

Challenges, Coping Mechanisms and Performance of Security Guards at Naga College Foundation, Inc., City of Naga

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the challenges encountered, coping mechanisms adopted, and work performance of security guards at Naga College Foundation, Inc., City of Naga, during School Year 2024-2025 and used the findings as the basis for intervention strategies. A descriptive-correlational design was employed with all 33 eligible security guards deployed in the academic campuses of the institution. Data were gathered through a validated researcher-made questionnaire and unstructured interviews; the questionnaire obtained a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .86 and a reported validity coefficient of .93. Weighted means, Pearson product-moment correlation, and coefficients of determination were used for analysis. Results showed that the guards generally experienced moderately low challenges in physical and mental demands, work environment and

operations, and job satisfaction and corporation. Coping mechanisms were reported as often practiced in the emotional and social domains and sometimes practiced in the physical domain, while performance was rated very good in personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity. Significant associations were reported between the challenge domains and emotional coping ($r = .93$, $p = .022$), while job satisfaction and corporation was significantly associated with personality and personal behavior ($r = .98$, $p = .003$), work behavior ($r = .91$, $p = .035$), and productivity ($r = .92$, $p = .027$). Coefficients of determination further indicated very strong influence on emotional coping and on the three performance dimensions. The study concluded that, although challenges were generally manageable, structured interventions remain important for sustaining guards' coping capacity and performance. Intervention strategies organized through the Analyze, Design, and Develop components of the modified ADDIE model were therefore proposed for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Keywords: *security guards, occupational challenges, coping mechanisms, work performance, campus security, intervention strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Security guards are central to maintaining peace, order, and safety in educational institutions because their responsibilities extend beyond surveillance to access control, emergency response, conflict management, protection of property, and assistance to students, employees, and visitors. Philippine higher education policy similarly recognizes the importance of licensed and competent security personnel in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2013). In this sense, campus security work supports the broader goal of building safe and orderly institutions while requiring guards to exercise vigilance, sound judgment, interpersonal competence, and resilience in daily operations (Robertson, 2018; Vellani, 2020).

The occupational demands of security work can nevertheless expose guards to physical fatigue, difficult interactions, irregular work conditions, inadequate equipment, training gaps, low compensation, and other sources

of stress. Studies in educational and other institutional settings have identified understaffing, extended working hours, logistical constraints, verbal or physical confrontation, poor working conditions, and insufficient professional preparation as recurring concerns (Sasitha et al., 2023; Kurle & Valvi, 2023; Desai, 2022; Eshun & Salifu, 2025). Philippine studies likewise show that guards may face resource and communication limitations, job insecurity, and uneven competency development, all of which can affect how they carry out protective responsibilities (Laroya & Mayao, 2024; Libo-on & Tayco, 2022; Ayeo-eo, 2023).

Because security work is inherently demanding, coping mechanisms are important to sustaining physical readiness, emotional regulation, social functioning, and work performance. The transactional view of stress and coping holds that responses to stress depend on how individuals appraise demands and the resources available to manage them (Biggs et al., 2017; Janse, 2025). Social support can also buffer the negative effects of stress by providing emotional, informational, and practical resources (Kort-Butler, 2018). Empirical work among security and related personnel has further linked coping, social support, and health behaviors with occupational well-being and capacity to remain effective under pressure (Saleem et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2021; Patnaik et al., 2022).

Literature Review

At Naga College Foundation, Inc., security guards protect a large and diverse academic community through gate control, patrol, monitoring, emergency response, and implementation of institutional rules. The source study identified a gap in research that simultaneously considered the guards' challenges, coping mechanisms, performance, and intervention strategies in a private educational institution. Accordingly, the study examined challenges in physical and mental demands, work environment and operations, and job satisfaction and corporation; assessed physical, emotional, and social coping; determined performance in personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity; tested relationships and influence among these variables; and developed intervention strategies intended to address the challenges and sustain or improve work performance.

Occupational challenges in security work

Security work is characterized by sustained vigilance, unpredictable encounters, and responsibility for preventing or responding to incidents. Sasitha et al. (2023) identified financial inadequacy, poor working conditions, and disregard for job descriptions among the challenges experienced by guards in different establishments. Similarly, Desai (2022) highlighted workplace violence, training concerns, cyber and physical security risks, outdated technology, and the first-responder role of guards. In educational institutions, Kurle and Valvi (2023) described long work hours, limited benefits, inadequate equipment, tasks beyond defined functions, verbal abuse, physical altercations, discrimination, and training limitations as conditions that may contribute to dissatisfaction and burnout.

