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UNVEILING THE INVISIBLE WALL: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF SCHOOL SECURITY GUARDS' EXPERIENCE AT DON MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the experiences of school security guards at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU), focusing on their challenges in implementing security measures and identifying areas for improvement in existing security protocols. Through semi-structured interviews with security personnel, the research uncovers key issues including insufficient resources and manpower, inadequate infrastructure, compliance challenges, and communication barriers. Additionally, the study highlights areas for improvement such as the enhanced use of technology, continuous training and development, clearer security policies, and improved interdepartmental collaboration. The findings emphasize the critical role of security guards in maintaining campus safety, their professional dedication, and the need for a comprehensive security plan to strengthen campus security. The research concludes with recommendations for upgrading surveillance systems, improving training programs, and involving security staff in policy formulation to ensure a more secure and efficient campus environment.

KEYWORDS: *School security guards, Campus safety, DMMMSU, Security measures, Challenges in security implementation, Security policies*

INTRODUCTION

Campus security was perceived as a multifaceted problem that required cooperation from security guards and other structures within the institution. Thus, understanding the nature of the relationship between the security unit and the administration was essential to comprehend how these agents perceived their tasks and the support they experienced on campus. This study was invaluable as crime increased in educational institutions due to expanding enrollment and the growth of branch campuses for security guards. It also revealed areas of breakdown in communication with university administration and shed light on the perceptions of security roles held by the university community. To improve campus security optimally, institutions need to establish conditions under which security personnel can be empowered and encouraged, which can only be attained through better communication and participation of security personnel in formulating policies on security. Consequently, security awareness for safety staff, community activities, and cooperation with police became essential to developing a secure campus environment for students and all employees and strengthening trusting relationships with law enforcement officers.

The safety and security of educational institutions had become paramount in society due to incidents of violence that sought refuge in learning environments, leading to disruptions in studies and posing risks to the lives of students, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff. This implied that security was everyone's business and concern; thus, government, management, employees, and students were all responsible for ensuring that the institution provided a safe environment for learning. The collective responsibility emphasized the need for collaboration among all stakeholders to address security challenges effectively and create a supportive atmosphere conducive to education.

The Philippine government acknowledged this by providing B. P. 232, which stated that schools had to ensure protection from harm to provide a conducive learning environment. This goal could only be accomplished with the assistance of various academic individuals, as threats could emanate from both inside and outside the institution. The passage of a Campus Security Act, or the "Declaration of Policies on Campus Security in the Philippines," could have served as an impetus to provide more focused solutions to these problems.

At DMMMSU, school security guards played an important part, especially in implementing measures that curtailed student bullying. They were the individuals who stood as guards to ensure that campuses were secure, but their plight was rarely highlighted. This study sought to understand the security guards at DMMMSU to learn more about their perceptions of safety and their experiences as contract workers in the university setting.

The current scenario of DMMMSU suggested that more attention needed to be paid to the problems that security guards encountered at their workplaces. Testimonies of the

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commendations given to security personnel for trustworthiness, such as when guards kept a laptop that some individuals left behind, served as evidence of security's positive impact on the university. However, the guards also faced several issues, including communication challenges with management and the perceptions held by people in the institution regarding the guards. Since the study adopted a qualitative research perspective aimed at identifying the real-life experiences of security personnel at the university, its goals were to expose the 'ivory wall of separation' between the security guards and other stakeholders in the university system. Such research was necessary to establish their daily struggles and viewpoints regarding safety and security matters and to tailor policy and practice recommendations to support their increased efficiency and inclusion within the campus setting. As a result of this research, the experiences of security guards will be narrated, which will help create a positive culture within DMMMSU.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of security guards in maintaining campus safety has received significant attention in research, particularly in terms of their challenges, the effectiveness of security protocols, and the evolving demands of safety in educational environments. Security personnel play a pivotal role in protecting students, faculty, staff, and property, making their work crucial to the overall safety and security of educational institutions.

Security guards face numerous challenges in their daily tasks, which can be compounded by insufficient resources and inadequate infrastructure. According to studies by Lo and Fielding (2017), the lack of proper equipment, such as surveillance cameras or adequate lighting, often hinders security guards' ability to prevent or respond to incidents efficiently. Similarly, Miller (2016) highlights that security staff, particularly in educational settings, are often overburdened with duties and operate with a limited number of personnel. These resource limitations result in security gaps that can jeopardize the safety of the campus community.

Another significant challenge security personnel face is the compliance of individuals with security protocols. Wilson et al. (2018) emphasize that non-compliance with safety measures, such as the refusal to follow security checks or procedures, is a frequent issue that security guards must manage. This non-compliance not only puts the individual at risk but can also compromise the security of the larger campus community. Security guards often find themselves in situations where they must enforce compliance with limited support or authority, leading to potential conflict and stress.

