



Community Policing in an Island Province: Worklife Journey of Police Chiefs

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Abstract

Community policing has become a vital strategy in crime prevention, emphasizing collaboration between law enforcement and communities. This study explored the lived experiences, strategies, and aspirations of police chiefs in Biliran Island, Philippines, during 2024. A transcendental phenomenological design was employed to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences. Eleven (11) informants were included through complete enumeration: eight municipal police chiefs, one provincial director, and two deputies, all with at least two (2) years of service in their current posts. Data were collected using a validated interview guide administered in both individual interviews and focus group discussions. Open-ended questions allowed participants to reflect deeply on their experiences. Ethical approval was secured from the University of Cebu's ethics committee, ensuring adherence to principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy. Informed consent was obtained, and interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and verified by participants to ensure accuracy. Colaizzi's method of thematic analysis was applied, involving familiarization, extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering into themes, and validation with participants to establish credibility and reliability. Findings revealed both positive and negative experiences. Positive experiences included duty-bound service and strong community linkage, while negative experiences involved public resistance, political interference, and insufficient resources. Strategies encompassed active engagement, technology-powered communication, and integrity-driven practices. Aspirations focused on strengthening partnerships, enhancing resources, and institutionalizing sustainable programs. The study underscores the dual challenges and opportunities in rural policing, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy, procedural justice, and social cognitive frameworks in shaping effective leadership and sustainable community policing.

Keywords: community policing, police leadership, Biliran Island, phenomenology, strategies, public trust



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INTRODUCTION

Community policing has emerged as a vital strategy in crime prevention, emphasizing collaboration between law enforcement and the community to ensure public safety and improve quality of life. Unlike traditional policing approaches that focus primarily on enforcement, community policing promotes shared responsibility, trust-building, and proactive problem-solving (Johnston, 2024). This approach has been widely adopted across countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Singapore, reflecting its global relevance in addressing complex and evolving crime patterns.

Despite its recognized benefits, crime remains a persistent challenge in both urban and rural settings. Rural communities, in particular, are increasingly affected by issues such as drug-related crimes, violence, and socio-economic disparities, often compounded by limited resources and social isolation (Peterson, 2024). In the Philippines, crime incidence remains relatively high, especially in economically disadvantaged areas, underscoring the need for more effective and context-specific policing strategies (Balita, 2023).

Effective crime prevention requires active community engagement, as policing cannot be carried out by law enforcement alone (Fenwick &

Slade, 2011). However, in rural areas such as Biliran Province, the implementation of community policing faces significant challenges, including resource constraints, resistance to organizational change, and low levels of public trust. These barriers highlight the need to better understand how police leaders navigate such complexities.

This study, therefore, explores the lived experiences of police chiefs in selected rural areas of Biliran Island, Philippines, focusing on their strategies, challenges, and aspirations in implementing community policing. While existing literature has extensively examined community policing in international contexts, there remains limited research on its application in rural Philippine settings, particularly from the perspective of police leadership. As such, this study contributes to addressing this gap by providing context-specific insights that may inform policy, practice, and future research.

The study is anchored on three theoretical frameworks. First, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) explains how behavior is shaped by the interaction of personal beliefs, environmental factors, and actions. In the context of community policing, this theory highlights how police chiefs' attitudes, experiences, and social environments influence their decision-making and implementation strategies. Second, Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) emphasizes the role of individuals' belief in their capability to perform tasks successfully. Police chiefs with high self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate persistence, adaptability, and effectiveness in addressing challenges. Third, Procedural Justice Theory (Tyler, 2006) underscores the importance of fairness, respect, and transparency in law enforcement. When communities perceive police actions as just and respectful, trust and cooperation are strengthened, which are essential for successful community policing.

Community policing is further supported by legal and institutional frameworks in the Philippines, including Republic Act No. 8551, which promotes a professional and community-oriented police

force, and NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2015-342, which institutionalizes Community and Service-Oriented Policing (CSOP). These policies reinforce the importance of partnerships between the police, local government units, and the community in maintaining peace and order.

Overall, this study is both timely and relevant as it examines contemporary challenges in community policing within a rural Philippine context. By focusing on the experiences of police chiefs, it aims to generate insights that can enhance policing strategies, strengthen community partnerships, and contribute to safer and more resilient communities.

