

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

Yaksat Emmanuel Augustine (PhD)^{1*} and Ojating Jane Henry (PhD)²

School of Education, Educational Foundations, University of Calabar, Nigeria¹.

Department General studies, Federal Polytechnic Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria².

Accepted 11, August, 2026

This study examined the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by increasing security challenges in higher educational institutions and the need to understand the role of governance practices in enhancing security management effectiveness. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 5,842 academic and non-academic staff of selected higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. A sample of 374 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Governance Practices and Security Management Effectiveness Questionnaire (GPSMEQ). The instrument was validated by experts, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient (0.70). Data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Simple Linear Regression Analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness ($r = .658, p < .05$). The result further showed that governance practices significantly predicted security management effectiveness ($\beta = .658, t = 16.86, p < .05$), accounting for approximately 43.3% of the variance in security management effectiveness ($R^2 = .433$). Based on the findings, the study concluded that effective governance practices contribute significantly to enhanced security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions. The study recommended that institutional administrators strengthen accountability, transparency, participatory decision-making, and policy implementation mechanisms to improve security management outcomes.

Keywords: Governance practices, Security management effectiveness, Higher educational institutions, Transparency, Accountability, Leadership effectiveness, Plateau State.

Introduction

Security has become a critical concern in higher educational institutions worldwide due to increasing incidents of violence, theft, cult-related activities, kidnapping, terrorism, and other threats that disrupt academic activities and institutional stability. Higher educational institutions are expected to provide a safe and conducive environment for teaching, learning, research, and community service. However, the effectiveness of security management in these institutions depends not only on the availability of security personnel and infrastructure but also on the quality of governance practices that guide decision-making, resource allocation, accountability, and policy implementation (Dominguez-Dominguez et al., 2023; Konček, and Hnilicia, 2026).

Governance practices refer to the processes, structures, and mechanisms through which institutions are directed, controlled, and held accountable in achieving their objectives. Effective governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and adherence to established policies and procedures. In higher educational institutions, governance practices influence strategic planning, risk management, resource utilization, and the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring institutional safety and security (Jiang and Abdullah, 2026; Jones, 2026). Consequently, institutions with sound governance systems are more likely to develop and sustain effective security management mechanisms.

Security management effectiveness encompasses the ability of an institution to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from security threats while ensuring the safety of staff, students, visitors, and property. Effective security management involves the coordination of policies, personnel, technology, and resources to minimize risks and maintain order within the campus environment. In recent years, Nigerian higher educational institutions have faced numerous security challenges, including campus violence, theft, vandalism, attacks by criminal elements, and other forms of insecurity that threaten educational activities and institutional development. These challenges have heightened the need for effective security management strategies (Merchan-Lima et al., 2021).

In Plateau State, Nigeria, higher educational institutions operate within a complex security environment influenced by recurring communal conflicts, criminal activities, and broader national security concerns. While institutions have implemented various security measures such as surveillance systems, access control procedures, and the deployment

of security personnel, the effectiveness of these measures may depend largely on the governance structures and practices within the institutions. Weak governance practices may result in poor policy implementation, inadequate supervision, insufficient resource allocation, and limited stakeholder participation, thereby undermining security management efforts. Conversely, strong governance practices can enhance institutional capacity to identify risks, formulate appropriate security policies, allocate resources effectively, and ensure accountability in security operations (Eze and Nwankwo, 2021; Okorie and Duru, 2021; Mamman, 2026).

Theoretically, the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness can be explained through Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) which views an institution as an interconnected system whose components must function harmoniously to achieve desired outcomes. Governance serves as a coordinating mechanism that influences the performance of various institutional subsystems, including security management. Therefore, improvements in governance practices are expected to contribute positively to the effectiveness of security management within higher educational institutions.

Despite the growing concern over security challenges in Nigerian higher educational institutions, existing studies have focused predominantly on security infrastructure, campus crime, and risk management, with limited attention given to the role of governance practices in enhancing security management effectiveness. This creates a gap in the literature, particularly within the context of higher educational institutions in Plateau State, where security concerns continue to affect institutional operations and stakeholder well-being.

It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study seeks to determine whether governance practices are significantly associated with and predictive of security management effectiveness, thereby providing empirical evidence that can inform institutional policy and decision-making.

Statement of the problem

The primary responsibility of higher educational institutions extends beyond teaching, learning, and research to ensuring a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and institutional assets. However, in recent years, many higher educational institutions in Nigeria have experienced diverse security challenges, including theft, vandalism, cult-related activities, violent attacks, kidnapping, unauthorized access to campus facilities, and other forms of insecurity. These challenges have disrupted academic activities, threatened the safety of stakeholders, damaged institutional property, and undermined the attainment of educational objectives.