Communication barriers between security personnel and other departments on campus also create challenges in addressing security issues. Graham and Watts (2019) assert that communication breakdowns often occur between security staff and faculty or administration, especially when it comes to responding to emergencies or implementing safety protocols. This lack of effective communication can delay responses to security incidents and undermine the overall safety of the campus.

The importance of continually improving security protocols in educational institutions is widely recognized in the literature. The integration of technology is one of the most significant advancements that can enhance security measures on campuses. Jones (2020) argues that the use of surveillance systems, access control technologies, and real-time monitoring software can provide security guards with valuable tools for detecting and preventing security breaches. By incorporating these technologies into daily operations, security personnel are better equipped to address potential threats before they escalate.

Training and development are also critical components in improving the effectiveness of school security guards. Research by Harrison and Lee (2018) emphasizes that regular training in crisis management, conflict resolution, and the use of modern security technologies enhances the preparedness of security staff to handle emergencies. Furthermore, continuous professional development helps security guards stay current with emerging threats and best practices in security management.

Another area for improvement is the establishment of clearer security policies and procedures. Buchanan et al. (2019) suggest that well-defined, easily accessible security policies help security staff effectively navigate complex situations. These policies ensure that security guards understand their roles, responsibilities, and authority, particularly in handling security breaches or emergencies. Additionally, regular updates to security policies are essential to address new risks and threats as they arise.

Improved collaboration across departments on campus is another area identified for enhancement. According to Anderson and Liu (2021), fostering collaboration between security personnel and other campus departments—such as student services, academic departments, and administration—ensures that security concerns are addressed holistically. A unified approach to security not only improves response times but also enhances overall awareness and commitment to campus safety.

Security guards play a crucial role in campus safety beyond just responding to emergencies. Taylor (2017) states that security guards are often the first line of defense in preventing crime and maintaining order on campus. Their visibility and presence act as deterrents to potential offenders. Moreover, their training allows them to de-escalate potentially volatile situations and manage crowds in a way that minimizes risk.

Furthermore, the professional dedication of security guards is vital in ensuring the safety of the campus community. As pointed out by Greenwood and Walker (2020), job satisfaction and organizational pride significantly impact the performance of security personnel. When security guards feel valued and supported by their institution, they are more likely to adhere to

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safety protocols, engage in continuous self-improvement, and take proactive measures in safeguarding the campus environment.

The implementation of a comprehensive security plan is crucial for addressing the evolving needs of campus security. Robinson and Williams (2018) propose that universities develop an integrated security framework that combines physical security, technology, and human resources. A comprehensive security plan should include access control systems, surveillance infrastructure, emergency preparedness measures, and effective incident reporting procedures. By integrating these components, educational institutions can create safer environments for students, staff, and visitors.

A review of institutional security measures, as argued by Thompson and Lee (2020), should be conducted periodically to adapt to new threats, changes in campus demographics, or technological advancements. Regular evaluations of security plans ensure that security protocols remain relevant and effective in addressing emerging risks, such as cyber threats or unforeseen campus emergencies.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

To fully comprehend the issues surrounding campus security, basic paradigms suggested that it was essential to understand at least the following: the context of concerns from the scholarly viewpoints and priorities of security officials and practitioners, as well as ongoing academic enforcement activities and related issues. Security guards were critical in this ecosystem; however, their end-users or customers rarely sought to understand how they felt or what was going through their minds during their service delivery in enhancing campus security. By employing theories such as Symbolic Interactionism and Constructivist Theory, researchers could better understand how security guards made sense of their roles and the contexts in which they operated. These frameworks facilitated a discussion of security personnel's roles in their encounters with students, faculty, and other administrators, thereby shedding light on the difficulties they faced and their contributions to enhancing safety on campuses.

Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological perspective that focuses on the role of meaning in individuals' social relationships. This theory was appropriate for analyzing the qualitative data collected regarding the lived experiences of school security guards because it explored how these guards made sense of their jobs and the tasks they performed at the university level. Based on this framework, researchers observed the interactions between security guards and other university community members, discovering how social processes affected these individuals. Thus, this framework proved useful in qualitative research to uncover the meanings people assigned to their experiences and social worlds as they lived them (Blumer, 1969; Ballantine & Spade, 2015). Based on constructivist theory, knowledge and understanding are not passively absorbed by the learner but rather constructed through their interaction with their environment (Shannon-Baker, 2023). This theoretical framework emphasized the participants' viewpoints concerning the world they inhabited. It was thus very applicable in qualitative research on the experiences of the security guards at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU). The choice of constructivism enabled an examination of artifacts like safety, roles, and context created by security guards. It focused on analyzing the construction of the tasks and challenges perceived by the guards, which enhanced the understanding of their perceptions of the security environment at the institutional level.

