

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Occupational Roles of Private Security Officers in South Africa

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Abstract

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The rapid spread of the virus disrupted many aspects of society including the role of private security officers (PSOs). In South Africa, when the government declared a National State of Disaster to prevent the spread of the virus, the private security industry was considered an “essential service”. As the country’s lockdown measures came into effect, businesses sought the services of private security companies to ensure the safety and security of their clients and premises. Consequently, PSOs were caught off guard due to their inadequate preparedness and lack of proper training. The purpose of the current study was to examine how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the occupational environment of PSOs in South Africa. There was a need for the study because the traditional roles of PSOs were disrupted by government lockdown regulations and there was a shortage of current and easily accessible information. Hence, the study applied the interpretive content analysis of literature harvested from different databases. The findings revealed that PSOs were obliged to take on additional roles and responsibilities for which they were not prepared, such as applying social distancing at business premises; enforcing restrictions on people not wearing masks; and screening people’s temperatures. Further, the findings revealed that PSOs had the right to refuse entry to people who did not abide by the rules, but they had less latitude to enforce the rules arbitrarily. The study recommends that the training requirements of PSOs be redesigned and modernised to meet the skills gap suited for a new generation of PSOs.

Keywords: private security officers; Covid-19 pandemic; essential service; lockdown; Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority

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Introduction

Private security officers (PSOs) are usually responsible for ensuring the safety and security of individuals and property in a private setting. The roles and responsibilities of PSOs are aimed at preventing losses and ensuring the security of employees, assets and clients. PSOs perform these functions by preventing losses and reducing risk by using various security risk control measures (Howlett 2020). The continuous surge in the demand for private security services demonstrates their necessity and relevance (Nalla and Gurinskaya 2020). In South Africa, the role of the private security industry is of strategic importance to the country in the prevention and reduction of crime. This is due to the large numbers of human capital it employs, and the substantial contribution it makes towards the economic growth of the country (Pillay 2002).

When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, it caused major disruptions across all sectors of the economy (WHO 2020). This had an immediate impact on the day-to-day lives of people across the world including the conventional roles and functions of PSOs. During the pandemic, PSOs had to take on additional responsibilities in what can now be seen as non-traditional security roles. For example, they were enlisted to assist the community, business sector, and the government in combating the spread of the virus through the enforcement of health protocols (Oringer 2020). Therefore, the purpose of the study was to review the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the occupational roles of PSOs in South Africa.

Problem Statement

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic prompting the private security industry to emphasise its role in enforcing health and safety measures, a noticeable gap has been identified since it has not been extensively researched or explored (CoESS 2020a). The declaration made by the WHO on the spread of the coronavirus as a global pandemic in March 2020, reduced the economic and social activities in most countries. It resulted in the introduction of the lockdown measures which many government officials announced to reduce the spread of Covid-19 infections (OECD 2020).

One of the effects of government-sanctioned lockdowns resulted in fewer employees, customers, and patrons being allowed to enter offices and workspaces, restaurants, bars, sports stadia, and places of entertainment, worship, and other public spaces (Grimes 2022). However, during the lockdown, when employees, clients, and customers entered any premises, they were first confronted by PSOs who were called upon to handle “unusual” duties (Reesor 2021). PSOs were tasked to take on added responsibilities to enforce compliance with lockdown measures according to government-sanctioned regulations (Howlett 2020; Trenkov-Wermuth 2020). One of the problems experienced by PSOs during the enforcement of lockdown measures was inadequate training and facilities such as digital technologies that could support the operations they received.

This might have been a consequence of the short notice they received to implement government-imposed health protocols (Donald 2020).

In South Africa, where the study was conducted, PSOs played a vital role as frontline workers amid the Covid-19 pandemic (Chersich et al. 2020). Key workers or frontline staff are employees who provided an essential service or key public service during the lockdown (Patel 2020). In addition to keeping buildings and property safe from crime, PSOs (frontline workers) were enlisted to contribute to the efforts of containing the spread of the virus within their area of responsibility (Donald 2020). To help flatten the curve, security guards took on the responsibility of making sure that people within a certain establishment follow safety procedures like handwashing, social distancing, and wearing masks (Reesor 2021). This problem can be addressed by changing the mentality of security officers from those who traditionally patrol, observe, and report, to one that now includes enforcing health and safety protocols and embracing the use of adaptable technology solutions (Anon. 2020a; 2020b). This would place new demands on the provision of physical security and stimulate new ways of doing work in the PSI. Failure to address the skills deficit and training in the provision of additional responsibilities, such as enforcing and maintaining health protocols, by PSOs may compromise the quality of service they provide to paying clients.