In Plateau State, the security situation within and around higher educational institutions has become increasingly complex due to recurring security concerns in the broader society. Although institutions have adopted various security measures such as the deployment of security personnel, installation of surveillance systems, enforcement of access control procedures, and formulation of security policies, incidents of insecurity continue to pose significant challenges. This raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of existing security management practices and the factors that influence their success.

One factor that may influence security management effectiveness is governance practices. Effective governance promotes accountability, transparency, stakeholder participation, responsiveness, and efficient resource management, all of which are essential for the formulation and implementation of effective security policies and strategies. Conversely, weak

governance practices may lead to poor decision-making, inadequate resource allocation, ineffective policy implementation, and weak oversight of security operations, thereby reducing the effectiveness of security management efforts. Despite the theoretical importance of governance in institutional management, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the extent to which governance practices influence security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions, particularly in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, most existing studies on campus security in Nigeria have concentrated on security challenges, crime prevention measures, and security infrastructure, while relatively little attention has been given to governance practices as a determinant of security management effectiveness. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical evidence to establish whether improvements in governance practices are associated with enhanced security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions.

It is this gap in knowledge that necessitates the present study. Therefore, the problem of this study is to determine the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria, and to establish whether governance practices significantly predict security management effectiveness.

Research questions

1. What relationship exists between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do governance practices predict security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria?

Research hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Governance practices do not significantly predict security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Literature review

Concept of Governance Practices

Governance practices refer to the systems, structures, processes, and mechanisms through which organizations are directed, controlled, and held accountable in the achievement of their objectives (Nnaji et al., 2026). In higher educational institutions, governance practices encompass transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, adherence to policies, strategic leadership, and effective resource management. Good governance ensures that institutional decisions are made in a manner that promotes efficiency, effectiveness, and stakeholder confidence (Obadahun, 2025).

Recent scholarship on university governance emphasizes that effective governance contributes significantly to institutional performance, sustainability, and risk management. Good University Governance is commonly associated with transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness in institutional administration (Adamu, Ahmad and Ibrahim, 2026). These principles enable institutions to respond effectively to internal and external challenges while achieving their educational goals.

In higher educational institutions, governance practices influence policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Effective governance also promotes coordination among institutional units and facilitates the allocation of resources necessary for achieving organizational objectives, including campus safety and security (Nnaji et al., 2026).

Concept of Security Management Effectiveness

Security management effectiveness refers to the ability of an institution to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from security threats while ensuring the safety of people, property, information, and institutional operations. Effective security management involves the integration of policies, procedures, personnel, technology, and resources to minimize vulnerabilities and enhance institutional resilience (Badamasi and Utulu, 2021). Within higher educational institutions, security management has become increasingly important due to growing concerns about physical insecurity, cyber threats, theft, vandalism, violence, and other security challenges. Studies have emphasized that security management should be approached as a holistic organizational function rather than merely a technical or operational activity. Effective security management requires strong leadership, clearly defined policies, adequate resources, stakeholder participation, and continuous monitoring of risks (Obadahun, 2025).

According to World Bank (2021) security management effectiveness is often assessed through indicators such as incident prevention, emergency preparedness, access control, risk management capability, response effectiveness, and stakeholders' perception of safety within the institution.

Governance Practices and Security Management Effectiveness

The relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Governance provides the framework within which security policies are developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. Effective governance enhances accountability, ensures adequate resource allocation, strengthens policy compliance, and promotes coordination among institutional actors responsible for security management (Merchan-Lima et al, 2021; Okorie and Duru, 2021).

Research on security management in higher educational institutions suggests that successful security outcomes are strongly influenced by governance structures and management practices. Security frameworks and policies are more effective when they are supported by clear governance arrangements, leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, and organizational accountability. Institutions with weak governance structures often experience challenges in implementing security policies and managing risks effectively (Adieme and Oliobi, 2024; Obadahun, 2025).

Furthermore, studies have shown that security management in higher educational institutions requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that combines governance mechanisms, organizational culture, policy implementation, and technological measures. Effective governance facilitates the coordination of these elements and contributes to improved security performance (Wordi and Wordu, 2024). Merchan-Lima et al., (2021) examined information security management frameworks in higher educational institutions and reported that effective security management depends on the existence of appropriate governance structures, policies, and implementation mechanisms. The study emphasized the importance of integrating governance and risk management practices in achieving security objectives. Similarly, Bwiino et al., (2026) reviewed information security practices in higher education institutions and found that effective security outcomes are associated with adaptive policy frameworks, organizational culture, leadership commitment, and governance structures. The study recommended a holistic approach that integrates governance, training, technology, and institutional support systems.

