

Exploring the Lived Experiences of VIP Security Personnel

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ABSTRACT

VIP security is the specific protection service offered to Very Important Persons (VIPs) like government officials, diplomats, business leaders, celebrities, and other high-profile individuals who can be threatened because of their status, position, influence, or wealth. This research investigates the lived experiences of VIP security personnel as they negotiate the demanding nature of protective work and the personal challenges created therein. Employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study selected participants working in VIP protection roles in one of the cities of Misamis Occidental, using purposive sampling for completeness and depth in information. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews guided by a custom interview guide developed by the researchers and approved by a panel to ensure clarity and relevance. The interview focused on participants' experiences in balancing professional duties and personal life, the psychological and emotional impact of their roles, and their coping strategies. To create a comfortable environment, interviews began with casual conversation to encourage openness, and participants were prompted to provide detailed responses regarding their challenges, coping mechanisms, and family dynamics. Data were analyzed using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological approach. The analysis revealed themes including constant vigilance and professional pressure, emotional and psychological strain, family connection as emotional anchor, peer and organizational support, adaptive coping strategies, and commitment to duty and professional integrity. From the findings, it appears that despite the intense demands made upon them, VIP security personnel develop substantial resilience and coping mechanisms through family support, peer collaboration, and personal discipline. It is concluded that acknowledging their experiences and strengthening their support systems is a crucial ingredient in the maintenance of their well-being and professional effectiveness. It is recommended that VIP security agencies implement regular mental health support programs and counseling services to address emotional strain and stress management. Additionally, agencies should develop work-life balance policies, including flexible scheduling and family support initiatives, to enhance personnel well-being and job performance.

Keywords: Coping; Job Performance; Resilience; Emotional Anchor; Psychological Strain; Family Connection; Status; VIP Security; Vigilance.

1. Introduction

VIP security is the specific protection service offered to Very Important Persons (VIPs) like government officials, diplomats, business leaders, celebrities, and other high profile individuals who can be threatened because of their status, position, influence, or wealth (He, 2025). VIP security entails close protection, threat identification, risk management, and the application of special skills to guarantee the safety of the client in public as well as in private arenas (Nemeth, 2022).

VIP security in the Philippines is largely subject to Republic Act No. 5487 or the "Private Security Agency Law", which regulates the operation and training of private security officers, including close-in protection agents (Horan, 2024), while government-provided VIP security is managed by units like the Philippine National Police (PNP) Police Security and Protection Group (PSPG) and the Presidential Security Group (PSG). Employment-wise, VIP security provides numerous chances both in the government sector and private security companies, with interest still on the increase as a result of growing issues pertaining to political instability, terrorism, organized crime, and individual security, rendering it a niche and highly sought career path within the realm of law enforcement and private security (Nemeth, 2022).

Training and skill acquisition form the backbone of the effectiveness of VIP security staff, since the dynamics of their job call for a diverse and solid skill base to enable handling of the distinct challenges inherent in protecting high-value individuals. Functional training schemes have to incorporate physical fitness, to enable security

officers to act decisively and promptly in reacting to potential dangers (Angafor et al., 2020). Moreover, these courses must focus on threat assessment techniques, allowing staff to recognize and assess threats in real-time, thereby averting possible incidents before they occur (Irfan, 2024). Crisis management training is also important, as it equips VIP security officers with the ability to manage crises calmly and strategically, ensuring the safety and comfort of their clients (Carr, 2024).

In addition, interpersonal communication skills are critical so that security personnel can interact properly with clients, staff at venues, and police officers while providing a respectful and discreet environment (Setiawan & Santoso, 2025). The continuous professional improvement of such skills is critical, as the changing nature of threats requires that security professionals keep up with new tactics and technology. This emphasis on overall training and ongoing skill development guarantees that VIP security officers are adequately prepared to provide a safe environment for those they guard, ultimately supporting the confidence that clients have in their ability (Deyas, 2022). The emotional and psychological effects of serving as VIP security staff are tremendous and diverse, derived from the extremely stressful nature of the work and the inherent pressures of maintaining client security (Clifton, 2023). Security personnel frequently work in atmospheres of latent risk, and this can produce elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and a feeling of separation from their peers and families as a result of the necessity to be discreet about their work-related experiences (Mangaoil et al., 2023). The stresses of the job can lead to emotional exhaustion, especially when staff cannot debrief or unload their burdens on others, such as mental health workers, because of strict confidentiality practices (Evans et al., 2023).

This alienation can hamper their participation in healthy coping strategies, thus having long-term impacts on mental health, e.g., burnout or depression (Jiang et al., 2025). Also, the mental strain is aggravated by having to stay constantly on guard and fearing that errors can have severe implications for their clients. It is therefore crucial that VIP security staff training programs cover not just the physical and technical competencies required in the position but also mental wellness services and resilience training so that they are empowered with coping mechanisms for the psychological effects of their work. Identifying and resolving these emotional issues is essential to ensuring the overall well-being of security professionals and improving the quality of protection they offer (Malik et al., 2024).

