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Exploring hindrances for professionalising South African Private Security Industry: Experiences and recommendations

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Abstract. The professionalisation of the private security industry (PSI) can be beneficial and costly and these need to be measured against undertaking any professionalisation initiatives, since they can provide some degree of quality control to some businesses working in the field but can also impose hindrances and negative experiences to those wishing to enter the industry. The purpose of this study was to explore the following question: What are the experiences on hindrances to professionalisation of the PSI by Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority [PSiRA] in South Africa? Following a qualitative research approach, this study employed the exploratory research design. The judgemental sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 40 participants from Gauteng (GP), KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Western Cape (WC) provinces. The findings highlighted that the majority of the participants agreed that the professionalisation of the PSI through PSiRA is facing many positive and negative experiences and hindrances, particularly in the private security training space where corruption and criminality are rife. This study recommends that, to overcome the noted hindrances, PSiRA needs to update the training curriculum, empower and train more inspectors and build relationships with industry stakeholders.

Keywords. Hindrances, Private Security Industry, Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority, South Africa

Introduction and Background

The PSI presents governments with a useful resource, which, if properly professionalised, can monumentally contribute positively to economic growth, reduce crime at the state, local, business and on a personal level, as well as assist state police in policing, (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] 2014). The private security industry (PSI) professionalisation journey is inundated with opportunities, challenges and composed of various stakeholders and key industry players interacting positively or negatively on the professionalisation platform (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2013). The PSI has reached maturity, globally, in terms of volume and diversity of services rendered, to the point that it is hard to imagine a world without a PSI. Professionalisation mechanisms must be introduced to prevent undesirable growth and to prompt the development and promotion of the professional image of the PSI.

According to Berg (2017), it has become difficult to ignore ethics, moral issues and threats posed to the general public by the PSI as it grows due to the challenges the industry presents on a normative and practical level, such as corruption, fraud, robbery, human rights violations, unlawful detention or arrest, excessive use of force and sometimes murder of civilians. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] and Democratic Control of Armed Forces [DCAF] (2010) observe that lack of effective regulatory mechanisms creates an atmosphere where corrupt deviation of money and other resources thrives unabated. The PSI is projected to enjoy great growth, as well as continuous professionalisation to upgrade and improve the profession. Thus, all efforts will be centred on cleaning up the PSI profession and to close the perceived gaps in the accountability of Private Security Companies (PSCs) and security officers (Mahesh & Gurinskaya, 2018). Bringing both good and bad practices into the public arena in a transparent manner can be an oversight mechanism to enhance compliance and encourage greater professionalisation in the PSI (UNODC, 2014).

By the year 2030, the PSiRA plans to professionalise the industry by properly vetting and screening security service provider applicants, increasing training and skills development, law enforcement and accrediting new training centres to provide an equal opportunity for all businesses interested in providing security services to apply for accreditation in GP, KZN and WC (PSiRA, 2019). Sefalafala & Webster (2013) believe that professionalisation of the PSI has not been fully researched; little literature, therefore, exists on the subject. The fast growth of the PSI has encouraged extensive discussion on how the industry can be professionalised (Sefalafala & Webster, 2013).

As the PSI grows and transforms, it seems to attract more and more scrutiny in terms of regulation and professionalisation mechanisms and how they ensure compliance with national and international rules. Professionalisation can be beneficial or costly, therefore, it needs to be weighed before undertaking any professionalisation initiatives, since it can provide some degree of quality control to some businesses working in the field but imposes barriers to those wishing to enter the field (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2013). This can stimulate supply, by making the PSI more attractive and diminish supply, by scaring away and making it difficult for new service providers and security personnel to penetrate the PSI. Professionalisation can make it easy for PSCs to meet their needs, which makes it easier to identify suitable security personnel, but can also inhibit the flexibility needed as services and job requirements change, especially given the broad nature and fluidity of the PSI. The demand for private security services is the greatest driving factor in the professionalisation of the PSI, as the PSI desires to provide quality security services.

