Original Research Article

**THE PRESSURES AND PREDICAMENTS OF CAMPUS SECURITY FORCES IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: SAFE AND SOUND**

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ABSTRACT

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| Campus security is fundamental in creating a safe and conducive learning environment, with security personnel serving as frontliners in preventing unauthorized activities and maintaining order. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the challenges, preventative measures, and lessons learned by school security personnel in upholding campus safety in selected elementary schools in Davao Oriental. Using a phenomenological approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with seven school-based security guards. Thematic analysis of the data revealed three major themes: challenges in upholding campus safety, including breaches of school rules, miscommunication, and lack of awareness; preventative measures such as conducting security checks, enforcing strict guidelines, and holding policy orientations; and key insights, including the need for strict compliance, continuous improvement, and cultivating a culture of safety. The study emphasizes that maintaining campus safety is a shared responsibility involving not only security personnel but also school leaders, staff, parents, and learners. The findings offer practical implications for strengthening school security systems and highlight the importance of consistent policy enforcement and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Future studies are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of these measures and explore innovative strategies for promoting secure yet welcoming educational environments. |

*Keywords: Pressures, Predicaments, Campus Security Forces, Public Elementary School, Safe, Sound*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the safety and security of school campuses is of paramount importance. Security personnel play a vital role in safeguarding these institutions by preventing the entry and use of illegal substances, deterring criminal activities, and addressing potential threats such as shootings, knife-related violence, the use of electronic cigarettes, and other forms of misconduct. These officers are tasked with maintaining a secure environment through regular inspections and the implementation of safety protocols. Understanding the challenges faced by security staff is essential for researchers and policymakers aiming to enhance campus safety and address the growing complexity of maintaining secure educational settings. Schools serve as respected institutions where students are expected to learn, grow, and thrive. Therefore, protecting these spaces is imperative. The role of school security guards is demanding, requiring constant vigilance and readiness to respond to unpredictable threats. Ensuring the safety of students, faculty, and visitors necessitates a broad range of protective measures, underscoring the need for comprehensive campus security systems.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, universities experience a wide range of security challenges. According to Ekpoh et al. (2020), security personnel have reported cult-related violence, abductions, drug-related offenses, unauthorized possession of firearms, student protests, unrest during student union elections, theft, burglary, and incidents of sexual assault.

At the Durban University of Technology in South Africa, Dlamini and Olanrewaju (2021) found that many students are unaware of the university’s procedures for reporting crimes and emergencies. This lack of awareness contributes to the underreporting of incidents and weakens the overall sense of campus safety.

At the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, Owusu et al. (2019) identified inadequate lighting as a key issue affecting student safety. Poor infrastructure and the lack of a secure physical environment contribute to student anxiety and fear. The study emphasized that a truly safe and secure campus must address both physical conditions and psychological well-being.

In the Philippines, Española and Savandal (2016) evaluated campus safety at Surigao State College of Technology. They concluded that the administration’s security efforts were ineffective and insufficient in preventing crime, maintaining peace and order, and responding adequately to student concerns. Students reported feeling that their complaints were not properly addressed and that administrative responses were lacking.

Similarly, a study in Nueva Ecija by Aydinan (2023) identified key gaps in campus security. These included insufficient CCTV coverage in critical areas, the absence of a smoke detection system in offices and laboratories, and inconsistent enforcement of safety protocols such as the NO-ID NO-ENTRY policy, visitor logs, and gate pass systems.

At the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) Main Campus, Presado (2016) highlighted a long-standing history of campus violence, including killings, shootings, and robberies. Despite having a security office, the persistence of such crimes over the past decade has created a climate of fear among students and faculty.

In the local public elementary school in Davao Oriental, where the current research is situated, similar concerns have been observed. There have been multiple instances of students skipping classes, violating school rules, and disrupting the order and safety of the school environment. The frequent disappearance of school property and the absence of formal security measures have raised serious concerns about the safety of both learners and staff.

**1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges faced by public elementary school teachers in upholding academic uprightness within the framework of quality and ethical education. Anchored on the principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), this research aimed to uncover the real-world difficulties surrounding academic assessment practices and the ethical dilemmas encountered by educators. By identifying the specific obstacles they encountered, the coping strategies they adopted, and the lessons they learned, the study sought to contribute to the promotion of a just, inclusive, and morally grounded educational system. The findings aimed to inform policy directions, reinforce institutional accountability, and strengthen the ethical foundation of elementary education in pursuit of sustainable and equitable learning outcomes.

**1.3 Research Questions**

This study examines these challenges through the following research questions.

1.What are the challenges that security personnel have encountered in upholding campus safety?

2.What preventative measures do security personnel employ to fortify campus safety?

3.What insights have security personnel gained from their experiences in upholding campus safety?

2. methodology

**2.1 Philosophical Assumptions of the Study**

The interview questions in this phenomenological qualitative study were developed with the assumption that participants would provide honest and meaningful responses during face-to-face conversations. The selection of participants was based on their capacity to offer rich, lived experiences relevant to the study’s focus. Underpinning the study were key philosophical assumptions that guided its design and execution. Ontology, or the belief about the nature of reality, shaped the study by recognizing that the participants' lived experiences represent multiple, subjective realities. Epistemology, the study of knowledge and how it is acquired, informed the use of in-depth interviews as a means to understand participants' perspectives and meanings they assign to their experiences. Axiology, which concerns values and ethics in research, was reflected in the researchers’ acknowledgment of their own values while respecting participants’ voices and ensuring ethical standards throughout the research process. Lastly, methodology, referring to the strategy or approach used, was grounded in phenomenology, emphasizing the exploration of participants’ lived experiences through qualitative inquiry. These assumptions provided the philosophical foundation for designing the study and interpreting its findings within a human-centered, context-sensitive framework.

