
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reinforcing the Frontlines: Experiences of Police Auxiliary during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This is a phenomenological study on the experiences of Task Force Kasaligan as auxiliary forces during the COVID-19 pandemic in Cebu City. Phenomenological interviewing was used in data gathering to describe the meaning of the phenomenon. This study was conducted in Cebu City, Philippines, where the participants were selected members of Task Force Kasaligan. These were ten participants who were chosen through purposive convenient sampling. The study utilized an interview Guide to elicit in-depth responses from the participants. The investigation aimed to explore several key areas: the personal experiences of individuals serving as police auxiliaries, the strategies they employ to address challenges faced while fulfilling their roles, and their goals for enhancing the service they provide to the community. Results revealed that three themes came up: two themes on positive and one on negative experiences of the participants in the performance of their duty as police auxiliary during the covid-19 pandemic which are: *Knowledge and Competence Leads to Better Performance, Police Presence Makes COVID-19 Spread Lessened*; and *Bashing and Disrespecting Authorities Leads to COVID-19 Spread*. Two themes in how the participants, as police auxiliaries, coped with the problems encountered in performing their duties: *Expanding the Maximum Tolerance* and *Building Strong Collaboration*. The aspirations of the participants to enhance the service quality provided to the community revealed two main themes: Firstly, the importance of "Holding on: Security of Tenure," highlighting the significance of job security. Secondly, "Moving on: The Need for Training and Development" emphasizes the necessity for continuous learning and skill enhancement. It was recommended that the Cebu City Police Office and the Task Force Kasaligan Personnel should conduct police partnership programs about the guidelines of COVID-19 health protocols in the different barangays in Cebu City. The purpose of this police partnership program is to strengthen the relationship of the Police Personnel and Task Force Kasaligan Personnel to the community's citizens and to ensure their cooperation.

KEYWORDS

Criminal Justice, Police Auxiliary, Phenomenological Study, Philippines.

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1. Introduction

Force Multipliers are organizations outside the government that perform voluntary public safety services to support existing government public safety functions and programs. The idea of force multiplication originates from military science. It involves a factor or a combination of factors that significantly enhance the efficiency of a group beyond what they could accomplish on their own without these elements. A *force multiplier* is an element that significantly enhances the strength or capabilities of a team's resources or forces. This synergistic factor boosts efficiency and offers a strategic edge. Their primary goal is to assist the PNP in maintaining peace and order and delivering public safety services.

With the coronavirus pandemic affecting every aspect of our lives, the world has faced one of the greatest crises for years. It has been dealing with the pandemic known as COVID-19, which started in 2019 and is still ongoing. Nobody was prepared for this;

everyone is working hand in hand to fight the pandemic. Every community aspect was affected, and many people lost their jobs. Numerous businesses had to close their operations and were prohibited from providing their services to prevent contamination and minimize direct interactions among people.

The government is doing its best to sustain the needs of everyone, especially those who are in the most need of help. Due to this difficulty, the government had to enforce strict quarantine. It cannot be avoided that people will always be going against quarantine protocols. The Cebu City government does not have enough workforce to enforce these protocols, so after months of planning and careful study, Task Force KASALIGAN (Kaluwasan sa mga Amigo Cops ug Sugbuanon Ang Gusto sa Atong Liderato nga Ipatuman Gumikan sa hula sa COVID-19 Alang Natong Tanan) is born to address and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

TF KASALIGAN is a proactive approach to speed up contact tracing and information dissemination to educate the community about the deadly disease, its effects on health, and possible loss of lives.

The Cebu City government has hired highly qualified professionals who will be using an approach based on contact tracing studies that have produced fruitful results.

These professionals will focus solely on contact tracing and educating the public on the gravity of COVID-19. The ignorance of the disease has left many subjects to transmission and contagion.

Cebu City, one of the regions in the Philippines, has also been affected by the pandemic. According to (Etemadi, n.d.) on civil society participation in the city governance in Cebu City, this City covers 330 square kilometers and is sub-divided into 80 barangays. Due to this high-rate population, Cebu City requires more workforce to help combat the situation.

As a criminologist, the researcher conducts this study to discover the lived experiences of task force Kasaligan in helping the PNP implement quarantine protocols amidst the pandemic. Hence, this study provides data-based information to help the police department shape the best strategies for enforcing quarantine protocols.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on the following theories: Social Control Theory by Travis Hirschi, which is further supported by Team Performance Theory by Dr. Meredith Belbin, and Routine Activity Theory by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus K. Felson.

During the 1960s, as sociologists explored different understandings of crime, Travis Hirschi's social control theory emerged as a significant perspective. Hirschi introduced a novel approach to control theory based on the idea that connections with family, school, and society at large play a crucial role in reducing the likelihood of engaging in deviant behavior. According to the social control theory, crime occurs when these social bonds are either weak or improperly formed. Thus, control theorists believe that without these connections, crime becomes a likely outcome (Wells, 2017).

