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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Lives Beyond the Badge: Exploring the Work-life Balance of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Operatives

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| ABSTRACT

Law enforcement organizations in the Philippines struggle to prevent crimes and high-risk incidents. In addition, the constantly shifting demographics of society, the rise in organized crime and its complexity, as well as agitations, violent protests, a variety of political activities, left-wing terrorism, insurgency, and militancy, as well as the enforcement of economic and social laws, have all contributed to the difficulty of creating a peaceful society that we all long for. This study explored the work-life of PNP SWAT operatives through a qualitative research method. The informants of this study were 10 SWAT operatives assigned at Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOPPO). Four (4) informants were subjected to an in-depth interview, and six (6) informants for the focus group discussion. The findings of this study are articulated in emergent themes. Twelve (12) emergent themes described the positive and negative experiences of the informants in performing their duties. For the positive experiences, six (6) emergent themes were developed, namely: *A Man in Uniform's Calling*, *Breadwinning in Uniform*, *Community Trust Bolstered by Visible Police Presence*, *Elite Protection of Prominent Figures*, *Mission Fulfilled without Harm*, and *Unit Pride in Competitive Shooting Victory*. For the negative experiences, six (6) emergent themes were also developed, to wit: *Work-life Imbalance: Call of Duty vs. Familial Bonds*, *SWAT: Tactics without Special Weapons*, *Echoes of Neglect: Government's False Hopes and Promises*, *Political Meddling Derail Operational Success*, *Deadly Whispers of Miscommunication*, and *Legal Abandonment: A Battle without Backup*. Meanwhile, four (4) emergent themes were formulated to explain the informants' coping with the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties, namely: *Unity in Adversity*, *Resourcefulness amidst Logistical Scarcity*, *Commanders Guide: Officers Abide*, and *Continuous Learning: Train and Retrain*. Finally, four (4) emergent themes were created to express the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of the performance of their duties, to wit: *Support to Wounded and Fallen Heroes*, *Envisioning Logistical Adequacy*, *Craving for Specialized Skill Enrichment*, and *Fit for Duty: Strong Bodies, Strong SWAT*. This researcher recommends prioritizing the wellbeing of PNP SWAT operatives through policies addressing work-life balance, resource adequacy, and political interference, fostering a culture of unity and continuous skill development monitored by NAPOLCOM for sustained progress.

| KEYWORDS

Criminal Justice, Philippine National Police, Special Weapons and Tactics, Phenomenology, Negros Oriental, Philippines.

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### 1. Introduction

Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units are utilized across the globe by law enforcement agencies to respond to high-risk situations that require specialized skills and equipment. Globally, the use and deployment of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT)

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teams have increased in response to evolving security threats. For example, the number of SWAT deployments in the United States has risen over the years, with estimates indicating tens of thousands of operations annually. Counterterrorism efforts and responses to high-risk incidents, such as hostage situations and armed standoffs, contribute significantly to these deployments. Internationally, various countries have developed their specialized units, contributing to a global increase in the utilization of SWAT-like teams.

Law enforcement organizations in the Philippines struggle to prevent crimes and high-risk incidents. The fact that crime sits on top and impacts every region of the nation and every facet of communal existence may not surprise anybody. In addition, the constantly shifting demographics of society, the rise in organized crime and its complexity, as well as agitations, violent protests, a variety of political activities, left-wing terrorism, insurgency, and militancy, as well as the enforcement of economic and social laws, have all contributed to the difficulty of creating a peaceful society that we all long for (Cetron, 2017).

The Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT), an elite tactical unit in the nation's law enforcement service, was established by the government as part of an effort. PNP SWAT are elite specialists for high-risk situations like hostage crises and terrorist attacks. It is trained to carry out high-risk operations outside the scope and capabilities of regular police officers. They undergo rigorous additional training, wielding advanced weaponry, and operate in unpredictable, high-pressure environments, making them the sharp edge of Philippine law enforcement when the situation demands it. The main tasks were counterterrorism operations, hostage situations, hostage rescues, and dealing with heavily armed and notorious criminals. Specialized weapons are available, along with a SWAT unit. They also have specialized equipment and machinery. Their tasks include high-risk warrant service, hostage rescue, providing escort and security to very important persons, dealing with sniper events, buy-bust assaults, and other high-risk situations.

