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# PRINCIPALS' SECURITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND MARKETABILITY OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*The study examined the extent to which Principals' Security Management Practices predict Marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of four hundred and ninety-nine (499) principals spread across all the four hundred and ninety-nine (499) Private Secondary Schools in the thirty-one (31) Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State. Two hundred and twenty-two (222) respondents were drawn from the population to participate in the study using multi stage sampling procedure. Two instruments, entitled "Principals' Security Management Practices Questionnaire (PSMPQ) and Secondary School Marketability Questionnaire (SSMQ)" were used to gather data for the study. The instruments were validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha Analysis which yielded reliability coefficients of .784 for PSMQ and .770 for SSMQ. Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that, physical security management is a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study also revealed that cyber security management is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that effective security management can indeed play a significant role in marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, management of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State should adopt various security management practices to ensure that their schools remain safe and secured since principal security management practices especially physical security management to a great extent significantly predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. It was recommended, amongst others that, Ministry of Education should organize in-service-training for principals in order to improve their management skills. The training perhaps should focus on security management in order to create a healthy and attractive school environment that can attract more enrolments.*

**Keywords**: Security, Security Management Practices, Cyber Security, Physical Security, Marketability of Private Secondary Schools, Akwa Ibom State

## INTRODUCTION

Education is universally accepted as an essential element in the process of national development. It is systematically organized and consciously programmed as a process by which society transmits its culture through teachers to learners. Before the arrival of the colonial masters (western education), the Nigerian education system focused on hunting, cooking, following stars, and obeying the gods. Parents, elders or priests were saddled with the power to teach the young ones. At present, education is a key social process and a dynamic element of change which is designed purposely to assist individuals to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfill their potentials and to lead productive and satisfying lives. Having the understanding of the function of education to the society, there is need to publicize, advertise and market education at any level.

The campaign and emphasis on the need for "education for all" becomes a fundamental starting point in the process of marketing education. For example the free and compulsory education declared in Akwa Ibom State years ago was no doubt a mass campaign to market education. Marketing in a general termis seen as a human activity geared towards satisfying the needs and wishes of people through the exchange processes (Uchendu *et al.*, 2015). It is a measure of whether a product will appeal to the buyers and sellers at a certain price range so as to generate profit. Marketability of private secondary school is therefore seen as the likelihood of being able to sell, market or advertise products and services of private secondary schools at a certain time, price, and under certain conditions. Akpan (2024) defined marketability of school as the ability of the school to attract students and families. Marketability of school in the context of this work is related to school advertisement, school growth, school attractiveness and how well a school can convince people to choose it over other educational options. It refers to how attractive, competitive, and "sellable" a private secondary school is to parents, students, government and other stakeholders.

Marketability of school is important because it can result to several beneficiary outcomes both at individual and organizational levels. It can lead to increased enrolment and revenue, good reputation, stronger parent and community relationships and competitive advantage. Principals in private secondary schools are also said to be competent when their school experience numerical growth. Conversely, poor marketing of schools can result in low enrolment, financial burden, parent and community disengagement, low brand value and loss to competitors. Several researchers are concerned about factors that could contribute to a school marketability. Some of these factors include academic reputation, school programmes, quality of staff, school facilities, available resources, school culture, environment, and cost or financial disposition. Cruz *et al.*, (2025) added that factors like tuition fees, school reputation, teachers' recommendation, influence of parents and guardians, location of the school, mode of transportation, graduate quality and learning environment. In addition to these factors, the researchers believe that security management practices adopted by principals can have a significant influence on school marketability. It can therefore be said that, the level of patronage private secondary schools enjoy from the public could depend on the security management practices employed by the principals.

Security management is about protecting an organization's valuable assets such as buildings, equipment and intangible things like data and information. Anyaogu and Alagbaoso (2022) see principals' security management as measures put in place by the principals to prevent crisis and violations of existing rules which are likely to cause security and safety risks. Obiekwe and Uwaezuoke (2023) define security management as approaches that principals can adopt to protect and manage school violence, reduce security risks, and ensure that the school environment is safe for teaching and learning. Principals' security

management practices can therefore be defined as the plans principals put in place for the protection of stake holders, the school, learners, educators and managers from crime and accidents by means of well-drawn policies (Manafa and Ohamobi 2021). The present study see principals' security management practices as the efforts, strategies and policies that school principals put in place to ensure the safety and protection of students, staff, school properties and the learning environment. There are several security management practices that principals can adopt to ensure schools attract more enrolments into private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. In this study, two of such practices are considered; namely: physical security and cyber security management practices.

