

# Integrating School Safety Measures for Sustainable Development: Experiences from Selected Secondary Schools in Dodoma City

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## Abstract

This study explored the implementation of school safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City. The primary objective was to identify the various safety measures employed in these schools. Utilizing a qualitative approach embedded within a phenomenological design, the study involved 3 heads of schools, 3 teachers, 6 parents, and 3 school watchmen, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, and analyzed using a systematic inductive thematic analysis procedure. Findings revealed that the most prevalent safety measures included physical and practical strategies such as designated safe areas, school fences, fire extinguishers, bells, and clear emergency exit routes. Additionally, communication strategies and wellbeing initiatives like first aid education, first aid kits, waste disposal pits, handwashing stations, and clear emergency exit routes were commonly implemented. The study concludes that despite the reliance on somewhat traditional safety measures, such as traditional alert systems and physical safety equipment, these measures play a crucial role in managing safety concerns within school premises. It is therefore recommended that the President's Office, Regional Administration, and Local Government (PO-RALG) in Tanzania prioritize budget allocation for school safety measures to address resource limitations and infrastructure challenges.

**Keywords:** School Safety, School Safety Measures, Basic Education

## 1. Introduction

School safety (SS) is defined as the implementation of measures and practices within educational institutions to protect the physical and emotional well-being of students, staff, and the wider school community (UNESCO, 2021). It encompasses creating an environment where individuals can engage in learning without exposure to potential harm, threats, or hazards. Globally, it is estimated that at least 246 million students suffer from various forms of school violence and bullying each year (Bourion-Bédès et al., 2022). This underscores the necessity of ensuring the school environment is free from significant risks, fostering educational and personal growth (Soliman, 2018). The importance of school safety lies in its role in providing secure and supportive environments for students to learn and thrive (Mubita, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). A safe school environment fosters academic success and emotional well-being by preventing issues such as bullying and violence and creating a positive social atmosphere that encourages collaboration and respect (Petal et al., 2020). Furthermore, SS involves emergency preparedness measures, ensuring students and staff can respond effectively to various safety-related situations (Naranasamy & Adams, 2019).

In the United States, school safety refers to comprehensive strategies to foster secure, supportive, and nurturing environments by addressing external threats and safeguarding against physical harm and violence, as well as bullying and mental health issues (Wangamati et al., 2022). Achieving school safety involves collaborative efforts among schools, communities, law enforcement, and policymakers (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Common threats include mass shootings, substance abuse, bullying, fighting, and incidents of sexual abuse (Soliman, 2018). For example, in 2019, about 21 percent of students aged 12-18 reported being bullied at school during the school year (Hamlin & Li, 2020). The U.S. Department of Education's initiatives, such as the Safe Schools Program, highlight the government's commitment to reducing school violence and promoting a positive school climate (May, 2018).

In Europe, the concept of school safety focuses on creating secure and inclusive learning environments, addressing threats like terrorism, cybersecurity, bullying, discrimination, and public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Cox-Wingo & Poirier, 2019). European countries adopt a holistic approach, involving physical security, emergency preparedness, mental health, and community involvement (Cefai et al., 2021). School safety measures include security infrastructure, international collaboration, digital literacy education, and inclusive policies against discrimination and bullying (Herke et al., 2022; Soklis, 2021). Community engagement and collaboration with local law enforcement are crucial for a coordinated approach to school safety in Europe (Cefai et al., 2021).

In developing countries, including those in Africa, school safety is challenged by infrastructure deficiencies, public health issues, socio-economic factors, and community engagement (Larson et al., 2020). Common safety issues include limited access to clean water and sanitation, exposure to natural disasters, and socio-economic challenges affecting students' well-being (Mubita, 2021). Despite resource constraints, developing countries prioritize infrastructure improvement, health education, community involvement, and emergency preparedness (Varela et al., 2019). Community-led initiatives and collaboration with NGOs play a vital role in addressing safety concerns and promoting a positive learning environment (Cahu, 2019).

Despite the global attention to school safety, significant gaps exist in understanding its implementation in Tanzanian secondary schools. There are limited comprehensive insights into the specific safety threats prevalent in Tanzanian schools and the measures or programs currently adopted to address them (Kibriya & Jones, 2021). The extent of parental and community involvement in school safety initiatives needs to be sufficiently documented. Furthermore, there is a dearth of information on the barriers hindering the implementation of school safety measures in the context of Tanzanian secondary schools, which is crucial for informing targeted policy interventions. Without this critical information, the ability to develop evidence-based and context-specific strategies for enhancing school safety in Tanzanian secondary schools is hindered.

