



Crusades for Drug-Free Communities: Hands-on Experiences of Rural Police Managers in the Second District of Bohol, Philippines

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Renante C. Napalla¹, MPA, MSCJ, ORCID No. 0009-0005-6482-1961
Atty. Dodelon F. Sabijon², PhD

¹Faculty, School of Criminal Justice Education, Talibon Polytechnic College, Talibon, Bohol, Philippines

²Dean, College of Criminal Justice Education, University of Cebu-Main Campus, Cebu City, Philippines

Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of Chiefs of Police in managing anti-drug programs in the Second District of Bohol, Philippines, with a focus on enhancing grassroots-level drug prevention strategies. Conducted from January 2024 to December 2024, the study aimed to examine three key aspects: the experiences of police chiefs in managing anti-drug programs, how they addressed challenges in implementation, and their aspirations for improved performance. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed, utilizing a validated interview guide to facilitate in-depth interviews with ten (10) purposively selected Chiefs of Police who met the inclusion criteria. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Colaizzi's method for phenomenological data analysis. Findings revealed both encouraging and challenging themes in managing anti-drug initiatives. Positive experiences centered on community support and a sense of achievement, while negative encounters were marked by budgetary constraints and the tactical use of technology by offenders. In overcoming obstacles, informants highlighted inter-agency collaboration and strategic monitoring as critical. Aspirations focused on sustained community engagement and access to professional development opportunities to enhance leadership capacity. The study recommends stronger funding mechanisms, capacity-building for police leadership, and multisectoral collaboration to reinforce anti-drug efforts at the local level. Future research should examine the emotional and psychological impact of sustained anti-drug operations on rural police managers and evaluate the long-term effectiveness of collaborative anti-drug strategies.

Keywords: Chiefs of Police, anti-drug programs, community engagement, collaborative strategies, rural law enforcement, Colaizzi's method, leadership development



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INTRODUCTION

The global perspective on anti-drug programs illuminates the intricate interplay between local and international dynamics in combating drug abuse and trafficking. Anti-drug programs have been implemented worldwide with varying degrees of success, often tailored to specific cultural, social, and economic contexts. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) found that while prevention initiatives have shown promising results in reducing drug use among youth in some regions, challenges persist due to factors such as limited resources, lack of coordination among stakeholders, and evolving drug trends (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that combines prevention, treatment, and harm reduction strategies to address the complex nature of substance abuse on a global scale (World Health Organization, 2018).

The anti-drug programs in the Philippines is marked by a combination of law enforcement efforts, rehabilitation programs, and community engagement initiatives. President Rodrigo Duterte's administration has implemented a controversial "war on drugs" policy, characterized by widespread police operations targeting suspected drug offenders. Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented thousands of

killings linked to the anti-drug campaign, highlighting the need for accountability and respect for human rights in drug enforcement efforts (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2020).

Philippine National Police (PNP) drug programs is to ensure public safety and security by addressing the widespread issue of illegal drug use and trafficking. These programs aim to reduce crime rates, which are often exacerbated by drug-related activities, by targeting both drug users and suppliers. The approach includes a mix of law enforcement, community engagement, and rehabilitation. By dismantling drug networks and educating the public, especially the youth, about the dangers of drug abuse, the PNP strives to create a safer environment. Moreover, rehabilitation efforts are designed to help former drug users reintegrate into society, thereby reducing recidivism and promoting social stability. The overarching goal is to create a holistic strategy that not only addresses the immediate threat of drug-related crimes but also mitigates the long-term impact of drug abuse on individuals and communities (Anderson, 2020).

In the Second District of Bohol, in managing anti-drug programs at the local level, chiefs of police play a crucial role in coordinating law enforcement efforts, implementing community-based initiatives, and fostering partnerships with other stakeholders, yet they face numerous challenges in effectively combating drug-related issues. In the Second District of Bohol, towns such as Ubay, Bien Unido, and Trinidad are grappling with a concerning rise in drug-related activities, particularly the distribution and consumption of methamphetamine, commonly known as "shabu." Recent reports from local law enforcement agencies indicate a surge in drug trafficking operations, with clandestine networks exploiting the region's porous borders and intricate transportation routes. Despite concerted efforts by authorities, the Second District continues to grapple with the pervasive influence of narcotics, necessitating coordinated and multifaceted approach to address the underlying issues fueling the drug epidemic.

Police chiefs in towns like Ubay and Bien Unido have spearheaded various community-based initiatives to prevent drug abuse and support rehabilitation. For example, the "Bayanihan sa Barangay" program encourages community members to participate in neighborhood watch activities and report any suspicious activities. Educational campaigns in schools and barangays aim to inform the public, especially the youth, about the dangers of drug use and promote a drug-free lifestyle.