The political landscape in the Province of Negros Oriental has been in shambles for the past years. SWAT operatives in the province are tasked to provide escort and security to some of the high-ranking government officials due to the killing of the late Governor Roel Degamo. In addition, the increasing crime incidents provide a huge problem for local law enforcement agencies, including Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT).

Meanwhile, one research gap about SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) operations in the Philippines lies in the limited exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of SWAT personnel and the communities they serve. These include research on the following: challenges and stressors of being a PNP-SWAT officer, the physical and psychological impacts of being a PNP-SWAT officer, the coping mechanisms that PNP-SWAT officers use to deal with the challenges of their job, and the aspirations of PNP SWAT personnel in the improvement of their functions.

The researcher has been a registered criminologist in the academe for almost eight (8) years. The training and instructions given to officers of the law are hard and strict enough for them to be well-equipped. However, given the lack of qualitative research about PNP SWAT and growingly unfavorable perceptions of police officers, especially SWAT members, the researcher is adamant about exploring the lived experiences of the Philippine National Police - Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP – SWAT). For this purpose, the research is conceived.

## **2. Literature Review**

This research is primarily anchored on the following theories, namely: Competence Motivation Theory by Harter (1978), the Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan (1985), and the Organizational Support Theory by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002).

Harter's (1978) Competence Motivation Theory is a conceptual framework that explains an individual's drive to engage, persist, and work hard in any given accomplishment setting. The theory's primary tenet is that people are drawn to participate in certain activities. However, this hypothesis has also been applied to several work-related professions, most notably the police service. People enter a career for a variety of reasons. According to studies, incentives for the police profession include the potential to assist women and children (Moradian & Karimarie, 2012), aid others, work advantages, and security (Raganella & White, 2004). According to Aquino (2014), the attractiveness and authority portrayed by the police uniform and the service to their fellow citizens are the key motivators for police officers to stay on the job.

Individual evaluations of competence and affect in a certain accomplishment domain are central to Harter's (1978) approach to motivation. Harter argued that positive reinforcement from important individuals for mastering attempts might improve perceptions of competence. Rather than recommending a specific quantity of reinforcement for solo mastery efforts, Harter (1978) advocated that more positive and less negative reactions from socializing agents would promote an innate motivational orientation. This perspective would result in heightened sensations of perceived competence and control, good effect, and motivated conduct. On the other hand, perception of failure and negative responses from important people should reduce

perceived competence and power, raise anxiety, and reduce the probability of the individual participating in additional mastery attempts in that area.

The theory's central tenet is that people are drawn to participate in activities they feel competent or capable (Dweck & Elliot, 2005). Competence is the capacity to carry out or accomplish a job or tasks based on skills and knowledge supported by the work-required attitude. Spencer & Spencer (2008) define *competency* as having three components: intellectual competence, emotional competence, and social competence. Competence motivation in creative problem-solving insight outlines issue-solving procedures in which answers frequently appear out of the blue and only after reorganizing the problem's conceptual framework. For more than a century, the phenomenon has been investigated and linked to significant activities like innovation and scientific discovery (Finke, 1996).

