



The Roles of Campus Protection Services for Students' Safety: A Case of a Higher Education Institution in South Africa

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Received: 01 October 2022</i></p> <p><i>Reviewed: 12 October 2022</i></p> <p><i>Revised: 18 December 2022</i></p> <p><i>Accept: 28 January 2023</i></p>	<p>Purpose: Students' safety and security problem have been reported as a regular problem across institutions of higher learning in South Africa. This paper departs from regularly reported cases of theft in student belongings in a South African university. The purpose of this study was to investigate the roles and involvement of the Campus Protection Services (CPS) in ensuring students' safety in an identified institution of learning.</p> <p>Methodology: The paper report findings obtained through the mixed methods approach which used questionnaires – with 265 cases returned and analyzed with document analysis to support the quantitative results.</p> <p>Findings: The main findings reveal in descending order, that the main forms of campus crimes are theft, mugging, damage to property, robbery, assault, and stalking. Ascribed reasons to these crimes were administrative shortfalls, broken equipment, frequent substance abuse and students' negligence and lifestyle. This paper recommends that campus management and security departments reach a holistic solution that brings together all stakeholder of the learning environment, thus establishing baseline policies for keeping students and their belongings safe in a typical learning environment.</p> <p>Originality/Value: This research assesses the roles of campus protection services for students' safety in south africa.</p>
<p>Keywords: <i>Crime, Student Safety and Security, Security Management Services, Campus Protection Services, Higher Education Institution.</i></p>	

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1. Introduction

Students' safety and security problem have always been a challenge in university environment. This has drawn attention of the media and researcher especially on how students' safety is affected [1]. Various authors confirm empirically the prevalence of such problems related to safety of learners and their belonging in schools [2, 3, 4]. They emphasized that university environment used to be perceived a safe place with conducive atmosphere protected from various types of crime such as violent, victimization, theft and sexual assault. However, research also indicates that students perpetrate 80% of campus crimes which reflects occurrence of school safety issues [1]. Furthermore, there have been incidences such as mugging, assault, theft, robbery where students have been victimized [1, 5, 6], and such incidences poses a whole lot of burdens for campus management, campus law enforcement personnel, the community, parents and stakeholders. More specifically, Chekwa et al. added that studies have revealed that many students feel unsafe of themselves and their properties while on campus [3]. In most cases, female students are significantly more likely to be unsafe, fearful and afraid as opposed to males being victimized having their mobile phone stolen, of being mugged and robbed, of being raped or stalked by strangers or intimate partners and being physically attacked by strangers.

The motivation for this study is further drawn from reported incidences in a university in the North West Province (in South Africa) where the authors are located.

According to the Campus Protection Service (CPS) manager, the university library and computer laboratories is purported to be a secure place to study, filled with surveillance cameras to monitor students and the university properties. Despite such assertion, there has been a high volume of laptops, cellphones and personal belongings theft from students [7]. A review of the incidence book for 2014 & 2015 show that theft was high in the library and some students camouflage collecting other students' belongings from the security depository. This is similar to recorded incidences in computer labs and Academic Development Centers (ADC) located within the university.

In addition, access to campus residence has changed over the years from the use of fingerprints to access cards. Control of student access is now difficult since an intruder can easily gain access by using another students' card to gain access, and possibly commit crime. There were two particular cases in May 2015 where student stole valuable items from one of the campus residence at 3am using another other students' access card to gain access in the building [8].

According to the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, section 12, all persons have rights to be free from violence in private and public places and torture [9]. This in turn can be achieved by providing a safe place for student in classrooms, residence and entire school premises. Accordingly, the CPS is responsible for the campus Security Management Services (SMS) whom protects the students and their belongings through available means provided is mandated to protect the abovementioned rights. To cater for such provisioning, universities ought to create an Occupational Health and Safety Policy devolved from the Occupational Health and Safety Act (85 of 1993) [10].