Purpose and Research Objectives of the Study

The study has provided insights into the challenges faced by PSOs during the Covid-19 pandemic and how their occupational roles have evolved in response to the crisis. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the occupational status of PSOs in South Africa. This would assist the researcher to analyse the effects of the pandemic on the daily duties and responsibilities of PSOs in South Africa. The research objectives of the study were:

- To examine the roles and responsibilities of private security officers.
- To determine whether the private security industry in South Africa is an “essential service” or a “critical occupation”.
- To investigate the changes that evolved in the roles of private security officers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

The dearth of empirical evidence covering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the occupational environment of PSOs in South Africa prompted a review of the extant literature to further examine this phenomenon. The review was guided by the lack of experiential and empirical research in South Africa on how PSOs’ traditional roles changed during the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of the review is to provide an overview of the current state of research on the topic and to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas for further investigation. The literature review was guided by the research objectives formulated for the study, namely: to examine the roles and

responsibilities of PSOs; to determine whether the private security industry in South Africa is an “essential service” or a “critical occupation”; and to investigate the changes that evolved in the roles of PSOs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Roles and Responsibilities of Private Security Officers

PSOs perform several roles and responsibilities, and these can vary depending on their employer; the industry they work in; and the specific job they to which they are assigned (Donald 2020). Some common responsibilities of PSOs include patrolling the premises they are responsible for guarding, for example, a building, a shopping mall, a university campus, an airport, a hospital, or an industrial site. PSOs may monitor the area for suspicious activity or safety hazards and take appropriate action to prevent any incident (Richards and Smith 2007). PSOs are responsible for monitoring surveillance equipment, such as cameras and alarms, and work as control room operators. They may also review footage to identify potential threats or suspicious behaviour (Nkwana 2017). In some instances, PSOs are trained to respond quickly to crises, such as fires, medical emergencies, and criminal activity. PSOs may be responsible for calling emergency services, evacuating the area, or providing first aid (Donald 2020).

PSOs had shown responsible for enforcing rules and regulations on the premises they are assigned to (Nemeth 2011). For example, they may enforce parking regulations, visitor policies, or safety procedures. In some cases, PSOs may be responsible for conducting investigations into incidents or suspicious behaviour (Gill 2014). They may gather evidence, interview witnesses, and provide reports to law enforcement or management (Nalla and Gurinskaya 2020). PSOs are often the first point of contact for visitors or customers on the premises they are assigned. They may provide information, directions, or assistance to ensure a positive experience (Nalla and Wakefield 2014). Overall, PSOs play an important role in maintaining safety and security in a variety of settings. In this regard, it is important that PSOs must be well-trained professionally, and be able to handle a variety of situations (Walkowski 2019).

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS 2020a) reported that the Covid-19 pandemic had affected and was continuing to affect the way private security companies conduct their business. It was believed that this would force PSOs to adapt their business operations to contain the pandemic. CoESS (2020a) emphasised that although the pandemic had forced many governments to regard the private security industry as a critical occupation, they had not necessarily transposed this into facts (CoESS 2020b). By this, they meant that PSOs were forced to take on new roles and responsibilities despite inadequate training and preparation to implement them when dealing with ordinary citizens (CoESS 2020b).

Private Security Industry in South Africa as an “Essential Service” or a “Critical Occupation”

The declaration by the WHO regarding Covid-19 as a global pandemic in 2020 forced many governments to take serious steps to restrict the free movement of their citizens to prevent the rapid spread of the virus (Cennimo 2021). During the pandemic, many governments, including South Africa, categorised private security as an “essential service” or a “critical occupation” (CoESS 2020a). Critical occupations refer to jobs that have been essential in fighting the pandemic as well as those that ensure economic continuity in times of crisis (OECD 2020). In South Africa, under the Disaster Management Regulations (South Africa 2020), several categories of services were included as “essential” or “critical” according to numerous South African Government Gazettes, for example, Gazette 43168 of 26 March 2020; Gazette 43199 of 2 April 2020 and Gazette 43232 of 16 April 2020, as amended (PSIRA 2020). The category of private security services was listed under Section 20 of the lockdown regulations (PSIRA 2020).