Isolation and relationship dynamics are significant in the life of VIP security personnel, affecting their psychological well-being and professional performance (Ahimie et al., 2023). The work they do often requires them to be isolated from personal relationships since confidentiality and keeping a low profile may provide insulation against openness of communication with friends and relatives. This isolation can result in loneliness and disconnection, and it becomes challenging for security professionals to find emotional support or discuss the difficulties they encounter at work (Fernández, 2025). Moreover, the stress on personal relationships could be caused by the uncertainty of their work schedules, which can interfere with family life and reduce time spent with loved ones. Since such professionals place the safety of their clients over that of their own social interactions, the emotional detachment can result in misunderstandings and tensions in their personal lives as well (Novyk & Mazur, 2021).

The need to encourage healthy relationship patterns is necessary through open communication by security personnel regarding their experiences, building support networks that are accommodating of their peculiar needs, and creating a support culture where they feel at ease seeking assistance in feeling isolated (Worsley et al., 2021). Through a resolution of these dynamics, employers can improve the overall well-being and performance of their security forces, ultimately helping to create a more stable and resilient working environment (Sorensen et al., 2021). Ethics and responsibility are core elements within the debate about the work of VIP security staff, especially concerning how to preserve the trust and integrity on which successful protection depends (Sennewald & Baillie, 2020). The considerable risk involved in their work requires a robust ethical basis to shape decision-making and the exercise of discretion in possibly unclear circumstances (Latta et al., 2020). This ethical duty is especially salient when looking at the potential impact their conduct can have on the security of their clients and the general public. In addition, the mechanisms of accountability should guarantee that such professionals conform to set standards of behavior while offering channels for transparency in their operations. Enacting strong accountability systems can ease the risks from abuse of authority or negligence and cultivate a climate in which ethical thinking is most prominent (Akinsola, 2025). Regular training for security units that underlines ethical procedure and accountability sends strong messages on what is most valued, ensuring the professionalism of staff and upholding public trust in their capability (Mutuma, 2024). Finally, an ethical and accountability commitment guarantees that VIP security professionals are prepared to handle difficult situations with integrity, which makes them effective and secure the people they protect.

Personal accounts and case studies are critical vehicles in comprehending the lived realities of VIP security officers, whose detailed insight cannot be replicated by quantitative measures (Duvenage, 2021). By analyzing individual accounts and actual situations, researchers can delve into the nitty-gritty and problems confronted by such professionals in their line of work, uncovering the psychological and emotional strain that high-stakes conditions place on them (Robinson, 2024). These stories shed light on how individual experiences inform officers' understanding of their ethical duties and accountability, as they struggle with the complex balance between client safety and civil liberties. Case studies enable close examination of particular incidents, setting the stage for discussion of best practices, implications of decision-making under pressure, and the imperative for ongoing improvement in training programs. In addition, personal accounts bring depth to academic discussion by infusing what otherwise could be abstract theory with a human element, promoting empathy and greater comprehension of the special stresses faced daily by VIP security professionals. Thus, both case studies and individual stories enrich the general body of knowledge in the discipline and can be used to inform policymaking, which in turn will result in improved practices that are consistent with ethical standards and accountability procedures (Bandola-Gill & Smith, 2022).

This study fills numerous essential research gaps, including a population gap, geographical gap, and conceptual gap. Although research in security and law enforcement has thoroughly examined typical police work and military operations, little scholarly examination has been directly placed on the special population of VIP security officers, particularly under the context of the Philippines exemplifying a population and geographical gap. Also, while

current literature broaches the technical and tactical dimensions of security careers, it tends to ignore the conceptual richness relating to the emotional, psychological, ethical, and interpersonal experience of such professionals.

This research aims to address such gaps by presenting detailed, qualitative descriptions of the lived experiences of VIP security officers, specifically in local contexts, thus adding a more holistic and humanized perspective to security studies and criminology. The objective of this study is to investigate and gain insights into the lived experiences of VIP security officers, with emphasis on the emotional, psychological, social, and ethical aspects of their job. Through their personal stories and actual accounts, the study seeks to reveal the stress, loneliness, professional pressures, and intricacies of holding ethical behavior under pressure, which they encounter. It also aims to illuminate the ways in which these experiences affect their performance, well-being, and relationships on both a personal and professional level. In exploring this, the study hopes to offer useful insights that can shape training programs, support systems, and policymaking, and ultimately improve VIP security practices as well as the wellbeing of those employed in this high-risk and high-responsibility profession.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of VIP security personnel, focusing on the emotional, psychological, and professional challenges they encounter in the line of duty.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Explore the experiences in protecting high-profile individuals.
2. Examine the challenges encountered by VIP security personnel as a result of their high-stress and high-risk responsibilities.
3. Investigate how VIP security personnel cope with the demands of their work, including isolation, long working hours, and the need for constant vigilance.

2. Methods

2.1. Design

This research employed a qualitative phenomenological research design since it is best suited to investigating and learning about the lived experiences of VIP security officers. Phenomenology is concerned with bringing out individuals' subjective accounts and meanings attributed to their experiences (Moustakas, 1994), which resonates with the study's interest in looking into the emotional, psychological, and social realities of working within dangerous and pressured environments. Through the use of this design, the study can move beyond descriptions of security work on the surface and instead identify how VIP security officers individually experience and manage the pressures of their work. This methodology is appropriate as it offers a richer sense of the difficulties these professionals experience stress, loneliness, and their effect on relationships along with an articulation of their own understanding, which is usually ignored in technical or procedural analyses of security work.

