

Duties and Responsibilities: Experiences of Port Security Personnel

Jun Vincent D. Docor, Frank Y. Lago III, Arcilo D. Macayran, Elmie A. Allanic, Jose F. Cuevas Jr.

College of Criminology, Misamis University, Ozamiz City, Philippines

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7672>

Received: 21 May 2023; Accepted: 31 May 2023; Published: 09 July 2023

ABSTRACT

The importance of public safety and the responsibility of the government and its citizens in ensuring it. The study highlights the vulnerabilities of seaports and the challenges faced in securing them. The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is tasked with ensuring the safety and security of cargo, personnel, and passengers in PPA-managed ports in the country, including the Ozamiz City Port. The Ozamiz City Port security personnel are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment in the port, including preventing crimes such as theft, unauthorized entry, and drug trafficking. The research aims to understand the daily experiences of security personnel in Ozamiz City Port and collect data on the methods and strategies employed to perform their duties and responsibilities. This study utilized the qualitative research approach, specifically the phenomenological design. The process of analyzing the data to come up with a meaningful theme follows Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology. This approach focuses on the wholeness of experiences and searches for the essence of experiences; it attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment or presupposition. The researchers recommend training port security personnel on effective communication and conflict resolution techniques, assisting travelers, and creating a supportive environment. The study highlights the significance of having a positive mindset and resilience in dealing with challenges in the workplace.

Keywords: challenges, conflict resolution techniques, experiences, port security personnel, public safety, seaport, supportive environment

INTRODUCTION

Public safety is a major priority in every government to protect its people against untoward disasters (Ferris, 2020). Under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), all people have the right to life, freedom, and security. Through this right, many government organizations were purposely created to protect the welfare of the people. Further, public safety is the responsibility of the government and its citizens. It requires cooperation on both sides (Brandsen, 2018). However, nobody is still safe from the dangers hiding in plain view.

In today's world, many dangers come from different areas (Leach, 2021). Regarding transportation, seaports are the most vulnerable target for lawless elements (bin Abdul Halim, 2020). These ports are likely targets for bombings, theft, and drug smuggling (Mlepo, 2022). It is quite a challenge to deal with these threats in these places because of the overwhelming number of people. These threats are limited to the virtual port and the seas. According to the ICC-IMB Annual Report (2019), the most common hazards at sea are piracy, kidnapping, and armed robbery. The report also states there were one hundred sixty-two (162) incidents of piracy, four (4) armed robberies, and eleven (11) kidnappings in 2019.

The Philippine government created the Philippine ports authority by Presidential Decree (PD) No. 505,

otherwise known as the “Philippine Port Authority Decree of 1974”. The agency is tasked to do many things; one is to work on the safety and security of cargo, personnel, and passengers in PPA-managed ports in the country. According to the Philippine ports authority (PPA) report (2019), there are about one hundred fifteen (115) ports under the jurisdiction of the PPA. The port authority also deploys well-trained port security personnel to ports under its jurisdiction. In addition, personnel is tasked to maintain a smooth and safe environment of seaports in the country (Senarak, 2021).

The Ozamiz City Port is one of the PPA-managed ports located at Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental; it is also an important facility due to its strategic location. According to the maritimereviewph (2019), the Port of Ozamiz is recognized as the “Gateway of Northern Mindanao.” Provinces like Lanao Del Norte, Zamboanga Del Norte, and Zamboanga Del Sur utilize this port to import or export all kinds of products. The Ozamiz City Port security personnel are responsible for the safety of the port, including enforcing the law and preventing crime. It is the first line of defense against lawless elements. According to the mirineinsights (2019), the most common crimes in areas like this are theft, unauthorized entry, and drug trafficking. Preventing crimes like this is a very difficult and tricky job for port security because they protect the people, but the threat also comes from these people.

The passengers are the most important person in the port. They are subject to protection, but this does not mean they are exempted from the law. For the port security to ensure the safety of the passengers, they must first protect them from themselves. Some passenger even knows that doing a certain act in the port is illegal, but they still do it (Nelson & Stout; L. A., 2022). However, not all, for some are ignorant of the law, are not also tolerated. The Ozamiz City port security personnel must exercise their discretion for all situations, for different situations require a different kind of solution. However, they must also respect all because they are the people’s servants, and their responsibility is the public’s safety (Cheng, 2021).

This research aims to understand the daily experiences of security personnel in Ozamiz City Port. The researchers Furthermore, they aim to analyze and collect data on the methods and strategies that the authorities employ to perform their duties and responsibilities. With the help of security personnel from the Ozamiz City Port, this research can achieve the original purpose and goals of the researcher.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study utilized the qualitative research approach, specifically the phenomenological design. The process of analyzing the data to come up with a meaningful theme follows Moustakas’ transcendental phenomenology. This approach focuses on the wholeness of experiences and searches for the essence of experiences; it attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudice or presupposition. It requires us to look at things openly, undisturbed by the habits of the natural world. The researcher is challenged to describe things as they are and to understand meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection (Simon & Goes, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). This design is appropriate for exploring the experiences of port security personnel in performing their duties and responsibilities.