Statement of the Problem. This study aims to explore the experiences of police chiefs in implementing community policing in Biliran Island, Philippines, for the year 2024. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of police chiefs in community policing?
2. What are the strategies employed by the police chiefs in addressing the problems encountered in the implementation of community policing?
3. What are the aspirations of the police chiefs to improve the implementation of community policing?

Significance of the Study. This study provides valuable insights into the implementation of community policing from the perspective of police leadership. The findings may assist police chiefs in addressing operational challenges and improving strategies, while also supporting the Philippine National Police (PNP), the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in developing evidence-based policies.

Furthermore, local government units (LGUs) and barangay officials may use the results to strengthen community-based programs and promote peace and order. The study also

contributes to the broader field of criminology by offering context-specific knowledge on rural policing in the Philippines and serves as a reference for future researchers.

METHODS

Research Design. This study used the transcendental phenomenological approach which is a form of qualitative research that focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences. Transcendental phenomenology is a philosophical approach that explores the nature of consciousness and experience. Transcendental phenomenology emphasizes the role of subjective experience in understanding transcendence. This research method focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of participants. Moustakas (1994), indicated the research process using transcendental phenomenological approach and these are: identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from several research participants who have experienced the phenomenon. The researcher then analyzes the data to identify significant statements or quotes and combines the statements into themes. Then, the researcher provides a list of various experiences of the research participants experienced, a structural description of their experiences and a description that explains the overall essence of the experience.

Participants and Sampling Technique. The participants of this study consisted of eleven (11) key informants drawn from the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Biliran Province. These included: Eight (8) Municipal Police Chiefs from the municipalities of Almeria, Biliran, Cabucgayan, Caibiran, Kawayan, Maripipi, Naval, and Culaba; One (1) Provincial Director; and Two (2) Deputy Provincial Directors. All participants were directly involved in the implementation and supervision of community policing initiatives within their respective jurisdictions. To ensure depth of experience, only police chiefs with a minimum of two (2)

years of service in their current position were included in the study.

This study employed complete enumeration, a sampling technique in which all members of the target population meeting the inclusion criteria are selected as participants. Given the limited and well-defined population of police chiefs in Biliran Province, all eligible individuals were included to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Additionally, purposive sampling was inherent in the selection process, as participants were chosen based on specific criteria, namely their leadership role in community policing and sufficient length of service. This ensured that all informants possessed relevant knowledge, direct experience, and the capacity to provide rich, meaningful insights aligned with the objectives of the study.

Research Instrument. An interview guide served as an instrument used in this study. The interview guide was used during the individual interview and the Focused-Group Discussion (FGD). Included in interview guide were open-ended questions formulated by the researcher and were answered by the research informants. Open-ended questions were used in order to gain multiple potential right answers, and require thought, reflection, and explanation from the research participants.

The questions focused on finding out the experiences, strategies and aspirations of police chiefs in the implementation of community policing.

The interview guide was subjected to content validation by experts. The corrections and suggestions for improving the research instrument were considered in the final preparation of the said research instrument which was the interview guide.

Then the result of the content validation of the research tool/interview guide was given to the statistician for the computation.

Data Gathering Procedure. Prior to beginning data collection, the researcher sent a letter to the Biliran Police Provincial Office requesting the names and addresses of the police chiefs assigned to each municipality in the Province of Biliran. After receiving the authorized letter request from the Biliran Police Provincial Office, the researcher coordinated with the designated staff members who were acquainted with the informants to obtain their consent to participate in the study.

The informants were given the informed consent form by the researcher, who discussed the study's goals and contents with them. The interview and discussion started after the forms were signed, and the audio recorder was used to capture the informants' answers during the interview. For private reasons, the interviews took place in the informants' offices in a language they are familiar and comfortable to use with. The researcher translated and transcribed the recorded answers of the informants. Any examiners or panel members concerned would have access to audio recordings for the necessary verification in order to guarantee the accuracy and dependability of the transcriptions. To prevent bias, the results of the transcriptions were shown to the informants, who signed them as evidence of their acknowledgment.