Unlike other theories that explain why people engage in deviant behavior, control theories take the opposite approach, questioning why people refrain from offending (Akers & Jensen, 2008).

Thus, the potential for criminal behavior exists within all members of society, and it is only evaded by those who actively maintain connections with family and society. Hirschi suggests that such connections are rooted in emotional attachments to family members, friends, educators, and colleagues; a dedication to pursuits that have required significant personal investment, like academic or professional ambitions; participation in group activities that not only strengthen social ties but also reduce the time available for engaging in misconduct; and a shared adherence to broader societal norms. These elements of social control are believed to work together to protect an individual from engaging in criminal acts, as discussed by Hossain and Ahmed in 2015.

Those seeking to test the strength of this theory as it specifically relates to young people have closely examined bonds with family, schools, community, and religion to determine the extent to which such bonds impact offending. The following discusses a selection of the literature on social control theory concerning youth delinquency and offending (Wiatrowski, 1978).

The team performance theory describes a pattern of behavior that characterizes one person's behavior towards another in facilitating a team's progress. This method allows a person or group to gain insights from understanding themselves and modify their actions to align with the requirements of the surrounding circumstances. A person's role within a team is determined by a 'Self Perception Inventory,' a survey to identify your favored approach to teamwork. This argument is reinforced through the integration of 'observer assessments,' which offer unbiased testimony regarding a person's roles within a team (Belbin, 2010).

It is important to remember that this instrument is intended to identify a person's 'preferred' roles within a team, suggesting the best way they would function in a team setting. Excelling in a particular team role can sometimes mean that what is considered a strength in this area might be perceived as a deficiency in a different situation.

An effective team typically maintains a well-rounded composition with all 9 team roles for optimal balance. It is common for strong teams to have a solid coordinator, a creative plant, and a critical monitor evaluator, along with several implementers, team workers, resource investigators, or completer finishers. Rather than having both a shaper and a coordinator, a shaper usually serves as an alternative to a coordinator. However, achieving this ideal balance is rare in practice. It is useful for a team to be aware of which roles are either underrepresented or missing entirely and also to recognize the secondary roles of its members.

The development and evolution of team roles can occur through experience and intentional focus. When a role within the team is missing, it often gets adopted by someone who might still need to see it as their primary responsibility. It is beneficial for the team to communicate openly about their specific roles, as this fosters a deeper comprehension and helps meet shared expectations.

Another theory that supports this study comes from Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus K. Felson, who developed the Routine Activity Theory (1979).

Routine Activity Theory, conceived by Cohen and Felson, is predicated on the convergence of three elements: a "potential offender, a suitable target, and the lack of a capable guardian" (Bottoms & Wiles, 1997, p. 320). For a crime to occur, these three components must be present simultaneously. This theory adopts the rational choice approach, similar to that used in situational crime prevention strategies. However, it is not without its critiques. A significant point of contention is the presumption that offenders make rational choices. Their thought processes might differ from those tasked with implementing security protocols. They might need to be conscious of the crime prevention methods in place. Influences such as drugs or alcohol or disregarding security precautions might drive their actions (Petri, 2022).

Following Cohen and Felson's landmark study, later work extended routine activity theory's application beyond changing national crime rates. Subsequent work often applied the theory to variation in individual risk of victimization instead. Routine activity theory is one of criminology's most influential and policy-relevant theories. This theory explains the dynamics of criminal events, patterns in criminal victimization, and predictions of victimization risks/likelihood (Allen, 2015).

Again, at the core of routine activity theory is the contention that three necessary locational elements must be present for a crime to occur: a potential offender, suitable targets, and the absence of capable and willing guardians. With the assumption that these three elements are present in a situation, the theory is based on two central propositions: First, the patterns and habits of daily life shape opportunities for crime by heightening the number and intensity of interactions between potential perpetrators and viable targets. Second, potential offenders likely assess the perceived value of a target and whether any available forms of guardianship are present when considering when, where, and upon whom to commit their crimes. Routine activity theory differs from most other criminological theories in that it is not primarily interested in identifying or specifying reasons for crime commission. Instead, it shifts focus on the differing risks for victimization that individuals and locations possess.

Additionally, routine activity theory provides insights regarding when, where, and upon whom criminal events are more likely to be perpetrated and explains how various aspects of individuals' lifestyles correlate with these differential victimization patterns. In this respect, the theory derives its name: it is centrally interested in identifying those typical behaviors of persons and that characteristics of situations are associated with increased and decreased likelihood of criminal victimization.

The theory has implications for advancing crime prevention efforts. Theoretically, even though persons may be willing to commit crimes given sufficient opportunities, if those opportunities never arise, the crimes will not occur. Opportunities may not arise for multiple reasons. It may be that potential offenders cannot find persons sufficiently vulnerable or possess property sufficiently valuable to merit interest. Moreover, even if valuable or vulnerable targets are present, these persons or items may be accompanied by guardians who are capable and willing to stop that impending crime from happening. As such, structural aspects of specific environmental contexts and individual choices are important for understanding where, when, and to whom criminal events happen.