In many localities, anti-drug programs are essential components of public health and safety. Community-based interventions, such as educational campaigns and outreach programs, are effective in raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and promoting healthy behaviors among youth. This strategy focuses on employing effective law enforcement measures to dismantle drug trafficking networks, engaging communities to raise awareness and encourage prevention, and delivering comprehensive rehabilitation services to assist individuals in overcoming substance abuse.

The main objective of this study is to explore the experiences of the Chiefs of Police in managing anti-drug programs in the Second District of the Province of Bohol, Philippines. This research provides insights into the actual encounters, strategies, and challenges faced by these rural police managers in their pursuit of creating drug-free communities. It aims to present a comprehensive account of their hands-on experiences, particularly their successes, obstacles, and aspirations as frontline implementers of anti-drug campaigns.

This research is primarily anchored on the Self-Efficacy theory by Bandura, A. (1997), supported by the Team Performance theory by Hackman, J. R. (2005), and the Broken Window theory developed by Wilson, J.Q. & Kelling, G. L. (2016). Effective community-policing hinges on three well-established ideas: (1) Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura) posits that officers who believe in their competence persist in difficult tasks; (2) Team Performance Theory (Hackman) shows that clear goals, complementary roles,

and trust boost group output; and (3) Broken-Window Theory (Wilson & Kelling) links visible order to lower crime. However, many police units still report uneven results when tackling quality-of-life offenses, suggesting a gap between theory and street-level practice. The study seeks to understand how rural police managers implement order-maintenance strategies, particularly broken-window policing, amid varying team dynamics and levels of individual confidence. Grounded in Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Hackman's team performance framework, and the broken-window theory, the research explores why similarly resourced teams produce different outcomes in maintaining public order. It hypothesizes that individual self-efficacy, combined with effective team processes, significantly enhances proactive policing of minor disorders. The findings aim to provide practical insights for strengthening police leadership, team coordination, and community engagement within the Philippine context.

The BIDA Program (Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y Ayawan), initiated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in the Philippines, represents a comprehensive community-based approach to combating illegal drugs. Launched in 2016, the program aims to address drug prevention, awareness, and rehabilitation efforts at the grassroots level (Philippine Information Agency, 2023). BIDA Program is grounded in legal mandates and policy directives designed to empower local communities in addressing the drug problem effectively. These include provisions from the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160), Executive Order No. 15, Series of 2017, and guidance from the Dangerous Drugs Board (Department of the Interior and Local Government, 2016). Issued on January 18, 2002, NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 2002-001 establishes the Drug Enforcement Units (DEUs) within the Philippine National Police (PNP) at various levels, national, regional, provincial, and city/municipal. These specialized units are designed to combat drug-related crimes effectively by utilizing trained personnel with expertise in drug enforcement operations.

The Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) encompasses a range of activities, including community-based drug awareness campaigns, drug testing initiatives, and the establishment of rehabilitation and treatment centers within barangays (villages). Regular monitoring and surveillance conducted by barangay officials and volunteers play a vital role in identifying drug suspects, enabling them to be reported to law enforcement authorities for further investigation and prosecution (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, 2023).

Board Regulation No. 3 Series of 2017, issued by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), serves as a pivotal framework for strengthening the implementation of the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) across the Philippines. This regulation provides comprehensive guidelines and directives aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of barangay-level efforts in combating drug abuse and trafficking within local communities (Department of the Interior and Local Government, 2017).

Under Republic Act No. 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, the functions of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) are outlined primarily in Section 81. The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) is the primary policy-making and strategy-formulating body for drug prevention and control in the Philippines. PDEA is tasked with planning and executing operations and ensuring proper procedures are followed in the custody and disposition of seized items. These provisions ensure a coordinated and collaborative effort between the PDEA, PNP, and other agencies, establishing clear roles and rules for engagement in the fight against illegal drugs in the Philippines (Republic Act No. 9165, 2002).

Moreover, Turner (2021) highlighted that rural police managers often form partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local government units to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services for individuals struggling with substance abuse. Clark (2018) pointed out that police managers in

rural areas must often make do with basic training programs, rely on local resources and exhaust available supports to conduct their duties, making the fight against drug-related crimes more difficult.

Advancements in technology have revolutionized drug enforcement efforts, providing rural police managers with tools to enhance operational efficiency. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), predictive analytics, and digital surveillance systems enable police to identify hotspots of drug activity and allocate resources effectively. Studies indicate that the integration of technology into law enforcement practices improves decision-making and reduces response times, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful interventions (Ratcliffe, 2016).