A detailed understanding of the specific challenges faced by Tanzanian schools is essential for developing effective strategies tailored to their unique needs. The present study aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the current school safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City. By identifying and documenting these measures, the study seeks to offer valuable insights that can guide the development of policies and practices to enhance school safety, ensuring a secure and supportive learning environment for students and educators in Dodoma City.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Study

To investigate the implemented school safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City

## 1.2 Research Question

What are the implemented school safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City?

## 2. Literature Review

School safety involves comprehensive strategies to create secure, supportive, and nurturing environments within educational institutions (Reed-Morrice, 2020). These measures address external threats and safeguard against physical harm, bullying, and mental health issues (Wangamati et al., 2022). In the United States, a meta-review by Gonzalez et al. (2016) examined the impact of school safety measures such as school resource officers (SROs), metal detectors, and surveillance systems on school-related delinquency and perceived safety. The review found that increased security measures often resulted in decreased student-perceived safety, suggesting that more security does not necessarily equate to safer schools. This finding highlights the complex relationship between physical security measures and students' sense of safety. Similarly, Chrusciel et al. (2015) assessed perspectives on SROs, armed teachers, and armed administrators. They found broad support for SROs but little support for arming school staff. This study underscores the importance of considering stakeholder perspectives when implementing safety measures.

In Germany, Afkinich and Klumpner (2018) analyzed data from the School Survey on Crime and Safety to determine if diverse prevention programs and community involvement were associated with lower school violence rates. They found that neighborhood violence was a significant risk factor, while parental volunteerism was a key protective factor. These findings suggest that both the broader community environment and direct parental involvement play critical roles in school safety. Soliman (2018) further explored parents' views on school safety, identifying that parental visits and

experiences with violence directly influenced their awareness of school violence and feelings of safety. This study highlights the crucial role of parents in the perception and reality of school safety.

In developing countries, school safety faces additional challenges such as infrastructure deficits, public health issues, socio-economic factors, and limited community engagement (Larson et al., 2020). In South Africa, Duma (2013) studied the role of school leadership in reducing violence, finding that community violence significantly impacted school safety and parental involvement was often lacking. This study points to the need for strong leadership and community engagement to tackle school safety issues effectively. Varela et al. (2019) echoed these findings, highlighting the increase in student indiscipline and the need for effective disciplinary structures and parental involvement. This underscores the importance of addressing both behavioral issues and fostering a collaborative environment between schools and parents. In Kenya, Mutiso (2019) investigated factors influencing the implementation of safety standards in public secondary schools. The study found significant relationships between safety awareness, school management practices, financial resources, and safety implementation. Despite the existence of safety manuals, challenges such as lack of awareness, inadequate funds, increased student enrollment, and management negligence were major hindrances. The study highlights the practical barriers to implementing safety standards in resource-constrained settings.

The reviewed literature indicates that while school safety is a well-researched topic internationally, significant gaps remain regarding its implementation in specific contexts like Tanzanian secondary schools. Studies in the U.S. and Europe provide insights into the impact of various safety measures and the importance of community involvement. However, these findings may not directly translate to the Tanzanian context, where challenges such as resource constraints and socio-economic factors play a more significant role. Furthermore, while research from South Africa and Kenya stress the importance of community involvement and effective school leadership, there is limited information on the specific safety measures implemented and their effectiveness in Tanzania. Additionally, there is a paucity of comprehensive data on the barriers to effective school safety implementation in Tanzanian secondary schools, including the role of parental and community involvement. The present study aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the current school safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City. By identifying and documenting these measures, the study aims to contribute useful insights that can guide the development of policies and practices to enhance school safety, ensuring a secure and supportive learning environment for students and teachers.

### 3. Methods and Materials

This study was conducted in Dodoma, chosen due to a significant increase in student enrollment in secondary schools and a substantial budget allocation for the Education for All program (URT, 2022). The expansion of government secondary schools in the region underscores Dodoma's efforts to accommodate the growing student population, making it an ideal location to study school safety initiatives and challenges. A qualitative approach, embedded within a phenomenological research design, was adopted to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the experiences and attitudes of key informants regarding school safety measures. This design was well-suited to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants.