Data Analysis Procedure. The data that were collected for the purpose of analyzing them thematically. Colaizzi's method of data analysis was used. This method of data analysis is extremely thorough. Thus, this qualitative method ensures the credibility and reliability of the results of the research study. Using this method allowed the researcher to unfold emergent themes and their interconnected relationships (Colaizzi, 1978). Data that were gathered were consolidated, sorted, categorized and analyzed. The process of data analysis started at the outset of field work, focusing on transcribed interviews, field notes were made during and after interviews. In analyzing the data, the following steps suggested by Colaizzi (1978) were followed by the researcher: First is familiarization. The

researcher kept on reading the informants' answers during the interview. Transcriptions of the interview were repeatedly read by the researcher to familiarize them with the data. Next was identifying significant statements. The researcher conducted basic data checks to identify and clear out any data points that may hamper the accuracy of the results. The researcher identified all statements in the transcription that were important to answer the questions posed in the study or the information that are significant for the purpose of attaining the objectives of the study. The third step was formulating meanings. The researcher identified meanings relevant to the research study that emerged from a careful consideration of the important statements. Next was the clustering themes. The researcher clustered the identified meanings into themes that were common across all the answers of the research participants. The fifth step was developing an exhaustive description. The researcher wrote a full and inclusive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all the themes that were developed or created. Then, the next step was producing the fundamental structure. The researcher condensed the exhaustive description down to a short, dense statement that captures just those aspects deemed essential to the structure of the phenomenon. A fundamental statement of structure was formulated to fully describe the phenomenon in question. The last step was seeking verification of the fundamental structure. The researchers were back to the research informants and asked for validation. Then the researcher returned the research findings to the informants and discussed the results with them.

Ethical Considerations. As a qualitative researcher it cannot be avoided to be involved or part of the research process, and the prior experiences, assumptions and beliefs would influence the research process. Thus, reflexivity was maintained during the entire process, and the researcher sustained a reflective attitude.

The first key principle, which was beneficence emphasizes the obligation to act in a way that

benefits others. In practical terms, it means striving to do good and promote well-being. For instance, in the conduct of this study, it is necessary that police officers must uphold the law (justice) while ensuring the safety of both themselves and the public (non-maleficence), all while respecting the rights of individuals.

The next key principle is non-maleficence. This principle focuses on avoiding harm. It means taking steps to prevent causing harm to others, both physically and emotionally. In the conduct of this study, it was to meticulously plan and execute a procedure to minimize any potential risks.

Another key principle is justice. This principle emphasizes fairness and equality. It means ensuring that resources, benefits, and burdens were distributed fairly, considering individual needs and rights.

Lastly, autonomy is another key principle in ethical consideration. This principle recognizes the right of individuals to make their own decisions and act independently. It means respecting individual choices and preferences.

RESULTS

This study explored the experiences, strategies, and aspirations of police chiefs in the implementation of community policing. Using thematic analysis, the data generated from eleven (11) informants revealed three major domains: (1) experiences of police chiefs, (2) strategies employed in addressing challenges, and (3) aspirations to improve community policing implementation. Each domain produced key themes and subthemes.

Positive Experiences of Police Chiefs in Community Policing

Duty-Bound Service. The Police Chiefs experienced satisfaction and fulfillment in their job because they can attain their mission in the implementation of community policing and other programs. Attaining the goal of an organization results in job satisfaction and fulfillment on the

part of the workers that result in better productivity and job performance despite the challenges being encountered. Some informants expressed that it is satisfying and fulfilling if they win the heart of the community and attain the main objectives which is maintaining the peace and order. The informants of the study reiterated that they feel happy and satisfied with their job because they have done their job to maintain peace and order and serve and protect the people in the community and received positive feedback from the people even, they meet challenges along the way.

This theme is connected to the central tenet of social cognitive theory, which is the concept of self-efficacy, individuals' belief in their capability to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1986). High self-efficacy is important for policemen to effectively implement community policing strategies and overcome challenging experiences they met during the implementation of the different programs, activities and strategies in community policing. Self-Efficacy Theory, which was developed by Albert Bandura (1977) posits that an individual's belief in their ability to successfully execute a behavior is a key determinant of their actions and outcomes (Lopez-Garrido, 2023).