Further, by identifying the characteristics of persons, their behaviors, and the settings in which these activities take place, routine activity theory research can expand our understanding of the interactions and locations of criminal events and develop and implement crime prevention programs. Once it is understood which activities, locations, and demographics are more vulnerable, strategies can be formulated to increase the quantity and effectiveness of protectors in specific environments. This could lower the attractiveness of potential targets. Additionally, educating individuals about riskier behaviors and places and the reasons behind these risks can empower them to make more informed choices regarding their day-to-day activities. Further, routine activity

theory can suggest ways in which communities and individuals can prevent crime by reducing criminal opportunities and utilizing law enforcement the most efficiently to increase the guardianship present. Additionally, routine activity theory can guide the continued social development of communities in order to provide greater crime prevention.

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution mandates that the State must protect and promote the people's right to health and increase their awareness of health matters. In response, the government issued Executive Order No. 168 in 2014, establishing the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF). This initiative aimed to bolster collaboration among various sectors to ensure the government is well-prepared and can effectively respond to, assess, monitor, manage, and mitigate the risk of spreading infectious diseases in the Philippines. According to Section 2(c) of E.O. 168, one of the key duties of the IATF is to reduce and control the local transmission of emerging infectious diseases in the nation. This is to be achieved by setting up or strengthening a system for the screening of potential patients, tracing contacts, determining how individuals were exposed to the disease, and executing efficient quarantine and isolation measures (IATF, 2020).

On January 28th, 2020, the IATF convened and issued regular recommendations for managing the 2019 Novel Corona Virus Acute Respiratory Disease, now known as Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). On March 18, 2020, a memorandum from the Executive Secretary's Office required all leaders of government departments, agencies, and other entities, including the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), as well as government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Local Government Units (LGUs), to follow, collaborate on, and enforce any guidelines issued by the IATF regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with their agency duties and applicable laws, rules, and regulations. On April 30, 2020, Executive Order (E.O.) No. 112, series of 2020, was enacted, establishing an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in areas of the Philippines considered high-risk and a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in the rest of the nation from May 1 to 15, 2020. This order included the comprehensive guidelines for its implementation and related matters (IATF, 2020).

The IATF then endorsed guidelines for implementing a Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), introduced a zoning strategy, and outlined the necessary criteria and phased responses or interventions. There was a recognized necessity to update the existing community quarantine guidelines to simplify the rules for various transitional community quarantine stages. Under Section 3 of E.O. 112, the IATF is empowered to revise or alter the Comprehensive Guidelines on Implementing Community Quarantine across the Philippines. Taking into account the information presented, the IATF has released these revised Comprehensive Guidelines to integrate and standardize the existing policies of the IATF and its member agencies concerning community quarantine, which will be enforced across all regions, provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays under community quarantine (IATF, 2020).

Ordinance #2566, "penalizing any violation about implementing general/enhanced community quarantine in Cebu City during a public health crisis," was approved last June 26 by the City Council in an online special session. A month later, on July 27, it was signed by Mayor Edgardo Labella. It will take effect 15 days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation. It is not known if the ordinance was already published. The present GCQ for Cebu City could expire and be extended or shifted to another form, with the ordinance still needing to be operative. As of now, it is only a newspaper publication away. However, the lesson learned is that even a pandemic must rush bureaucracy more quickly. To think that the reason for the ordinance, as mentioned in its explanatory note, was alleged flagrant disregard of quarantine rules by many city residents. Under the National Task Force IATF guidelines, local governments must penalize violations of C.Q. prohibitions through the mayor's executive orders and the Sanggunian ordinances.

For so long, with the mayor's E.O.s but no City Council ordinances, the police were arresting violators based on a vague Bayanihan One law. What law enforcers did was to detain them for a few hours and lecture them or, when it got their fancy, require them to dance the Sinulog. In the real sense of the word, they arrested only those who resisted detention but were charged with resisting arrest, not for C.Q. violation. It aimed to deter violators, which the authors -- Councilors David Tumalak, Raymond Garcia, and Philip Zafra -- specify as the reason for its filing. Ordinance #2566 imposes stiff penalties. Getting harsher as the offense is repeated: first offense, less than P1,500 fine or less than 30 days in jail or both fine and imprisonment; second offense: fine of less than P3,000 and 30 days in jail; third offense, at least P5,000 and 30 days in jail. The violator cannot receive any cash aid, tax amnesty, or any other financial benefit from the city for two years from the violation.