2.2. Setting

This study was conducted in Misamis Occidental. The province strategic location ensures ease of access for participants, making it an ideal site for the research. Participants were selected from this area, providing a diverse representation of backgrounds and experiences relevant to the study. This geographic choice also allows for the inclusion of VIP security personnel who operate within varying professional contexts, offering valuable insights into the emotional, psychological, and operational aspects of their work.

2.3. Participants

The study involved ten (6) VIP security personnel from various agencies in Misamis Occidental as research participants. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, which is appropriate for gathering detailed insights from individuals with direct experience in the subject matter. The selection criteria included: 1) VIP security personnel currently active in their roles; 2) A diverse mix of both male and female officers; 3) At least 2 years of experience as VIP security personnel; and 4) Officers who are willing to participate.

2.4. Instrument

An interview guide was used to gather data from the VIP security personnel participants. The researchers developed a custom set of interview questions, which reviewed and approved by the panel to ensure they are clear, relevant, and aligned with the study's objectives. The interview focused on the lived experiences of the officers, particularly the challenges they face in balancing their professional duties with personal and family life, as well as the psychological and emotional impact of their roles.

2.5. Data-Gathering Procedure

To foster a comfortable and open environment, the interview began with casual, introductory conversation. This initial interaction helped participants feel more at ease and encourage them to engage openly in discussions about their experiences. Participants were encouraged to provide detailed, descriptive answers, offering insights into their personal challenges, coping mechanisms, and the impact of their work on family dynamics and relationships.

The interview guide was structured to cover various dimensions of work-life balance, including emotional stress, time management, and how the demands of security work affect personal relationships and family life.

To ensure the study's proper conduct, the researchers first sought approval from the Dean of College of Criminology in Misamis Occidental, specifically from the agencies employing VIP security personnel. Once permission is granted, the researchers will obtain informed consent from the participants, who are actively working in the field. The study was focused on exploring the challenges these professionals face in balancing the demands of their work with their personal and family lives, as well as the coping mechanisms they use to manage the emotional and psychological stress associated with their roles.

Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews with the participants, where the researchers explored specific issues such as emotional stress, personal sacrifices, and the impact of the job on their well-being and relationships. The researchers emphasized the importance of the participants' active involvement and cooperation, ensuring that their insights are crucial to the success of the study. Participants were fully informed about the

study's objectives, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of their participation, ensuring that they feel comfortable and respected throughout the research process.

2.6. Ethical Consideration

In conducting this qualitative research, the researchers were strictly adhered to ethical guidelines set by the university and relevant ethical protocols. The study ensured that all participants voluntarily agree to take part, with their involvement based on fully informed consent. Prior to any interviews, participants were provided with an informed consent form that clearly outlines the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the voluntary aspect of their involvement. The signed consent form was confirmed that participation is entirely voluntary, and refusal to participate will not result in any penalties or loss of benefits. Furthermore, signing the consent form will not waive any legal rights or claims.

To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, the researchers implemented measures to maintain anonymity. Participants' names were not revealed during the interviews or in any reports related to the study. Instead, they will be addressed by neutral terms like "Ma'am" or "Sir" to ensure further protection of their identities. All data presented in the study was excluded any personal identifiers, safeguarding participant confidentiality throughout the research process.

The researchers also complied with Republic Act No. 10173, the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," ensuring the protection of participants' personal data and privacy. Any information that is unnecessary for the study was securely stored and kept confidential.

2.7. Data Analysis

This study employed the phenomenological reduction technique, as outlined by Moustakas (1994). The analysis focused on the lived experiences of the VIP security personnel participants, particularly regarding the challenges they face in balancing their professional duties with their personal and family lives. Data was collected from interview transcripts and analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological approach. The steps of phenomenological reduction that would guide the data analysis are as follows: (1) Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Managing Unpredictable Risks in Dynamic Public and Travel Environments

VIP protection agents are confronted with unpredictability in public gatherings and travel, and they must make fast decisions to avoid potential danger (Drury, 2023). This ability to make effective decisions helps to keep protected individuals safe in dynamic environments. Unpredictable risk factors in a dynamically changing public or travel environment are a major consideration in the security of VIP clients, primarily because the factors involved are constantly shifting, such as crowd patterns, open spaces, traffic patterns, or unpredictable movements. These are fluid security environments where protectors have to be extremely alert and responsive, using their skills to make instantaneous, informed decisions to avert possible danger (Armstrong, 2025). Indeed,

unpredictability stemming from the presence of crowds, together with constant movements from point to point, means that the possibility of unforeseen risk factors is more pronounced, so there is a clear need for a proactive, responsive, and adaptive approach to the security of VIP clients (Finn, 2023).