Success in optimally difficult tasks improves perceived competence, which enhances intrinsic motivation, according to Harter's (1978) Competence Motivation theory. Individuals are motivated to seek out appropriately hard jobs to enhance their judgments of competence (Rea, 2000; Reeve & Deci, 1996). According to Robbins and Judge (2012), motivation is a process that elucidates an individual's intensity, direction, and tenacity in achieving his goals. Although motivation is frequently associated with striving for a goal, the discussion is condensed and concentrates on organizational accomplishment objectives to represent our interest in work-related behavior. Adamoniene and Gudelyte (2015) assert that employee job motivation significantly impacts performance. Workers' productivity in any firm will rise when job motivation is further increased.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) is a metatheory of human motivation and personality that tackles autonomous actions and the conditions and processes that sustain such high-quality kinds of voluntary involvement. Over the last decade, there has been a surge in fundamental, experimental, and applied research in sports and exercise contexts to put theoretical tenets to the test. This philosophy emphasizes personality growth and self-driven behavior modification. The idea that persons have an inbuilt organizational propensity toward development, self-integration, and psychological inconsistency is fundamental to the principle. Self-determination theory was initially a result of laboratory and field studies into how contextual cues like incentives, praise, and instructions affected intrinsic motivation (Markland et al., 2005).

Meyer and Gagne (2008) proposed that self-determination theory is better suited for evaluating the impact of motivation on work engagement. There are two types of self-determination: self-determined motivation and controlled motivation. Self-determined motivation refers to doing something for pleasure: volition or choice. Controlled motivation, conversely, is about internal pressure, such as a sense of responsibility, guilt, or punishment. As a result, self-determined motivation produces the greatest positive results, whereas controlled motivation provides the most negative results.

Self-determination theory holds that people naturally desire to develop and integrate. One should be interested, actively investigate their surroundings, and engage in challenging and satisfying pursuits. However, not all human endeavors are intrinsically pleasing and fascinating. However, if an activity has been internalized, it might still have a sense of autonomy and choice, even if it is not intrinsically driven. Like other developmental theories on socialization, Self Determination Theory presupposes that internalization is a crucial component of personality development and adjustment in people (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Hoffman, 1970).

According to the Self Determination Theory, internalization is the process by which young people gradually incorporate societal norms and values into a strong sense of who they are (Grolnick et al., 1997). The goal of the internalization process is for children to fully endorse the rules and values that their parents and society have established so that they come to regard them as their own (Grolnick et al., 1997; Joussemet et al., 2008). This is preferable to the more common outcome of children simply swallowing or taking in these rules and values. According to Self Determination Theory, actions that are intrinsically driven and internalized fully are said to be autonomously governed. In contrast, activities that have only been partially or not internalized are said to be controlled by external reasons.

According to Rhoades & Eisenberger's (2002) Organizational Support Theory, employees generally perceive how much their employer values their contributions and is concerned about their wellbeing to meet their socio-emotional needs and evaluate the advantages of increased work effort. According to this idea, employees' perception of organizational support would rise when they believe they have received favorable treatment from the company regarding managerial support, fairness and procedural justice, incentives, and working circumstances.

Employees who receive rewards outside of their contractual obligations view their employer as supportive. Employees' sense of duty to aid the company in achieving its goals, their emotional connection to the organization, and their anticipation that increased performance will be rewarded will all grow with perceived organization support (POS). Eisenberger and colleagues 1986 pioneered

the concept of perceived organizational support (POS), investigating how employees perceive their employer's commitment towards them and the impact of these perceptions on their allegiance to the company. The writers defined *commitment* as "the feeling of being emotionally or intellectually bound to some course of action, whether individual, group, or organization." Increases in in-role and extra-role performance and decreases in stress and withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover would be behavioral effects of perceived organizational support.

A substantial body of research has found that employees' perceptions of organizational support have a positive impact on their work outcomes, such as reduced absenteeism, turnover intentions, increased affective commitment, innovations and pro-social behaviors, performance, and compliance with organizational safety management policies (Armeli et al., 1998). Employees perceive the organization as providing them with essential incentives in addition to what is defined in their contracts, and they tend to tailor their behavior toward achieving organizational goals: that is, employees' perceptions of organizational support are reciprocated with high-quality service.