In response to the Disaster Management Regulations (South Africa 2020), the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in South Africa issued a circular which clarified the role of the private security industry under the lockdown regulations. The PSIRA confirmed under the Private Security Industry Regulation Act 56 of 2001, that the private security industry is classified as an essential service (PSIRA 2020). The circular included a permit addressed to the South African Police Service (SAPS) and South African National Defence Force (SANDF) instructing them to acknowledge that the private security industry was exempted from national lockdown regulations (PSIRA 2020). In addition, it directed security service providers to ensure that all PSOs deployed were issued with personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, sanitisers, and gloves to protect them from health risks. It stated that businesses which could not conform to the regulations should not deploy PSOs (PSIRA 2020). One glaring shortcoming in the PSIRA communication was the lack of direction provided by PSIRA on the training and upskilling of PSOs to perform additional duties during the pandemic.

Changes Facing the Roles of Private Security Officers during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Normally, security professionals including PSOs undertake a diverse range of duties, roles, and responsibilities. As mentioned previously, these may include managing the security and surveillance of premises, patrolling and monitoring sites, CCTV systems, and recording equipment (Gill 2014). The security tools are responsible for controlling site access for authorized staff and visitors, liaising with the authorities in emergencies, protecting access to facilities and equipment, and upholding safety and mandatory site requirements (Nalla and Prenzler 2018). One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on the private security industry in South Africa has been the increased demand for their services. During the pandemic, many businesses and individuals were

concerned about the safety and security of employees, customers, and the public (Benoit 2020). This resulted in an increase in demand for private security services. This has also led to an increase in the number of PSOs employed by security companies (Oringer 2020). Tarallo (2020) found that in the United States (US), security companies whose workforces were already working strenuous and long shifts, have been inundated with requests for new and additional types of security services. For example, clients required PSOs to perform additional services, thus requiring more medical-related tasks, such as conducting Covid-19 screening measures like taking temperatures (Tarallo 2020). In this way, security officers are being challenged to take on duties that they were otherwise not trained for or required to do.

Owners of private security companies and their employees (PSOs) were forced to change their strategies and activities to adapt to the changing times brought about by the pandemic (Benoit 2020). In South Africa, shortly after the commencement of the national lockdown, the sight of PSOs outside shopping malls and stores became commonplace to ensure the safety of shoppers and the public. In this situation, PSOs supported frontline workers by assisting them to adhere to proper social distancing (Reesor 2021). This practice proved to be essential for the functioning of the country's economy. PSOs had to ensure that social or physical distancing was maintained at the business premises. In this regard, no one was allowed to enter buildings, shops, or any public space without a mask until they were further screened before they could enter the premises (CoESS 2020b). It was believed that this would help keep track of numbers to control crowds. Furthermore, PSOs had the right to refuse entry to people who did not abide by the rules, and did not wear masks properly to cover their mouths and noses (Martinelli et al. 2021). In addition, the PSOs played an important role in supporting public compliance with restrictions (SaferWorld 2020). PSOs were employed by businesses, the public, and governments to perform non-core security functions to combat the further expansion of the pandemic (Howlett 2020). This has shown that the role of PSOs changed beyond what they were expected to do during the pandemic (Howlett 2020). Reesor (2021) found that the pandemic unleashed a range of unforeseen challenges for governments to enforce public health emergencies. For this reason, private security companies were called on to respond to additional demands for maintaining and enforcing health and safety protocols.

