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SECURITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR ENHANCED SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined security management practices for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted. The population comprised all the 44 Principal Officers in the 7 public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Out of these Principal Officers, 27 are males whereas 17 are females. The entire population, which represents 100%, was used as the sample which infers the use of census sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was 18 item self-structured questionnaire entitled: "Security Management Practices for Enhanced Safe School Environments Questionnaire (SMPESSEQ)." internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that security practices are managed in very low extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that School Management should always endeavour to equip the security personnel in best security practices by exposing them to capacity building programmes to improve on their skills and providing them with adequate security infrastructures that will enable them to curb crimes on campuses.

Keywords: Security management, Enhanced safe school, Environment, Public tertiary institutions

Introduction

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria offer the highest level of education individuals acquire, and they are expected to play pivotal roles in national development, its sustainability and also carry out an ever-growing spectrum of roles. These include: training of high level relevant manpower that contribute to national development; knowledge generation that promotes problem-solving; conducting of research that shall be relevant to the nation's developmental goals and contributing to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the host communities (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Thus, tertiary institutions can only attain these goals effectively in safe and secure school environments. If there is a feeling of insecurity within and outside the university environment, both students and lecturers are likely to live in fear, and it will obviously disrupt academic performance. Corroborating this position, Ekpoh et al. (2020) noted that tertiary institutions exist as a complex organisation with heterogeneous people from different backgrounds who have divergent goals that are susceptible to varied security threats. Hence, effective management of security practices is very critical to ensure that every student, staff, school property as well as host school communities is protected from both human-induced and natural disasters.

Safe school environment is perceived as a learning environment that is devoid of fear, threat, violence, bullying, anxiety, kidnapping, cult activities, riots, students' unrest, attacks, danger, among others. Squelch (2001, as cited in Nwideeduh and Adieme 2016) defined a safe school as one that is free from danger where students, administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff can work, teach and learn without fear, ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) asserted that a safe school has high institutional integrity where teachers and students being protected from unreasonable and hostile forces, concentrate on qualitative education. Thus, a safe school environment is committed to teaching and learning. Xaba (2014) described safe school environment as one that is not dangerous and possesses no threats to physical, emotional, psychosocial and psychological wellbeing of the occupants. Hoy and Miskel (2008) viewed safe school as one that is not vulnerable to destructive outside forces. Thus, enhancing safe school environments falls in line with the ongoing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4,

which expects school environments to be safe, friendly and free from threats of all forms of violence. Lecturers and students in safe school environments are committed to qualitative teaching and learning. A study conducted by Mensah et al. (2019) revealed that learners who are afraid of violence and attacks in school tend to live in fear or drop out of school. This is why United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2017) maintained that without safe schools, there will be no future for children. In other words, a safe school entails an environment that is secured and free from fear, threat and danger.

Management is the systematic planning, organising, controlling and coordinating of available human and material resources to efficiently and effectively attain organisational goals. Security management is central to the effective administration of tertiary institutions, and meeting the educational needs of students as well as the knowledge-based society. Management of security practices in tertiary institutions is solely the responsibility of the Principal Officers, whose duty it is to ensure seamless learning. As an open system, the tertiary institutions harbor people with various cultural backgrounds, and are vulnerable to all manners of security threats that emanate both from inside and outside their environments. Campbell (2007, as cited in Ojukwu 2017) viewed school security management as strategies and procedures required for coordinating the diverse activities of the school; protect lives and property; manage violence; reduce security risks and ensure that the school environment is safe for teaching and learning. Lending credence to this assertion, Lussier and FitzPatrick (2016) posited that security issues can be managed effectively by focusing on preventive practices; rather than response and intervention approaches. Thus, security management practices encompass all the measures taken to combat or curb threats to lives and property in the school environments.

Security practices are the proactive measures taken by security personnel to safeguard the human and material resources in the school environments from impending danger and threats that emanate from both inside and outside forces. Alimba (2018, as cited in Ekpoh et al. 2020) defined school security practices as strategies that are aimed at creating conducive climate for people to work assiduously without fear, threats or risks. Thus, tertiary institutions' security personnel are expected to provide safe learning environments for members of staff

and students, and develop measures/strategies to effectively deal with security issues and challenges. Rosenberg (2014) asserted that security personnel are needed for creating a safe learning environment, rendering proactive approaches to identifying and mitigating risks and hazards. With the current insecurity situations in Nigerian higher education institutions, it becomes necessary to emphasise that security officers on campuses must operate in synergy with the school management in order to maintain peace and order that promote effective administration and quality education delivery. It should be noted that there are inside and outside forces that pose security threats. However, the thrust of this study is centred on the security issues that stem from outside forces such as kidnapping, banditry and armed robbery, which are incessantly ravaging Nigerian education system.