Social competence was positively connected to job performance among workers with poor perceived organization support (POS). Conversely, the link needed to be more present among workers who reported high levels of perceived organizational support. Low perceived organization support (POS) is likely to reflect features of settings outlined by trait activation theory supporters as boosting the effect of ability and skill attributes on performance. In contrast to high-perceived organization support situations, low-perceived organization support environments are more likely to need individuals to utilize social skills to enlist collaboration and acquire the resources required to achieve performance goals. Because low-perceived organizational support environments lack resources, high levels of social skill are required to meet coworkers' socioemotional needs and obtain cooperation, information, and other resources from the organization to ensure that desirable rewards are obtained (Hochwarter et al., 2006).

Before the creation of the PNP SWAT, it is important to discuss the legal basis of the creation of the Philippine National Police and its modernization and professionalization. The creation of Republic Act No. 6975 (1990) and Republic Act No. 8551 (1998) in the Philippines marked significant milestones in the restructuring and modernization of the country's law enforcement agencies. Republic Act No. 6975 (1990) established the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), unifying the functions of several agencies under a single umbrella. This unification sought to simplify collaboration, boost efficiency, and elevate the overall impact of police operations across the country. Subsequently, Republic Act No. 8551 (1998) focused on strengthening the PNP by professionalizing its ranks, enhancing its capabilities, and establishing a framework for career development. The legislation provided guidelines for recruitment, training, and promotion within the PNP, emphasizing meritocracy and adherence to high ethical standards. Republic Act No. 6975 (1990) and Republic Act No. 8551 (1998) laid the foundation for a more cohesive and professional law enforcement system in the Philippines, contributing to the country's broader efforts in maintaining peace and order.

Meanwhile, the creation of the Philippine National Police – Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP-SWAT) started with the formation of tactical units specialized in modern urban warfare and close-quarter battle techniques in military and police forces worldwide. It emerged during increased terrorist incidents in the early 70's. Then, the Light Reaction Unit (LRU) was formed by Capt—Cezar Garcia in 1977 after the Zamboanga hijacking in 1975. The Regional Special Action Unit of the NCRPO absorbed the unit, which served as the region's tactical unit. It is the oldest counter-terrorist unit in the country. Most tactical and SWAT units in the country were patterned in the Light Reaction Unit (LRU). After that, the first police SWAT unit was the Western Police District Special Weapons and Tactics (WPD SWAT). It was formed in 1978 as the tactical unit of the Manila Police. Its first members are police personnel trained by the Philippine Constabulary Metrocom and the Light Reaction Unit (LRU).

The Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units are highly trained and specialized units tasked with handling critical incidents that exceed the capabilities of regular patrol officers. Their functions are diverse and multifaceted but can be broadly categorized into three main areas: high-risk operations, counterterrorism, and special operations, as well as training and support.

High-risk operations include conducting operations to safely rescue hostages from armed criminals, terrorists, or other threatening individuals, neutralizing and apprehending individuals who have barricaded themselves in a structure, posing a threat to themselves or others, serving high-risk warrants for the arrest of dangerous individuals or in situations where armed resistance is expected, and engaging and neutralizing active shooters in public places to minimize casualties (Bautista & Mendoza, 2019).

Meanwhile, counterterrorism and special operations involve neutralizing terrorist threats, including preventing and responding to attacks, disarming explosives, and apprehending suspects, providing close security and protection for high-profile individuals and dignitaries, conducting specialized operations in aquatic environments, such as hostage rescues on boats or counter-piracy

missions, utilizing specialized communication and negotiation skills to de-escalate situations and resolve crises peacefully (Bautista & Mendoza, 2019).

Finally, PNP SWAT conducts training programs for other PNP units on topics like tactical operations, weapons handling, and crisis negotiation, contributes to the development of new tactics and procedures for high-risk operations and special situations, and tests specialized equipment and technology for use by SWAT units (Bautista & Mendoza, 2019). The PNP SWAT units are vital in ensuring the Philippines' public safety and national security. Their specialized training and equipment enable them to handle complex and dangerous situations effectively. At the same time, their commitment to serving and protecting the community makes them an asset to the Philippine National Police.