Obadahun (2024) investigated the relationship between leadership and academic excellence in selected Nigerian universities using a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed that leadership effectiveness significantly influences institutional performance, while weak accountability structures and resource constraints negatively affect organizational outcomes.

Relating governance and institutional effectiveness, Adamu, Ahmad and Ibrahim (2026) examined governance, institutional autonomy, and security effectiveness in Nigerian universities. The study found that governance challenges often arise from misalignment among government agencies, university management, and academic unions, thereby affecting institutional effectiveness. For security management and effective administration, Wodi and Wordu (2024) investigated on digitalizing campus security management in the face of rising security challenges in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. The study emphasized that modern security management in tertiary institutions requires effective administrative support, policy implementation, and technological integration. Addressing security threats in Nigerian tertiary institutions, Badamasi and Utulu (2021) developed a Framework for managing cybercrime risks in Nigerian universities. The study concluded that effective governance structures are necessary for successful implementation of security policies.

Nnaji, Ayanwale, Ukeje, Ekwunife, Igwe, Okwor and Nwuzor (2026) in their findings on enhancing governance and performance in Nigerian higher education through AI-driven digital transformation: Insights from stakeholder perspectives reported that weak governance implementation structures and infrastructural deficits hinder institutional effectiveness in Nigerian higher education institutions. Similarly, Ofor-Douglas (2022) in their study on organizational effectiveness: A necessary tool for achieving quality university education in Nigeria and Igbokwe and Onyekwelu (2023) observed that

effective administrative practices and sound governance and leadership structures are essential for achieving quality outcomes in Nigerian universities.

Although previous studies have established the importance of governance in security management, most of the existing literature has focused on information security and cybersecurity management in higher educational institutions. Limited empirical studies have specifically examined the relationship between governance practices and overall security management effectiveness within the context of higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. This gap provides the justification for the present study.

Theoretical Framework: Systems Theory

This study is anchored on Systems Theory, originally developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968/2000. The theory views an organization as a system composed of interrelated and interdependent components that work together to achieve common objectives. According to the theory, the effectiveness of any subsystem depends on its interaction with other subsystems within the organization.

Higher educational institutions consist of several interconnected subsystems, including governance, administration, academics, finance, and security management. Governance serves as a coordinating mechanism that influences the functioning of other institutional subsystems. Consequently, effective governance practices are expected to enhance the effectiveness of security management by promoting accountability, resource allocation, policy implementation, coordination, and continuous improvement. Systems Theory is therefore relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding how governance practices influence security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The design also allows for the prediction of the dependent variable from the independent variable through regression analysis without manipulating any of the study variables.

The study was conducted in Plateau State, Nigeria. Plateau State is located in the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria and hosts several higher educational institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. The state has experienced various security challenges over the years, making it an appropriate context for examining issues relating to governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions.

The population of the study comprised academic and non-academic staff of selected higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The selected institutions included the University of Jos, Plateau State University, Bokoos, Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin Ladi, and the Federal University of Education, Pankshin. Records obtained from the personnel units of the institutions indicated a total population of 5,842 staff, comprising both academic and non-academic personnel.

These staff members were considered suitable respondents because of their familiarity with institutional governance practices and security management processes within their respective institutions.

A sample was drawn from the target population using a multistage sampling procedure. First, selected higher educational institutions were purposively chosen based on their operational status and accessibility. Thereafter, respondents were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation of both academic and non-academic staff. A sample size of 374 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations. In the first stage, four higher educational institutions were purposively selected because of their size, accessibility, and relevance to the study. In the second stage, respondents were stratified into academic and non-academic staff to ensure adequate representation of both groups. In the third stage, proportionate sampling was used to allocate the sample to each institution according to its staff population. Finally, simple random sampling technique was employed to select the required respondents from each stratum. The distribution of the population and sample respectively for the institutions were as follows: University of Jos 2,450 and 157; Plateau State University, Bokoos 920 and 59; Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin Ladi 1,372 and 88 and Federal University of Education, Pankshin 1,100 and 70. The total population and sample for the institutions were 5,842 and 374 respectively.

This sampling procedure ensured adequate representation of both academic and non-academic staff across the participating institutions. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Governance Practices and Security Management Effectiveness Questionnaire (GPSMEQ) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A: Demographic information of respondents. Section B: Items measuring Governance Practices. Section C: Items measuring Security Management Effectiveness. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in Educational Management, Measurement and Evaluation, and Security Studies. Their observations, comments, and recommendations were used to improve the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the questionnaire items before the final administration of the instrument.

