

HARNESSING SAFETY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS, WORKPLACE AND SPORTS SETTINGS

Osiki Joshua Obazu, Odelola Jacob Olusola, Iyanda Adisa Bolaji, Fakorede Kolade
Oolayomi, Oredugba Maria Precious and Lukeman Faith Oiza
Department of Health Education, University of Ibadan

Abstract

Ensuring safety within educational and sporting environments is paramount for the protection and well-being of students, staff, and athletes. This paper examines the critical role of safety rules and regulations as foundational guidelines designed to prevent accidents, injuries, and other hazards. It highlights how well-formulated safety protocols establish clear procedures and responsibilities that promote a culture of caution and preparedness. Furthermore, the study explores the legal frameworks governing safety in schools, including national and local legislation that mandate safe infrastructure, emergency preparedness, health standards, and the duty of care owed by educational institutions to their communities. Similarly, the paper documented laws and statutory provisions related to safety in sports, addressing issues such as athlete protection, risk management, equipment standards, and liability for injuries during training and competitions.

Keywords: Safety rules, Safety regulations, School safety, Sports safety

Introduction

Safety is the act of being free from harm, danger or hazards. Safety management practices enable organizations to reduce the chances of accidents, injuries, and near misses (Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010). According to Kennedy and Kirwan (1998), safety management practices are the actual roles in the organization to remain safe. Therefore, it is quite understandable that to ensure occupational health and safety remains the biggest challenge for practitioners and theorists alike (Clarke, 2006; Fruhen, 2019; Lestari, 2019; Zohar, 2010).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO - 2018) workers around the world continues to bear millions of injuries and deaths. However, there are various safety management practices that are used to enhance occupational health and safety performance and to reduce the rate of accidents and injuries at the workplace (Lee, 2018). The poor conceptualization for safety management practices and interchangeable terms compel for development of a holistic framework that encompasses different aspects of safety management practices (Autenrieth, 2016). Besides, in previous research studies, scholars have identified the role of safety management practices to enhance occupational health and safety performance (Baldassarre, 2020; Hanafi, 2018; Lee, 2018; Liu, 2020; Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010; Zimolong and Elke, 2006).

However, the rate of accidents, injuries, and health and safety expenses revealed the fundamental concerns for the study designs and safety management models (Alingh,

2018; Amponsah-Tawaih and Adu, 2016; Aziz, 1993). Added to this, occupational health and safety-related theories have evolved dramatically and resulted in various safety management practices in the last decade (Zohar, 2000). To date, no successful attempts have been made to create a unified framework for safety management practices and occupational health and safety performance. For example, Hanafi (2018); Lee (2018); Vinodkumar and Bhasi (2010); Vredenburg (2002) conducted a literature review to synthesize literature on safety management practices and occupational health and safety performance. In facility management, AI-driven smart sports venues optimize environmental conditions to enhance exercise experiences. Automated adjustments to temperature, humidity, and lighting contribute to improved performance and injury prevention.

Concept of Safety Rules and Regulations

In hazardous organizations, e.g. oil and gas, construction, management needs to adopt a safety management model to reduce the chances of accidents (Amponsah-Tawaih and Adu, 2016). However, the scope of studies (Hanafi, 2018; Lee, 2018; Liu, 2020; Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010; Vredenburg, 2002) was limited to only safety management practices at the strategic level of the organization. Safety rules and regulations are specific guidelines and instructions designed to protect individuals from harm and ensure safe conduct in various environments such as schools, homes, workplaces, roads, and public places. They help prevent accidents, maintain order, and promote health and well-being by setting clear expectations for safe behaviour. In this context, rules are understood as formal, written artifacts in contrast to organizational routines (Pentland and Feldman, 2005).

Formal rules are an essential aspect of most organizations as they fulfill a number of organizing functions: As a form of organizational control, they are used to steer human action by aligning individual and collective behaviour with the organization's goals (Cardinal, Sitkin, and Long, 2004). As such, rules are always a form of power in organizations (Clegg, Courpasson, and Philips, 2006). Next to this "vertical" function, rules also work "horizontally" as a coordination mechanism. By defining responsibilities, allocating resources and helping to develop agreement, they enable actors to collectively reach a shared goal (Okhuysen and Bechky, 2009; Thompson, 1967; Van de Ven, Delbecq, and Koenig, 1976). However, rules also have drawbacks: Too many rules can hinder innovation introduction and lead to inertia (van der Steen, 2009).

This phenomenon is also called "red tape" and has been defined as "formalization (in the form of burdensome rules and procedures) that is detrimental to the organization" (Pandey and Kingsley, 2000). Finding the right degree of formalization is therefore a challenge to every organization (Walsh and Dewar, 1987). Whereas classic bureaucratization theory (Weber, 1978) argues that formalization has a self-promoting tendency to create ever more rules, Schulz (1998) found that rules do not infinitely "breed" more rules – instead the production of new rules slows down as more rules are already in place. Adler and Borys (1996) proposed the concept of enabling bureaucracy (in contrast to coercive) as a healthy form of formalization. However, Adler later revised his position,

arguing that bureaucracies are always simultaneously enabling and coercive (Adler, 2012). Cardinal, Sitkin and Long (2010) contrasted formal forms of control (e.g., written rules or directives) with informal ones (e.g., values, norms or beliefs) and showed how organizations over time can move from one extreme to the other, trying to find the right balance.