The study was conducted in the Port of Ozamiz City in the Province of Misamis Occidental, Northern Mindanao (Region X), Postal code 7200, Coordinates 8.1417, 123.8454 (8° 9’ North, 123° 51’ East). The city of Ozamiz grew out of an old Spanish town called Misamis, a name believed to have been derived from the subanen word “*Kuyamis*”, a variety of coconut. After the war, Misamis became a chartered city by Republic Act 321 on July 16, 1948. It was also renamed Misamis to Ozamiz after a hero Jose Ozamiz who hailed from the province of Misamis Occidental.

The study participants were seven (7) port security personnel from the Philippine Ports Authority assigned to Ozamiz City Port. The participants were selected based on the following criteria: 1.) a Security Personnel of Ozamiz City Port. 2.) At least one year assigned in Ozamiz City Port. 3.) Willing to participate in the

study.

The study utilized the in-depth guide developed by the researcher. The interview guide contains questions for the participants to respond to based on their experiences performing duties and responsibilities. The instrument of the study was evaluated by the research panel and was checked by the Dean of the College of Criminology to ensure the reliability of the questions.

Data collection is vital in every research. Thus, the data collection was done meticulously to obtain important information. Before the researcher tried to obtain the information from the participants, the researcher asked for authorization from the Dean of the College of Criminology, permitting the researcher to conduct the interview. After obtaining all the necessary permission from the school, the researcher sent a formal letter to the head of security in the Ozamiz City Port. After receiving the response, the researcher set an appointment for an interview with the port security personnel. When the interview was conducted, the researcher and the participants observed the minimum health protocol.

The information obtained from the participants is protected and was used for the study only. The researcher has observed the Republic Act No. 10173 guidelines, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”. The researcher ensured that no participant had been interviewed against his/her will. The researcher did not divulge any information about the participant’s identity or background if it was irrelevant to the study. The researcher also prepared a written letter of consent to be signed by the willing participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Profile of the Participants

Seven (7) Port Security personnel participated in the study through a face-to-face interview. The participants age from 27-50 years old. All of them have worked as Port Security Personnel for at least one year.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

| Code Name | Age | Length of Service |
|-----------|-----|-------------------|
| P1 | 33 | 3 years |
| P2 | 47 | 6 years |
| P3 | 37 | 1 1/2 years |
| P4 | 27 | 1 year |
| P5 | 37 | 9 years |
| P6 | 50 | 18 years |
| P7 | 27 | 1 1/2 years |

3.2 Experiences of Port Security Personnel

This part presents different themes that were derived from the different responses of the participants of the study during the conduct of the interview. The study explored port security personnel’s experiences in performing their duties and responsibilities in the

City Port. Themes were derived from the responses of the participants of the study after conducting an interview. The study identified four (4) appropriate themes: (1) Family Support, (2) Assistance to Passengers, (3) Dealing with Irate Passengers, (4) Maintaining Positive Attitude.

3.3 Family Support

The participants’ need for familial and financial assistance played a significant role in their decision to work in port security. Many participants specifically state that they choose this career route because of their families. The participants’ emphasis on assistance from family and money may reflect larger social and economic trends. Families are frequently regarded as important social institutions, and people are frequently under pressure to put their families’ interests and welfare first (Newton,2018).

| Code Name | Responses |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | “My family has inspired me to enter this field of work, notably our financial troubles.” |
| P2 | “My family has inspired me to pursue this career and my passion to protect and serve the populace.” |
| P4 | “My family has inspired me to pursue this career and my passion to protect and serve the populace.” |
| P6 | “My family inspired me to pursue this career.” |
| P7 | “My desire to support my family is what drives me to pass through port security.” |

For others, the desire to support their family may stem from a broader sense of obligation or a desire to contribute to their loved ones’ well-being (Fuligni,2002). In either case, the participants see port security work as a way to provide for their families. Some mention specific financial goals or responsibilities.

3.4 Assistance to Passengers

Some people have mentioned helping travelers as another duty. This could be answering queries, giving instructions, or assisting travelers with their bags. Port Security Personnel may create a stress-free environment by helping travelers (Tarlow,2017).

| Code Name | Response |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | “I have a responsibility to check the passengers’ luggage and assist them.” |
| P3 | “I have a responsibility to help the traveler and check their luggage.” |
| P4 | “I have a responsibility to take care of myself, the passengers, and this situation.” |
| P5 | “It is my duty to look over the travelers and their vehicles, as well as to look over their boarding passes and tickets.” |

Port Security Personnel can help create a positive experience for travelers and enhance the reputation of the terminal (Wu,2018). This is important because many travelers may be unfamiliar with the terminal or may be feeling stressed or anxious about their journey. By offering friendly and helpful assistance, Port Security Personnel can help ease their concerns and create a welcoming and supportive environment (Brashers,2004).

