
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Battle Against the Drug Menace: Narratives of Law Enforcers in Implementing the Anti-Drug Program

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| ABSTRACT

The study explored into the work life of station commanders in the tri-cities, of Cebu, Philippines. The study sought to answer the work life of police station commanders. Transcendental phenomenological approach was used in the study. The study involved fifteen (15) research informants who are who are currently assigned as Station Commanders in the tri-cities of Cebu. It was conducted in the tri-cities of Cebu, Philippines namely: Cebu City, Mandaue City and Lapu-lapu City. The researcher utilized research guide questions with an open-ended question for individual in-depth interviews. Thematic content analysis was used in the treatment of collected data. The researcher generated four (4) themes for the experiences of the informants in the implementation of the anti-drug program. For the positive experiences there were two (2) themes namely: *Triumph in Shared Victory and Justice in Motion: Fulfilment in Every Rescue*. For the negative experiences there were two (2) themes namely: *Fighting a Battle That Resets Itself and Stand Amidst the Storm*. As to addressing the challenges encountered by the informants in the implementation of the anti-drug program, there were three (3) themes namely: *Leading with Resolve in the Midst of Limitations; Presence with Purpose and Unity in Action*. For the impact of the implementation of the anti-drug program to the peace and order of the community, there were two (2) themes namely: *Peace Built on Persistence and Precision and Trust at the Center of Peace*. The implications emphasize that effective and humane anti-drug implementation requires shared responsibility across sectors. Strengthening leadership, trust, collaboration, and community engagement forms the path toward safer and more resilient society.

| KEYWORDS

Anti-Drug Program, Police Station Commanders, Peace and Order, Philippines

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The growing drug menace in the Philippines has wrought tremendous social devastation, eroding families, destabilizing communities, and posing grave threats to crime prevention and public order. Drug dependence, drug trafficking, and associated violence have drained public resources and inflicted emotional trauma on countless households. Amid this crisis, law enforcement agents remain at the frontline, bearing the responsibility of implementing anti-drug strategies intended to shield the public from harm.

The problem does not just manifest on a local scale but reverberates at national and global levels. The 2022 UN Drugs and Crime report estimated that about 275 million people abused illicit drugs and 36 million suffered from drug disorders worldwide. The problem is even more severe in Asia, where the region continues to be the epicenter of drug production, transportation, and release, in particular through the "Golden Triangle" of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand (Chouvy, 2019). In the Philippines, official data show the death toll from anti-drug operations exceeded 5,000 between 2016 and 2022, with independent estimates

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surpassing 12,000 fatalities. These alarming figures underscore the national urgency to understand how such programs are carried out on the ground and their ripple effects on peace, civil liberties, and governance.

Critical to these efforts have been programs such as Oplan Tokhang (Toktok-Hangyo/Mahangyo or "Toktok Persuade/Beg"), Oplan Double Barrel, and the more recent "Bida" program, each of which represented an evolving approach to target drug related issues. Launched in 2016, Oplan Tokhang was a triple package of home visits, persuasion (to stop using drugs) and surrender (do the opposite), with the barangay drug council at the helm (Estacio Jr et al., 2022). Oplan Double Barrel paired tokhang with operations targeting high-value drug offenders, while the Bida program emphasized "discipline" and rehabilitation (Lasco & Abesamis, 2024). Though implemented nationwide, differences in local application, especially within Cebu's tri-cities, remain largely undocumented, leaving significant variations unattended.

Locally, Cebu City, Mandaue City and Lapu-Lapu City remain drug-affected areas. Based on their economic and port activities, these cities still struggle with drug prevention and control. Police station commanders are at the frontline of this effort, adjusting their strategies to reflect national policies while maintaining public trust and peace and order in their localities.

The existing literature explains aspects of the broader effects of anti-drug policies, but is often analytical and fails to take account of implementers' actual qualitative experiences. Soriano et al., (2021) examined media directed community views about police directed anti-drug initiatives, not the police narrative itself. Basco-Galangco & Chinayo (2022) studied public trust and legitimacy in drug enforcement operations, stressing the importance of understanding police work. Arugay & Encinas-Franco (2024) have given a comparative policy analysis between the Duterte regime and the Marcos Jr. regime, but not micro-level challenges on the part of the police alike. Robak (2024) discussed human rights frameworks in Southeast Asian anti-drug campaigns, noting the gap between policy intentions and on ground realities. Lasco & Yarcia (2022) evaluated the "rehabilitation turn" in Philippine drug policy but did not capture the lived experiences of police leaders tasked with the anti-drug implementation. This study addresses these gaps by focusing directly on the police station commanders as narrators of their experiences and strategies in the implementation of the anti-drug program.

As the Program Head of the College of Criminology and a licensed criminologist with over a decade of academic and administrative experience, I am in a position to conduct this inquiry. My goal is not only to contribute to scholarly knowledge but also to understand better how future policies can be more effectively implemented and, in turn, share these insights with students who will eventually serve in the field.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on Self-efficacy theory of Albert Bandura (1997) and supported by the Competence Motivation Theory by Susan Harter (2015) and the Role Theory of Ralph Linton & Bruce Biddle (1968).

The theory of self-efficacy is a social cognitive belief concept that is a valuable framework for understanding how people operate in complicated, high-stakes settings. Defined by psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their skills and capability to perform behaviors that enable the attainment of an action. These are also more than attitudes to skills; they are fundamental to how people believe, feel, and act in adversity. The theory suggests that an individual's perception of personal agency is central to how they approach goals, tasks and setbacks, it said. In the world of decision-making under risk, self-efficacy can be a relative predictor of the tendency toward persistence, adaptability, and resilience.

At its core, Self-Efficacy Theory rests on four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Mastery, having successfully executed a task before, has the most decisive influence. Watching others complete a task (particularly in the face of equivalent constraints) and being encouraged are mechanisms that also influence the development of efficacy beliefs as well as coping with emotional responses (i.e., anxiety, fear). These ideas are critical in an organization whose policy requirements are ad-hoc, scarce resources are persistent, and situational needs can change quickly. When individuals possess high levels of self-efficacy, they can develop strategies, remain motivated, and persevere through organizational shifts and societal pressures (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

The importance of self-efficacy for job performance in a literature review ranging from different disciplines, including professions with unpredictability, discretion, and community accountability, has been endorsed by scholars. For example, it has been demonstrated historically that officials or enforcers with a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to be successful at instituting reforms, controlling public expectations, and operating effectively in the face of changing political directives (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). In settings characterized by high levels of public accountability and the continuous demands of operation, efficacy beliefs

are empirically associated with strategic innovation, compliance behavior, and resilience (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). These results illustrate the transformative effects of perceived self-efficacy on individual as well as organizational outcomes.

Although the theory is clearly valuable, it is not perfect. Critics point out that self-efficacy can be challenging to measure reliably, as self-perceptions may not always be accurate reflections of actual competencies or performance capabilities. Contextual factors/issues (institutional cultures, political pressure, or system issues) may play more significant roles than personal belief. Furthermore, a pure focus on self-efficacy may overlook the role of external structures or collective efficacy, such as may be the case in sectors where outcomes depend considerably on inter-agency coordination and public support. However, despite its criticisms, the theory continues to be a powerful area of analysis for how people make sense of and cope with the requirements of complex and shifting social environments.

The theory of Susan Harter, known as Competence Motivation Theory, posits that individuals are naturally driven to seek out and master tasks that affirm their skills and sense of effectiveness in specific domains (Harter, 2015). At its heart, people are motivated not just to act, but to feel capable while doing so. The need for competence becomes most salient for positions that involve leadership under pressure, as when pursuing law enforcement operations, where professional self-efficacy critically influences performance, decision-making, and morale.

The theory of Harter, which was rooted in the effectance motivation of Robert White, operationalized as a developmental method that emphasizes the need for competence in various domains, including social, cognitive, and physical (Harter, 1981). The focus of this theory is perceived competence and perceived control. Perceived control refers to one's own belief in one's professional skill, emphasizing that self-efficacy tone can affect outcomes. These core beliefs shape motivation through emotional feedback, success boosts pride and persistence, whereas failure can lead to shame or withdrawal.

Supporting evidence that perceived competence and encouraging feedback promote continued motivation and future performance (Bortoli et al., 2011). In policing, where formalization has historically enabled unethical and immoral conduct, where officers believe they can secure uncritical support from peers, superiors, and the community as long as they are perceived as good planners and decision makers, they are likely to continue with the operation of complex drug activities. The study is also consistent with research in the police sector, where higher self-efficacy in leaders is associated with more thorough use of community-based strategies and resilience in maintaining enforcement.

Despite its value, Harter's motivation competence theory has been faulted for the placement of perspective, which may be isolating as it relates to the subjective viewpoint without paying attention to external constraints (organization, ethical considerations, or socio-political pressures) (Harter, 2008). Critics argue that to explain performance variance, it will never be sufficient to rely solely on perceived competence, particularly in resource-deprived settings or in politically unstable settings.

Role Theory of Biddle (1986), with roots in sociology and organizational behavior, focuses on the expectations, performances, and conflicts experienced by individuals occupying formal positions or those simultaneously fulfill multiple roles: as law enforcers, community leaders, implementers of national policy, and subordinates within a hierarchical police structure. This theoretical perspective is helpful in understanding how they reconcile their responsibilities amid competing demands and shifting public expectations.

The theory introduces critical concepts such as role expectations, role conflict, ambiguity, and adaptive performance (Anglin et al., 2022). Police leaders are expected to take a hardline stance on drug-related crimes, often under intense pressure to meet "quotas" or operational targets. Engagement and rehabilitation brought new expectations, often without the corresponding structural support or retraining. These shifting demands create cognitive and organizational tensions, requiring to constantly adapt, interpret, and prioritize their roles.

Empirical applications of Role Theory in law enforcement are well-established. Biddle (1986) emphasized how unclear or conflicting role expectations often lead to occupational stress and reduced performance. In a local study, Bonaobra & Macabeo (2022) observed that police officers involved in drug operations experienced significant role confusion when public sentiment turned critical, particularly in areas with strong civil society presence. These pressures were even more pronounced at the leadership level, where they had to manage both operational effectiveness and political navigation.