To help flatten the curve, PSOs were deployed to ensure that people within a certain establishment followed safety procedures like handwashing, social distancing, taking temperature checks, and wearing masks (DCAF 2020a; 2020b). PSOs took on the implementation of new safety procedures, communicating directly with the public, and enforcing health and safety controls in addition to their existing responsibilities (DCAF 2020a; 2020b). During the pandemic, it became apparent that private security guards played an important role in monitoring compliance with quarantine measures by ensuring that individuals who are required to self-isolate or quarantine are adhering to the guidelines (Reesor 2021). Amid the lockdown, the private security industry witnessed an increased demand for their guarding and patrol services, as numerous

businesses sought their assistance in safeguarding unoccupied offices, retail stores, and commercial establishments (Moore 2020). Part of the duties and responsibilities of a security guard is to make sure that all assets and properties of the company are safe and intact even during a temporary closure. This is to ensure that a company can immediately return to normal operations once the office doors open once again (DCAF 2021). To buttress the emphasis made, PSOs had to enforce the rules and explain to the public and patrons the importance of such measures, enforce compliance, and evict offenders should they refuse to do so. As a result of having PSOs enforce regulations, the public can feel reassured that essential health measures are being followed on the premises. This can help alleviate their concerns prior to entering a building (Reesor 2021).

The lockdown in South Africa and the subsequent reopening of the economy posed several challenges particularly for the retail sector as the government introduced regulations restricting the number of people entering shops and other facilities (Jakicic 2020). For example, security officers had to ensure that the customers at their stores were protected without negotiation. PSOs had to assist shop managers control the number of customers who could enter the store at any given time. This was to ensure that the government-mandated social distancing protocols were adhered to without any compromise (DCAF 2021).

However, there was evidence from Nigeria (Shodunke 2022) that during the enforcement of lockdown regulations, there was a mixed reaction from the public. Some people were supportive of the PSOs, by realising that their role was to ensure the rules were enforced and were intended to protect public health and safety. Unfortunately, there were others who were critical of the way in which PSOs enforced the regulations, and there were accusations of PSOs overstepping their boundaries by using excessive force (Shodunke 2022).

In some instances, it was reported that PSOs enforcing lockdown regulations had been involved in confrontations with members of the public. Some of these incidents resulted in complaints or legal action against the PSOs, particularly in cases where there had been allegations of excessive force or abuse of power (Leloup and Cools 2022). Similarly, there were instances where PSOs were commended for their professionalism and effectiveness in enforcing pandemic-related rules and regulations. Many people appreciated the role that security guards played in helping to keep public spaces safe during the pandemic (Shodunke 2022). Therefore, it is evident that the scale of the Covid-19 pandemic challenged the private security industry in extraordinary ways. It placed further emphasis on the role PSOs can play in promoting security; developing and enforcing health and safety protocols; and promoting respect for human rights during the pandemic.

Research Method

The study applied non-empirical research based on conceptual frameworks, opinions, beliefs, or anecdotal evidence (Kwan 2021). This type of research is qualitative in nature using interpretive content analysis of literature harvested from different databases (Unachukwu and Chukwuemeka 2018). The reason for adopting this method was that it is a quick and easy process to review existing information when scant scientific data is available (O’Leary 2020). The review meant that already existing data was used as a method of inquiry (Curtis and Curtis 2011). In this way, a secondary data review was used to present an assessment of the situation, based on available information on how the Covid-19 pandemic changed the occupational roles of PSOs in South Africa. The review of secondary sources included an overview of the scale and impact of the pandemic on PSOs, their locations, and the short-term risks to which they were exposed. The next step was to locate the data to find out what information was available and whether it was accessible. To determine the relevance of the data the author considered issues like the original purpose of the information when it was written, the operationalisation of concepts, and the questions asked (Unachukwu and Chukwuemeka 2018). To validate and assess the credibility of the data, the author consulted secondary sources, such as the published reports of CoESS (2020a; 2020b) and the DCAF (2020b) report.

In addition, the researcher examined the circular issued by the PSIRA (2020) at the start of the lockdown in South Africa, to obtain a better understanding of the problems and the implications of the pandemic on the changing nature of work performed by PSOs. The researcher used secondary sources to identify gaps in knowledge which served to inform further assessment formulation of appropriate research objectives of the study (Curtis and Curtis 2011). Academic databases, such as Scopus and Web of Science, as well as specialised databases, such as ProQuest and JSTOR, were also consulted. The sources were fully evaluated by first assessing the relevance and reliability of the sources before the researcher searched for reputable, peer-reviewed sources that were directly related to the research objectives (Winchester and Salji 2016).

