

MANAGEMENT OF SAFETY AND SECURITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NEW  
NORMAL

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**Abstract**

*The World globally is going through a period of break down in security and order. Lives and properties are endangered; killings, kidnappings, terrorism and ritual sacrifices are the order of the day. The environment itself is bedeviled with pollution in the atmosphere. Recently, a disease that the World had never experienced suddenly broke out, man became afraid of shaking one another, coughing and sneezing which used be natural and mild symptoms of cold or influenza turned into symptoms of a horrendous and killer disease called Corona-virus (COVID-19). There is fear everywhere, in institutions of learning, Students are being kidnapped, and terrorist attack has become prevalent. Health wise, many lost their loved ones to the pandemic. Government all over the World closed down businesses, organizations and institutions of Learning, so as to save lives of many, it was indeed the era of the 'dark days'. However, the World is gradually coming to terms with managing the pandemic, thanks to the scientist, drugs and vaccines are being discovered, organizations and educational institutions are slowly going back to normalizing. Thus, in the 'new- normal' the safety and security of lives of students and workers in educational institutions should be of utmost importance to educational managers. It is recommended that educational managers put in place new innovations, to help manage safety and security in educational institutions in the new normal.*

**Keyword:** *Safety and Security, Higher Education, New normal*

**Introduction**

COVID-19 was first experienced in Wahan, China in late December 2019 (Shereen, *et al.*, 2020). A high light of COVID-19 timeline shows that on January 15, 2020, the first corona virus infection outside China was reported February, 2020, while the first corona virus mortality outside China was recorded; march 11, 2020. The World Health Organisation announced the outbreak of a pandemic spreading to different continents; April 10 2020, the global death toll surpassed a hundred thousand, May 11, 2020, countries like Spain, New Zealand, Thailand and Iran began to ease their quarantine restrictions after a decrease (Secon, *et al.*, 2020). Educational systems are likewise preparing for the post. Covid-19 era characterised by "new normal". This expression first emerged in the field of business. It was used to caution the belief of economists that industrial economies would revert to the normal after the recession (EL-Erian, 2010). The term has since been used in different context to mean that something which was previously not typical has become typical.

The urban dictionary (2009), described "new normal" as the situation of being after some intense change has occurred. It substitutes the accepted, habitual, usual state after a certain event happened. The unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 global outbreak is indeed ushering educational systems including the higher education to a new normal period in history (Basilaia & Kvavadza, 2020). This paper attempted to examine the management of safety and security in the higher education in the new normal.

**Concept of Safety**

Mostly, people tend to perceive "safety" as the total absence of danger, but this may not be absolutely right. Safety is frequently defined as the inverse of risk; the lower the risk, the higher the safety. Safety as the antonym of risk certainly captures the important dimension of safety, but it does not provide an

exhaustive understanding of the concept (Moller, *et al.*, 2006). Risk is commonly understood as the product of likelihood and severity, safety is increased which is the antonym or opposite of risk. People need to transition from seeing safety as an absence of negatives such as no serious incidents to seeing it as the presence of a positive capacity to make work proceed properly. A focus on safety and risk should become a focus on resilience (Dekker, 2015). The fact that incidents are relatively rare, events should remind all stake holders that the absence of a negative does not always result in a strong positive (Smith, 2014). Safety is no more and no less a condition of judgment of acceptable control over hazards and risks inherent to what an organization is doing at a point in time or chooses to do at some future point. Hazard inherent to the business process especially those not controlled to an acceptable level represent the true challenge.

### **Health Safety**

The World Health Organization outlined various hygiene protocols such as ‘‘hands washing frequently and thoroughly, use of alcohol (based hand sanitizers or hand wash with soap and water as a necessary step to contain the covid-19 pandemic (World Health Organisation, 2020). Also, UNICEF considers proper hand washing with soap with as critical to fighting the virus and the key to protecting frontline workers in various health centers. According to UNICEF, ‘‘hand washing with soap is one of the cheapest, most effective thing you can do to protect yourself and others against corona virus, as well as many other infectious diseases (UNICEF, 2020 a). Further recommendations for campus operations that minimize transmission are to the extent possible asses the level of vaccine coverage’s and make vaccine readily available for staff and students.