Evetts (2011) views professionalisation as an occupational valuable tool used to control the practices and conduct of both PSCs and security guards. Sefalafala and Webster (2013) support Evetts' claim by confirming that it is a strategy of control imposed from the top through the state-led independent regulator (Sefalafala & Webster, 2013). Any professionalisation exercise, therefore, needs to carefully consider the benefits, trade-offs, hindrances and recommendations, as they help in informing decision making by the government, state departments, regulatory bodies and professional organisations about whether to and how to undertake activities to professionalise the PSI (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2013).

In South Africa, professionalising the PSI through PSiRA remains an inconceivable desire if it is not supported by quality training, registration and law enforcement (Nemeth, 2017). Ndungu (2020) believes that training and licensing are the main areas that need regulatory strengthening and improvement if professionalisation is to work. This was echoed by the UNODC (2014) when it stated that mandatory training, registration and law enforcement

standards can enhance professionalisation and the delivery of quality security services. Legal enforcement and compliance are key if professionalisation of PSI is to work (UNODC, 2014).

The professionalisation and corporatisation of PSCs is seen as a yearning on the part of the PSI to distinguish itself; thus, making the profession of private security more appealing to the general populace across the globe (MacLeod, 2015). Although research on the regulation of the PSI has identified a number of strategies and regulatory systems adopted to effectively regulate the PSI, there is limited research on the professionalisation of the PSI in South Africa by PSiRA in GP, KZN and the WC (Berg & Gabi, 2011). This study, therefore, aims to explore experiences and hindrances for professionalising the South African private security industry through PSiRA. The study will also explore possible recommendations for PSiRA in the optimum professionalisation of the PSI.

Problem Exposition

Professionalisation of the PSI has been a contentious issue in South Africa, the industry has been undergoing various regulatory changes in a bid to professionalise it; however, it continues to face hindrances and experiences that work against the professionalisation efforts (Nemeth, 2012). Most of the hindrances to PSI professionalisation manifest as non-compliance, unethical conduct, corruption, assaults of civilians by security officers and the presence of illegal private security service providers.

The mentioned instances are prevalent in GP, KZN and the WC respectively, as they had the highest populations of registered PSCs and security officers; 6 586 (69%) and 1 576 136 (67%) respectively, of the entire PSI in South Africa during the 2018/2019 financial year (PSiRA, 2019). Despite the establishment of PSiRA to regulate and professionalise the PSI, previous research findings suggest that there is a significant gap between what PSiRA aims to achieve and the reality of widespread hindrances through non-compliance with legislation on the ground (Sefalafala & Webster, 2013). The professionalisation can limit or deny access, stifle new approaches and innovation, it can exclude those most affected by issues emanating from the profession and ethical conduct cannot always be guaranteed, as security officers or PSCs sometimes act depending on the prevailing situation or threat, which might be contrary to regulation and legislation (Fawkes, 2017).

Methods and Materials

This qualitative study was guided by the exploratory research design. The judgemental sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 40 participants from GP, KZN and WC provinces, equally divided for the focus group discussion and hybrid, semi-structured interviews. The participants were attached to PSiRA executives and officials' teams, the South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Labour (DoL), Department of Health (DoH), National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the legal fraternity and the PSC directors and security officers. The researcher first collected qualitative data through the FGDs from a sample of 20 participants. FGDs were composed of five participants from each province (GP, KZN and WC) and five more participants composed the national FGD.

Furthermore, the hybrid semi-structured face-to-face interviews were also conducted with 20 participants (8 from GP, 6 from KZN and 6 from WC). The participants were selected based on homogenous characteristics and composed of one member from each of the following: PSiRA, SAPS, NPA, government departments (such as the DEL and DoH), the PSC directors or management and other security industry stakeholders. Having participants from a wide PSI spectrum in the FGD contributed to diverse perspectives and rich discussions emanating from the exchange of ideas and conversations between the participants. The findings from the FGDs

and hybrid semi-structured face-to-face interviews produced the study themes, which will be discussed in the following section.

Furthermore, this study made use of non-formalised lists of questions, which were more open-ended than the straightforward question-and-answer format, to allow for a rich discussion between participants in focus groups and with the researcher during interviews. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were done using Zoom online link, with the researcher and the participants conversing in the comfort of their own homes. The conducted interviews were recorded.