The use of constructivism as a paradigm served well to identify the qualities of qualitative research from the perspective that knowledge is constructed through experiences, social interactions, and cognitions. This approach considered how security guards made sense of their roles within the university context and social world and how such experiences constituted their identities as security personnel. Consequently, within this constructivist framework, it became possible to provide methodologically sound solutions for navigating the complex context of security guards' workplaces and practical development of security work based on their practices (Bogna, Raineri, & Dell, 2020).

Significance of the Study

This qualitative study was paramount in capturing the experiences and difficulties of the school security guards of DMMMSU. Security guards who were always posted at the vulnerable points of the school ensured that students, faculty, and staff were kept safe. However, their experiences and perspectives were often overlooked or underrepresented in research. The study aimed to provide insights into the experiences of security guards as they operated in the facilities they secured by interviewing the security guards themselves about the walls and barriers they encountered. The results of this study revealed more about the difficulties faced by security guards, including handling violently aggressive students, controlling entrance for visitors, and reacting to emergencies. These findings could be applied to refine training and assistance for security guards to help them better safeguard the campus. Additionally, the study advanced awareness of security guards as stakeholders within the university and built constructive relationships between security personnel, students, and other university stakeholders. The implications of this study were not limited to DMMMSU; it contributed to the overall understanding of security guards in educational institutions.

The results could be used to compare different universities or regions and explore further measures within the security system. By revealing the existence of an invisible wall that hindered security guards from being integral members of the university community, this research encouraged people to provide the appropriate support and recognition that security personnel richly deserved for their excellent work.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess the implementation of the security measures undertaken by school security guards at Don Mariano

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Marcos Memorial State University to provide a comprehensive understanding of their role in maintaining campus safety specifically:

1. To investigate the challenges faced by security guards in implementing security measures at DMMMSU; and
2. To identify areas for improvement in existing security protocols at DMMMSU.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive design was used. This research design is predisposed to collecting the stories and voices of the participants, which is particularly valuable when analyzing the roles and responsibilities of the security personnel. Conducting interviews and observations, the study obtains descriptive qualitative data, enabling the researchers to understand the real-life interactions between the security guards and students, faculty, and administration. This approach helps one assess how security guards understand their functions and workplace social interactions. However, it traces the necessity of its context involved and flexibility needed in data collection while researching to understand people's experience. In this manner, the researchers can pinpoint the significant themes concerning the communication difficulties, perceptions of authority, and total influence of the security roles on the cultural atmosphere of the university campuses; thus, the guidelines and advisories for policy changes that can contribute to the improvement of the support and recognition of the security personnel within a university community.

Population and Locale of the Study

The population of this study includes all the school security guards at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) in San Fernando, La Union, at the time of the study. It means that the participants for the research will be selected based on purposive sampling technique to involve only those persons with viable experiences. This case affords the researcher a chance to work with only those respondents who meet certain qualifications, and this is helpful in improving the quality and reliability of the gathered data. The criteria for choosing participants involved in the study are that the participants are currently serving as security guards at the DMMMSU, are employed for less than three years as security guards, are stationed to monitor the entry and exit point of the university, and are willing and willing to be voluntarily interviewed on camera. On the other hand, security guards on leave or not working during the time of the study, those with less than three years of work experience, or not posted at the entry and exit points will be excluded from the study.

Data Gathering Tool

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed for this study as this approach provided a clear framework of questions in which target areas could be presented while at the same time providing a flexible framework that enabled the interviewee to elaborate freely. This approach helped to gather deep qualitative data and remained flexible enough to capture any new ideas or approaches that group participants might have provided. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and an interview guide, which encompassed the background information, informed consent, and broad questions to be asked in the interviews, was developed.

Data Gathering Procedure

A formal request was written and addressed to the President's Office for permission to interview the selected security guards of the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) in San Fernando, La Union. After the participant selection process, the selected participants were contacted, and interviews were conducted at the participants' convenient time and place. Informed consent was sought from each participant before conducting an interview with them so that they could understand the purpose of the study as well as their rights in these studies. The interviews were also voice-recorded to ensure the accurate capture of the information that the participants were willing to offer. A note-making system was also used in order to record things that were not said but expressed in other ways by the participants, as well as other observations that might have been beneficial in the process. The interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached, when no new major themes were identified during the interview. This approach ensured that the researcher gathered all the information in his/her possession before drawing a conclusion about the security guards' experience.