Campus settings also introduce institution-specific demands. Eshun and Salifu (2025) reported understaffing, long hours, work-life imbalance, logistical constraints, low remuneration, and training lapses among campus guards, while Laroya and Mayao (2024) documented resource and manpower shortages, infrastructure limitations, compliance concerns, and communication barriers among university security personnel in the Philippines. Earlier work by Aldovino and Villaruel (2018) and Gebresilassie (2017) likewise emphasized low wages, inadequate benefits, weak training, and poor working conditions. These studies establish a relevant background for assessing whether similar concerns are present among security guards in a private educational institution in Naga City.

Stress, coping mechanisms, and resilience

The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping provides a useful explanation of how occupational demands become stressful through an individual's appraisal of threats, challenges, and available coping resources (Biggs et al., 2017; Janse, 2025). Coping may involve deliberate cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage internal or external stressors (Algorani & Gupta, 2023). In security work, such efforts can include health-maintenance behaviors, emotional regulation, leisure, spiritual practices, and seeking assistance from family,

peers, or supervisors. These strategies are especially relevant in occupations that require prolonged attention and emotional control during interaction with the public.

Research among security and related protective-service personnel supports the importance of coping and social resources. Saleem et al. (2017) described occupational stress and coping strategies among university security guards, while Singh et al. (2021) found coping strategies and social support to have a buffering role in the relationship between occupational stress and mental health among police personnel. Patnaik et al. (2022) documented health concerns among security personnel working in different shifts, underscoring the need for physical self-care. Together, these findings reinforce the importance of adaptive coping and social support in helping security personnel manage occupational demands while protecting well-being.

Preparedness, competence, and work performance

The effectiveness of security personnel depends not only on physical presence but also on preparedness, competence, discipline, and the quality of their behavior while performing assigned duties. Barte et al. (2022) reported that school security personnel had very good qualifications but still showed room for improvement in preparedness for institutional practices and programs. Ayeo-eo (2023) likewise found that competency can be constrained when opportunities for continuing professional growth are limited. These findings support the need to examine both the conditions guards face and the quality of the performance they demonstrate in routine and emergency duties.

Performance is also shaped by organizational and employment conditions. Libo-on and Tayco (2022), in a Naga City context, reported that external factors affected behavioral aspects of security personnel performance and noted concerns related to job tenure and recognition. Sundjoto (2023) found that training, work discipline, and leadership were associated with security guard performance, reinforcing the role of organizational support in sustaining effective service. More generally, occupational stressors can interact with well-being and work outcomes, making performance assessment more meaningful when interpreted together with the challenges and coping mechanisms experienced by personnel (Aceret et al., 2025).

Theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study

The study integrated three perspectives. First, the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping explains how guards appraise work demands and select ways to respond to them (Biggs et al., 2017; Janse, 2025). Second, Social Support Theory emphasizes the protective role of supportive relationships and social resources during stressful situations (Kort-Butler, 2018). Third, the safety-needs component of Maslow's hierarchy, as used in the thesis, underscores the importance of physical safety, health, financial stability, and protection from harm as conditions that can shape work experience and functioning. Together, these perspectives connect challenge exposure, coping responses, and work performance within the security-guard context.

The conceptual framework therefore positioned the three challenge domains—physical and mental demands, work environment and operations, and job satisfaction and corporation—alongside physical, emotional, and social coping mechanisms and the three dimensions of performance: personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity. The framework further identified intervention strategies as the study output, linking empirical findings to planned organizational action. This is consistent with intervention-development literature emphasizing deliberate, theory-informed strategies that are designed to address identified needs and subsequently evaluated for effectiveness (Morse et al., 2019).