This study also used thematic data analysis, following Creswell and Creswell's (2018) six-step qualitative data analysis. This process requires the researcher to organise and prepare the data for analysis through transcribing focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, optimally scanning material and cataloguing each visual material. The second step is reading and looking at all the data. The third step is coding. Coding is the process of organising data by bracketing chunks (text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category in the margins (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Generating a description and theme from the coded data is the fourth step. In step five, representing the description and themes is done. Lastly, step six is the use a qualitative computer software programmes to analyse the data. Atlas.ti was used to assist with the analysis of the coded data as software programmes are faster and more efficient than hand coding. Atlas.ti is powerful software for the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and video data (Atlas.ti, 2020).

Literature Review

The National Research Council of the National Academies (2013) states that the major drive towards professionalisation is to: (1) Establish and standardise roles (associated knowledge, skills and abilities) and pathways in order to align supply and demand; (2) Regulate workers whose work or services affect the health, safety, or property of others; (3) Guide the behaviour of practitioners in the field, with regard to morally and ethically ambiguous activities; (4) Enhance public trust and confidence; (5) Establish a monopoly or otherwise regulate the supply of labour to advance the interests of its members; (6) Enable compliance with regulatory, legal and contractual requirements; (7) Enhance the status of the occupation; and (8) Establish a shared set of values, cultures, ethos and mind-set for a profession. These values can play a huge role in the ability of practitioners to work together effectively, particularly across roles in an organisation and across organisations.

Professionalisation is beneficial for legitimising and accepting qualified businesses and experienced individuals into the profession, establishing best practices that are commonly shared among members and good professional planning that leads to better outcomes, status, as well as ethical and responsible practices (Fawkes, 2017). According to Buyruk (2014), the Department of Homeland Security (2012) and the National Research Council of the National Academies (2013), professionalisation is a universal social process that involves interplay and experiences between occupational associations, powers and interests, socio-political systems and institutions within a particular set of conditions that play a major role in the transformational trajectory of an occupation into a profession. These interactions play out as negotiation, conflict, lobbying, conciliation, training and regulation.

However, Buyruk (2014) further suggests that a profession can develop by following different trajectories, interactions and overcoming impediments that can make it develop differently in diverse societies. The Department of Homeland Security (2012), the National Research Council of the National Academies (2013) and Bell and Levine (2015) assert that professionalisation occurs when an occupation develops skills, knowledge through training,

specialised guidelines and best practices with quality standards to gain public trust, respect, acceptable code of conduct, reward and continuous improvement. Abudu, Nuhu and Nkuah (2013); Berg and Gabi (2011) and Loader and White (2015) agree that when training is lacking in the PSI, it can result in poor handling of security equipment like firearms, button sticks, security dogs or pepper spray by poorly trained security officers who pose a serious risk of injury or death to others or themselves.

McCrie (2017) contends that the hours security officers are trained from zero-to-a-few hours' pre-deployment training to be a skilled guard, first responder, specialised firearm handler, capable communicator or crowd controller to an informed user of security technology in the workplace, is not enough to produce the required professional security officer. Tracey (2011) states that the presence of illegal firearms in the security industry makes it easy for untrained security officers, who gain access to company firearms, to partake in criminality, misuse firearms or losing them. Berg and Gabi (2011) confirm this finding by stating that PSIRA has conducted inspections, raids and investigations based on the complaints and anonymous tip-offs from the whistle-blowers and concerned or affected parties. Inspections are essential tools of any regulated industry. Inspections can help to control the quality of services, create a channel through which the PSIRA can listen to the concerns of the regulated, inspections can yield further understanding of the industry, identify existing and potential threats and determine their underlying causes and monitor and recommend corrective action that could address regulatory challenges (Berg & Howell, 2017).

Results and Discussion

The following section presents the qualitative findings from the conducted interviews with the selected participants. It also presents the analysis of their verbal responses.