The experience of VIP Security 1 underlines the need for instant coordination in dealing with unexpected security violations, thereby underlining the need for instant decision-making to counter potential threats. VIP Security 2 underlines the need to be flexible while dealing with sudden changes that might take place in public gatherings, thereby implying that protection requires instant changes in plans and formations. VIP Security 3 underlines the need for preparation, such as route inspection before traveling, to counter potential threats that might take place. The need for preventive planning to ensure safety and efficiency is thereby emphasized. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"There was an event. Despite thorough planning, an unexpected ground source occurred, creating a potential security breach. Reacting quickly, I coordinated with local authorities to reroute the crowd and reinforce the security perimeter." VS 1

"There was one event where our VIP made an unscheduled stop at a crowded public place. The sudden change caught us off guard, and we had to quickly adjust our formation." VS 2

"During a provincial trip, our vehicle almost got into an accident because the route wasn't checked in advance. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but it made me realize how vital advance planning and route inspection are to ensure safety and efficiency in every operation." VS 3

In order to control unpredictable risks in rapidly changing public and travel settings, a vigilant, pro-active, and speedy response approach is a necessity for security personnel (Bader et al., 2020). They have to face various scenarios, which include overcrowded public areas, unscheduled movements, and travel-related risks, which could result in a compromise of safety if immediate attention is not given. Research and analysis on the topic of crowd and event security illustrate that awareness and pre-route scanning and preparation are crucial for securing a risk-free and safe passage from events where breaches, accidents, or widespread surges in the crowds might take place. In this regard, evidence from various pieces of research has shown how pre-active strategies, such as simulation drills, have contributed to improved operational efficiency in environments with rapidly changing settings (Javaid et al., 2024).

Related research into security management for the public and travel environments pulls into sharp focus the importance of situational awareness and adaptability and proactive risk planning in dynamic environments, like the kind faced by security personnel for the protection of VIPs (Carr, 2024). In the realm of event and crowd security, the nature of spontaneous gathering and nomadic event security represents some of the greatest threats, since security planning for these kinds of events might prove ineffective using traditional and rigid security planning against crowds and unforeseen circumstances in real time, and through dynamic risk accommodation and planning, security personnel can stay ahead and prepare for the risks presented by crowd gatherings and dynamic, unforeseen changes in travel routes and plans (Kanaujiya & Tiwari, 2022). Through related research

into security planning, the importance of situational awareness for security personnel to perceive, understand, and project possible risks has emerged, and for decision making in unforeseen circumstances like crowd gathering and unforeseen changes in travel plans and security routing and evacuation planning in critical security operations for the safety of VIPs and associated travel security planning.

The consequences of being faced with unpredictable risks in public and travel environments are quite important in terms of the efficacy and well-being of VIP security personnel. This is because being subjected to unpredictable risks and challenges associated with travel conditions, for instance, can make the work of VIP protection personnel stressful and emotionally taxing. In light of these considerations, there is a great need for organizations to invest in comprehensive and effective threat prevention and management strategies. In particular, organizations should invest in adequate training for VIP protection personnel with a focus on preparing them for any possibility through scenario-based drills and preparation for any eventuality.

Moreover, organizations should invest in teamwork and support networks for VIP protection personnel to help them cope with the associated stresses. This will be crucial in ensuring the efficacy of VIP protection. From a theoretical point of view, the Situational Awareness Theory (Endsley, 1995) supports the above findings in the sense that the effective management of the threat is contingent upon the ability of the individual to perceive the environment around him or her and perceive the meanings of the different factors in the environment in terms of predicting the potential environments in the future that can be experienced by an individual in the dynamic environment

3.2. Importance of Advance Planning, Coordination, and Rapid Response

In VIP security, advance planning, cooperation, and quick action are critical to provide for any possible risks that might arise to protect high-risk individuals (Manafe, 2023). This allows for quick action on the part of security agents to effectively deal with any unforeseen situation that may arise. The relevance of advance planning, coordination, and rapid response to the security of VIPs can be appreciated from the perspective that collectively, they help to prevent and respond to threats before they turn into critical or disaster situations. Advance planning helps the security team to anticipate threats and devise strategies to counter them (Judijanto et al., 2023). Coordination between the security team and other stakeholders is essential to achieve common goals. Rapid response is important to enable the security team to react quickly to unexpected situations. In fact, all the factors combine to make a comprehensive security framework that helps to improve the effectiveness and security of high-profile individuals (Liu et al., 2024).

VIP Security 1 points out the crucial role of immediate coordination with the authorities in handling sudden security threats, underlining how timely precautions might avoid such incidents. VIP Security 2 complements this with the need to have contingency plans and be constantly alert, proving that readiness in case of sudden movements is the lever to successful protection. VIP Security 5 states the importance of proactive planning and continued awareness of the situation, showing that anti-guiding risks and thinking one step ahead improves overall effectiveness and the ability to protect high-profile targets. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"Reacting quickly, I coordinated with local authorities to reroute the crowd and reinforce the security perimeter."

VS 1

"That experience taught me the importance of always having a backup plan and staying alert for unexpected movements." VS 2

"Because of what I've experienced, I now put more emphasis on planning ahead and maintaining situational awareness at all times. I've learned to think two steps ahead, which helps me protect the VIP more efficiently."

VS 5

The aspect of advance planning, coordination, and response and readiness underlines the importance of being prepared in VIP security work (Dahlan & 2023). Preparedness and readiness in VIP protection involve proactive monitoring of potential danger, being situationally aware, and having an effective communication framework for instant response during surprise situations (Hesterman & Carhart, 2020). Research in security management reveals that being contingency-oriented, working in harmony with the rest of the security team and the local administration, and having proactive risk analysis all contribute to lowering the chances of a breach or an accident. VIP security workers recognize that scenario simulations, physical observation of routes, and constant monitoring are best practices that increase the efficiency of the process and enable fast response and readiness during surprise situations.