In an attempt to creating solution towards students' safety and their belonging in institutions of higher learning, this paper investigates the roles and involvement of the SMS of the CPS in ensuring students' safety in an identified institution of learning in a typical university environment in South Africa. To cater for this purpose, the authors established the following secondary objectives:

- *Investigate the major crimes occurrences at the university campus;*
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of the Security Management Services of the Campus Protection Services in the case university;*
- *Ascertain what student think of safety and security measures*
- *Evaluate current measures to improve safety and security of residing and non-residing students and their belongings while on campus*

2. Literature Review

2.1. Nature of Campus Crimes

The avowals of Masike and Mofokeng affirms that matters related to student's safety has been held at a high esteem by the government in recent years due to incessant cases of crimes in the institutions of high learning in South Africa [11]. Hence, the issue of student's needs, safety, welfare and the protection of personal belongings continues to draw so much attention [12]. In this regard, Sewpersad and Van Jaarsveld state that campus crimes such as theft, robbery, sexual harassment, rape, possession of drugs and weapons, and other possible crimes occur as a result of the inability to manage the security of the students which invariably affect the reputation and progress of Institutions of higher learning at a global context [13]. Sewpersad and van Jaarsveld [13] and Gover et al. [14] argue that the issue of campus crimes has consequent negative impact on the daily lives of students, especially, illicit acts that result in death.

Heimer and Lauritson posit that male students fall victims to most campus crimes due to the fact that they find themselves in surroundings where there are high possibilities of violence than female students [15]. Johnson and Kercher further aver that male students are more likely to be victims of murder, assault, and robbery while female students are perhaps, the victims of sexual assault and stalking. In the study of Johnson and Kercher, it was deduced that the consequences of insecurity on campuses have negative effects on their academic performance, therefore, the government should device possible measures to curb this social menace [16].

2.2. Campus Protection Services (CPS)

Sewpersad and Van Jaarsveld aver that educational institutions are communities encompassing the three fundamental components of a community which are to secure a geographical location, serve as a common link among people and as a collective collaboration. Institutions of higher learning are usually communities comprising of several infrastructures which are located in strategic areas [13], while some campuses are essentially autonomous cities comprising of multiple sports ground and other facilities which requires vital security measures. The different structures may be used for different activities on campuses and will consequently require different stages/phases of protection (for example, lecture halls will require different phase of security to an administrative building) [17].

Considering the nature of universities which is labeled an open campus environment, there has been an ongoing discussion on access to information, facilities and security measures to protect people and properties [18, 19]. This, however, becomes challenging as the openness of campus environment increases its vulnerability since people from outside the community commonly use campus venues and facilities [18]. Some of the major challenging issues raised concerning Campus Protection Service (CPS), includes handling student access which encompasses how and where to gain access [13]. This

is applicable to campus as a whole and student's residences. Campuses have easy access, open movement at all hours, and by allowing unknown individuals inside the campus increases the chances of crime occurrence [13].

In the view of Masike and Mofokeng, there is the need for security officers to patrol round the campus environment as it forms part of day-to-day duties required. It is also fundamental that the security officers should search each and every individual entering and leaving the university premises to ensure safety of students as well as the protection of students' properties. However, if the security officers fail to carry out their mandates by searching individuals, it becomes easy for students to gain access to the campus or residences with substances; drugs or alcohol without being noticed [11]. More so, the identified campus boundaries should be regularly checked by the security officers to ensure the safety of the residents in order to stop the culprits from taken stolen items out of the residences.

According to Masike and Mofokeng [11], the CPS in the Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa has been unable to promote the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) as well as the implementation of limited access control, boom gates, security guards, turnstiles and many others. In some Higher Institutions, the CCTV may not be monitored at all times or may not be displayed at every strategic location. Also, there is no guarantee that the cameras will capture crimes or unwanted behavior. These cameras maybe malfunctioning due to the inability to service the equipment and to position it in the right place [11].

2.3. Consequences of Students Fear of Crime on Campus

According to Masike and Mofokeng [11] it is a general assumption that South Africa is a country with high rate of crime. Students' fear of crime at University Campuses remain under investigation as previous research evidence depicts that fear is usually found within female students [2, 14]. Fisher and May confirm that in the past years, sociologists, psychologists and philosophers have discovered that there are gender-based variances in fear levels across crime types and in certain type of situations, such as the University community [20].