Seniors and those with a physical disability, among others, will not get much help within the prescribed period. Exempt establishments that violate prohibited acts will revoke their permits and be closed down. The ordinance applies to all quarantine violations, whether general or enhanced, plain or modified C.Q. The offense must be related, however, to a "health crisis" and must be covered by an executive order of the mayor. Moreover, it may include all other acts the mayor's E.O. penalizes about a health crisis for which a quarantine is declared. The ordinance shall apply to "any other violation of provisions from now on considered as a violation under the executive order for a declared state of general or community quarantine." Section #5 of this ordinance

lists the health protocols, including (1) wearing of face masks, (2) social distancing (1.5 meters apart) in public places and commercial or business establishments, (3) social distancing (one seat apart) in public and private vehicles, (4) posting of notices by establishments, (5) mandatory stay-at-home orders, and (6) use and wearing of C.Q. pass—section #10 lists the prohibitions, which do not exactly match the list of health measures. The law enforcer and prosecutor tend to look at the prohibited acts, not the health regulations. The section says the list of prohibited acts is not exclusive and includes other violations mentioned by the ordinance. For example, loitering is not among the health protocols but is included in the list of prohibited acts. Loitering is prohibited not just in public places "day and night" but also in "premises" outside the home or residence "at any time." This means the ban covers even the "tugkaran" outside the gate or boundary line of one's property (Seares, 2020).

Mass gatherings are prohibited under the ordinance, but no number of people is specified to constitute such a gathering. I assume that the numbers specified in IATF guidelines will apply. (SunStar, 2020). The City Government of Cebu, together with PRO7 under the leadership of PBGen Albert Ignatius Ferro, Regional Director, and the Cebu City Police Office (CCPO), launched this project to aid medical front liners in arresting the rapid spreading COVID-19 (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). TF KASALIGAN will operate based on developed strategies that will best slow down the virus and eventually stop its spread with discipline that will be instilled through unceasing records, leafleting, and social media blasts throughout the densely populated barangays of the city (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). With the team in full operation, it will greatly help maintain the low transmission statistics. While the vaccine is yet to be available, the roles of the contact tracers will come into full play (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021).

The combined efforts of the police officers and other gov't agencies along with TF KASALIGAN will be a good equation to counter the spread of COVID-19 (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). Today, before the contact tracers go into full battle, they will be trained and equipped to function effectively in their new responsibilities (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). Trained professionals will orient and train them to have full knowledge in dealing with COVID-19-positive contacts and how to disseminate information effectively. PRO7's i5 strategy (Inform, Identify, Isolate, Intervene, and Integrate) will be applied in this campaign (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). TF KASALIGAN is PRO7 and Cebu City's joint effort to take care of public health during this pandemic; TF KASALIGAN was created to ensure that the public health protocols in Cebu City are being followed by its citizens (Sararaña & CDN Digital, 2021). TF KASALIGAN is one of those many auxiliary forces here in Cebu City that is helping implement health protocols and was activated last September 8, 2020. The recruits were mostly unemployed college graduates, but most were graduates of Criminology courses; they were trained and deployed for four months from September to December 2020 to augment the city's police force to implement mostly health protocols and quarantine rules. These included helping implement the wearing of face masks and those regulations under executive ordinances issued by the city mayor, including the latest regarding liquor ban. The task force members, however, could not apprehend quarantine violators. However, they could only back up the police officers assigned to a team (*TF Kasaligan Members Resume 'Backup' Duties for Cebu City Cops*, 2021).

A study by Greenberg, M. A. (1984) titled "Auxiliary Police – The Citizen's Approach to Public Safety" presents a framework for creating an effective public safety plan. The study employed survey questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews for data collection, and it used percentages and weighted mean for analysis. It assessed the Davao City Police Office (DCPO), finding its intelligence operations effective but identifying issues with visibility patrols, public safety support, and security operations. Despite initial support from the local government and the DCPO for the Police Auxiliary Unit (PAU), the unit was eventually disbanded. The study concluded that the ineffectiveness of DCPO in certain areas could compromise Davao City's safety and recommended restructuring an auxiliary force to bolster peace and order efforts. It also suggested that the Davao City local government should provide technical and financial assistance for this initiative, referencing the Department of the Interior and Local Government Memorandum Circular 2010-94.

A research study has found that over 25% of the global population experiences insecurity due to high crime and violence rates, particularly in the Global South. While police forces are crucial in mitigating these issues, they can also be the source of unjust harm to the people they are meant to protect. Our analysis focuses on the impact of community policing, which aims to foster trust between the community and law enforcement, enhance collaborative efforts for public safety, and decrease crime rates. Community policing strategies include more foot patrols, community meetings, and adopting problem-solving techniques to address issues highlighted by residents. This approach, by fostering cooperation and effective police actions, builds trust among citizens, encouraging further collaboration and creating a positive feedback loop. Community policing has been tried globally, but while it shows promising results in wealthier nations, there needs to be more comprehensive evidence of its effectiveness in building trust and curtailing crime in the Global South.

In collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, we executed six synchronized field studies across Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Uganda. Our joint efforts focused on enhancing community policing practices tailored to each locality. To mitigate potential risks associated with working alongside police forces, we proactively sought feedback on police misconduct and meticulously chose the regions and specific police departments for our collaboration. Areas were randomly

designated to either adopt the community policing strategies or to serve as part of the control group. Our interventions reached approximately 9 million people in 516 treated areas. At the end line, we surveyed 18,382 citizens and 874 police officers and obtained crime data from the police. We conducted experiments in multiple settings with common measures to strengthen the generalizability of our findings. A combined analysis of the six studies was preregistered to mitigate the possibility of publication bias.

In six locations, the shift towards community policing practices tailored to local needs failed to enhance trust between citizens, increase citizen collaboration with the police, or decrease crime rates. Despite initial strong support from leaders in each area, the police's application of these practices needed to be more consistent and complete. While citizens noted a more significant presence of police in areas where community policing was initiated, there is scant evidence of effective police responses to citizen reports. The lackluster outcomes could be attributed to three prevalent issues in policing reforms: diminishing commitment from police leadership over time, the frequent changeover of police leadership and personnel, and inadequate resources to address concerns reported by citizens.

In an era where police departments globally are exploring reforms to enhance trust with citizens, it is crucial to scrutinize the empirical support for popular reform initiatives. Given the constraints of motivation and resources for change, our comprehensive experiments convey a straightforward conclusion. Merely implementing community policing does not immediately or solely result in significant betterment of relations between citizens and police or in crime reduction. According to Blair et al. (2021), for effective crime reduction and to ensure that police are more accountable to the public, it might be necessary to undertake structural changes within the police force.

A 2021 study by Jordan and colleagues highlights the transformative approach of community policing, positioning it at the heart of collaborative efforts to foster a safe and secure environment. In this approach, the community actively engages in its governance, viewing law enforcement not as an external imposition or a source of danger but as a partner in progress. It underscores the importance of a tripartite collaboration involving the community, local government, and police force to address crime effectively. The research focuses on the community policing model in Piat, Cagayan, drawing from the experiences of the Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel and local citizens. Employing the input-process-output model, the study elucidates the dynamics between various elements, including the profiles of the PNP force and community members, the implemented community policing strategies, and the challenges faced by the PNP in service delivery. It examines the perceptions of these stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the community policing system and concludes with an evaluation of community satisfaction with the PNP's efforts. Findings reveal no significant differences in perceptions between the two respondent groups concerning police visibility and traffic management. However, their views align regarding the efficacy of police patrols and the organization of symposiums and seminars. The study also notes significant variations in community satisfaction levels with the PNP's community policing efforts based on demographic factors such as age, sex, and civil status. This underscores the necessity for wholehearted community support and involvement in assisting the PNP in achieving optimal service delivery.

With all the theories and related literature, I supported the studies related to the life experiences of Task Force Kasaligan on implementing the health protocols amidst this pandemic. In this study, the researcher wanted to explore and understand beyond revelation the experiences of the participants in implementing the health protocols, how the participants maintain safety protocols in the community, problems encountered by the participants while performing their duties, and how the participants address the problems encountered in the performance of their duties. Moreover, the participants aspire to improve the quality of service rendered to the community.

3. Methodology

3.1 Gathering of Data

The data was gathered by interviewing the selected participants. The interview was recorded, and each information gathered was taken down into writing. The participants were told what the study was, the interview process, the fact that the interview could be kept confidential upon their request, and their willingness to participate. The participants were asked to answer each question with only truth and honesty and were given written consent stating the purpose of the interview for the study. The interview was conducted, and everything recorded was transcribed into writing for a better source of information and analysis of all their answers. The type of questions that the researcher used was open-ended type to make the participants freer to speak on their experiences, thoughts, opinions, complaints, and personal feelings towards the duty they are making, creating a borderless relationship with the researcher.

3.2 Data Analysis

After collecting all responses, the researcher analyzed the data by summarizing all the answers from the data collection. The researcher then made notes on important and relevant information regarding the study, summarizing it for coding and translating

vernacular answers into English. After this, the researcher reviewed the transcript by rereading the answers to ensure the accuracy of the data. This is also to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

The following steps were used in analyzing:

The initial phase involved converting the data from the tape into a written document. This was done to refine and revise the manuscripts by removing any spelling mistakes and inconsistencies and to review and amend the content. Following this, the focus shifted to evaluating and refining the transcripts and organizing the data for further examination. At this stage, frameworks for analysis and interpretation were established, the data was condensed through coding, and patterns within the data were pinpointed. Throughout this phase, the researcher gathered all the data, including field notes and transcripts from interviews, and started to understand the gathered information comprehensively. The researcher then coded the data and conducted a content analysis, searching for specific terms to unearth underlying themes. The outcomes from individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were summarized to highlight the commonalities and distinctions, facilitating the creation of typologies. In this phase, the researcher also began to assess the accuracy of the interpretations by revisiting the transcripts. This step was crucial for confirming or adjusting the hypotheses formulated earlier.