A sample of fifteen (15) participants was selected from three (3) secondary schools in Dodoma City. The sample included key members of the School Management Teams (SMTs)—specifically, three heads of school, three teachers, and three school watchmen. Additionally, two parents from each school were included to represent the school community. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their direct involvement and experience with school safety. This approach ensured the inclusion of individuals who could provide relevant insights into the implementation of school safety measures.

Primary data were collected using semi-structured interviews and non-participatory observation. Semi-structured interviews explored the implemented school safety measures, the challenges hindering these measures, and the involvement of the school community in safety initiatives. An interview guide was developed to ensure systematic coverage of relevant topics while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. Non-participatory observation involved the researcher visiting schools' environment to identify the presence of safety measures such as fire extinguishers, school fences, and alarm systems, and to observe signs of community engagement. This method provided a holistic understanding of the tangible safety measures in place.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. This process involved familiarization with the data through reviewing transcriptions of interviews and observation notes to gain an initial understanding. Generating initial codes involved identifying and labeling key concepts and ideas within the data. Searching for themes entailed organizing these codes into potential themes. Themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately captured the data's meaning. Each theme was defined and named to reflect its relevance to the research questions, and the findings were synthesized into a coherent narrative, supported by illustrative quotes from participants.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, strategies were employed across four dimensions: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of data collection methods and member checking. Dependability was ensured by maintaining detailed documentation of the research process, including any changes in design, data collection methods, or analysis techniques. Transferability was addressed by providing comprehensive descriptions of the study setting, participants, and data collection methods. Confirmability was maintained by presenting findings without researcher bias, supported by triangulation and supervisor feedback.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Dodoma, the Regional Administrative Secretary, and the Director for Dodoma Municipality Council. Participants provided informed consent, were briefed on their rights, and were informed of their option to withdraw at any point. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with pseudonyms assigned to protect participant identities. Interactions occurred within secure and familiar school environments, ensuring participants' privacy and dignity.

## 4. Results

In exploring the first objective of this study, which centered on identifying the school safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City, data were collected both through in-depth interviews and through observation from three schools. Consequently, prominent categories or sub-themes informing the implemented school safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City include practical safety measures, communication strategies, wellbeing initiatives, and collaboration and community involvement. These sub-themes serve as crucial lenses through which the multifaceted landscape of school safety in Dodoma City's secondary schools can be comprehensively examined and understood.

#### 4.2.1 Physical and Practical Safety Measures

When participants discussed issues relating to the implementation of physical or practical safety measures such as a designated safe area, a school fence, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, bells, clear emergency exit routes, and regular safety drills, these responses were categorized (coded) under the theme practical safety measures. For example, the Head of School A mentioned that: “Our school focuses on basic safety essentials. We have designated safe areas, simple first aid kits, and clear emergency exit routes in case of unforeseen incidents”. (Interview, Head of School, School A, September 2023). The Head of School A reflects a proactive approach, emphasizing not only the presence of safety equipment but also the importance of regular drills to ensure preparedness.

In contrast, the teacher representing School B emphasized the role of security infrastructure in maintaining a secure environment, stating: “While we may not have the latest equipment, we ensure that the school is equipped with at least two fire extinguishers and that our staff is trained on basic first aid procedures.” (Interview, Teacher, School B, September 2023). The teacher representing School B identifies that the school does not have modern school safety facilities; however, being safety-conscious, the school ensures that classrooms are equipped with basic fire safety tools and a trained staff on first aid assistance.

On another end, the watchman from School C provided a grounded perspective, mentioning that:

Our emphasis at this school largely is on vigilance. I patrol the school premises during and after school hours to ensure there are no security breaches. The school does not have high-tech surveillance, but our watchful eyes contribute to school safety (Interview, Watchman School C, September 2023)

The watchman from School C sheds light on the practical aspects of implementing safety measures against vigilance, highlighting the importance of patrolling the school premises during non-school hours.

Sharing similar practical measures, the watchman or security personnel from school A had this to say: “The school bell is our immediate alert system. It's not just for the class changes; it's a crucial safety measure. If there's an emergency, that bell can bring everyone's attention to the situation in an instant.” (Interview, Watchman, School A, September 2023). In his statement, the watchman or security guard from School A informs the present study that the school's bell is a crucial measure to safety, particularly in alerting the school of an emergency for immediate action.