However, students are more probable to fear under particular circumstances such as surroundings with poor lighting [2, 11], in the absence of defensible space, and in most cases at University parking spaces. The fear of crime is likely to be prior experience of victimization as opined by the findings of Masike and Mofokeng [11] while Jennings et al. [2] aver that being a victim automatically increases fear. Thus, the authors of this article are of the opinion that the performance of most academic institutions in South Africa is affected by crime to some extent.

Another report by Hilinski et al. explains that the reason behind women's fear of crime is associated to prior victimization. Several women are always emotional with regard to crimes such as theft, assault, burglary, and rape/sexual assault [21]. Undergoing any kind of victimization possibly causes a sensitive consciousness of victimization, resulting in increased levels of fear amongst all kinds of crimes. When students find themselves in such kind of situations, the need for social and emotional counseling may be required. As it may affect the welfare of the student in the sense that he/she might perform poorly in academic activities as result of such trauma, the University management are expected to provide supports to the student [21].

2.4. Strategies to Reduce Campus Crimes

In order to implement strategies and prevention measures to reducing crimes at educational institutions that will ensure a safe and secure atmosphere, Sewpersad and Van Jaarsveld opined that it is crucial that a combined security system is deployed. The combination of campus protection services (CPS) and various securities measures should be incorporated to form a holistic system, consisting of physical security measures, technological security measures, policies and procedures, security aids and human resources. The following are the measures to reduce campus crimes [13].

2.5. Installation of Security Equipment

To improve the safety and security in the Institutions of higher learning, the Close-circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance systems, access control systems, as well as a completely furnished control room and good communication system should be provided by the Universities [22]. In order to prevent crimes, high definition Bosch CCTV cameras should be positioned in strategic locations, card readers and turnstiles should be installed at various internal locations as well as highly implemented access control system that combines card readers at the gates should be put into practice [23]. In this regard, Institutions should practice a combined layer and concentric protection method to risk analysis. This provides a good defense mechanism and a risk deterrence system. Subsequently, the layer and concentric protection infers an outwards-in-tactic. This indicates that one would always start at the outer layer/perimeter and work his/her way inwards through the various security shielding layers [22].

This layered security method is separated into three layers, namely the outer protective layer, the middle protective layer and the inner protective layer. The outer layer refers to the physical barriers at the property line (campus perimeter barriers). These barriers can be either natural (i.e. rivers) or man-made (i.e. wall, fence). The middle protective layer is at the exterior of the building (building perimeter). This can refer to parking spaces, warning signs, the building, doors and windows. Last is the inner protective layer which refers to security measures within the building (i.e. doors, locks, alarms, safes and guards).

The closer the layers to the protected asset, the more powerful and excessive the security protection becomes. This proposes that individuals would have to move from low risk areas towards the high-risk areas, but would have to pass through numerous barriers and security measures before reaching the targets in the high-risk areas. It is also vital to ascertain that such systems must be continuously be functional, monitored and evaluated in order to improve in the responses to emerging crime incidents.

2.6. Security Lighting Systems

Security lighting is another mechanism of securing campus environment. As stated previously, CCTV systems can provide caution signs of possible criminal offences and act as a reactive tool. CCTV monitors crowds and individuals, responds to threats and thus notifies the operator (s) of harmful behavior and actions before, during and after the occurrence of an incident [11]. With regards to the lighting systems, some Universities uses measures such as adding security guards, installing alarm systems, increasing lighting, blue lights around campus, establishing a night escort service and restricting access to campus buildings at night to keep their campuses safe [1]. Visibility of surroundings or location is an important element of a person to be able to see what awaits them.