**2.2 Qualitative Assumptions**

This study was grounded in key qualitative assumptions that guided its design and execution. First, it assumed that reality is subjective and shaped by individual and contextual factors, meaning that each campus security personnel’s experience is uniquely influenced by the school environment, personal values, and community dynamics. Second, it recognized that the true meaning of their challenges and motivations can only be fully understood through direct interaction, as is central to phenomenological inquiry. Third, the study assumed that the researcher is not a passive observer but an active instrument in the research process, tasked with interpreting the lived realities of participants with empathy, reflexivity, and ethical consideration. Lastly, it acknowledged that the richness and depth of the narratives shared by school security staff are vital for uncovering the often-unseen emotional and professional burdens they carry in safeguarding school environments. These assumptions supported the study’s aim to reveal the deeper insights into the pressures and dilemmas faced by security personnel in public elementary schools as they strive to ensure safety, stability, and peace within the educational space.

**2.3 Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of campus security personnel in public elementary schools as they navigate the daily pressures and dilemmas of maintaining school safety. Phenomenology, as a research approach, seeks to uncover and describe how individuals perceive and make sense of their experiences in relation to a specific phenomenon (Urcia, 2021). Rooted in interpretivism, this design emphasizes subjective understanding and deep engagement with participants' personal narratives. In the context of this study, the phenomenological approach was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to delve into the complex realities of school security personnel who face safety threats, emotional stress, limited resources, and institutional expectations. By capturing their insights, feelings, and coping mechanisms, this design offered rich and meaningful understanding of the unseen challenges and contributions of these individuals in fostering a safe and supportive learning environment in Philippine public elementary schools.

**2.4 Research Participants**

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools across Davao Oriental, Philippines, where school-based security is essential in maintaining campus safety. The target population comprised all security personnel assigned to these public elementary schools within the specified region. From this population, a sample of seven (7) actively serving school security personnel was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique based on the researchers’ informed judgment. These participants were chosen due to their direct and relevant experience in ensuring campus safety, making them suitable for providing rich and meaningful insights into the phenomenon being studied. The participants represented multiple institutions rather than a single school, enhancing the diversity of perspectives included in the research.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews (IDIs), allowing participants to share their lived experiences, perspectives, and reflections. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving systematic coding and the identification of key themes. The analysis revealed three major themes: challenges in upholding campus safety, such as breaches of school policies, miscommunication, and lack of awareness; preventative measures, including regular inspections, enforcement of rules, and orientation sessions; and insights and lessons learned, emphasizing the value of strict compliance, continuous improvement, and fostering a shared culture of safety. This clearly defined research setting and methodological approach ensured the trustworthiness of the findings and contributed to a deeper understanding of the issues faced by school security personnel in elementary schools.

**2.5 Role of the Researcher**

Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is the human being, all observations and analyses were inevitably influenced by the researcher’s worldview, values, and perspectives. In the context of this study, I acknowledged the assumptions, beliefs, and potential biases I brought while exploring the lived experiences of campus security personnel in public elementary schools. This was especially important given that another researcher might have interpreted the same data differently. To uphold research integrity, I adopted an attitude of reflexivity through self-disclosure, critically reflecting on my own background, personal views on school safety, and assumptions about the roles of security personnel prior to data collection. This process helped me remain as objective as possible during interviews and analysis, ensuring that the voices and experiences of the participants were genuinely and respectfully represented.

**2.6 Data Gathering Procedure**

I dedicated significant time and attention to conducting this qualitative phenomenological study. As an active participant in the research process, I continuously reflected on my role and engagement with the campus security personnel, using these insights to shape both data collection and interpretation. Consequently, the research process evolved organically, influencing not only the direction and depth of the information gathered but also contributing to my growth and transformation as a researcher. After identifying the participants, I formally contacted them through letters that clearly stated their voluntary involvement and assured them of strict confidentiality regarding all data collected. Prior to the interviews, each participant signed an informed consent form. To ensure comprehension and comfort, I translated the questions into the language most familiar to the participants.

Data were collected through a combination of in-depth interviews, field notes, and recorded video documentation. Field notes captured nonverbal cues and environmental observations relevant to the participants’ experiences. Interviews were semi-structured and guided by an interview matrix composed of open-ended questions that allowed for both structure and flexibility. The interviews were conducted using a question-and-answer approach, which encouraged participants to share freely and ask clarifying questions when needed. Responses were recorded using a voice recorder or cellphone video to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

To ensure the clarity and appropriateness of the interview questions, a pilot interview was conducted with a separate group of security personnel who were not part of the final study sample. This allowed the researchers to test the instrument for coherence, flow, and relevance without influencing the responses of the actual participants. The data from the pilot group were excluded from the main analysis to avoid bias and ensure the integrity of the findings. Feedback from the pilot interviews led to minor adjustments in phrasing and sequencing of questions, thereby strengthening the reliability of the final data collection process.

**2.7 Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study employed a deductive thematic analysis approach, which provided a structured and systematic method for analyzing qualitative data. This approach was particularly appropriate for examining the lived experiences of security personnel in public elementary schools, as it allowed the researcher to explore how their narratives aligned with pre-existing concepts related to school safety, stress, and institutional responsibilities. The following step-by-step process was used in the analysis: (1) familiarization with the data through careful reading of transcripts and field notes, (2) generating initial codes based on the research questions and framework, (3) searching for recurring and relevant themes, (4) reviewing themes for coherence and consistency, (5) defining and naming the themes, and (6) writing up the findings in a clear and interpretive manner. This process enabled the researcher to examine how the challenges, pressures, and coping strategies of school security personnel connected with existing literature and theoretical concepts. Ultimately, the use of deductive thematic analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences in maintaining a safe school environment, while also contributing meaningful insights to the broader discourse on campus security in elementary educational institutions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

**2.8 Ethical Considerations**

This study strictly adhered to recognized ethical standards to safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, with each participant fully briefed on the study’s objectives, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were used, and all data were securely stored and accessible only to the researchers. The ethical procedures followed in this study were guided by the framework of Pregoner et al. (2025), which emphasizes respect for persons, integrity in the research process, and transparency in educational inquiry. Furthermore, ethical clearance was secured from the appropriate institutional ethics review committee before data collection commenced, ensuring full compliance with the standards for conducting research involving human participants.