Recent happenings have shown that insecurity is crippling education system in Nigeria; thereby, making schools the most unsafe places to be. Owonikoko (2021) emphasised that Nigerian students have been risking their lives going to school due to insecurity. Similarly, Ukala and Adieme (2022) observed that the escalating cases of insecurity in the Nigerian education system have undermined the quality of education delivery. Certain cases abound to illustrate the need for effectively and regularly managing security practices on our campuses so as to keep the university environments secure. For instance, there have been reported cases of robbery attacks, rape, kidnapping, banditries, cult activities, violence, threats, sexual harassment, bullying, apprehension, fears, among others, in the public tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular, for the past six years. Just in 2023 alone, the Daily Post Newspaper (August, 2023) reported that armed criminals broke into female hostels in Rivers State University (RSU), robbed and sexually assaulted some of the students. It was gathered that the criminals broke the wall to gain entrance at midnight. In another scenario, the Vanguard Newspaper (October, 2023) reported that suspected terrorists invaded a hostel of a Federal University in Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State and abducted some female students. In the same vein, the Punch Newspaper (September, 2023) reported that many University of Calabar students fled the campus following attacks by masked gunmen on the Malabor Republic Hostel in

the night. Thus, it is so obvious that the security personnel were ill-prepared to prevent or intervene in these incidences.

In addition, just in March, 2024 alone, there have been countless reports of abysmal level of insecurity in Nigeria currently, and higher education institutions in the South-South Zone seem to be the target for kidnappers, bandits and armed robbers. Daily Post Newspaper (March, 2024) reported that gunmen stormed a male hostel in University of Calabar at 7 pm, and whisked away three male students to an unknown destination. In the University of Port Harcourt, a 300 level Accounting student was found dead in early hours of morning under mysterious circumstances (Linda Ikeji Blog, March, 2024). Mensah et al. (2019); Oladipo et al. (2018) noted that schools are expected to have well-developed security and safety plans, proper risk management together with well-articulated strategies and procedures to protect them from crimes and threats. In a related study, Ozmen et al. (2010) maintained that the evidence of a secured school is the availability and implementation of security plans which are well drawn policies of protection that should be given to the internal stakeholders within the school. The research findings of Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020) revealed that equipping the school security personnel with adequate tools that are needed for conducting security checks and controlling threats enhance effective administration of schools. Hence, the incessant ravaging of schools by bandits, kidnappers, armed robbers, among others, has called for a critical look at the security practices that are being carried out by security personnel in the public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Quite a number of researchers have recommended security practices that can enhance safe school environments. Xaba (2014); Ozmen et al. (2010) suggested provision of patrol vans that will aid round-the-clock surveillance systems; arranging with law enforcement agencies for periodic patrols and inspections within and outside the school; development of emergency action plan to handle threatening and destructive conditions, as well as building emergency communication lines to link up necessary units to receive timely support and help in threatening situations. The findings of Dagogo (2005, as cited in Nwankpa 2015) revealed that training and re-training of security personnel significantly impact positively on their level of service delivery. In the same vein, Owonikoko (2021) posited that

schools must invest in their security infrastructure to make themselves less vulnerable to security threats. Nwideeduh and Adieme (2016); Amanchukwu (2012) recommended physical access control, as well as metal detector checks on pedestrians. In a related study, Ukala and Adieme (2022) suggested other security measures such as introducing students' identification cards, random metal dictator checks on visitors, security alarms, emergency call boxes, security dogs, lighting school premises at night, secured perimeter fencing, burglar-proof windows and iron doors in both classrooms and hostels. Ojukwu (2017); Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020); Ekpoh et al. (2020) suggested installation of electronic monitoring gadgets such as closed circuit television (CCTV), as well as adequate provision of security apparatus.