In the study, the researcher adhered to ethical considerations in the following ways. The different sources consulted were referenced. Plagiarism checks, misrepresentation, bias, confidentiality, deception, and validity of the study were followed judiciously. To address the issue of plagiarism, the researcher ensured all sources consulted for the study were properly acknowledged. The researcher ensured there was no misrepresentation of ideas as established truths or facts, without acknowledging the author/s. The review of secondary data, books and other sources of information consulted was not influenced by the researcher’s personal biases, values, and beliefs. Most of the secondary data, books and other sources are freely available on the internet, and permission for further use and analysis is implied (Tripathy 2013). In addition, the researcher acknowledged ownership of the original source/s he consulted.

Findings and Discussion

To answer the research objectives, data sources, such as news articles, social media posts, official government statements, and reports from the PSIRA were consulted. The findings of the study were based on the content analysis of the articles and other documents reviewed. The study identified the following findings with regard to the research objectives formulated: (i) there were changes in the job descriptions of PSOs; (ii) the enforcement of lockdown rules was increased; (iii) temperature checks and crowd control were introduced; (iv) there was an increased risk of infection; and (v) there was a greater demand for security services to prioritise the safety of their employees. These categories affirmed the changing roles of PSOs during the enforcement of Covid-19 lockdown regulations. To affirm the findings obtained, the researcher could establish that the pandemic led to changes in the job descriptions of PSOs. As a result of many businesses being forced to operate under strict lockdown regulations, PSOs had to adapt to new roles, such as ensuring that people adhered to social distancing regulations and wore masks. They also had to enforce curfews and other lockdown measures. These changes meant that PSOs in South Africa had to become more adaptable and flexible in their roles.

A study by White (2022) carried out in the United Kingdom (UK), confirmed that soon after the first lockdown was imposed, the UK government acknowledged the significance of the duties carried out by PSOs that were crucial to national infrastructure and law enforcement. They were thus granted “critical worker” or “key worker” status, elevating them to the same occupational status as doctors, nurses, paramedics, police officers, firefighters, teachers, and other essential workers. In addition, White’s (2022) study aligned with these findings and concluded that PSOs had to take on various frontline duties during the Covid-19 outbreak. These included maintaining social order in hospitals and supermarkets, as well as protecting commercial properties, industrial areas, supply chains, and initiating emergency responses.

PSOs in South Africa, whose jobs were designated as “essential services” during the Covid-19 lockdown, found it difficult to implement lockdown regulations. This was because certain individuals were uncooperative in following the regulations, leading to clashes between PSOs and the public. As a result, the pandemic made the work of PSOs even more difficult, as they had to adapt to unfamiliar and complicated situations. In Nigeria during the pandemic, Ezeibe et al. (2022) found that the overzealous conduct of security operatives and other task forces enforcing lockdown across Nigeria resulted in torture, assaults, extortion, and fatal shootings, causing numerous deaths.

PSOs were responsible for conducting temperature checks at the entrances of public buildings and workplaces to identify individuals with fever-like symptoms and prevent them from entering. For example, in Wuhan province in China, Heilongjiang’s provincial high court circulated an order to its employees (including judges, law clerks, administrators, and security personnel), asking them to “dive in” their own

neighbourhoods and take on duties, such as warning residents to wear masks and checking the body temperature of residents entering and departing their compounds (Xuefei 2020). Further, PSOs were required to manage large crowds during the enforcement of lockdown measures by ensuring that social distancing measures were adhered to (Ezeibe et al. 2022).

