

Building Intelligence Capacity in Schools: Strategies for Training Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff in Security Management

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Abstract

In light of increasing insecurity in educational environments, there is a pressing need to build intelligence capacity among school personnel. Intelligence capacity refers to the ability of school staff to gather, interpret, and act on information related to security threats. This paper examines strategic approaches to training both teachers and non-teaching staff in security management. It highlights the significance of embedding intelligence education within professional development programs, fostering partnerships with security agencies, and leveraging technology for surveillance and data reporting. The study is grounded in the Situational Crime Prevention Theory, which emphasizes proactive interventions to reduce opportunities for crime. Recognizing the unique roles that both teaching and non-teaching staff play in school security, the paper advocates for an inclusive training framework that addresses physical, cyber, and psychological threats. The challenges to implementing these strategies, such as inadequate funding, resistance to change, and lack of policy support, are critically examined. Recommendations include policy reforms, increased funding, and the integration of security training into existing educational structures. The paper concludes that building intelligence capacity through strategic training and collaboration is essential for fostering safe, secure, and resilient learning environments. This approach ensures that all members of the school community contribute meaningfully to safety management.

Keywords: *Intelligence capacity, security management, schools, teacher training, non-teaching staff, school safety*

Introduction

Schools are no longer insulated from the security challenges confronting broader society. From kidnapping and armed invasion to cyberattacks and internal threats such as bullying and

radicalization, educational institutions in many parts of the world are increasingly vulnerable. These threats disrupt academic activities, traumatize school communities, and in extreme cases, result in injury or loss of life. Given these realities, school safety must now be understood not just in terms of fire drills or gate security but as a comprehensive intelligence-led management strategy involving all members of the school community. The term *intelligence capacity* in educational management refers to the skills and systems in place that allow school personnel to detect, interpret, and appropriately respond to potential security threats (Adeyemi&Ogunyemi, 2021). It includes both the formal collection of information through technology and surveillance, and informal methods such as observation, interpersonal communication, and reporting of anomalies. While security personnel may be trained in these areas, there is often a gap in the capacity of teachers and non-teaching staff to contribute meaningfully to security operations.

Traditionally, teachers are seen as knowledge transmitters, and non-teaching staff are considered ancillary to academic operations. However, in a security-conscious school model, these individuals serve as front-line observers and potential first responders. For example, cleaners, porters, and administrative staff often interact with the school premises and its visitors in ways that provide them with access to critical information that may escape the notice of formal security agents (Nwankwo&Iheanacho, 2023). Training these individuals in basic intelligence techniques, including identifying behavioral red flags and understanding early warning indicators, equips them to contribute to a culture of safety. Globally, several school systems have adopted proactive approaches to security, including the institutionalization of safety audits, training workshops, and collaborations with law enforcement agencies (Ugwoke&Ayodele, 2024). In Nigeria, however, such initiatives are still in their infancy and are often reactionary rather than preventive. The absence of structured policies on school intelligence management means that many institutions are unprepared for emerging threats. Moreover, inadequate funding and a lack of political will further compound the problem, leaving school communities exposed and vulnerable.

Building intelligence capacity in schools requires a multi-stakeholder approach. It should involve the integration of intelligence education into existing professional development programs, the establishment of school-based security committees, and the use of simple but effective technological tools for surveillance and communication. Importantly, this capacity-building must be inclusive, recognizing the role of non-teaching staff as integral to the school's security ecosystem (Musa &Agbaje, 2023). The need for such a paradigm shift has never been more urgent. This paper therefore seeks to articulate practical strategies for training teachers and non-teaching staff in intelligence and security management. By identifying key frameworks, potential challenges, and actionable solutions, the paper aims to contribute to ongoing conversations about safety, resilience, and preparedness in the educational sector.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT), developed by Clarke (1980). The SCPT posits that criminal activities and threats to security are not only driven by offender motivation but are significantly influenced by environmental factors and opportunities that make such acts feasible. The theory emphasizes the importance of reducing the opportunity for crime through proactive environmental and behavioral interventions, such as surveillance, access control, target hardening, and increasing the perceived risk of being caught. For school

security, the theory aligns with the goal of building intelligence capacity among teachers and non-teaching staff, as it underscores the significance of early detection, vigilance, deterrence, and environmental design in preventing security breaches. Teachers and non-teaching staff when trained in intelligence gathering and basic security protocols can serve as effective agents in identifying suspicious behaviors, limiting access to sensitive areas, and discouraging harmful activities through their presence and actions. For example, a cleaner trained in basic security awareness might recognize and report an unattended bag in a hallway, preventing a possible threat. Similarly, a teacher trained in behavioral indicators might identify a student exhibiting signs of distress or radicalization. These seemingly minor actions, when part of a structured intelligence management system, directly correspond with SCPT's preventive mechanisms.