Nonetheless, Role Theory has been critiqued for its limited treatment of power dynamics and institutional control. It tends to view individuals as passive recipients of role expectations rather than active agents who can redefine or resist these roles. However, when combined with insights from Self-efficacy Theory and Competence Motivation theories, Role Theory offers a

well-rounded lens for interpreting the social, political, and administrative pressures faced by police station commanders in navigating complex policy terrains.

When undertaking such an investigation on anti-drug efforts in the Philippines, it is imperative to understand the whole set of laws and policies that regulate the efforts of drug prevention and control practices in the country. At the heart of this is the CDD Act of 2002 (RA 9165), on which the country's drug enforcement, prevention, rehabilitation, and education system hinges. The following dropped the anti-drug policies: This act paved the way for the creation of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), the country's lead anti-drug law enforcement agency, and institutionalized the creation of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) in crafting policies and strategies in monitoring and overseeing the national campaign against the illegal drug trade. Complementing this are initiatives under the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (PADS), institutionalized through Executive Order No. 66, s. 2018, which promotes a whole-of-nation approach to address drug problems through balanced strategies involving enforcement, rehabilitation, and reintegration (Anino et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) play a vital role as the enforcement arm of the national policy at the ground level. Under Command Memorandum Circular No.16-2016 (Project "Double Barrel"), the PNP operationalized Oplan Tokhang and high-value-target operations, guided by NAPOLCOM policy and executive orders that set minimum standards and joint protocols. The memorandum formalizes the accountability and coordination expected from station-level leadership in sustaining anti-drug efforts across jurisdictions.

The COSAP and BADAC, as implemented in Cebu City, manage substance abuse prevention through multi-sectoral mechanisms: the City Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (COSAP) and the barangay BADAC. Operated under the office of the mayor, COSAP identifies barangays for "drug-clearing" and encourages BADACs with recognition and cash prizes, thereby providing direct support for local enforcement activity. As a result, the station commanders have an opportunity to connect their operations to community-level objectives and have a platform from which they can marshal civic support.

Additionally, the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDGP) implemented by the PDEA in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) underscores community-based efforts to sustain drug-free communities Brigue et al. (2023) alongside (Brannon, 2025). Relevant as well is the Mental Health Act of 2018 (RA No. 11036), which also highlights the provisions for treatment and rehabilitation for people who use drugs (Samaniego, 2022). Cebu Province's implementation of Ordinance No. 2018-05 and participation in the Operation Tokhang campaign demonstrates localized measures in accordance with national strategies (Rebusquillo, 2020). Together, these legal-institutional structures provide a sound basis for scrutiny of antinarcotics initiatives in the Philippines, which have important implications for the assessment of their implementation, level of success, and public order and community coping.

In order to understand why so much enthusiasm has been generated for the rollout of anti-drug programs in the Philippines, it is essential to review conceptual literature and empirical studies on this issue. Reviewing literature contributes significantly to theoretical paradigms, frameworks, and international practices of drug control and Law enforcement. These texts, in turn, provide the intellectual groundwork that inflects the reading of data from the field and the story-telling of informants.

Moreover, a review of local and international studies highlights documented experiences, strategies, and challenges law enforcement agencies encounter in drug prevention efforts. These empirical inquiries provide comparative lenses through which the present study can situate itself, particularly in the context of the Tri-Cities of Cebu, Lapu-Lapu, and Mandaue. This chapter establishes scholarly grounding through the synthesis of related literature and studies. It identifies research gaps and areas where the present investigation can contribute original knowledge to the criminology and public policy field.

Burke (2022) highlights that effective leadership and organizational structure are vital for managing change, especially in challenging environments. Successful change leadership is essential as it influences how organizations tackle new challenges. To achieve successful outcomes, the strengths and weaknesses of both formal structures and informal social systems, including hidden connections or emergent systems, need to be explicitly recognized. It is the changing nature of drug enforcement, from one administration to another leadership and law enforcement practices to maintain some semblance of order and public confidence. The gap between rule-bound protocols and the actual, not always tidy, human dynamics therein underscores the demand for flexible leaders.

In his 2024 work, Ciocchini explores how legal practitioners involved in the Philippines' "war on drugs" have deftly navigated a tangled web of violence and legality. They often rely on something called "punitive paternalism" through plea bargaining, a concept that seems rehabilitative but normalizes state violence by portraying it as necessary for moral reform, particularly

targeting disadvantaged communities and drug users; this strategy in neoliberal ideas that unjustly pin systemic poverty's blame solely on individuals while concealing more profound societal inequities, thus reinforcing an aggressive anti-drug stance. When you look at law enforcement it becomes clear how officers may operate within these murky lines between what is legally permissible or morally right. The roles of men in uniform, even seen in the previous years, are not just dictated by direct orders but are also a reflection of a much broader system where laws might most, if not often, justify harsh actions, so this paper pointed out that understanding the complexities can reveal much about police leaders' perspectives regarding their duties prompting adjustments amidst ever-evolving policy dictates (Ciocchini, 2024).

According to Farazmand (2023), jobs funded by taxpayers, including government sector employment, are likely to be significantly affected by political stability, equitable power distribution, and the overall quality of state democratic governance. Unlike private employment, public service and government officers will uphold this to reflect society's diverse makeup and uphold the principles of inclusive representation. As emphasized in the Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance, the theory of representative bureaucracy highlights that a bureaucracy reflective of the society it serves is more likely to deliver fair and balanced decision-making and public service delivery. The role of drug law enforcement in implementing the drug law impacts frontline governance. Thus, this concept strongly resonated with the above in exploring ability to deliver justice and maintain order is not just a matter of personal performance it also reflects how well public institutions embody representative and responsive governance.

The study in 2023 highlights how reforms, while often driven by international pressures and policy models, do not always yield consistent results across different contexts. Efforts to improve corporate governance faced challenges due to a mismatch between global standards and local realities. The study highlights how structural factors and social interactions influence the outcome of reforms where drug policies have shifted across different administrations. Like corporate governance reforms, external pressures and internal agency dynamics shape drug law enforcement. As officers navigate evolving mandates under shifting political leadership, their ability to adapt, while staying grounded in local realities that plays a crucial role in shaping outcomes and responses to challenges (John, 2023).

As noted in Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector, these shifts call for a stronger performance orientation and a renewed commitment to serving the public good, regardless of the political climate (Rosenbloom et al., 2022).

Effective leadership determines employees' motivation and the organization's performance, and this is more relevant in task environments such as in security and police organizations. According to Sokolic et al. (2024), managers with a supporting employee-centered leadership style significantly enhance team spirit, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. Based on Sokolic and colleagues, the performance, workplace stress, and the satisfaction of the duty to promote an innovative "behavior" through leadership lead towards job performance in COP in a dynamic multiproduct drug policy constellation.

Based on the findings of Shah (2022), the head of the state must not push on personal policy agenda but must ensure that the administrative units faithfully enforce the law. However, in modern presidential leadership, legal execution is often mixed with political strategy when being executed, causing friction between constitutional goals and executive mandate. As emphasized, the risk arises when presidential directives steer law enforcement away from the intent of drug laws and toward political interests. Often, this may result in law enforcers performing their jobs consistently, making it difficult for them to balance faithfulness to the law and coping with the ever-evolving political agenda. This only means that the roles, responsibilities, and coping strategies will directly influence how executive leadership affects them or how they exercise their function.

Change management models are commonly adopted as guide tools to support transitions within complex systems like healthcare departments. Though these models are not applied often or rarely used in a uniform way of management, their flexibility allows them to meet the unique challenges of different environments. Their most significant value lies in offering structure while still allowing for responsiveness to local needs, particularly when used alongside improvement and implementation frameworks. Reinforcing the importance of leadership in navigating clinician led initiatives benefited from this approach. Like healthcare, law enforcement operates in a dynamic, high-stakes environment where rigid models may fall short. The ability of police leaders to guide their teams through these political and operational shifts can benefit from flexible change frameworks that acknowledge local realities, foster adaptation, and support ongoing improvement in enforcement strategies (Harrison et al., 2021).

As mentioned by Lee & Park (2021), perceptions of leadership styles among public servants can be significantly shaped by the organizational structure, culture, and even gender representation within an agency. In rigid, male-dominated environments with strong hierarchical authority, such as many policing institutions, transformational leadership behaviors may be less visible or more complex to implement due to formalized chains of command and limited upward communication. Their ability to lead effectively amid shifting drug policies may hinge on their leadership style and how their personnel perceive and respond to it, particularly in contexts where communication is top-down and organizational change is slow. Police officers' comprehension and reaction to changes in national drug policy are frequently formed by cultural norms and material realities, recalibrating how new edicts are semantically considered and how officers manage transitions and re-align how they perform their work.

Frabutt et al. (2010) outline a structured approach to street level drug elimination, emphasizing the importance of strategic, step-by-step interventions. Knowledge of how local police leaders adapted to changes in policy landscapes helps improve models of drug enforcement and translate or operationalize national strategies to local practice.

Salindo et al. (2024) emphasize that examining law enforcement experiences in these areas provides critical insight into how national policies translate into local implementation. Moreover, a workshop facilitated the drafting of a policy statement addressing the drug issue from a public health and human rights standpoint. Despite evolving discussions, the government continues to predominantly approach the drug problem through law enforcement and punitive measures.

Law enforcement's Anti-Drug program started with mapping activities to pinpoint the locations most impacted by drug-related activities and identify the usual spots where users, buyers, and dealers are active (Cerado & Llano, 2015). Subsequently, awareness campaigns were initiated to inform the public about the dangers and negative consequences of drug use.

A survey by De Castro and his group also revealed a "sizeable" backing for the anti-drug and anti-crime stances regardless of age or background. When residents felt safe and experienced good policing, trust and confidence of the police increased. To sustain such support, officers need to consistently demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and adherence to the rule of law. The research underscores that a genuine partnership between the police and the public is the key to peace and a secure environment. This shows or prove key for future policymaking, planning, and programming that is beneficial for the police and the community alike. Future studies could be conducted that addressed police work that is not represented in our data to gain more insight into the role of law enforcement in society. This realization might inspire the direction of respectful future endeavors that conform to human rights and community vitality (De Castro et al., 2020).

