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INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of politics on security challenges for secondary school management in Kogi state, Nigeria. Over the past few years, secondary schools have become exposed to violence, kidnapping, murder, and politically based unrest, which interfere with learning processes, jeopardise the security of students and teachers, and make school management difficult. These security outcomes are greatly influenced by political structures and leadership priorities and, therefore, affect policy implementation, resource distribution, and coordination with security agencies. This paper was guided by Systems Theory and Political Economy Theory as a way of exposing vulnerabilities in school security, which impact administrative efficiency, teacher morale, and student learning outcomes. The literature suggests that insecurity compels school administrators to use responsive management practices at the expense of school planning and focus on crisis management. Moreover, funds meant for the teaching process are often diverted to security, which worsens operational conditions. The paper establishes that the interaction between politics and security challenges is a systemic issue requiring specific interventions. It recommends merit-based leadership appointments, structured safety training, and formal cooperation between schools and security agencies.

Keywords: Management, Political Influence, School, Security Challenges.

Introduction

Security challenges have become a prominent issue in the education sector in recent years, especially in areas where political instability, weak governance, and rising insecurity are common. According to Aderinto et al. (2025), schools, particularly at the secondary level, have become increasingly exposed to violence, kidnapping, armed attacks, communal conflicts, and political unrest. These security issues disrupt academic operations, jeopardise the safety of students and staff, and hinder the effective functioning of educational institutions. Kosmider (2021) notes that the nature of security challenges and their management in education are strongly linked to political structures and decision-making processes. Government policies, political leadership, resource allocation, and institutional coordination play a critical role in determining school security. Political interests, inconsistent policies, and low political commitment to school safety often exacerbate security problems. Consequently, responses to security threats in educational institutions are typically reactive rather than proactive, leaving school administrators ill-equipped to manage imminent risks effectively. In Kogi State, Nigeria, secondary schools operate within a complex security environment shaped by broader political and socio-economic challenges. Political interference, insufficient funding for security infrastructure, and ineffective collaboration between secondary schools and security agencies have increased the vulnerability of schools to insecurity (Adamu & Uleanya, 2025; Akorede et al., 2023). These conditions place considerable strain on school managers, who are tasked with maintaining safe learning environments while navigating politically influenced security frameworks beyond their control. Persistent security challenges in secondary schools pose significant obstacles to educational management and policy implementation. Abdullahi and Dahiru (2025) and Akorede et al. (2022) observed that insecure school environments disrupt academic timetables, reduce student enrolment, lower teacher morale, and increase administrative burdens on school leaders. Despite these impacts, few empirical studies have specifically examined how political factors influence security issues and how these challenges affect the management of secondary schools, particularly in the context of Kogi State.

This study is relevant to educational institutions and policymakers because it provides insights into the intersection of politics, security, and school administration. Understanding the political dynamics that shape security

challenges in education is crucial for developing policies and management strategies that ensure both the safety of schools and the continuity of the learning process.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past few years, security issues in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria, have become increasingly complex, compromising the safety of both students and teachers, disrupting academic processes, and undermining the effective management of schools. These issues include violence, abduction, and ethnic conflicts, as well as politically instigated violence, which have been exacerbated by political interference, poor governance, and insufficient provision of resources to secure schools. School administrators are often constrained by politically charged systems that limit their ability to implement preventive and sustainable security measures. Although political structures and decision-making are crucial in determining security outcomes, empirical literature on politics and security challenges in education remains limited, particularly in relation to secondary school management in Kogi State, Nigeria. Existing studies tend to address insecurity from a specific perspective without adequately examining its political bedrocks. For example, Adamu and Uleanya (2025) explored insecurity in secondary education in Northern Nigeria, emphasising its implications for sustainable development but paying limited attention to political determinants. Similarly, Carr (2024) examined safety and emergency preparedness within the hospitality industry, offering useful security frameworks that are not directly transferable to school frameworks. Enwere (2026) focused on the relationship between insecurity and students' psychological behaviour in tertiary institutions, thereby addressing outcomes rather than causes. In contrast to these studies, the present research adopts an integrative approach by examining how political factors, including policy inconsistency, politicisation of school administration, and resource allocation, directly influence security challenges in secondary schools and their implications for school management in Kogi State. By involving political dynamics in administrative outcomes, such as increased workload, low teacher morale, and disrupted academic schedules, the paper advances a more nuanced understanding of the politics-security-management tie and offers empirical insights for policy development aimed at improving school safety and effectiveness.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by examining the influence of politics on security challenges for secondary school management in Kogi state, Nigeria.