3. results and discussion

**3.1 Challenges faced by Security Personnel**

The main theme puts emphasis on the challenges of security personnel as they perform their duties in protecting, maintaining and upholding campus safety. By identifying these challenges, security personnel can examine their weaknesses when it comes to campus safety and further strengthen security around school campuses. These challenges can, on occasion, cause anxiety to people and may lessen their trust in schools. This coincides with terror management theory, which states that to reduce anxiety, people seek to defend their worldview (Psychology Today, 2015). Knowing this will prove vital when facing the challenges they encounter in upholding campus safety. Moreover, Uzuegbu-Wilson (2019) from Nigeria highlights in his study that security awareness and orientation aimed at sensitizing the public need to be taken as the topmost priority by the appropriate authorities. He also added that in addition to security personnel, school proprietors, school administrations, and staff, parents and students have a part to play when it comes to upholding campus safety and should effectively collaborate and establish an effective working relationship for the purpose of promoting safe school in collaboration with public law enforcement agencies.

To add to this, a study conducted at the University of Harcourt, Nigeria, underscored that the presence of security needs and lack of safety needs and protection of lives and property is not conducive to a safe learning environment and creates a hostile place for educational attainment as no effective teaching and learning can take hold in a place that is littered with threats of insecurity, wars, rumors, crises, and other tools are devices for insecurity (Kpee & Osiobe, 2014).

***Breaching School Rules and Regulations***

The first sub-theme encapsulates the problem of non-compliance with rules and regulations. Proper compliance with rules and regulations is vital to ensuring school safety. This is an important reason that violating school policy, rules, and regulations puts everyone at risk for avoidable dangers and ruins people's trust in educational institutions.

The participants were also asked how the situations uplifted their commitment to carrying out their responsibilities. Participants commented this way based on the “breaching with rules and regulations” theme.

(I made a promise because I am able to continue my work and uhh, the students uhh I monitor them so that nothing bad happens.). ***(IDI\_02).***

(Ahhh, one of the situations that I have been through as security guard some of them cannot follow the law but we are trying to make sure that they follow.). ***(IDI\_06)***

The remarks of Participant 2 highlight the importance of properly monitoring students to ensure their safety and well-being. Additionally, Participant 6 emphasized that despite efforts to maintain order, some students still fail to follow school policies, which presents ongoing challenges for school security personnel. These statements reflect the daily difficulties faced by guards in enforcing school rules and ensuring compliance among students, particularly when discipline issues stem from repeated disobedience.

Supporting literature from other contexts mirrors these observations. In a study conducted in Kenya, Atenya and Wekesa (2020) found that students often violate rules related to behavior, emotions, and attitudes—such as fighting, bullying, and theft. Rules are commonly communicated through admission letters and notice boards, which many students disregard. Misinterpretation of these rules contributes to non-compliance. The study recommends behavior modification strategies and intensive guidance and counseling to help students manage their emotions and aggression.

Similarly, Amelia et al. (2023) in Indonesia identified personal needs, a disengaging learning environment, and habitual behavior as key contributors to students’ defiance of rules. Boehari (2021) added that social and psychological factors, such as peer mockery and altercations, can lead to juvenile delinquency. Amelia et al. further emphasized that when school rules—such as restrictions on mobile phone use—conflict with students’ academic needs, they are more likely to be disregarded.

These international findings align with the experiences of school security personnel in Davao Oriental, who also reported challenges with student non-compliance and behavioral issues. However, unlike in Kenya and Indonesia where structural communication gaps were emphasized, participants in this study highlighted students’ deliberate disobedience despite awareness of the rules, pointing to deeper behavioral and disciplinary concerns that require more proactive school-wide interventions.

***Miscommunication and gaps in understanding***

Misunderstandings and problems in effectively communicating school rules, regulations, and policies can pose a major challenge to maintaining campus safety. When rules are not clearly conveyed, students and even parents may misinterpret them or fail to fully grasp the consequences of non-compliance. This miscommunication can lead to complacency or even disregard for important safety protocols. Addressing these gaps is crucial in making students more aware of school policies and helping them become more knowledgeable of the consequences that come with violating them.

During the in-depth interviews, several participants highlighted issues related to unclear communication, forming the theme “Miscommunication and Gaps in Understanding.” One participant (IDI\_01) noted:

"Sometimes the problem is misunderstanding—especially from parents or students—because they don’t fully understand the school rules or the situation. But as security guards, we still do our job and follow the rules as required."

This suggests that a lack of shared understanding between school personnel and stakeholders like parents may create barriers to implementing safety procedures effectively.

Another participant (IDI\_03) described a specific issue:

"We can't always monitor everything. For example, some students don’t pass their belongings through the gates. Instead, someone already inside the school receives the items from outside—sometimes passed through the back fence—so we can’t inspect those things. That’s how some items get inside without being checked."

This quote highlights a critical loophole in security operations: students deliberately bypass checkpoints, making it harder for personnel to monitor prohibited or unsafe items.

These local insights echo findings from international research. A study on Campus Emergency Management (CEM) at Northeastern University in the U.S. emphasized the importance of clear communication structures in ensuring both internal and external stakeholders understand emergency protocols (Dillon, 2016). It found that vague leadership, poor coordination, and lack of resource alignment significantly hamper effective communication with parents, medical personnel, and first responders. Likewise, Black III (2018) argued that in Texas-based universities, strong communication ensures that students understand their environment and related policies, which in turn supports safety and academic performance.

In comparison, the present study in Davao Oriental reflects similar concerns: inadequate communication mechanisms leave room for misinterpretation or deliberate circumvention of rules. While the international literature often emphasizes systemic or leadership-level issues, participants here point to daily operational challenges—such as direct parent misunderstandings and student tactics—that complicate school safety enforcement on the ground.