From the perspective of Mendoza et al. (2021), the performance of police officers in the Philippine National Police is shaped more by informal "subcultures" within units than by the formal organizational culture, which is widely perceived as rigid, consistent, and challenging to navigate. This inflexibility has led to internal mechanisms of working around that inflexibility, and too frequently, it hardens into general misconduct among the ranks. In the implementation of anti-drug policy, and especially in a rapidly changing policy where the governing leadership was changing and thus policy priorities were shifting, such subcultures might have been one kind of adaptive response to the pressures of on-the-ground operation. The peer dynamics and informal norms in these subcultures strongly affect how the officers, including police chiefs, are able to perform, face challenges, and stay motivated. Officers who have traits that are not significantly instilled in them, for example, confidence, discipline, and immunity to negative peer influences, will personally uphold performance norms in the face of institutional pressures. In addition, officers who have taken managerial training courses are more effective, highlighting the value of leadership training in facilitating police adaptation to changing patterns of anti-drug implementation.

Hoggett et al. (2019) emphasized that identity and experience are crucial to gaining trust and credibility in police leadership. Many officers believe that effective leaders must have first-hand experience across all policing ranks and enforcement to understand and guide the police force efficiently and effectively. It is believed that those who rose from the rank so quickly or enter through fast track or direct entry programs pose challenges, as they may be viewed with skepticism. However, even long-serving leaders can be thought of as out of touch and forgetting the need to wrestle on the frontline. For any police leader to lead effectively, something in their character and conduct needs to demonstrate that they understand and represent the interests of their teams. When officers feel that their leaders share their identity and values, they are more likely to trust and follow them even during difficult decisions or controversial changes.

According to Klijn et al. (2022), leadership style whether servant or transactional has only a limited influence on the enforcement styles of frontline personnel, with the only notable correlation being that transactional leadership slightly encourages a more accommodative approach, where inspectors consider the perspectives of others. Surprisingly, this finding contradicts

expectations and underscores that organizational culture, rather than leadership style, plays a more decisive role in shaping enforcement behavior. While individual leadership may offer some influence, the prevailing culture within police institutions whether hierarchical or developmental appears to substantially impact how officers carry out their duties, respond to political pressures, and adjust their enforcement styles.

In the analysis provided by Karimullah (2024), the professionalism of law enforcement is deeply tied to integrity, independence, and a consistent commitment to justice and human rights principles that become increasingly complex to uphold when political pressures enter the equation. In contexts, especially those in leadership positions, may find themselves navigating conflicting demands between maintaining professional standards and responding to political agendas. As Karimullah further points out, sustaining professionalism requires more than internal discipline; institutional reforms, ethical training, and strong accountability systems empower officers to act fairly regardless of external pressures. Police officers working in busy urban environments often need to balance changing enforcement policies with the ongoing responsibility to earn the public's trust and uphold their professional values.

Thompson (2020) indicates, even with political changes, local law enforcement officers, like those who execute anti-drug programs, tend to make the same decisions on immigration enforcement regardless of their party affiliation; this implies that political affiliation is not the only factor determining program implementation behavior but other factors, like the candidate selection process. Research suggests that local anti-drug law enforcement should focus more on public safety rather than political interests, challenging the notion that political bias affects their actions. Just as anti-drug officer selections can constrain partisan influence, police officers may navigate anti-drug implementation policies based on professional standards and practical concerns rather than political pressure alone, influencing their performance and coping strategies in the implementation of the anti-drug program.

As argued by Romdoni et al. (2022), political actors contribute significantly to molding law enforcement since today's legal institutions are far from immune to political interests. Even as the law should be a politically neutral tool of justice, political intervention in its implementation and creation can destroy its neutrality. The study states that government policy decisions must focus on public interest, not personal or political party agenda. It will result in weak and ineffective enforcement if made otherwise or with no genuine public concern when crafted. As Romdoni and colleagues suggest, for law enforcement to succeed and retain public trust, political activities must remain accountable to the rule of law, and the law itself must reflect the real needs of society.

As Helton (2024) predicts the needs in the law enforcement profession require intentional investment in leadership, especially among newly promoted officers. Mass promotions, staffing shortages, and generational complexities in the police agency cause morale to suffer, rifts to form, and public trust to fade when officers are not properly groomed for leadership. Frequent changes in leadership roles without effective mentoring may inhibit their ability to respond suitably to policy changes. Helton emphasizes that leadership training beyond the minimum can contribute to an organization's success, especially in high-stress environments. To this effect, providing ongoing and quality training to officers, especially those leading implementation activities, can improve their ability to deal with the stresses brought by evolving mandates and political pressures, allowing them to lead with confidence, resilience, and integrity despite operating limitations.

Generally, this study is guided conceptually by Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which focuses on an individual's perception of their ability, influencing decisions and leadership conduct in the implementation of policies. The study is supported by Role Theory, which illuminates the pressures and expectations that these law enforcers must navigate concerning their legal obligations and public responsibilities. In addition, Competence Motivation Theory offers a valuable lens for understanding how law enforcers are driven by an intrinsic desire to perform effectively, meet challenges, and demonstrate their capabilities in demanding roles, such as drug enforcement. This intrinsically driven need for efficacy and mastery might be particularly applicable to describing what police station commanders (leaders of police anti-drug efforts) do and why in competing against drug dealers under high-risk conditions. In tandem, these theories contribute to a rich, multi-dimensional understanding of the lived experiences of station commanders in the tri-cities of Cebu, Lapu-Lapu, and Mandaue, with how the convergence of these perspectives, the study is poised to offer a richer, more grounded conceptualization of how policy translates into action on the ground, influenced by personal agency, institutional pressures, and the polycentric nature of leadership within law enforcement.

3. Methodology

This section should contain detailed information about the procedures and steps followed. It can be divided into subsections if several methods are described.

3.1 Research Design

This qualitative research employed a transcendental phenomenological research design. Transcendental Phenomenology is a qualitative research design grounded in the philosophical tradition of Edmund Husserl, who emphasized the importance of returning "to the things themselves" to uncover the essence of human experience. At the core of this approach is the concept of consciousness, that all knowledge begins with lived experience as it appears to consciousness, free from presuppositions and external judgments (Husserl, 1931).

This design seeks to describe experiences as they are perceived by individuals, placing a strong emphasis on epoch, or the suspension of the researcher's biases and assumptions. In doing so, the researcher assumes an open posture that lets occurrences or phenomena come into their light through the eyes of those who have experienced them.

Clark Moustakas (1994) followed on from Husserl's original work and elaborated the framework of Transcendental Phenomenology into a comprehensive strategy for qualitative research. Moustakas introduced a structured approach that includes bracketing, horizontalization, clustering of meanings, and the synthesis of textual and structural descriptions to arrive at the essence of the experience. According to Moustakas, this method aims to reach a more profound knowledge of the universal essence of a phenomenon, grounded in the participants' accounts (Moustakas, 1994).

Rigour of reflection, empathy and intuition constitute basic methodological tools for investigating human experience in Transcendental Phenomenology. It privileges dialogue with people and invites researchers into their medium and into the meaning that exists there in experience. The design is especially effective when the goal is to understand complex experiences that are deeply personal, contextual, and emotionally rich.

The study will surface these officers' challenges, adaptations, and reflections through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. Such findings are crucial to understanding how macro-level policy shifts influence micro-level law enforcement realities and decision-making.

3.2 Research Participants

This study involved a total of fifteen (15) key informants, composed of six (6) police station commanders from Cebu City, five (5) police station commanders from Mandaue City, and four (4) police station commanders from Lapu-Lapu City. These informants are regarded as operational informants and are the key sources of field experience, since they occupy leadership positions at the station level and are actively involved in the operation of the anti-drug program implemented in their respective territories.

Participants were purposively selected based on appropriate inclusion criteria. Specifically, the informants must be presently assigned as police station commanders in any of the three cities, have held the current position as the police station commander or at least a year, and have had direct experience and involvement in the execution of the government's anti-drug program. In addition to meeting these qualifications, informants must also be willing and able to participate in the study through in-depth, face-to-face interviews, and willing to give their voluntary, informed consent.

No focus group discussions were conducted in this study. Because of the nature of the respondents' positions in terms of operationally sensitive, decisional responsibility and accessing classified information, individual interviews will be used predominantly for data acquisition. This lesser-known method, when used in this way, provides more confidentiality, depth, and opportunities for reflective practice, allowing all members to share their stories/insights and challenges in a safe and held environment.

By choosing informants who are not just knowledgeable about the operationalization of anti-drug campaigns but are directly involved in their execution, this study will capture invaluable stories that represent the lived experiences of front-line police command in Cebu City's urbanized areas.

3.3 Research Instruments

The researcher gathered the data using an Interview Guide that highlights the experiences of the informants. The research panel validated the research guide. The interview guide is to consist of 3 sections: Part 1 inquired into the experiences of the informants with the implementation of the anti-drug programs, Part 2 asked how they deal with the implementation and challenges that arise through the implementation, and Part 3 inquired about impact of implementation of the anti-drug program to the peace and order in the community.

The researcher contacted the informants directly to arrange the interviews, giving the informants a full explanation of the confidential nature of their answers and request their consent on prepared forms. During the interviews, the researcher employed open-ended questions that encourage detailed and meaningful responses.

3.4 Data Collection

The research started with securing formal approval from the Graduate School. Subsequently, protocol documents were submitted to the ethics committee for their review and approval. The moment ethical clearance was released; potential informants were identified and contacted through official channels to participate in the study.

Upon identification, interview schedules were made at the time most accommodating to the participants. Once the interviewee agreed to the study, the researcher then described the study to the interviewee, make appropriate assurances about the confidentiality of the data, and obtain the interviewee's consent. The interviews took place in a private and safe space, mostly on police premises or police station commanders office.

Most of the interviews last 45 minutes to one hour, with follow-up questions. Field notes were taken during each session, and digital audio recordings were used with the participant's consent for accuracy and transcription. Data was collected through audio-recorded interviews, note-taking, and observation of non-verbal cues during the conversation. Each recording was transcribed verbatim within 24 to 48 hours of the interview.

Initial readings of the transcripts were performed to check for accuracy. The confirmed transcriptions were coded, and significant words, phrases, and themes were sketched for a thematic cluster.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected narratives were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis, an approach combining storytelling's structural and content dimensions (Nowell et al., 2017). The steps in this analysis include: The first step was the transcription, audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were cleaned to correct typographical errors while preserving the participants' meaning and voice.

It was followed by, Initial Coding, Codes derived both deductively from the research questions and inductively from emerging data patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2023). These includes codes related to legal interpretation, administrative influence, leadership roles, operational challenges, public reception, and inter-agency dynamics.