Therefore, this study aims to;

1. examine the influence of political factors associated with security challenges in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria;
2. Identify the influence of security challenges experienced by secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.
3. determine the influence of the implications of security challenges in the management of secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The literature review examines existing scholarly works on;

Influence of Political Factors Associated with Security Challenges in Secondary Schools

The influence of political factors on security challenges in secondary schools has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly within developing nations where governance structures significantly shape educational outcomes. Drawing on the Political Economy Theory, existing literature underscores that the distribution of political power and resources plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of security systems in schools. Tsako (2020) argues that political institutions influence how resources are allocated, thereby affecting public service delivery, including education and security. In Nigeria, Ake (1981) posits that governance failures and elite control of resources often result in unequal distribution, which weakens institutional capacity. Similarly, Ibeanu (2016) highlights that politicisation of public institutions undermines efficiency and accountability, contributing to systemic vulnerabilities.

Empirical studies further reveal that political interference in school administration, such as the appointment of unqualified personnel, inconsistent policy implementation, and inadequate funding, exacerbates security challenges. For instance, Adamu and Uleanya (2025) note that insecurity in secondary schools in Northern Nigeria is partly linked to weak governance and insufficient investment in educational infrastructure. These conditions

often result in poorly secured school environments, making them susceptible to threats such as vandalism, violence, and external attacks. Moreover, policy inconsistency driven by political transitions has been identified as a significant factor affecting school security. Frequent changes in educational policies disrupt long-term planning and hinder the implementation of sustainable security strategies. Political neglect and mismanagement of funds also contribute to the deterioration of school facilities, thereby increasing exposure to security risks.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that political factors, particularly resource allocation, governance quality, and policy stability, are central to understanding security challenges in secondary schools. However, there remains a gap in specific studies that explicitly link these political dynamics to school management outcomes at the state level, thereby justifying the need for further empirical investigation in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Influence of Security Challenges Experienced by Secondary Schools

Security challenges in secondary schools have become a critical concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in developing countries where institutional vulnerabilities are pronounced. Existing literature indicates that insecurity significantly affects the functioning and outcomes of schools by disrupting teaching and learning processes, undermining administrative effectiveness, and threatening the overall safety of stakeholders.

Okonkwo and Idigo (2025) emphasise that weak institutions and poor governance systems create environments where insecurity can thrive, thereby affecting public institutions such as schools. In the Nigerian context, Carment et al. (2009) argue that systemic inequalities and inadequate state capacity contribute to institutional fragility, which manifests in poor security management.

Empirical studies have identified various forms of security challenges experienced by secondary schools, including physical threats such as vandalism, theft, student violence, bullying, and, in extreme cases, armed attacks. Adamu and Uleanya (2025) highlight that insecurity in Northern Nigerian schools has led to school closures, displacement of students, and increased fear among teachers and administrators. Similarly, Enwere (2026) and Akorede et al. (2021) found that unsafe school environments negatively influence students' psychological behaviour, leading to anxiety, reduced concentration, and poor academic engagement.

Furthermore, insecurity has significant implications for school management. It increases administrative workload, as school leaders are required to implement emergency responses, liaise with security agencies, and manage crises. It also contributes to low teacher morale and absenteeism, as educators may feel unsafe in their work environments. In addition, frequent disruptions caused by security incidents often lead to irregular academic schedules and reduced instructional time, thereby affecting overall educational quality.

Despite these insights, much of the existing literature focuses on the outcomes of insecurity rather than providing a comprehensive analysis of how these challenges influence school management processes at the secondary school level. This highlights the need for the present paper to examine the influence of security challenges on the administration of secondary schools, particularly in regions such as Kogi State, Nigeria.

Influence of the Implications of Security Challenges in the Management of Secondary Schools

The implications of security challenges for the management of secondary schools have become a major concern in educational research, particularly in contexts characterised by weak institutional capacity and governance constraints. Security challenges not only threaten the safety of students and staff but also significantly influence administrative processes, decision-making, and overall school effectiveness. Abugre (2018) argues that weak institutional frameworks and ineffective governance systems often result in inadequate provision of security infrastructure, thereby placing additional burdens on school management. Similarly, Sele and Mukundi (2024) highlight that systemic inequalities and poor state capacity can exacerbate institutional inefficiencies, including those related to school administration. Empirical evidence suggests that the implications of security challenges manifest in multiple dimensions of school management. Administratively, school leaders are compelled to divert attention from core academic responsibilities to crisis management, security planning, and coordination with external agencies. This shift often results in increased workload and reduced efficiency in instructional leadership. Studies such as LaBonte et al. (2022) indicate that insecurity leads to frequent school closures and disruptions of academic calendars, thereby complicating planning and resource management. Furthermore, security challenges negatively affect human resource management within schools. Teachers working in insecure environments often

