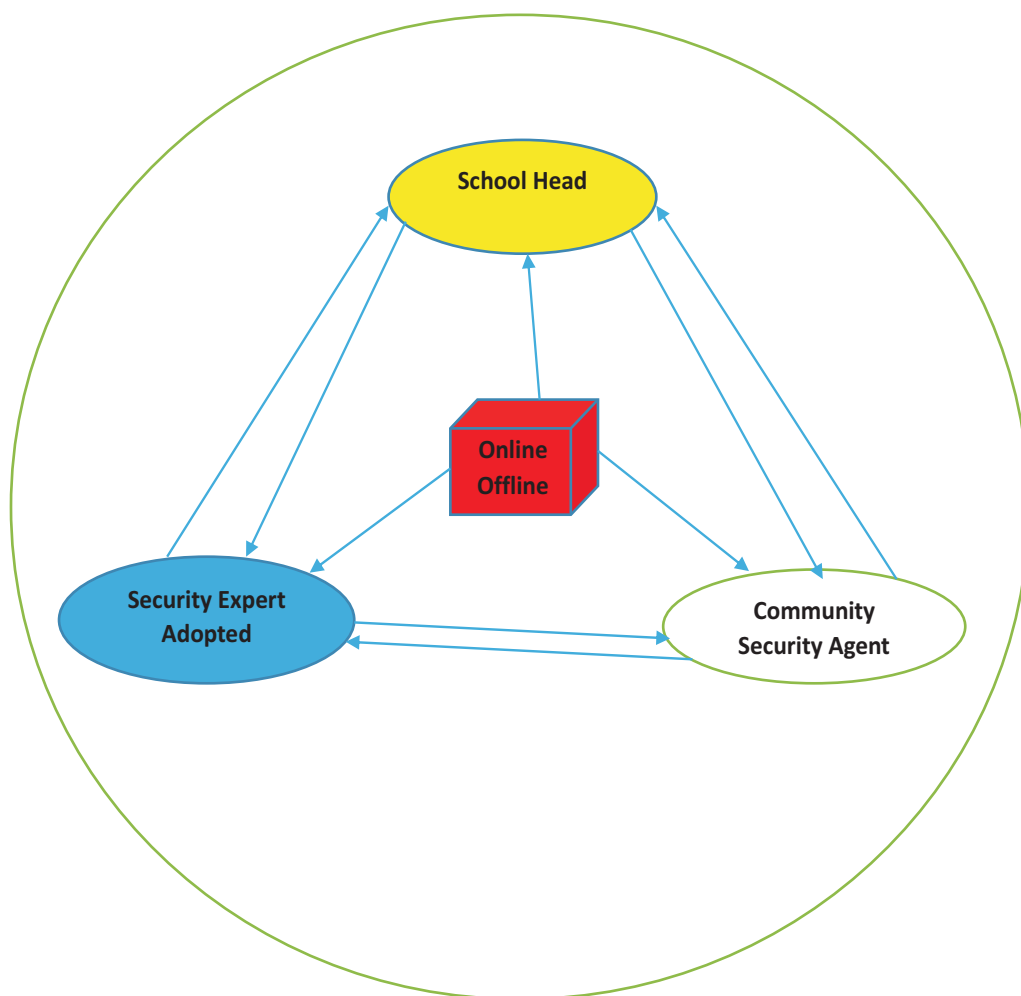
**Discussion of Result**

As presented in Table 1, research questions 1 and 2 show high percentages; the lowest being 95 and means of above 2.5, host communities do not have adequate awareness and are not seriously involved in providing security to schools in their domains neither do they understand the purpose of any Schools Online/Offline Security (SOS) Intelligence initiative in North Eastern Nigeria as shown in table 1. Moreover, the data presented also clearly showed that school insecurity in the North East have clear and far-fetching effects on school learning environments and programs. Responses presented in table 2 affirm this and answer research question 3 with high percentages and means of at least 3.2 (above 2.5). These effects include; loss of lives and properties, increased rate of school dropout in the area, backwardness of youths and increases in the rate of illiteracy and ignorance in the region.

Furthermore, the dire need for community-school security initiatives/strategies for curbing school insecurity in the region was highlighted according to the data in table 3 where respondents clearly stated they are not aware of any measures taken by governments or other school owners for curbing insecurity in our schools 87(87%), 3.1, Security education is not given to students through teaching and learning processes in this region 77(77%) 3.0 and that there is no school-community based security network dedicated to curbing insecurity in this area 78(78%), 2.9.

In addition, data collected as indicated in Table 4 shows that the region yearns for the creation of Initiatives/strategies that can curb existing school insecurity in North East Nigeria 100(100) 3.5, and    Schools and communities in this area are willing to collaborate and share information for the collective security of educational institutions 96(%) 3.3. This agrees with the desire and call for an online and offline school-community initiative against school insecurity as a good measure to tackle insecurity in this area 95(95%) 3.3. This is capped up by the strong agitation for the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in schools for dealing with insecurity 95(95%) 3.4.

After data was collected, the researchers staged a simulated security alarm with the active collaboration of the local security network on a Saturday (non-school day). The real community leaders and Head Teachers were deliberately left out of the plan in order to elucidate original responses from them. The objective of the simulated security alarm was to test run the online/offline security (SOS) buffer to examine its effectiveness in mitigating school insecurity threats. This was successfully carried out with 78 percent success. The buffer stimulated online and offline sharing of information from the point of violence to the head teacher, the local law enforcement agents and community leaders and their individual and collective response to the insecurity situation. The figure below presents the networking channels of the buffer.

**Figure 1:Schools Online Security (SOS) Intelligence Buffer.**



**Conclusion**

The study investigated the problem of school insecurity and the application of an online/offline security network for curbing school insecurity in North Eastern Nigeria. Data was collected from schools and their host communities. The analysis of the information showed that the awareness of school insecurity is very low and the purpose of a security network that will deal with the challenge is not there. The study also found out that the communities and schools in the region are fully aware of the negative effects of school insecurity on the region and hence are anticipating solutions in the form of intervention from government and community-school initiatives that will curb the problem.

**Recommendations**

Based on the result and findings, the following recommendations are made in proffering solutions to the problem:

1    Each school and community in the North east should be made to create community-school security committees (CSSC) and security networks (S-Net) that will be

responsible for constant and regular assessment of security atmosphere and issues in their area. The enforcement role can be performed by the Local Government Area authorities.

2  The community-school security committees (CSSC) and security network (S-Net) should be saddled with the responsibility of creating sensitization awareness on the need for community-school involvement in security building and prevention on one hand and on the other creating awareness on the importance and purpose of security for schools.

3.  The government should take up proactive roles in guiding schools and preventing insecurities in schools.

4.  The use of the Schools Online Security (SOS) Intelligence Buffer is strongly recommended for all schools and host communities. This should be facilitated by the installation of CCTV Cameras in all schools by the government.

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