Treatment of the Data

This research used thematic analysis to analyze the interview data received from participants in the study. This method entailed purposive coding and interpretation of patterns that emerged within the narrative accounts of the guards. First, each of the recorded interviews was transcribed literally so that the participants' opinions were preserved. The data in the form of transcripts were then read separately and together by the researcher to come up with the initial list of codes that were derived from the data. After that simple coding process, the researcher created a coding scheme to successfully classify the emerging themes. With such a structure, the researcher was able to map the complexity of interactions between and across the themes, which helped in gaining a better understanding of the participants' experiences and views.

Ethical Considerations

This research complied with standard ethical practices in every stage of the research process. All participants were given proper and sufficient information concerning the purpose of the study, the procedure to be followed, and the possible harms and benefits of involvement in the study. It also made the participants aware of the various aspects to engage in the study, hence enabling them to make informed decisions when participating in the study. The participants' identities were concealed by ensuring that all the participant identifiers were removed and kept secure during and after the study, as well as in the final report.

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All the individuals in the study agreed to participate in it voluntarily, and the study participants were always told that they had freedoms, including withdrawing from the study at any time without any repercussions. The researcher ensured that all participants were respected and their confidentiality was upheld to help them provide information freely. In instances where the participants had questions or concerns, the researcher responded to these concerns. At the end of the study, the respective security guards and the university administration were informed of the results through published work and offered a copy of the final report to the school. This dissemination enabled the study's findings to be applied to enhancing security measures within Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Faced by Security Guards in Implementing Security Measures at DMMMSU

Security guards' experiences of implementing measures at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University described the complexity of their responsibilities and the difficulties they meet on campuses to secure them. Consequently, this qualitative study sought to explore the various challenges embarked on in this research to understand various challenges personal security faces: limited training, long working hours, and an essential requirement to handle some awkward characters. Furthermore, it examined how these issues affect efficiency and organizational satisfaction. As the discussion pursued the analysis of these problems, the authors were interested in presenting the case of security guards and how these concerns influence their work and outcomes achievable in campus protection.

Insufficient Resources and Manpower

One of the major concerns that emerged after the COVID-19 virus outbreak was the scarcity of experienced security personnel. This staffing gap broadly impacted campus safety; for example, a survey of 400 security companies found that 34% of all responding organizations reported staffing constraints below pre-pandemic levels. As a result, most security firms had no option but to employ less qualified individuals, leading to poor security standards and heightened safety risks for community members. The lack of security personnel reduced the efficiency of guards in deterring criminal activity, as explained by one key informant (KI1): "This challenge affected the operations and effectiveness of security guards; there was a need to deploy 3-4 security guards to monitor the movement of vehicles within the campus." Another informant (KI3) also mentioned, "We could not perform any task in parallel as the number of guards on duty was outnumbered," indicating that poor staffing restricted operational progress. Designers and architects aimed to create a campus environment that was friendly and accessible by incorporating open courtyards and spaces for individuals with disabilities; however, this design inadvertently increased the likelihood of troubling activities such as drug misuse, unlawful acts, and violence. KI5 stated that with so few guards, it became increasingly difficult to ensure the safety of many individuals, resulting in inadequate responses to events due to insufficient personnel without adequate training.

The lack of security staff made it difficult to effectively prevent criminal activities on campus premises, as mentioned in the KI report. They stated the need for 3 to 4 guards to manage vehicle movements within the area. In addition, KI3 highlighted the challenge of needing help to multitask due to the limited number of guards on duty. Furthermore, according to KI2, "it was suggested that there should be designated parking areas and separate exit points for students from staff and personnel." Although colleges and universities strived to create spaces that enhanced accessibility, this openness also exposed vulnerabilities to misconduct. An assessment of safety risks related to violent crimes highlighted that students had concerns about dangers linked to academic settings, such as drugs, guns, and excessive drinking. It was crucial to have adequate security staff in place to ensure safety and build trust with students and staff members.

KI5 underscored the critical need for proficient security personnel who were well-equipped to handle potential emergencies with efficiency and skill. It emphasized that inadequate security staffing posed risks for everyone involved, from staff to students. The shortage of security personnel hampered responses to incidents and increased the likelihood of these incidents escalating into perilous situations if not handled promptly and effectively. This highlighted the essential requirement for a sufficient number of well-trained security personnel to ensure the safety and security of the campus community

However, dealing with the lack of staff posed difficulties. Universities faced a challenging financial situation due to high operational expenses, shrinking state support, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, there was little room for significant investment in security upgrades. As noted by KI3, "That was why I consistently stressed the need for security staff... It ensured safety." Effectively managing budget limitations was crucial for addressing the security issues that campuses and their neighboring communities encountered.