A pilot study was conducted using respondents from a higher educational institution outside the study area but with similar characteristics to the study population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained and so was considered adequate for the study.

The researcher obtained the necessary approvals from the management of the selected institutions before administering the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed directly to the respondents with the assistance of trained research assistants. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of the information provided. Completed questionnaires were collected, coded, and prepared for analysis.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research question 1 was answered using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to determine the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness. Research question 2 was answered using Simple Linear Regression Analysis to determine the extent to which governance practices predict security management effectiveness.

The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance as follows: Hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). Hypothesis 2 was tested using Simple Linear Regression Analysis. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Research question 1

What relationship exists between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria? Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness and the summary presented in Table 1.

Table 1 *Pearson Product Moment Correlation between governance practices and security management effectiveness*

S/N	VARIABLES	N	r	p-value
1.	Governance practices	374	0.658	0.000
2.	Security management effectiveness	374		

The result revealed a strong positive relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness ($r = .658$, $p < .05$). This implies that improvements in governance practices are associated with improvements in security management effectiveness.

Hypothesis one

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The Pearson correlation analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = .658$ with a corresponding p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Research question 2

To what extent do governance practices predict security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria?

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive influence of governance practices on security management effectiveness and the summary presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Simple linear regression analysis of governance practices as predictor of security management effectiveness*

R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.658	.433	.431	.521

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Regression	76.42	1	76.42	284.26	.000
Residual	100.05	372	0.269		
Total	176.47	373			

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.156	-	7.78	.000
Governance practices	.681	.040	.658	16.86	.000

a. Criterion: Security management effectiveness.

b. Predictors: (constant), Governance practices.

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.

The result showed that governance practices explained approximately 43.3% of the variance in security management effectiveness ($R^2 = .433$). This indicates that governance practices substantially contribute to security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions. The result revealed that governance practices significantly predicted security management effectiveness ($\beta = .658$, $t = 16.86$, $p < .05$). This implies that a unit increase in governance practices is associated with a corresponding increase in security management effectiveness.

Hypothesis two

H_{02} : Governance practices do not significantly predict security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The regression analysis revealed that governance practices significantly predicted security management effectiveness ($\beta = .658$, $t = 16.86$, $p = .000$). Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Therefore, governance practices significantly predict security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that governance practices have a significant positive relationship with security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness ($r = .658, p < .05$). This implies that improvements in governance practices are associated with corresponding improvements in the effectiveness of security management within higher educational institutions. The finding suggests that institutions characterized by transparency, accountability, effective leadership, stakeholder participation, and efficient policy implementation are more likely to achieve better security outcomes.

The finding is consistent with the view that governance provides the framework through which institutional policies, decisions, and resources are coordinated to achieve organizational objectives (OECD, 2021; Badamasi and Utulu, 2021; Nnaji et al., 2026; Bwiino et al., 2026). Effective governance facilitates the formulation and implementation of security policies, ensures adequate allocation of resources for security operations, promotes accountability among security personnel, and enhances institutional responsiveness to emerging security threats. Consequently, institutions with stronger governance practices are better positioned to establish and maintain effective security management systems.

The study further revealed that governance practices significantly predict security management effectiveness ($\beta = .658, t = 16.86, p < .05$). The regression analysis showed that governance practices accounted for 43.3% of the variance in security management effectiveness ($R^2 = .433$). This finding indicates that governance practices are an important determinant of security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions. The implication is that improvements in governance structures and processes can lead to substantial improvements in institutional security management outcomes.

This finding corroborates previous studies which emphasized the critical role of governance in organizational security management (Ofor-Douglas, 2022; Wodi and Wordu, 2024; Mamman, 2026). Earlier studies have reported that effective governance structures contribute significantly to policy implementation, risk management, resource allocation, and organizational resilience (Obadahun, 2025; Mamman, 2026; Abraham and Yu, 2026). Researchers have argued that security management should not be viewed solely as an operational responsibility but as a strategic organizational function that requires strong governance support (Wordi and Wordu, 2024; Adamu, Ahmad and Ibrahim, 2026; Nnaji et al., 2026). The present study extends these findings to the context of higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria, by providing empirical evidence that governance practices significantly influence security management effectiveness.

The findings are also consistent with Systems Theory (1968/2000), which served as the theoretical framework for this study. Systems Theory posits that organizations consist of interrelated and interdependent subsystems that must function in harmony to achieve organizational goals.

