

# Innovations

## School Safety Strategies as Determinant of Administrative Effectiveness in Public Polytechnics, Kwara State

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**Abstract:** Educational institutions are to guarantee safety of lives to the school community, it is only under this situation that teaching and learning can thrive. It was against this background the study examined school safety strategies as determinants of administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study and sampled a total of 580 respondents comprising 290 lecturers and 290 students from selected public polytechnics. An instrument tagged “School Safety Strategies Questionnaire (SSSQ) and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ) were used for data collection. Mean and Pearson product-moment correlation at the 0.05 level of significance was used for data analysis. Findings revealed the level of school safety strategies in public Polytechnics in Kwara State was low and the level of administrative effectiveness in public Polytechnics in Kwara State was low. A correlation analysis showed that none of the safety strategies individually or collectively had a statistically significant relationship with administrative effectiveness (all p-values > 0.05). This suggests that current safety practices in Kwara State polytechnics are not robust or strategic enough to influence the quality of administrative operations. From on these findings, the study suggested that polytechnic administrators and policymakers should develop a more integrated and actionable school safety framework that aligns closely with administrative objectives.

**Keywords:** School safety strategies; Administrative effectiveness; Safety training; Maintenance of school infrastructure; Emergency planning

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## Introduction

Safety in schools, also implies setting schools campuses aright in a manner where its primary focus will not be jeopardized. School safety, therefore, is the act and practice of proactively preventing accidents/incidences and mitigating personnel injury or damage to equipment or property within the school environment. Safety and security are synonymous and interchangeably used. Safety is an indispensable concept in human endeavour. It is the state of being free from internal, external, physical and psychological threats. A safety environment promotes nothing but progress and it underscores the essence of safety in schools. In order to ease meaningful attainment of goals in schools, safety must be ensured. Sokpuwu and Enoch (2023) viewed that every education service-based organization understands that no impactful teaching-learning process can take place in an unsafe environment. They added that there is an inter-relationship between a safe workplace environment and the achievement of set organizational goals, especially, in polytechnics as a higher institution where young adults' minds are being prepared towards having a peaceful future requires putting all hands-on deck to ensure achieving its goal as an institution where lower and middle level manpower are produced.

School safety strategies refer to the measures and actions implemented to create environment where students, staff and faculty can engage in academic activities without fear of harm or violence. It encompasses both physical and psychological safety, addressing issues like violence, bullying, emergency security issues, and the overall well-being of the school community. School safety strategies also represent the organized, proactive, and reactive measures implemented by institutional management to mitigate risks, prevent incidents of violence, cultism, physical damages of properties, respond effectively to emergencies and foster a culture of safety. In the context of polytechnics in Nigeria, school safety becomes even more crucial due to the increasing incidents of violence, accidents, and unrest in educational institutions (Okebukola, 2006).

School safety strategies can be broadly categorized into preventive, responsive, and supportive measures. Preventive strategies include initiatives such as surveillance systems, security personnel, and campus regulations aimed at reducing the likelihood of dangerous situations (Ibitoye, 2016). Grossly, it involves combination of actions targeted at zero tolerant to threats and insecurity on and off campus. Preventive measures of safety in schools include provision of physical security, emergency preparedness and making a positive school and conducive learning environment. Breach of trust in the security architecture might cause hiccups and distraction of school programs in schools resulting from faulty security configuration of the school is suffice for the system to provide an alternate measure such as responsive measures.

Nigeria, like some countries in the world, has been confronted with challenges related to school safety, challenges like students' social unrest, violence, criminal activities, and natural disasters have affected the learning environment in Nigerian

schools. Recent reports by the National Security Adviser's Office and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) have underscored the importance of addressing these challenges to ensure the safety and security of educational institutions. A recent study by Ibrahim, Usman and Yusuf (2021) examines teachers' awareness of school safety policies in Nigeria and found that while most teachers were aware of basic safety measures, there was a significant gap in their knowledge of comprehensive safety policies and emergency response procedures. They are saddled with the responsibility of producing and grooming skilled workers to meet the need of the economy. However, these institutions face various challenges, including inadequate security infrastructure, limited resources, and lack of awareness about safety protocols.