Physical security is the relative public safety from environmental dangers caused by natural or human processes due to ignorance, accident, mismanagement or design (Yusuf and Idoghor, 2016). It is the protection of people, buildings, equipment and other tangible assets from physical threats such as theft, damage, violence, fire, natural disaster, or unauthorized access. According to Obiekwe and Uwaezuoke (2023), physical security management involves the implementation of multiple interdependent layers of security system that can include protective barriers, perimeter fencing and other systems designed to protect persons and property. Principals of secondary schools can adopt physical security measures to ensure the safety of lives and property. When physical security measures are appropriately implemented, maximum protection will be guaranteed. Alimba (2018) added that some of the physical security measures that can be adopted by principals are the use of fence, locks and keys, safe and strong rooms, burglar proof, electronic equipment, among others. These security gadgets should be strategically fixed in places where the school management can easily use them to control and monitor people so as to prevent intruders from gaining access to such places.

Cyber security management on the other hand denotes the activity, process, ability or state whereby information, communications systems and the information contained therein are protected against damage, unauthorized use, modification, or exploitation (Gioe*et al.* 2019). The internet undoubtedly increases one's knowledge. More formally put, cyber security management is the organization and collection of resources, processes, and structures used to protect specific assets in cyberspace and cyberspace-enabled systems from attack. Furthermore, Seemma *et al.* (2018) reported that cyber security management is the technique generally set forth in published materials that attempt to safeguard the cyber environment of a user or organization. It manages the set of techniques used to save the integrity of networks, programmes and data from unauthorized access". Davis, (2018) listed the following as samples of school data stored electronically and which could be susceptible to cyber-attack: Student ID; Social security numbers for students, faculty and staff; credit card numbers for faculty, staff and school; immunization history and/or medical records; enrollment and attendance; special education documentation; names of students, faculty and staff; addresses; date of birth; city, state and country of residence; bus routes; telephone numbers, email addresses; gender; race; criminal record and test scores. Cyber threat can occur in three fold: cybercrime, cyber-attack and cyberterrorism (Kruse, 2017). These are all dangerous to school management.

Despite the importance of physical security and cyber security management practices, preliminary observations indicate that many principals of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State face challenges in implementing comprehensive security measures. Some schools operate with weak perimeter barriers and inadequate security personnel, while others use digital platforms without proper data protection protocols. These lapses have, in some cases, led to incidents of theft, bullying, and online fraud, which negatively affect parents'

confidence and, by extension, the marketability of the private secondary schools. Empirical studies on security management in schools have largely focused on public schools and on physical security alone, with little attention paid to cyber security and to the private school context in Akwa Ibom State. Given the competitive nature of private education and the growing importance of both physical and digital safety, it has become necessary to examine how principals' management of physical and cyber security influences the marketability of private secondary schools. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the extent to which principals' security management practices predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The security of schools has become a major concern for parents, proprietors, and government in Nigeria, and Akwa Ibom State is not an exception. In recent years, cases of theft, vandalism, cultism, kidnapping, and cyber fraud have been reported in and around secondary schools. This has made parents anxious about where to enroll their children and this can affect school marketability because, a school that cannot guarantee physical safety of students and security of its digital records and portal is likely to lose enrollment to competitors.

The principal, as the chief security and administrative officer of the school, is expected to manage both the physical environment (provision of fences, guards, and emergency systems) and the cyber space of the school (protection of school data, portals, and students from online threats). However, observations and preliminary reports suggest that many principals of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State have not given adequate attention to these two aspects of security management. Some schools lack functional perimeter fencing and trained security personnel, while others operate websites and admission portals without proper data protection, making them vulnerable to hacking and fraud.

Consequently, the marketability of these schools in terms of student enrollment, reputation, and competitiveness appears to be declining. Despite this, there is paucity of empirical studies in Akwa Ibom State that have examined the extent to which principals' physical security management and cyber security management influence the marketability of private secondary schools. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the extent to which principals' security management practices predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which principal's security management practices predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the extent to which principals':

1. physical security management practice predicts marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State
2. cyber security management practice predicts marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does Principals' physical security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does Principals' cyber security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H0_1$ principals' physical security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

$H0_2$ principals' cyber security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study consisted of four hundred and ninety-nine (499) principals spread across all the four hundred and ninety-nine (499) Private Secondary Schools in the thirty-one (31) Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size of this study comprised 222 principals representing 44.5 % of the principal's population. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to arrive at 222 principals. At first, cluster sampling technique was used to cluster the population into 3 senatorial districts. Hat and draw method was used for selecting 44.5% of private secondary schools in each senatorial district. This gave a total of 222 principals in 222 selected private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The decision to use 222 principals was in line with Taro Yamane (1973) formula for sample size determination. Convenience sampling technique was used for selecting three parents to rate each principal's school marketability strategy. Parents do not constitute the population of the study. The reason for choosing three parents per principal was as a result of need for uniformity in the number of parents who rated each principal and also to avoid principals being biased in rating themselves.

