


Original Article

# The Role of School Security Guards in Promoting Safety and Student Discipline

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**Abstract.** School security guards ensure everyone's safety inside the educational learning institution's premises. They serve as welfare guardians of educational stakeholders while enforcing school rules, regulations, and policies. The school authority's implemented measures also serve as the foundation for their judicious actions. Hence, this study described how school security guards regulate educational safety and discipline in a public university in the Philippines. This qualitative-descriptive research used a duly validated semi-structured interview with seven (7) purposefully selected school security guards. The collected data were analyzed using Wolcott's Transforming Qualitative Data. From three (3) significant themes namely: (1) imposing security protocols; (2) promoting human inclusion; and (3) preserving school dignity, six (6) meaningful categories emerged such as: (1) protecting school stakeholders; (2) organizing school system; (3) eliminating social problems; (4) building a cohesive school community; (5) implementing ethical interventions; and, (6) carrying-out legal interventions. Thus, school security guards regulate educational safety and discipline to minimize socio-emotional conflicts among stakeholders through rational actions. The findings of this study raise awareness among educational stakeholders about school security guards' practices in building a conducive academic environment. The information included suggests that the government should empower school security guards to impose security protocols, promote human inclusion, and preserve school dignity. Proper training and seminars are essential to improve their competence, proficiency, and adaptability in fulfilling their responsibilities. Above all, communication and collaboration are significant in building a safe, interactive, and positive school environment.

**Keywords:** Discipline; Education; Regulation; Safety; School security guards.

School security guards play a vital role in maintaining peace and order in schools (Kahlke, 2014; Shukla, 2017). They are hired and assigned by administrators to protect the worth and dignity of academic learning institutions (Layton & Shaler, 2019; Bokenkamp & Walker, 2019). The scope of their work extends beyond ensuring safety within school premises; they serve as welfare protectors of educational stakeholders while upholding school rules, regulations, and policies (Manzo, 2011; Birch & Springer, 2019). Likewise, their actions are anchored in the measures implemented by the school authority (Borg & Jonas, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the contemporary landscape, this role has expanded to include managing complex technological surveillance systems and integrating digital safety protocols. Modern security practices emphasize a holistic approach that balances physical presence with psychological safety measures to ensure a stable learning environment (Higgins

et al., 2022). Furthermore, guards are increasingly expected to act as first-line observers of student well-being, identifying early signs of distress that could compromise campus peace (Miller & Thompson, 2024).

Since the safety and discipline of educational stakeholders are of utmost importance in educational institutions (Nalla & Cobbina, 2017), schools have been facing an increasing number of security challenges, such as violence (Graham & White, 2022), theft (Smit & Venter, 2023), and vandalism (Miller & Thompson, 2024). As a course of action, many schools have turned to school security guards to provide a visible and effective deterrent to potential offenders (Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Hackett, 2019). Because they work within legal and ethical standards, security measures were criticized by students, teachers, and parents for stringent school orders and discipline (Fisher & Devlin, 2019). Recent studies suggest that the securitization of schools can sometimes create a climate of fear rather than safety if not managed with empathy (Graham & White, 2022). To mitigate this, many institutions are adopting restorative security practices that prioritize dialogue over immediate punishment (Smit & Venter, 2023). The effectiveness of these guards is also being re-evaluated through the lens of emergency preparedness, particularly in response to the rise of localized threats and community-based conflicts (Patel & Richards, 2025).

Previous studies about school security guards have focused on their attitudes and behaviors (Brown, 2014), roles, activities, and outcomes toward the institution (Zvi Cohen, 2018), on how they enforce peace and order that have implications for the school's culture and climate (Rolnick, 2016), and how they use their arms in compliance with a school protective system that is uncommon in some nations (Layton & Shaler, 2019; Shpeizer, 2021). As school security guards enforce school rules and regulations, concerns about their impact on school discipline are rising (Pratt et al., 2010; Maskaly et al., 2011). Some argued that their presence can lead to a more authoritarian and punitive approach to discipline, which may not align with the educational values of fostering a safe and positive learning environment (Manzo, 2011; Suárez-Álvarez et al., 2014). Contemporary research highlights a shift toward soft security measures, where guards are trained in de-escalation and cultural competency to reduce the disproportionate disciplining of minority groups (Lopez & Garcia, 2023). This evolution reflects a growing demand for security personnel who understand the developmental needs of young adults (O'Neill & Bennett, 2022). Moreover, integrating trauma-informed care into security training has become a pivotal focus for fostering a supportive school climate (Sullivan & Ross, 2024).

