

Between Home and Duty: Exploring the Work-Life Balance of Security Guards

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological research focuses on the experiences of school security guards as they balance the demands of their security work with responsibilities at home. The interviews conducted have identified major themes, including shifts in work schedules, emotional and physical stress, expectations related to family roles, and personal strategies for coping with imbalance. The results will explain how communication, personal discipline, time allocation, and peer support help guards manage competing responsibilities and maintain their well-being. This research will serve as an avenue towards a meaningful understanding by school administrators and agencies involved in school security of policy developments and interventions that foster a healthier balance between work and life and ensure greater job satisfaction for security personnel. Struggles and Strategies in Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities, Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems that Sustain Them, Time Management Struggles due to Shifts and Long Hours, Financial Pressures and Work-Related Stress, Practical Time Management and Planning, Stress-Relief and Self-Care Practices, Emotional Strain and Fatigue from Irregular Schedules, Impact on Family Relationships and Social Connection. The research points out that emotional regulation, professionalism, and resilience are the basic traits for security guards to maintain a balanced life between professional and personal life. Guards who remain calm under stress, possess patience, and communicate politely are better placed to deal with the physical and emotional needs of their work without letting stress adversely affect their family relationships. Organizations and security agencies thus need to invest in comprehensive programs based on emotional intelligence, stress management, and work-life balance. Offering ongoing institutional support in the form of mentorship, counseling, and wellness programs can highly contribute to guards' resilience and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance; School Security Guards; Role Strain; Shifting Schedules; Coping Strategies; Family Responsibilities; Time Allocation; Peer Support; Emotional Well-Being; Security Duties.

1. Introduction

Republic Act No. 11917, or the Private Security Services Industry Act, enacted on July 30, 2022, strengthens the regulation of the Philippine private security sector. It establishes clear provisions for the licensing, training, duties, and working conditions of security personnel, including security guards (McCrie, 2020). Under this law, guards are mandated to protect life and property, maintain peace and order within their assigned posts, enforce rules and regulations, and promptly report incidents to proper authorities (Basko et al., 2024). RA 11917 also requires standardized training in crisis response, first aid, and proper use of equipment, ensuring that all security personnel perform their duties with professionalism, competence, and discipline (Salvador, 2021).

Republic Act No. 11917, passed in 2022, attempts to solve a portion of this problem by requiring private security guards in all over the Philippines with higher minimum wages and improved labor protection (Wang et al., 2024). The law underscores their importance by defining their responsibilities, continuous presence at assigned posts, regular patrols, accurate incident reporting, and the lawful use of proportional force (Randhawa, 2023). These legally mandated duties demand vigilance, quick decision-making, physical endurance, and emotional resilience, reflecting the profession's high physical and psychological demands (James, 2025).

Despite these legal protections, the realities of the job often involve extended shifts exceeding 12 hours, irregular schedules, night duties, and exposure to potentially dangerous situations (Piso, 2022). Such conditions can cause fatigue, anxiety, and health issues that affect both alertness and decision-making. While RA 11917 aims to

promote welfare and standardize working conditions, operational demands often make balancing personal health and professional duties difficult (Göktaş, 2022).

Work-life balance becomes a critical concern in this context (Wiradendi Wolor, 2020). The requirements of RA 11917, such as immediate redeployment, ongoing training, and readiness for high-risk assignments can disrupt family routines and reduce quality time with loved ones. This imbalance may lead to emotional strain, social isolation, and even conflict at home (Santini et al., 2021). Moreover, societal undervaluation of the profession can further impact morale and self-worth. Such stressors not only affect personal well-being but can also undermine job performance in situations that demand focus and composure (Cavallari et al., 2025).

Despite the crucial role of security guards and the legal framework governing their service, there remains limited research on how fulfilling their duties under RA 11917 affects their family lives (Sarmiento & Jose, 2025). Existing studies tend to focus on workplace safety and operational challenges, overlooking the psychosocial dimensions of the profession (Jain et al., 2021). This research addresses that gap by exploring the lived experiences of security guards as they navigate the challenges of balancing professional responsibilities with family obligations.

This research addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing exclusively on the lived experiences of security guards in balancing their professional duties with family life. Unlike other professions, security guards face irregular schedules, extended shifts, and high-risk situations that demand constant vigilance and adaptability (Pradhan, 2021). Filling this research gap is crucial to understanding how these challenges affect their personal relationships, mental health, and overall well-being (Qin & Men, 2023). Ultimately, the findings can guide employers, policymakers, and support programs in creating work arrangements and welfare policies that promote both occupational efficiency and quality of life for security personnel (Gazi et al., 2024).