Valuable perspectives have been shared on the challenges and approaches involved in enforcing anti-drug laws, particularly from the standpoint of police chiefs who oversee such programs. These insights deepen our understanding of the critical role law enforcement leaders play in designing and executing effective strategies for drug prevention and control. The information also serves as a practical resource for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers committed to improving responses to drug-related issues (Johnson & Smith, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method, specifically the descriptive phenomenological approach, was utilized in this study. A total of ten (10) participants were purposively selected to participate in the research. All participants were Chiefs of Police (COPs) assigned to various Municipal Police Stations within the Second District of Bohol, Philippines, each having served in their respective posts for at least two (2) years and possessing relevant experience in the management of anti-drug programs. In gathering qualitative data, the researchers employed a verified, approved, and validated interview guide to collect the necessary information from the participants.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted to facilitate a thorough exploration of the participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding the management of anti-drug programs. The researchers used this approach to guarantee the validity and dependability of the interview process, as well as the participants' reliable answers, which in turn produced precise and trustworthy results.

The study followed Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method for data analysis, a systematic approach used to interpret qualitative data through the lived experiences of participants. First, the researchers engaged in familiarization by thoroughly reading and reviewing the transcribed interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses. Second, significant statements, expressions directly related to the experience under investigation, were extracted from the transcripts. Third, formulated meanings were derived from these statements, capturing their essential insights. Fourth, these meanings were organized into clusters of themes, highlighting common patterns across the narratives. Fifth, the clustered themes were synthesized into exhaustive descriptions that richly conveyed the essence of the phenomenon. Sixth, these descriptions were integrated into a fundamental structure that encapsulated the shared experience. To ensure the accuracy of interpretation, the findings were critically analyzed concerning the participants' original expressions. As Sosha (2012) emphasized, this rigorous method, characterized by transcription, repeated reading, coding, and reflection, enhances the credibility, dependability, and depth of phenomenological analysis.

The researcher ensured strict adherence to ethical protocols in the conduct of this study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all informants after explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time. Ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice were observed throughout. Confidentiality and privacy were prioritized. All

information gathered was handled under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), ensuring the anonymity and protection of participants' identities. Recording of interviews was done with the consent of informants, and all data were securely stored.

RESULTS

The experiences of the informants offer a comprehensive understanding of managing anti-drug programs in rural communities. Through the inclusive narratives of the Chiefs of Police (COPs), eight compelling themes emerged. These themes reflect both the positive and negative aspects of their work, as well as the strategies employed in addressing challenges and their aspirations for improved performance.

The themes identified from the lived experiences of the police managers are as follows: (1) Positive Feedback and Achievements; (2) Community Support; (3) Budgetary Constraints; (4) Tactical Evasion Through Technological Exploitation; (5) Collaboration with Local Government and Agencies; (6) Strategic Monitoring Initiatives; (7) Commitment to Community Engagement; and, (8) Professional Development for Enhanced Leadership.

These eight themes highlight the multifaceted nature of managing anti-drug programs. They illustrate the complexities faced by rural police leaders, emphasizing not only the operational and logistical hurdles but also their resilience, commitment to community engagement, and continuous efforts to enhance leadership capabilities and inter-agency collaboration.

Theme 1. Positive Feedback and Achievements. Theme 1 reflects the positive experiences of Chiefs of Police (COPs) regarding the recognition and appreciation they received for their efforts in implementing anti-drug programs. The study's findings revealed that the informants experienced a sense of accomplishment and motivation driven by commendations from the community, local government units, and internal leadership.

These expressions of support and acknowledgment reinforced their dedication to duty and encouraged continuous performance improvement. Motivational recognition – a subtheme of this result – clarifies the participants' experiences of gaining validation through positive feedback and measurable achievements in their anti-drug campaign efforts.

Motivational Recognition. The findings showed that all participants experienced a strong sense of motivation through the recognition and commendation they received from their superiors, local officials, and community members. This acknowledgment served as a significant morale booster that reinforced their sense of purpose and validated their efforts in managing anti-drug programs. The recognition came in various forms, including public appreciation during barangay assemblies, commendation letters, and verbal praises from stakeholders. These gestures inspired the Chiefs of Police (COPs) to further enhance their performance and sustain their commitment to service. Additionally, Participant 2 shared insights into how their team effectively manages anti-drug programs, highlighting the significance of recognition and awards at both the regional and provincial levels, stating:

"We were awarded at both the regional and provincial levels, twice a month, for our excellent performance. Of course, it motivated us and proved that we are not just here for the salary but to deliver quality service." (Participant 2)

Moreover, in an individual interview, Participant 10 expressed positive experiences in managing anti-drug programs. He shared that these experiences have been largely rewarding, particularly due to the awards and recognition he received for his leadership and efforts. These commendations not only served as a source of pride but also strengthened his drive to continue implementing impactful programs in the community. He stated:

"We apprehended and convicted numerous individuals for violations of RA 9165, earning

recognition for our station as the 5th top-performing in the anti-drug campaign. As Chief, I received several awards, including Best Junior PCO (2021) and Best PCO for PCR (2024)." (Participant 10)