Although school security guards viewed their work not as a career but as a stepping stone toward better employment (Nalla & Cobbina, 2017; Noronha et al., 2020), they endure boredom, distress, and a lack of appreciation from other people. Research on school security guards has primarily focused on violence and injustice as common issues in schools (Sun & Shek, 2010), while reinforcing a school-based system of safety and discipline that is essential for protecting students (Jarldorn, 2020; O'Brien et al., 2020; Richie & Martensen, 2020). Recent inquiries into the professional identity of school guards reveal that specialized crisis-intervention training significantly improves their job satisfaction and perceived social value (Zhao et al., 2023). In a post-pandemic context, their responsibilities have shifted further toward health-related surveillance and the enforcement of public health mandates on campus (Kim & Lee, 2022). As Carboni et al. (2013) suggested that school authorities and security officers should maintain inclusive and unbiased spaces where all students have equal access, studies on the work practices of school security guards in various private and commercial institutions must be updated. Moreover, information about their job in maintaining a fair, safe, and supportive learning environment (Walker et al., 2021) in public academic institutions is relatively scarce. The literature remains unclear on how guards navigate the tension between maintaining rigid safety protocols and supporting the inclusive mission of modern public universities (Anderson & Holme, 2025).

As school security guards help build sound school management practices, they foster healthy socio-emotional relationships among stakeholders (Kankaraš & Suárez-Álvarez, 2019). Recent data indicate that positive interactions between security personnel and students can bridge the trust gap, leading to more effective reporting of safety concerns (Martinez & Hughes, 2024). Furthermore, the collaborative synergy between security teams and student affairs departments is now recognized as a cornerstone of institutional resilience (Foster & Nguyen, 2023). Hence, this study described how school security guards regulate educational safety and discipline in a public university. School security guards can impose security protocols, promote human inclusion, and preserve school dignity. The findings of this study can raise awareness among educational stakeholders about school security guards' practices in building a conducive academic environment.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Pedroso et al., 2021; Pedroso & Pacit, 2022), grounded in constructionism, which aims to transform school security guards to establish a secure and inclusive school community (Ültanır, 2012). Furthermore, this theory was combined with epistemology and the naturalistic inquiry methodology (Armstrong, 2010), which sought to address the attitudinal and behavioral concerns of school security guards in regulating educational safety and discipline. This design was selected to capture nuanced perspectives and practices that cannot be quantified.

### Informants and Sampling Technique

With the use of the purposive sampling technique in selecting the informants (Palys, 2008; Pedroso, 2020), this study involved seven (7) school security guards from a public university. The inclusion criteria that ensured the eligibility of the school security guards are as follows: (a) a school security guard employed in a public educational institution; (b) must be 30-60 years old; (c) must be working as a school security guard from 1 to 30 years; and; (d) must be a resident in the Province of Iloilo.

Table 1 shows the informants' profiles. The school security guards are 30-60 years old. There were six (6) who served the public university for 1-10 years, while the other one (1) served for 27 years. There were three (3) school security guards living in Jaro: one (1) from Miag-ao, one (1) from Lambunao, one (1) from Cabatuan, and one (1) from Dumangas. Pseudonyms were assigned to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the data.

*Table 1. Profile of the Informants*

School Security Guards	Age	Years of Service	Permanent Address
Juanito	60	27	Miag-ao
Mario	52	10	Jaro
Daniel	30	7	Lambunao
Ronald	32	3	Jaro
Gabriel	45	7	Jaro
Joselito	36	1	Dumangas
Arthur	39	9	Cabatuan

### Research Instrument

This study used a semi-structured interview guide, which was duly validated by three (3) experts in qualitative research. The instrument focused on collecting data, specifically, on how school security guards regulate educational safety and discipline in a public university. The interview guide was crafted in English. During the interview, Hiligaynon was used so that informants could express their views comfortably; the audio was recorded, and the verbatim responses were transcribed afterwards. Indeed, digital devices such as cellphones and laptops were used to record and transcribe the data (Kendra, 2020; Pedroso et al., 2021).