Besides the discussion of the right degree, or right type of formalization, organizational scholars have long found that rules are not always being followed and that violations are part of every rule system (Lehman and Ramanujam, 2009; McLean Parks, Li, and Gallagher, 2010; Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Veiga, Golden, and Dechant, 2004; Warren, 2003). Interestingly, some scholars have focused more on the harmful side of rule violations (MacLean and Behnam, 2010; Phipps, 2008; Tyler and Blader, 2005; Umphress and Bingham, 2011) while others have shown how rule violations can benefit co-workers, customers or can represent an indicator of necessary change (Desai et al, 2010; Olin and Wickenberg, 2001). Most recently, Martin (2012) differentiated rule violations on two dimensions: first, whether rule-breaking is contested or instead unofficially permitted, and second, whether rule-breaking is organized by a (low-level) individual, on a work group level, or at the level of top organizational managers.

Safety in Schools

Schools are naturally designed to be a citadel of teaching and learning where whoever passes through it should be distinguished in society. Similarly, schools are meant to be places that are free from both psychological and physical attacks. Schools should also be places where refuge can be sought. Unfortunately, the reverse is now the case because attacks on schools are a common occurrence in the modern era. Uzuegbu-Wilson, (2019) submitted that the severe security issues that jeopardize the security and unity of the Nigerian state, in general, do not exclude attacks on schools. However, the causes of the attacks are not well understood (Alimba, 2018). Due to the insurgency of Boko Haram, 22 of Borno State's 27 local government areas had no formal education in place by 2013. In 2014, there were no functioning schools in 2 out of 3 educational zones in Yobe State and 7 out of the 21 local government areas in Adamawa State. In Yobe State, all schools have moved to Damaturu, the state capital. Attacks by Boko Haram in Adamawa State resulted in the closure of 115 schools in 8 local government areas, displacing 285,632 students and 8,150 staff.

Furthermore, the attack is not limited to schools, religious centres (mosques and churches), embassies, cultural centres and many more in Nigeria have continuously been threatened by the state of insecurity of the nation. For instance, Kpee and Osiobe (2014) reported that the bombings of the Mogadishu Barrack in Abuja in December 2010, Afropolitan Journals 73 Vol. 10, No. 1 2023 African Journal of Humanities & Contemporary Education Research www.afropolitanjournals.com the police headquarters in Abuja in June 2011, the UN House in Abuja in August 2011, the Catholic church in Suleja, as well as various other buildings and institutions, have all been blamed on Boko Haram. Also, the schools are facing the challenge of laboratory equipment, bullying, rape, students' unrest and suicidal ideation. To get rid of these, a school safety manual was

created by the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as part of the Teacher Training and Development for Peace-building in the Horn of Africa and Surrounding Countries (UNESCO-IICBA, 2017).

This study aimed to familiarize teachers with the knowledge and abilities required for the establishment, upkeep, and maintenance of fundamental school safety. Mubita (2018) explained that this guidebook primarily serves as a guide for teachers about school safety. Despite the efforts of government at all levels to make schools a safe haven, day-in day-out, different kinds of attacks are witness. This is to the extent that lives of teachers, students, and other personnel are recorded. Research investigations have discovered some variables that change depending on the location. Typically, school attacks result in the damage of the school's physical infrastructure, the death of both teaching and non-teaching personnel, pupils, and other people working at the school.

The security challenges in Nigeria are myriads in nature and range from simple civil disturbance or communal clashes between neighbouring communities to very large-scale disturbance that may threaten the cooperate existence of the country or directed towards the citizenry or organs of government or institutions set up for the well-being of the state or nation" (Kpee and Osiobe, 2014). There are a variety of definitions of what constitutes a safe school. For example, Hernandez, Floden, and Bosworth (2010) suggested that a safe school is a place free from violence, and represented by an environment where there is no perceived fear with respect to the school or its disciplinary procedures. This in tells that in a safe school, learners, teachers, staff, and visitors are free to interact without fear or threats, and in a supportive way to support teaching and learning. Hull (2010) provided a more practical and management-oriented elucidation of school safety, stating that it includes the school's culture and the appropriate training and resources to respond to threats and hazards.

Squelch (2001) also defined a safe school as one that is free from danger and possible harm, where non-educators, educators and learners can work, teach and learn without fear or ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence. Regulation of Head of National Agency for Disaster Management (BNPB) No. 4 in 2012 (Perka BNPB No. 4/2012 on Guidelines on Implementation of Safe School/Madrassa from Disaster in A Practical Guideline to Making School Safer from Natural Disaster for School Principals and School Committees (2014: 2)

Laws Relating to Safety in Sports

The Nigerian Sports Commission Act: The Nigerian Sports Commission Act is the central legislative piece governing sports in Nigeria. This act principally provides for the establishment of a National Sports Commission; established in 1971 to manage sports activities, ensuring harmony and the proper representation of Nigeria in the international sporting arena. This statutory document outlines the composition, functions, powers, and structure of the National Sports Commission, which promotes, facilitates and provides adequate resources to propel sports at all levels in Nigeria. The Commission's primary role is to develop, encourage, and effectively manage competitive and non-competitive

sports in Nigeria. In sport, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) can clarify how specific metrics, like biometric data or movement patterns, impact injury risk assessments or training advice, helping athletes and coaches make informed, trustworthy decisions (Procopiou & Piki, 2023; Wang et al., 2022).