Next was Theme Development, through iterative reading, related codes clustered into themes that reflect cross-cutting issues and unique experiences. Verification and Trustworthiness was part of the data validation will be conducted through member checking, feedback and clarification (Nowell et al., 2017). Triangulation of data through interview transcripts, field notes, and secondary policy documents employed to enhance credibility.

Finally, the interpretation and generalization results were interpreted against the backdrop of existing literature on drug law implementation in the Philippines. The findings are not generalizable in the statistical sense but seek to offer transferable lessons to other law enforcement in terms of anti-drug implementation.

This analytical process was assisted by qualitative data analysis to ensure systematic coding and theme clustering.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

When it comes to research, ethical considerations involve treating all participants with the respect, fairness, and dignity they deserve. It has to do with protecting rights, security, and having voluntary and informed consent. At the core of this research is

ethical responsibility, participants were never put at risk, and their stories will only ever be used with their full knowledge and consent.

Consent was sought before each interview takes place. Study purpose, data utilization, and the right to withdraw were explained to participants. All communication were strictly confidential, and the identity of individuals were kept confidential as well.

4. Results & Discussion

Out of the responses made by the fifteen (15) informants, the researcher was able to extract one hundred eighty (180) significant statements and formulate the same number of core meanings without providing any personal opinions and views. Moreover, formulated core meanings were grouped or clustered according to their similarities in meaning and description. Thereafter, thirty-eight (38) clustered themes emerged. These clustered themes were analyzed and grouped wherein nineteen (19) sub-themes were then clustered to come up with the major themes called the emergent themes. There were nine (9) emergent themes that reflected the overarching themes that give meaning to the four (4) sub-problems of the study. The researcher created nine (9) emergent themes that best represent the work life of police station commanders which explicitly focused on their experiences in implementing the Philippine Anti-Drug Program, the challenges encountered, and the program's impact on peace and order in the community.

The following are the emergent themes, to wit:

- I. **Experiences of the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program**
 - A. **Positive Experiences**
 1. Triumph in Shared Victory
 2. Justice in Motion, Fulfilment in Every Rescue
 - B. **Negative Experiences**
 1. Fighting a Battle That Resets Itself
 2. Stand Amidst the Storm
- II. **Addressing the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program**
 1. Leading with Resolve in the Midst of Limitations
 2. Presence with Purpose
 3. Powering Progress Through Partnerships
- III. **Impact of the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program to the Peace and Order of the Community**
 1. Peace Built on Persistence and Precision
 2. Trust at the Center of Peace

4.1 Experiences of the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program

During the interview of the informants who are station commanders the researcher listened to how they described their positive and negative experiences in the implementation of the anti-drug program. Out of the responses and significant statements made by the informants, the researcher made the following themes.

4.1.A Positive Experiences of the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-drug Program

4.1.A.1. Triumph in Shared Victory

This theme describes of how station commanders appreciate and felt fulfilled when the community and community partners join them in creating a safe and drug free city. Their accounts consistently show that real success stems from shared efforts and collective ownership of peace and safety, thus, greatly affect their operational successes. Informant 10 recalled and said:

We take great pride whenever a barangay is declared drug-cleared. Such success is made possible through the strong cooperation among the barangay officials, PDEA, and the community. Earning the trust and confidence of the public becomes easier when everyone works hand in hand toward effective implementation (IDI10: SS109).

According to the police commanders the police operation becomes fulfilling if combined with open reporting and collective cooperation. These are factors recognized by the commanders as vital in the implementation which was affirmed by Informant 3 when he said:

It feels fulfilling when people report directly to me. It's fulfilling when, after an arrest, the community expresses happiness and gratitude toward us. It's also fulfilling when we are able to clear the barangays efficiently. I feel very happy because the community places strong trust in the police, as we work together to protect their barangays from being infiltrated by drugs. The coordination between the local government and the PNP is excellent. Earning the trust and confidence of the community is my top priority, winning their hearts and minds (IDI3:SS25).

Informant 14 recalled meaningful affirmation of their successful operation through the help of the barangay and how it impacted to the process, increased information sharing, public support and eagerness to cooperate in their work. He stated:

At that time, the local community trusted us. It feels fulfilling when we are able to connect with the barangay, and they provide us with information that we can validate. With that, we can conduct successful operations. Even if only a few are apprehended, the impact on the community is significant because it helps build trust with the locals. It develops a special bond and trust with the public, encouraging them to cooperate with us through BADAC (IDI14:SS157).

Taken together their account reveal a shared message that the fulfillment of police commanders emerged not from isolated enforcement success, but from the visible bond of trust and collaboration between police and the people they vow to protect and serve. The theme "Triumph in Shared Victory" is felt by commanders when peace is achieved through commitment and harmony thrives wherein everyone will share common mission.

4.1.A.2. Justice in Motion, Fulfillment in every Rescue

This theme reflects a deeply personal and professional fulfillment of an officer where there are tangible results of their enforcement and leadership. One of the commanders spoke proudly of arresting offenders who had long been disturbing the peace in the area noting how that arrest significant contributed to the crime reduction in that barangay. Public recognition, though not their primary motivation also reinforces their sense of pride and professional identity, Informant 9 spoke that:

We're mostly happy when, for example, we conduct an operation in a community and the people there are really on our side. They would say things like, "Sir, arrest that person, he's a thief here," or "He's always using drugs." When I see that the people in the area are satisfied because that person was arrested by the police is messing with them, it shows the community's recognition of our implementation. We feel happy because we're able to perform our duties, and the community being the direct recipient, is also happy in general. That's what makes the operation meaningful (IDI9:SS97).

Positive experiences also came from seeing not only in the improvement in the peace and order in the community but also in people's lives and how they rebuild it. Informant 5 candidly recalled:

One of our accomplishments that we can truly say was fulfilled is that most of the persons arrested were not only involved in illegal drugs but also in other crimes, particularly the eight focus crimes. This greatly helps in maintaining the peace and order of the city. At the same time, some of the people who were arrested changed for the better after undergoing interventions (IDI5:SS49).

These positive and fulfilled experiences of seeing the violators being rehabilitated and been renewed, as after effect of their successful anti-drug operations was further corroborated by Informant 11 when he narrated, that:

Proud not only of our operational activities but also of the rehabilitation efforts. It's fulfilling to be part of their rehabilitation program and aftercare (especially through the church), particularly when we see someone change or turn their life around after rehabilitation (IDI11:SS121).

Overall, the significant statements show how officers felt fulfilled not just by mere operational successes but of how these impacted the peace and order in the community and the lives of those violators who affirm to the rehabilitation process.

4.1.B Negative Experiences of the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-drug Program

4.1.B.1 Fighting a Battle That Resets Itself

This theme reflects the account of the station commander which they repeatedly describe that the battle against the anti-drug campaign haven been constantly resets wherein progress seems temporary and gains are easily undone. That despite the persistent operation and efforts the endless cycle of illegal drug involvement, uncooperating and public mistrust would somehow take a tool on their drive, leading to police frustration. The same patterns of illegal drug activity will occur as new player continuously emerge, that is even after a successful arrest and worst some would go back to their bad habits. Informant 1 painfully mentioned:

During operations, we often experience burnout, especially when information about our plans gets leaked. It becomes frustrating when, after a successful operation, within just a week, new or younger individuals emerge to replace those we have arrested. It feels like an endless cycle, you catch one but more take their place. Some individuals who have undergone rehabilitation also tend to relapse and return to their old habits after being released. There was even a time when I was wrongly implicated and accused of misconduct because of my constant participation in arrests, and that experience was deeply painful for me (IDI1:SS4).

Observation after the successful operations like of continuous cycle and emerging of new players have been seen and also noted by Informant 6 and said:

It's no longer about the program, but rather the outcome, despite numerous operations, arrests, and convictions, there are still new players or people trying to get involved (IDI6:SS65).

The statement made by Informant 1 and Informant 6 was further corroborated by Informant 5. He shared same sentiment; he spoke that police efforts have been exerted already and yet the cycle still continues. They still observe new players after the arrest. Informant 5 narrated that:

We've given our all, poured almost our best efforts into it, yet sometimes we can still ask why it's like this and why it never seems to end. You arrest two, and three more replace them. That's the reality. But we will not surrender, we just continue moving forward (IDI5:SS53).

It was further noted by the informants that relapse of released violator after their rehabilitation or even after being released after entering a plea deal agreement. Informant 12 said:

Frustration and disappointment are always there. Sometimes, those who are released through plea bargaining end up going back to their old ways once they return, they get arrested again (IDI12:SS136).

Taken together, their narrative illustrates that the implementation of this anti-drug program is an uphill battle. With which the commanders and their men have to repeatedly confront the same problem, a very exhausting cycle. There stories show one hard emotional truth, that no matter how hard they push forward, they often end up starting all over again.

4.1.B.2 Stand Amidst the Storm

This theme reflects the emotional burden, ethical dilemmas and silent leadership struggles confronted by the station commanders. Beyond operational and resource constraints, the accounts made by the commander revealed that intense emotional and ethical burdens is embedded in their role, a weigh that the public rarely sees and understands. Many commanders' leadership as an internal struggle that require them to remain steadfast and perseveres despite policy shift, unclear direction and constant expectation. Informant 4 expressed that:

There are times during the service when leaders have different program thrusts (approaches), especially during transition periods. But we just simply follow orders (IDI4:SS41).

Coupled with these scenarios are the pressure to deliver accomplishment, that placed heavy psychological weights on them. Informant 13 cited that:

From a general perspective, why should we focus on increasing accomplishments in an area like this when there really aren't any? We end up being questioned. The focus should be on the quality or the number of arrests and convictions resulting from those arrests (ID13:SS149).

These silent mental load of leadership pressure have been further become heavier with emotional burden by operational activities wherein commanders and their men had to arrest pregnant women or minor whose involvement were positively validated during intelligence operations. They also recalled disheartening situation wherein seeing children cry as their parents are taken. Informant 9 vividly described those encounters and said:

It becomes really emotional when we handle cases involving families like when a child comes from a do re mi from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and both the mother and father are involved. If these two are arrested, who will take care of the remaining five? But there's nothing you can do, it's your job. Sometimes minors are involved. Then we get blamed for why they were arrested, as if it's our fault. It's the cycle of going in and out of prison. Being charged, or being summoned, it's very stressful (ID19:SS102).