It has been evident from research that advance planning, coordination, and response play the very basic yet crucial roles for the successful execution of security operations and this is more critical in situations where VIPs are involved, masses are present, or the event site keeps changing from time to time (Hall et al., 2022). Best practices for security planning and operations include the fact that advance planning prior to an event, including threat and risk assessment, route assessment, development of contingency planning strategies, and coordination with key concerned stakeholders, plays a critical and essential role in assessing risks and formulating adequate security planning for the purpose of mitigating the same prior to the onset of the security operation itself.

Furthermore, advance security planning and coordination not only result in better assessment of security risks but also play an essential role in ensuring quick response action during an emergency or critical security situation since security response action plans and procedures are clearly defined and prepared in advance for the security team to act promptly and instantaneously during such critical scenarios and operations (Radvanovsky & Mc Dougall, 2023).

The relevance and importance of advance planning and rapid response have far-reaching implications for effectiveness and safety in VIP security processes. Advance or proper planning for VIP security is necessary to ensure that potential risks and factors are identified and addressed appropriately. In this way, it is possible to avoid mistakes that could occur during critical situations. Coordination and team work between security staff and other stakeholders also allow for effective and efficient decision-making in situations that seem unpredictable. Additionally, rapid response is important because it ensures that potential threats that emanate from any quarter are removed instantly and do not have any negative impacts on VIP characters and other members of staff. These

findings are also confirmed from a theoretical perspective by Situational Awareness Theory, which underlines that good security performance depends on the ability to perceive environmental cues, comprehend emerging threats, and project future developments for timely decisions with rapid responses in the case of VIP protection.

3.3. Psychological and Emotional Strain from Constant Stress and Responsibility

The VIP security personnel are under substantial psycho-emotional pressure due to the constant need to protect high-profile individuals. Being exposed to high-stress conditions for a long time can cause fatigue, anxiety, and lack of concentration, which makes stress management an area that demands attention for VIP security personnel as well (Schoeman, 2020). The stress and pressure that take a toll on a person's mental and emotional state owing to the nature of the job being performed can be considered an important issue for security personnel working for and around VIPs (James, 2022). The reason for this is that the ever-constant need to remain alert along with being under pressure to protect the life of another individual can bring in certain mental pressure in the individual that could result in fatigue and decreased concentration levels. The constant exposure to uncertain threats along with having to make decisions under significant pressure can increase the emotional requirements (Palamarchuk & Vaillancourt, 2021).

VIP Security 1 points out the potential effects of mental fatigue and exhaustion on mental faculties such as focus and decision-making as a result of continuous exposure to high levels of stress. VIP Security 2 explains the extreme levels of stress that result from the knowledge that one's life is solely in one's hands and therefore the necessity of rest and mental conditioning as key to managing that stress. VIP Security 4 points out the anxiety that stems from uncertainty, indicating the importance of experience and training in high-risk events as part of the formula for remaining calm and confident. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"In my role, I have faced emotional challenges such as dealing with high-stress situations, maintaining composure under pressure and managing the anxiety of potential threats, these challenges can sometimes lead to mental fatigue and emotional exhaustion affecting my focus and decision making abilities." VS 1

"One of the biggest challenges is constant stress and pressure. Knowing that someone's safety depends on you can be mentally exhausting. Sometimes it affects my sleep and focus, but I've learned to manage it through rest and mental conditioning." VS 2

"Dealing with high-risk situations brings anxiety, especially when threats are unpredictable. It sometimes affects my concentration, but experience and training have helped me stay composed and confident under pressure." VS 4

Psychological and emotional strain can be one of the most determining factors in security work due to the high-stress and high-responsibility nature of the role (Semenenko et al, 2024). The constant need for vigilance, pressure regarding the safety of high-profile individuals, and confrontation with unexpected threats result in mentally fatigued states, anxiety, and reduced concentration that would probably affect decisions and operational efficiency. Research into occupational stress among security professionals suggests that prolonged exposure to

stress promotes emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbances, and diminished cognitive performance. Because of this, mental conditioning, effective coping strategies, and scenario-based training have today been widely recommended in maintaining poise, resilience, and professional performance in risky environments (Cushion, 2022). The findings underpin the critical need for structured support systems and interventions that are aimed at mitigating the psychological demands inherent in the protective services.

Studies on the topic of occupational stress among security workers have regularly demonstrated that highly responsible and continuously vigilant jobs are correlated to psychological/emotional strains (Pradhan, 2021). There is evidence that security guards suffer from moderately severe levels of job-related stress that adversely influence both their bodily and mentally healthy conditions. In addition to that, there are findings showing that experiencing violence at workplaces has contributed towards increased degrees of psychological strains; that is, there is an obvious direct association between job-related risks as well as mental health conditions within security-related positions (Simelane, 2023). When job demands surpass an individual's capacity to deal with them, the state of job-related stress emerges due to increased anxiety levels, poor concentration, as well as poor well-being conditions that parallel the psychological strains experienced by professionals within high-risk protective services employment positions.