3.5 Dealing with Irate passengers

Port Security Personnel must exhibit specific qualities such as humility, understanding, calmness, and strictly adhering to law and port regulations (Hood,2001). They must also monitor and assist passengers with calmness and humility while dealing with any egotistical or irate passengers. In addition, port Security Personnel can help prevent conflicts and maintain a peaceful environment in their area of responsibility (Eski,2016). It is essential for the safety and well-being of passengers and security personnel.

| Code Name | Response |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | “I have kept peace and order here in my job because I am very understanding with thepassengers and I have to be modest every time.” |
| P2 | “In order to maintain calm and order in my role, I must be humble around passengers.” |
| P3 | “Even those egotistical and irate passengers must be humbled if I’m to keep the peace inmy neighborhood and avert conflict.” |
| P5 | “To keep the peace and order in my post I must deal with haughty and irate passengers withcalmness and be humble.” |
| P7 | “Monitoring and assisting the passengers is what I do is to keep the calm always in mypost.” |

Port Security Personnel must monitor and assist passengers while dealing with any egotistical or irate passengers with calmness and humility. This means that Port Security Personnel must be attentive to their surroundings and the needs of passengers, and must deal with any difficult passengers with patience and respect (Brewer,2014)

3.6 Maintaining Positive Attitude

They use positive thinking, maintain a positive attitude, and be patient to cope with the challenges they encounter as Port Security Personnel (Ehrenreich, 2009). The respondents emphasized the importance of having a positive mindset and outlook to overcome difficult situations in their line of work. It highlights the significance of having a positive attitude and resilience in dealing with challenges in the workplace.

| Code Name | Response |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | “I discovered that in order to handle the difficulties I found here, I needed to be contentand like my work.” |
| P2 | “I maintained to keep a positive mind in order to cope with these challenges in my line ofwork.” |
| P4 | “I overcome these difficulties by remaining mindful.” |
| P5 | “Use positive thinking to get through these difficulties.” |
| P6 | “In order to cope with these challenges, I always view the positive side of my job.” |

The respondents have developed strategies to cope with their challenges as Port Security Personnel. They recognize that their job can be demanding and stressful at times, and to deal with the difficulties, they need to maintain a positive attitude and outlook. This positive mindset allows them to approach the challenges they face.

CONCLUSION

The researchers conclude that becoming a security officer in seaports can be rewarding and demanding. Throughout their tour of duty, the personnel faced numerous difficulties. These difficulties frequently arise from the people they were supposed to safeguard. However, the security staff has learned to deal with these difficulties professionally. To meet their everyday necessities, they are driven by their families. They discovered how to adapt and show humility to those who despise them. It demonstrated how good communication can help reduce tensions caused by irate and arrogant travelers. These security professionals play a critical role in guaranteeing the port's safety.

Therefore, it is critical to assist them and give them a secure workspace so they can perform.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Port Security Personnel should receive training on effective communication and conflict resolution techniques to handle difficult passengers calmly and respectfully. Additionally, it would benefit them to receive training on assisting travelers and creating a welcoming and supportive environment. Moreover, it is recommended that support should be provided to Port Security Personnel in terms of financial assistance and family support to improve their morale and job satisfaction, which can ultimately enhance their performance. Finally, Port Security Personnel needs to maintain a positive attitude and mindset to cope with the challenges of their job. It can be achieved through regular team-building activities and access to counseling services to help them deal with stress and maintain a positive outlook.