The experiences pushed officers into moral conflicts where duty clashed with compassion. Other odds they are facing where cases of bribery attempts, family or relatives asking for favors to drop cases and false accusations and social media attacks. To make things worse they recalled receiving death threats. Informant 1 recalled and said:

There were times when some relatives would come to me because someone in their family was caught in a drug case. There was a time when the person we were supposed to arrest was pregnant, and I was told I had no compassion because she had so many small children and her partner had already been arrested. There was also a time when we conducted a buy-bust operation and arrested my former classmate from the training center. After that, my family was threatened. I was here in Cebu while they were in the province. They monitored my child and even told me they would burn down my house (ID11:SS6).

Despite these, the commanders remain steadfast and still cling into upholding discipline and the rule of law. Statement such as we will follow orders show a deep respect for institutional hierarchy and accountability. Informant 14 affirm and said:

It means that we don't question, we simply follow orders and the law (ID14:SS161).

Emerges from these narratives is a profound internal and personal struggle faced by the informants. That while civilians see uniform and badges, they rarely see the emotional wounds beneath them. That the commander and their men must stand firm, not because the work is easy but because the mission matters. In a storm of legal, emotional, community and operational challenges their commitment becomes the anchor that holds the campaign even tighter.

4.2 Addressing the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program

4.2.1 Leading with Resolve in the Midst of Limitations

This emergent theme reflects the core reality experienced by station commanders who continue to push forward despite resource and operational challenges. The narratives across the formulated core meaning consistently reveal this recurring constraints in the performance of their tasks. Informant 11 revealed that:

There really is a lack of resources, logistics, personnel, and budget so we just find ways to cope, being resourceful and managing the available resources to maximize them (ID11:SS129).

Within these conditions, the commanders emphasize the necessity of strong management skill, prioritization and resourcefulness to sustain operation. Among the officers was Informant 12 who blatantly admit that:

What they say about lack of resources has been going on for a long time, in any office. So, the key is your management or supervisory skill, you find ways to make the resources sufficient. For me, the focus is on our mandate or what matters most for the agency. Streamlining processes and avoiding duplication of work (ID12: SS141).

Bombarded with these insufficiency and limitations some would take a leap of shelling out personal funds agencies just to sustain operation needs. As clearly shown in the statement of Informants 6, he said that:

Operations get delayed and lack sufficient funding. There are times when I have to use my own salary (IDI6:SS67).

Limitation would not only mean financial constraints; this also includes manpower. Thereby leadership of the police commanders will be tested to resolving it by coordinating with LGU and other partner agencies. Informant 10 mentioned that:

Resources are really a challenge, especially human resources, which becomes a problem for deployment management and checking priority areas. Coordination and collaboration with the LGU and other partner agencies are essential. We have to make do with what we have (IDI10:SS117).

These constraints do not halt operations but in fact highlight the leadership and operational skills of the commanders to adapt despite scarce resources. This limitation cultivates a structured leadership practice such as prioritization, strategic deployment and force multiplication. This was highlighted by the statement of Informant 9 when he said:

Management and prioritization are key. We maximize our resources, for example, the PSB working with barangay tanods becomes a force multiplier. We also coordinate with partner agencies, the advisory council, and the LGU to secure the resources we need (IDI9:SS105).

The theme shows how the station commanders draw strength from discipline, leadership and how they embody the spirit of perseverance. They remain steadfast and remain true to fulfill their mandate despite the limited means. This resolute captures the theme strength in midst of struggle, of how commanders' leadership becomes a stabilizing force despite the dynamics of the anti-drug implementation.

4.2.2 Presence with Purpose

This theme significantly encapsulates how prevention strategies remain core in the anti-drug implementation. The commanders repeatedly emphasize how visible policing strategically maintain not only peace but also strengthen public confidence. It is significantly illustrated in the statement of Informant 1 when he said:

Our strategies include conducting information drives among the youth in schools and reaching out to parents through house-to-house visits. Regular patrol operations and strong police visibility have also proven to be effective in peace and order (IDI1:SS8).

These prevention efforts are not merely procedural but are deliberate and strategic means of how the officers win hearts and minds of the people. These intentional presence and purposeful initiatives would cultivate relationship that will aid in breaking the culture of fear and later on will promote cooperation. Informant 3 in his statement said, that:

I would also include community relations. You can't achieve everything solely through police operations. Operations might instill fear, but they don't necessarily gain the community's cooperation, trust, or win their hearts and minds. You really need other approaches through police-community relations, actively engaging with the community. Engage in any kind of program: free haircuts, mobile libraries, feeding programs, what's important is that people feel that the police are watching out for them and can be trusted. Now, in our area, there are minor disturbances, drunkards, and small complaints, but people report them to the police because they feel valued. Since the police frequently visit the barangay, the community has developed a strong trust in us (IDI3:SS32).

The commanders recognizes that prevention is strongest when rooted in awareness and empowerment. Thus, educational approaches and barangay meetings are being conducted. Informant 5 said:

We have youth activities under the BIDA program. What our PCR does is more of an awareness drive targeting students and barangays. We strive to gain the trust and cooperation of the community, especially the barangay officials. We hold dialogues with the LGU and barangay officials to make sure they understand our programs (IDI5:SS56).

The commanders describe this as purposeful and strategic, they ensure that they are felt and seen by the public not to enforce but to connect, educate and prevent escalation. The theme "Presence with Purpose" emphasizes how police visibility makes an

intentional investment in the prevention aspect. This strengthens community ties and making the anti-drug implementation humane, inclusive and collaborative.

4.2.3 Powering Progress through Partnership

This emergent theme focuses of how indispensable the role of inter-agency collaboration will make a difference for the implementation to prosper. Across the statements of the commanders, they consistently mentioned that effective implementation depends on the strong partnership with LGUs, PDEA, BADAC, advisory council and community organization. Informant 2 said:

Strengthen the policies and programs of the PNP and the local government unit through pakipagsandurot. Ensure the cascading of program implementation by organizing and building networks within the community, as well as coordinating with PDEA and, in my current area, with the Coast Guard (IDI2:SS20).

This collaboration will be of vital support not only in terms of logistical support but also in terms of intelligence, community access and manpower. The deficiency of manpower can be amplified thru LGU and barangay partnership to extend operational reach. Informant 13 mentioned that:

We just coordinate closely with the LGU, especially for curfew implementation. For OPLAN Bulabog, we work with the barangay, particularly the tanod, to multiply our force since we have only a few personnel here (IDI13:SS153).

The leadership resourcefulness of coordination with partner agencies, advisory council and tapping the barangay to strengthen or maximize manpower was further corroborated with the statement made by Informant 9 when he stated that:

Management and prioritization are key. We maximize our resources, for example, the PSB working with barangay tanods becomes a force multiplier. We also coordinate with partner agencies, the advisory council, and the LGU to secure the resources we need (IDI9:SS105).

The commanders recognizes that progress is powered through unified action and that anti-drug implementation successes are not just police efforts. It is gained through "Powering Progress through Partnership" in the spirit of cross sectoral commitment, the key of its strength.

4.3 Impact of the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program to the Peace and Order of the Community

4.3.1 Peace built on Persistence and Precision

This theme encapsulates of how police commanders recognizes that for crime reduction to strengthen deliberate enforcement must be complimented with skilled intelligence work and competent case handling. Informant 5 deliberately mentioned that:

We aim to further broaden our intelligence development efforts. We need to reach even the most remote areas. Our engagement shouldn't be limited to just a few people, what I mean is, not only the barangay officials, but everyone. There should be more training on case build-up, not just on making arrests (IDI5:SS60).

The commander acknowledged that proper case handling and improved technical skills would aid in making sure that the case filed are without errors avoiding case dismissals. Informant 6 said:

There should be greater involvement in the community. More training is also needed in implementation, especially in filing cases, to address technicalities and avoid case dismissals (IDI6:SS72).

The station commanders recognizes that improvement of personnel capability the better use of technology, more accurate case build-up and reinforced standard operating procedures will improve the crime prevention efforts. Informant 11 is keeping high hopes that:

More training for personnel in technology or hiring specialized personnel is needed. On the prevention side, we push programs that can change the community's perception (IDI11:SS132).

Thus, the thoughts of the informants spiraling on central insights, that peace is achieved not only to tireless action but by competent, well-coordinated and technically sound enforcers or implementors.

4.3.2 Trust at the Center of Peace

This theme circles on the insight of the informants that peace is most sustainable when the people trust the police enough to engage, cooperate and take responsibility. This also recognizes how this shared responsibility once understood and acknowledge will help in bringing peace and nation building. Informant 13 in his interview said:

Crime will decrease if many offenders are apprehended in a specific barangay. When more people are arrested, the crime rate drops, and public trust increases. The community becomes more supportive of the PNP they start reporting incidents and become more cooperative. Parents become aware of their responsibilities toward their minor children. Former individuals involved in illegal drugs also realize the consequences and understand the path they should take if they choose to return (IDI3:SS35).

Their knowledge of knowing how important that they trust police in information was further corroborated by the statement of Informant 5 when he mentioned:

Those fathers who used to use drugs are now bonding with their families. The public or ordinary people now approach us and share what they know. We can really see that they trust and respect us. The LGU has become more supportive and actively helps in our activities (IDI5:SS59).

Taken together the shared insights points that trust is the foundation upon which peace becomes permanent. Peace and order are an outcome of shared vigilance and mutual confidence between the police and the people they serve.

5. Analysis of Data

In the analysis of the gathered data the researcher sought the meaning from all available data using Thematic Analysis. The significant statements made by the informant have been categorized and been properly coded. Out from the one hundred eighty (180) significant statements where same number core meanings have been formulated. It was then grouped according to similarities and meaning, the group are then known as the clustered themes. The thirty-eight (38) formulated clustered themes have been refined skillfully group to similarities thus creating the nineteen (19) sub-themes. Out from these sub-themes were the researchers crafted the nine (9) emergent themes. The researcher utilized thematic analysis as the primary basis for organizing and reporting the study findings.

The study was anchored on Self-efficacy theory of Albert Bandura and supported by the Competence Motivation Theory by Susan Harter and the Role Theory of Ralph Linton and Bruce Biddle.