Besides, another practical or physical school safety measure mentioned by the participants of this study was echoed by a guardian to a student attending School B, who, in their understanding, shared their observation of the school's safety implementation measure:

I know there's a fence around the school, even though it's not in the best condition. But the main gate is always manned by the watchman, and that's the only way in. So, I feel assured that there's control over who enters and exits (Interview, Parent, September 2023).

The parent representing the school-community shares their understanding regarding the implemented school safety measures in secondary schools in their community. The parent explains that they understand that the school has a fence, a gate, and a watchman or security guard who controls who enters and exits the school.

In another interview session with a member of the school's A community, they echoed the same observations, reflecting their understanding of the implemented school safety measures:

I've been to the school several times, and I've noticed that the doors and windows in the classrooms open outward, and I think that's a good thing. It gives me peace of mind knowing that in case of an emergency, like a fire, my child can easily exit the building. It's a small detail, but it matters for safety (Interview, Parent, September 2023).

In the above statement, the school-community member representing School C explains that the school observes that all classroom doors and windows open outward, which fosters easy exit in case of an emergency. These diverse perspectives illustrate a holistic understanding and implementation of practical or physical safety measures among the SMT and the school-community in secondary schools in Dodoma City, encompassing both preventive and responsive strategies for school safety.

The visual evidence provided from the researcher's non-participatory observation (see Appendices) aligns with the participants' statements, providing a tangible representation of the implemented practical or physical safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City. The photos affirm the presence of designated safe zones, a school bell, basic fire safety tools, and vigilant watchmen. They offer a comprehensive view of how secondary schools employ practical measures to ensure the safety and well-being of their students, staff, and the school-community.

#### 4.2.2 Communication Strategies

During the analysis of data pertinent to the first objective of this study, which aimed to identify the safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City, an important finding emerged. This sub-themes encompassed data associated with participants' responses when they talked about

the communication strategies employed in Tanzanian public secondary schools, emphasizing the significance of clear and timely dissemination of information pertinent to school safety.

For example, Head of School B shared that: “Communication is key. We conduct regular drills to familiarize students and staff with safety procedures. It's about creating a culture of awareness and preparedness, even with limited resources.” (Interview, Head of School, School B, September 2023). Sharing other practical measures, a teacher representing School A highlighted that: “We use school the school’s notice boards to post newsletters that keep parents informed about safety measures. It's a simple yet effective way to ensure everyone is aware of the steps taken to maintain a safe environment.” (Interview, Teacher, School A, September, 2023). From their perspective, participants explain that schools utilize information and communication strategies as a way of informing both the school and the school-community regarding safety issues. This involves creating and posting posters and newsletters regarding prevention measures and protective strategies against risks. The participants also emphasise that although it is a simple strategy, it is an effective way of ensuring that students, staff, and the school community are well informed of the steps to take to be safe at school and outside the school premises.

On a similar note, the Head of School B emphasized the importance of school meetings. In their words, they stated that: “Face-to-face communication is crucial. During school meetings, we discuss safety measures, address concerns, and ensure that everyone, including parents, is on the same page regarding school safety.” (Interview, Head of School, School B, September, 2023). In his statement, the Head of School B emphasizes the point that face-to-face communication is an important approach to school safety implementation in secondary schools. He highlights that their school entertains regular school meetings with the school-community to discuss safety measures, address concerns, and ensure that students, staff, and the school community are well updated regarding safety.

Moreover, when the school-community member was invited to share their perceptions regarding the school measures implemented in secondary school in terms of school safety, one parent representing School C appreciated the use of information communication, expressing that:

We receive safety updates from the school through short messages. It's convenient, and the school ensures that information reaches us in a timely manner. For example, during the COVID-19 outbreak, this strategy helped keep us updated with safety information (Interview, Parent, September 2023).

The parent representing School C’s community affirms receiving regular and timely updates from the school through phone messages commonly known as SMS. The participants highlight that this strategy is convenient to them as the school ensures that the communications are forwarded timely. Additionally, the participants underscore how this strategy helped them through the pandemic era.

