

# Empowering Security Professionals: Exploring Lived Experiences and Aspirations in Current Training Program

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## ABSTRACT

Security professionals serve as the first line of defense against evolving threats, yet little is known about how current training programs shape their professional experiences and aspirations. This study explored the lived experiences of ten private security professionals in the Philippines through a descriptive-phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's method, revealing that training is perceived as practical, relevant, and empowering. Participants reported enhanced confidence, professional competence, and interpersonal skills, and expressed aspirations for continuous learning, technological competency, and leadership development. Findings highlight the importance of aligning training programs with real-world demands and supporting professional growth.

**Keywords:** Security training, lived experiences, professional development, private security, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

In the face of evolving global security challenges, security professionals play a critical role in safeguarding communities, upholding peace, and ensuring justice. In the Philippines, personnel undergo training programs offered by the Philippine National Police-Supervisory Office for Security and Investigation Agencies (PNP-SOSIA) to prepare for threats including terrorism, cybercrime, and organized criminal activities. Despite their importance, concerns persist regarding the adequacy of current training in addressing the complex demands of modern security environments (Fortinet, 2024; High-Speed Training, 2025). Traditional programs have focused largely on technical skills, yet understanding the lived experiences and aspirations of security professionals can reveal opportunities to enhance program relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with career goals (Palmer & Thomas, 2021; Bryant & Dunlop, 2020). Insufficient training not only increases vulnerability to cyber and physical threats but also heightens professional stress and reduces overall effectiveness, whereas targeted, practical programs have been shown to improve skills, confidence, and job performance (Manley, 2023; Hook Security, 2023). This study explores the lived experiences of private security professionals within current training programs, the perceived impact of these programs on their professional practice, and their aspirations for further development. By capturing these insights, the research provides evidence to inform the design of more responsive, practical, and career-oriented security training frameworks, supporting both personal growth and the capacity of professionals to meet evolving threats effectively.

## Objectives

This study explored the lived experiences of the private security professionals on the current security training programs offered by private security training agencies.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What are the lived experiences of the informants on the current security training programs offered by the Private Security Training Agencies?

2. How do current security training programs affect the lives of the informants?
3. What are the aspirations of the informants to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitude for real-world application?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences and aspirations of private security professionals in relation to current training programs. This design allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' subjective experiences, focusing on the meanings they attach to training and its impact on their professional growth (Delve, 2023; Shorey, 2022).

### Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of ten private security professionals with at least ten years of experience, Philippine citizenship, and valid licenses. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide meaningful insights on the effectiveness and impact of current training programs.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, conducted either in person. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. The flexible format allowed exploration of key themes while accommodating participants' unique experiences.

### Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's thematic analysis. The process involved coding and categorizing data into themes that reflected participants' experiences, perceived effects of training, and aspirations for professional development.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were strictly followed to protect participants' privacy and well-being. Informed consent was obtained verbally or in writing depending on participants' preference.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Lived Experiences of Security Professionals

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed that security training programs offered by private agencies are perceived as highly relevant and practically applicable to daily duties. Informants consistently emphasized that skills and knowledge gained were directly transferable to real-world scenarios, bridging the gap between theoretical instruction and the demands of the profession.

Thematic analysis identified three core aspects of lived experiences:

***Practical Application and Relevance*** – Training equips security professionals with skills they can immediately apply on the job, enhancing preparedness and situational judgment.

**Acquisition of Essential Skills.** Participants highlighted learning in areas such as client management, public relations, self-control, legal frameworks, and discipline as critical for professional competence.

“ambot lang kaha sa uban sir basta sa akola lang nagamit jd cya in real scenario sap ag panarbaho”

English Interpretation: “I don’t know about others, sir but for me, it has really been useful in real-world work scenarios” (Informant 2, p.1, II. 5-6)

“Nagamit jd sir ang training sir. Oh, kay kaning mga, ma-apply jd na sa, labi na actual jd na post to post nmo ug actual na gyud na area ang among training nga ilang gihatag among magamit jd”

English Interpretation: “The training is really useful, sir. Oh, because these things, they can really be applied, especially since our post-to-post assignments and the actual areas where we had our training are realistic” (Informant 3, p. 3, II. 59-61)

The noteworthy statements emphasize how useful they believe the training was for carrying out their actual responsibilities. The informants two (2) and three (3) believe that the material was useful in their daily tasks and was not just theoretical. This demonstrates unequivocally that the present training approach successfully closes the knowledge gap between classroom instruction and the requirements of the security industry. According to Klein et al. (2029) that security personnel are the community’s first line defense, outnumber police by nearly three to one, carry out many of the same tasks as police officers, and many even carry firearms to protect people and properly, their practical application probably helps them feel more prepared and competent.