1. Consider extra spacing between people when bringing groups or classes together.
2. Recommending or requiring face covering for staff and students.
3. Promote a culture of face covering acceptance.
4. Maintain protocols to quickly identify sick students or staff.
5. Encourage students or staff to stay home when sick, consider sick and leave policies that support flexibility to academic programming and work when necessary.
6. Consider encouraging daily symptom screening of students, staff through symptoms screening apps or signs that people see daily which will be posted throughout the campus. (institutes of higher education (IHE):

### **Concept of Security**

The end of the cold war prompted the emergence of a new thinking about security indeed with the end of the cold war ,the concept of security has been broadened or extended as posits by Rothschild, (1995), to include threats, that have no longer a purely military character. Rothschild understands this extension in four main forms: first, from the security of nations to the security of the international system; third., an horizontal extension from military aspects to political, economic, social, environmental and human aspects; fourth: the political responsibility to ensuring security is extended:

it is diffused in all directions from national states, including upwards to international institutions, downwards to regional or local government and sideways to non-government organizations, to public opinion and the press ,and to the abstract forces or nature or of the market (Rothschild, 1995).

Rothschild’s ideas coincide with the innovative work presented by Barry Buzzan in Peoples, States and fear (1991). In the early postcold war period, Buzzan (1991) made a significant contribution to the debate on security by offering categorizations to the evolving security agenda. Actually, notion of threat and vulnerability is central to Buzzan’s ideas, since different components of the state are vulnerable to different types of threats (Brauch, 2011).

More so, the definition proposed by the CHS re-conceptualizes security in a fundamental way by:

- (i) moving away from traditional state-centric conception of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression, to one that concentrates on the security of the individual their protection and empowerment;
- (ii) drawing attention to a multitude of threats that cut across different aspects of human life and thus highlighting the inter face between security and development within and across nations (CHS, 2004).

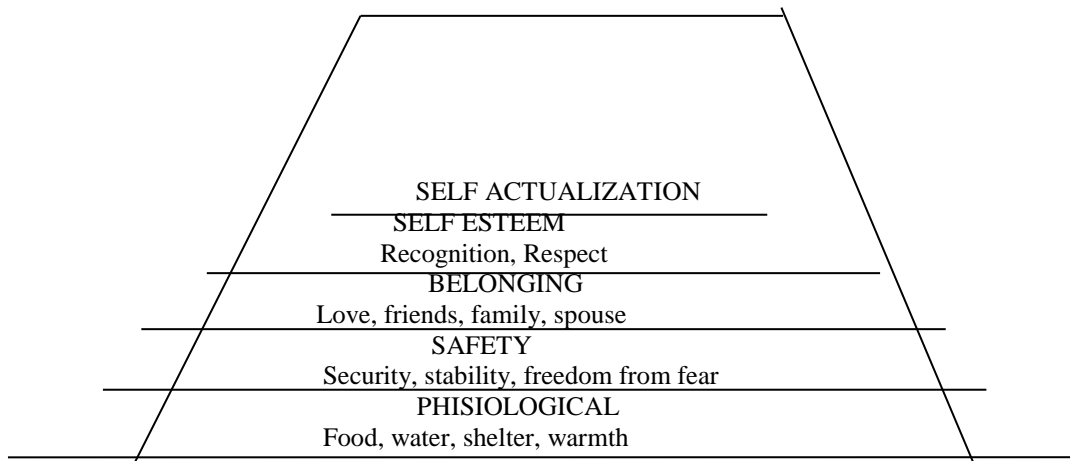
### **Need for Human Security**

As argued by the commission on human security (CHS, 2001) the need for security is associated with two sets of dynamics. First, human security is needed in response to the complexity and inter relatedness of

both and new security threats from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism and sudden economic and financial down turns, such threats tend to acquire transnational dimension and move beyond traditional notions of security that focus on military aggressions alone. Secondly, human security is required as a comprehensive approach that utilizes the wide range of new opportunities to tackle such threats in an integrated manner. Human security threats cannot be tackled through conventional mechanism alone. Instead, they require a new human rights and national security (HSU- OCHA Hand book, 2001).

The CHS (commission for human security), in its final report defines human security as protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedom and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting human fundamental freedoms-freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (wide spread) threat and situations. It means using processes that build some people strength and aspirations. It means creating political, social ,environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity(CHS:2003:2004).

Furthermore, in order to examine the need for safety and security in the higher education in this new normal, it is expedient that Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs be considered.



### Hierarchy of Human Need

According to Abraham Maslow the physiological needs for food, water, shelter which are related for survival and maintenance of life, are the literal requirements for human living. If these requirements are not met, the human body simply cannot continue to function. Then safety needs are next in line of importance, this include safety against sicknesses, accidents, murder, kidnapping, terrorism, security of life and property and so on. Therefore educational managers have to take cognizance of the prevalent issue of lack of safety and insecurity recently pervading educational institutions as a result of aftermath of the pandemic in the area of health, fear of contagion, genocide and the likes. Gregory (2020), asserts that the structure of students Affairs and services or SAS organisation varies widely ,unlike in the US, where many Universities have police with armed officers who have the power of arrest, universities elsewhere tend to have security departments with no arrest power and must rely on local Law enforcement agencies. The Educational Managers, students' affairs services has a role in managing fear on campus, reporting to students and parents the reality of potential threats to students and plans to curb the threats. He also suggests that the issues of safety, crime prevention and security may be addressed by providing programmes and informing students of the dos and don'ts, as well as of ways to avoid victimization.