From the various reports of the national newspapers, it is so obvious that insecurity is ravaging and crippling Nigerian education system. Hence, managing and safeguarding the school environments effectively have become imminent. It is against this backdrop that this study is conducted to ascertain the extent to which security practices are effectively managed in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem
The concern about the rising cases of insecurity on Nigerian tertiary institutions' campuses in this era of pervasive coordinated attacks by bandits, kidnappers, rapists, armed robbers, among others, has been on the front burners of national discourse. A cursory glance at the Nigerian daily newspapers will convince one of the state of insecurity in the tertiary institutions. For instance, the Daily Post Newspaper reported on August, 2023, that armed criminals broke into female hostels in Rivers State University (RSU), robbed and sexually assaulted some of the students at midnight. In another scenario, a lecturer in University of Port Harcourt parked his car on a fateful morning, went in for lectures and at close of work discovered that his car has been stolen on campus. In another dimension, female hostels have been broken into, and electronic gadgets carted away in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Other gory incidents abound! More worrisome is the fact that female students, instead of studying at night, tend to be more apprehensive in their hostels due to the recent abysmal level of attacks meted on them by scoundrels.

As a matter of fact, schooling in Nigerian higher education institutions nowadays appears to be a risky venture that portends the loss of life, property and freedom. This obviously can adversely affect learning, and make the tertiary education goals unattainable. Students, academic and non-academic staff, parents, as well as host communities seem to live in fear of the unknown, especially at nights. It appears that the security personnel are overwhelmed by the alarming waves on insecurities, and are not well-equipped with the sophisticated weapons to confront perpetrators and curb crimes on campuses. It also seems that they do not regularly undergo trainings to improve on their skills and practices. The incessant kidnapping incidents and robbery attacks on students' hostels and lecturers' quarters have compelled the researchers to wonder what the security personnel, who are charged with safeguarding lives and property do. Hence, these underscored this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study
The aim of this study was to examine security management practices for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:
1. ascertain the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State;
2. find out the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State; and
3. determine the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions
The following research questions guided the study:
1. What is the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. To what extent are electronic monitoring gadgets installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

3. What is the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 alpha level:

Ho_1 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Ho_2 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Ho_3 There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all the 44 Principal Officers in the 7 public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. These include: University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers State University (RSU) Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic (KSPoly), Bori, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic (CEAPoly), Rumuola, College of Education (COE), Omoku and College of Health Technology (CoHTech). AS at the time of this study, UNIPORT has 7; RSU, 7; IAUE, 7; KSPoly, 6; CEAPoly, 6; COE, 6 and CoHTech, 5 respectively. Out of these Principal Officers, 27 are males whereas 17 are females. The entire population, which represents 100%, was used as the sample which infers the use of census sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was 18 item self-structured questionnaire entitled: "Security Management Practices for Enhancing Safe School Environments Questionnaire (SMPESSEQ)." The questionnaire was structured after the four-point

modified Likert rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent with weights of: 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively.

The instrument was validated by five experts in Departments of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation in Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficient for SMPESSE was 0.80. The subscale reliability for the extent to which security personnel are equipped, use of electronic monitoring gadgets and surveillance are 0.82, 0.79 and 0.78 respectively; hence, they were adjudged to be reliable for the field study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to ascertain "High Extent" or "Low Extent". The decision rule therefore was that any mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.50 were tagged "Low Extent" while mean scores of 2.50 and above represented "High Extent." Analysed data therefore, with calculated z-values above the z-critical value of ±1.96 were rejected and below ±1.96 were not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Opinions of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Security Personnel are Equipped for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

S/N	The Extent Security Personnel are Equipped	Male Principal Officers = 27		Female Principal Officers = 17			
		$\overline{X}_1$	SD$_1$	$\overline{X}_2$	SD$_2$	$\overline{X}_1\overline{X}_2$	Decision
1.	To what extent are security personnel in your school trained regularly on emergency response drills to effectively prepare them to curb crimes?	1.63	1.45	2.58	1.86	2.61	High Extent
2.	To what extent are they equipped with adequate security infrastructures?	2.27	1.52	2.13	1.97	2.20	Low Extent
3.	To what extent are they trained on usages of technology gadgets/devices?	1.32	1.70	1.39	2,15	1.36	Very Low Extent
4.	To what extent are they provided with sufficient patrol vans, motor cycles, etc?	2.08	1.49	2.12	1.97	2.10	Low Extent
5.	To what extent are they armed with operational emergency action plan to handle threatening situations?	3.03	1.37	3.01	1.75	3.02	Very High Extent
6.	To what extent are they equipped with communication tools like two-way radios,	3.20	1.33	3.18	1.71	3.19	Very High Extent

cell phones, etc to link up necessary units in order to receive support in emergency situations?					
Aggregate Mean/SD	**2.42**	**1.87**	**2.40**	**1.90**	

NB: Very High Extent = 3.00-3.50; High Extent = 2.50-2.99; Low Extent= 2.00-2.49; Very Low Extent = 0.00-1.99

Data on Table 1 show the mean responses of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Their responses indicate that security personnel are equipped to low extent. This is evidenced in their aggregate mean scores of 2.42 and 2.40 respectively.