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher prioritized data privacy and security during data collection (Pedroso & Pacit, 2022). After the consent letter to conduct the study was addressed and approved by the Head of the University Security Unit and the University President (Pedroso & Pacit, 2022), data gathering commenced. Face-to-face interviews with the informants were conducted to collect the data using a semi-structured interview guide. Before starting the interviews, informants were informed of the study's goal and assured of utmost anonymity and confidentiality. They were also informed that participation in the data collection process was optional, and the researcher asked for permission to record the interview session.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected was stored electronically in Microsoft Word for easy access. To analyze the data, Wolcott's Transforming Qualitative Data was employed (Pedroso, 2020; Pedroso & Pacit, 2022). The audio-recorded data were first transcribed and organized in a research-made matrix. The researcher assigned relevant codes and clustered them to identify significant themes and meaningful categories systematically. The content validity was upheld, as the study findings were presented to the informants to assess credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Analysis of literature, research journals, and paradigms was also considered to support the study's findings (Pedroso, 2020).

## Ethical Considerations

The researcher was guided in the ethical conduct of this study by Republic Act 10173, also known as the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*. It is hereby stated in Section 8 that publishers, editors, and duly accredited reporters of any newspaper, magazine, or periodical shall ensure always the value of confidentiality of any personal data that comes to their knowledge and possession. Section 20 (a) of the said law also emphasized that a personal information controller must implement reasonable and proper organizational, physical, and technical measures intended for the protection of personal information against any accidental or unlawful deterioration, modification, and disclosure, as well as against any other unlawful processing. In the succeeding paragraph of the same section, it is further elaborated that the information controller must determine the appropriate level of security by taking into account the nature of the personal information to be protected, the risks represented by the processing, the size of the organization and difficulty of its operations, data privacy practices, and the cost of security imposition (Philippine Government, 2012). The approved letter of information, waivers, and written consent forms were used to obtain participants' voluntary consent for this study. The researcher maintained the utmost anonymity and confidentiality throughout the data-gathering process (Pedroso & Pacit, 2022).

## Results and Discussion

Three (3) significant themes emerged in regulating educational safety and discipline, namely: (1) Imposing Security Protocols; (2) Promoting Human Inclusion; and (3) Preserving School Dignity, see Figure 1.

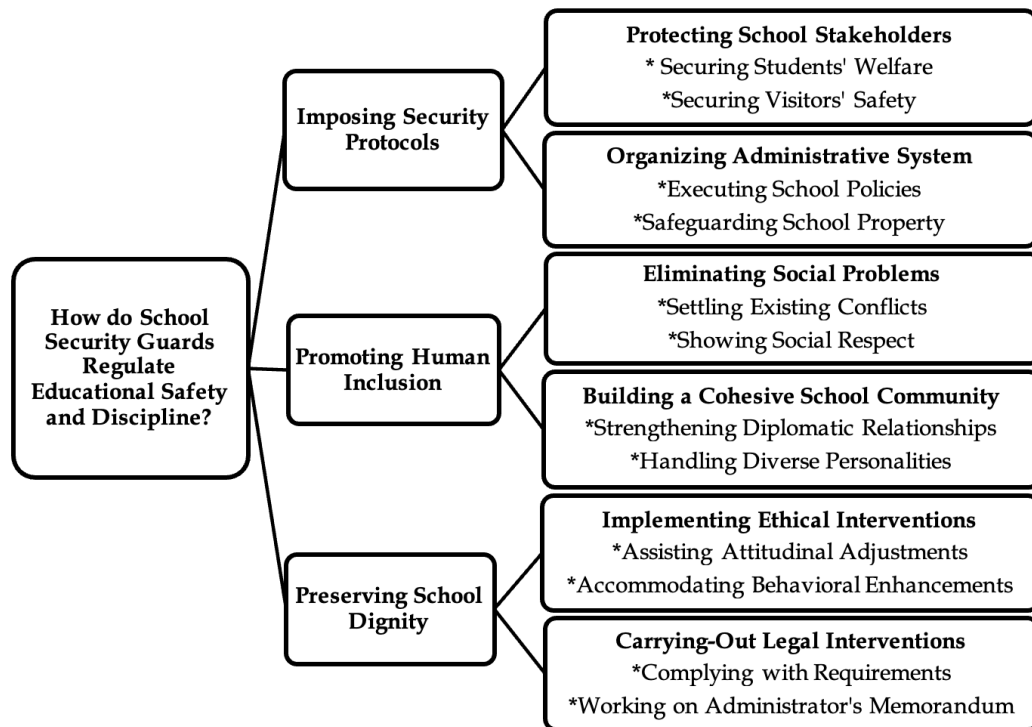


Figure 1. Demonstration of Meaningful Categories of the Study

### Imposing Security Protocols

School security guards have responsibilities in an educational environment. They obey the orders of school administrators and stakeholders who accept their legitimacy to exercise power and authority. In imposing security protocols, they are (1) Protecting School Stakeholders, and (2) Organizing the Administrative System.