The theory of self-efficacy is a social cognitive belief concept that is a valuable framework for understanding how people operate in complicated, high-stakes settings. Defined by psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their skills and capability to perform behaviors that enable the attainment of an action. These are also more than attitudes to skills; they are fundamental to how people believe, feel, and act in adversity. The theory suggests that an individual's perception of personal agency is central to how they approach goals, tasks and setbacks, it said. In the world of decision-making under risk, self-efficacy can be a relative predictor of the tendency toward persistence, adaptability, and resilience.

This was supported by theory of Susan Harter, known as Competence Motivation Theory, which posits that individuals are naturally driven to seek out and master tasks that affirm their skills and sense of effectiveness in specific domains (Harter, 2015). At its heart, people are motivated not just to act, but to feel capable while doing so. The need for competence becomes most salient for positions that involve leadership under pressure, as when pursuing law enforcement operations, where professional self-efficacy critically influences performance, decision-making, and morale.

Another theory that supported this study was the Role Theory of Biddle (1986), with roots in sociology and organizational behavior, focuses on the expectations, performances, and conflicts experienced by individuals occupying formal positions or those simultaneously fulfill multiple roles: as law enforcers, community leaders, implementers of national policy, and subordinates within a hierarchical police structure. This theoretical perspective is helpful in understanding how they reconcile their responsibilities amid competing demands and shifting public expectations.

From the data shared by the informants, it was categorized to formulate themes. Nine themes were created based on the significant responses of the informants.

5.1 Experiences of the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program

With this sub-problem, the researcher formulated four (4) emergent themes, two (2) for positive experiences and two (2) negative experiences drawn from the significant responses from the informants which was coded meticulously, clustered, refined into sub-themes.

5.1.A Positive Experiences

5.1.A.1 Triumph in Shared Victory

This theme reflects station commanders' positive experiences were not only rooted on the successful police operations but the relationship and impression it brings in the people. What stood out must is how deeply they value the support of the people in the community in the implementation of the anti-drug program. The fulfillment and meaning of their work arise when everyone moves together toward a common goal and that is creating a safer, drug-free barangays. This sense of shared effort becomes their source of pride and motivation forming the foundation of this theme.

The accounts of the commanders show that collaboration and shared responsibility are central in their work especially the implementation of the anti-drug program. Based on their account they believe that the implementation of the program becomes effective when police and the people stand on the same side. The efforts like barangay clearing, information gathering and the conduct of operation become achievable when people will actively participate. Through their collective stories shows that commanders feel fulfilled when they see unity between police and the people they serve.

This theme strongly aligns with Self-Efficacy theory of Albert Bandura (1997) on the idea that mastery experiences will enhance one's belief in their own capability. When the commanders see barangay being cleared or receive information from people these will become reinforcing experiences that will strengthen their confidence as leaders. Likewise, the verbal support from among civilians serve as verbal persuasion that boost them, that motivates their sense of competence in leading the anti-drug implementation programs.

Moreover, the theme is also supported by Role Theory of Ralph Linton and Bruce Biddle (1986), knowing that station commanders fulfill multiple roles they feel fulfilled when those roles align with the drug-related activities. These moments become significant since they will lessen the role conflict allowing commanders to perform with greater confidence and clarity.

The affirming experience of the commanders are echoed widely in the literature, like De Castro et al. (2020) for one, emphasizes that police partnership with the community will impact police efforts. Burke (2022) highlight the importance of informal network in police operations and how it becomes more effective when community ties are strong. Furthermore, Hoggett et al. (2019) pointed out that trust and credibility form the very foundation of police leadership connecting to what the informant described building bond with the residents as key to efficient and effective implementation.

The theme clearly reveal that effective drug enforcement is rooted in only rooted in a plain technical operation but also through human connection. Acknowledging how cooperation and shared responsibility uplifts police work. Ultimately, this theme is a reminder that peace is built strongest when the police and people move together toward the same vision of safety.

5.1.A.2 Justice in Motion, Fulfilment in Every Rescue

This theme shows how deeply fulfilled station commanders are when their work efforts will lead to tangible impact to public safety. The theme gives meaning to how commanders leadership and decision are strengthened when they witness real life impact brough by the conduct of anti-drug operations. The commanders described that fulfillment is felt when an operation significantly relieves the resident from fear or annoyance caused by these violators. When they also saw transformation of these violators who undergo rehabilitation. Commanders find a profound sense of purpose in seeing justice that will take form in the very city or municipality they serve.

The theme is strongly supported by Bandura Self-efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997). That the source of self-efficacy or mastery of experiences of commanders are from successful arrements, crime reduction and stories of rehabilitation. When the commander witness that their leadership produces significant change and meaningful impact their confidence of their own capability strengthens.

It also aligns with Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter which states that a person will be driven to perform if competence is affirmed (Harter, 2015). The accounts made by the commanders clearly shows that their fulfillment is tied not only to operational successes but is also to the facts that through their leadership the public safety is improved or it brought life changes through rehabilitation. These emotionally rewarding experiences aside from it validates their capability it also becomes a driving force to continue perform well even under challenging conditions.

From the lens of Ralph Linton and Bruce Biddle on their Role theory, the theme reflects of how police commanders navigate to their demanding roles being an enforcer, protector of the peace, leader and at times mentor in rehabilitation. Their fulfillment stems when these roles intersect harmoniously, when they see that their leadership provides direction and contributed to the transformation of people who once violated the rule of law. Moments like this bring clarity and purpose thus strengthening their sense of personal and professional identity.

As mentioned by Burke (2022) he highlights that effective leadership and organizational structure are vital for managing change, especially in challenging environments. The result of visible improvements in public safety mirrors of how commanders feel fulfilled witnessing them. It was likewise affirmed by Salindo et al. (2024), that local law enforcement leaders have significantly played an important role in translating national police into meaningful results.

Studies on rehabilitation, including Samaniego (2022), also support the idea that the recovery efforts will not only impact community safety but will also contribute to the emotional reward experienced by these officers who witness people rebuild their lives.

The accounts shows that successful anti-drug work is not merely measured by number alone but also contributed to safe places where peace is restored and transformed lives. The core of this theme reminds us that justice become more meaningful when it uplifts community and restores dignity, creating fulfillment not only for those who are rescued but also for those who serve.

5.1.B Negative Experiences

5.1.B.1 Fighting a Battle That Resets Itself

This theme as revealed by the narratives of the police commander reflect on the painful reality that beyond the demands of the anti-drug program the work becomes a battle that reset itself. While the police commanders and their men exerted tremendous effort to address the problem tend to repeat or the challenges seems to be repeating in cycles. Their story shows how fragile progress and how gains can be easily undone when offenders are quickly replaced by new players, those who undergo rehabilitation or secure plea bargains will return to the same behavior. The emotional toll faces by the officers of facing the same problem repeatedly is the basis of the theme "Fighting a Battle That Resets Itself".

This theme reveals the disheartening and discouraging side of the implementation of the anti-drug program. This theme reflects that their victories are often temporary and that war on drugs is not linear but is circular thus making it exhausting and emotionally demanding. Taken from their accounts, together it demonstrates how commanders are caught in an operational loop that repeatedly challenged their endurance, patience and morale.

From the theoretical perspective, the theme resonated with Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bandura (1997), particularly the emotional and physiological states that influence a person's ability in their capability. The feeling of burn-out, frustration and feelings of defeat are examples of negative emotion that could tarnish self-efficacy. When their efforts seem futile caused by emerging of new players or relapse, their sense of mastery is disrupted. This tear confidence that their efforts will bear meaningful change.

The theme also aligns with Competence Motivation Theory of Harter (2015), that repeated setback could weaken the officers send of competence for successes seemingly are short-lived. Their work motivation is challenge when the result of their hard work does not endure. When rehabilitation failed, when individual return to vices and emergent of new players are moments wherein their emotional resilience is tested and challenge.

From the lend of the Role theory of Linton and Biddle (1986), the theme reflects on the intense role conflict that station commanders must navigate. They are expected to enforce the law, maintain peace and produce lasting results yet drug activities continue making the expectation very difficult to meet. Their role is being challenged and being complicated by factors beyond their control. These factors would normally create tension between what is expected of them and what is realistically achievable which would lead to feeling of stress and exhaustion to most officers.

In his study Burke (2022) emphasized that leadership especially in complex environment often involve going through unpredictable outcomes and systemic challenges. As discussed by Ciochini (2024) legal processes like plea bargaining will enable rapid release, inadvertently will lead to recurrence of the challenges mirrored on the accounts made by the police commanders. John (2023) also highlights that at times the struggles of reforms and enforcement often happen when structural conditions do not align with local realities. This is why drug activity persists despite efforts made by the police.

This theme an important yet difficult truth, that despite one's commitment, police commanders often face a battle that resets itself but choose they choose to rise and continue, even when the odds seem uncertain and unchanged.

5.1.B.2 Stand Amidst the Storm

This theme encapsulates the narrative which reflect that behind the uniform and command responsibility lies an emotional, ethical and mental burden that the public rarely sees. The theme captures the silent struggles of station commanders; those moments when they must endure and be still despite shifting directives, heavy expectations and emotional toll in making difficult operational decisions. Their accounts reflected that leading the implementation of the anti-drug program do not only revolve around strategy but also on how to navigate situations that will result to moral tension, emotional strain and unseen weight of delivering what the law requires even if it means clashing with compassion. These resonated the heart of the theme "Standing Firm in the Storm".

The experience of the police station commanders as reflected in this study show not only the operational pressure but also the personal and ethical challenges lie within the implementation. The emotional strain when operation involve vulnerable individuals; pregnant mothers, minors or parents while their children are their and cry. These very situation place commanders in moral conflict; they must enforce the law, but they are also human beings who recognize the suffering of those affected by it. The stress seems to magnify even more by occasions of repeated cycles of seeing individuals going in and out of jail, filing cases, facing legal raps and facing community ridicule. To make matters worse commanders often face threats and intimidation that only shows how implementation is not only demanding but personally risky, exposing officers to retaliation and fear for their loved ones.

Yet, despite these emotional wounds, commanders most often than not would consistently expressed commitment to discipline, hierarchy and the law saying "we simply follow order and law because we are good soldiers". This reflects strong respect for institutional authority and the ethical demand to uphold the law even in moments of internal conflict highlighting the need to remain firm amid moral, emotional and operational pressures.