Furthermore, Participant 9 explained how they achieved positive feedback and recognition in their previous assignment until this present by emphasizing the importance of team motivation, he mentioned:

"Actually, sir, in my previous assignment until now, I have received many awards, especially due to our intensified illegal drug operations and community engagement. I made sure that our team was motivated and committed by receiving awards such as Best Police Commission Officer in Operation and Best PCR (Police Community Relations) officer Regionwide in 2022." (Participant 9)

Theme 2. Community Support. The findings of the study revealed that community support plays a vital role in the successful management of anti-drug programs. This theme highlights how collaboration between law enforcement and local communities enhances operational effectiveness, builds mutual trust, and encourages open communication to address drug-related problems more efficiently. This sub-theme (Trust Building) clarifies the participants' experiences of establishing and strengthening trust with the community through consistent engagement, transparency, and shared responsibilities in the implementation of anti-drug initiatives.

Trust Building. The result of the study emphasized that building trust between law enforcement and the community is essential in the success of anti-drug programs. Participants shared that consistent communication, visibility, and sincerity in addressing community concerns helped earn the public's trust and cooperation. This was supported by the statement of Participant 2, who expressed:

"In our operations, the support from the barangay people is very significant. The Barangay Intelligence Network (BIN) provides

information that helps in identifying drug users and dealers. Therefore, it is important that we encourage the community to participate in programs so that our efforts can be more effective" (Participant 2)

Participant 9 also shared that the trust and active participation of the community in their activities are very important. He said that:

"The trust of the community and their active participation in our activities are very important. We always invite them to seminars and forums so that they can understand the problem of drugs. By showing that we need their help, they are more willing to support our programs. As a result, more people report information, which has led to numerous operations." (Participant 9)

Moreover, Participant 7 expressed his thoughts on the importance of community support in anti-drug programs. He shared that:

"The support of the community in our programs play a significant role. They are not just spectators but active partners in our efforts. When we organize drug awareness campaigns in schools, especially among the youth and barangays, we can truly see their participation." (Participant 7)

Theme 3. Budgetary Constraints. Theme 3 reflects the negative experiences of Chiefs of Police (COPs) and anti-drug program implementers as they face significant financial limitations in carrying out their duties. The findings of the study revealed that budgetary constraints hamper the effectiveness of anti-drug programs, limiting their capacity to conduct continuous operations, organize educational campaigns, and provide logistical support. The lack of sufficient funding has led to delays, reduced community engagement, and frustration among personnel. This sub-theme (resource limitation) clarifies the participants' experiences of struggling with inadequate resources, expressing concern over unmet operational needs, and the emotional toll of being unable to fully respond to the demands of their anti-drug responsibilities.

Resource Limitations. The result of the study emphasized that the lack of essential resources, such as vehicles, materials, and manpower, greatly hampers the implementation of anti-drug programs. Participants shared that these limitations affect mobility, delay operations, and reduce the overall efficiency of program delivery. This was supported by Participant 2, who expressed:

"We are lacking in budget, sir, which is why we find it difficult to monitor our drug users or drug pushers. It is hard to move forward since we don't have any money; how can we act? So, we have what we call an initiative; we have to dig into our pockets just to fulfill our responsibilities." (Participant 2)

However, Participant 5 expressed concerns about the lack of budget for conducting illegal drug operations and mentioned that fear for their safety makes it difficult for them to provide information. He said that:

"One of the significant challenges is the lack of budget in conducting illegal drug operations. It's not easy to carry out these operations, especially since we often need to purchase information from the community. Informants are often hesitant to provide information due to fear for their safety. While this does present challenges, it does not significantly affect my ability to manage these issues as Chief of Police." (Participant 5)

On the other hand, Participant 1 expressed a strong commitment to continuing the anti-drug operations, even with budgetary limitations, going so far as to use personal funds to support the needs of intel operatives and civilian assets who provide information on drug users and dealers in the area. He shared that:

"As Chief of Police, despite the lack of budget, we continue our anti-drug operations. If necessary, I contribute from my own funds to cover the food, snacks, and other needs of my intel operatives, as well as expenses for our alpha assets, who are civilians helping to gather and provide information about drug users and dealers in the area." (Participant 1)

Theme 4. Tactical Evasion Through Technological Exploitation. The findings of the study revealed that drug offenders are increasingly using technology and digital platforms to evade law enforcement operations. This theme highlights the growing challenge for authorities in monitoring online activities, securing digital evidence, and keeping up with evolving tactics used by offenders. This sub-theme (digital surveillance challenges) clarifies the participants' experiences of encountering difficulties in surveillance and tracking, due to the suspects' use of encrypted messaging apps, social media, and other digital tools that complicate the execution of anti-drug programs.