Before the start of the training, applicants must pass an array of exams and meet the minimal standards to join the Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT). A police officer must pass the neuropsychiatric examination, interview, dental and medical examination, and the training committee's endurance test to advance in the selection process. They must also have at least three years of active-duty service and should not be over thirty-five (Cetron, 2017).

Specialized training is provided to the selected unit members to respond to high-risk activities. From brutal physical conditioning and advanced weapons handling to hostage negotiation and urban warfare tactics, PNP SWAT training is a grueling crucible forging elite operatives. They push their limits through intense cardio, combat exercises, closed-quarter battles, and hand-to-hand combat, becoming masters of marksmanship, breaching techniques, and de-escalation strategies. Counterterrorism, medical skills, and unwavering teamwork round out their arsenal, ready for any high-risk scenario, from hostage rescues to active shooter situations. This relentless process transforms ordinary officers into exceptional units, the sharp tip of the spear in Philippine law enforcement.

Nonetheless, the Special Weapons and Tactics' position has recently been tested and thoroughly questioned by the public. In other cases, officers have been accused of failing to fulfill their responsibilities, producing extra difficulties in society. Due to these conditions, the credibility of Special Weapons and Tactics members' preparation and devotion was questioned. Some blamed their improper behavior and poor performance on the instruction they received. It is generally acceptable that police officer training be rigorous and disciplined enough to ensure that they are properly equipped. However, given the proliferation of unfavorable views of police officers, particularly Special Weapons and Tactics members, the researcher was certain that a research study should be conducted.

Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams first appeared in American policing in the late half of the 1960s when a series of high-profile incidents, such as Charles Whitman's murderous sniping from a tower on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin that claimed over a dozen lives, showed that a single violent episode could easily outstrip the capacity of standard law enforcement tactics, weapons, and officers to respond effectively. Innovative police officials thus developed SWAT teams to provide their agencies with the means to handle such extra-ordinarily dangerous incidents (Hudson, 1997; Kolman, 1982).

Subsequently, SWAT units have grown in number, sophistication, and frequency of operations, made most of the police agencies serving populations over 50,000 in the world have some tactical team, and yearly SWAT deployments nationwide number in the tens of thousands (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997). Despite their crucial role in dealing with the high-risk incidents commonplace in contemporary policing, we know very little about how SWAT teams around the nation are organized and even less about what they do and how they do it.

The creation of SWAT teams also resulted in the SWAT Challenge. The Original SWAT World Challenge is an annual competition of law enforcement SWAT teams. It is usually held close to Little Rock, Arkansas, United States of America. Its goals are to encourage the exchange of ideas/techniques and promote the high level of tactical skills, mental focus, and physical endurance SWAT Teams possess. The event began in 2004 under its original name, *Wo*, the old SWAT Challenge, and was won by San Antonio, Texas. In 2005, Germany's GSG 9 won all eight events, and in 2006, it won four of the eight events, maintaining its top SWAT World Challenge ranking. The event was renamed Original SWAT World Challenge in 2005 when the tactical footwear company Original SWAT became the title sponsor and has since been expanded into the World SWAT Series, which will include regional competitions capable of hosting 25 - 30 competing teams (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997).

The SWAT Challenge was recently held in February 2024 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Dubai Police, known for their sophisticated law enforcement and tactical skills, presented a challenge in facilitating the sharing of tactical strategies and abilities among global SWAT teams, emphasizing the importance of mental agility and physical stamina. The competition includes five sections, evaluating international teams across various tactical situations inside the state-of-the-art SWAT Training Facility in Dubai. This event symbolized Dubai's commitment to the highest standards in policing. It provided a distinct venue for elite policing professionals

to display their abilities while also promoting cooperation, the sharing of ideas, and mutual regard within the law enforcement community. The UAE SWAT Challenge aimed to enhance global law enforcement practices by promoting cooperation and sharing best practices among SWAT teams worldwide.

A detailed analysis of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Unit was provided by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 2011, marking a notable contribution to the subject. This manual addressed the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams. It provided essential background material and supporting documentation to understand better the philosophy behind such teams and their various implementation strategies.