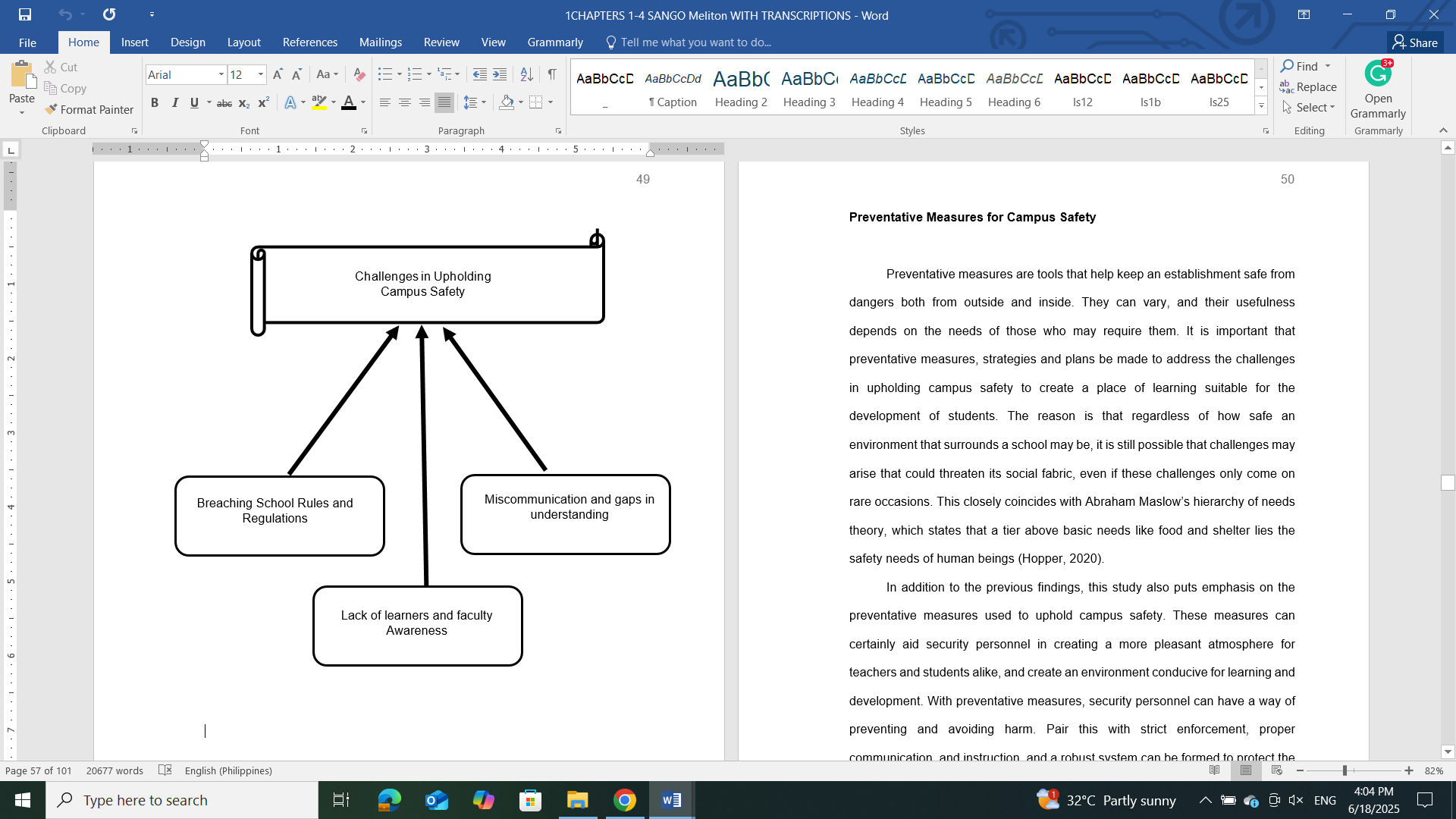
***Lack of Learners, Faculty, and Stakeholders Awareness***

Another pressing challenge in ensuring campus safety is enhanced security education and awareness among students and faculty. This is added to the challenge faced by the security personnel since sometimes even the teachers and parents are unaware of the safety rules and regulations. Here are the excerpt from the participants’ answer:

(Factors? Like uhhh problems that? The problem is sometimes the misunderstanding of the, especially the parents or students because the uhhh the rules of the schools there are those who don't understand the situation, but we just follow our jobs as a security guard of the school.). ***(IDI\_01)***

(Like, for example let's say there is a repeating uhh, bringing forbidden items to school, people being stubborn, that for me is one of the reasons for this is people can be complacent, like they don't take it to heart the consequences of their actions. Then they don't make themselves aware if that's wrong*.*). ***(IDI\_07)***

These answers from participants 1 and 7 further prove the importance of raising awareness for all the stakeholders so that there is no need for chaos when a policy is being implemented. This also shows the further challenge to the security personnel when their clients do not know the school's policy and guidelines. To enhance security education and awareness among students and faculty, various strategies have been proposed and explored in the literature. One effective approach is the integration of security-related topics into the curriculum. For example, incorporating security modules into existing courses or offering specialized courses on campus safety can provide students with essential knowledge and skills (Smith, 2018). Additionally, interactive training programs, such as workshops and simulations, have been found to be engaging and effective in promoting security awareness (Alkhazi et al., 2022).



***Figure 1.*** *Challenges Faced by Security Personnel in Upholding Campus Safety*

**3.2 Preventative Measures for Campus Safety**

Preventative measures are tools that help keep an establishment safe from dangers both from outside and inside. They can vary, and their usefulness depends on the needs of those who may require them. It is important that preventative measures, strategies and plans be made to address the challenges in upholding campus safety to create a place of learning suitable for the development of students. The reason is that regardless of how safe an environment that surrounds a school may be, it is still possible that challenges may arise that could threaten its social fabric, even if these challenges only come on rare occasions. This closely coincides with Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, which states that a tier above basic needs like food and shelter lies the safety needs of human beings (Hopper, 2020). In addition to the previous findings, this study also puts emphasis on the preventative measures used to uphold campus safety. These measures can certainly aid security personnel in creating a more pleasant atmosphere for teachers and students alike, and create an environment conducive for learning and development. With preventative measures, security personnel can have a way of preventing and avoiding harm. Pair this with strict enforcement, proper communication, and instruction, and a robust system can be formed to protect the school premises and its constituents. In the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, for example, it was sighted that poor lighting infrastructure causes safety concerns on the part of students. This signifies that having lighting infrastructure is essential to having a safe and secure environment. Having a secure environment requires an all-encompassing approach that addresses unhelpful behavior and deals with the school environment's basic components to curb tendencies (Owusu et al., 2019).