Table 1: Biographical data of the semi-structured interview participants

Province	Participants	Work experience	Age	Gender
GP	G1	25	40-50	Male
	G2	15	40-50	Male
	G3	6	50-60	Male
	G4	13	40-50	Male
	G5	11	40-50	Male
	G6	10	30-40	Male
	G7	15	40-50	Male
	G8	4	50-60	Male
KZN	K1	19	50-60	Male
	K2	17	50-60	Male
	K3	11	50-60	Male
	K4	9	70-80	Male
	K5	5	40-50	Male
	K6	6	30-40	Male
WC	W1	27	50-60	Male
	W2	23	50-60	Male
	W3	25	50-60	Female
	W4	10	40-50	Male
	W5	25	50-60	Female
	W6	22	50-60	Male

Source: Researchers' illustrations

Table 1 shows that eight participants were from GP and that their work experience ranged from four to 27 years, their ages ranged from 30 to 60 and they were predominantly male. Moreover, the results show that six participants were from KZN, their work experience ranged from five to 19 years, their ages ranged from 30 to 80 and they were largely male. The results further reveal that six participants were from the WC, their work experience ranged from 10 to 27 years, their ages ranged from 40 to 60 years and a third of the participants were female.

Table 2: Biographical data of the focus group participants

Province	Participants	Work experience	Age	Gender
GP	FG1	35	50-60	Male
	FG2	15	40-50	Male
	FG3	17	40-50	Female
	FG4	15	40-50	Male
	FG5	13	50-60	Male
WC	FW1	20	50-60	Male
	FW2	14	40-50	Male
	FW3	15	40-50	Female
	FW4	22	40-50	Male
	FW5	15	40-50	Female
KZN	FK1	22	40-50	Male
	FK2	30	50-60	Male
	FK3	35	50-60	Male
	FK4	15	40-50	Female
	FK5	16	40-50	Male
National	FN1	7	30-40	Female
	FN2	20	30-40	Male
	FN3	25	40-50	Male
	FN4	15	40-50	Male
	FN5	20	40-50	Male

Source: Researchers' illustrations

Table 2 shows that five participants were from GP, their work experience ranged from 13 to 35 years, their ages ranged from 40 to 60 and they were predominantly male, with one female participant. Moreover, the results show that five participants were from KZN, their work experience ranged from 15 to 35 years, their ages ranged from 40 to 60 and they were largely male, with one female participant. The results further reveal that five participants were from the WC, their work experience ranged from 14 to 22, their ages ranged from 40 to 60 years and two of the five participants were female. This table also shows that five participants were from all the provinces (national) and that their work experience ranged from seven to 25 years. Only one participant was female aged 30 to 50 years.

Theme 1: Experiences and hindrances to professionalisation of the PSI by PSiRA

Sub-theme 1: Training

Some participants identified training as one of the major hindrances to the professionalisation of the PSI. The training centres were identified as letting down the industry in terms of training, which produced unqualified, ill-trained and unprofessional security personnel. FN5 supported this and said: *"In my opinion, it is the training centres that's letting*

us down". In support, K1 further stated: *"The institutions that are responsible for issuing training certificates in order for guys to qualify, they are the ones that really need to be looked at"*. In agreement, FN1 added: *"I also agree that the fact that we have to rely on private training providers who are not about professionalising the industry, is also a huge gap and I think that's letting us down as opposed to nursing and where you have to start at a government-owned entity to get your profession."*

The participants felt that in some instances training was not done at all, but rather certificate selling and buying was the norm. In this regard, FG3 stated: *"There is rumour going around that these PSIRA certificates are being sold, so what does that mean? It means people are not trained. There is training, but now if people can buy these things, then you have got security officers who are not trained"*. Abudu, Nuhu and Nkuah (2013); Berg & Gabi (2011) and Loader and White (2015) confirm these findings by indicating that training for private security personnel is a concern for human freedoms. The writers agree that there is a lack of training and education standards in the PSI and the effects of poor training result in poor handling of security equipment like firearms, button sticks, security dogs or pepper spray. Poorly or untrained guards who carry firearms, assume an increased risk of injury to themselves and others.