Echoing similar ideas, the assistant head of school B had this to say: The school has a proactive approach to communication. We don't just wait for meetings; we

use electronic platforms to regularly update parents about safety measures. It's about keeping everyone informed consistently and promptly (Interview, Head of School, School B, September, 2023).

The Head of School B reflects their proactive approach to communication, instead of just waiting for school-community meetings. The school head emphasizes the use of electronic platforms to disseminate regular updates to parents about safety issues. This school safety measure helps keep stakeholders informed consistently and promptly.

The researcher's non-participant observation reflected through images presented from the field (see Appendices) affirm these findings by illustrating the diverse communication strategies implemented by public secondary schools in Dodoma City. The use of newsletters, school meetings, and electronic platforms such as short messages reflects a multifaceted approach to ensuring that safety information reaches various stakeholders. The photos provide a glimpse into the practical aspects of these communication strategies, reinforcing the participants' emphasis on the clear and timely dissemination of safety-related information. This visual evidence adds depth to the participants' narratives, showcasing the tangible implementation of communication methods within the context of Tanzanian public schools.

#### 4.2.3 Wellbeing Initiatives

When participants shared information pertaining to maintaining a school kitchen, clean toilets for students and staff, the availability of water taps, a waste disposal pit, and safety education and training, these responses were placed under the theme "wellbeing initiatives." For example, a teacher from School C emphasized the importance of school infrastructure for well-being, stating: "Our school has invested in a conducive kitchen to ensure students have access to clean meals. We also prioritise clean toilets because hygiene is a fundamental aspect of students' safety from communicable diseases." (Interview, Teacher, School C, September 2023). The statement made by the teacher explains that another safety measure observed by the school includes investing in a conducive kitchen where students' meals are prepared on a daily basis. The teacher emphasizes that maintaining a conducive kitchen will guarantee clean meals, which in turn ensures students' wellbeing against communicable diseases. Additionally, maintaining clean toilets is mentioned by the teacher from school C as an approach to maintaining students' safety from communicable diseases.

Echoing similar measures or strategies for school safety, the Head of School B mentioned that: "We have strategically placed water taps across the school premises, and there is a designated waste disposal pit. These initiatives contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment for everyone." (Interview, Head of School, School B, September 2023). In his narrative, the Head of School B informs the present study of another school safety measure implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City, which is the placement of water taps across the school's premises to enable washing of hands, and eating utensils. Additionally, together with water taps, the Head of School B reveals that the school also has a large waste disposal pit for disposing of all waste materials. The participant

emphasizes that these initiatives contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment for students, staff, and the school-community.

Furthermore, the Head of School B highlighted the significance of safety education to students, staff, and the school-community, stating: “In addition to physical safety infrastructure, in our school we conduct regular safety education sessions and trainings. It is crucial for students and staff to be well informed and prepared for emergencies.” (Interview, Head of School, School B, September 2023). The Head of School B explains that besides investing in physical safety infrastructure, the school also maintains regular safety education sessions and trainings for students, staff, and the school community at large. The head of school emphasises that maintaining a safety mindset is crucial for emergencies. Supporting these ideas, a parent representing the community of School A shared that: “I appreciate that the school conducts safety training. My child has come home several times sharing what they learned to combat fire outbreaks, and it gives me confidence that the school prioritizes their safety.” (Interview, Parent, September 2023). The statement made by a parent representing the community of School A informs the present study that they appreciate that the school conducts timely safety trainings for students. The parent explains that there were several times their child came back home with stories of how they learned how to save themselves in case of a fire outbreak. This has helped in building the confidence of the parent as far as the safety of the students is concerned.

Echoing similar approaches to school safety implementation in secondary schools in Dodoma City, the head of School C shed light on integrating safety education into daily practices, mentioning that: “Safety education is not just theoretical; we ensure its integration into daily school life. This includes routines like fire exit routes and awareness about potential hazards.” (Interview, Head of School, School C, September 2023). The Head of School C explains that to maintain a safe school climate, safety education is an important strategy to keep stakeholders’ safety-conscious. The Head of School explains that the school has integrated regular routines of firefighting skills and exit routes around the school’s premises. Additionally, awareness against possible hazards has also been part of the school’s approach to safety.