To address the issue of needing more security staff members in universities, they needed to consider different approaches to improve the situation, such as providing training sessions to enhance the skills of current employees and bringing in additional security staff from external sources if necessary. By establishing schedules for managing staff and investing adequate resources into security improvements, universities could create a safer atmosphere, promoting learning and personal growth.

Inadequate Infrastructure

KI1 highlighted how the security of the MLUC facility was compromised due to the perimeter fences collapsing and lacking security measures such as a top guard or concertina wire. This emphasized the importance of maintaining security protocols and adhering to military standards through regular inspections to prevent external threats or malicious activities. The absence of

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protective elements, like a top guard of barbed wire facing outwards to increase the fence's height and defensive strength, reduced the wall's effectiveness and made unauthorized entry possible. This oversight added to the vulnerability of the MLUC structure, underscoring the importance of routine evaluations to pinpoint vulnerabilities before they pose security risks.

KI2 suggested that building fences was a reliable way to keep intruders out and enhance security in places like businesses and government buildings. High-security fences used sturdy materials such as steel and wrought iron to create strong barriers against common methods of trespassing. These fences typically featured components that made climbing difficult, such as tops and small gaps between the vertical posts to prevent individuals from gaining a grip and climbing over easily. Furthermore, tall fences acted as barriers, with their strong appearance communicating to trespassers that the area was secure and dissuading them from attempting unauthorized entry. When combined with surveillance systems and access control methods, high-security fencing established a layered security approach (Kontek Industries, 2024). This approach involved using multiple security measures to protect against potential threats, thereby improving overall safety by enabling quick reactions to breaches. Moreover, the longevity of high-security fences reduced maintenance expenses over time while decreasing the chances of theft or vandalism incidents, making them a prudent choice for safeguarding valuable assets (RKC Contractors, 2023).

At that time, MLUC had a problem: during rush hour, it had only one gate for both entrance and exit. This situation allowed offenders easy access, compromising security standards that should have dictated reducing flammable points in the perimeter fence. According to KI1, military security standards recommended that gates be designed to enable access while denying entry to large metallic vehicles without hindering the movement of large loads (NASA Guidelines, 2020). The use of these gates was instructive; they needed to be positioned correctly and installed with automatic traffic controls to ensure that traffic flow was enhanced while remaining under positive control to avoid intrusions (Wilber, 2021). Furthermore, creating additional physical barriers that could be closed during low-traffic periods would augment security since fewer areas would be open during high-traffic times (NASA Guidelines, 2020). If these traffic management problems were effectively addressed, security at MLUC could be enhanced, provided it maintained high operational traffic levels.

Compliance Issues with Regulations

Conflict management was one of the biggest issues that security officers had to grapple with. Security guards likely faced individuals who refused to cooperate and could be hostile or aggressive, which often led to confrontations. These confrontations required patience, strategy, and a sound mind to navigate effectively.

Adhering to the rules and regulations set by institutions posed difficulties when managing students who displayed stubbornness and a tendency to boast or have a quick temper, as mentioned in KI3's findings. These findings highlighted the challenges security officers faced when dealing with such behaviors, making it more difficult to follow the established guidelines to ensure safety and order within the campus premises. Regulatory compliance entailed an organization's responsibility to follow laws, regulations, and standards that applied to its activities (TechTarget, n.d.).

Security officers needed to stay composed and courteous when dealing with confrontations; however, the job became more demanding due to the extended hours and intense stress involved. To manage this pressure effectively and maintain well-being on the job, security personnel needed access to health resources and support services such as counseling, stress management workshops, and regular health check-ups. This support was a luxury and a necessity for those who ensured safety (Off Duty Officers, 2023).

Security personnel need to be trained to identify signs of physical aggression from individuals or groups. This training was essential for managing instances such as shouting and invading personal space, which could escalate tensions if not handled correctly (XPressGuards 2023). The challenges faced by security guards often involved dealing with students, arrogant staff members, and disrespectful individuals, all of which required a patient, skilled, and composed approach. KI1's observation noted, "Some parents, with an attitude, tended to demean security personnel." To effectively manage these situations, employers should have provided resources such as training programs, reporting systems, and access to psychological support, ensuring the safety and security of everyone involved.

Meeting security regulations was often tough due to the varying ways administrations applied rules. According to KI4, "differences in rule implementation across various administrations" made it hard to keep up with the latest requirements set by the current administration. This lack of consistency confused security staff and made it difficult for them to enforce rules efficiently. Organizations face an environment with laws such as GDPR, HIPAA, and PCI DSS standards. These regulations demanded security practices and consistent evaluations to meet compliance requirements (Hyperproof 2024). Unclear guidelines on compliance could lead to misunderstandings of the rules and result in legal issues and harm to an organization's reputation (Secureframe, 2024).