experience fear, stress, and reduced job satisfaction, which contribute to absenteeism, low morale, and, in some cases, attrition. Kupchik (2016) further notes that unsafe school environments can influence behavioural outcomes, indirectly placing additional demands on school administrators to manage discipline and student welfare issues. In addition, insecurity undermines the physical and organisational structure of schools. Poorly secured infrastructure, vandalism, and neglect of facilities weaken the learning environment and reduce institutional credibility. These conditions often compel administrators to reallocate limited resources toward emergency responses and repairs, thereby affecting long-term development goals. Generally, the literature reviewed demonstrates that the implications of security challenges extend beyond immediate safety concerns to significantly influence the management of secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework

Political Economy Theory was used to guide the study. This provides a systematic explanation of how the distribution of political power and economic resources shapes the functioning of social institutions. Its intellectual foundation can be traced to the works of Karl Marx (1867) and Adam Smith (1776), who emphasised the interrelationship between governance, wealth creation, and social structure. This perspective has been further advanced by contemporary scholars such as Daron et al. (2019), Claude (1981), and Ibeanu (2016), who underscore the central role of political authority in the allocation of resources, opportunities, and public services, including education and security. Within the context of secondary education, political actors significantly influence the distribution of funding, formulation of policies, provision of infrastructure, and administrative appointments. These decisions may either strengthen institutional capacity or generate systemic vulnerabilities that undermine the effectiveness of school security structures and management. Consequently, Political Economy Theory offers an analytical framework for understanding how governance priorities and economic arrangements shape the operational realities of educational institutions.

The theory is particularly relevant to this study as it elucidates how political interests and economic conditions contribute to security challenges in secondary schools. Factors such as inadequate funding, politicisation of appointments, unequal allocation of educational resources, and poor maintenance of infrastructure expose schools to heightened security risks. By applying this theoretical lens, the study critically examines how political decision-making processes influence school management outcomes and provides a foundation for proposing policy-driven interventions. Overall, the theory facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship between politics, security, and management, thereby supporting efforts to address the structural causes of insecurity in secondary schools.

Political Influence on Security Challenges in Education

Political influences play a central role in shaping the nature, effectiveness, and sustainability of security measures in educational institutions. Government decisions regarding education and national security determine how schools respond to threats such as violence, kidnapping, vandalism, communal unrest, and terrorism (Jimoh, 2025). Political leadership, policy direction, funding priorities, and governance structures collectively affect the overall safety of the education system. According to Osegbue et al. (2025), political decisions influence school security through the formulation and enforcement of laws, regulations, and strategic priorities. Governments determine whether school security is treated as a national priority or a peripheral concern. When political leaders prioritise education security, clear directives are issued to promote inter-agency collaboration among education authorities, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. Conversely, when education security is not prioritised, schools are left with inadequate protection and limited emergency response capacity. Educational and security policies provide the structural framework for safeguarding schools. Well-designed policies outline standards for infrastructure safety, access control, surveillance, crisis management, and staff training (Carr, 2024). However, their effectiveness is contingent upon political will and consistent implementation. Frequently, policies exist only in documentation, with weak enforcement and poor alignment between federal, state, and local authorities, resulting in fragmented security measures and vulnerabilities in schools.

Funding represents a critical political determinant of school security. Budgetary allocations affect the provision of infrastructure such as perimeter fencing, lighting, alarm systems, and trained security personnel. Inadequate or irregular funding limits schools' ability to maintain effective security measures, while political bias may favour urban or politically connected schools over rural or marginalised institutions (Umeh et al., 2026).

Governance structures also influence the successful implementation and monitoring of security policies. Thus, strong governance promotes transparency, accountability, and coordination among agencies, whereas weak governance, characterised by corruption, limited oversight, and low institutional capacity, undermines security initiatives. Unclear roles and responsibilities often result in lapses that increase vulnerability.

Additional political factors further worsen security challenges. The politicisation of security may lead to decisions driven by partisan interests rather than objective risk assessment. Security interventions may be delayed, selective, or used to achieve political gains. Policy inconsistency, often caused by frequent changes in government or leadership, disrupts long-term planning and weakens institutional memory. According to Murtala et at. (2025), insufficient political commitment, inadequate funding, and poor monitoring mechanisms create significant gaps between policy intentions and actual practice, leaving schools exposed to insecurity.