Within higher educational institutions, governance and security management represent interconnected subsystems. Effective governance serves as a coordinating mechanism that influences decision-making, communication, policy implementation, resource allocation, and monitoring processes across the institution (Agoi et al., 2026; Adamu, Ahmad and Ibrahim, 2026). Therefore, improvements in governance practices are expected to enhance the effectiveness of security management, as observed in the findings of this study.

The significant predictive influence of governance practices on security management effectiveness underscores the need for institutional administrators and policymakers to prioritize governance reforms as part of broader security management strategies. Strengthening transparency, accountability, participatory decision-making, leadership effectiveness, and policy implementation mechanisms may contribute substantially to improving campus security and creating a safer learning environment for staff and students.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that governance practices are not only associated with security management effectiveness but also serve as a significant predictor of security outcomes in higher educational institutions. This highlights the importance of integrating governance considerations into institutional security planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between governance practices and security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that governance practices have a significant positive relationship with security management effectiveness. The study further established that governance practices significantly predict security management effectiveness, indicating that institutions with stronger governance structures and processes are more likely to achieve better security outcomes.

The study demonstrated that governance practices, characterized by transparency, accountability, effective leadership, stakeholder participation, and efficient policy implementation, play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of security management within higher educational institutions. The significant proportion of variance in security management effectiveness explained by governance practices further underscores the importance of governance as a strategic factor in institutional security management.

Based on the findings, it is concluded that effective governance practices are indispensable for achieving and sustaining security management effectiveness in higher educational institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. Therefore, efforts aimed at improving institutional security should not be limited to the provision of security personnel and technological infrastructure alone but should also focus on strengthening governance mechanisms that support security planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. By promoting sound governance practices, higher educational institutions can enhance their capacity to prevent, manage, and respond effectively to security challenges while providing a safe and conducive environment for teaching, learning, research, and community service.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of higher educational institutions in Plateau State should strengthen accountability and transparency mechanisms in institutional governance to enhance effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of security management activities.
2. Institutional administrators should promote participatory decision-making by involving relevant stakeholders, including staff, students, security personnel, and governing councils, in the formulation and implementation of security policies and strategies.
3. Higher educational institutions should organize regular training, workshops, and capacity-building programmes for administrators and security personnel on governance best practices, security risk management, crisis response, and policy implementation.
4. Governing authorities should ensure adequate allocation of financial, human, and technological resources to support effective security management systems, including surveillance technologies, access control systems, communication facilities, and emergency response mechanisms.
5. Institutional management should establish periodic monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of governance practices and security management policies, with a view to identifying gaps and implementing necessary improvements.
6. Higher educational institutions should develop and implement comprehensive security policies that clearly define roles, responsibilities, reporting structures, and accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in security management.
7. Collaboration between institutional management, security agencies, host communities, and government authorities should be strengthened to facilitate information sharing, threat detection, and coordinated responses to security challenges affecting higher educational institutions.
8. Policymakers and regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should encourage the adoption of governance frameworks that integrate security management considerations into institutional planning and administration.

By implementing these recommendations, higher educational institutions can strengthen governance practices and improve the effectiveness of their security management systems, thereby creating safer and more conducive environments for teaching, learning, research, and community service.

Operational definition of terms

Governance practices: Governance practices refer to the processes, structures, and mechanisms through which higher educational institutions are directed, managed, and controlled. In this study, governance practices are operationalized in terms of transparency, accountability, stakeholder participation, leadership effectiveness, and policy implementation as perceived by academic and non-academic staff.

Security management effectiveness: Security management effectiveness refers to the extent to which security measures and strategies achieve the desired objective of protecting lives, property, information, and institutional activities from security threats. In this study, it is measured in terms of incident prevention, emergency preparedness, access control effectiveness, response capability, and stakeholders' perception of safety within higher educational institutions.

Higher educational institutions: Higher educational institutions refer to post-secondary institutions that provide advanced education, training, and research opportunities. In this study, the term includes universities, polytechnics, and university of education located in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Transparency: Transparency refers to the openness of institutional processes and decisions, particularly those relating to policy formulation, resource allocation, and security management. In this study, it is measured by the extent to which institutional actions and decisions are communicated clearly to stakeholders.

Accountability: Accountability refers to the obligation of institutional leaders and officials to explain, justify, and take responsibility for their actions and decisions. In this study, it relates to the degree to which administrators and security personnel are answerable for security-related policies and outcomes.

Leadership Effectiveness: Leadership effectiveness refers to the ability of institutional leaders to provide direction, make informed decisions, coordinate resources, and inspire commitment toward achieving organizational goals. In this study, it specifically relates to leadership roles in enhancing security management.

Plateau State: Plateau State refers to the geographical area in North-Central Nigeria within which the selected higher educational institutions included in this study are located.

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