Effective school safety strategies are crucial to ensuring a supportive and secure atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. In strengthening school safety, certain key strategies have been identified as central to fostering administrative effectiveness. One of such strategies is the provision of security devices, which includes tools like CCTV surveillance cameras, metal detectors, access control systems, and alarm systems. These tools serve both deterrent and monitoring functions, allowing administrators to prevent and quickly respond to threats. According to Ogundele and Oparinde (2019), the integration of modern security technology in educational institutions helps in maintaining order and ensuring the safety of lives and property, thereby reducing anxiety among students and staff and allowing administrators to focus on academic planning and institutional development.

Another pivotal strategy is safety training, which equips students, staff, and faculty with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle emergencies effectively. This includes drills on fire evacuation, first aid, and active shooter scenarios. Ede and Mba (2020) emphasized that regular and structured safety training in tertiary institutions enhances preparedness and promotes a culture of vigilance and responsibility among stakeholders, significantly reducing the impact of unexpected incidents. Well-trained staff and students act as the first responders during emergencies, complementing administrative efforts toward crisis management and safety assurance.

Collaboration with security agents is another vital strategy, which involves establishing formal partnerships between educational institutions and external agencies such as the police, civil defence, and emergency services. These partnerships ensure that institutions receive timely support and intelligence during crises. Akpan and Oluwabamide (2021) noted that public polytechnics that maintain consistent communication with law enforcement agencies are more effective in handling threats such as cultism, theft, and campus violence. This collaboration not only facilitates external support but also legitimizes internal safety policies and enhances institutional credibility.

The maintenance of school infrastructure also plays a significant role in school safety. Dilapidated buildings, faulty electrical systems, and poor sanitation facilities

can pose physical threats to the school community and impede administrative efficiency. A study by Iwu, Enueme, and Okecha (2016) found that institutions with well-maintained infrastructure report lower accident rates and higher student satisfaction, contributing to a more stable and effective administrative environment. Administrators are therefore expected to prioritize routine maintenance and infrastructural development as a strategy for minimizing safety-related disruptions.

A well-structured emergency plan is essential to any institution's safety strategy. This plan should include procedures for evacuation, lockdowns, communication during crises, and post-incident recovery. As posited by Yusuf and Bello (2022), institutions that develop and regularly update emergency preparedness plans are better positioned to mitigate chaos during emergencies and resume normal operations more quickly. Emergency plans help administrators make informed decisions under pressure and ensure that safety remains a continuous and proactive process rather than a reactive one.

Administrative effectiveness in educational institutions refers to the efficiency, quality of decision-making and successful implementation of policies, programs, and strategies by the school management. In Nigerian polytechnics, the role of administrators is central to creating an environment conducive to learning and achieving institutional goals. According to Ajayi (2007), administrators who successfully manage resources, personnel, and safety are able to enhance academic performance and ensure the smooth running of the institution. The effectiveness of school administration in Nigerian polytechnics, particularly in Kwara State, was closely tied to the safety strategies implemented within the institutions. School safety played a fundamental role in ensuring that students, staff, and administrators could engage in their activities without fear of harm, thereby improving the overall functioning of the institution (Sanni, Enefu, & Ogwu, 2023).

### **Statement of the Problem**

School environment including institutional campuses are expected to be free of threat of any sort. An effective teaching learning can only take place where learners, teachers and their entire staff are adequately protected and free from security threat. Educational institutions are to guarantee safety of lives to the school community, it is only under this situation that teaching and learning can thrive. This has been the situation right from the inception of institutions, because a serene environment facilitates effective transfer of learning (Ekpoh, Edet & Ukpung, 2020). In the words of Xaba (2014), it has been observed that Nigerian schools, especially higher institutions of learning are increasingly and rapidly becoming sites for high levels of crimes, violence, and disorder. Gunmen invasion is one of the main problems confronting schools in Nigeria including but not limited to Kwara state public polytechnics. Tunde (2024) reported that on September 4th, 2024, a 21-year-old student of Electrical and Electronics Engineering was fatally shot at a police checkpoint in the Fate area of Ilorin, the incident which claimed his life the next day

at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital. The incident led to widespread protests by students, demanding justice and accountability. In response, the Kwara State Police Command conducted an internal investigation resulting in the dismissal of the three concerned officers. The officers were charged with criminal conspiracy and culpable homicide and have been remanded in prison custody, awaiting further court proceedings. Badiora (2017) issued that, the spectra of crimes on the campuses of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have grown to an alarming rate and level, that it has remained a permanent issue in national discourse. Unfortunately, this has adversely affected the academic and social life of both staff and students on campus.