The psychological and emotional demands brought about by stress and high levels of responsibility have important consequences for the performance, welfare, and retention of VIP security personnel. Continued engagement with high-stress activities can give rise to mental fatigue, anxiety, and distraction, which can affect decision-making and performance during high-stakes missions. Such challenges underscore the importance for organizations to establish support frameworks that address stress management, mental health services, or enhanced resilience training to ensure that individuals can deal with the challenges that accompany their work roles. Staying abreast of such implications not only maintains the mental well-being of security staff but also not only contributes positively to the success of their overall mission performance but also enables them to ensure high levels of safety for their VIPs. From a theoretical perspective, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model explains that job demands such as vigilance, high levels of job responsibility, and risk exposure result in burnout and emotional exhaustion because of the lacking of job resources.

3.4. Work–Life Imbalance and Personal Sacrifices

Unfortunately, the security personnel of VIPs have to spend long hours on unscheduled duties; this can be demanding job-wise and leave little or no time for personal obligations. The described cases of personal sacrifice are work oriented yet may make individuals isolated, reproachful, and emotionally exhausted (Mostafa, 2022). Work-life imbalances and personal sacrifices can very well be experienced by protection personnel given the working hours and their constant exposure to their responsibilities. The requirement to stay back in case of an emergency, travel, and special assignments might cut into quality time spent with family and may hamper one's routines (Shin et al., 2022). These factors may contribute to emotional and physical fatigue and issues in developing personal relationships. Over a period of time, if personal sacrifices aren't tended to, it may raise

concerns regarding an overall sense of satisfaction in one's life. The recognition of this dimension underscores the value of support systems being in place for protection staff (Devaney & Gregor, 2022).

VIP Security 2 mentions the problems posed by hours worked and unattended family events, but VIP Security 3 looks back on the emotions experienced as a result of working away from family and realizes that living with purpose and making the best out of time helps to make such sacrifices less painful. VIP Security 6 points out the stress that irregular working hours involve, explaining that self-control, balance, and the sense of responsibility are required in order to make such sacrifices bearable in terms of the effects on the private lives of such individuals. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"The stress and long working hours often kept me away from my family. I missed important occasions, which caused some misunderstandings at home. Over time, I learned to communicate better and make the most of my free time to rebuild those connections." VS 2

"Being away from my loved ones for long periods has been one of the toughest sacrifices. I cope by focusing on my purpose, ensuring safety and serving with professionalism. I also use my free time to reconnect and make every moment with family meaningful." VS 3

"The biggest sacrifice is the constant separation from my family due to unpredictable work hours. It's emotionally draining, but I manage it by focusing on self-discipline, maintaining emotional balance, and reminding myself that my sacrifice ensures their safety and well-being." VS 6

Work-life imbalance and sacrifices are natural connotations for personnels involved in VIP security work due to long hours of work, unconventional work patterns, and protection work coming with its own set of strenuous expectations. Spending much time away from families and support systems could easily result in emotional distress and difficulties in maintaining intimate relations for those involved in VIP protection work (Mokae, 2023). The impact of work-related stress in the field of protective work has been explored in existing research to include effects on psychological well-being, including fatigue, guilt, and reduced life satisfaction. Strategies for managing stress have been identified to include adopting strategies for quality time with loved ones and self-discipline for balanced work life when in VIP protection work (Marques & Berry, 2021).

Studies on high work demands and high work-related stresses have found work-life conflict and personal sacrifices to be major concerns for professionals engaged in long work hours, high responsibility, and long-term absences from home (Akanji & Ajonbadi, 2020). In field studies carried out on police and military forces, it has been found that due to work pressures and demands, work-life balance is made complicated and results in limited personal and social commitment and concerns for future family roles. The work-life conflict study fields in occupational psychology illustrate that work pressures and personal responsibilities could have adverse effects on mental health and work satisfaction and well-being due to spillovers from work to non-work life (Lott, Y., & Wöhrmann, A. M. (2023). Studies conducted on work patterns and pressures in private security have also reflected that long work hours and night work and pressure situations have mental and emotional effects on personal and family life even when flexible work schedules exist. These studies on work-life conflict and personal

pressures on security professionals have illustrated that work pressures and work-life imbalances have psychological effects on work staff and represent a clear recommendation for organizational strategies to mitigate these pressures.

The constant strain caused by high levels of stress and responsibility has far-reaching implications not only for the well-being but also for the performance of the personnel involved in VIP security. Prolonged exposure to the pressure elements can result in mental fatigue, anxiety, reduced concentration, and poor decision-making, which may affect operational effectiveness and the safety of high-profile individuals. This further justifies the requirement for organizations to adopt formalized support structures like stress management programs, mental health counseling, and training in building resilience to help personnel manage the demands placed upon them. Such steps have repercussions not only for the mental health and job satisfaction of security professionals but also for higher overall efficiency in operations, better mitigation of risks, and the ability to sustain high standards of protection in environments characterized by unpredictability and high stakes. From a theoretical point of view, the Work-Family Conflict Theory argues that work-family conflict, where the demands from one role make the other role difficult to fulfill, applies in the case of VIP security guards, who experience this kind of pressure.