In support, FN1 mentioned: *"There are fraudulent certificates that are out there and if PSIRA has more control then we would make sure that everyone is trained the way that they are supposed to be trained and they have the relevant skill after the training"*. This was supported by K2, who said: *"In my opinion, 90% of all security officers are not even aware of what the law is because 80% of them probably bought their own certificates"*. One participant as being outdated and out of touch with the current times. Concerning this, FN3 stated: *"We are still running with the Securities Officers Board Training Regulations, since 2001, we are now in 2020. So, you could see, and we are in the industrial revolution where now the type of services that was done in 1987 when PSIRA was formed and before that and now has differed, so we find that the training that our providers are providing or users need, they do not balance each other"*.

The participants also felt that training was not standardised enough for national safety to be achieved. The expressed views by the participants agree with what Mccrie (2017) state, that it is impossible to imagine a security officer with zero-to-a-few hours' pre-deployment training to be a skilled guardian, first responder, specialised firearm handler, capable communicator with the public and crowd controller and an informed user of security technology in the workplace. This statement was supported by FN5, who stated: *"Training is not up to standard because the function that these people are going to do out there, is for national safety of this country"*. Issues of unregistered training providers who sold certificates and people willing to buy the security certificates were also mentioned by G5. Concerning this, G5 stated: *"There are a lot of unregistered training providers and then there are people who are just selling certificates ... people think that you can just go to a training provider and get a certificate ... you can just go and the scores that you do for 3 weeks they can do it within a day and then get a certificate"*.

The articulated views of the participants are supported by UNODC (2014) by confirming that better training for the PSI, systems of firearm control and training and regular reviewing of training content need to be strengthened. Training hours and code of conduct need to be frequently revised and updated to meet new security developments and advances. The articulated views by the participants concur with what Berg (2017) states, that it has become increasingly difficult to ignore ethics, moral issues and threats posed to the general public by the private security industry due to the challenges the industry presents on a normative and

practical level ranging from corruption, fraud, robbery, human rights violations, unlawful detention or arrest, excessive use of force and sometimes murder of civilians.

One participant felt that some security training companies showed little willingness to provide quality training to security officers, who were left without the proper skills to handle security equipment, putting them and others in danger. This was supported by G6, who stated: *"We do use firearms, we do use dogs, we do use computers, we do use the two-way radios, all those types of things and then, I can tell you now, if you look at our security officers, they carry their firearm, they carry their pepper spray, their hand-cuffs, all those items, but they don't know how to use them because somebody has not taught them the skills on how to use security equipment"*. W6 revealed that poor or no training by some of the security training providers was driven by the desire to make money and profit. In this regard, W6 stated: *"The companies or the service providers out there, they are just after money. They don't tend to follow them, give them some practicals or give them maybe six months, on how to use their skills to demonstrate how to use this, how to use that, but they just take the money."*

Sub-theme 2: Corruption

Most participants revealed that even though PSiRA is the presiding authority over the PSI, there were still opportunities for corruption to thrive. Corruption is one of the negative experience and a major hindrance to the PSiRA's professionalisation efforts. Concerning this, FG2 stated: *"If we are not prepared to raise a hand and say that I am aware of a company like that, then nothing's going to happen and unfortunately in the industry, there are too many friends, people with registered and unregistered companies who are friends with one another and they do not want to take the chance to, call it, blow a whistle on one another and that's just to me, that is kind of also brings a part in the way that causes corruption"*. Some of the corruption was reported by participants to be coming from within PSiRA itself, through its inspectors. Some inspectors were accused of being friends with certain security training service providers, which affected the industry, as the inspectors ended up not doing thorough inspections and effective regulation.

The views of the participants are supported by Sefalafala and Webster (2013) and Florquin and Morales (2011) when they said corruption is one of the negative perceptions of the professionalisation of the PSI together with fraud, gross misconduct, regulatory violation, crime, human rights abuses and firearm abuse and sometimes death of innocent civilians. In this regard, G6 indicated: *"If your inspectors go out there to do site inspection and then also make friends out there, then the industry will fall... they do not go there to regulate the industry, they just go out to make friends"*. Clients were also identified as playing a role in the corruption within the private security industry as they encourage the deployment of untrained security officers by neglecting to properly screen them before contracting them. This was supported by G3 who stated: *"especially because there is a market, those clients that are allowing that to happen..."*