This implies that Police Chiefs perform well in their job because they are satisfied and fulfilled on the outcomes of their jobs. As stated by Raymond (2021), job satisfaction has a correlation on healthier workforce with higher performance. This is supported by the findings of the study of Gazi et al., (2024), which revealed that employees who reported high levels of job satisfaction also reported higher levels of job performance. Moreover, Katebi et al., 2022 and Muhammad et al., 2022 reiterated that satisfied workforces are more productive and enthusiastic in their work.

Community Linkage and Collaboration. Cooperation of the people in the community is vital for successful implementation of community policing. This implies that community policing is not simply a policing strategy, but a community-building endeavor that needs

sustained commitment between and among law enforcers and the community to collaborate for that attainment of the objectives in community policing. The success of community policing depends directly on the active and willing participation of the community itself.

This theme is supported by Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The theory can serve as a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing community linkage and partnership by focusing on the dynamic interaction between people in the community and the law enforcers. The principle of this theory emphasizes how people learn through observation, modeling, and reinforcement, which are crucial elements in building strong community relationships and collaborative initiatives. In this study, the informants reiterated that they conduct community visits, conducted dialogues and symposiums to explain to the community that the PNP main responsibility of the PNP is to serve and protect the people. Through constant interaction, the PNP can establish strong community linkage and collaboration leading towards successful implementation of community policing.

When the community observed a successful implementation of the community policing, others will also engage and collaborate with other community projects because they are inspiring get involved. People are more likely to commit in behaviors they believe will lead to positive outcomes. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) asserts that people learn through observation, imitation, and social interactions, and that these experiences shape their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Negative Experiences of Police Chiefs in Community Policing

Public Resistance and Political Interference. This finding has similarities to the findings of the study of Setu and Tekle (2017) which found out that some of the challenges in the implementation of community policing are low public trust in the police, weak police-community relations, and low participation of community in

community policing initiatives. An implication can be drawn that the negative opinions of the people in the community about police officers and their lack of cooperation in the implementation of community policy conveys that there is a need to employ varied strategies to build trust and improve relationship between law enforcers and the community. Strategies that may be used include community outreach programs, increased transparency, and be proactive on addressing community concerns.

With this view, this conveys an idea that law enforcers need to establish strategies and approaches to gain the trust and respect of the people in the community and in the same manner, the law enforcers should also show trust and respect towards the people in the community. In this connection, the tenet of Procedural Justice Theory can be used as theoretical framework. It posits that individuals are more likely to comply with and cooperate with authorities when they perceive those authorities to be acting fairly and with respect. It suggests that police officers who treat citizens with respect, listen to their concerns, and explain their actions are more likely to gain cooperation and compliance (Gold, 2019). This framework provides a valuable insight for understanding how police interactions with communities can influence trust, legitimacy, and ultimately, the effectiveness of policing efforts.

Insufficient Resources. Limited human, financial, and logistical resources were identified as significant barriers. Informants reported that inadequate resources constrain their ability to sustain community engagement, implement programs effectively, and respond to public safety concerns.

The above findings are supported by the study of Frank (2023), indicating that some of the challenges in the implementation of community policing are resistance to change from law enforcement agencies, lack of resources, and a lack of community trust in the police. This finding draws an implication that effective community policing is not possible without sufficient resources. It is necessary that in community

policing, an investment in providing sufficient human, financial, and material resources is necessary to ensure its success. Insufficiency of resources may impact the ability of Police Chiefs and members of the Philippine National Police to effectively build good relationships with and serve the community.

Strategies Employed by Police Chiefs

Active Engagement and Open Dialogue. Police chiefs emphasized the importance of consistent communication and community presence. Regular barangay visits, consultations, and dialogues allow police to understand community concerns, build trust, and encourage cooperation.

An implication can be drawn that regular visits and communication with the community have a positive impact on police-community relations. Regular interaction strengthens trust and gain cooperation from the people. Establishing a good relationship with the community is fundamental for effective crime prevention and response, as citizens are more likely to report crimes and assist investigations when they feel comfortable with the members of the PNP.

This theme connects with Procedural Justice Theory, specifically the first component which is the voice. Voice, also known as "active participation," refers to the fact that we are allowed to share "(our side of) the story," those police pay attention to what we have to say, and that they consider it when making decisions that affect us (Bradford et al., 2021). It means people feel heard when they can share their perspective, police listen attentively, and this input genuinely influences decisions affecting them. This active participation builds trust and legitimacy, as people feel respected and valued in the process, aligning with Procedural Justice's goal of fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and the community.