2.7. Access Control Mechanism

Inferring from a document analysis of this study, it is suggested that control of access to the University and especially to the residences be reviewed and the level of CPS effectiveness be improved. It is noted from these documents that strangers, visitors and even students and non-students can access the residences easily without being monitored by security officers which have resulted in many campus crimes including rape. Another emphasis is to channel a turnstile gate as there has been concerns about the ineffectiveness of access control mechanism. The management should resolve the problems at these residences to improve student safety, welfare and protection of personal belongings [11].

2.8. Security Patrol on Campus Environment/Residences

Kahari affirms that the security patrol in the campuses, both on foot or in vehicles serves as an optimistic deterrent against potential criminal actions. Patrolling on campuses is perceived as an elementary duty of security officers [1]. Masike and Mofokeng stresses the importance of having the security officer to patrol round the residences as students may take in substance abuse or stolen goods in or out of the campus premises. They noted that boundary barriers/fences should be regularly checked by the security officers in case of any threat or vulnerability to ensure the safety of students in their residences [11].

2.9. Background Check and Crime Reduction

Most tertiary institutions in the United States (US) have progressively adopted criminal history background checks in their admissions processes and practices and have begun to create exclusionary policies grounded on these background checks. As discussed in this study, there is virtually no confirmation to imply that past criminal histories of students are directed to crime on campuses, and thus policies to exclude such students will not make campuses any safer [24, 25].

Despite the fact that there is no tangible evidence that students with criminal records commit crimes on campus at a rate slightly different from other students, a few document analyses of crimes and concern about institutional accountability have led to admission policies which necessitate prospective applicants to disclose their criminal records and even their secondary school academic history [26, 27]. The normal Application form used by various universities and colleges, have included questions about both criminal convictions and school disciplinary records to their application. Dickerson [28] sustains that there have been various debates on this issue whether students' criminal background checks are relevant in addressing the rate of criminal activity; however, Jaschik [27] affirms that it contributes fundamentally in the aspect of campus crime prevention.

3. Methodology

According to Creswell [29] and Leedy and Ormrod [30], the philosophical assumptions, design and methods are crucial to the purpose of any research endeavor. This paper was keyed in the pragmatic paradigm which warranted the use of the mixed methods approach. Data was obtained through the use of questionnaires for the quantitative approach and document analysis as qualitative approach. Questionnaires were distributed to 363 respondents using random sampling with a make-up of CPS staff and students registered from first to fourth year. Only 265 cases were returned and analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Permission was obtained through all appropriate ethical channels. Voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were ensured throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

This section offers the presentation and discussion of results based on the objectives of this paper.

4.1. Major Campus Crimes

This objective was set on determining the prevalent campus crimes as reported by students. Data show in descending order the most occurring campus crimes is theft (39.45%); mugging (26.17%); malicious damage to property (17.97%); while, robbery, assault and stalking has an occurrence of less than 20% (Fig. 1). This is in line with document obtained from CPS documents which shows the record of incidents of campus crimes. The reports confirm theft has the most predominantly occurring form of crime on campus.