Digital Surveillance Challenges. The result of the study emphasized that drug offenders' use of digital platforms poses significant challenges in surveillance and intelligence gathering. Participants shared that limited training, outdated equipment, and the complexity of tracking online communications hinder their ability to monitor suspects effectively. This was supported by the statement of Participant 6:

"The primary obstacle is the advancement of technology, as some of our target individuals do not want to engage in actual selling or transactions involving the exchange of money and drugs. Some of them prefer to send it through GCash or Kumot. The items are placed in designated areas for retrieval, which poses difficulties for us." (Participant 6)

Participant 8 emphasized that law enforcement agencies need to adapt their strategies to counter the technological tactics used by drug offenders, such as money transfers through platforms like GCash, he said:

"Our failure to apprehend the suspect demonstrated their ability to use technology, such as sending money through GCash. This indicates that we need to revise our strategies to keep up with the tactics of criminals." (Participant 8)

Moreover, Participant 4 highlighted the need for continuous innovation in their tactics to

enhance their response to illegal activities. He emphasized the importance of adapting to technological changes and improving investigative strategies. He profoundly stated that:

"In our operation, the suspect was not apprehended due to online transactions and being more skilled than our asset, resulting in failure. Through debriefings, we assessed the mistakes and adjusted tactics for better outcomes in the future." (Participant 4)

Theme 5. Collaboration with Local Government and Agencies. This theme emphasizes the importance of a unified approach in addressing drug-related issues, particularly through partnerships with local government units (LGUs) and other agencies. The findings of the study revealed that collaboration enhances resource sharing, promotes coordinated efforts, and strengthens community support for law enforcement activities. Informants reported that inter-agency cooperation helped improve the implementation of programs and broadened their reach in the community. This sub-theme (interagency coordination) clarifies the participants' experiences of working closely with LGUs, barangay officials, and other institutions, which provided logistical support, manpower, and platforms for community engagement, making anti-drug initiatives more effective and sustainable.

Interagency Coordination. The result of the study emphasized that strong coordination between law enforcement, local government units, and other concerned agencies plays a crucial role in the success of anti-drug programs. Participants shared that effective collaboration helps streamline operations, maximize resources, and foster community trust. This was supported by Participant 4:

"I call for a coordination meeting with the BJMP, Coast Guard, RHU, and other agencies to work together in addressing the problem. Through collaboration, we achieved success in drug clearing, making four barangays drug-cleared while the program continues in the remaining 21 barangays." (Participant 4)

Moreover, Participant 3 emphasized the role of local government support in anti-drug operations, highlighting the importance of barangay coordination for logistics and community involvement. His statement goes:

"Support from the barangay is essential for logistics and organizing operations, and coordination with the captain and officials is important to gain more support. We also ensure that they take responsibility for monitoring their constituents." (Participant 3)

Moreover, Participant 8 described the importance of collaboration with the LGU, barangay officials, and other stakeholders in effectively managing anti-drug programs. He emphasized how these partnerships enhance program delivery and community engagement. He mentioned that:

"We collaborated with the LGU and stakeholders for the budget and information regarding programs against illegal drugs. Through monthly meetings and collaboration, we achieved positive results in the operations." (Participant 8)

Theme 6. Strategic Monitoring Initiatives. This theme focuses on the specific methods and procedures employed by law enforcement to ensure consistent and effective oversight of anti-drug programs. The findings of the study revealed that strategic monitoring, such as the use of regular reporting systems, intelligence validation, and field evaluations, enables agencies to proactively respond to emerging challenges, assess program performance, and adjust strategies accordingly. This sub-theme (data-driven decision making) clarifies the participants' experiences in implementing systematic monitoring practices that helped them allocate resources efficiently, track the progress of initiatives, and maintain transparency and accountability in the conduct of anti-drug operations.

Data-Driven Decision Making. The result of the study emphasized that the use of accurate data and reliable intelligence plays a vital role in shaping effective anti-drug strategies.

Participants shared that collecting and analyzing information from community reports, surveillance, and past operations allowed them to make informed decisions, prioritize high-risk areas, and allocate resources efficiently. This was supported by the statement of Participant 10, who expressed:

"We had an operation in an Island barangay where we diverted to another location due to human CCTV at the port, which led to a successful operation. We maintained our relationship with intel operatives and civilian informants while planning and adjusting strategies based on the situation. The success of the operation depended on the tactics and cooperation among all agencies and informants." (Participant 10)

Participant 2 highlighted the significance of cooperation and teamwork in their efforts. He said:

"We conducted constant monitoring, called the team for updates, and held meetings to strengthen our teamwork. Through the bond we built, we established support and cooperation to achieve our goals." (Participant 2)

Participant 6 emphasized that local community members are actively involved in the weekly meetings with the police and barangay officials to address drug-related issues in their barangay. He stated:

"Considering that we have a Police Sa Barangay (PSB) officer assigned to each barangay, they hold weekly meetings where the designated police officer assigned to that specific barangay meets with the barangay officials and barangay 'tanods.' In these meetings, they discuss the drug users and drug pushers in the area. Through these meetings, we are able to monitor specific drug personalities within the barangay, with the help of our informants. We really work together on this monitoring." (Participant 6)

Theme 7. Commitment to Community Engagement. This theme underscores the dedication of police managers to foster strong relationships with the community as a vital

component of effective anti-drug initiatives. The study revealed that informants viewed community engagement as essential in building trust, encouraging public cooperation, and promoting awareness of drug prevention strategies. By participating in community activities, conducting information drives, and maintaining open communication with residents, the police were able to create a more inclusive and proactive environment. This sub-theme (trust and relationship building) illustrates the informants' belief that genuine community involvement contributes to long-term success in curbing drug-related problems and enhances their sense of purpose in public service.

Trust and Relationship Building. The results of the study highlighted that establishing trust and strong relationships with community members is a fundamental element in the success of anti-drug programs. Informants shared that mutual respect, consistent presence, and honest communication with the public encouraged cooperation and reduced resistance during operations. Building rapport with residents, especially through regular dialogues, barangay visitations, and outreach activities, fostered a sense of shared responsibility in addressing drug-related issues. This was supported by the statement of Participant 10, who expressed:

"We conducted symposiums and lectures in barangays and schools for drug awareness and building trust with the police. Through the AMEL PROGRAM, GODCOPS, and AMISPORTS PARA BIDA, we gained the trust of 25 barangays through community engagement. The people provided information based on their personal knowledge and witnessed activities." (Participant 10)

Moreover, Participant 3 highlighted the importance of conducting various activities to actively engage the community. He said:

"We are conducting various activities for the community to engage them further, as one of the goals of the PNP is to win back the hearts and minds of the community. As chief of police, I have a significant role in addressing the issue

of illegal drugs, especially as I lead my team in engaging in illegal drug operations and involving the community. For me, it is important to encourage and inspire my personnel to do more in engaging with the community so that we can effectively solve the problem regarding illegal drugs. We should also encourage the community, especially the barangay, to continue the drug rehabilitation program. I also hope that the government can provide sufficient livelihood opportunities for the community.” (Participant 3)

Participant 4 emphasized the importance of continuing community engagement in our community relations and conducting more best practices. He stated:

“We have best practices such as conducting outreach programs where we engage with the community. We have made efforts through this strategy to interact and mingle with the people. We distributed rice, slippers, and other dry goods, and we built houses through a program from our provincial director that provides free housing for the poorest members of the community.” (Participant 4)

Theme 8. Professional Development for Enhanced Leadership. This theme emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development in strengthening the leadership capacity of police managers involved in anti-drug programs. The findings of the study revealed that informants recognized the need for ongoing training, seminars, and exposure to best practices to effectively lead their teams and respond to emerging drug-related challenges. Enhanced leadership skills were seen as vital in motivating subordinates, making sound decisions under pressure, and implementing strategic plans. This sub-theme highlights how professional growth empowers police leaders to become more confident, adaptive, and competent in delivering effective and sustainable anti-drug initiatives.

Continuous Learning and Skill Enhancement. The findings of the study emphasized the value of continuous learning and skill development in effectively managing anti-drug programs. Informants acknowledged that staying updated with current trends, legal procedures, and

operational techniques significantly improved their performance and decision-making. They shared that attending specialized trainings, workshops, and refresher courses helped them adapt to evolving drug-related issues and enhance their investigative, communication, and leadership skills. This commitment to lifelong learning empowered police managers to remain competent and confident in their roles. This was supported by the statement of Participant 2, who expressed:

“So, we should develop our personal and professional growth by conducting our mandatory special training and we can also study law. We have the opportunity to study law so that we can be effective and efficient in enforcing our laws regarding anti-illegal drugs. Our current programs can be described as progressive because we have made progress, as we have apprehended individuals and cleared several barangays of drugs. We have several programs that can enhance our experiences and how we combat our drug problems. We will undergo training, sir.” (Participant 2)

On the other hand, Participant 10 elaborated on the importance of ongoing training and skill development, emphasizing that investing in his education and professional growth directly impacts his ability to lead and make informed decisions, which ultimately benefits the community they serve. He shared that:

“I attended courses such as intelligence, basic investigation, and public safety officer course that helped in my leadership. These trainings had a positive impact on my management as Chief of Police, especially in implementing anti-illegal drug programs.” (Participant 10).

Moreover, Informant 8 emphasized the significance of continuous education for personal growth, stating:

“I attended a seminar on human rights and a basic course for investigation officers, especially in operations against illegal drugs. I am continuing my Police Community Relations course and sharing the knowledge I gained with

my colleagues to improve community relations and raise awareness about the harmful effects of illegal drugs.” (Participant 8).