On the other hand, the school-community’s involvement informed the present study through a parent representing School B on the maintenance of clean toilets as an approach to safety implemented in School B. In their words, they stated that: “I have noticed the school's efforts to provide basic infrastructure like clean toilets and water taps. It is not just about academics; the school considers the holistic well-being of students.” (Interview, Parent, September 2023). The participant explains their knowledge of the school’s toilets used by students on a daily basis. In their concern, having a functioning toilet is a good approach to safety, as it protects students from getting communicable diseases.

Additionally, echoing a similar strategy to maintain students’ wellbeing and safety, a teacher from School B highlighted that: “Maintaining hygiene is a collective effort. We involve students in initiatives like waste disposal to instill a sense of responsibility and contribute to the overall cleanliness of the school.” (Interview, Teacher, School B, September 2023). The teacher representing School B emphasizes that maintaining hygiene is a collective endeavour that should involve students in activities such as waste disposal. The discipline teacher explains that this is crucial as it instills a

sense of responsibility among students, which in turn contributes to the overall cleanliness of the school.

The use of photos obtained through non-participatory observation (see Appendices) illustrate the different wellbeing initiatives implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City to ensure the safety of students, staff, and the school community in general. A clean kitchen, running water taps for hands and eating utensils, washing, clean toilets, a waste disposal pit, and regular safety education for the wellbeing of the students, staff, and community reflect a multifaceted approach to ensuring that safety information reaches various stakeholders. The visual evidence adds depth to the participants' narratives, showcasing the tangible implementation of communication methods within the context of Tanzanian public schools.

#### 4.2.4 Collaboration and Community Involvement

Collaboration and community involvement in school safety encompass the active engagement of school stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and local community members, in joint efforts to identify, implement, and sustain effective safety measures. When participants discussed issues relating to involving the school community or the authorities in matters pertaining to school safety, these responses were coded and placed under the theme collaboration and community involvement. For example, the Head of School A informed the present study that: “Our school emphasizes collaboration with the local community. We involve parents in safety discussions, seek their feedback, and even organize safety awareness events in collaboration with community leaders.” (Interview, Head of School A, September 2023). The Head of School A explains that, as a measure of school safety, the school would usually involve parents in discussions surrounding school safety and seek their input. The Head of School A further clarifies that the school organizes safety awareness events, collaborating with the local community leaders.

Sharing similar ideas concerning school safety approaches, a teacher representing School C had this to say:

In my perspective, I think school safety is not only about rules but also about community responsibility. We try to engage students, parents, and even local authorities to promote a sense of collective ownership of the school's safety initiatives. (Interview, Teacher, School C, September 2023).

The teacher from school C explains that school safety, in a broad sense, is not just about establishing rules; it is a community responsibility. In their words, they emphasise that engaging parents, students, and the local authorities fosters a sense of collective ownership of the school's safety initiatives at large. Moreover, when asked by the researcher regarding their knowledge about the school safety implementation in School C, a parent representing the school community shared that: “I appreciate that the school values our input. We have meetings where safety concerns are discussed, and parents are encouraged to contribute ideas. It creates a supportive environment for everyone.” (Interview, Parent, September 2023). The parent informs the present study that the school has a tendency to

engage parents in matters pertaining to school safety. The parent explains that during meetings, safety concerns are also discussed, and they get the opportunity to express their ideas for improvement or safety concerns. The participant emphasizes that this is a practical step as it creates a supportive environment for students, staff, and the local school community at large.

Echoing the potentiality of collaborative efforts for school safety, the Head of School B stated that: “Collaboration extends beyond school walls. We work with local authorities, businesses, and community organizations to enhance safety. Together, we address challenges and implement measures for a safer school environment.” (Interview, Head of School B, September 2023). In the same vein, similar thoughts were shared by a teacher representing School A: “Safety is a joint effort at school. We involve students in safety committees and organise trainings with input from teachers and parents, fostering a culture where everyone plays a role in maintaining a secure school environment.” (Interview, Teacher, School A, September 2023). In these narratives, both the Head of School B and the discipline teacher representing School A share a common viewpoint regarding the success of school safety implementation, which is collaboration. The Head of School B emphasises that collaboration should extend beyond the school’s premises to involve local authorities, businesses, and community organisations to enhance safety. However, in School A, the teacher emphasizes involving students in safety committees and organizing trainings with input from teachers and parents. Both participants believe in fostering a culture where everyone plays a role in maintaining a secure, safe school.