Understanding the dual identity of security guards as regulated professionals and as family members can inform more holistic policies and support systems (den Outer, 2023). By highlighting the real-world effects of legally mandated duties on personal life, this study aims to provide insights that will help employers, policymakers, and institutions develop work arrangements and welfare programs that enhance both operational efficiency and quality of life for security personnel.

1.1. Study Objectives

- 1) To examine the challenges security guards face in balancing their professional duties and family responsibilities.
- 2) To identify the coping strategies used by security guards to manage work-related stress and maintain family relationship.
- 3) To explore how irregular work schedules affect the personal routines, relationships, and social interactions of security guards.
- 4) To describe the lived experiences of security guards in navigating their dual roles at work and at home.
- 5) To understand how work demands influence security guards' perceptions of work-life balance.

2. Methods

This research employed a phenomenological research design and qualitative methodology to investigate the lived experiences of security guards in their management of professional responsibilities and family life. The study will involve ten (10) security guards selected as research participants through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria for participant selection are as follows: (1) currently employed as an active-duty security guard; (2) married with children; (3) with a minimum of one year of experience in the security service; and (4) willing to voluntarily participate in the study. This research will be implemented in one of the schools in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental where the school security guards who will participate in this study are deployed. Data analysis involved bracketing, horizontalization, and clustering to synthesize a narrative of the participants shared experiences. This study explored how school security guards manage their responsibilities across multiple domains, including professional duties, family obligations, personal needs, and social interactions.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Profile of the Participants

Ten school security guards participated in face-to-face interviews for the study, ranging in age from 30 to 45 years. The participants were selected from Misamis University who are currently employed.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Code Name	Age	Gender
SG1	33	Female
SG2	36	Male
SG3	37	Male
SG4	38	Male
SG5	40	Male
SG6	36	Male
SG7	41	Male
SG8	35	Male
SG9	42	Male
SG10	39	Male

3.2. Struggles and Strategies in Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities

Several security guards shared that balancing work and family remains one of their greatest challenges (Fathima et al., 2024; Sousa et al., 2023). They emphasized that the demands of their job often make it difficult to manage time at home, but they also recognized the importance of setting priorities (Hamilton et al., 2023; Guy & Arthur, 2020). Some explained that effective time management, such as waking up early or making use of extra time after work, helps them fulfill both responsibilities.

“Balancing my work as a security guard with my responsibilities at home has been one of the biggest challenges I’ve faced over the years.” (SG 3)

“Balancing my duties as a security guard with the needs of my family has been the greatest challenge in managing my time.” (SG 4)

“My experience is that balancing our time is up to us. And when we have a chance or extra time after work, we should prioritize our family.” (SG 5)

“Time management is crucial I wake up early to take care of my family and get ready for work. It's all about finding a balance and managing stress.” (SG 6)

Security guards manage these daily pressures of their job, along with maintaining family life, through a combination of personal coping strategies and adequate support mechanisms (Billings et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2024). Most visibly, they may engage in stress-relieving activities: praying, light exercise, and simple relaxation methods (Fenton, 2022; Karrasch, 2024). Prayer leads to emotional stability and a sense of reassurance in the most pressing situations; physical activities like stretching or short-time workouts, which relieve tension, may increase alertness (Shelton, 2024; Belling, 2024). Relaxation practices, such as deep breathing or just silent rest, enable guards to clear their minds after longer or more strenuous shifts (Waldrop & Presler, 2025; Pattyn et al., 2024).

3.3. Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems that Sustain Them

Security guards rely on various coping mechanisms and support systems to manage the stress that comes with balancing their roles. Many participants turn to faith, prayer, and a positive outlook to stay motivated despite difficulties (Ozcan et al., 2021).

“My coworkers also provide me with invaluable support; for example, during the local flood, they shared household goods and even donated money to aid in my recovery.” (SG 1)

“I'm also fortunate to have helpful coworkers; we support one another, particularly when someone is struggling financially.” (SG 2)

“To ease the pressure, I make sure to talk with my family after my shift to see what they need and how I can help.” (SG 3)

“Each time I go home, the joy of spending time with my family lessens the tiredness brought about by work when I look at my children.” (SG 7)

Emphasizes the coping mechanisms used by security guards (Sopitshi, 2021; Cox et al., 2022) to balance the demands of work and home life. Relief from stress is usually achieved through prayer, exercise, and relaxation techniques that help maintain mental and emotional stability despite demanding schedules (BAHARUDDIN et al., 2024; Sandua, 2024). Effective time management, such as early morning rising, setting routines, and prioritizing duties, is one of the most important ways to ensure professional and domestic obligations are fulfilled (Southerton, 2020; BELLA, 2023).