Moreover, SCPT is especially relevant in developing countries like Nigeria where law enforcement presence in school environments is minimal or non-existent. In such situation, school personnel often become the first line of defense, and their ability to apply intelligence-based decision-making can significantly improve safety outcomes (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2022). Building intelligence capacity among staff, therefore, operationalizes the SCPT framework by embedding security-conscious behaviors and routines into the daily functioning of the school. Furthermore, integrating SCPT into school management practices supports the creation of a "defensible space" a concept closely tied to environmental design and behavioral control which ensures that school premises are structured and monitored in a way that discourages intrusions and mitigates vulnerabilities (Newman, 1972). Through surveillance systems, controlled access points, and staff training, schools can create environments where security risks are minimized. SCPT provides a robust theoretical lens for understanding and implementing practical strategies for security management in schools. Its relevance to this paper lies in its focus on proactive, behaviorally informed, and environmentally embedded interventions that empower non-security personnel such as teachers and administrative staff to actively contribute to intelligence and safety efforts.

Strategies for Training Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff in School Security Management

Building intelligence capacity in schools requires strategic, inclusive, and context-sensitive training programs. Since both teachers and non-teaching staff play distinct but complementary roles in the school system, tailored strategies are essential to ensure effective security awareness, vigilance, and response. Below are key strategies for training school personnel in security and intelligence management.

Integrating Security Education into Professional Development:

Security and intelligence training should be embedded into regular professional development programs for all school personnel. This includes workshops, refresher courses, and in-service training that focus on recognizing behavioral warning signs, identifying potential threats, and understanding security protocols. Training should be mandatory and periodically updated to reflect emerging threats and global best practices.

Scenario-Based Simulation and Drills: Scenario-based simulations (e.g., lockdown drills, evacuation exercises, active shooter simulations) help prepare staff for real-life crises. These drills should be inclusive, involving teachers, administrative staff, cleaners and guards, to ensure holistic preparedness (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2022). Simulations reinforce practical skills such as

communication, coordination, and decision-making under pressure.

Partnership with Security Agencies and NGOs: Schools should collaborate with local police, civil defense corps, and certified NGOs to conduct training on intelligence gathering and basic self-defense. This fosters trust and improves reporting pathways. In Nigeria, the Safe School Initiative recommends community-based intelligence training as a sustainable way to reduce security risks in educational settings (UNICEF, 2020).

Digital Tools and e-Learning Platforms: Modern security training can be enhanced through digital platforms offering virtual security awareness courses, video tutorials, mobile alerts, and anonymous threat reporting systems. Tools such as mobile-based simulations and e-learning modules enable flexible learning, especially in rural or under-resourced schools (Nwankwo&Iheanacho, 2023).

Creating Security Committees within Schools: Establishing a school-based Security and Intelligence Committee that includes trained representatives from both teaching and non-teaching staff promotes collective ownership of safety. These committees can coordinate internal trainings, liaise with law enforcement, and ensure sustainability of the training process.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanisms: Every training initiative should have an M&E framework to assess effectiveness, identify gaps, and recommend improvements. Post-training evaluations, feedback surveys, and incident response reviews are critical to ensuring continuous improvement and accountability in school security programs (Musa &Agbaje, 2023). Training teachers and non-teaching staff in intelligence and security management is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. It requires institutional commitment, and continuous refinement. Through context-driven, inclusive, and technology-supported strategies, schools can build a robust intelligence system that deters threats, mitigates risks, and safeguards learners.

Challenges in Building Intelligence Capacity in Schools

Despite growing recognition of the importance of intelligence capacity and security management in educational institutions, several challenges hinder effective implementation of training programs for teachers and non-teaching staff. These challenges are multidimensional, cutting across structural, institutional, financial, and human resource limitations.

1. Inadequate Funding and Resource Allocation: A major barrier is the chronic underfunding of the education sector in many developing countries, including Nigeria. Budgetary provisions for security infrastructure, capacity building, and staff development are often insufficient (Ogundele&Aina, 2023). Security training programs are typically not prioritized in school budgets, leaving administrators with limited capacity to implement or sustain them. As a result, schools operate without structured security policies or trained personnel to handle emergencies.