REFERENCES

1. Bin Abdul Halim, W. M. Z. (2020). Risk Assessment and Decision Making of Security in Container Port Facilities. Liverpool John Moores University (United Kingdom). Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8y7est> on September 23, 2022
2. Brandsen, T., Steen, T., &Verschuere, B. (2018). Co-creation and co-production in public services: Urgent issues in practice and research. In Co-production and co-creation (pp. 3-8). Routledge. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/y6ytrt47> on September 22, 2022.
3. Brashers, D. E., Neidig, J. L., & Goldsmith, D. J. (2004). Social support and the management of uncertainty for people living with HIV or AIDS. *Health communication*, 16(3), 305-331. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/ks5ph> on April 14, 2023
4. Brewer, R. (2014). Policing the waterfront: Networks, partnerships, and the governance of port security. OUP Oxford. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/ffqyu> on May 16, 2023
5. Cheng, T. (2021). Social media, socialization, and pursuing legitimation of police violence. *Criminology*, 59(3), 391-418. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/ykruxdur> on September 24, 2022
6. Chiricos, T., Pickett, J. T., & Lehmann, P. S. (2020). Group threat and social control: A review of theory and research. *Criminal Justice Theory*, 69-92. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/4pbpm2z7> on October 22, 2022
7. Ehrenreich, B. (2009). Bright-sided: How positive thinking is undermined America. Metropolitan Books. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/rb708> on May 16, 2023
8. Eski, Y. (2016). Policing, port security and crime control: An ethnography of the port securityscape. Routledge. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/r7kjb> on April 14, 2023
9. Ferris, E., &Weerasinghe, S. (2020). Promoting human security: Planned relocation as a protection tool in a time of climate change. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 8(2), 134-149. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/yc7hnyd9> on September 22, 2022
10. Fuligni, A. J., & Pedersen, S. (2002). Family obligation and the transition to young adulthood. *Developmental psychology*, 38(5), 856. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/e12p6> on April 14, 2023
11. Grasmick, H. G., Kinsey, K., & Cochran, J. K. (1991). Denomination, religiosity and compliance with

- the law: A study of adults. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 99-107. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/3x467ft4> on October 22, 2022
12. Heylighen, F., Kingsbury, K., Lenartowicz, M., Harmsen, T., & Beigi, S. (2018). Social systems programming: Behavioral and emotional mechanisms co-opted for social control. Manuscript submitted for publication. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/3jm9a96s> on October 22, 2022
 13. Hood, C., Rothstein, H., & Baldwin, R. (2001). *The government of risk: Understanding risk regulation regimes*. OUP Oxford. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/4gptm> on April 14, 2023
 14. <https://maritimereview.ph/the-port-management-office-of-misamis-occidental-ozamiz-pmo-moz/> Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/p2a4xmh6> on September 23, 2022
 15. <https://www.marineinsight.com/marine-safety/9-types-of-maritime-crimes/#:~:text=1.,major%20threat%20to%20maritime%20security.> Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/4yk3jkch> on September 23, 2022
 16. Kumari, K., Barkat Ali, S., & Abbas, J. (2021). Examining the role of motivation and reward in employees' job performance through mediating effect of job satisfaction: empirical evidence. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 10(4), 401-420. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/yc787n57> on October 22, 2022
 17. Leach, M., MacGregor, H., Scoones, I., & Wilkinson, A. (2021). Post-pandemic transformations: How and why COVID-19 requires us to rethink development. *World Development*, 138, 105233. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8mbfav> on September 23, 2022
 18. Martela, Frank, et al. "Motivating voluntary compliance to behavioural restrictions: Self-determination theory-based checklist of principles for COVID-19 and other emergency communications." *European Review of Social Psychology* 32.2 (2021): 305-347. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/bdd4dyz8> on October 22, 2022
 19. Miller, T., & Vuolo, M. (2018). Examining the anti-ascetic hypothesis through social control theory: Delinquency, religion, and reciprocation across the early life course. *Crime & Delinquency*, 64(11), 1458-1488. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/mpdd2hhu> on October 22, 2022
 20. Mlepo, Andrew Thomas. "Attacks on road-freight transporters: a threat to trade participation for landlocked countries in Southern Africa." *Journal of Transportation Security* 15.1 (2022): 23-40. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/42a7pev4> on September 23, 2022
 21. Nelson, J. S., & Stout, L. A. (2022). *Business Ethics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press. Retrieve from: <https://tinyurl.com/mvjnkju8> on September 24, 2022
 22. Newton, K., Stolle, D., & Zmerli, S. (2018). Social and political trust. *The Oxford handbook of social and political trust*, 37, 961-976. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/ek7h9> on April 14, 2023
 23. Senarak, C. (2021). Cybersecurity knowledge and skills for port facility security officers of international seaports: Perspectives of IT and security personnel. *The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics*, 37(4), 345-360. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/yc556mkz> on September 23, 2022
 24. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 3 (December 10, 1948) General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8zkhbc> on September 22, 2022.
 25. Van den Broeck, A., Carpini, J., & Diefendorff, J. (2019). Work motivation: Where do the different perspectives lead us. *The Oxford handbook of human motivation*, 2, 354-372. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/hy3dc9h5> on October 22, 2022
 26. Wu, H. C., Cheng, C. C., & Ai, C. H. (2018). A study of experiential quality, experiential value, trust, corporate reputation, experiential satisfaction and behavioral intentions for cruise tourists: The case of Hong Kong. *Tourism management*, 66, 200-220. Retrieved from: <https://rb.gy/j556s> on April 14, 2023
 27. Zhang, F., & Parker, S. K. (2019). Reorienting job crafting research: A hierarchical structure of job crafting concepts and integrative review. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 40(2), 126-146. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/ybyvsp3v> on October 22, 2022