Procedural justice theory follows this line of reasoning. Views of procedural justice influence confidence in the law enforcement. Put your faith in the police, as Bradford (2020) indicates that "a

person shows trust in a person or organization when they voluntarily entrust important results to them, such as their freedom or security, because they think they have the right to do so. Procedural justice theory argues that people's insights of fairness in how the law is applied directly had impact on their trust into the police officers. This means that even if a person does not agree with the outcome of a police interaction, they are more likely to accept it and view the police as legitimate if they feel the process was fair and they were treated with respect.

Tech-Powered Engagement. The use of technology emerged as a key strategy. Informants reported utilizing social media, communication platforms, and surveillance systems (e.g., CCTV) to enhance information dissemination, transparency, and responsiveness.

As revealed in the study, one of the strategies of the Police Chiefs in implementing community policing is using technology. This implies that technology has been considered a significant driver to law enforcement strategies and tactics in community policing. These technological capabilities provide closer connections and information sharing between police and the citizens they serve. According to Strom (2017), technology and policing have been interconnected for decades, dating back to the advent of the telephone, the automobile, and the two-way radio. The Philippine National Police embrace the benefits that technology can give to communicate and keep in touch to the people in the community even through virtual communication.

It is important that people in the community and the law enforcers establish close connections through sharing of information. Closer connections and information sharing represent the desired behaviors. When police and citizens engage using these technologies, it promotes mutual understanding, cooperation, and trust.

This theme also found support in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This suggests that successful

implementation of these technologies depends on the attitudes, beliefs, and self-efficacy of both the police and the people in the community. For example, if citizens believe that the police are not trustworthy, they may be less likely to engage with them online. Likewise, if police officer lack confidence in using these technologies, they may not be as effective in building relationships with the community.

Integrity for Public Trust. Maintaining ethical standards and professionalism was identified as critical in gaining public trust. Informants highlighted that integrity, transparency, and accountability foster credibility and strengthen police-community relationships.

The members of the PNP maintain ethical standards in their job that result in gaining trust from the people in the community. Blair et al., (2021) emphasize that trust in the police reflects the public's view of their reliability and service fulfillment. This implies that sustaining high moral standards fosters trust, leading to increased cooperation from the citizens. The people in the barangay are more likely to report crimes, give or share information, and help in investigations when they believe the police are acting ethically and with integrity. This cooperation is vital for effective community policing implementation.

As stated by Moore et al., (2018), to build this trust for an effective community partnership police must treat people with respect and sensitivity. The use of unnecessary force and arrogance, aloofness, or rudeness at any level of the agency will dampen the willingness of community members to ally themselves with the police.

Multi-Agency Community Network. Collaboration with local government units, barangay officials, and other stakeholders was viewed as essential. Informants stressed that shared responsibility and coordinated efforts improve the effectiveness of community policing initiatives.

The findings underscore the important role of inter-agency collaboration in the successful

implementation of community policing. This collaborative strategy gives great benefits in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and community relations, in order to establish a safer and progressive communities.

Positive interactions and collaboration between police and communities lead to more effective crime prevention and problem-solving, making neighborhoods safer. Positive police-community interactions are crucial for addressing systemic bias and discrimination within law enforcement. When officers engage with communities in a respectful and equitable manner, they build relationships that foster understanding and challenge prejudices. This is particularly important in communities that have historically experienced disproportionate levels of policing and criminal justice involvement (Alexander, 2019).

Strong relationships of mutual trust between police agencies and the communities they serve are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. Police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members' willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy (Gove, 2019).

Data-Driven Strategic Resource Management. Police chiefs underscored the importance of careful planning, validation of information, and efficient resource utilization. Strategic decision-making based on data enhances operational effectiveness and program implementation.

Careful planning and analyzing situations are necessary in the implementation of community policing. A similar study of Pensotes et al., (2024), based on the findings of the study, one of the formulated themes was "Careful Planning". This theme describes the meticulous planning of the police before initiating a community relations program on insurgents. Moreover, in the study of

Litavski et al., (2023) it was stated that Action Plan for the implementation of Community Policing Strategy is necessary. The Action Plan should be detailed and describe how each phase of the strategy is to be implemented, monitored with measurable indicators as well as with planned means for its implementation. In addition, the study of Salang (2023) revealed that in order for a program to be effective, there should be proper planning and understanding of the situation.