DISCUSSION

Through the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach, the results and findings of the study were identified and categorized. Thematic analyses revealed the participants lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations in managing anti-drug programs within their respective areas. The study revealed that strong community involvement, trust-building, and professional development were central to the effectiveness of their efforts. Furthermore, the positive attitudes of the police managers, such as commitment to service, continuous learning, and collaboration with local agencies, served as motivating factors that enhanced their performance and strengthened the overall implementation of anti-drug initiatives in the community.

The police managers demonstrated a strong sense of commitment and purpose, viewing their role in anti-drug programs as a meaningful public service rather than just a routine responsibility. This deep sense of duty aligns with the concept of work fulfilment, which, as discussed by Lee & Shin (2023), involves a personal and emotional investment in one's professional role that extends beyond surface-level job satisfaction. Such fulfilment not only supports the professional growth of individuals but also enhances the overall performance and ethical standards of law enforcement agencies. The participants' dedication, driven by a sincere desire to serve and protect their communities, highlights the critical role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining effective and long-term anti-drug efforts.

Moreover, the dedication and commitment of the police managers in implementing anti-drug programs are deeply rooted in their strong sense of purpose and professional responsibility. This work ethic is often reflected in their willingness to go beyond their basic duties to serve the community. According to Santos & Rivera (2025), public servants with a

strong work ethic are more goal-driven and are likely to take initiative in achieving the objectives of their organization. Additionally, Chen & Lopez (2024) highlight that work ethic significantly influences the positive relationship between job satisfaction and overall well-being, reinforcing the idea that meaningful engagement in public service enhances both performance and personal fulfillment. This perspective underscores how intrinsic motivation and a values-based approach contribute to the sustainability and impact of anti-drug efforts in local communities.

The police managers encountered several operational challenges in the implementation of anti-drug programs, including limited resources, lack of community cooperation, and risks to personal safety; these are considered negative experiences that hinder the effective delivery of their duties in drug prevention and enforcement.

The police stations involved in anti-drug operations face significant limitations in manpower, equipment, and logistical support, which affect the overall effectiveness of program implementation. As highlighted by Dela Cruz & Santos (2024), the lack of resources, outdated tools, and insufficient personnel continue to challenge the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies, especially in high-risk and underserved areas. Police managers also faced negative public perceptions and misconceptions, where their integrity and motives were often questioned by the community. According to Ramirez & Tolentino (2024), distorted public views and media bias can significantly affect law enforcers' morale, judgment, and overall job performance, often leading to emotional stress and decreased public trust.

Police managers also experienced the emotional toll of duty while implementing anti-drug operations, as they are frequently exposed to high-stress and traumatic situations. Recent findings by Mendoza & Cruz (2024) indicated that prolonged exposure to danger, community conflict, and operational pressure places law enforcement personnel at higher risk for

mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and burnout.

Despite the many operational and emotional challenges they face, police managers remain motivated to fulfill their mandate in leading anti-drug initiatives. They implement various adaptive strategies such as operational efficiency, collaborative teamwork, community engagement, and strong inter-agency coordination to overcome obstacles. These efforts reflect their resilience and dedication to public service. By maintaining a proactive stance and working closely with both internal teams and external partners, they are able to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of anti-drug programs despite resource constraints and external pressures (Del Rosario & Bautista, 2025).

Good leadership and teamwork play a critical role in promoting operational adaptability and efficiency within law enforcement agencies. Effective leaders not only communicate a clear vision but also serve as role models by demonstrating resilience, flexibility, and a proactive attitude in addressing challenges. These behaviors inspire their teams to embrace innovation and adjust to new strategies in complex operational environments (Lopez & Ramirez, 2025). Moreover, fostering a culture of adaptability enables organizations to perform better in unpredictable conditions, while strengthening emotional intelligence among leaders further improves collaboration, decision-making, and overall organizational performance (Tanaka et al., 2024).

Focused implementation of anti-drug strategies through interagency collaboration and community engagement was actively carried out by police managers. In the context of law enforcement, collaborative approaches are essential in enhancing operational efficiency and public safety, particularly in communities facing complex drug-related problems. Recent studies have shown that the success of such initiatives often depends on the integration of efforts across government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities (Soriano et al., 2025).

Furthermore, delays in response and fragmented coordination are often linked to weak interagency communication and limited stakeholder involvement, which hinder the effectiveness of public safety programs (Yeo et al., 2024). Additionally, strengthening intelligence sharing, community-based interventions, and multi-sectoral cooperation enhances the capacity to prevent and respond to illegal drug activities. A coordinated and inclusive approach allows for better identification of root causes, early warning mechanisms, and sustainable solutions. According to Valencia & Cruz (2024), involving local stakeholders in the planning and execution of anti-drug programs leads to increased community ownership, trust in law enforcement, and long-term program impact.