#### Protecting School Stakeholders

Teachers, students, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders are key human resources in building a strong educational institution. To protect the school's stakeholders, they are (1) Securing Students' Welfare and (2) Securing Visitors' Safety.

Securing Students' Welfare. School security guards are responsible for securing students' welfare and well-being.

Gabriel: *"School security guards usually ask about the intention of the entrants to ensure the security of stakeholders."*

Securing Visitors' Safety. Aside from teachers and students, other stakeholders and guests are also important to be safe while in school.

Arthur: *"School security guards protect the safety of the different social groups in school communities."*

### **Organizing the Administrative System**

They are assigned to ensure the orderliness of school properties. In organizing the administrative system, they are (1) Executing School Policies, and (2) Safeguarding School Property.

Executing School Policies. School security guards help implement school regulations and policies to ensure peace and order within school premises.

Joselito: *"Everyone must follow the school protocols to maintain the peace and order inside the campus."*

Juanito: *"School security guards implement school policies that apply to all."*

Safeguarding School Property. School properties are vulnerable to damage and loss, making the presence of school security guards crucial.

Mario: *"The safety of school properties matters for school security guards, aside from the security of stakeholders."*

Gabriel: *"School security guards practice safe school community management and initiatives."*

### **Promoting Human Inclusion**

Aside from imposing security protocols, they also consider teachers and students partners in promoting inclusivity in educational institutions. In promoting human inclusivity, they are (1) Eliminating Social Problems and (2) Building a Cohesive School Community.

#### **Eliminating Social Problems**

School security guards consider obedience to ethical standards a priority to help shape students' social capabilities. Thus, cohesive social groups within the school premises became possible as they are (1) Settling Existing Conflicts and (2) Showing Social Respect.

Settling Existing Conflicts. School security guards communicate pleasantly and considerately with their colleagues. They express their kind words in the health dialogue.

Daniel: *"School security guards build good relationships with colleagues to avoid social conflict."*

Ronald: *"Communal understanding begins with open communication among the educational stakeholders."*

Showing Social Respect. Social respect is important amid the conflicting views on the implementation of school policies.

Daniel: *"School security guards value human respect, despite the occurrence of disagreement."*

Joselito: *"School security guards accept their imperfections as implementers of school safety and discipline."*

#### **Building a Cohesive School Community**

In ensuring a cohesive school community, school security guards and administrative officers are (1) Strengthening Diplomatic Relationships and (2) Handling Diverse Personalities.

Strengthening Diplomatic Relationships. Indeed, they learn from social interaction, including school discipline, about how to treat stakeholders.

Ronald: *"School security guards learn a lesson from how they treat people inside the campus."*

Handling Diverse Personalities. They use kind words while reaching out to stakeholders with different behaviors and personalities.

Juanito: *"School security guards encounter different personalities of students who are against the school policies."*

### **Preserving School Dignity**

The policies imposed by school security guards are anchored in the school's institutional outcomes. They have to protect the academic institution's reputation. In maintaining the school's dignity, they are (1) Implementing Ethical Interventions and (2) Carrying-Out Legal Interventions.

#### ***Implementing Ethical Interventions***

School security guards need to address students' misbehavior with a clear rationale and corrective guidance. Implementing ethical interventions includes (1) Assisting Attitudinal Adjustments and (2) Accommodating Behavioral Enhancements.

Assisting Attitudinal Adjustments. Neglect of school protocols is another problem faced by school security guards.

Ronald: *"School security guards have problems in developing self-management among the students."*

Gabriel: *"School security guards implement school policies that are fundamental for stakeholders to follow."*

Accommodating Behavioral Enhancements. Although students' habitual disobedience of school policies is inevitable, constantly correcting their behavior will help cultivate desired values.

Gabriel: *"School security guards refer the students for guidance counseling."*

Juanito: *"School security guards are aware of the appropriate disciplinary approaches."*

#### ***Carrying Out Legal Interventions***

Effective implementation of school rules and regulations is a practical intervention to address school conflicts. School security guards carry out legal interventions by (1) Complying with Requirements and (2) Working on the Administrator's Memorandum.

Complying with Requirements. Planning and implementing an activity requires complete documentation. The proposal and permits need to be signed and approved by the school administrators, including the security unit. Everything must follow a systematic process to avoid problems among stakeholders. By following a systematic process of preparing documentary requirements for the smooth implementation of activities.