Many researchers have worked on different aspects of school safety; they include Tajudeen, Jubrin and Alhassan (2019) who researched security measures and administrative effectiveness in universities in Kwara state, Nigeria. *Also, Sanni, Enefu and Ogwu (2023) carried out a study on administrative strategies in maintenance of school safety for quality academic delivery in tertiary Institutions in Kogi State. Similarly, provision of school safety devices for administrative effectiveness of tertiary institutions in Rivers State is another study carried out in Rivers State by Sokpuwu and Enoch (2023).* Succinctly, there was limited focus on how safety strategies specifically determine the administrative performance in the context of polytechnics, particularly in Kwara State. This gap, coupled, with the locale and title scope gaps, are the focus of this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to explore school safety strategies as determinant of administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics, Kwara State. Precisely, purposes of this study were to:

- ascertain the level school safety strategies in public polytechnics in Kwara State.
- determine the level of administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the level of school safety strategies?
- What is the level of administrative effectiveness?

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: School safety strategies do not significantly determine administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research utilized a survey type of descriptive research design to gather the necessary and pertinent data.

### Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

Population of the study involved the whole 1,165 lecturers and 20,502 students totalling 21,667 as obtained from the office of the registrars of each Polytechnics. This researcher employed the use of research advisor sample table (2016) in determining the sample size. The advisor research specified 290 lecturers as sample to be taken from 1,165 lecturers, while 290 students were selected as sample that was taken from 20,502 students to ensure even representations for correlation analysis. The sample distribution table is represented in the table that follows. Random sampling technique was used to sample 290 lecturers and purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting 290 students of ND2 and HND2 from the concerned polytechnics in Kwara State. See table 1 for details

**Table 1: Sample Frame:**

| S/N | Institution             | Population |           | Sample   |           |
|-----|-------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|     |                         | Students   | Lecturers | Students | Lecturers |
| 1   | Kwara State Polytechnic | 9,020      | 502       | 128      | 125       |
| 2   | Kwara Polytechnic Offa  | 11,482     | 663       | 162      | 165       |

### Methods of Data Collection and Instrumentation

Two self-designed questionnaires were used for this study. They were “School Safety Strategies Questionnaire (SSSQ)” and “Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ)”. Both questionnaires were attempted by both the lecturers and students sampled. The instruments were structured into two each section (A and B). Section A was used to solicit respondents’ ideas on the SSSQ and AEQ respectively. However, the former contained six (6) items under each of provision of security device, safety training, collaboration with security agencies, maintenance of school infrastructures and emergency plans while the latter featured five (5) items under each of these headings: uninterrupted academic calendar, students’ discipline and students’ commitment. These questionnaires, therefore serve as source of primary data which assisted the study in relating the school safety strategies to the administrative effectiveness of polytechnics.

To ensure the extent at which the instrument measure what it is supposed to measure of the study, a careful procedure involving giving out the instruments to researcher’s supervisor and three experts in the department of educational management for their perusal and constructive criticism of the items contained in the instruments. Their individual responses were harmonized to ensure that every phase of the research focus is adequately considered. In determining the consistency of the instrument used in this study, the questionnaires were administered to a sample of twenty (20) lecturers and twenty (20) students from another higher institution that shares similar characteristics with the target population but was not included in the main study. The responses were split into



two halves and imperilled to Cronbach's Alpha analysis a measure of internal consistency. The analysis produced reliability coefficients of 0.81 for the lecturers' instrument and 0.72 for the students' instrument, indicating acceptable levels of reliability for both instruments.

### Data Analysis Methods

Mean of descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions while Pearson product-moment correlation statistics was used to test the hypothesis formulated for the study, specifically mean, was employed to answer the research questions. The decision benchmark for interpreting the mean scores was as follows: 3.50–4.00 (High), 2.50–3.49 (Moderate), 1.50–2.49 (Low), and 1.00–1.49 (Very Low).

### Results

#### Findings for Objective 1:

This objective is to find out the level of school safety strategies in Polytechnics in Kwara State.