Implications For School Management

The implications of insecurity are far-reaching for the effective management of schools. School management is responsible for ensuring that the teaching and learning environment remains safe and conducive; however, recurrent security issues undermine leadership effectiveness, disrupt academic activities, strain resources, and negatively impact the well-being of both staff and students (Adamu & Uleanya, 2025; Enwere, 2026). Such circumstances place a tremendous burden on school heads and administrators, compelling principals and management teams to divert significant attention from academic planning to crisis management and safety concerns (Awodoyin & Emmanuel, 2025). Decision-making often becomes reactive rather than strategic, as administrators focus on responding to threats, coordinating with security agencies, and reassuring parents and the community. In some instances, school leaders are unable to enforce discipline, supervise staff effectively, or maintain regular school operations due to fear of attacks or unrest (Jimoh, 2025). Moreover, administrative instability may arise from frequent school closures, staff transfers, or absenteeism linked to security concerns, further compromising the management and performance of schools.

Implications For Teaching and Learning Processes

Insecurity directs the way the teaching and learning process is interrupted. Thus, the absence of uniform school attendance, intermittent shutdowns, and reduced school duration diminish the time spent in instruction and have implications on the coverage of the curriculum (Adamu and Uleanya, 2025). However, the teachers might be less motivated and focused because they are afraid of their safety, and students might not learn in an environment of anxiety and uncertainty. In extreme circumstances, low dropout rates, poor academic achievement, and the cancellation of extracurricular and enrichment programs, which facilitate holistic education, are caused by insecurity (Enwere, 2026).

Implications For Resource Allocation

Insecurity significantly alters how school resources are allocated. Funds that should be used for instructional materials, infrastructure development, and staff development are often redirected toward security-related expenses such as fencing, surveillance equipment, guards, and emergency preparedness (Abdullahi, 2025). This reallocation places additional financial strain on school management, particularly in underfunded schools. Limited resources may also result in unequal distribution, where security needs overshadow essential academic priorities (Abdullahi, 2025).

Implications For Staff and Students

Insecurity has a grave influence on the well-being of the staff and students. The constant experience of threats generates fear, stress, and emotional trauma, which have the potential to harm mental health and overall performance (Jimoh, 2025). Similarly, teachers can also transfer to safer areas, resulting in a shortage of staff and experienced teachers. Instead, students can experience anxiety, low levels of concentration, and a lack of sense of belonging, which are disadvantages to personal growth and academic performance. Thus, the lack of a safe environment will eventually undermine confidence in the school system.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature indicates a strong interrelationship between political factors and security challenges in secondary school management, particularly in developing nations. Governance deficiencies, including inadequate resource allocation, policy inconsistency, political interference, and elite dominance, weaken school security systems and expose educational institutions to multiple security threats, thereby limiting the provision of safe learning environments. Furthermore, security challenges are presented as systemic issues that significantly disrupt educational processes. These challenges negatively affect teaching and learning, reduce instructional time, weaken administrative efficiency, and contribute to adverse psychological and behavioural outcomes among students and staff, ultimately diminishing overall school performance and stability. In addition, the literature shows that the implications of insecurity extend to school management structures, where administrators are compelled to prioritise crisis response over academic leadership. This shift increases workload, reduces efficiency, and diverts scarce resources from developmental objectives to emergency management. It also undermines human resource stability through reduced teacher morale, absenteeism, and attrition. Thus, the literature identifies a clear gap in state-specific empirical studies that integrate political factors, security challenges, and secondary school management outcomes, particularly in Kogi State. This gap underscores the need for further research to inform effective policy measures aimed at strengthening governance, improving school security, and enhancing management effectiveness in secondary education.

Suggestions

1: The State Government should reduce political interference in education by ensuring that resource allocation, school funding, and staff appointments are guided by transparent policies and merit-based procedures. This can be achieved through strengthened education monitoring bodies, strict enforcement of accountability mechanisms, and independent oversight committees to ensure fair distribution of resources and improved school security structures.

2: The State Government should strengthen school security systems by identifying key security risks and implementing preventive and responsive measures in secondary schools. This can be done through the deployment of trained security personnel, installation of basic security infrastructure such as perimeter fencing and surveillance systems, and regular collaboration between schools, community stakeholders, and security agencies.

3: State Government should address the administrative implications of security challenges by strengthening school management capacity and improving crisis response systems. This can be achieved through continuous training of school administrators on emergency management, provision of adequate support staff, and integration of security planning into school administration to ensure stable academic calendars and effective school operations.

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