2. Lack of Security Expertise among Educators: Most teachers and non-teaching staff lack prior training or exposure to security and intelligence operations. Their core training often focuses solely on academic or administrative tasks, with little or no inclusion of crisis management, threat assessment, or emergency response (Akinwale&Oladele, 2022). This

knowledge gap makes it difficult to foster a security-conscious school culture without external assistance.

3. Absence of Comprehensive Policy Frameworks: There is a noticeable lack of standardized policies guiding school security training, especially across many states in Nigeria. While national policies such as the *Safe School Declaration* exist, implementation at the grassroots level is weak due to inconsistent government commitment and poor monitoring (UNICEF, 2020). This policy vacuum results in ad hoc and reactive security measures rather than proactive and preventive strategies.

4. Resistance to Change and Attitudinal Barriers: Some staff members perceive intelligence and security training as irrelevant or burdensome. Teachers may resist new responsibilities they consider outside their professional roles, while non-teaching staff may feel excluded from training initiatives (Nwankwo&Iheanacho, 2023). This resistance hinders collective participation and reduces the effectiveness of any security program.

5. Inadequate Collaboration with Security Agencies: A successful school security strategy requires synergy between educational institutions and local security agencies. Unfortunately, many schools lack functional relationships with police, civil defense corps, or emergency services (Ajayi, 2023). The absence of such collaboration limits access to expert guidance, prompt response, and community-based intelligence sharing.

6. High Turnover and Inconsistent Staffing: Frequent turnover among non-teaching staff, especially in low-income schools, undermines consistency in security training. New staff are often not inducted into security protocols, leading to fragmented knowledge and reduced preparedness (Okoli&Nwachukwu, 2023). Additionally, there are no formal structures in place for institutional memory or training continuity when staff exit.

7. Technological Gaps and Digital Illiteracy: The integration of digital security tools such as surveillance systems, mobile alert apps, and e-learning platforms is limited by poor ICT infrastructure and digital illiteracy among staff. In rural and underserved areas, many educators lack access to training technology or the skills to navigate them (Musa &Agbaje, 2023). This hinders modern approaches to intelligence building and rapid response systems.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges identified and the need to build intelligence capacity in schools, the following recommendations are proposed:

Institutionalize Security Training as Part of School Policy: Every school should develop and implement a formal security and intelligence policy that mandates periodic training for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Government Funding and Budgetary Allocation for School Security: The federal and state ministries of education should allocate specific funding for school safety programs, including the training of personnel and acquisition of security tools.

Partnership with Security Agencies and Civil Organizations: Schools should collaborate with law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and emergency management authorities for expert-led training, drills, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

Role-Specific Training Modules: Training programs should be customized to fit the roles of different staff members teachers, administrators, cleaners, gatekeepers, and security personnel.

Use of Digital Platforms for Security Awareness: Invest in mobile and online platforms that can provide flexible security training, virtual simulations, reporting tools, and emergency alerts. Establish School-Based Security Committees: Each school should form an internal security committee comprising representatives from both teaching and non-teaching staff to coordinate security efforts and liaise with external agencies.

Mandatory Induction Training for New Staff: Orientation programs for new employees should include a security module to ensure that all staff members are aligned with the school's safety protocols from the outset.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Develop tools to assess the effectiveness of security training programs through feedback forms, incident reviews, and periodic audits to identify areas for improvement.

Promote a Security-Conscious Culture: Engage students, parents, and the wider school community in awareness campaigns that emphasize the shared responsibility of maintaining a safe and secure learning environment.

Enact and Enforce National School Safety Legislation: Policymakers should pass and implement comprehensive school safety laws to standardize security training and accountability mechanisms across all educational institutions.

Conclusion

In an era marked by growing insecurity and unpredictable threats to school environments, building intelligence capacity among both teaching and non-teaching staff has become a non-negotiable priority. This paper has emphasized the strategic importance of integrating intelligence training into professional development frameworks, fostering partnerships with security agencies, leveraging technology, and institutionalizing school-based safety committees. Rooted in the Situational Crime Prevention Theory, the study reinforces that proactive, preventive, and inclusive approaches to security management are more effective than reactive measures.

Despite the numerous challenges ranging from inadequate funding and weak policy implementation to staff resistance and technological gaps the path to safer schools lies in sustained commitment, collaborative engagement, and policy innovation. By equipping all categories of school personnel with the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to security threats, educational institutions can evolve into resilient and secure learning spaces. Ultimately, fostering a culture of intelligence-led safety management will not only protect students and staff but also safeguard the integrity of the educational mission.

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