**Understanding Roles and Responsibilities** – Training fosters awareness of their role as first responders and “force multipliers” within the community, emphasizing professionalism and ethical conduct in collaboration with law enforcement.

These findings align with Klein et al. (2019), who emphasized that practical skill application and clarity of role significantly enhance security personnel’s confidence and effectiveness.

*“The curriculum was really to equip what is needed in the security industry, especially the focus on the protection of lives and properties considering that the security guards or private security throughout the country is more than the number of the active PNP as of right now and even it was called by the PNP the security guard in the country as the force multiplier that really can help them in maintaining peace and order within the community”* (Informant 9, 13, II. 394-400)

Moving past a limited view of their work as exclusively focused on stability and security for private interests, this promoted a sense of professional duty and an understanding of their crucial role within the broader public safety ecosystem. According to informant nine (9), the training helps participants develop a feeling of civic duty and an understanding of how public law enforcement and private security work together to keep everyone safe.

This highlights how important security leadership is to preserve community stability and security. They must be able to coordinate across teams, make choices quickly and effectively handle crises (Al-Subaie, 2025). This shows that private security personnel have a lot of obstacles to overcome, such as complicated security crises and escalating conflicts, which calls for continuous training and leadership development.

### **Effects of Training on Professional Performance and Personal Development**

The training programs positively impacted both professional and personal domains:

**Increased Confidence and Empowerment** – The participants were able to approach their obligations with more confidence after gaining knowledge relevant to their jobs and gaining a new perspective on their duties. Indeed, participants reported enhanced self-assurance and ownership of their duties. One participant stated:

*“Oh, confident jd ta kai naa naman tai knowledge sa atung trabaho sir, kaysa ma trabaho raka nga pahoy pahoy rak diha dako kaau ug deperensya”*

English Interpretation:

“Oh, we are definitely confident because we already have the knowledge for our job, sir. It has a huge difference compared to just working aimlessly” (Informant 2, p. 1, II. 24-25)

*“Oh, confident kai nana man kai nahibaw-an”*

English Interpretation: “Oh, I am confident because I already know what to do” (Informant 5, p. 7, I. 215)

*“Yes sir, tungod sa kahibalo naka, sakto ka sa training gihatag na sa mga instructor nimo nga confident naka sa imong unsay nga maka kuanan nimo nga pwesto kai sakto naman kayo ka sa kahibaw. Gihatag na gyud nila.”*

English Interpretation: “Yes sir, because you have the knowledge and the training given by your instructors was accurate, you are now confident in whatever position you might get, because you are very well-versed. They truly gave you all that.” (Informant 4, p. 5, II. 159-161)

The development of certain jog-related knowledge, such as protocols, processes, and best practices pertinent to their employment, is the direct cause of this increased confidence and empowerment that ties them to self-esteem. Additionally, the training frequently gives them a fresh perspective on their duties, elucidating expectations and enabling them to take decisive and efficient action in a variety of circumstances. Empowerment is a key mediating factor that links security organizational innovation and self-leadership (Kim and Kim 2012).

**Enhanced Job Performance** – Knowledge of rules of engagement, chain of command, and situational protocols allowed participants to perform tasks more effectively, contributing to workplace safety and operational reliability. According to the participants, a security training program is the main factor influencing their increased job performance and general effectiveness in their positions. People regularly believe that the particular knowledge and practical abilities they have gained from the training immediately enable them to better comprehend the subtleties of their responsibilities and carry them out with greater accuracy.

A more proactive and capable attitude to upholding safety and order results from this improved understanding, as does greater adherence to established security measures. As a result, participants feel more equipped to deliver a higher level of service, whether it be answering questions, controlling access, or dealing with unanticipated circumstances, according to a quote from one of the participants:

*“Yes, ang epekto ah they know their duties and responsibilities for examples rules of engagement kabalo siya mo apply unsay maximum tolerance nga dili na kinahanglan nga mo gamit sila ug firearms”*

English Interpretation: “Yes, the effect is that they know their duties and responsibilities. For example, in rules of engagement, they know ho to apply maximum tolerance, so they do not need to use firearms.” (Informant 10, p. 14, II. 454-459)

And according to another participant in private security,

*“Yes sir, nakatabang jd, na apply sad nmo ang nakat-onan sa training,”*

English Interpretation: “Yes sir, it really helped, you were able to apply what you learned in the training.” (Informant 6, p. 9, I. 259)

The thorough explanations provided by the informants ten (10) and six (6) show how the training directly relates to the real-world implementation of important ideas like the chain of command. Maintaining safety, order, and operational integrity in security operations requires mastery of these concepts. Strong predictors of a guard’s degree of satisfaction include their perceptions of task of priority, goal specificity, and objective difficulty, as well as their sense of direction and role clarity (Nalla et al., 2015).