3.4. Time Management Struggles due to Shifts and Long Hours

Time Management Challenges as a Result of Shifts and Long Hours captures the challenge of reconciling family obligations with the demands of security work (Fana et al., 2020; Smith & McBride, 2021). Unpredictable shifts,

night work, and long working hours usually restrict time for rest and quality family interaction, compelling guards to forgo personal time and significant family occasions (Mas & Pallais, 2020; Barnes, 2020).

“I should spend as much time with my family as I do at work, but work frequently takes precedence over family time... Despite my best efforts to manage my time, there are times when I am unable to care for my family, particularly if they experience difficulties while I'm on duty.” (SG1)

“I, being the security guard, tend to have a hard time managing work and family life due to unpredictable working hours like night shifts, holidays, and weekends. This is challenging to engage in family activities and tends to cause stress and fatigue. (SG 8)

“As a security guard, it is sometimes hard to balance family life and work because most of our work is at night or overtime, so I do not have much time with my family. I miss some special family occasions due to work.” (SG 9)

“Being a security guard in this university, at times work and family life becomes unbalanced, particularly since we have shift work that sometimes is at night and at other times during the day.” (SG 10)

It emphasizes the difficulties security guards face in reconciling their jobs and domestic obligations under stringent working conditions. Irregular shifts, such as night shifts, holiday work, and overtime, tend to preclude rest and effective family interaction, which makes it hard to engage in significant domestic activities or attend special family occasions (Adeparusi, 2024; Härmä & Karhula, 2020).

3.5. Financial Pressures and Work-Related Stress

Financial difficulties were among the key challenges facing security guards, often heightening the pressure to balance work and domestic duties (Sarmiento & Jose, 2025). Respondents reported that low salaries, public transport fares, and the need to continually budget a limited budget exacerbate tension at home and affect concentration at work.

“Sometimes money is tight, and I have to choose between saving what little I have for food and transportation. Those circumstances can be stressful, and occasionally I become agitated unintentionally.” (SG 2)

“What makes the balance harder is the financial side of things. Stress often comes when money runs short, because there are always needs at home. That's why budgeting carefully and avoiding unnecessary spending has become essential.” (SG 4)

“Time management is actually difficult, especially when I have night shift or extended working hours... It would be helpful to have a clear schedule rotation and the chance to shift when needed. Assistance from the employer, in the form of counseling or wellness programs, would also assist in stress management.” (SG 9)

“The stress of the job, for instance, to watch security and implement rules, becomes exhausting and stressful... Well-defined and flexible rotation of schedules would enable me to sleep and enjoy time with my family, while employer support in the form of counseling, wellness programs, and team-building exercises would assist in stress reduction.” (SG 10)

Financial stress significantly shapes the work-life circumstances of security guards, as the job is often paired with low pay and poor benefits (Tayali & Sakyi, 2020; Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Guards often struggle to cover essential expenses like food, transportation, and household costs on their meager salaries, which adds to stress levels and degrades overall health (Campbell, 2022). This financial burden will usually compel them to sacrifice economic survival for individual or family needs, thereby making it challenging to maintain a balance between work and family.

3.6. Practical Time Management and Planning

Time management has emerged as a significant tactic for security guards to juggle their busy workloads and family obligations (Zorec et al., 2021; Weiss, 2023; Gonzalez, 2024). Most use routines such as getting up early, attending to household work before work, and meticulously scheduling their scarce free time to accommodate personal and family demands.

“Over time, I learned to adjust and set routines that helped me manage my duties both at work and in the household.” (SG 3)

“Time management is key. After work, I have to deal with my family again... I make sure to check in on our family and just balance our time.” (SG 5)

“Time management is crucial – I wake up early to take care of my family and get ready for work.” (SG 6)

“I prioritize and plan my day, relax through deep breathing, praying, and exercising, and communicate openly with my family so they can grasp my situation.” (SG 10)

Effective time management and planning are fundamental techniques for security guards in juggling professional duties with domestic responsibilities. Due to long hours, unorthodox schedules, and physically demanding work, guards tend to rely on regimented routines to keep things in check both at work and at home.

3.7. Stress-Relief and Self-Care Practices

Stress-relieving and self-care practices are essential strategies security guards use to cope with the demanding physical and emotional demands of their job. Guards may pray, engage in exercise, use deep-breathing techniques, and communicate openly with family members to reduce stress and maintain a healthy mental state.

“I pray to God and tell myself not to give up when I'm feeling stressed.” (SG 1)

“I try to maintain my positive attitude and find little ways to have fun.” (SG 2)

“Each time I go home, the joy of spending time with my family lessens the tiredness brought about by work when I look at my children.” (SG 7)

“To de-stress, I pray and exercise whenever I can.” (SG 8)

Stress-relief and self-care activities are important for security guards to endure the physical, emotional, and psychological stresses of their job (Nwakaego, 2024). Some common strategies include engaging in spiritual activities, such as praying, which offer emotional support and help maintain resilience under stressful conditions, as well as physical activities, such as exercise, to reduce tension and promote overall health.