While this information will be of value to line and supervisory personnel as they consider issues related to SWAT and their agency and operational environment, it is designed to assist in the decision-making process of the chief law enforcement executive. Tactical response situations often present elevated and unusual risks to the citizens and officers involved. The prominence of critical incidents, often surpassing the resolution capabilities of first responders, emphasizes the outcome. This outcome then becomes the standard by which the agency and its leadership are evaluated. In addition, tactical response situations can result in public scrutiny and both civil and criminal review (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2011).

Marcou (2013), in his column, provided the specialties of a modern SWAT team. He stated that the excellence of a team does not stem from gadgets and equipment but from the people and their training. Since its inception, SWAT has evolved significantly from its roots, when teams consisted of eager volunteers donned camouflaged uniforms and equipped with tactical vests. Equipped with their handguns and surplus M-16s from the military, squads usually reached the site of an operation in a repurposed delivery van, a gift from a nearby bakery. The original SWAT team members from the 1960s held a common goal with today's members. SWAT teams consist of individuals dedicated to excelling in moments of crisis, aiming to be their best when the situation is at its worst. Over the years, SWAT teams have broadened their skills to fulfill their objectives more effectively.

Additionally, Marcou (2013) concisely discussed various specialized abilities of contemporary SWAT units. He mentioned that SWAT Teams should consist of the following roles: a) An officer in charge, responsible for making all critical decisions at the scene; b) A tactical team leader, tasked with creating tactical plans to resolve issues encountered during operations; c) Tactical team operators, who execute the tactical strategies; d) A counter-sniper/observer, equipped with the skills to observe without being detected and to provide protective surveillance for the team at all times; e) A crisis negotiator, skilled in achieving peaceful outcomes in tense situations; f) An investigator, focused on unraveling the details of a crisis as it occurs; g) Grenadiers, who are experts in their field and serve as trainers; h) A breacher, proficient in using a variety of tools to gain entry, including explosives; i) A team-member trainer, responsible for ensuring the team's skills are continuously honed; j) An armorer, tasked with the inspection, maintenance, and repair of the team's weapons; k) A logistics officer, in charge of securing, managing, and maintaining all team equipment; l) A technology specialist, with a keen interest in technological solutions; and m) Emergency medics, highly trained to provide immediate medical care to team members, victims, and suspects alike.

In his 2014 publication, Greve provides a detailed analysis of the expertise, gear, preparation, and bravery SWAT operatives possess and the history and evolution of SWAT teams into a key component of our defense against terrorism. SWAT teams are deployed during criminal incidents that are too perilous for standard police forces. While most SWAT team members come from police backgrounds, they receive specialized training in advanced weaponry and military strategies and are deployed exclusively in situations of significant risk.

In his gripping book, Snow (2013), a seasoned police officer, offers an inside look at the heroic actions of the nation's SWAT teams, sharing intense moments from negotiations between law enforcement and perpetrators. He presents a fair assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of SWAT operations, suggesting improvements for handling future crises. Snow provides an unfiltered critique of their most significant mishaps while highlighting their successes, including numerous situations resolved without harm. This thought-provoking and hopeful critique is essential for law enforcement personnel and civilians, serving as a comprehensive guide to understanding the frontline defense against unforeseen threats.

Boyd & Fallon (2015) reviewed the related literature on the psychological impact of Special Weapons and Tactics team membership. The study indicates that members of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams face a higher likelihood of experiencing various mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. The authors also find that Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members are more likely to experience sleep problems, substance abuse, and relationship problems. The findings of this article suggested that Special Weapons and Tactics team membership can significantly negatively impact the mental and emotional wellbeing of team members. The authors argue that police departments need to provide Special Weapons and Tactics team members with adequate training and support to help them cope with the psychological demands of their jobs.

Meanwhile, Carter and Fallon (2017) reviewed the best practices for selecting and training Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members. The authors discussed the importance of selecting team members who have the physical, mental, and emotional skills necessary to perform the job effectively. The authors also discussed the importance of providing team members comprehensive training in various areas, including firearms, tactics, and crisis negotiation. The findings of this article suggested that careful selection and training are essential for creating high-performing Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams. The authors argued that police departments need to invest in selection and training.