**Improved Personal Attributes and Professionalism** – Training encouraged self-discipline, focus, ethical behavior, and respect for others, resulting in more mature and professional conduct in daily operations. As it is also focusing primarily on the development of tangible job-related abilities, the security training program clearly fosters improvements in personal qualities that greatly enhance security personnel’s general professionalism. Due to a greater awareness of their vital role in preserving safety and security, participants frequently report feeling more accountable and responsible as highlighted by participant:

“Dako na jd aug makuha sir labi na usa jd na ang disciplina sa imong kaugalingon, kanag disciplina sa kaugalingon mao jd nai mas mayo unya respite sa akung isig kataw ang maayong mahatag.”

English Interpretation: “You’ll gain a lot, sir, especially self-discipline. That self-discipline is truly the best thing, along with the respect that you can give to your fellow human beings.” (Informant 3, p. 3, II. 73-76)

Participant or informant 3’s emphasis on self-control and consideration for others underscores the program’s important contribution to the development of morally upright security personnel. These results echo findings by Selic et al. (2019), highlighting the importance of professional development in cultivating responsible, ethical, and competent personnel in security roles.

### **Aspirations for Professional Growth**

Participants expressed proactive desires to enhance their professional capabilities:

**Interpersonal Skills and Attitude** – Improving patience, conflict resolution, and customer service skills was emphasized, reflecting the need for emotional intelligence in security operations. As quoted by one of the participants;

“*Sa akoo lang siguro, kini gyung Batasan jd sa taw mas mayo jd na gyud ug dapat taas ug pasensya kai kung ingon kag sakto kag pamatasan dapat taas pd ka ug pasensya kai kanag naai mag suko suko diha dli jd na nimo tubayan mas mayo jd nang good mood lang kanunay, naa jd nang maximum tolerance dapat eh apply jd na.*”

English Interpretation: “For me, it is probably about a person’s character. It is really best to have a lot of patience because if you claim to have good character, you should also have a lot of patience. If someone gets angry; you really should not retaliate. It is truly better to always be in good mood. You really need to apply that maximum tolerance.” (Informant 3, p. 4, II. 94-95)

Effective security frequently depends on handling human relationships with diplomacy and emotional intelligence, which is why security employment places a strong emphasis on patience and keeping a pleasant attitude. The fundamental virtue of patience fosters self-control, distress tolerance, and relationship management, all of which are essential for security guards who regularly deal with tense or hostile circumstances. Highlights of the Indrawati et al. (2023) found that interpersonal skills and constructive knowledge significantly improve work readiness, whereas work motivation interferes with the impact of these factors on work readiness via physical security as security professionals constantly express a great desire to improve their professional contribution by developing their career competence and expanding their knowledge in area that are directly related to their security duties.

**Professional Competence and Knowledge** – Participants aspired to strengthen situational awareness, vigilance, security discipline, and technological skills, including familiarity with reporting systems and computer literacy. This goal is a result of the understanding that the security environment is ever changing, with new threat, technologies, and best practices appearing on a regular basis. This shows a strong desire to learn more about subjects including risk assessment, emergency response protocols, conflict resolution strategies, and pertinent legal frameworks.

“*We are aiming for the impossible, we’re going to enhance our private security professional’s knowledge of computer systems today. Because whether you like it or not, all reporting, and any reports will soon be integrated into computer technology systems.*” (Informant 8, p. 12, II. 357-359)

**Broader Impact Recognition** – Security personnel acknowledged their role in contributing to community safety and family well-being. The participants saw their professional skill as directly contributing to the security of the community and the stability of their own families, rather than just being a job need. This sense of purpose goes beyond the individual and presents the security professional as an essential component of the community’s social structure.

“Dako kayo og tabang ang training dili lang sa trabaho, Kundi sap ag pagpanalipod pud sa akong pamilya ug sa komunidad nga akong gina-serbisuhan.”