Resource Management, which focuses on the best use of financial and logistical resources, is necessary in the implementation of the different programs and activities of the PNP (Salang, 2023). Based on the findings of the study, an implication can be drawn that resource management plays a vital role for an effective implementation of community policing. By maximizing the use of its financial and logistical resources which are available, the PNP can improve its operational capabilities and enhance its good relationships with communities leading towards successful implementation of community policing.

The finding of the study implies that validation of information is important. This approach can enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of the PNP. This practice builds trust, improves decision-making, and would contribute to successful implementation of community policing.

Aspirations of Police Chiefs

Modern Technological Infrastructure. Police chiefs aspire to integrate advanced technologies such as crime mapping, CCTV systems, and digital communication tools to improve efficiency, transparency, and crime prevention capabilities.

The findings of the study convey that Police Chiefs as leaders of the PNP embrace and adopt technology, gadgets, equipment and use internet to effectively implement community policing. The police chiefs believe that technology and using internet could involve using crime mapping to

identify crime hotspots, employing body-worn cameras to enhance transparency and accountability, utilizing social media to engage with the community, using CCTV which plays a significant role in solving crimes and for monitoring the situation of the different communities. Study of Cuevas et al., (2016), revealed that CCTV cameras are highly effective in crime prevention specifically crime against person and property by recording the scenes that can help in solving the reported theft or robbery incidents. Locating suspicious character in the streets and monitoring the incoming and outgoing individuals from establishments. In addition, Piza et al., (2019) support for the continued use of CCTV to prevent crime as well as provide a greater understanding of some of the key mechanisms of effective use.

Ethical Professionalism. Informants emphasized the need to strengthen ethical conduct, accountability, and professionalism within the police force. They aspire to serve as role models and uphold integrity in all aspects of their duties.

Upholding to ethical and professional standards is important. The Philippine National Police (PNP) play a vital role in maintaining peace and order, protecting citizens, and upholding the rule of law in the country. The effectiveness and legitimacy of the PNP is significantly affected by their adherence to high ethical and professional standards. Failure to uphold these standards threatens public trust, caused ineffectiveness of police operations and may cause failure in the implementation of community policing.

This theme also found support with procedural justice theory which highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in policing. When citizens perceive that the police are acting fairly and with respect, they are more likely to view the system as legitimate and to trust the police. This trust is very important for effective policing, when people in the community have trust with the police officers, they are encouraged to report crimes, cooperate with investigations, and participate in community policing initiatives (Meares, 2017). When people trust the police officers, they are more likely to

see them as partners in maintaining safety and order, rather than enemy.

Foster Community Relationships. Strengthening ties with the community remains a central aspiration. Police chiefs aim to enhance trust, cooperation, and active participation through continuous engagement and partnership-building.

The overwhelming evidence is that police forces are more effective and better received when they engage in community-oriented policing. As a matter of fact, police officers often feel that constructive dialogue and discussion about local policing issues with the people in the community are one of the most important components of effective local policing (Martell, 2024). Similar with the study findings of Schermuly (2018), that when the police remain in contact with the public in everyday situation and procedural justice is applied in every encounter, it secures police legitimacy and enhances public trust.

Positive interactions and collaboration between police and communities lead to more effective crime prevention and problem-solving, making neighborhoods safer. Positive police-community interactions are crucial for addressing systemic bias and discrimination within law enforcement. When officers engage with communities in a respectful and equitable manner, they build relationships that foster understanding and challenge prejudices. This is particularly important in communities that have historically experienced disproportionate levels of policing and criminal justice involvement (Alexander, 2019).