From a theoretical standpoint, this theme aligns strongly with Self-efficacy theory of Bandura specifically the component of emotional and physiological states. High level of emotional strain, the fear, the feeling of guilt, moral distress and pressure will lead to reduction of self-efficacy since these factors can weaken one's internal confidence in their ability to handle challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997). The commanders account of emotional exhaustion lead by these factors illustrates how negative emotion can create heavy psychological barriers which will influence how they exercise and approach their roles.

This theme also resonates with Competence Motivation Theory of Harter (2015), which explains how individual feel motivated when they believe that they are performing effectively. Here, the negative encounters as being blamed, being pressured and being harmed or threatened will affect commanders' sense of competence. When they feel questioned or morally conflicted, their perceived ability is threatened. Though majority still continue to persevere, showing strong internal motivation despite diminished emotional reinforcement.

Role theory of Linton and Biddle (1986) strongly illuminates in this theme. Commanders who stand at the intersection of multiple and conflicting roles being an enforcer, leaders, protector of others, their families lives and role on public accountability. The emotional turmoil as being reflected in their narratives are examples of role conflict, role strain and ambiguous expectation which create internal stress. Despite these conflicts, commanders continue fulfilling their sworn duty, which a reflection of role commitment even under pressure.

In his book, Burke (2022) emphasized that leaders in demanding environments often face organizational pressure and emotional strain, reflecting the commanders' experiences with shifting priorities and accomplishment expectations. In his study, Ciochini (2024) described how law enforcers often navigate moral complexity in drug enforcement, particularly when legal processes and violence intersect; mirroring the moral dilemmas the commanders discussed.

It was furthermore noted by John (2023), that local realities and structural pressures often distort the implementation of reforms, consistent with how commanders feel conflicted by demands for numbers and unclear directives. In his research Mendoza et al. (2021) identified that internal police culture and external pressures contribute heavily to stress and coping challenges, aligning with the commanders' experiences of emotional weight, threats, and role conflict.

The insights are critical for the PNP leadership, training institution and criminology students since this section offer a deep understanding of the hidden struggles embedded in police work. Acknowledging these burdens may guide on crafting more compassionate policy, improve mental health support and leadership development programs that address the risk brought by the implementation of this program. Ultimately, this theme is a reminder that while public sees only the uniform, behind it stands a person carrying emotional storms with quite strength, leading not because the work is easy, but because mission matters.

5.2 Addressing the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program

5.2.1 Leading with Resolve in the Midst of Limitations.

This theme revolves on the experiences of the station commander's leadership resolve to navigate operational demands despite limited manpower, scarcity and delayed fundings. This theme shows their adaptability, strategic thinking and how they respond with resolve and do not allow these challenges to paralyze their sworn duty. Their accounts reveal that this resource constraints have pushed them to rely heavily on their leadership capability, resourcefulness and strong respect for their duty to keep the operations moving. These unwavering resolute forms the very essence of this theme "Leading with Resolve in the Midst of Limitation".

The commander's strategies highlight of how they confront limitation not with resignation but with active problem solving. They spoke candidly about the long-standing nature of scarcity across government offices yet stressing the importance of supervisory skills, streamlining the task and focusing on what matters. To some commanders they even take personal financial risk to push through, others thought smart management and resourcefulness to sustain operation. Many commanders highlight the need for prioritization, force multiplication and partnership building. These experiences shows that commanders do not allow to become a passive victim of constraints but instead they actively find ways to fill the gaps to accomplish their mission. These police leaders are making the most of what they have while staying focused on public service and nations safety.

This theme strongly reflects the anchor theory Self-Efficacy theory of Albert Bandura (1997) particularly the belief that one can succeed even under difficult circumstances. The commanders resolve show high levels of self-efficacy; instead of being discouraged by shortages they develop strategies, adapt procedures and persevere through adversity. This ability to push forward despite challenges demonstrate confidence in their capability and leadership skills.

The theme also aligns with Competence Motivation theory of Harter (2015) which emphasizes when faced with challenged will show competence. Here, limited resources become a stepping stone for the commanders to prove their leadership effectiveness. Their efforts have maximized manpower, secure partnership and result to streamlining the process stressing an internal drive to meet expectation despite limitation. Their sense of competence is reinforced not by ideal situations and conditions, but by overcoming difficult ones.

The is also likewise connects to Role Theory of Linton and Biddle (1986) as commanders must balance multiple roles while they navigate constraints. They are expected to be managers, strategists, LGU partners, leaders to their men all while fulfilling their legal and operational duties. Their stories navigate on role expectations how to make it high even when resources are low, forcing them to adapt and reinterpret or reinvent their responsibilities. Their leadership becomes a driving force that serves as stabilizing power that hold the operations together amid dynamic challenges of the anti-drug implementation.

As mentioned by Burke (2022) in his book, it emphasized the importance of strong leadership and adaptive management in regulatory environments with complex demands; mirroring how commanders address resource scarcity through strategy and persistence. According to John (2023), the author mentioned of how local realities and limited resources often undermine program implementation, requiring frontline leaders to develop creative problem-solving approaches, similar to the resourcefulness described by the informants.

Further studies like Briguel et al. (2023) and Brannon (2025) stressed the need for inter-agency coordination in drug enforcement, aligning with the commanders' reliance on LGUs, advisory councils, and partner agencies. Mendoza et al. (2021) further noted that officers often cope with institutional gaps through informal practices and personal initiative; echoing the commanders' personal funding support and improvisation strategies.

This theme is deeply relevant to PNP supervisors, local government units and training institution for the narrative illustrates that effective implementation does not rely solely on resources but on resilient leaders. By looking into how commanders navigate these situations, they can better explore onto logistic support, policy adjustment and even capacity building programs. The theme holds another vital truth; even when resources are scares good leaders can make the wheels turning proving that resolve, discipline and adaptability are the quiet engines behind public safety.

5.2.2 Presence with Purpose.

This theme emerges from the account of the informants that prevention is not an afterthought of the anti-drug execution rather it remains core in its implementation. Beyond arrests and operation, they pointed out the importance of officer's physical presence in the area in ways to reassure, educate and engage the public. Their narrative illustrates that police visibility becomes far more than patrol routines but it becomes a strategy to connect, signal resident that they are seen, heard and protected. This intentional engagement lies at the core of the theme "Presence with Purpose".

Their narrative also shows that prevention become their strongest tool. The conduct of information drives to students, parents, reaching out to house-to-house visits and police visibility are action that they deliberately perform are signals that preventing crime is often more sustainable than reacting to it. On their accounts, they believe that though police operations are necessary this cannot guarantee genuine cooperation they explained that it is through public engagement that will allow the resident to feel that they are valued by the police. Thee mentioned strategies show how they shift from fear-based policing toward relationship-based policing where prevention is gained thought connection and emotional connection.

The theme aligns closely to Self-efficacy theory of Albert Bandura (1997) particularly the concept of vicarious experience and verbal persuasion. When police are seen through awareness campaigns, dialogues it creates window of opportunity for resident to see the positive side of the police. These encounters become central for positive public perception that will lead to increase confidence to police in reporting and cooperation. For the commanders the successful community engagement becomes a mastery experience that reinforces their belief in the value of preventive strategies.

This theme is also strongly connected to Competence Motivation theory of Susan Harter (2015) which reflect that individual is motivated when they feel capable and valued. The positive feedback and increased trust reinforce the commander sense of competence. These affirmations become ground for their motivation to invest on prevention efforts, knowing that their presence makes a meaningful difference.

From the perspective Linton and Biddle (1986) of the Role Theory, this theme reflects the commander's ability to navigate multiple roles; law enforcers, community partners, educators and advocates for youth and resident empowerment. These preventive strategies made them to step outside their traditional enforcement role and embody a more inclusive and rational form of leadership. The performance of this adaptive role significantly reduces the tension between police and the community. It also clarifies that the expectation that policing is not only about control but also about guidance and support.

The findings is supported by De Castro et al. (2020) which emphasized that strong community and police relationships enhance trust and cooperation, aligning with informants' accounts that engagement builds confidence and encourages residents to report disturbances.

It was further highlighted by Briguel et al. (2023), that the importance of community-based efforts in sustaining drug-free spaces, supporting the commanders' preventive activities in barangays. Additionally, Hoggett et al. (2019) stressed that credibility in police leadership grows from meaningful connection and shared identity with the community; mirroring how commanders gain trust by being physically present and emotionally accessible. Burke (2022) also noted that effective change in public safety often hinges on informal social systems, such as community programs and local partnerships, which the commanders actively cultivate through their preventive strategies.

This theme clearly is important for criminology students, police leaders, LGUs and training centers because it will tell them that policing do not only rely solely on force but it can also be grounded in presence, visibility and community engagement can create safe environment. Ultimately, this them invoke idea that meaningful prevention begins when police are not only seen but are seen with purpose, compassion and commitment with the very people they serve.

5.2.3 Powering Progress Through Partnership

This theme depicts the collective narrative of the informants that successful anti-drug implementation does not rest solely on the shoulders of the PNP. Instead, it thrives when multiple sectors work together toward shared mission. Their accounts consistently highlight coordination between police, LGUs, PDEA, BADAC, advisory council and other sectors amplify the program reach, strengthen the capabilities and eases then weight of operational limitations. The intentional collaboration forms the heart of the theme "Powering Progress Through Partnership".

The commanders emphasize that by strengthening their ties, building their networks form essential pillar for the effective implementation. Based on their narratives these collaborations emphasized that the anti-drug implementation is not a standalone effort but a synchronized undertaking. This alliance would push for to address manpower shortages, helping them in multiplying their force. Personal visitation and having dialogues with LGU officials fill operational gaps, strengthen their credibility and ensure smooth implementation. They also emphasized the need to coordinate with their partner agencies; their experience only shows that progress in the implementation become possible when all sectors are moved together creating cross-sectorial action rather than isolated police efforts.

This theme is supported from the perspective of Self-Efficacy of Albert Bandura (1997) specifically the role of social support and shared agency. This collaboration will boost commanders' confidence that they are not working alone. Shared success with partner agency will also contribute to the commanders' sense of mastery and belief in their capacity to lead large scale initiative despite the limited resources.

The theme also aligns with Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (2015), where individuals are motivated when they feel capable and supported. The affirmation they receive from LGUs, barangays, PDEA, and other partner agency reinforces their sense of competence and gives emotional validation to their efforts. These collaborations act as positive reinforcements, fueling their motivation to push forward amid challenges.