In Ghana, it was reported that some poor urban residents failed to follow the lockdown rules by travelling long distances to buy low-priced food in the central markets. They also disregarded social distancing guidelines by taking public transportation. Consequently, security and law enforcement officials had to deny entry to some of them and used excessive force (Ezeibe et al. 2022). During the lockdown, PSOs found themselves exposed to increased risks of contracting Covid-19 due to their constant interaction with people. This led to concerns among PSOs about their own safety and that of their families. To protect PSOs, some private security companies had to provide their employees with PPE to minimise the risk of infection. The pandemic, therefore, highlighted the need for private security companies to prioritise the safety of their employees. A study by Stogner, Miller and McLean (2020) in the US revealed that law enforcement officials, who were considered “essential workers”, were not exempt from the stress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, it also affected PSOs. In addition, the social distancing policies implemented during the pandemic also resulted in several changes and modifications in protocols of officers, including the mandatory use of PPE, changes in patrolling routines, and alterations in shift schedules and work hours (Stogner, Miller and McLean 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen an intensified demand for private security services as companies and businesses have had to adopt new security measures to protect their premises and staff. MacLeod (2020) found the result of many governments categorising private security as an “essential service” or a “critical occupation” created further demand upwards. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a hike in demand, from both states and businesses all over the world, for certain types of private security services (MacLeod 2020).

Implications of the Study

During the Covid-19 pandemic, PSOs were responsible for enforcing protocols; managing access control; and ensuring social distancing in public places. Thus, it became apparent that PSOs placed themselves at an increased risk of exposure to the virus due to their proximity to the public. To mitigate this risk, security companies had to implement measures, such as providing PPE and enforcing social distancing guidelines. To deal with the new challenges brought about by the pandemic, private security companies had to adapt their training and protocols to ensure that their officers were properly equipped. This included providing training on Covid-19 protocols, as well as on how to respond to Covid-related incidents. To maintain social distancing guidelines in place, private security companies had to rely more heavily on technology

to carry out their duties. This included the use of drones and other surveillance equipment to monitor public spaces and enforce Covid-19 protocols (Gupta, Abdelsalam and Mittal 2020).

Recommendations

The study recommends that PSOs should receive specific training to help them to better understand the principles of infection control, such as hand washing, the correct use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection procedures to effectively manage the Covid-19 pandemic. The training may involve temperature checks, crowd control or occupancy management, or advising on best practices during the pandemic. Training in crowd management requires additional considerations, such as enforcing social distancing and monitoring the number of people allowed into a particular area, such as shop. It is further recommended that all PSOs should be trained to have a better understanding of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19; what causes it to spread quickly; and have information on the latest guidance and regulations related to the pandemic. Finally, the training must include ways to communicate effectively, especially when enforcing pandemic-related rules and regulations. PSOs should be trained in de-escalation techniques to handle difficult situations calmly and professionally. They need to have more training to sharpen their communication skills and a better understanding of healthcare protocols to protect customers and the public at large.

Conclusion

The study has established that private security services and their workforce have become the panacea for protecting people and property. The private security industry became a critical resource during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the smooth functioning of the economy. The inclusion of PSOs as an “essential service” or a “critical occupation” according to the under the Disaster Management Regulations (South Africa 2020) regulations in the country, demonstrated the key role the private security industry performed as part of an effective and comprehensive pandemic response. However, a serious gap existed in the communication by the PSIRA when it declared the private security industry in South Africa to be an “essential service”. This chasm was evident in the PSIRA’s silence when it did not provide leadership and direction on the training and upskilling of PSOs to perform additional duties during the pandemic.

The study has also affirmed how the role of PSOs changed in helping to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic by highlighting the criticality of their services which proved vital to keeping businesses and society safe and secure during the lockdown. The review identified some of the ways the pandemic affected the occupational roles of PSOs in South Africa, including: the increased demand for their services; changes in their job descriptions; the increased risk of infection; and challenges faced by enforcing the protocols. The range of the study makes it unique because it focused on a specific geographic region, namely, South Africa. In addition, such a review which was not available in broader studies can provide unique insights into the changing occupational

roles of PSOs, especially during a pandemic. Furthermore, the research objectives of the study had not been explored previously, thus making the study unique. Therefore, these findings may challenge existing assumptions and reveal new insights into how the Covid-19 pandemic forced PSOs to quickly adapt to new roles and carry out extra duties. In addition, the review found that although PSOs were issued with PPE to carry out their duties, many PSOs did not receive proper training to enforce lockdown regulations which rendered the study unique. The study results will contribute to the wider understanding of the operations and services of PSOs where public health, safety and security merge. The study will offer important insights into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in relation to PSOs and their role, other than acting as public law enforcement agencies within society.

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