Gottlieb (2015) claims that "community engagement" primarily refers to the process of assisting communities in moving out of a suspended or stagnant state. The objective of police community engagement is to engage local community members in problem-solving by means of participation, influence, and involvement at different levels. Social mechanisms should be employed more often than enforcement-based policing in order to lower crime and disorder, increase feelings of

safety, and enhance relations between the police and the community. This speaks to both the perceptions that members of the community have of police officers and their interactions with them. It is also anticipated that a better rapport between the police and the public will lead to a higher degree of trust (Myhill, 2012). It is stated that citizen engagement is necessary to strengthen citizens' sense of independence and confidence in their capacity to empower others in a diverse society, in addition to being essential to the growth of democracy. This is suggested as a prerequisite to deal with the complex problems that society is dealing with.

The National Policing Institute (2024) states that regular community engagement and interaction are necessary for effective community policing. Building relationships with the community they serve requires police officers to engage in outreach programs, show up to community gatherings and events, and maintain a personable and accessible demeanor. Building rapport and trust with the community is essential to effective policing. It is crucial to create an atmosphere where community members are welcomed to offer helpful suggestions, critiques, and comments on policing strategies and projects. Police officers can improve public safety and forge stronger relationships by actively participating in the community.

Kappeler and Gaines (2011) also noted that successful law enforcement depends on strong partnerships between the police and the community. Shared responsibility boosts accountability and morale and increases the chances of long-term success in reducing crime.

With this study, it clearly conveys that through shared responsibility of the community and the police officers, the goal of the Philippine National Police which is to establish a safe community can be achieved. The informants' stories remind us of the common quotation that "It takes two to tango". This means that effective community policing cannot be done by one agency alone. It needs the cooperation and helps of the people in the community such as barangay officials, local

leaders, private institutions, other government agencies and even ordinary citizens in the community. Everyone in the community is a part and parcel in making community policing successful. It requires teamwork, where everyone has important role to play. The value of teamwork would ease the burden of the police officers in doing their job and at the same time builds stronger trust and connection among everyone in the community who are involved. Keeping a community safe is not just the job of the Philippine National Police, rather, everyone has a role and responsibility to work on and be proactive.

Extensive Information Drive. Informants highlighted the importance of educating the public about police programs and community policing initiatives. Information campaigns, school visitations, and community dialogues are seen as vital in increasing awareness and participation.

Information drive is one way of educating people in the community about programs of the PNP. The study of Alehegn (2025), revealed that enhancing public awareness and fostering proactive engagement can significantly contribute to crime prevention and overall security management. It was reiterated that a well-structured community policing system ensures effective information sharing.

This conveys that informing the community about the goals of community policing is essential. When people in the community are well-informed, they are more likely to cooperate and engage in the activities to successfully implement the programs and projects of the Philippine National Police in connection to community policing. Providing community members with relevant information empowers them to take an active role in crime prevention. Informed citizens are more likely to participate in neighborhood watch programs, report suspicious activities, and support community safety initiatives.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the dynamic role of police chiefs in the implementation of community policing. The results highlight the interplay between individual motivation, organizational strategies, and community dynamics, which can be understood through the lenses of Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Procedural Justice Theory.

The positive experiences of duty-bound service and community collaboration suggest that police chiefs derive intrinsic motivation from fulfilling their roles and achieving organizational goals. This aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to perform effectively and persist in challenging situations. The sense of fulfillment expressed by the informants reinforces the idea that high self-efficacy contributes to improved performance and resilience in law enforcement. Community linkage and collaboration further reflect the principles of Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the role of social interaction and observational learning. Through continuous engagement, both police officers and community members influence each other's behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. The study demonstrates that positive interactions foster trust and encourage community participation, which are critical components of successful community policing.

However, the presence of public resistance and political interference underscores persistent challenges in building trust and legitimacy. These findings support Procedural Justice Theory, which emphasizes that perceptions of fairness, transparency, and respect significantly influence public trust in law enforcement. When communities perceive bias or external interference, their willingness to cooperate diminishes. This highlights the need for police officers to consistently demonstrate neutrality, fairness, and respect in their interactions.

The issue of insufficient resources further reveals structural limitations that affect the effectiveness of community policing. Without adequate support, even well-intentioned strategies may not achieve their desired outcomes. This finding emphasizes the importance of institutional investment in manpower, training, and technological resources to sustain community policing efforts.

The strategies identified in the study, particularly active engagement, technological integration, and multi-agency collaboration, demonstrate adaptive approaches employed by police chiefs to address these challenges. Active engagement and open dialogue reflect the “voice” component of Procedural Justice Theory, where community members are given opportunities to express their concerns. This participatory approach enhances legitimacy and strengthens police-community relationships.