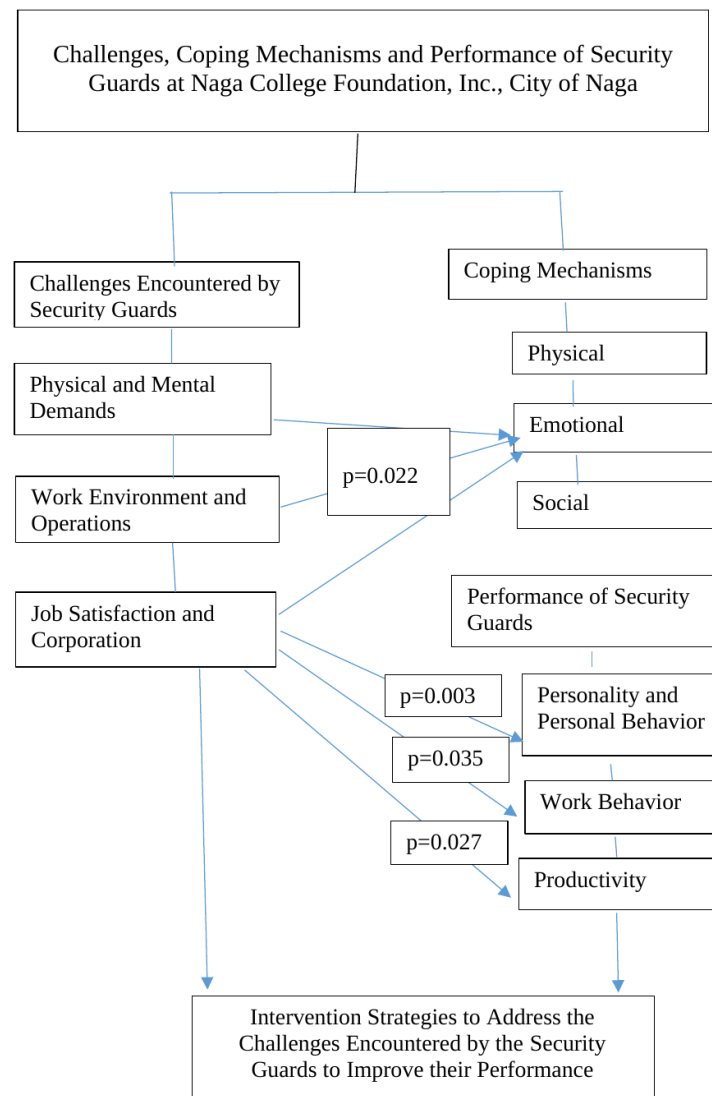


Figure 1. *Conceptual Paradigm*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to characterize the challenges encountered by the security guards, the coping mechanisms they adopted, and their work performance. The correlational component was used to determine the relationships between challenge domains and coping mechanisms and between challenge domains and work performance. Consistent with correlational research, the analysis examined the strength and direction of relationships without manipulating the variables or asserting experimental causation (Bhandari, 2024).

Research Locale

The study was conducted at the academic campuses of Naga College Foundation, Inc. in the City of Naga during School Year 2024-2025. The participating guards were deployed at the main campus, the Basic Education/Senior High School campus, and the NCF Annex along Magsaysay Avenue. Security posts outside these academic campuses, including other establishments served by the same agency, were excluded from the study.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were 33 security guards of Tres Dekalibre Security Agency who were assigned to the academic campuses of Naga College Foundation, Inc. The study required at least one year of service at the institution so that participants would have sufficient experience with the working conditions being assessed. After this eligibility criterion was applied, all qualified guards across the different shifts were included through total enumeration. Thus, the study combined purposive eligibility criteria with complete enumeration of the small, defined population.

Research Instrument

Two data-gathering approaches were used: a researcher-made questionnaire and an unstructured interview. The questionnaire measured challenges in physical and mental demands, work environment and operations, and job satisfaction and corporation, as well as physical, emotional, and social coping mechanisms. Four-point response scales were used for both challenge level and coping frequency. Work performance was based on agency evaluation dimensions covering personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity. Five research-active faculty members reviewed the questionnaire, and a dry run was conducted with 10 security guards formerly assigned to Naga College Foundation but already transferred to other establishments. The instrument obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .86, interpreted in the thesis as good reliability, and a reported validity coefficient of .93.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher prepared the questionnaire, subjected it to expert review, conducted the dry run, and incorporated necessary revisions before final administration. The finalized instrument was personally distributed to the respondents. Personal administration also allowed the researcher to clarify critical or interesting responses through unstructured interviews and helped ensure that questionnaire items were completed. Responses were tallied, quantified, organized in tabular form, and then analyzed and interpreted according to the study objectives.

Data Analysis

Frequency counts supported response tabulation. Weighted means were used to summarize the level of challenges, the frequency of coping mechanisms, and the work performance ratings. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to assess relationships between the study variables, while coefficients of determination were used to express the reported extent of influence of challenge variables on coping and performance (Hair et al., 2019; Turney, 2024). The intervention strategies were organized using the Analyze, Design, and Develop components of a modified ADDIE approach.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, beneficence, and the right to withdraw. Participants were informed of the purpose and procedures of the research and indicated voluntary participation through signed consent. Codes were used instead of names, and personal identities were not disclosed in the manuscript. The researcher also established a data-handling procedure under which data submitted by a withdrawing participant would be deleted when withdrawal was still feasible. The thesis further declared that artificial intelligence tools were not used to manipulate or fabricate data and were used only in limited ways to support idea generation, organization, and writing improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges encountered by the security guards