Research Question 2: To what extent are electronic monitoring gadgets installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Opinions of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Electronic Monitoring Gadgets are installed at Strategic Places for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

S/N	The Extent of Installation of Electronic Monitoring Gadgets	Male Principal Officers = 27		Female Principal Officers = 17			
		$\overline{X}_1$	SD$_1$	$\overline{X}_2$	SD$_2$	$\overline{X}_1\overline{X}_2$	Decision
7.	To what extent are motion sensor detectors set up at every entry point gates in the school?	1.37	1.69	1.73	2.14	1.55	Very Low Extent
8.	To what extent are digital cameras	1.08	1.75	1.04	2.24	1.06	Very Low

No.	Item						Remark
	strategically installed on hostels blocks to spot suspicious activities in time?						Extent
9.	To what extent are centralized software connected for tracking unauthorized access or movement?	1.03	1.76	1.01	2.25	1.02	Very Low Extent
10.	To what extent are CCTV cameras installed strategically on the school environments?	1.28	1.71	1.39	2.15	1.34	Very Low Extent
11.	To what extent are communication devices provided to security officers to coordinate activities?	2.67	1.44	2.63	1.84	2.65	High Extent
12.	To what extent are access control systems such as biometric scanners used to control entry into the school environments?	1.09	1.75	1.06	2.24	1.08	Very Low Extent
	Aggregate Mean/SD	1.42	1.68	1.48	2.13		

NB: Very High Extent = 3.00-3.50; High Extent = 2.50-2.99; Low Extent= 2.00-2.49; Very Low Extent = 0.00-1.99

Table 2 displays the mean responses of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Their responses show that the extent to which security personnel are equipped is very low. This is evidenced in their aggregate mean scores of 1.42 and 1.48 respectively.

Research Question 3: What is the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Opinions of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Security Personnel Carry out Surveillance for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

S/N	The Extent Security Personnel Carry out Surveillance	Male Principal Officers = 27		Female Principal Officers = 17				
		$\overline{X}_1$	SD_1	$\overline{X}_2$	SD_2	$\overline{X}_1\overline{X}_2$		Decision
13.	To what extent do the security personnel conduct physical access control on vehicles as they enter or leave the campus?	3.13	1.35	3.18	1.71	3.16		Very High Extent
14.	To what extent do they carry out detection activities on students, members of staff, visitors, etc?	2.24	1.52	2.29	1.93	2.27		High Extent
15.	To what extent do they conduct security checks on school physical facilities in order to safeguard them?	3.09	1.36	3.05	1.74	3.07		Very High Extent
16.	To what extent are they rotated from their duty posts to ensure effectiveness?	2.78	1.42	2.71	1.82	2.75		High Extent
17.	To what extent do they carry out surveillance on	2.66	1.44	2.63	1.84	2.65		High Extent

	hostels, especially the female ones in the night?						
18.	To what extent do they patrol around the staff quarters, school environments in the night?	2.59	1.45	2.55	1.86	2.51	High Extent
	Aggregate Mean/SD	2.75	1.42	2.74	1.82		

NB: Very High Extent = 3.00-3.50; High Extent = 2.50-2.99; Low Extent= 2.00-2.49; Very Low Extent = 0.00-1.99

Data on Table 3 show the mean responses of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Their responses show that the security personnel carry out surveillance to high extent. This is evidenced in their aggregate mean scores of 2.75 and 2.74 respectively.