The integration of technology in policing aligns with contemporary developments in law enforcement, where digital tools facilitate communication, transparency, and data-driven decision-making. From a Social Cognitive Theory perspective, the effective use of technology depends on both the police officers' confidence (self-efficacy) and the community's trust in these systems.

Moreover, integrity as a strategy reinforces the importance of ethical professionalism in building public trust. Consistent with Procedural Justice Theory, ethical behavior and accountability are essential in fostering legitimacy and encouraging community cooperation.

The aspirations of police chiefs further reflect a forward-looking perspective on improving community policing. The emphasis on modern technology, ethical standards, community relationships, and information dissemination indicates a holistic approach to policing. These aspirations highlight the recognition that effective community policing requires not only operational efficiency but also strong social connections, human bonds, and informed citizen participation.

Overall, the findings suggest that community policing is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration between law enforcement and the community. The success of its implementation depends on trust, communication, resource availability, and the continuous development of police competencies. The integration of theoretical frameworks in this study provides a deeper understanding of how beliefs, behaviors, and social dynamics influence the effectiveness of community policing.

Recommendations. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of community policing in Biliran Island and similar contexts:

Strengthening Police Capacity and Training. The Philippine National Police (PNP) must prioritize the formalization and standardization of training programs for police chiefs and officers, particularly in the area of community policing. Such programs should emphasize proactive engagement with communities, ethical professionalism, and effective conflict resolution, thereby equipping officers with the skills necessary to foster trust and cooperation. Beyond these foundational elements, specialized training is essential to prepare officers for the realities of navigating political interference, addressing public resistance, and managing resource constraints with creativity and resilience. To sustain these competencies, continuous professional development should be institutionalized, focusing on ethical leadership, integrity, and data-driven decision-making. These measures collectively enhance operational effectiveness while reinforcing public confidence in law enforcement institutions.

Investing in Technology and Resources. To strengthen community policing, the Philippine National Police (PNP), in partnership with local government units (LGUs), must prioritize investments in modern technological infrastructure such as reliable internet connectivity, crime mapping systems, communication platforms, and surveillance

tools. These innovations enhance transparency, accountability, and community engagement. Equally vital is the strategic allocation of budgetary resources to support field operations, outreach programs, and technology upgrades, ensuring that policing initiatives remain responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving needs of the public.

Enhancing Community Engagement. Police chiefs should sustain regular, open dialogues with community members through consultations, barangay visits, and participatory programs to build trust, encourage cooperation, and foster shared responsibility for public safety. Complementing these efforts, comprehensive information campaigns must be implemented to educate citizens on the objectives, initiatives, and roles of community policing. Such initiatives promote civic awareness and participation, ensuring that communities remain informed, engaged, and supportive of collaborative approaches to law enforcement.

Strengthening Institutional Support and Collaboration. Police chiefs should foster trust and cooperation by maintaining regular, open dialogues with community members through consultations, barangay visits, and participatory programs that emphasize shared responsibility for public safety. Complementing these efforts, comprehensive information campaigns must be implemented to educate citizens about the objectives, initiatives, and roles of community policing. Such initiatives encourage civic awareness and participation, ensuring that communities remain informed, engaged, and supportive of collaborative approaches to law enforcement, thereby reinforcing accountability and strengthening public confidence.

Promoting Research, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement. Advancing community policing requires a strong commitment to research, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Future studies should develop standardized tools to assess programs, measuring community trust, engagement, satisfaction, and officer well-being.

Longitudinal research is vital to examine the long-term effects of policing strategies on public safety, morale, and resilience. Comparative studies can highlight the effectiveness of different models by considering organizational structures, resource allocation, and socio-demographic contexts. Additionally, research must explore mechanisms of engagement, reintegration programs, and inclusive strategies to ensure equitable and sustainable public safety outcomes.

In summary, the successful implementation of community policing requires a multi-level approach that combines proactive police strategies, ethical conduct, technological support, institutional collaboration, and active community participation. By addressing the identified challenges, leveraging police chiefs' aspirations, and institutionalizing best practices, community policing can achieve its goal of fostering safer, more resilient, and cooperative communities.

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