This coincides with the findings of Puckett (2022) from Tennessee, United States, in her thesis about campus safety and security. The largest area of concern for students is the time of day, and the location of the campus. Hence, students show higher fear at night when it is dark and find it hard to discern their environment, especially in campus parking garages. Having an improved lighting infrastructure and patrols at parking garages during nighttime can be beneficial when it comes to addressing the students' fears. Adding to this, improving the availability of surveillance cameras can provide deterrence against offenders and make students feel safer.

***Conducting Policy Orientation***

Policy orientation should encompass several key components to ensure a comprehensive approach to campus safety. Security personnel feel the need to include campus safety during orientation as one preventive measures to address challenges in securing the campus itself. As one participant argues:

(Ummm, in that sir we coordinate with the concerned departments sir then, usually they conduct uhh seminars for the students so that they are made aware of the things that are not good to do.).***(IDI\_03)***

Firstly, it should include preventive measures such as security patrols, access control systems, and surveillance cameras. These measures act as deterrents and help in minimizing potential threats. Research by Turner (2021) demonstrated that the presence of security personnel and surveillance systems significantly reduces the likelihood of criminal incidents on campus.

Also, policy orientation should promote awareness and education about safety issues among students, faculty, and staff. Training programs, workshops, and campaigns can enhance individuals' ability to recognize and respond to potential threats. A study by LaHood (2025) emphasized that educational institutions with comprehensive safety education programs witnessed a higher level of preparedness and a lower incidence of safety-related incidents.

***Implementing Strict Rules and Protocols***

Having strict rules and regulations can serve as a testament to campus safety. Having these signifies to students, staff, and visitors alike that an institution like the school should be taken seriously. This can help uplift the schools’ campus safety and security and can aid in bettering the school and making it an even more suitable place for learning and growth. With that in mind, it’s important to take account that through this, having strict rules and regulations can also be beneficial when it comes to addressing security threats and concerns, for example: bullying, and/or theft. This is valuable to maintain and preserve the school's social fabric and keep a safe haven for development.

Furthermore, the participants were also asked how security personnel assess the effectiveness of their implemented strategies. Participants commented this way based on the “implementation of strict rules and regulations” theme.

(How can we assess? Or the handling of the students? Ahh, we do have strategies that we put into motion in our school. What we are doing is effective because if we are not strict they won't listen to us they don't believe that's why they agree we have to be strict because this is our job it’s also for all of us.). ***(IDI\_04)***

(Assess? Like how we know if they work? Ummm, we can know if we get to observe if there are no more people who violate the rules of the school. If we can see that students behave appropriately and they follow the rules that signals to us that it's effective.). ***(IDI\_07)***

In the responses of Participants 4 and 7 mentioned above, they highlighted the importance of assessing security measures and protocols in order to test their effectiveness. Assessing the effectiveness of security measures and protocols is vital for ensuring campus safety. This coincides with Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs (Hopper,2020).

This according to Fekadu (2019), there are significant differences in the assessment of school personnel in the implementation of school disciplinary rules and regulations. Since implementation would vary as reported by the select school personnel. Students should also be reminded at home about the disciplines imposed in schools since such awareness would develop further understanding, acceptance, and realization of the purpose of school rules and disciplines in shaping good behavior that aids in forming an environment conducive to learning.

In contrast, an article by Espinosa (2020) from the Philippines, it is important to ensure that students are fully aware of the positive and negative outcomes of their actions, which is best done by having them participate in student orientations during student conferences and becoming a part of daily class reminders. Lastly, the continuous review of the implementation of school rules and regulations should be done collectively and collaboratively with student representatives, school officials, implementers, and parents.

Additionally, a related study conducted in Ethiopia showed that students’ awareness of school rules and regulations statistically correlates with their perceptions of promoting good behavior. This means that a better understanding of the school rules would increase the effectiveness of rules in promoting students' good behavior. Students should have ample understanding of the rules and regulations for effective implementation. Improving students’ awareness of school rules and regulations would enhance their perception of promoting good behavior because students understand them enough. This results in them behaving well, offering a good learning environment for students (Fekadu, 2019).

***Conducting Security Checks and Inspections***

One of the methods by which campus safety is upheld is through security checks and inspections. Through checks and inspections, prohibited items like drugs, cigarettes, and vapes can be confiscated and dealt with accordingly before they can cause any further harm. This is vital in halting the prevalence of prohibited items on school premises. Thus creating a safer school campus free of danger. Additionally, security checks and inspections can serve as deterrence when preventing individuals with ill intent to enter school grounds. The participants were also asked about the effectiveness of the specific initiatives or approaches that security personnel employed in enhancing campus safety. Participants commented this way based on the “conducting security checks and inspection” theme.