Across the three challenge domains, the security guards generally reported moderately low challenges. Physical fatigue was the highest-rated item under physical and mental demands ($M = 2.32$), while dealing with difficult individuals was the highest-rated work-environment concern ($M = 2.39$). Under job satisfaction and corporation, meeting emergency preparedness and response was the highest-rated concern ($M = 2.39$). Although these ratings indicate that the problems were manageable rather than severe, the findings still identify concrete occupational conditions requiring attention, particularly fatigue, difficult interpersonal encounters, preparedness, equipment reliability, work schedules, compensation, and recognition.

Table 1. Key Findings on Challenges Encountered by Security Guards

Challenge Domain	Highest-Rated Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Physical and mental demands	Physical fatigue	2.32	Moderately Low
Work environment and operations	Dealing with difficult individuals	2.39	Moderately Low
Job satisfaction and corporation	Meeting emergency preparedness and response	2.39	Moderately Low

The pattern is consistent with literature describing security work as physically and psychologically demanding even when day-to-day conditions remain generally manageable. Security guards may encounter difficult people, role ambiguity, limited training, and other conditions that can produce cumulative stress (Anagha, 2023; Guardian Group Services, 2021). Local and institutional studies have likewise identified low compensation, resource limitations, and communication or support concerns as recurring features of security work (Mindanao, 2021; Laroya & Mayao, 2024). The relatively low challenge ratings in the present study may therefore reflect resilience and accumulated experience rather than the complete absence of occupational stressors.

Coping mechanisms adopted by the security guards

The thesis summary reported that emotional and social coping mechanisms were often practiced, while physical coping was practiced sometimes. Emotional coping included developing a positive mindset, meditation or deep breathing, religious practices, counseling, and leisure activities. Social coping included productive use of days off, direct action to relieve stress, quality time with family, receiving advice from peers and significant others, and maintaining calm and friendly interactions. Physical coping included adherence to scheduled work hours, healthy food and drinks, adequate sleep, medical checkups, and exercise.

Table 2. Summary of Coping Mechanisms

Coping Domain	Average Weighted Mean	Reported Interpretation
Emotional	2.39	Often
Social	2.37	Often
Physical	2.31	Sometimes
Overall	2.36	Often

These findings support the importance of both personal regulation and interpersonal resources in occupational coping. The use of social support is consistent with Social Support Theory, which views family, peers, and other relationships as resources that can buffer stressful experiences (Kort-Butler, 2018). The pattern also echoes evidence that coping and social support can protect mental health in protective-service occupations (Singh et al., 2021). The less frequent physical coping behaviors, particularly regular exercise and consistent health-maintenance practices, suggest an area that can be strengthened through structured wellness support, especially given the health risks associated with prolonged standing, shifting schedules, and security work (Patnaik et al., 2022).

Work performance of the security guards

Performance was rated very good across all three dimensions. Productivity obtained the highest average weighted mean ($M = 3.70$), followed by work behavior ($M = 3.69$) and personality and personal behavior ($M = 3.68$), for an overall performance mean of 3.69. Strong individual indicators included friendliness, punctuality, coordination with peers and school personnel, patience, maximization of time on duty, foresightedness in protecting people and facilities, prompt reporting, and knowledge of security responsibilities.

Table 3. *Summary of Security Guard Performance*

Performance Dimension	Average Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Productivity	3.70	Very Good
Work behavior	3.69	Very Good
Personality and personal behavior	3.68	Very Good
Overall	3.69	Very Good

The results indicate that the guards were able to maintain strong service performance despite the challenges documented in the study. Comparable research has connected preparedness, qualifications, training, discipline, and leadership with security personnel performance (Barte et al., 2022; Sundjoto, 2023). The finding is also consistent with local evidence that security personnel can perform well in core duties even when external employment conditions, such as tenure security or recognition, remain potential concerns (Libo-on & Tayco, 2022).

Relationships among challenges, coping mechanisms, and performance

The tabulated correlation results showed significant relationships between each challenge domain and emotional coping, with $r = .93$ and $p = .022$ for physical and mental demands, work environment and operations, and job satisfaction and corporation. These values indicate that the measured challenges were closely associated with the emotional coping responses reported by the guards. The finding is consistent with the transactional view that coping responses are shaped by how occupational demands are experienced and appraised (Biggs et al., 2017; Janse, 2025).