3.5. Individual Coping Strategies and Stress Management Techniques

VIP security personnel utilize their own unique stress-coping methods that include techniques such as mindfulness, breathing techniques, mental rehearsal, and fitness to keep their concentration and composure intact even when they are working under extreme pressure. Reducing stress anxiety, preventing burnout, and improving decision-making skills are also made possible through such techniques (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). Individual coping styles and stress management strategies are important for enhancing the ability of VIP security personnel to remain focused and composed under high-stress situations. Some of these coping styles are physical fitness, planned schedules, mindfulness, breath control, and trust in professional skills to deal with stress and resultant physical and emotional exhaustion (Maresca et al., 2022). By managing stress effectively, it becomes easier to remain vigilant and make rational decisions during sensitive security operations. It should be noted that individual coping styles are important to maintain individual and job-based well-being under high-stress conditions of security work (Kim & Ahn, 2025).

VIP Security 2 includes the benefit of proper physical fitness activities to combat stress. VIP Security 4 focuses on physical discipline to build mental endurance to remain composed during stressful operations. VIP Security 6 introduces key techniques to remain composed by relying on training, concentration, and confidence to remain sharp and not go into panic at times of operations when quick decisions are required. The techniques not only describe the methods of remaining composed but also include relevant examples. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"I cope by maintaining a healthy routine getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and keeping a balanced diet. Physical fitness helps me stay alert, while good rest allows me to handle stress and pressure more effectively during operations." VS 2

"I stick to a routine of regular physical training and discipline. Exercise not only keeps my body fit but also strengthens my mental endurance, helping me stay sharp and calm even in stressful environments." VS 4

"I keep myself calm by focusing on the task rather than the fear of danger. I remind myself of my duty, rely on my training, and maintain confidence in my skills. This mindset keeps me centered and prevents panic in critical situations." VS 6

Personal coping mechanisms and methods for managing stress are critical in ensuring mental and physical well-being among VIP protection agents (Anderson et al., 2022). Research evidence from studies conducted among individuals with high-stress security jobs indicates that sticking to routines involving regular physical exercises, getting sufficient sleep, and eating healthy food helps improve alertness, endurance, and resilience during high-stress protection operations. Mental techniques involving focused concentration, relying on professional training, mindfulness, and controlled breathing techniques are well-documented effective approaches to cope with stress, remain composed, and avoid panic in uncertain or high-stakes protection situations (Srivastava, 2025). Research suggests that a combination of physical training and emotional regulation strategies is effective in improving decision-making and performance in high-risk protection operations.

There is evidence that people in high stress jobs proactively employ personal strategies to cope with stress (Schwarzer & Reuter, 2023). It indicates that public safety professionals employ numerous techniques to proactively handle stress at work. For instance, studies have found that people in high stress jobs employ personal strategies such as self-reflection, stress education, or therapy, such as psychotherapy, to actively cope with stress. Systematic analysis in other occupation groups, such as prison or law enforcement careers, further supports that mindfulness strategies, breathing techniques, meditation, cognitive behavioral techniques, and resilience training provide highly effective stress relief, reduction of burnout, reduction of anxiety, improvement of focus, or management of personal emotions in high stress jobs (Geetanjali et al., 2023). Specifically, within a security context, exercise, sound sleeping habits, relaxation, or social support have been recognized as particularly effective strategies to actively deal with stress, in addition to being reflected in overall stress concepts that provide evidence of efficient techniques to cope with stress at work.

Such implications are fundamental to the effectiveness, well-being, and resilience of individual personnel operating within VIP security. Security personnel can decrease anxiety and prevent burnout by adopting practices aimed at reducing tension through mindfulness, controlled breathing, physical exercise, structured routines, and task-focused mental strategies, thereby remaining composed in highly pressurized situations. These have been designed to improve cognitive functioning and decision-making under stress and bring about long-term psychological and physical health benefits seen as important in sustaining operational readiness. Recommendations are that organizations should facilitate the development of personal coping skills through relevant training, wellness programs, and access to resources, such skills being supportive of professional performance and overall well-being in demanding protective roles. This theme is rooted within the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping by Lazarus & Folkman, which holds that people cope with stress by cognitive appraisal and problem-focused and emotion-focused coping efforts, which are seen within the physical and

mindfulness-based strategies utilized by VIP security officers to remain in control and perform effectively under stressful conditions.

3.6. Reliance on Social and Organizational Support Systems

The security personnel responsible for VIP protection utilize social and organizational support structures like family and social networking groups for dealing with challenging situations associated with high-stress task performance (Kaur, 2025). These social and organizational structures offer these employees encouragement and assistance in order to stay focused on assigned responsibilities. The psychological and professional pressures associated with high-risk responsibilities in VIP security call for reliance on both social and organizational support systems (Koeppen & Hopkins, 2021). Support by family, peers, mentors, and colleagues offers a level of psychological reassurance, shared understanding, and practical guidance that may minimize stress and prevent burnout. Organizational support through teamwork, open communication, wellness programs, and access to professional resources enhances further the level of resilience and job performance. Such systems create a feeling of relatedness and stability that enables staff to stay focused and motivated during challenging periods (Kaur, 2024). Emphasizing the value of social and organizational support is in recognition of its critical role in sustaining well-being, effectiveness, and long-term commitment to the work performed in the security of VIPS (Alzadjali & Ahmad, 2024).