Babalola, Ali and Sulaiman (2015) also defined Security as the state of being free from jeopardy or threats, a degree of resistance to or protection from harm. He developed a 3D Security Approach and mechanism namely

Defense -----→ Diplomacy -----→Development

The 3D frame work or mechanism promotes Development, Diplomacy, and Defense or security strategies. The 3D recognizes that security challenges like terrorism requires a variety of facilities in addressing couple threats. Babalola *et al.* (2015) went further to explain the 3D as follows:

**Defense:** This refers to a wide range of military tasks including waging war, peace keeping or coordinating disaster response.

**Diplomacy:** This is communication or negotiation between people to resolve shared problems and address conflicts through political, legal, religious, traditional rulers' means.

**Development:** This refers to governmental and non-governmental efforts to build the economic, social and political foundations of stable communities and societies.

### **Management of Safety and Security in Higher Education in the New Normal**

The safety of university campuses has been a hot topic in recent years. The problem might be ascribed to students' increased fear of risk as a result of many high-profile incidents publicized by the national media in recent years. It might also be due to the fact that the number of students enrolled in our institutions is outpacing the number of security officers provided by university officials on our campuses. Furthermore, the topic has been examined from the standpoint that rising female enrolment levels might be a factor, as women are often viewed as susceptible when it comes to safety and security concerns. Crime and violence are frequent in schools and higher learning communities, according to studies undertaken by Chekwa, *et al.*, (2013); Fernandez (2001); and Ratti (2010). According to research, violence has always persisted on university campuses. Historians have noticed that the problem of safety on campuses of higher educational institutions existed as early as the fourteenth century, as described by Schackner (as mentioned in Pezza, 1995).

Safety and security management is the process of detecting, analyzing, and predicting hazards that are regarded a danger or risk to an organization is known as safety management. As a result, safety management is a systematic approach to risk management inside an organisation (Zaboli, *et al.*, 2007). Following the systematic patterns and procedures in safety management may help the business reach the causes of catastrophes in a rational manner and steer them away from an unstructured approach based on psychologically and tactfully generated thinking that wastes time (MHT, 2006). As identified by Babalola *et al.* (2015), school administrators/ managers and planners are the core of school security management and as such, they can employ the development strategies in an insecure/ violent school environment by creating opportunities for the students to easily reach out to authorities. Diplomacy: The school managers should use friendly and approachable way to provide channels for negotiation in resolving conflicts in school.

Defense: On the other hand, employ closed circuit television (CCTV) installation strategically in the campus to monitor indiscipline activities such as cultism, rape, stealing and so on. Security men- police and the military can be employed as a last resort for investigating and suppressing riots by closest military base to the school. Therefore, the following general safety precautions must be considered in order to strengthen the security management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria in the new normal:

1. collaboration between educational institutions and national security agencies, etc;
2. surveillance cameras and other technical surveillance;
3. armed or unarmed security guards;
4. criminal code, national security law, or other appropriate regulatory framework for higher education protection;
5. staff and student security exercises or other sorts of training to teach them how to react in the event of an attack;
7. creating security committees in higher education institutions;
6. police inspections to university campuses;
8. emergency response equipment, such as first-aid kits and fire extinguishers;

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that the Pandemic had a devastating effect globally on all aspects of the economy, family life, education sector in general. However, 'the new normal' may not only refer to the after effect of the Pandemic ( COVID-19) alone, but also the after effect of terrorism, rape, kidnapping, killings, on members of the society which may culminate into general fear and feeling of insecurity in the society and on campuses of higher institution. Therefore, safety and security should not be left in the hands of the health workers and security department alone but educational managers must develop a systematic and proactive means of managing safety and security in higher institutions, so as to make the campus safe for the ultimate goal of learning.

**Recommendations**

1. The students and staff must be educated on the importance of safety and security and a zero tolerance for molestation, violence and rape should also be declared on campus.
2. The management in collaboration with non- governmental organization may organize health based seminars and disaster control, such as fire and how to use fire extinguishers for both students and staff. Fire extinguishers too should be placed strategically in lecture halls and offices.
3. Also, there should be collaboration between the school (campus) security department and the local police station around, such that the police can come on patrol in the campus every night so as to forestall criminal activities.
4. The lighting system of the campus should also be improved; all lonely paths should be well lighted. Security personnel or officers should be on roaster, some on night duty manning the gates, hostels and the environment.

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