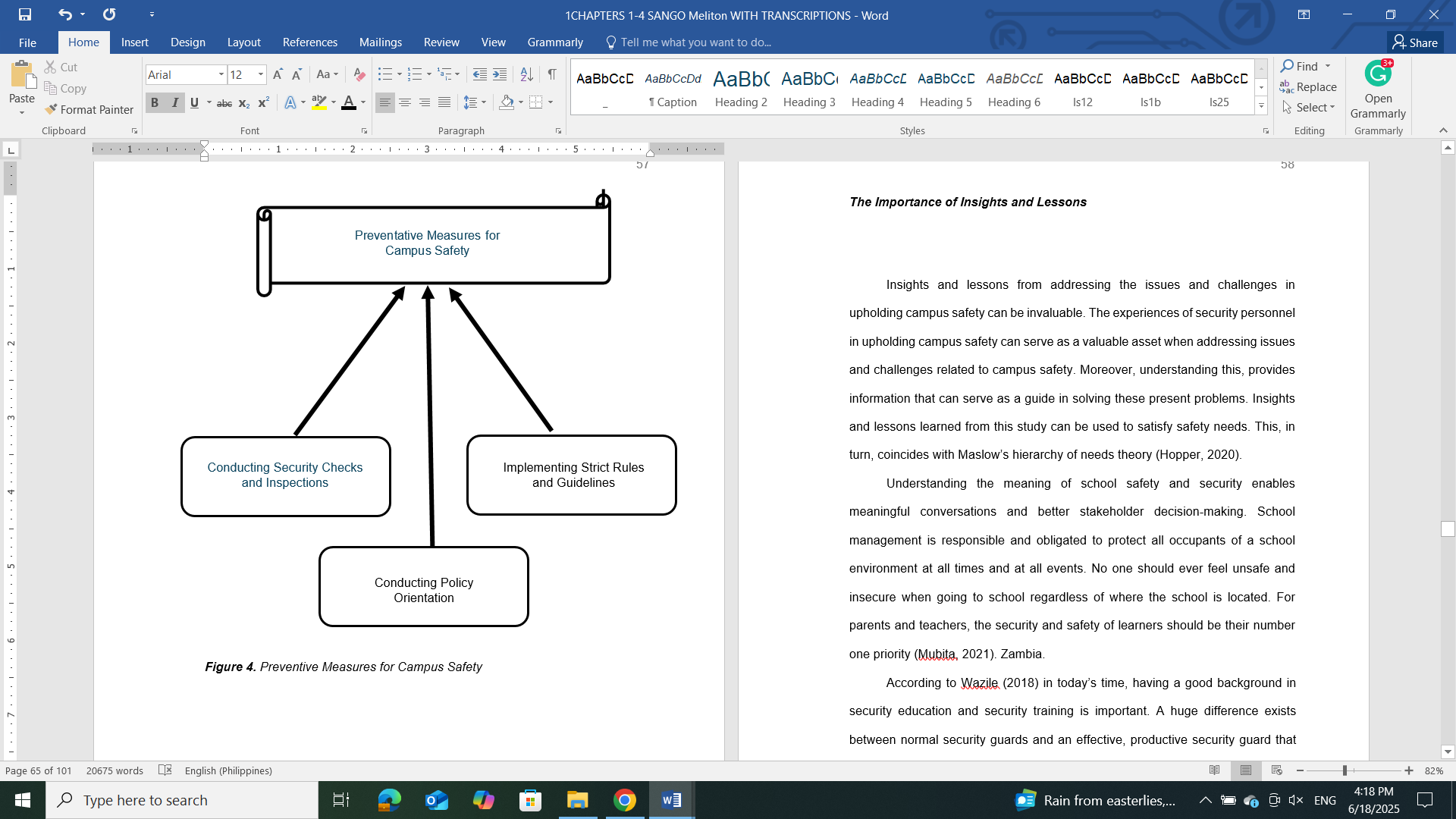
(The ahh, we inspect all the bags, we need to check them one-by-one and if allowed touch them on certain areas to check if they brought prohibited items here in the campus and we do our jobs for wellbeing of the school.) ***(IDI\_02).***

(Ummm like for example, like inspections thats the first thing that students, people encounter before they go in, ahhh it's effective if all follows because sometimes we can't avoid that there are those that are really stubborn.) ***(IDI\_07).***

According to the responses of both participants, they highlight the importance and the need to conduct security inspections and screening to ensure that prohibited items are not allowed to enter school grounds. This closely coincides with Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs (Hopper, 2020).

In relation to this, the importance of security screening can vary depending on the context and location of an establishment. But, it depends in the ability to identify and evaluate potential factors that may have an effect on security and safety. Whether these factors are attributed criminal activity, or any other threats. This can be achieved through actions such as advanced security assessments and risk analyses, using cutting-edge technology to monitor and predict potential problems, and developing effective emergency response procedures. Security checks improves the awareness of potential risk and threats, and give stakeholders an opportunity to apply preventative and corrective measures (Landoll, 2021).

Implementing technology can enhance the effectiveness of security checks and screening. Hutter (2016) stated in his white paper that facilities may need physical controls that monitors access. Firstly, perimeter security. This can be in the form of fences, gates, and turnstiles. Secondly, badges. Badges can refer to name tags, and IDs (identification cards). This can be useful in distinguishing who and who isn’t a member or part of a certain organization, in this case the school. Lastly, motion detectors can be used in addition to alarm systems. It’s important to take note that these technologies can be expensive and it is imperative to examine the needs of the school first.



***Figure 2. Preventive Measures for Campus Safety***

**3.3 The Importance of Insights and Lessons**

Insights and lessons from addressing the issues and challenges in upholding campus safety can be invaluable. The experiences of security personnel in upholding campus safety can serve as a valuable asset when addressing issues and challenges related to campus safety. Moreover, understanding this, provides information that can serve as a guide in solving these present problems. Insights and lessons learned from this study can be used to satisfy safety needs. This, in turn, coincides with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (Hopper, 2020).

Understanding the meaning of school safety and security enables meaningful conversations and better stakeholder decision-making. School management is responsible and obligated to protect all occupants of a school environment at all times and at all events. No one should ever feel unsafe and insecure when going to school regardless of where the school is located. For parents and teachers, the security and safety of learners should be their number one priority (Mubita, 2021).

According to Wazile (2018) in today’s time, having a good background in security education and security training is important. A huge difference exists between normal security guards and an effective, productive security guard that has undergone security education and training. Security education is about gaining knowledge about principles, concepts, and facts to develop analytical and problem-solving skills. During security training, they are gaining a skill or a set of skills specific to a particular job. Security guards that lack information can expose valuable data in your company or business. It can also risk your reputation when you have failed security guards in the Philippines.