Additionally, another parent representing School B shared their input, saying that:

The school encourages us parents to participate both actively and sometimes even pro-actively. We have volunteered on several occasions for school safety projects, like improving lighting around the school premises. It is a tangible way to contribute to the well-being of all students. (Interview, Parent, September 2023).

The statement made by the parent informs the present study that the school usually encourages parents’ participation in school safety affairs. As a result, parents have been volunteering for school safety projects like improving the school’s lighting. The parent emphasizes that this is a tangible way of contributing to the safety of students and staff inside the school’s premises. The Head of School C also had this to say:

Community involvement is in fact integral to our safety strategy as a school. We have joint initiatives with local police and healthcare providers. It's not just about what happens within school gates; it's about the wider community ensuring our students are safe. (Interview, Head of School C, September 2023).

The Head of School C explains that involving the community is integral to maintaining school safety at the school. Involving the local police and healthcare providers has been a strategy of the school in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the students, staff, and the school community.

Correspondingly, the images presented offer evidence obtained from the researcher's non-participatory observation aligns with the participants' statements, providing a tangible representation of the implemented school safety measures in secondary schools in Dodoma City pertaining to collaboration and community involvement. The photos affirm the presence of collaboration with the local community, meetings where safety concerns are discussed, engagement of students, parents, and even local authorities, as well as work with local authorities, businesses, and community organizations to enhance safety. These photos offer a comprehensive view of how secondary schools involve and collaborate with the community to ensure the safety and well-being of their students, staff, and the school-community.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study resonate with and complement existing literature on school safety, offering context-specific insights into the implementation and effectiveness of safety measures in Dodoma City's secondary schools. By bridging empirical evidence with theoretical frameworks, this discussion contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics shaping school safety initiatives, thereby informing future research endeavors and policy interventions aimed at fostering safer and more resilient educational settings.

In line with studies conducted in the United States by Gonzalez et al. (2016) and Chrusciel et al. (2015), our findings highlight the importance of considering stakeholder perspectives when implementing safety measures. While increased security measures may address external threats, they may inadvertently decrease students' perceived safety. This underscores the need for a balanced approach that integrates physical security measures with strategies to promote students' sense of safety and well-being. Similarly, insights from Afkinich and Klumpner's (2018) analysis of school safety in Germany resonate with our findings regarding the significance of community involvement. The presence of parental volunteerism emerged as a key protective factor against school violence, underscoring the critical role of broader community engagement in enhancing school safety. Our study further emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts between schools and local communities in fostering safe and supportive learning environments.

Drawing parallels with research conducted in developing countries such as South Africa (Duma, 2013) and Kenya (Mutiso, 2019), our findings shed light on the unique challenges faced by schools in resource-constrained settings. Infrastructure deficits, limited financial resources, and management negligence were identified as significant barriers to the effective implementation of safety standards. However, our study also highlights the resilience and adaptability of schools in Dodoma City, as they employ pragmatic approaches to enhance safety within their means, emphasizing vigilance, community engagement, and practical safety measures.

In the context of the theoretical framework underpinning this study, which is the ecological system theory by Bronfenbrenner, the findings resonate with the theory's emphasis on the interconnectedness of various systems influencing human development. The microsystem, representing the immediate environment, is reflected in the practical safety measures and wellbeing initiatives within the school premises. The mesosystem comes into play through communication strategies that involve interactions between different microsystems, such as schools and parents. The exosystem is evident in the collaboration and community involvement theme, where external factors like local authorities and community organizations impact school safety. The macrosystem, representing the broader cultural context, is reflected in the universal principles of safety and wellbeing that transcend geographical boundaries.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the current state of school safety implementation in secondary schools within Dodoma City. It was evident that secondary schools in Dodoma City demonstrate a commitment to safety through a variety of measures, including physical and practical safety measures such as a designated safe area, a school fence, fire extinguishers, bells, and clear emergency exit routes. Moreover, communication strategies and wellbeing initiatives such as first aid kits, waste disposal pits, hand-washing spots, and clear emergency exit routes were the most commonly used school safety measures. Despite the reliance on somewhat traditional methods, such as traditional alert systems and physical safety equipment, these measures play a crucial role in managing safety concerns within school premises.