The NATO and DCAF (2010) reveal that lack of oversight mechanisms and absence of adequate rules and regulations can create an atmosphere prone to corrupt deviation of money and other resources. This statement was supported by G4, who pointed out that: *"The biggest challenge that is there, is the clients would not want to pay the industry-related prices. If you are going to give them a proper price, let say according to the recommendation of PSiRA, they will say you are very expensive. Therefore, you are not going to get that work. Now you are forced to cut your price very low. Then over and above that, you get your institutions, some of the Government institutions, not paying you at the end of the month. Up to 2, 3 months, 4 months, then you can't survive. Then you start to default on your financial commitments because*

there is no money coming in". When clients default on their payments, private security companies also default on paying their security guards leading them to make use of untrained and unregistered security guards who they can pay less.

Theme 2: Methods used by PSiRA to professionalise the PSI

Sub-theme 3: Transformative Strategies

The greatest transformational strategy in professionalising the PSI that the PSiRA uses to its advantage to ensure quality security training of security officers in the industry is the Private Security Industry Regulation Act (No. 56 of 2001). One of the participants identified the PSIR Act as the leading strategic tool that was driving transformation and quality training within the private security industry. The law has helped PSiRA to regulate and enforce compliance. This was supported by FN2, who said: *"There are certain laws that are already being in place like our PSIRA Act, 2001"*. Further, G2 revealed: *"The other thing that we have done, and I think which is a good strategy, PSIRA has become intentional in its law, in its quest to enforce compliance."*

The views of the participants are confirmed by Berg & Howell (2017) who indicate that transformation in the security industry is enabled by legislation, where ineffective legislation is reviewed and replaced with new legislation that gives PSiRA more power to effectively enforce regulations and deal with the challenges in the industry. FN4 said: *"There is continuous training of inspectors."*

In support FW4, mentioned: *"the inspection of companies on a regular basis, I think it is one thing that is done properly, that PSIRA is now having or ensuring that service providers have offices, their processes, their structures and they also have systems in place that they are able now to comply with the legislation that is in place, so this sort of imposes a duty or gives the service providers a sense of responsibility that there is a certain standard that they have to meet in order to be part of the industry. I think that is done very properly."*

Some participants revealed that PSiRA updated a number of systems and policies, particularly the training curriculum, in order to professionalise the industry. This statement was supported by FN5, who said: *"The update of the new training curriculum to ensure that training material is relevant and up to date"*. Participants felt that PSiRA uses research and development to add value and professionalise the private security training space. This statement was supported by G2, who said: *"We are the only one who have a kind of an intelligence hub or intellectual hub in the form of Research and Development (R & D), which is another strategy. Our regulations and standards are informed by research and now that is very powerful. It earns us respect. It professionalises the industry. It is a library of reference, these are documents or reports that speak for us, even if we would not be there"*.

In keeping with the objective to ensure and enhance learning, PSiRA developed skills programmes for the different categories or classes of security service providers based on unit standards or qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in support of the competencies for the different categories or classes of security service providers. The skills programmes were designed with the aim to facilitate continuous learning and development of the security service provider. The minimum entry levels of learning for purposes of registration as a security service provider are complimented with a clear progression in each occupation with the aim for security service providers to obtain national qualifications. In addition, numerous specialisation skills programmes within the different occupations have been designed for security service providers to grow within their occupation or embark on a new occupation within the security field.

Sub-theme 4: Strategic collaboration with stakeholders

Most of the participants revealed that PSiRA prioritises strategic collaboration with industry stakeholders, especially in the training and skills development sectors, including Department of Education (DoE), Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority [SASSETA], South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], Quality Council for Trades and Occupations [QCTOs], Security Sector Education and Training Authorities [SETAs], NQF and security training service providers in the determination of statutory training standards for the industry. These collaborations with stakeholders help to get rid of the negative experiences and hindrances harboured by stakeholders towards PSI professionalisation. Strategic collaborations play a huge role in getting the buy-in of the stakeholders to the professionalisation strategies of the PSiRA. With regard to this, FN3 said: “The Authority of PSiRA has engaged with stakeholders whereby we have invited certain regulatory framework subject matter experts to also share what has been going on with the regulator”. The expressed view of the participant was supported by PSiRA (2019), which stated that PSiRA is working on strengthening working relationships with other government departments, agencies and other third-parties in the industry, to professionalise the industry (PSiRA, 2019).