***Importance of Strict Enforcement and Compliance***

Strict enforcement and compliance present an important element to campus safety. This strictness can serve as a nuisance to students, and they might find it annoying. But, students must remember that these are necessary sacrifices in order to maintain safety at schools, and they must be required to comply and be held accountable for not doing so. Thus, following school policy is needed for a person to pass through. In other words, it is part of a security personnel’s job to restrict entry to certain people to maintain campus safety.

To add to this, the participants were also asked about the influences of their experiences to develop or modify security protocols and procedures better to address the safety needs of the campus environment. Participants commented this way based on the “importance of strict enforcement and compliance” theme.

(What is needed for the development of our school sir is the kinds of policies that would complement the effective policies that doesn’t need to be violated by students and children can be better protected if they’re inside the school.) ***(IDI\_05).***

(The rules that we enforce here are to safeguard this campus. All that goes inside, the outsiders, we check them we have them leave their ids, put their names on a logbook and whatever we have to do we do it for the welfare of the students, that’s all.). ***(IDI\_02)***

Participant 2 said that any outsiders are thoroughly checked before entering school grounds to maintain the safety of the school. This is important to make sure that any prohibited items does not enter school grounds. This can be viewed in the lens of the theory of terror management (Psychology Today, 2023).

Consequently, Parmar (2021) from India, said that a well-established security management system guarantees protection towards the sizable population of students, faculty, and administrative staff in academic institutions. A well-equipped system handled by an efficient team of security personnel is incredibly important to keep an educational institute safe from the likelihood of any such accidents. With the increase in a sizable population in colleges and students from various spectrums of society under one roof, the existence of conflicts is often a major issue that has had a tremendous effect on the learning environment on campuses. The security authorities, being well trained and equipped with the know-how, can cope with adverse situations with a professional approach. Institutions with hostel facilities are prone to criminal behavior.

In a study in the United States about the role of school strictness. It appears that strict school punishment practices can contribute to higher grade retention and juvenile justice referral. Additionally, lenient school punishment practices worsen these same outcomes and greater referral rates. It’s important to consider that having fair, just, and balanced school punishment practices can help in students’ advancing in the educational system (Peguero et al., 2018).

***Need for Continuous Improvement and Adaptation***

Today, we live in a fast paced world. What this means is that everything is constantly evolving and sometimes it is not easy to catch up. In the context of campus safety, New threats could emerge that may pose a danger to school campuses. Therefore, it is imperative that security systems, and protocols must be up-to-date to meet these new challenges. This is essential if campus safety is to be made a priority. Furthermore, the participants were also asked about the experiences that have guided them in implementing proactive measures and adapting their strategies to effectively address security concerns and maintain a secure campus environment. Participants commented this way based on the “need for continuous improvement and adaptation” theme.

(We perform our jobs sir like if you guard you must be alert, like, you become strict at work at following the rules, security sir ummm protocols. That sir if you get used to that sir long enough, the students they would also follow suite, what's it called, they can be aware also, they get to realized that it's safe here in the school. So that they can feel safe.) ***(IDI\_03).***

(Because ever since I became security sir, my experiences here are also the ones that give me lessons on how to do right and avoid doing things wrong . Like, the things that need to be changed and solved.) ***(IDI\_05).***

The response of Participant 3 underscores the need to be aware about school policy and safety as a security guard. This is of course important in emphasizing campus safety and security. It is then later emphasized in Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs (Hopper, 2020).

In accordance with this, the management of the safety and health of schools is crucial for creating a safe and healthy learning environment. The importance of safety and health management in schools has been widely recognized recently, with many schools implementing health and wellness initiatives to improve learner outcomes. Effective safety and health management in schools requires collaboration and communication among all members of the school community. By working together, schools can create safe and healthy learning environments that promote positive learner outcomes (Mubita et al., 2023).

Dlamini and Olanweraju (2021) from South Africa stated that security is improved with information sharing. This can be between institutions to students, and the necessary authorities. Additionally, this recognizes the interplay of different sectors of security and that isolated improvements alone will not improve campus safety and all sectors of security must be enhanced to see significant improvements. The first key area for improving campus security should be establishing standard operating procedures for daily, routine as well as unexpected tasks. Procedures must have a standard to provide a baseline for how things should be done and then measure performance against that standard.