Conclusion. The study's results provide the varied experiences of the Chiefs of Police in managing anti-drug programs within the Second District of Bohol, Philippines. While the informants expressed a deep sense of purpose, commitment, and job fulfillment in performing their duties, they also encountered multiple operational challenges. These included a lack of personnel, limited logistical and material resources, public misconceptions about police work, and the emotional toll brought about by the nature of their responsibilities.

These challenges affected their overall performance and the smooth implementation of anti-drug operations in their respective areas. Despite these difficulties, the informants demonstrated strong leadership, teamwork, and resilience. They applied strategies such as operational adaptability, close coordination with stakeholders, inter-agency collaboration, and continuous community engagement to sustain and improve their anti-drug efforts. These actions reflected their dedication to public service and their desire to build safer communities through effective program implementation. Therefore, the Chiefs of Police need consistent support from national and local government units to provide them with necessary resources, including additional personnel, capacity-building programs, updated equipment, and improved facilities, to

ensure the success and sustainability of anti-drug programs across the Province of Bohol.

Recommendations. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the management and implementation of anti-drug programs by Chiefs of Police in the Second District of Bohol, Philippines.

1. *Capacity Building and Leadership Training.*

To strengthen the effectiveness of anti-drug operations, there is a need to provide continuous leadership and capacity-building programs for Chiefs of Police. These should include specialized training in community-based interventions, strategic planning, and evidence-based policing to ensure they are equipped with modern and adaptive approaches in addressing drug-related issues.

2. *Psychosocial Support Services.* Given the emotional and mental toll of managing anti-drug programs, it is recommended that the Philippine National Police (PNP) establish regular mental health support services. This could involve peer counseling, psychological first aid, and wellness sessions aimed at reducing stress and preventing burnout among police managers.

3. *Improved Resource Allocation.* The Chiefs of Police require sufficient logistical support, including additional personnel, reliable mobility assets, communication tools, and upgraded facilities. The PNP and concerned government agencies should prioritize funding and resource distribution to ensure the sustainability of anti-drug initiatives in rural and high-risk areas.

4. *Enhanced Community and Inter-Agency Collaboration.* There is a pressing need to strengthen partnerships with local government units, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders. This collaboration will improve information sharing, encourage public trust, and foster a shared responsibility in addressing the drug problem at the grassroots level.

5. *Policy Support and Program Monitoring.* Policymakers should consider institutionalizing regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for anti-drug programs to assess their impact and ensure accountability. Feedback from local police stations should be integrated into policy development to align national strategies with local realities.

Collaboration among the Philippine National Police, local government units (LGUs), and relevant community organizations is essential to the successful implementation of anti-drug programs and in promoting safer neighborhoods. Moreover, Chiefs of Police should further enhance coordination with the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and local barangay officials to ensure a holistic approach to drug prevention and rehabilitation. Establishing real-time information sharing, synchronized planning sessions, and a shared database for tracking drug-related cases, community reports, and program outcomes would allow for more effective operations, community outreach, and policy development.

Moreover, the Philippine National Police should enhance its partnership with local government units, civil society organizations, and rehabilitation centers by forming joint committees focused on anti-drug awareness, prevention, and intervention strategies. These committees should facilitate regular coordination meetings, conduct community-based training programs on drug education and enforcement protocols, and implement shared monitoring systems to assess risks and program effectiveness. Collaborative efforts like these can reinforce trust, streamline operations, and promote a comprehensive and community-driven approach to drug prevention and control.

Additionally, the Philippine National Police should actively engage with community members, particularly youth groups, parents, and local leaders, by establishing barangay-based reporting and feedback mechanisms that allow residents to relay concerns about drug

activities and related incidents. This approach, combined with regular educational seminars and community-based prevention campaigns, can foster greater awareness, encourage public participation, and build a culture of shared responsibility in addressing the drug problem at the grassroots level.

The support and involvement of local government units are equally important in aiding the Philippine National Police with the effective implementation of anti-drug programs. LGUs can assist by providing necessary resources such as office space, communication tools, and transportation to enhance mobility during operations. In addition, they should adopt and enforce community-based drug prevention policies that align with national strategies. The LGUs can also strengthen public awareness by organizing information drives, supporting rehabilitation initiatives, and involving barangay officials in grassroots monitoring and reporting efforts.

In addition, future research should explore the long-term effects of operational limitations and psychological stress on the overall performance and well-being of Chiefs of Police involved in anti-drug programs. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insight into how these challenges influence leadership, decision-making, and program outcomes over time. Researchers may also assess the impact of implemented strategies, such as inter-agency cooperation and grassroots involvement, on the success and sustainability of local anti-drug efforts. Furthermore, studies should examine the role of external support in improving police capabilities and enhancing public safety in community-based drug prevention.

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