Table 4: Summary of z-test on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Security Personnel are Equipped for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Status	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	Critical Value	Remarks	Decision
Male Principal Officers	27	2.42	1.87	42	0.03	±1.96	Ho$_1$ Not Significant	Failed to Reject
Female Principal Officers	17	2.40	1.90					

P< 0.05

Table 4 reveals the z-test analysis on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to

which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The result shows that z-calculated value of 0.03 is less than the critical value of ±1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Summary of z-test on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Electronic Monitoring Gadgets are Installed at Strategic Places for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Status	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	Critical Value	Remarks	Decision
Male Principal Officers	27	1.42	1.68	42	-.09	±1.96	Ho_1 Not Significant	Failed to Reject
Female Principal Officers	17	1.48	2.13					

P< 0.05

Table 5 reveals the z-test analysis on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The result shows that z-calculated value of -0.09 is less than the critical value of ±1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of z-test on the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principal Officers on the Extent to Which Security Personnel Carry out Surveillance for Enhanced Safe School Environments in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Status	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	Critical Value	Remarks	Decision
Male Principal Officers	27	2.75	1.42	42	0.02	±1.96	Ho_1 Not Significant	Failed to Reject
Female Principal Officers	17	2.74	1.82					

P< 0.05

Table 6 shows the z-test analysis on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The result shows that z-calculated value of 0.02 is less than the critical value of ±1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female Principal Officers on the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that the extent to which security personnel are equipped for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State is low. These include: inadequate security infrastructures and insufficient patrol vans, motor cycles, among others. It was also revealed that training of security personnel on usages of technology gadgets/devices is to very low extent. This implies that the security personnel are not well-equipped to curb crimes that are wreaking havoc in the education system. This

finding is in agreement with Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020), who discovered in their study that security officers are ill-equipped and lack adequate training programmes in public secondary schools in Anambra State, and recommended equipping them with adequate tools. It is also in line with Ekpoh et al. (2020), who observed non-professionalisation of security personnel in universities in Cross River State, and suggested regular training. The finding also corroborated the findings of Xaba (2014); Ozmen et al. (2010), who suggested provision of patrol vans that will aid round-the-clock surveillance systems. It is also in consonance with Owonikoko (2021), who posited that schools must invest in their security infrastructure to make themselves less vulnerable to security threats.

Another finding of the study revealed that the extent to which electronic monitoring gadgets such as motion sensors, digital cameras, centralised software, CCTV cameras and access control systems are installed at strategic places for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State is very low. The implication of this study is that tertiary institutions are not prepared to fight crimes in this technology-driven era, where scoundrels perpetrate all manners of atrocities using sophisticated weapons. The finding agrees with Ojukwu (2017); Onuorah and Nwankwo (2020); Ekpoh et al. (2020), who observed non-availability of electronic monitoring gadgets on campuses, and suggested installation of electronic monitoring gadgets, as well as adequate provision of modern security apparatus. It is also in line with Mensah et al. (2019); Oladipo et al. (2018), who found out in their various studies that Nigerian universities are yet to integrate technologies into their security system. In corroborating the finding of this study, Ozmen et al. (2010), maintained that the evidence of a secured school is the availability and implementation of security infrastructures.

Finally, the study discovered that the extent to which security personnel carry out surveillance for enhanced safe school environments in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State is high. These include the areas of physical access control on school property, buildings, vehicles and environment; detective activities using metal checks and patrolling in the nights. This finding is in consonance with Xaba (2014); Ozmen et al. (2010), who suggested provision of patrol vans that will aid round-the-clock surveillance systems and arranging

with law enforcement agencies for periodic patrols and inspections within and outside the school. The finding corroborates with Nwideeduh and Adieme (2016); Amanchukwu (2012), who recommended physical access control, as well as metal-detector checks on pedestrians. It also agrees with Ukala and Adieme (2022), who suggested random metal dictator checks on visitors, security alarms, emergency call boxes, lighting up school premises at night, secured perimeter fencing, burglar-proof windows and iron doors in both classrooms and hostels. The finding is also in agreement with Ozmen et al. (2010); Mensah et al. (2019); Oladipo et al. (2018), who maintained that the evidence of a secured school is the availability and implementation of security plans; well-developed risk management; well-articulated strategies and procedures which are carefully drawn policies of protection. Thus, regular security checks are the most effective strategy to safeguard lives and property on campuses, which promote seamless teaching-learning process.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was therefore concluded that the extent to which security practices are managed in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State is very low. This poses a serious threat to safe school environments, and obviously endangers quality education delivery.

Recommendations

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

1. School Management should always endeavour to equip the security personnel in best security practices by exposing them to capacity building programmes to improve on their skills and providing them with adequate security infrastructures that will enable them to curb crimes on campuses.
2. The Rivers State Government should install electronic monitoring gadgets in all strategic places in all the tertiary institutions, especially in the hostels that will enable security personnel to dictate unlawful activities in time.
3. Principal Officers should constantly conduct risk assessment with the Chief Security Officers (CSOs), and devise other

measures that will effectively manage security practices, so as to maintain safe school environments.

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