***Importance of a culture of compliance and safety***

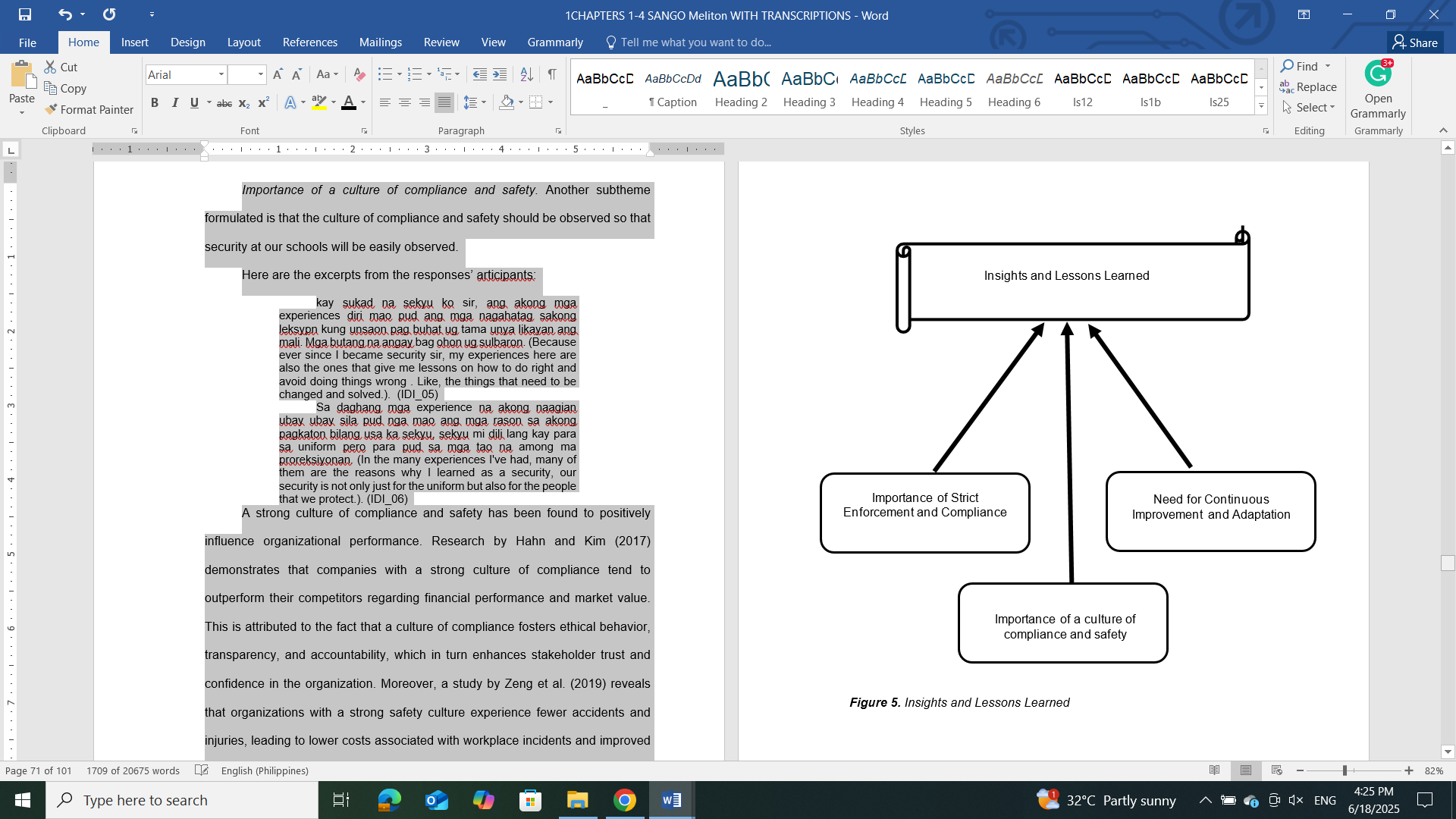
Another subtheme formulated is that the culture of compliance and safety should be observed so that security at our schools will be easily observed.

Here are the excerpts from the participants’ responses:

(Because ever since I became security sir, my experiences here are also the ones that give me lessons on how to do right and avoid doing things wrong . Like, the things that need to be changed and solved.). (IDI\_05)

(In the many experiences I've had, many of them are the reasons why I learned as a security, our security is not only just for the uniform but also for the people that we protect.). (IDI\_06)

A strong culture of compliance and safety has been found to positively influence organizational performance. Research by Boulanouar et al. (2024) demonstrates that companies with a strong culture of compliance tend to outperform their competitors regarding financial performance and market value. This is attributed to the fact that a culture of compliance fosters ethical behavior, transparency, and accountability, which in turn enhances stakeholder trust and confidence in the organization. Moreover, a study by Bayram & Ünğan (2020) reveals that organizations with a strong safety culture experience fewer accidents and injuries, leading to lower costs associated with workplace incidents and improved productivity.



***Figure 3. Insights and Lessons Learned***

4. conclusions

The findings of this study highlight the challenges of security personnel in upholding campus safety. By effectively addressing these challenges, school management, and local school authorities can better create a more friendly environment that incites the learning and growth of students. The proper implementation of preventative security measures such as security checks, screening, and having proper security infrastructure can not only improve the safety and overall security of a school but can also increase peoples’ trust in educational institutions. Furthermore, the insights and lessons learned in upholding campus safety can be utilized to identify weaknesses in the present security protocols to enhance them and prevent further harm to constituents of schools.

The results from this study closely align with the tenets of Maslow’s Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) and Terror Management Theory pioneered by Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski (Greenberg et al., 1986). Security is essential when it comes to fostering an atmosphere conducive to learning and growth; this idea closely intertwines with Maslow’s proposition that safety is a foundational human need that must be fulfilled before higher-level cognitive and self-actualization pursuits can occur. Consequently, the Theory of Terror Management focuses on reducing people’s anxiety in response to the awareness of their mortality, known as mortality salience. By ensuring the safety of students and other constituents of schools, people can have the confidence to place their trust in educational institutions, thereby bolstering the capacity of schools to effectively educate and nurture learners.

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Educational policymakers and authorities from the Department of Education should prioritize the well-being and safety of students from the moment they arrive on school premises. It is essential to ensure that both public and private schools across the country strictly comply with established safety mandates and institutional policies. Additionally, the Department should consider increasing the allocation of financial resources to strengthen and modernize school security infrastructure, thereby creating safer and more supportive learning environments.

School administrators can utilize the results of this study to evaluate their own security measures and protocols and develop new plans and initiatives to enhance campus safety. This is crucial for preventing violence and conflicts within school premises.

Security personnel need to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of the measures and protocols they implement and ensure that they are kept up-to-date.

The findings of this study can serve as a guide for students on demonstrating good conduct in school. Students should be mindful of their behavior in the school environment, given the institution's respected status. Moreover, professionalism should be maintained between teachers, students, and other school staff, which is essential for upholding students' integrity and compliance with school policies.

For future researchers, this study can be utilized to explore alternative qualitative approaches to address issues related to campus safety. Additionally, they can consider implementing more specific criteria for participant selection and involving a broader population of security personnel from multiple schools.

Consent (where ever applicable)

This study strictly adhered to recognized ethical standards to safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, with each participant fully briefed on the study’s objectives, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were used, and all data were securely stored and accessible only to the researchers. The ethical procedures followed in this study were guided by the framework of Pregoner et al. (2025), which emphasizes respect for persons, integrity in the research process, and transparency in educational inquiry. Furthermore, ethical clearance was secured from the appropriate institutional ethics review committee before data collection commenced, ensuring full compliance with the standards for conducting research involving human participants.

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1.

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3.

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