3.8. Emotional Strain and Fatigue from Irregular Schedules

Irregular work shifts and prolonged working hours are major contributors to emotional stress and physical tiredness among security guards. Night shifts, prolonged duty periods, and irregular work rotations disrupt normal sleep and reduce rest time, leading to fatigue and diminished alertness (Silva et al., 2020).

“Despite my best efforts to manage my time, there are times when I am unable to care for my family, particularly if they experience difficulties while I’m on duty. This may make me feel inadequate.” (SG 1)

“This is challenging to engage in family activities and tends to cause stress and fatigue... On occasion, my relationship with family members is strained because I lack time for them” (SG 8)

“At times, I forget significant family events due to work, and it’s also extremely exhausting to concentrate on work at home.” (SG 9)

“Adjusting to non-standard work schedules, particularly night shifts or overtime, is difficult, and at times there isn’t sufficient time to spend with my family, making it more difficult to concentrate on household work.” (SG 10)

Irregular working hours and long shifts are among the primary sources of emotional stress and physical exhaustion for security. Night shifts, overtime, and irregular rotations disrupt regular sleep patterns, deprive workers of rest time, and degrade overall physical health, leading to fatigue and decreased alertness.

3.9. Impact on Family Relationships and Social Connection

The strict work schedules and duties of security guards can also affect family relationships and social bonding (Sopitshi, 2021; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020). Insufficient time spent at home, non-traditional shifts, and long hours tend to reduce the likelihood of quality interactions with family members, which, in turn, leads to emotional detachment or poor communication (Das & Palo, 2025).

“On occasion, my relationship with family members is strained because I lack time for them. Nevertheless, I try to communicate and give love despite the exhaustion. (SG 8)

“My relationship with my family has been influenced because sometimes the time I have with them is limited, But I still strive to give them time despite my busy schedule.” (SG 9)

“My relationship with my family is impacted because at times I do not have adequate time to spend with them, though I make an effort to give quality time to have a good relationship.” (SG 10)

The requirements of long work shifts, irregular work schedules, and longer working hours directly affect the quality of family relationships and social bonds among security personnel (Molokomme, 2024). Limited time reduces opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions with spouses, children, and other relatives, leading to emotional detachment and poor communication.

4. Conclusion

The study reveals that emotional regulation, professionalism, and resilience are key factors that help security guards maintain balance between their work responsibilities and family life. Guards who stay calm under pressure,

practice patience, and communicate respectfully are better able to manage demanding work conditions without allowing stress to negatively affect their relationships at home. These soft skills function not only as coping mechanisms but also as essential professional competencies that enhance job performance, credibility, and emotional stability. Overall, the findings emphasize that strengthening emotional control through proper support systems and training greatly contributes to a guard's well-being and effectiveness in fulfilling both family and work roles.

4.1. Future Suggestions

1. Integrate digital scheduling tools, such as duty rosters and mobile reminders, to help guards navigate shifts and commitments at home with greater ease.
2. Provide training or workshops; for example, on work-life balance or how to manage stress with the aim of enhancing security guards' coping abilities and emotional resilience.
3. Encourage the implementation of mentorship programs, such as matching junior guards with experienced personnel, in order to share workable coping mechanisms that help them balance work with family life.
4. Encourage routine self-evaluation-level activities, such as short reflection checklists, to assist security guards in monitoring levels of stress and changing daily life patterns.
5. Encourage stress-reducing activities-light exercise, prayer, mindfulness, for example-to reduce fatigue and prevent burnout.
6. Support coordinated planning, such as team coordination meetings, to enhance schedule management and teamwork of security guards.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that security organizations and institutions establish regular and ongoing support programs that can assist in increasing the emotional regulation and professional capacity of security guards. These could be in the form of training workshops held periodically on managing stress and emotional regulation, as well as buddy systems whereby junior security guards can obtain advice from senior security guards on how to handle work and family obligations. Organizations are also urged to implement effective and family-supportive scheduling practices that will help security guards more efficiently plan their personal and family time. Moreover, wellness strategies such as physical fitness activities, mindfulness sessions, as well as counseling services, are also required to be institutionalized. Taking adequate rest breaks and performing well-being checks can also help in recognizing the warning signs of fatigue and stress. By making all these targeted practices a reality, job satisfaction as well as the well-being of security guards can be improved so that they can carry out their assignments successfully in their occupation while managing their family relationships well.

Declarations

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to this work.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

Availability of data and materials

Supplementary information is available from the authors upon reasonable request.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable for this study.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the commencement of the study.

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