**Table 2:** Level of School Safety Strategies

| Strategies                    | N   | X           | SD  | Decision |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------|-----|----------|
| Provision of Security Devices | 290 | 2.03        | .30 | Low      |
| Safety Training               | 290 | 2.22        | .29 | Low      |
| Collaboration with Agencies   | 290 | 2.98        | .39 | Moderate |
| Maintenance of Infrastructure | 290 | 3.03        | .34 | Moderate |
| Emergency Plan                | 290 | 1.83        | .42 | Low      |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>             |     | <b>2.41</b> |     |          |

**Key: Very Low:** 1:00-1.49; **Low:** 1.50-2.49; **Moderate:** 2.50-3.49; **High:** 3.50-4.00

The result in Table 2 shows that the level of implementation of school safety strategies in public polytechnics in Kwara State is generally low to moderate. Among the five strategies examined, maintenance of school infrastructure (Mean = 3.03) and collaboration with security agencies (Mean = 2.98) recorded moderate levels of implementation. On the other hand, provision of security devices (Mean = 2.03), safety training (Mean = 2.22), and emergency plan (Mean = 1.83) were rated low. These results indicate that while certain safety measures are fairly well-established, others still require administrative strengthening for effective coverage. Hence, the grand mean of 2.41 clearly showed that the level of school safety strategies in Polytechnics in Kwara State was low

#### Findings for Objective 2:

This objective is to find out the level of administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State.

**Table 3:** Level of Administrative Effectiveness

| <b>Administrative Effectiveness</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>X</b>    | <b>SD</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Uninterrupted Academic Calender     | 290      | 2.70        | .34       | Moderate        |
| Students Discipline                 | 290      | 2.34        | .22       | Low             |
| Students Commitment                 | 290      | 2.29        | .23       | Low             |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>                   |          | <b>2.44</b> |           |                 |

Administrative effectiveness level in public polytechnics in Kwara State is from low to moderate level. The data discovered that the aspect of administrative effectiveness with the highest mean score is uninterrupted academic calendar (Mean = 2.70, SD = 0.34147), which falls within the moderate level. This indicates that, to a reasonable extent, academic activities in the polytechnics are conducted with minimal disruptions. In contrast, students' discipline recorded a mean score of 2.34 (SD = 0.22971), while students' commitment had a mean score of 2.29 (SD = 0.22618); both fall within the low category. These findings suggest that while academic schedules are being moderately upheld, there are noticeable deficiencies in students' behaviour and commitment to academic and institutional goals. Overall, the results point to a moderate level of administrative effectiveness, largely supported by the stability of the academic calendar, but weakened by challenges in maintaining student discipline and fostering active student engagement. In conclusion, the grand mean of 2.44 showed that the administrative effectiveness level in public Polytechnics in Kwara State was low

### Findings for Objective 3

This objective is to examine the relationship between school safety strategies and administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State.

**Table 4:** Correlation Coefficient between School Safety Strategies and Administrative Effectiveness

| <b>Variables</b>                    | <b>N</b> | <b>df</b> | <b>r</b> | <b>P-value</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>School Safety Strategies</b>     | 290      | 288       | .018     | .764           | Not Significant |
| <b>Administrative Effectiveness</b> | 290      | 288       |          |                |                 |

Significant at  $p < .05$

The correlation between school safety strategies (as a composite variable) and administrative effectiveness showed coefficient of  $r = 0.018$  with a p-value of 0.764. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the relationship is not statistically significant. This means there is no significant correlation between the implementation of school safety strategies and administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics in Kwara State. Therefore, the



hypothesis which states that school safety strategies do not significantly determine administrative effectiveness is retained. This suggests that, collectively, the safety measures in place including security devices, training, collaboration with security agencies, infrastructure maintenance, and emergency planning do not have a measurable influence on how effectively the administration operates in the institutions studied.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The analysis on school safety strategies level in polytechnics revealed in table one that the level of school safety strategies in public polytechnics in Kwara state is low. Among the five strategies examined, maintenance of school infrastructure and collaboration with security agencies recorded moderate levels of implementation. Conversely, provision of security devices, safety training, and emergency plan were rated low. These findings suggest that while some institutions have made notable efforts in infrastructural maintenance and security collaboration, core proactive strategies such as safety training and emergency response planning remain inadequately implemented. This uneven development poses challenges for achieving a comprehensive and effective safety system capable of supporting administrative operations and school climate. The result supports the findings of Sokpuwu and Enoch (2023), who noted that although certain visible safety features like caution signs and sanitation facilities were present in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, critical devices such as fire extinguishers, emergency vehicles, and communication tools were either lacking or poorly positioned. This gap was reported to hinder both the responsiveness and effectiveness of institutional administration. Similarly, Sanni et al. (2023) highlighted that in Kogi State tertiary institutions, administrators acknowledged the importance of infrastructure and physical safety measures, but their commitment to ongoing safety training and risk preparedness was inconsistent. The present study confirms this trend, especially with the low ratings of emergency planning and safety training in Kwara State's polytechnics. While infrastructural upkeep and inter-agency collaboration are progressing modestly, there is an urgent need for polytechnic management to strengthen low-performing strategies, especially provision of modern security devices, staff and student safety training, and emergency planning systems.