The Role Theory of Ralph Linton and Bruce Biddle (1986) further illustrate that this theme, as commanders must fulfill multiple roles; law enforcer, community collaborator, and inter-agency coordinator. Partnerships help reduce role strain by providing clarity, shared responsibility, and collective direction. When various agencies align their actions, commanders experience less conflict between expectations and reality, allowing them to function more effectively in their leadership roles.

The literature strongly supports the role of multisectoral collaboration in effective drug enforcement like Briguel et al. (2023) and Brannon (2025) emphasized that drug-clearing and anti-drug programs succeed when PNP, LGUs, BADACs, and partner agency coordinate closely mirroring the experiences of the commanders.

Furthermore, De Castro et al. (2020) also noted that trust and cooperation between the police and partner agencies strengthen operational effectiveness. Burke (2022) discussed how organizational outcomes improve when formal structures are complemented by informal social systems, which aligns with the commanders' use of community and advisory partnerships. Likewise, John (2023) highlighted that implementation gaps can be reduced when agencies work in synergy rather than in isolation.

This theme is beneficial in the PNP and partner sectors since this recognizes that enduring progress requires collective commitment. Understanding this will tell that partnership can guide stronger mechanism, better coordination protocol and more inclusive prevention strategies. This theme implores on one powerful lesson; anti-drug implementation when sectors unite, proving that real strength lies in moving as one.

5.3 Impact of the Implementation of the Anti-Drug Program to the Peace and Order of the Community

5.3.1. Peace Built on Persistence and Precision

The commander's reflection reveals that for a meaningful and lasting peace enforcement must be in combination of consistent police presence and strengthened police intelligence work and careful execution in case handling. Their insights encapsulates that the implementation demand more than just arrests this will require skill, coordination and disciplined attention to detail. This belief forms the foundation of the theme "Peace Built on Persistence and Precision".

The theme emphasized on the importance of avoiding technical errors in filing of cases; poor case handling can result to dismissals thus weakening the impact of the program. Improving the legal documentation will contribute to more robust prosecution, personnel training in technology, hiring of specialized personnel are essential to maintain gains of the anti-drug implementation. Together, the insights show that peace emerges when anti-program campaign is well executed with precision; not rushed decisions but in a well-informed and well documented efforts.

From a theoretical standpoint, this theme aligns strongly with Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura, particularly the idea that competence and skill mastery enhance one's ability to produce meaningful outcomes. Commanders recognize that their men's confidence and effectiveness grow when they are given adequate training in intelligence gathering, technology use, and case build-up. When officers feel capable and technically prepared, they perform better, contributing to more sustainable peace in the community. The desire for more training and specialized personnel reflects their belief that mastery leads to better performance which a core principle of self-efficacy.

The theme also resonates with Competence Motivation Theory Susan Harter (2015), which emphasizes that individuals are driven to perform tasks where they feel competent and capable. The commanders' repeated call for improving personnel skills, case-handling accuracy, and technological proficiency reflects an internal motivation to enhance the quality of their operations. Their insights show that when officers feel competent, not just active, they contribute more effectively to crime prevention and community safety.

Role Theory of Ralph Linton and Bruce Biddle (1986) further reinforce this theme. Commanders understand that crime reduction requires them to not only enforce the law but also to act as analysts, coordinators and trainers. Their recognition of the importance of coordination, precision, and case integrity indicates that they are negotiating complex roles with multiple expectations. Peace becomes achievable when these roles are performed in harmony when officers are trained, informed, and supported.

The literature closely mirrors these insights from the book of Burke (2022) it emphasized that effective leadership requires strengthening both formal procedures and informal practice to achieve consistent outcomes similarly to the commanders' emphasis on sustained intelligence work and structured case handling.

As highlighted by Briguel et al. (2023), the importance of strategic, evidence-based processes in drug-clearing programs, reinforcing the need for accuracy and community involvement. From the perspective of Frabutt et al. (2010) they stressed that drug elimination efforts require systematic, step-by-step interventions grounded in intelligence and technical precision. Likewise, Hoggett et al. (2019) further support the idea that capability, experience, and technical skill build credibility in police leadership, aligning with the commanders' hope for more training and specialized personnel.

These insights are for training academies, policy makers and PNP leaders to also move into approaches which is technical, skills driven model of prevention. The theme highlights a powerful meaning; peace is not only product of persistent action but of precise, well-informed and expertly executed policing where every step is taken with accuracy and purpose.

5.3.2 Trust at the Center of Peace

The theme reflects a simple but power realization the peace becomes real and lasting when trust stand at the center of police and community relation. The accounts made by the informants show that the most transformative impact of the anti-drug program emerges when residents begin to trust the police enough to report crimes, cooperate in interventions and take responsibilities for their families and their surroundings. The theme highlights the deep truth, that peace and order flourish when people no longer fear the police but work with them.

In this theme account of the informant explained that when parents become more mindful of monitoring their children or a loved one who is a former user or even the user himself understand the consequences of their choices and take step towards positive change, begun to repair family relationship it signals more unified effort and front in maintaining peace and order.

The theme aligns strongly with anchor theory of Self-Efficacy of Albert Bandura (1997), particularly the role of social persuasion and emotional reinforcement. As communities show trust, cooperation, and respect, these responses serve as positive reinforcement that enhances officers' confidence in their role. When residents willingly report, coordinate, or seek help, officers perceive their work as effective and meaningful, strengthening their sense of agency and persistence.

The theme also echoes the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (2015), where individuals are driven when they feel valued and effective. The commanders' sense of fulfillment when communities cooperate, when former drug users reunite with families, when LGUs express support, reinforces their internal motivation to continue their efforts. Trust serves as emotional feedback that affirms their competence, encouraging sustained performance and deeper engagement with the community. Linton and Biddle (1986) Role Theory further enriches this theme by explaining how police commanders navigate multiple roles; enforcers, protectors, community educators, and partners in rehabilitation. Trust helps resolve role conflict. When the community supports them, expectations become clearer and role performance becomes smoother. Trust aligns the roles of the police and the public, creating shared norms that reinforce peace.

As mentioned by De Castro et al. (2020) it is found that when residents feel safe and perceive good policing, trust naturally increases, leading to more cooperation and better crime reporting. Additionally, Burke (2022) noted that sustainable reforms rely heavily on strong relationships between institutions and communities, echoing how commanders see trust as the glue of peace.

Furthermore, Briguel et al. (2023) emphasized that community-based drug-clearing initiatives succeed when trust enables smoother coordination between PNP, LGUs, and barangay structures. Hoggett et al. (2019) also stressed that credibility and legitimacy in police leadership deepen when officers show genuine concern for the public, reinforcing the insights shared by the commanders.

The themes show a very important take away for the PNP, LGUs and training institution, that the most enduring form peace is co-produced. Enforcers initiate safety, but trust sustain it.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study carry important implications for practice, leadership, policy refinement, and capacity development across sectors involved in anti-drug efforts. Given the lived realities of the station commanders, these implications highlight the need for more humane, strategic, and collaborative approaches in future practice.

To the Police Station Commanders the study implies that commanders should continue strengthening leadership that balances enforcement, community engagement, and inter-agency coordination. Their experiences highlight the importance of mentoring

personnel in intelligence, case build-up, and ethical decision-making. Institutional support for emotional well-being and reflective leadership practice is also essential.

On the side of the Police City Directors, the findings indicate that city directors must recognize the operational and emotional burdens placed on station commanders. This calls for supervisory systems that value quality outcomes, community trust-building, and inter-agency partnerships, not merely quantitative accomplishments. Strengthened mentoring, consultation, and support structures may enhance leadership performance.

To the PNP in General, at the national level, the study suggests the need to recalibrate policies to account for recurring drug activity, resource constraints, and emotional strain among field commanders. Strengthening mental health support, refining performance indicators, and institutionalizing community-based strategies may improve program delivery. These implications highlight the importance of aligning national directives with local realities.

For the Police Operatives, the findings imply that operatives should understand their work within broader leadership and community contexts. Encouraging operatives to view themselves not only as enforcers but as partners in prevention and community trust-building may enhance professionalism and cooperation. More structured mentorship and communication regarding strategy rationale is recommended.

Dangerous Drug Board (DDB). For the DDB, the study implies the need to refine policies in ways that reflect ground-level realities, including issues of relapse, plea bargaining, and community dynamics. Enhancing support for rehabilitation-centered approaches and ensuring policy alignment with enforcement conditions may improve long-term outcomes. Continuous consultation with field commanders is vital.

To the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), the results indicate that deeper coordination between PDEA and local police is essential, particularly in intelligence sharing, case build-up, and barangay drug-clearing processes. Harmonizing standards, documentation protocols, and training may strengthen prosecution and reduce operational duplication. This reinforces the value of unified, multisectoral drug enforcement.

On the PNP Training Institute and Academies, training institutions should integrate the hidden emotional, ethical, and leadership burdens experienced by commanders into their curriculum. Scenario-based learning, reflective exercises, and modules on mental health and inter-agency coordination can better prepare future officers. This aligns training more closely with the realities of anti-drug implementation.

For the Local Government Units (LGUs), the study suggests that LGUs play a crucial role in providing logistical support, political backing, and community-based programs that complement police operations. Treating station commanders as governance partners, rather than mere implementers, can improve coordination and program outcomes. Institutionalizing joint planning mechanisms may enhance long-term peace and safety.

For the Criminology Students, the results suggest that criminology students should be exposed to the practical, emotional, and ethical dimensions of police work, not only its procedural aspects. Integrating real narratives of leadership, community trust-building, and inter-agency coordination into instruction may strengthen their preparedness. This can inculcate deeper empathy, resilience, and realistic expectations as future practitioners.

For the researcher, the findings underscore the need to continue linking academic insights with frontline law enforcement realities. The study provides a foundation for curriculum development, policy advocacy, and future collaborative initiatives with police agencies. This strengthens the researcher's role in bridging scholarship and practice.

For future researchers, the study implies opportunities to explore perspectives not covered in this research, such as those of operatives, community members, or rehabilitated users. Future research may examine mental health impacts, trust-building strategies, or comparative approaches to community-based drug enforcement. These avenues can deepen understanding and guide more evidence-based reforms.

The implications emphasize that effective and humane anti-drug implementation requires shared responsibility across sectors. Strengthening leadership, trust, collaboration, and community engagement forms the path toward safer and more resilient communities.

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