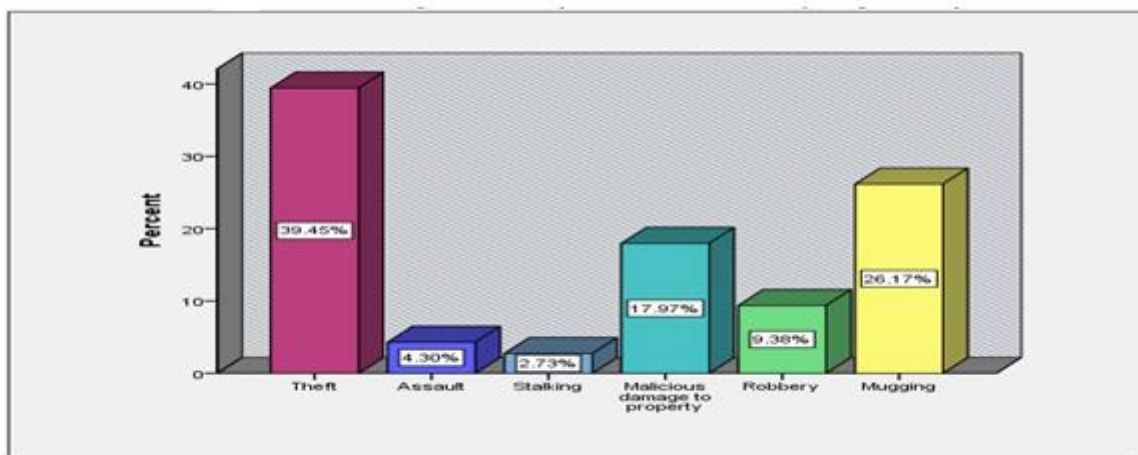


Fig. 1. Occurrence of campus on campus

Masike & Mofokeng [11] and Sewpersad & Van Jaarsveld [13] affirmed that higher institutions globally are experiencing crimes. Nonetheless, the nature of such crime may slightly differ in the manner in which they occur. Campus crimes, such as, theft, sexual harassment, rape, possession of drugs affects university campuses nationally. Most of these acts are committed between students between the age group of 20 to 25. Moreover, such type of crime rarely results in death, however, students who are victim may be troubled depending on the severity of the crime and consequences of such are anxiety, downheartedness, reduced self-esteem, increased stress, and mixed physical health consequences [14].

4.2. Effectiveness of the Security Management Services

The role of CPS is vital in institution of higher learning. Cased on the data reported on the prevalence of campus crimes such as, theft, mugging, assault, victimization, robbery, etc., it is arguable that the security management systems of the campus may be overloaded.

The results show that 32% of the respondent are of the opinion that the campus environment is not safe. This result raises urgency for attention towards security mechanisms. To determine level of effectiveness, participants were asked on the perception on the CPS on campus to ascertain whether the security facilities are functional, efficient and mal-administered. Data shows that more than 60% of the respondents opined that campus security regularly patrol the campus – offices, labs, classrooms and residences. The question is why there are high report of crimes. However, documents obtained show that security mechanisms such as cameras (CCTV) were only installed in few areas until the recent fees

must fall protest campaign on campus. This may be the reason for the high crimes rate on campus. Furthermore, respondents confirm stating that 72.3% of students are of the opinion that the security facilities installed on campus such as the CCTV, security lighting, and turnstile gate are not functional.

Students were therefore asked to rate the level of services provided by the CPS. It revealed that 61% of respondents were poor followed by fair with 23%. The rest occupied 16% - as good. This result indicates that the campus still needs proper security control systems to ensure and advance students' safety, protection including their personal belongings. Sewpersad and Van Jaarsveld [13] suggests that the safeguarding of university campus environment is an on-going progression that requires strategic planning. Such planning must include the inclusion of all stakeholders and a proper outline on the expectations of the challenges that comes with the day-to-day activities of the security management services.

4.3. Perception of Students on Safety and Security Measures

37% of the respondents were of the opinion that the security officers do not patrol round the campus. The study progressed to find out the opinions of the respondents on the activeness of the campus security. Most respondents (41.41%) indicate that the activities of the campus security were fair while 32% affirms that the campus security service is not actually performing. Kahari [1] states that security patrol on campus; both on foot or in vehicles serve as an optimistic deterrent against potential criminal actions. Furthermore, the studies of Masike and Mofokeng [11] sustains that it is of paramount importance to have the security officers patrolling round the campus environment to provide the needed security needed by the students. The figure below shows the perception of students on the activeness of the campus protection services.