3.3 Ethical consideration.

The participants' identities were treated with confidentiality, and prior permissions were obtained from the participants before the interviews were conducted. The researcher also complied with the policy on research, namely the informed consent form, before researching the experiences of the task force Kasaligan.

Ethical guidelines prohibit the creation or alteration of data falsely, thus supporting the primary objective of research, which is the quest for knowledge and truth. Ethical conduct is essential in collaborative efforts, fostering trust, responsibility, and reciprocal respect among researchers. This is especially important when considering data sharing, co-authorship, copyright guidelines, confidentiality, etc. The researcher also committed to ethical principles, ensuring the public's trust and support for the study. The community needs to be confident that the researcher abides by the necessary standards concerning human rights, animal welfare, legal compliance, conflict of interest, safety, health norms, and more. The management of ethical concerns significantly influences the integrity of a research project and can determine its eligibility for funding. Ethical considerations hold considerable importance in research, prompting numerous professional associations and agencies to establish codes and policies that define ethical conduct and offer guidance to researchers.

4. Results and Discussion

This portion presents a comparative or descriptive examination of the study, drawing upon the findings, prior research, and other relevant literature. The presentation of the results should be logical, prioritizing the key findings and directly addressing the objectives outlined. The focus should be on the novel or significant aspects of the results. Additionally, it is important to contextualize the findings within the broader existing literature or current practices.

4.1. Experiences of the Participants as police auxiliary

4.1.1. Knowledge and Competence Leads to Better Performance.

This particular theme of the study relates to the participants' positive experiences in performing their duties. When personnel stay longer in their job, they gain experience in police work that will help in their application to the enforcement of laws.

As a registered Criminologist, I believe that the task force Kasaligan will greatly help us as future law enforcers. We can see what the police work is that we can apply for soon. (Participant 1).

My positive experience as a reliable task force member is that as criminology graduates, we can apply even the basics in the field, not just theories. However, we can apply and help the task force by adding knowledge and enhancing those who know during schooling. (Participant 4).

My positive experience as task force Kasaligan is that I was able to meet several types of people, which makes me advantageous in doing our duty as a PNP auxiliary because we can make adjustments already, unlike before as a student and having only civil-mindedness in which I do not know how to socialize with other people or can be easily offended, but now, as task force Kasaligan, we can already adjust to ourselves. What made this task force Kasaligan positive is that we can learn things related to our course, Criminology. Shortly, as we become Police Officers, we can relate to this experience, not just by what we have known in books but in the real-life setting. Moreover, we can know some of our Police Officers and make friends with them, like those Officers here (Parian Police Station), our organic, our chief of police, the deputy, and some officers assigned here in Cebu City due to the pandemic. This is a huge help to us Criminology students because it relates to our field, of course, and our future jobs. (Participant 8).

The team performance theory describes a pattern of behavior that characterizes one person's behavior about another in facilitating a team's progress. Participants were deployed in different police stations in Cebu City to implement and execute the COVID-19 health protocols in different barangays and streets to stop the spread of the virus and enhance the performance of each member.

According to (Sullivan & O'Keeffe, 2017), Increasing police stops, quality-of-life summonses, and low-level arrests deter more serious criminal activity by signaling that the area is being monitored and that deviance will not be tolerated. Civilian complaints that major crimes such as burglary, felony, assault, and grand larceny decreased.

(Farrow, 2020) said the task of ensuring public compliance with the new measures has been integrated into the policing role, with officers now being called upon to ensure citizens comply with the government's social distancing requirements.

4.1.2. Police Presence Makes COVID-19 Spread Lessened.

This particular theme relates to the participants' positive experiences in performing their duties. They are so happy and, at the same time, satisfied that the assistance they rendered helped a lot in the implementation of health protocol to lessen COVID-19 cases in Cebu City.

My experience is that I helped lessen the spread of covid 19 by approaching people who do not wear masks and telling them to wear face masks so the spread of covid 19 will be slow. (Participant 2).

I am satisfied because we can arrest violators of our city ordinance who do not wear face masks; we will still give our police help because they cannot do anything without us as a task force. (Participant 4).

We have given a huge help to PNP personnel as it lessens their work about health protocols because it is not their only work to do, but also on crimes; as Task Force Kagan, we could help implement health protocols in Cebu City. (Participant 5).

Travis Hirschi's Social Control theory is relevant to the theme discussed, as it suggests that connections with family, educational institutions, and various societal elements act to reduce an individual's inclination towards engaging in deviant acts. The participants were satisfied and happy that the service they rendered led to the reduction of Covid-19 cases. At the same time, it is the result of the strong bonds between the Police and task force Kasaligan in their implementation of COVID-19 health protocols to the citizens in the community that makes the people cooperate and follow the guidelines of the protocols about COVID-19.

Globally, the enforcement of police authority has led to restricting the free assembly via state-mandated directives requiring people to remain at home, adhere to physical distancing guidelines, shutter operations of businesses deemed non-essential, and enforce quarantine measures.