Secondly, the active engagement of parents and the broader school community is integral to fostering a safe school environment. Parental involvement, community partnerships, and resource contributions significantly contribute to improving safety infrastructure and initiatives. Notably, the dedication of parents in providing financial support, manpower, and innovative ideas has led to tangible improvements in safety infrastructure and health initiatives, particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 6.2 Recommendations

In response to the conclusion that limited resources pose a significant barrier to successful school safety implementation, PO-RALG in Tanzania should prioritize allocating dedicated budgets specifically for school safety measures. This funding should address the identified infrastructure limitations and ensure the procurement of essential safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers and CCTV cameras.

Secondly, building upon the finding that community involvement is crucial for effective school safety, schools should actively seek partnerships with local authorities, parents, and the school-

community. These collaborations can provide additional resources, expertise, and support for implementing comprehensive safety initiatives, such as safety awareness campaigns and emergency response training.

Moreover, Policymakers in Tanzania are encouraged to develop and disseminate comprehensive safety guidelines for secondary schools in Tanzania. A unified and standardized approach will ensure consistency in safety measures, addressing the lack of a unified safety plan. These guidelines should cover aspects such as infrastructure requirements, safety protocols, and community involvement, providing a clear framework for schools to follow.

Consequently, although the present study identifies the school safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Dodoma City, it does not show to what extent these measures are effective. Therefore, further studies can attempt to assess the effectiveness of these measures in ensuring the safety of students, staff, and the wider school-community. Moreover, further studies may also want to evaluate the sustainability of the school safety measures implemented in secondary schools in Tanzania. For example, scholars may want to examine the sustainability of the well-being initiative established to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide Questions

S/N	Research Questions	Probing Questions
1.	What school safety measures are implemented in your school?	Can you describe the specific safety measures that your school has implemented to ensure the well-being of students, staff, and the school community?
		How are these safety measures communicated to students, staff, and parents/guardians?
		In your opinion, which safety measures have been most effective in creating a secure learning environment?

**Appendix 2: Observation Checklist**

S/ N	ITEM	YES	NO
1.	Adequate signage indicating emergency exits, assembly points, and safety procedures.		V
2.	Presence of a well-maintained school fence and controlled access points.	V	
3.	Availability and accessibility of fire extinguishers in strategic locations.	V	
4.	Functioning alarm systems or bells for emergency notifications.	V	
5.	Clearly marked and unobstructed evacuation routes.	V	
6.	Presence of security personnel or School Resource Officers.	V	
7.	Controlled access to the school premises, with monitored entry and exit points.	V	
8.	Surveillance systems, including CCTV cameras covering critical areas.		V
9.	Proper lighting in and around the school premises.		V
10.	Availability of clean and well-maintained restrooms for students and staff.	V	
11.	Access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities.	V	
12.	Adequate waste disposal systems to maintain cleanliness.	V	
13.	Measures in place for disease prevention, such as hand sanitizers.	V	
14.	Existence of an updated and well-communicated emergency response plan.		V
15.	Regular drills and exercises for students and staff to practice emergency procedures.		V
16.	Presence of first aid kits in classrooms and common areas.	V	
17.	Accessibility of emergency contact information.	V	
18.	Existence of an updated and well-communicated emergency response plan.		V
19.	Awareness campaigns addressing the consequences of bullying.		V
20.	Availability of counseling services for students experiencing bullying.		V
21.	Presence of community engagement initiatives promoting safety.	V	
22.	Collaboration with local law enforcement for school safety.	V	
23.	Involvement of parents in safety-related activities or committees.	V	
24.	Presence of community engagement initiatives promoting safety.	V	
25.	Integration of safety education in the curriculum.	V	
26.	Regular workshops or training sessions on safety for students and staff.		V



Figure 4. 1: School B's Fire Extinguisher



Figure 4. 2: School C's Watchmen Office



**Figure 4. 3: School A's School Bell**



**Figure 4. 4: School B's School Fence and Main Gate**



Figure 4. 5: School A's Notice Board



Figure 4. 6: School C's Kitchen



**Figure 4. 7: School B's Designated Water Taps**



**Figure 4. 8: School A's Fire Safety Tools**



**Figure 4. 9: School B's Students' Toilet**



**Figure 4. 10: School B's Waste-Disposal Pit**



**Figure 4. 11: The Head of School A receiving safety awareness training with other Heads of Schools**



**Figure 4. 12: SMT and School-Community Meeting at School C**