Table three on levels of administrative effectiveness of public polytechnics in Kwara State indicates that administrative effectiveness was low. Among the components of administrative effectiveness assessed, Uninterrupted Academic Calendar falling within the moderate category. This suggests that polytechnic administrators are reasonably successful in maintaining academic stability, with minimal disruption to the school calendar. Such consistency may be attributed to effective planning, resource allocation, or proactive engagement with staff unions and stakeholders to avert academic strikes or unscheduled closures. This finding aligns with Umar (2019) who examined principals' administrative strategies in Yobe State and found that school leadership often struggled with managing student

discipline due to autocratic leadership styles and ineffective supervision. Umar recommended adopting leadership approaches that promote participatory engagement and student-centered interventions to improve behavioral outcomes.

The correlation analysis (table four) examining the overall relationship between school safety strategies and administrative effectiveness in public polytechnics. This infers that, in the sampled institutions, the combined implementation of safety strategies including provision of security devices, safety training, collaboration with security agencies, maintenance of school infrastructure, and emergency planning does not have a measurable impact on administrative effectiveness. This finding suggests that despite the presence or partial implementation of safety strategies, their integration into administrative operations is not strong enough to influence core areas of effectiveness such as policy enforcement, student discipline, academic planning, and institutional coordination. It may reflect a disconnect between the operational layers of safety management and the strategic leadership functions that drive effective school administration. The implication of this finding is that in Kwara State's public polytechnics safety strategies, as currently practiced, are insufficiently integrated into the administrative architecture. To improve their impact, institutional leaders must not only implement safety measures but also monitor, train, evaluate, and align them with the institutions' strategic plans, student services, and risk management protocols. This finding supports the study by Okorafor (2025) who found that security devices in schools in Rivers State had no substantial predictive value for effective administration, concluding that unless those devices are maintained and embedded into daily routines, they have little or no influence on administrative outcomes

## Conclusion

This study concludes that while school safety strategies are being implemented at varying levels in public polytechnics in Kwara State, their impact on administrative effectiveness remains minimal. Maintenance of school infrastructure and collaboration with security agencies were more commonly practiced, whereas provision of security devices, safety training, and emergency planning were weakly implemented. Despite these efforts, none of the safety strategies whether considered individually or collectively showed a statistically significant influence on administrative effectiveness. Administrative efficiency, especially in areas like student discipline and commitment, remains a challenge, suggesting that safety measures alone are insufficient in driving institutional effectiveness unless they are integrated with broader administrative reforms. Therefore, enhancing administrative outcomes requires not just implementing safety strategies, but aligning them with a more holistic and strategic management approach that addresses both operational security and institutional culture.

## Recommendations

- Polytechnic authorities should intensify efforts to institutionalize comprehensive safety strategies by formulating clear safety policies, ensuring adequate budgetary allocation for safety needs, and creating a dedicated safety unit in each institution. Particular attention should be given to improving weakly implemented strategies, such as emergency planning and provision of security devices, to balance safety coverage across all areas;
- since maintenance of school infrastructure was found to be the most frequently used strategy, institutions should leverage this strength by integrating infrastructure management with broader safety efforts. Administrators should expand infrastructure maintenance beyond aesthetics to include security considerations (e.g., reinforced doors, emergency exits, functional lighting, and surveillance points). Routine safety audits should be adopted as part of infrastructure reviews;
- to enhance administrative effectiveness, polytechnics should prioritize interventions targeting student discipline and commitment, which were found to be low. Administrators should implement value-based leadership, peer mentoring programs, and code-of-conduct reforms. Counselling services and non-academic engagement strategies should be strengthened to improve student involvement and institutional alignment; and
- Given that the composite of safety strategies showed no significant effect, there is a need for better integration of safety measures into the institutional governance structure. Polytechnic administrators should treat safety as a core component of school leadership by involving all departments in planning, executing, and evaluating safety programs. Safety implementation should be data-driven and outcome-oriented.

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