To tackle these compliance issues effectively and efficiently in organizations, it was important to establish guidelines outlining the regulatory needs while conducting thorough staff training programs. Internal audits should have been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of compliance measures and pinpoint areas that needed enhancement (AuditBoard, 2024). Moreover, organizations had to stay updated with regulation modifications

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and adjust their compliance approaches accordingly (Secureframe, 2024). By promoting a sense of responsibility among employees and supporting compliance management, companies could successfully navigate the intricacies of regulatory mandates and bolster their overall security stance. In the long run, ensuring compliance proactively was a way to lessen risks and reinforce the organization's dedication to safeguarding information and upholding trust with those involved.

Communication Barriers

Dealing with communication challenges significantly affected how well security guards performed and how people viewed security in a company or organization. According to KI1 data, employees pointed out that the "behavior of security guards" was a critical concern that could disrupt smooth interactions and lead to a hostile environment. A significant obstacle was the focus on training security staff in communication skills. They were typically trained in handling altercations and responding to emergencies rather than in customer service or effectively managing conflicts. The lack of communication resulted in confusion and a feeling of impoliteness during interactions between security personnel and staff or the general public (XPressGuards, 2023).

Moreover, how security organizations were structured created obstacles to communication among their members, as highlighted in KI2, which stated, "We communicated in a hierarchical structure... We communicated respectfully and courteously." This hierarchy caused a gap between security staff and those they were tasked to protect, as information often had to pass through multiple levels before reaching the intended recipients. This process resulted in delays or alterations that could lead to employee confusion and dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of attention paid to their concerns (Diamond et al., 2015). In addition, communicating in noisy environments complicated matters for guards, as the loud surroundings hindered their ability to hear or convey messages effectively, resulting in potential misunderstandings (London Security College Report, 2023).

Understanding and respecting cultures was vital for effective communication in diverse settings like security work environments, where guards interacted with people of various backgrounds and communication styles daily (Asset College, 2023). It was essential to be mindful of differences to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to conflicts or feelings of disrespect among individuals from different backgrounds. Training programs that focused on enhancing awareness played a significant role in helping security personnel bridge these gaps and navigate social interactions more smoothly. In addition to that point, when it came to communication, obstacles like stress or annoyance could impede interactions. Security personnel enduring extended shifts in challenging conditions often found it difficult to stay calm and collected in their dealings (Secureframe, 2024).

To overcome these obstacles in communication, the university needed to introduce training initiatives that concentrated on resolving conflicts, engaging in active listening, and enhancing nonverbal communication skills. Additionally, creating feedback channels would have allowed employees to express any issues they encountered during interactions with security staff. By promoting a communication culture and offering the essential tools for skill enhancement, organizations could have boosted the effectiveness of their security personnel and strengthened relationships with the community they served.

Areas for Improvement in Existing Security Protocols at DMMMSU

Within this context, the current security arrangement was assessed and important areas in which improvements were deemed necessary to be highlighted. The findings of this analysis was also informed by literature and best practice that were gleaned from key informants in the existing comparable institutions. In addition to this, the areas that highlighted could help in improving the existing security structure at DMMMSU since it pointed out the areas of the training program, communication strategies, and measures to ensure compliance with the set regulations and standards. Finally, the shift towards a preventative security mindset would benefit the campus population and also strengthen the relationships between all members of a campus community.

Enhanced Use of Technology

The increasing utilization of technology in security operations changed the responsibilities of security personnel by providing them access to tools that enhanced their performance and productivity levels. As mentioned in the KI1 report, findings suggested that incorporating systems created by the Management Information Systems (MIS) department could save time and costs for security staff. This demonstrated a pattern where technology became more intertwined with security protocols, leading to smoother operations and improved resource allocation management. For example, sophisticated surveillance systems, like modernized CCTV cameras, enabled monitoring and data gathering essential for detecting threats proactively (AGPS Security Report 2024). These advancements improved situational awareness and allowed guards to concentrate on essential duties instead of repetitive monitoring tasks.

The use of CCTV cameras throughout the DMMMSU campus was not just an initiative but a significant step toward managing the occurrence and implementation of activities in real-time to eliminate any destructive and unlawful activities. CCTV systems effectively increased campus security by surveilling areas with high traffic and those needing close monitoring (2krew, 2023). The visibility of these cameras discouraged potential perpetrators of theft, vandalism, and violence and instilled a sense of security in the campus community. Available research evidence pointed to the fact that establishments with strong video surveillance mechanisms recorded low incidences of crime, and people felt safer within such learning institutions (How Video Surveillance

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Systems Can Enhance the Campus Security of Educational Institutes, 2023).