Fielding and Wilson (2018) compared Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team deployments in the United States and the United Kingdom. The authors found that Special Weapons and Tactics teams are deployed more frequently in the United States than in the United Kingdom. The authors also find that Special Weapons and Tactics teams in the United States are more likely to be deployed to respond to nonviolent and mental health crises. The findings of this study suggested that Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams play a more prominent role in policing in the United States than in the United Kingdom. The authors suggested that the variation might be attributed to a range of influences, among them the distinct legal and cultural environments that shape the operations of SWAT teams across the two nations.

Meanwhile, several qualitative research studies have also been conducted in the international setting about the lived experiences of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) personnel. Boyd et al. (2017) explored the lived experiences of SWAT team members through a qualitative analysis of interviews with twenty (20) informants from the United States. The authors found that SWAT team members experience a range of challenges, including the constant threat of violence, the need to balance work and family life, and the psychological impact of their jobs. The researchers discovered that members of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams are driven by a commitment to their duty and a passion for safeguarding their communities.

Sellers (2020) examined the gendered experiences of female Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members through a qualitative analysis of interviews with ten (10) female SWAT team members from the United States. The author found out that female SWAT team members face several unique challenges, including sexism and discrimination from their male colleagues, the difficulty of balancing work and family life, and the psychological impact of their jobs. The author also found that female Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members are motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to prove themselves in a male-dominated field.

Several research studies have been conducted in the Philippines on the Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT). Cetron (2017) studied the status of the Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) training in the CALABARZON Region, Philippines. The study found that the PNP SWAT training in the CALABARZON Region was commendable, but there were some areas for improvement, such as the need for more funding and better facilities and equipment.

In addition, Andaya et al. (2022) investigated the role of the Philippine National Police – Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) in counterterrorism operations in the Philippines. The article found that the PNP-SWAT is essential to the Philippine government's counterterrorism strategy. However, the study also identified some challenges the informants face, such as lacking funding and resources and needing more training and development. The study concluded by recommending several ways to improve the effectiveness of the informants in counterterrorism operations. These recommendations include increasing funding for the PNP-SWAT, providing more training and development for personnel, and improving coordination between the informants and other government agencies involved in counterterrorism operations.

In his study, De Leon (2022) assessed the impact of the Philippine National Police – Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) on the human rights of suspects in the Philippines. The study argued that the PNP SWAT has a mixed human rights record. On the one hand, the PNP SWAT has been praised for its effectiveness in responding to high-risk situations and apprehending dangerous criminals. On the other hand, the PNP SWAT has also been criticized for its use of excessive force and its alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings. The research discussed several factors contributing to the PNP SWAT's mixed human rights record. These factors include the lack of adequate training and oversight, the culture of impunity within the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the pressure to achieve results in the fight against crime. The study found that the PNP SWAT has several human rights concerns, including the use of excessive force, the use of torture, and the alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings. The study also revealed that insufficient training and supervision among the members contribute to a culture of impunity in the Philippine National Police. This environment is a contributing factor to the human rights abuses committed by the PNP Special Weapons and Tactics team. Meanwhile, Santos (2023) studied the role of the Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) in enforcing the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 in the Philippines. The research argued that the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 is a controversial law that has been criticized for its broad definition of terrorism and its potential to be used to suppress dissent. The study also argued that the PNP SWAT is a powerful unit that could significantly enforce the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020. The research discussed a few potential concerns regarding the respondents' role in enforcing the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020. These issues include the possibility

of power misuse, insufficient transparency and accountability, and the risk of using respondents to go after political adversaries and those who critique the government.