VIP Security 1 recognizes the vital role that an extended support system, including relatives, peers, and close friends, has in cushioning the psychological pressures of the job and helping an individual remain focused and functional in their work. VIP Security 3 removes attention from personal support and points to the benefits that come with networking with fellow professionals in similar lines of work, establishing that shared experiences and advice are useful in stress relief. VIP Security 5, on the other hand, points to the importance of having all the support that comes with having both relatives and workmates. These are evident in the responses of the VIP Security Personnel during the conduct of interview:

"Family, peers, mentors, friends this support system create a strong network that buffers the emotional demands of my role to maintain focus, well-being, and effectiveness on duty." VS 1

"I rely heavily on my teammates and peers in the security field. We often share experiences and advice, which helps relieve stress. Having people who truly understand the challenges of the job makes coping much easier." VS 3

"I lean on both my family and colleagues for support. My family helps me recharge emotionally, while my peers give me professional guidance. That balance between personal and work relationships keeps me stable and motivated." VS 5

This dependence on social and organizational support structures is one of the important components that help in balancing high-stress security work demands. Research indicates that family, peers, mentors, and colleagues provide the emotional reassurance, guidance, and practical assistance which helps diminish stress, deter burnout, and maintain operational focus (Dalton, 2021). According to occupational psychology research, strong social

networks buffer the psychological impact of job-related pressures and enhance resilience, enabling personnel to cope effectively with high-risk and unpredictable situations (Davenport, 2025). Organizational support, structured wellness programs, opportunities for mentorship, and team-based collaboration not only reinforce these effects but create a sense of belonging, improve communication, and ensure personnel have access to the resources which can sustain them both professionally and personally.

Studies on occupation-related stress and coping clearly suggest the important function of social organizational support systems in the alleviation of job-related stress, besides improving the overall well-being of employees in demanding work settings (Reh et al., 2021). The JD-R approach and models-related studies suggest that the augmentative function of social organizational support systems offsets the deleterious effect of job-related stress, providing the much-needed psychological boosting to counter stress, in a manner that ensures the prevention of burnout experiences, allowing the individual to maintain an effective level of job-related performance. The empirical approach clearly suggests that coworkers, supervisors, and organizational forms of social organizational support systems can help alleviate stress, boost job performance, besides improving overall commitment, with the employee reporting a higher level of relationship quality, besides a notable decline in stress, in work settings where these systems are in place (Chen et al., 2020). Lastly, a substantial amount of job-related stress, besides improving work-life interface, was noted to be directly influenced by the level of social organizational support systems, specifically job-related stress, with the overall level of psychological distress, besides work-life interface, improving appreciably due to the augmentative function of social organizational relationships, specifically job-related stress, besides relationships within the family.

The reliance on social and organizational support systems has profound impacts on the welfare, resilience, and performance of VIP security personnel. Clearly, access to strong support networks-family, peers, mentors, and organizational resources-serves to buffer the emotional and psychological demands of high-pressure assignments, thereby reducing stress and preventing burnout. This is how support grows operational effectiveness, enabling personnel to remain focused, composed, and competent to make decisions during unsure and high-risk situations. These findings imply that supportive environments need to be deliberately nurtured by the organization through mentorship programs, team-building activities, wellness initiatives, and open lines of communication, while personnel develop personal strong relationships, as both sources of support are vital in maintaining mental health and job satisfaction and sustaining long professional performance. This theme is rooted within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory because social and organizational support serve a very important role in providing key job resources to mitigate stressful effects of high job demands among VIP security personnel working in a high-stress environment.

4. Conclusions

According to the study's findings, VIP security guards frequently struggle to strike a balance between their personal and emotional well-being and the demanding nature of their work. Their job necessitates long, unpredictable hours, constant alertness, and the capacity to handle stressful situations all of which lead to emotional strain, mental exhaustion, and little family time. In spite of these obstacles, the participants showed

great resilience by using personal coping mechanisms like physical training, mindfulness, and a structured routine, as well as the assistance of peers, family, and organizational resources. The study emphasizes that while protecting VIPs is still their top priority, preserving their emotional stability and robust support networks is essential to their efficacy and long-term welfare. These firsthand accounts highlight the dual sacrifices made by VIP security guards protecting lives while juggling personal demands and highlight the need for institutional acknowledgement as well as all-encompassing support systems that take into account their mental, emotional, and social well-being.

5. Recommendation

VIP security guards may improve their organizational support structures in order to better handle the particular demands of this profession. Burnout can be decreased and emotional resilience increased by putting in place organized mental health programs, frequent psychological evaluations, and stress management seminars. To guarantee that employees can recuperate both physically and psychologically, organizations may also take into account requiring rest periods, modifying schedules, and providing access to private counseling services. Creating family-inclusive programs, trauma-informed interventions, and peer support groups can improve relationships, increase understanding, and boost spirits. Professional development should also incorporate training courses on communication, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance. In order to better understand the intricate dynamics within the VIP protection industry, future researchers are urged to investigate family members' viewpoints and compare experiences in various security environments or geographical areas.

Declarations

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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.

Informed Consent

All participants in this study voluntarily gave their informed consent prior to their involvement in the research.

Availability of data and material

All supplementary documentation can be provided for the purpose of academic inquiry or verification.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable for this study.

Ethical Approval

The researchers adhered to the ethical protocols set by Misamis University.

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