This was supported by FN4, who said: “*We are focussing on working with other Government departments*”. In addition, W4 mentioned: “*We collaborate with SASSETA*”. Therefore, stakeholders can be vital in helping to develop standards, comment on regulations and support its enforcement and push for compliance with regulations. Strategic collaborations with stakeholders in the education sector can provide guidance, best practices and internationally recognised standards that could uplift the image of the private security industry. Other benefits of strategic collaboration include quick problem identification and resolution, innovative ideas, efficient processes, increased success and improved communication. PSiRA also gets an opportunity to listen and learn from the service providers, industry experts and stakeholders, which could help the PSiRA to achieve its mandate.

Theme 3: Possible recommendations to PSiRA for the optimum professionalisation of the PSI

Sub-Theme 5: Updating the training curriculum and method of training

PSiRA (2019) expresses that the authority is taking considerable steps to review the training curriculum of all security courses and the manner in which training is conducted by security training instructors in order to improve competency and skills required to render a security service. Training is directly linked to the way the PSI can be professionalised. Regarding this, FN5 stated: “*Update of the new training curriculum to ensure that training material is relevant and up to date. It have not been updated for a very, very long time and I think the fact that we are looking at a new syllabus now is definitely a strategy to professionalise the industry.*” The views expressed by the participants are supported by Ndungu (2020) who revealed that training and licensing are the main areas that need regulatory strengthening and improvement if professionalisation of the PSI will be effective.

The government and the PSiRA should set minimum training instructor standards to ensure that trainers have a proficient level of security experience, as well as adult learning training and delivery experience. This would mean that only those who have worked in the security industry for a minimum amount of time, for example three to five years, would be allowed to offer training courses. This would also mean that trainers would be required to prove their formal training certifications in order to provide training. Unqualified security trainers produce poorly trained security officers. As G2 stated: “*In the past there used to be a problem production of ineffective security officers. Then we came up with an intervention of capacity*

building workshops whereby we standardise. If a person is in Cape Town, the kind of training that is received in Cape Town should be the same with the kind of training that is received in the Northern Cape, which is a sleepy town. So, this we have done through capacity building training workshop interventions so that there are no longer shortcuts”.

FK2 said: *“We need to develop or have a proper policy framework in place and better training policies in place because obviously there is a gap, and I think our approach also in this regard should just be more of a proactive nature than being reactive”.* Security officers are largely trained in a passive environment, in which they sit in class without the opportunity to practice the skills they are learning. Their instructors should request adult learner subject matter experts from the educational sector to assist in creating active learning training material for instructors to use. Adult learning professionals can provide valuable input to improve learning objectives and ensure that they are met. They can help implement a variety of content delivery methods and review a security course to move away from an instructor-centric approach and toward a student-centric one.

Local or national education experts may also be able to assess instructor qualification programs to determine if increased instructor qualifications are needed. This was supported by G2, G3, FN1 who felt that PSiRA needed to update its training material and training method. In this case, G2 said: *“The other thing that we need to do, let’s be decisive in introducing specialised courses. We have now reviewed the Grades that were outdated. We need to review specialised courses, so that someone who is in the cash in transit for instance, someone who is in close protection sector could see themselves moving forward or improving their skills over and above the Grades”.* In support of this statement, G3 indicated: *“the new training curriculum to produce a competitive security officer because it’s an industry that evolves, evolves a lot”.* In this regard, FN1 stated: *“I think the issue of revising the training material and the causes, I think the vision there is very big because I think that’s another big part of professionalising the industry”.*

This was supported by Nemeth (2012), who mentioned that the training of security officers has been a hot topic in South Africa and the impact of low training and poor recruitment standards have been on PSiRA’s agenda. PSiRA needs to move curriculums over to a more outcome-based national qualifications, that are registered with the SETAs, SASSETA in particular and then allow security officers to do skills programmes or part qualifications and then work towards national qualifications. PSiRA needs to play a bigger role in participating and in ensuring that the quality assurance bodies are developing the right qualifications.