Gabriel: *"School security guards require the stakeholders to secure approved documents of school activities."*

Working on Administrator's Memorandum. All disciplinary actions of school security guards must follow the memorandum issued by the school president and other authorities and departments. The resolutions on discipline and security guide their use of strategies. They do their work diligently as required by administrators.

Gabriel: *"School security guards adhere to the policies for a proper working system."*

Mario: *"School security guards follow the rules as the administrative body of educational safety and discipline."*

This study revealed that school security guards regulate educational safety and discipline through three essential themes: imposing security protocols, promoting human inclusion, and preserving school dignity. First, the school security guards actively impose security protocols that protect students' welfare and ensure visitors' safety, demonstrating how school safety is maintained through strict monitoring and enforcement of institutional rules (Sango & Baguio, 2025; Magana & Abad, 2025). These findings support earlier research showing that guards require students, faculty, and staff to abide by school rules and policies (Sprenger & Basin, 2018; Vincent et al., 2012; Skiba & Losen, 2016). Furthermore, the study corroborates Jarldorn's (2020) findings that school security personnel organize administrative systems and implement policies to protect school property, although challenges remain in fully executing these responsibilities due to limited resources and institutional constraints

(Schlesinger, 2013; Smith et al., 2018).

Second, the guards promote human inclusion by resolving conflicts and demonstrating respect in their daily interactions with students and colleagues. This reflects the social dimension of security work, as emphasized by Van Steden and Sarre (2010) and Richie and Martensen (2020), and aligns with findings that security personnel face difficulties in earning social respect due to school culture and authority structures (Kupchik, 2010; Saarikkomäki & Kivivuori, 2016). Similar evidence from recent Filipino studies shows that inclusive school practices and child-protection policies are essential but often hindered by systemic barriers, underscoring the complexity of implementing humane interventions in educational settings (Evidor & Villacruz, 2025; Belano & Aclao, 2025).

Third, the study found that ethical and legal interventions are vital to preserving the school's dignity. Guards enhance student behavior by correcting misconduct and promoting positive values, consistent with the work of Payne and Welch (2010) and Morrison and Vaandering (2012). However, ethical intervention alone is not sufficient; legal compliance and documentation are necessary to uphold institutional reputation and credibility (Myrستol, 2013; Chrusciel et al., 2015; Villalobos & Bohannon, 2017). This aligns with Filipino research indicating that child-friendly school systems and policy implementation contribute to the protection of learners' rights and the overall dignity of educational institutions (Evidor & Villacruz, 2025).

Overall, the study extends the existing literature by emphasizing the professional roles of school security guards in a public university context and illustrating how their practices are essential to maintaining safety, inclusion, and dignity despite numerous challenges.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

School security guards help maintain educational safety and discipline, reducing interpersonal conflicts and emotionally negative interactions among stakeholders. By helping to shape stakeholders' attitudes and behaviors, they are seen as partners with the educational institution in maintaining its identity and reputation. They are there to address potential safety threats and disciplinary issues while fostering a safe environment conducive to learning.

This study has various limitations that are vital to address in future research. Firstly, this research utilized a qualitative-descriptive design to describe how school security guards regulate safety and discipline in a public university. Consequently, the findings are primarily relevant to their specific approaches to maintaining order within school premises. Secondly, because the study focused exclusively on guards in a public university setting, the findings are built upon verbatim responses specific to that environment. Future studies should provide more elaborate information on work practices arising from diverse or specialized school challenges. Lastly, because the researcher utilized semi-structured interviews, there is a possibility of social desirability bias inherent in self-reporting. Despite these limitations, this research generates critical insights into the regulatory roles of school security personnel.

Nonetheless, the results of this study strengthen the theory of constructionism and related frameworks in educational leadership and administration. These theoretical perspectives serve as guiding principles for the school community. This study can also influence the work system of school security guards by emphasizing the importance of stakeholder safety and discipline. By fostering a secure and inclusive environment, school security guards indirectly contribute to improved student engagement, reduced behavioral incidents, and a more conducive learning atmosphere. The findings can increase security personnel's motivation and commitment to school services. Furthermore, the information suggests that the government and university administration should empower school security guards to impose protocols, promote human inclusion, and preserve school dignity. Proper training and seminars are essential to improve their proficiency in fulfilling these responsibilities. Finally, school stakeholders should actively coordinate with security guards regarding rules and regulations. Above all, communication and collaboration are significant in building a safe, interactive, and positive school environment.

## Contributions of Authors

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## Conflict of Interests

The researcher declares that he has no conflicts of interest.

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