Furthermore, implementing surveillance systems, as discussed by KI2, illustrated how technology could enhance conventional security methods. By incorporating features such as facial recognition software and motion detection sensors, security personnel were better equipped to swiftly and accurately detect risks (Officer Reports, 2023). These advancements enabled quicker reaction times and enhanced safety by promptly notifying guards of suspicious behavior. Additionally, security teams could effectively and quickly share information using communication tools like two-way radios and mobile apps, significantly enhancing their capabilities (XPressGuards, 2023).

Despite the noteworthy advantages of incorporating technology into operations and services, it was crucial to acknowledge the accompanying difficulties arising from such integration efforts. Security staff needed training to effectively utilize these sophisticated systems, including interpreting data from surveillance feeds and adequately responding to alerts triggered by automated systems (Asset College, 2023). Ongoing training initiatives were imperative to ensure security personnel could adjust to changing technologies and uphold operational preparedness.

Training and Development for Security Personnel

It was crucial to provide training for security staff at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) to ensure safety and security on campus effectively. As mentioned in KI3, "It was important to provide training in first aid as well as crowd and crisis control to equip security personnel with the necessary skills for handling different scenarios—from medical emergencies to possible threats." Engaging in training helped improve their workplace skills and gave them a sense of assurance when handling various situations proficiently (Mason & Leachs, 2020).

In addition to being trained in crisis management, as mentioned in Key Insight 4, which stated that "Knowing CCTV operation... would enhance our job performance," it was equally crucial to undergo technical training. Understanding surveillance technologies empowered security officers to oversee situations more efficiently and react swiftly to incidents. Combining hands-on skills like First Aid and crisis handling with technical expertise in equipment such as CCTV systems formed a versatile security team capable of dealing with various challenges (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2024).

Furthermore, continuing education initiatives should have incorporated simulated activities and scenario-driven drills for security staff to enhance their competencies in various environments. This method supported knowledge retention and identified areas needing enhancement (Asset College I, 2023). Conducting training workshops for students and faculty on safety measures and incident reporting empowered the university community to contribute to a more secure campus. A culture of vigilance and collective accountability was nurtured by offering sessions that educated individuals on threat recognition and appropriate responses (The Personal Safety Group, n.d.).

To ensure that these training programs were as effective as possible at DMMMSU, assessments needed to be carried out on the training methods, and feedback was to be collected from the security personnel and members of the university community involved in them. Continuous evaluation helped maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the training in addressing security challenges that arose. By emphasizing the importance of providing thorough training for security staff and raising awareness among the university community members at DMMMSU, significant improvements could be made to enhance overall security measures and create a safe environment that promotes learning and personal growth.

Clearer Policies and Procedures

To bolster security measures at DMMMSU, it was crucial to enhance the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), mainly focusing on the procedures for entering and leaving the premises, as mentioned by KI1: “The SOP on Ingress and Egress needed to be improved and coordinated with the MIS Office.” This enhancement involved a key partnership with the Management Information Systems (MIS) department. Their role in ensuring that all security protocols were smoothly integrated and coordinated effectively could not be overstated. A defined SOP helped manage the traffic of individuals entering and leaving the campus and laid a strong groundwork for implementing more sophisticated security measures.

In addition to these enhancements mentioned earlier, the KI2 statement: "For the protection of students and staff, there could be several forms, such as a modernized surveillance system, access control measures, and recurring security drills," focused on updating security measures to keep up with modern standards. Installing a surveillance system and enforcing access control protocols alongside regular security exercises significantly improved the safety of students and staff members. Investing in CCTV technology with high-definition cameras linked to real-time monitoring systems enabled security personnel to respond promptly to potential threats (United Educators, n.d.). Moreover, the access control mechanisms better-managed entry points by restricting access to authorized personnel only in specific areas of the campus.

It was essential to maintain and monitor surveillance systems to ensure they worked effectively as intended by conducting routine checks of camera functionality, performing software updates, and reviewing recorded footage periodically for performance evaluation (University of Calgary, n.d.). Equally important was setting operating protocols that balanced privacy rights with security advantages. Cameras must be strategically positioned in public locations like entrances, hallways, and parking lots while respecting the privacy of restrooms or offices.

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By combining standard operating procedures with state-of-the-art surveillance technology and thorough training initiatives, DMMMSU created a safe atmosphere that prioritized the well-being of everyone on campus. This forward-thinking strategy ensured the safety of students and faculty members while cultivating an environment for learning by emphasizing the importance of safety and awareness across the university grounds.