Although these methods show promise, their use in sports data handling is still in its early stages and requires further exploration to fully realise their potential. The Act further grants the Commission the latitude to present National Sports Policy recommendations to the government, suggesting that the Nigerian Sports Commission Act is the bedrock of sports administration and legal regulation in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Football Association Act is an extensive legal instrument designed specifically to govern football-related activities in Nigeria, the country's most popular sport. Its advent has greatly impacted Nigerian football, imbuing it with a sense of direction and uniformity, encouraging the sport's steady growth. In real-time game analysis, AI systems offer insights into tactics, formations and player positioning, allowing for adaptive strategies in sports like football and basketball (Fischer et al., 2019; H. Li et al., 2021). A challenge here is balancing AI-driven insights with the nuanced, situational knowledge of human coaches. Training coaches and sport scientists to interpret and integrate AI insights effectively could enhance in-game decisions without compromising their expertise.

To ensure a seamless and harmonious relationship between athletes and their employers, labour laws are duly applied. The Labour Act, primarily, is the chief source of employment law in Nigeria, and it also finds applicability in sports law. The Act provides a framework for the contractual engagement of an athlete, including the terms of service, termination of the contract and entitlements of an athlete. The Sports Betting Regulation. The National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) regulates sports betting activities in Nigeria. It ensures the licensing and monitoring of betting operators, protects the interests of consumers and promotes responsible gambling practices. Ministry of Youth and Sports Development: The Ministry of Youth and Sports Development is the government body responsible for the overall development and regulation of sports in Nigeria. It formulates policies, provides guidance, and oversees the implementation of sports-related activities in the country. Sports Federations and Associations: Various sports federations and associations are responsible for the development and governance of specific sports disciplines in Nigeria.

These bodies are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and are required to comply with the relevant laws and regulations. The Nigerian Institute for Sports (NIS) is responsible for the training, certification, and professional development of sports administrators, coaches, and athletes. The NIS offers various courses and programs aimed at improving the overall standards of sports in Nigeria. Nigeria's legal framework is not limited to its internal scope but also involves international regulatory bodies like FIFA. Regulations issued by these organizations are part of the country's sports regulatory backdrop. Moreover, sports clubs, associations, and organizations in Nigeria follow documented constitutions, codes, regulations, and rules that promote a

robust and healthy sports culture. Moreover, sports sponsorship and endorsements in Nigeria are the country's sports law's significant concerns.

They are governed by standard contractual principles embodied in common law, specific statutory policies like the Nigerian Communications Commission Act and associated regulations regarding advertising and endorsements. Apart from the foregoing, there are a plethora of other laws, either federal or state, that provide for the management and regulation of a variety of sports activities in Nigeria. Examples include Nigerian Boxing Board of Control Act, amongst others. Anti-Doping: Nigeria is a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Agency Code and has established the Nigerian Anti-Doping Commission ("NADC"). The NADC is responsible for implementing anti-doping policies, conducting tests, and enforcing sanctions for doping violations in sports. Finally, in sport research, AI is advancing areas such as talent identification and the use of simulation for injury prevention and performance modelling, while also prompting important discussions around the ethical use and governance of sensitive data.

Conclusion

Safety rules and regulations are essential for creating a secure environment where people can live, learn, and work without unnecessary risks. Everyone must know, follow, and respect these rules to protect themselves and others. Laws relating to school safety are crucial in protecting students and staff from harm. When properly implemented, they promote a safe and supportive learning environment where education can thrive. Laws relating to safety in sports are essential for protecting everyone involved in sporting activities. Following these laws helps reduce injuries, promotes discipline, and ensures an enjoyable and fair sporting experience. The study therefore recommended as follows:

- i. Institutions should integrate comprehensive safety education into school and sports curricula. Teachers, students, athletes, and support staff must be regularly trained on safety rules, emergency response, and hazard prevention to enhance preparedness and minimize risks.
- ii. Schools and sports organizations should establish, document, and enforce clear safety rules and regulations tailored to their specific environments. These policies must be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging risks and best practices.
- iii. Educational and sports institutions must ensure strict adherence to national and international laws related to safety. This includes compliance with child protection laws, occupational safety standards, and sports-specific safety regulations.
- iv. Regular safety audits should be conducted in schools and sports facilities to identify and address potential hazards. This includes inspecting buildings, playgrounds, sports fields, and equipment to ensure they meet legal safety requirements.
- v. Schools and sports organizations should form safety committees responsible for monitoring, implementing, and reviewing safety procedures. These committees should include administrators, health professionals, coaches, and other relevant stakeholders.

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