Two researchers' developed instruments entitled "Principals' Security Management Practices Questionnaire (PSMPQ) and Secondary School Marketability Questionnaire (SSMQ)" were used to obtain information from respondents. 30 items on PSMQ were developed in line with the constructs of the independent variable (physical security management practice and cyber security management practice) to elicit information from principals on how security is managed in their private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.SSMQconsisted of 30 items. It was used to measure dependent variable (Secondary School Marketability) and it was designedto obtain information from parents about marketability of private secondary schools. Both instruments were constructed on a declarative statement of four-point rating scale. Responses to positive worded instrument were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1; while responses to negative worded instrument were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Disagree (D) = 3 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 4. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and were expected to indicate by ticking the extent to which the questionnaire items applied to them.

In order to ensure that the instruments developed measured accurately what they were purported to measure over time, the researcherssought the opinion and advice of three validates. Thevalidates examined the language, contents and the structure of the items critically and necessary corrections and suggestions made by the validates were effected by the researchers. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, inter-item method was used for Principals' SecurityManagementPractices Questionnaire (PSMPQ) and Secondary School Marketability Questionnaire (SSMQ). This is because; humans are notorious for their inconsistency and are easily distracted. To avoid raters changing from time to time, the instruments were administered onceon30 respondents from the population not selected for the

study. The scores obtained from the exercise were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test. A reliability coefficient of .784 was obtained for PSMPQ and .770 for SSMQ. These coefficients showed that the values are high enough to justify the use of the research instruments because Hussey *et al.,* (2025) recommended that, a coefficient value of .70 and above is adequate for any research work.

After presenting letter of introduction, the researchers administered the instruments: PSMPQ and SSMQ to the respondents in their various schools with the help of four research assistants within two weeks. Out of 222 copies of instruments sent out, 211 copies were returned. This represents 95% return. Out of 211 instruments returned, two copies of the instruments were wrongly filled and were not useful for the analysis. This gives 5.9% attrition rate. 95 % response rate was highly acceptable because it aligns with Sataloff and Vontela (2021) who opined that a response rate of at least 60% is deemed appropriate and responses exceeding 70% are considered excellent. All completed and returned copies of the instruments were subjected to statistical analysis. Simple Linear Regression Coefficient of Determination ($R^2$) was used in answering research questions while the F-value of the Simple Linear Regression Statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In testing the null hypotheses, the calculated F-value was compared with critical F-value at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis would be rejected if the calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value. Otherwise, it would be retained.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does Principals' physical security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 1 Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent to which Principals' Physical Security Management Practice predict Marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State**

| Variable | R | $R^2$ | Extent of Prediction | Std. Error of Estimate | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Security Management Practice | | | | | |
| Marketability of Secondary School | .145 | .021 | 0.16% | 3.28696 | Low Extent |

The information in Table 1 shows the strength of prediction R and the determination of the extent to which physical security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools. The R-value of .145 indicates a low extent of prediction of marketability of private secondary school by principal physical security management practice. The calculated $R^2$ of .016 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that only 0.16% of marketability of private secondary schools is predicted by principals' physical security management practice. This implies that 0.16% of the variation in marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is due to principals' physical security management practice.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does Principals' cyber security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 2 Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent to which Principals' Cyber Security Management Practice predict Marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State**

| Variable | R | $R^2$ | Extent of Prediction | Std. Error of Estimate | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cyber Security Management practice | .121 | .015 | 0.10% | 3.29792 | Low Extent |
| Marketability of Secondary School | | | | | |

The output in Table 2 shows the strength of prediction R and the determination of the extent to which cyber security management practice predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The R-value of .121 indicates a low extent of prediction of marketability of private secondary school by principal cyber security management practice. The calculated $R^2$ of .015 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that only 0.10% of marketability of private secondary schools is predicted by principals' cyber security management practice. This implies that 0.10% of the variation in marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is due to principals' cyber security management practice.