Improved Collaboration Across Departments

Enhancing security operations called for teamwork among departments to benefit security guards' effectiveness firsthand. In agreement with KI3's observation that "Security and other departments collaborated effectively in implementing safety measures," this joint effort promoted a strategy for safety and security across the organization. This cooperative approach improved communication and guaranteed all departments were in sync with their mission to safeguard the community and its resources.

Establishing a culture of teamwork was essential for safeguarding all assets and enhancing security measures, as highlighted in KI5: "Fostering a sense of collaboration to secure all properties and ensure safety." Encouraging collaboration entailed sharing information and resources across departments to bolster overall security readiness. For example, holding meetings between security staff and other teams facilitated knowledge exchange regarding potential risks and ongoing projects. Recent studies emphasized the value of maintaining lines of communication to improve situational awareness (Scout Security, n.d.; Community Security, 2024).

Additionally, incorporating technology into team projects enhanced security measures. Current surveillance systems and access control methods enable monitoring and quick reactions to events (Community Oriented Policing Services Office, 2022). By engaging divisions in choosing and deploying these technologies, companies ensured that the systems met the distinct requirements of all parties involved. Collaborative training drills involving security personnel and other department staff also boosted crisis coordination by allowing them to practice response tactics together (Asset College, 2023).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the job of security guards includes many activities, where working flexibility can be a key attribute, and it helps security guards address various emergencies and perform respective tasks during strictly prescribed time frames. How they can manage crowds and incidents that may cause accidents to prove them flexible in safeguarding individuals and properties. However, job satisfaction and organizational pride are major interest areas for security personnel. When guards realize that they are backed by the organization they work for, they are usually more productive in achieving personal responsibilities of maximum security in the community. This sense of pride makes them work harder and adhere to security measures without compromising.

However, the experiences of security guards also encompass hardships that should not be overlooked. It can be frustrating to deal with individuals who do not adhere to safety measures, which can jeopardize overall security. Nevertheless, security personnel demonstrate tenacity and professionalism, focusing on finding the best ways to ensure compliance and minimize risks. Their commitment to providing a safe environment for learners is evident in their operational principles. The positive outcomes of effectively addressing emergencies foster confidence in the necessity of security guards within society, as evidenced by their management of people during calamities, such as facilitating evacuations during disasters. Thus, performing well during high-risk incidents saves lives and underscores the value of security personnel as unique assets to any organization. Implementing a comprehensive institutional security plan at DMMMSU will significantly enhance the safety of the university community. By integrating access control, surveillance, emergency preparedness, training programs, incident reporting, and community engagement, DMMMSU can create a safer learning environment that ultimately improves student performance. This plan should be revised periodically to anticipate new risks and threats while striving to maintain a secure environment across all campuses.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the findings regarding the roles and characteristics of security personnel at DMMMSU, it is suggested to evaluate the current technology in DMMMSU and determine other components of the security structure where enhanced surveillance systems, access control, and reporting systems can be implemented for boosting up the current security system of the university. This should major in funding high-definition CCTV cameras coupled with real-time monitoring systems and software enabling analytical tools for risk threats. Involving security personnel in the choice and application of these technologies would ensure that the systems fit their active needs and improve the utility of these systems. DMMMSU can use new technology to make physical security at the institution more sensitive to the needs of the community in the institution in question.

Setting up a continuing security personnel training program to introduce new security technologies and leadership skills in handling crises and interpersonal communications is important. Security staff should be able to attend frequent workshops to explain current security threats and procedures. By so doing, they will be able to practice the response strategies being adopted in a special and more contained environment, improving their real-life preparedness. Also, the inclusion of cybersecurity measures in onboarding new employees will enhance the establishment of awareness and responses to threats where needed among all the employees.

Organizations must have easy-to-understand and achievable security policies to help direct the behaviors of any person within the organization. These policies should define how security and compliance issues are to be addressed and how they are to be enforced and ensure that they are to be updated periodically to

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coincide with the new emerging threats. If the staff members are involved in formulating policies, the implemented policies will be well understood and, hence, complied with. Moreover, organizing direct contacts in the form of meetings between departments with a major focus on security can also help share information on security between the different departments, leading to better security awareness of the situational environment. The culture formulated for this collaborative approach should incorporate a practical cadet program that enables the security body to run exercise drills with other organizational departments and allows the participants to 'simulate' a drill. Therefore, if DMMMSU follows these recommendations, the university's security situation will improve. The students and the staff will be protected, and all the people on the campus will learn how to engage in security practices actively.

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