For work performance, the tabulated significant relationships were between job satisfaction and corporation and all three performance dimensions: personality and personal behavior ($r = .98$, $p = .003$), work behavior ($r = .91$, $p = .035$), and productivity ($r = .92$, $p = .027$). These strong positive coefficients show that the job-satisfaction/corporation domain moved closely with the performance ratings in the sample. This result reinforces the practical importance of organizational conditions, recognition, compensation, preparedness, and support in sustaining effective security service.

Table 4. *Significant Correlations Reported in the Study*

Challenge Domain	Outcome	r	p	Decision
Physical and mental demands	Emotional coping	.93	.022	Significant
Work environment and operations	Emotional coping	.93	.022	Significant
Job satisfaction and corporation	Emotional coping	.93	.022	Significant
Job satisfaction and corporation	Personality and personal behavior	.98	.003	Significant
Job satisfaction and corporation	Work behavior	.91	.035	Significant
Job satisfaction and corporation	Productivity	.92	.027	Significant

Influence of challenges and proposed intervention strategies

Using coefficients of determination, the study reported very strong influence of each challenge domain on emotional coping ($r^2 = .86$). For performance, job satisfaction and corporation showed very strong reported influence on personality and personal behavior ($r^2 = .96$), work behavior ($r^2 = .82$), and productivity ($r^2 = .84$). The findings indicate that the conditions surrounding the guards' work and their experience of the job were closely connected with how they managed emotional strain and how their work performance was assessed. These results support the study's conclusion that intervention should address both individual coping and organizational conditions rather than treating performance as an isolated outcome.

Table 5. *Coefficients of Determination for Key Reported Relationships*

Challenge Domain	Outcome	r ²	Interpretation
Physical and mental demands	Emotional coping	.86	Very Strong
Work environment and operations	Emotional coping	.86	Very Strong
Job satisfaction and corporation	Emotional coping	.86	Very Strong
Job satisfaction and corporation	Personality and personal behavior	.96	Very Strong
Job satisfaction and corporation	Work behavior	.82	Very Strong
Job satisfaction and corporation	Productivity	.84	Very Strong

The proposed intervention strategies were organized using the Analyze, Design, and Develop components of the modified ADDIE model. The Analyze phase identified the challenge areas requiring continued attention even though overall ratings were moderately low. The Design phase structured the intervention around key areas, objectives, implementation strategies, responsible human resources, budgetary requirements, and success indicators. The Develop phase translated these design elements into an actionable intervention plan and included provisions for monitoring and evaluation. This approach is consistent with the study's objective of using empirical findings to support practical improvement rather than merely describing the conditions experienced by the security guards (Morse et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that security guards at Naga College Foundation, Inc. experienced generally manageable but persistent occupational challenges while maintaining strong coping resources and very good work performance. Physical and mental demands, work environment and operations, and job satisfaction and corporation were all identified as challenge areas, although at a moderately low level. Emotional and social coping were the most prominent forms of response, while physical coping was less frequent. At the same time, the guards were rated very good in personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity, indicating that they continued to carry out their responsibilities effectively despite the demands of campus security work.

The correlational findings further show that selected challenge conditions were significantly associated with coping and performance. The tabulated results identified strong relationships between all three challenge domains and emotional coping and between job satisfaction and corporation and all three performance dimensions. The reported coefficients of determination likewise indicated very strong influence for these relationships. Taken together, the findings support the development of structured intervention strategies that strengthen physical well-being, emotional coping, organizational support, preparedness, recognition, and work conditions while preserving the high level of performance already demonstrated by the guards.

Recommendation

Naga College Foundation, Inc., the Civil Security Office, and Tres Dekalibre Security Agency should jointly review specific incidents and recurring challenge areas so that concerns related to fatigue, difficult interactions, emergency preparedness, equipment, schedules, compensation, support, and recognition can be addressed promptly. Wellness initiatives should strengthen physical coping through exercise, adequate rest, health monitoring, and access to medical support, while emotional and social coping may be reinforced through peer support, debriefing, counseling, and family-sensitive scheduling. The security agency should also consider a standardized performance-assessment tool to improve consistency in evaluating personality and personal behavior, work behavior, and productivity.

The proposed intervention strategies should be implemented on a phased basis and accompanied by monitoring and evaluation to determine their effectiveness. Future studies may broaden the coping dimensions to include spiritual and health-related approaches, examine work-life balance in greater depth, and replicate the study in other private and public educational institutions using larger samples. Subsequent evaluations should also determine whether improvements in training, work conditions, support, and wellness are followed by measurable changes in coping, job satisfaction, and performance.

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