**$H0_1$:** Principals' physical security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 3 Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent to which Principals' Physical Security Management Practice Predict Marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State**

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F-Cal | F-Crit | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 48.372 | 1 | 48.372 | 4.477 | 3.89 | .036[b] |
| Residual | 2247.252 | 208 | 10.804 | | | |
| Total | 2295.624 | 209 | | | | |

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value of 4.477 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 208 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which claims that principals' physical security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. The result shows that principals' physical security management practice significantly predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

**$H0_2$:** Principals' cyber security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 4 Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent to which Principals' Cybersecurity Management Practice predict Marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State**

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F-Cal | F-Crit | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 33.359 | 1 | 33.359 | 3.067 | 3.89 | .081[b] |
| Residual | 2262.265 | 208 | 10.876 | | | |
| Total | 2295.624 | 209 | | | | |

The output in Table 4 reveals that the calculated F-value of 3.067 is less than the critical F-value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 208 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which claims that principals' cyber security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is retained. The result shows that principals' cyber security management practice does not significantly predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Principals' physical security management practice to a low extent predicts marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Principals' cyber security management practice to a low extent predicts marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
3. principals' physical security management practice is a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State
4. Principals' cyber security management practice is not a significant predictor of marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Principals' Physical Security Management Practice and Marketability of Private Secondary Schools

The result of the analysis reveals a low positive relationship between principals' physical security management practice and marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The corresponding hypothesis reveals a significant extent of prediction between principals' physical security management practice and marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. This result seems to have come out this way probably because robust physical security measures such as perimeter fencing, surveillance cameras, controlled access points, and security personnel can create a sense of safety that reassures prospective parents that their wards would be safe in the school. Also, a school that demonstrates a commitment to safety through visible security infrastructure and well-trained personnel stands out as a responsible and forward-thinking institution, making it a more attractive choice.

The result of this finding supports the finding of Ali and Fozia, (2016) who agreed that, physical security can be a strong marketing tool when strategically integrated into promotional materials. This finding is also in agreement with Onuorah and Eziamaka, (2020) who found that physical security is a major factor in school marketability because parents, students, and staff highly value a safe learning environment. Schools that invest in modern security systems, well-trained security staff, and emergency preparedness build trust, enhance

reputation, and attract more students. When students and teachers feel safe, they can focus on academics and extracurricular activities without distractions from potential threats. In a competitive education landscape, where parents weigh multiple factors before selecting a school, physical security therefore serve as a compelling differentiator.

**Principals' Cyber Security Management Practice and Marketability of Private Secondary Schools**

The result of the analysis reveals a low positive relationship between principals' cyber security management practice and marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The corresponding hypothesis reveals insignificant extent of prediction between principals' cyber security management practice and marketability of Private Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. This result could be attributed to the fact that many parents and students may not fully understand the importance of cyber security in schools. Unless a school has faced a major cyber attack or data breach, cyber security might not be a deciding factor for enrollment. Also, schools that invest in cyber security may not see instant enrollment growth, making it a long-term rather than short-term marketability factor. Similarly, parents focus more on tangible benefits like academic success, safety, and affordability when selecting a school.

The finding of this result refutes the finding of Donatus and Udebunu, (2015) who said that cyber security can encourage school growth by increasing dependence on digital learning as many private schools use e-learning platforms, digital libraries, and online assessments, making cyber security a critical factor. The finding of this result is also at variance with Triplett, (2023) who agreed that cyber security influences school growth positively as parents and students prefer schools that ensure safe and secure online learning environments without risks of hacking or data breaches. According to Hart *et al.* (2020), cyber security plays a significant role in the growth of schools where digital learning, data privacy, and online safety are top concerns for parents. Schools that prioritize cyber security gain a competitive edge thus making them more appealing to students and parents. While cyber security is important for protecting sensitive school data, it is not a major selling point for most parents and students.

## CONCLUSION

This study was able to make various discoveries and observations about the extent to which principals' security management practices predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. If marketability of private secondary schools is to be enhanced, management of school security should be improved upon. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that effective security management practices can indeed play a significant role in marketability of private secondary schools. Therefore, management of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State should adopt various security management practices to ensure that their schools remain safe and secured since principal security management practices especially physical security management to a great extent significantly predict marketability of private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education should organize in-service-training for principals in order to improve their management skills. The training perhaps should focus on security management in order to create a healthy and attractive school environment that can attract more enrolments.
2. Ministry of Education should monitor private secondary schools and withdraw Authority To Operate (ATO) form schools with reoccurring crises and security threats.
3. Proprietors of Private Secondary Schools should develop and incorporate plans for management of school security. This should be captured when designing school plan.
4. Principals should ensure regular staff meetings and constant supervision of staff in their various duties posts as this will help to monitor their level of compliance with school security management policy.
5. To future researchers, moderating variables should be introduced in future studies in order to determine the effect of other variables such as: principals' personal characteristics, principals' administrative competence etc on marketability of private secondary schools

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