Sub-Theme 6: Empower and train more Inspectors

Some participants felt that change was needed concerning PSiRA inspectors so they can also steer the professionalisation of the PSI. Here, participants felt that a good approach that PSiRA could adopt in the professionalisation of the industry was to enlarge their human resources, particularly the inspectors. This was supported by FK3, who said: *“the increase in human resources inspectors or human resources within the environment, could attend to a lot of these outward images of the organisation”.* Regarding this, FN5 indicated: *“I think the professionalism of our law enforcement department, we go out there and we do inspections, and we teach legislation on a daily basis, helping with compliance, I think that in itself is a strategy.”* Here, most participants indicated the need for continuous training and development of inspectors.

This statement was supported by G5, who stated: *“PSiRA should keep on training the inspectors so that they can exercise their power enough”.* Concerning this, G6 said: *“I think you as the regulator; you need to beef up your inspectors with the information or what they need to*

do when they go out for inspection, what are the powers that they have if a digit is not in place?" He was supported by FW4, who indicated: *"So these Inspectors must have the capacity and capability not only to inspect, but to provide a learning, teaching or a training kind of skill to these companies to say, 'look, this is how you are going to do things.'"*

This was supported by FK2, who indicated: *"Perhaps we also have to look at really extending the powers of our inspectors."* In support, FK3 stated: *"I notice that from the time of inspection by an inspector to the date when an enquiry is held, may take many months and I often have asked why there been a delay in that period and the delay could result in many things, evidence disappearing, people forgetting, people not being available? So, if that can be seen, if that can be shortened in any way at all."* Delays were not only experienced in inspections, but in obtaining a security guard certificate. Participants recommended that PSiRA should ensure that wait time for obtaining a security guard PSiRA certificate should be made as short as possible. Delays in registration were a significant barrier to hiring adequate and qualified security officers. Some contract providers and in-house security services tend to have vacant positions for weeks to even months due to these delays.

Recommendations

Therefore, the following recommendations to the PSiRA emerged from the study:

- Review the training curriculum of all security courses and the mode of training instruction to improve competency and skills required to render a security service.
- Enlarge and empower their human resources, particularly the PSiRA inspectors, to effectively regulate and professionalise the PSI.
- Strengthen supportive and collegial relationships with the PSCs, enforcement stakeholders, the education sector stakeholders, security officers, clients and the public, to keep them abreast of all PSiRA professionalisation initiatives.
- Improve PSiRA's communication with the service providers, stakeholders, clients and the public for its professionalisation strategies to be effective and widely accepted.
- Enforce heavy penalties to security service providers who subvert legislation.
- Name and expose non-compliant security service providers to do away with unprofessionalism in the PSI.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were made from the study:

As the PSI grows and transforms, it is attracting more and more scrutiny in terms of regulation and professionalisation mechanisms and how they ensure compliance with national and international rules. Professionalisation can be beneficial and costly, therefore, it needs to be weighed before undertaking any professionalisation initiatives, since it can provide some degree of quality control to some businesses working in the field but imposes barriers to those wishing to enter the field. The professionalisation of the PSI is not a clear and straightforward process, it is inundated with positive and negative experiences and hindrances that can either promote professionalisation or impede it. To the regulators of the PSI, professionalisation is a valuable occupational tool used to control the practices, conduct of both PSCs and security guards and make them compliant to regulations and codes of conduct. This can stimulate supply, by making the PSI more attractive and make it easy for PSCs to meet their needs, which makes it easier to identify suitable security personnel.

There are negative experiences encountered in the professionalisation of the PSI. Professionalisation can be a strategy of control imposed from the top through the state-led

regulators. Professionalisation can also inhibit the flexibility needed as services and job requirements change, especially given the broad and fluidity of the PSI, which can diminish supply, by scaring away and making it difficult for new service providers and security officers to join the PSI. Therefore, any professionalisation exercise needs to carefully consider, the benefits, experiences, trade-offs, hindrances and recommendations, as they help in informing decision-making by the government, state departments, regulatory bodies and professional organisations about whether to and how to undertake PSI professionalisation initiatives.

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