4.1.3. Bashing and Disrespecting Authorities Leads to COVID-19 Spread.

This particular theme of the study relates to the participants' negative experiences in performing their duties. They encountered violators discrediting the authority and effort of the task force Kasaligan personnel. This lowers their morale.

I feel low morale when they label us as volunteers and unprofessional. We approach them with respect, and they make the contrast unjustly. (Participant 2).

We can be low in morale; mostly, we encounter people who will not believe us, and others will. However, it is like they look at us as unprofessional and not like a graduate of a 4-year course. We are cheap on our part. When we conduct a record, look at them. They do not have the force and are arrested. They resist, but we have the police with us. They will follow us if we have a police officer with us. (Participant 4).

Yes, sir, I feel low morale because we apprehended them rightfully and did not show them our real selves; as long as we assisted the PNP, they would treat us like that. It lowers our morale to be told that we are not yet police officers and do not have the right to arrest them, but as long as health protocols are observed. Reliable that we need to be more reliable. (Participant 5).

This theme is supported by the Social Control Theory of Travis Hirschi, which explains that the deviant behavior of an individual occurs when the bonds to society are weak or not well established. Some of the participants said that when they implement and execute the COVID-19 health protocols and other city ordinances for the people in the community, the majority of the citizens will not follow. When apprehended, they will resist and insist they did not commit any violations.

According to (Hapal, 2021), the term "pasaway" is a Filipino word loosely referring to an importunate, stubborn, or obstinate person. Amid the lockdown, the term pasaway referred to people violating government-imposed health protocols who feared spreading the virus; the pasaway became the bane of the government's pandemic response. Community members are less likely to comply and cooperate, and they show more resistance (Jones, 2020).

Police-community relations are likely to suffer during a public health emergency; tensions on both sides might be heightened because officers may have to enforce measures that infringe on civil liberties (Laufs & Waseem, 2020).

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4.2 Coping with the problems encountered by the participants in the performance of their duties

4.2.1. Expanding the Maximum Tolerance.

This study theme relates to how participants address the problems encountered in performing their duties. They will exercise maximum tolerance whenever they encounter aggressive behavior from people.

That is why when we encounter challenges, especially when we get to meet an arrogant person, the one thing we should do is observe maximum tolerance. Not because he is using a loud voice does not mean you should do the same; you have to calm yourself to keep the argument from getting serious, and you should tell them that if they have complaints, they should do it in the station. (Participant 2).

Most importantly, you need to approach things fairly and apply maximum tolerance. We do not know if they have the same problems as us, so we should be patient. (Participant 3).

Just stay calm and apply the maximum tolerance. If they do not understand us, we will need to call the help of the police, so they are the ones who will tell them about their violations. (Participant 7).

This theme is supported by team performance theory, which describes a pattern of behavior that characterizes one person's behavior towards another in facilitating a team's progress. This method allows a person or group to gain insights from self-awareness and modify their actions to meet the requirements of the external context. A "Self Perception Inventory," a survey to identify your favored approach to teamwork, determines an individual's role within a team. This process can be enhanced with "observer assessments," offering objective feedback on a person's roles within a team. The participants said that to address the problems encountered, they employed strategies such as the proper approach to the violators, explaining to them the violations they committed, and listening to the side of the violators in order to avoid misunderstanding on both sides that would result in conflicts. They do this as a team; it has been said that there is strength in numbers.

According to (Mazerolle et al., 2014), if the police are perceived as a legitimate power holder, community members are likelier to comply and cooperate with police and less likely to re-offend. Police legitimacy implies that the police are seen as legitimate power holders who uphold the law and operate in the community procedurally, giving a voice to the people they serve (Meyerson et al., 2020).

4.2.2. Building Strong Collaboration.

This theme relates to how the participants address the problems encountered in performing their duties when helping the PNP in their duties and responsibilities— the Assistance to the PNP and apprehension of the violators.

It gave a huge help being a task force kasaligan, especially for the PNP now that they have fewer applicants due to the pandemic; as they have fewer personnel, it gave a huge help that the creation of the task force helped in implementing guidelines and protocols of the IATF, especially to those who commit violation which gave help the PNP. Participant 1).

Maybe the factor will coordinate with the PNP, especially in assisting them in conducting checkpoints and arresting those who do not wear masks. Participant 4).

One of the advantages for people to listen to us is our close coordination with the PNP. Hey, are there when there is an operation? People will think twice before they violate when the PNP is with us, especially when the PNP-SAF are deployed here in Cebu. Participant 8).

This theme is supported by team performance theory. The team should share their team roles to increase understanding and enable mutual expectations to be met. The participants said they work as a team and execute their duties to avoid possible conflicts and eliminate the aggressive behaviors of the violators and the citizens of the community towards Task Force Kasaligan personnel.