English Interpretation: “The training is a huge help not just for work, but also in protecting my family and the community I serve.” (Informant 5, p. 7, II. 220- 222)

The acknowledgment of their protective role implies that training fosters a strong feeling of civic responsibility that goes beyond the workplace. This result is consistent with the findings of Klein et al. (2019), who contend that security personnel frequently form a protector identity that shapes their conduct in private. As a result, the training has two benefits: it improves professional dependability and encourages responsible citizenship in the workforce.

**Training Program Improvement** – Informants involved in training delivery advocated for better facilities, more time for practical exercises, and enhanced learning materials. The physical and instructional infrastructure of security academies needs to be modernized, according to informants, especially those who have moved into supervisory or training delivery responsibilities. They argued for a change to hands-on, immerse settings that more closely resemble the demanding reality of the industry.

“Kinahanglan gyud unta of mas nindot nga pasilidad ug dugang nga oras para sa actual exercise para mas andam ang mga guards sa tinuod nga sitwasyon.”

English Interpretation: “We really need better facilities and more time for actual exercises so that guards are better prepared for real-world situations.” (Informants 7, p. 10, II. 310- 312)

The need for improved facilities and hands-on training highlights a perceived disconnect between classroom theory and the practical requirements of security operations. This supports the conclusions of Dela Cruz et al. (2021), who pointed out that in order to preserve operational efficiency, Philippine security training needs to change to incorporate technology-driven solutions and high-fidelity simulations. Training organizations can guarantee that the trainee’s lived experiences translate into increased survival and success rates in the field by attending to these infrastructure demands. These aspirations highlight the participants’ commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with evolving security demands, supporting the need for ongoing professional development programs.

Officers with presence of mind, which is closely linked to vigilance, are able to maintain mental focus and awareness, which is essential for spotting small clues in changing situations. This cognitive attentiveness improves overall safety outcomes by helping people make better decisions under pressure and by reducing reaction times. Work role salience mediates the relationship between professional competence and leadership aspiration, and accomplishment aspiration modifies this relationship (Nair & Senthil Kumar, 2024).

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that current security training programs are effective in preparing personnel for complex, real-world roles while also promoting personal growth and professional identity. Practical, scenario-based learning strengthens skill application, enhances confidence, and fosters situational awareness, supporting the role of private security personnel as critical contributors to public safety (Klein et al., 2019; Al-Subaie, 2025).

The study also underscores the need for ongoing development:

- Incorporation of technology training (e.g., computer systems, reporting tools) to keep pace with modern security challenges.
- Focus on soft skills, including communication, conflict resolution, and public interaction, essential for handling dynamic environments.
- Emphasis on first aid, CPR, and report-writing to enhance accountability and operational effectiveness.

Overall, the integration of practical skills, ethical standards, and continuous professional development contributes to a competent, confident, and community-oriented security workforce. These results can be used by the Philippine National Police's Supervisory Office for Security and Investigation Agencies (PNP-SOSIA) to establish soft skills as a required curriculum pillar. Since security personnel are frequently the first point of contact for visitors and the general public in the Philippines, resolving conflicts and interaction with the public are not only extras, rather, they are crucial to upholding the service-oriented character of Philippine security (RA 11917, 2022). The technology must be adopted as it serves as driven solution instrument which enhance security efficiency (Dela Cruz et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that current private security training programs are effective, providing practical skills and fostering personal and professional growth, including increased confidence, self-discipline, and responsibility. Participants highlighted the need for continuous development, particularly in interpersonal skills, resilience, professional competence, and adaptation to technological advancements. To address this, it is recommended that training programs offer advanced modular courses, ongoing professional development through seminars and mentorship, and alignment with legal and professional standards, emphasizing practical application, courtesy, and discipline. These measures can enhance security personnel preparedness, effectiveness, and career development in an evolving field.

### Limitations and Future Research

The small sample size of ten participants, which is typical of qualitative phenomenological research but restricts the result's applicability to a larger security population, is the main limitation on the study's conclusions. Because the data only includes seasoned professionals with more than ten years of experience and the training beneficial are the ones who stayed in the field. As a result, the favorable opinions noted may not adequately reflect the difficulties encountered by individuals who had difficulty with the curriculum or left the field early.

However, the study's institutional and geographic scope may affect how well the themes translate to other areas or particular security niches. In order to ascertain whether present training satisfies the needs of a younger, more tech-savvy workforce, future study should aim for a comparative approach by examining the lived experiences of novice guards with only one to two years of service. A more thorough understanding of how contemporary digitalized security environments affect training sufficiency and job retention would be obtained by looking at the viewpoints of early-career professionals.

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