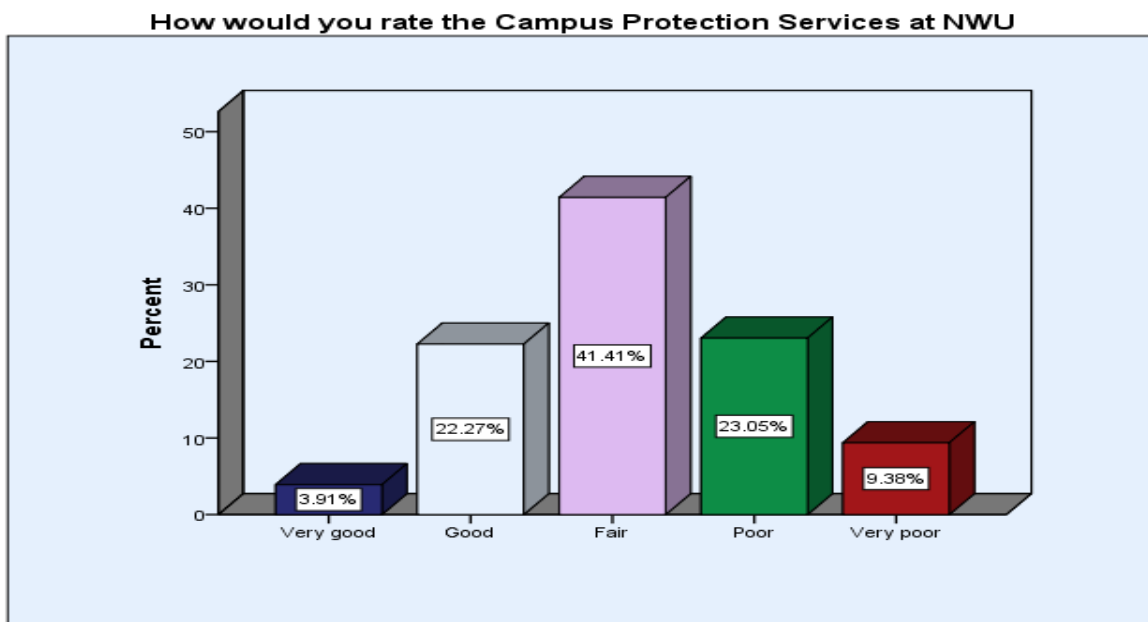


Fig. 2. Level of CPS

4.4. Measures to Improve the Safety of Residing and Non-Residing Students

This section provides possible measures to improve campus safety and strategies to reduce campus crimes. Respondent were asked to indicate their level of safety precaution measures while on or off the campus. The results are presented in the Table (1).

Table 1. Safety precaution measures

Safety precaution	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Physical security measures e.g. patrol, round searches, access control mechanism	31%	38%	17%	14%
Technological security measures e.g. security equipment, security lightening system	8%	22%	42%	28%
Campus safety policies	40%	30%	22%	8%
Background check e.g. checking of persons' history	0%	0%	0%	100%

The Table (1) show that most of the safety precaution installed on campus are ineffective except for physical safety precautions. The results in Table (1) confirms the lack of effectiveness of the SMS on campus. 70% of the respondent agree that technological security measures, such as, security equipment, security-lightening system, CCTV cameras are not working or not installed. Result further show that the SMS engaged in constant patrol and the use of access cards in premises, such as, the library, labs and residences. However, respondents seem to agree to the use of legal structures for control (70%). The implications of this might be that it is more of a disciplinary measure for crimes committed by students on campus than preventive even though it outlines penalties. Background checks may be a regular routine in most academic institution. Student are of the opinion that this method is not effective (100%) as such records may not stop a students' admission or expulsion due to constitutional right in section 28 of the Constitution (SA, 1996). According to Koekhoven [23], recommended ways for improving the state of safety and security, a range of Close-Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance systems, access control systems, a fully functional control room and a good communication system should be installed [22].

5. Conclusions

Due to the prevalence of violence and safety issues reported in institutions of higher learning, this paper was sought to investigate the roles of CPS for students' safety benchmarking against data obtained from a higher education institution in South Africa.

Findings show that crimes rates are high and mechanisms set for prevention of such are not effective because of management provisioning. Most equipment is dysfunctional and out of place. In addition, the current measures put in place are just general conventional means that are not holistic. This paper recommends an investigation that examines top management priorities on campus crimes. In addition, technological and physical security measures should be reinforced such as the additional installation of security equipment and security lightening systems. The code of conduct for students should be reviewed which includes all stakeholders (academic, non-academic staff and student) to spell out clearly accepted behavior and penalties.

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