4.3 Aspiration of the Participants to Improve the Quality of Service Rendered to the Community

4.3.1 Holding on: Security of Tenure is at stake.

This theme relates to the aspirations of the participants to improve the quality of service rendered to the community. According to the participant, it is a big help, especially when the number of COVID-19 cases in Cebu decreases.

Maybe the one who can inspire me at work is that we should become regular employees. (Participant 1).

Until we are regularized in the government and a salary increase. (Participant 3).

My main goal for staying in this job is to be regular; that way, we are assured that we will still have work in the next few months. (Participant 8).

Travis Hirschi's social control theory supports this theme. The theory posits that strong attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in the institutions in society, such as government officials, law enforcement officers, teachers, family, and friends, create a strong bond that eliminates the capability of individuals to engage in deviant behaviors. The participants said they hope to work in any law enforcement agencies and be law enforcement officers in the future. Their deployment as Task Force Kasaligan personnel played a big factor in their solid background and experience in police work, which can be an advantage to their side.

According to Orrick (2008), positions within law enforcement provide a stable career and present numerous possibilities for advancement. With sufficient experience, individuals can progress into leadership or specialization roles, which come with the potential for higher earnings.

According to a statement from the National Police Commission Regional Office No. V, the approval has been given for hiring 17,314 new patrolmen and patrolwomen. This move aims to offset personnel losses, bolster personnel numbers, enhance the visibility of the police force, and improve the ratio of police to the population as well as the conditions of peace and order within the areas of operation of the various Police Regional Offices (PROs) and National Support Units (NSUs).

4.3.2. Moving on: The need for Training and Development.

This particular theme relates to the aspirations of the participants to improve quality of service rendered to the community. He said that his own office is an advantage.

This work inspires me because the time will come when we will be given our own office, and the government will recognize the importance. (Participant 1).

We are very motivated in our work because our strategies are effective. After all, the number of COVID-19 cases in Cebu is decreasing, but they should bring us additional training and seminars because there are so many new implementations that we do not know. (Participant 2).

Just calm down when implementing the law, and I will inspire myself in this work because our role is important; we need to explain to the public that we should also be given our own office because, for now, we are just mixed with the police. They should have sent us training and seminars to further our knowledge. (Participant 9).

Travis Hirschi's social control theory can be integrated into the study's theme. Travis Hirschi's social control theory can be applied to the study's theme. The theory posits that strong attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in the institutions in the society, such as government officials, law enforcement officers, teachers, family, and friends, creates a strong bond that eliminates the capability of individuals to engage in deviant behaviors. Participants said they maintain a close and harmonious relationship within their group, understand each other's feelings or ideas, and communicate well.

According to (*The Perceptions of Minority College Students Toward a Career in Law Enforcement - ProQuest, n.d.*), police embrace a guardian mindset during these unprecedented and uncertain times. The ideology of the guardian is to work with communities and embrace their role as one that is not only there to arrest and incarcerate but to engage the community in non-enforcement conversations and assist in solving problems in the community.

5. Conclusion

This study identified seven emergent themes related to the experiences of police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three themes were associated with positive experiences, including the satisfaction of using their knowledge and competence to perform their duties effectively, the perception that police presence helped to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and the recognition that disrespecting authorities can exacerbate the spread of the virus. Two themes were related to coping with the challenges faced by police officers, including the need to expand their maximum tolerance for difficult situations and the importance of building strong collaboration with colleagues and the community. Finally, two themes reflected the aspirations of police officers to improve their service to the community, including the desire for job security and the need for ongoing training and development.

The results indicate that the involvement of police officers was crucial in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting that their experiences during this period were diverse and intricate. Further research is needed to explore these themes in greater depth and to identify strategies for supporting police officers in their ongoing efforts to protect and serve their communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for law enforcement agencies worldwide, and police auxiliaries played a critical role in reinforcing the frontlines and ensuring public safety. The lived experiences of police auxiliaries during this tumultuous period highlight their dedication, resilience, and adaptability in the face of adversity.

Police auxiliaries faced many challenges during the pandemic, including increased workload, exposure to the virus, and heightened public scrutiny. However, they persevered, demonstrating their commitment to serving their communities. Their contributions were instrumental in maintaining order, enforcing public health measures, and supporting frontline responders.

The pandemic also brought unique opportunities for police auxiliaries to expand their skill sets and broaden their perspectives. They gained valuable experience in crisis management, community engagement, and public health promotion. These experiences will undoubtedly shape their future roles in law enforcement.

The lived experiences of police auxiliaries during the COVID-19 pandemic serve as a testament to their unwavering commitment to public safety. Their contributions deserve recognition and appreciation, as they symbolize resilience and dedication in the face of extraordinary challenges.

Going forward, recognizing the distinct contributions of police auxiliaries is crucial, and ensuring they have the support and resources they need to carry out their duties effectively is important. Their experiences during the pandemic provide valuable lessons for strengthening law enforcement agencies and enhancing community resilience in the face of future crises.

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