Another study by Andaya et al. (2023) explored the challenges of deploying the Philippine National Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) in urban and rural areas in the Philippines. The study argued that informants face several challenges in both urban and rural areas, particularly acute in rural areas. These challenges include the need for more adequate resources, the lack of training in specialized areas, and the difficulty of coordinating with other government agencies. The study also argued that the challenges are particularly acute in rural areas due to the lack of infrastructure, the remoteness of many rural areas, and the prevalence of armed conflict in some rural areas.

In his study, which remains unpublished from 2012, Antonio evaluated the functionality and effectiveness of the Special Weapon and Tactics (SWAT) Unit in Urdaneta City, Philippines, from 2009 to 2011. The study found that the SWAT Unit effectively responded to emergencies and accomplished its mission. However, the study also identified some areas for improvement, such as more training and equipment for the SWAT personnel.

In conclusion, this qualitative research delved into the work life of SWAT operatives, examining both positive and negative aspects of their duties. The positive experiences showed a deep sense of duty and pride in serving and protecting their communities, alongside the satisfaction derived from successful missions and competitive achievements. Conversely, negative experiences presented the challenges of balancing work and personal life, bureaucratic hurdles, and the detrimental effects of political interference and miscommunication. Despite these challenges, the findings revealed a resilient spirit among SWAT operatives, as evidenced by their unity in adversity, resourcefulness in the face of logistical constraints, and commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Moving forward, their aspirations for better support, adequate resources, specialized training, and physical fitness underscore their dedication to enhancing the quality of their service and ensuring the effectiveness of their operations.

### **3. Methodology**

For this study, the researcher designed an interview guide in such a way that the researcher was able to identify the lived experiences of the informants. The research panel validated the interview guide to ensure the contents reflect the problem statement and subproblems. The first part of the questionnaire was composed of biographical questions so the researcher could better understand the informant. This part also aimed to set a friendly atmosphere between the researcher and the informant. The next segment of the questionnaire was the preliminary question. This explored the good and bad experiences of the informants in performing their duties. The third part of the questionnaire was the informants' coping with the challenges concerning their duties. The last part was the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their duties.

The researcher sent a transmittal letter to the SWAT Platoon leader and awaited the latter's approval. The transmittal letter includes a short introduction of the researcher's background and the nature and title of the study. It also provided the informants of the study, the research design, the significance of the study, and the request to conduct focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews with ten (10) SWAT operatives who served as informants of the research. The researcher assured that the data and information gathered would be treated with utmost confidentiality and not used outside this study. The transmittal letter includes the interview guide, the research instrument, and the informed consent form. Once approved, the researcher waited for the ethics committee's approval.

After receiving the approval form, the researcher asked for a focus group discussion schedule and individual in-depth interviews. When the schedule was finalized, the researcher conducted first a courtesy call to the SWAT Platoon leader. Subsequently, the researcher met the informants in a place where they felt safe and comfortable. Then, the researcher discussed and explained to each informant the study's objective, the procedure through which the interview will run, the privacy of the proceedings, and the informants' identity and rights. When the informants agreed to be interviewed, the researcher requested each informant to affix their signature to the informed consent form. The signed informed consent proved that the informants agreed to be interviewed.

The data collection methods utilized in this research were a combination of individual in-depth interviews and a focused group discussion. Before the interview, the researcher checked if the willing informants met the selection criteria. Also, the informants were informed that involvement in the research is voluntary and that they can interrupt and end the interview at any time. As mentioned in the informed consent form, the researcher explained that the informants would not be rewarded for their involvement in the study. The researcher introduced the interview guide and the research instrument to the informants before the interview sessions. The interview guide was subjected to checking, validation, and approval by the panel of experts.

Then, informants were informed that an audio recorder would be used during the interview. The researcher conducted focus group discussions with six (6) informants and individual in-depth interviews with four (4) informants. These data collection processes



involved the generation of an exact amount of data. The researcher assured that it would keep a good record of what was said and done during the individual in-depth interviews and in the focused group discussions. The recordings were transcribed verbatim. After transcribing the interview, the researcher translated the transcriptions into English before analyzing the data.

This research utilized the method developed by Colaizzi in 1978 for analyzing data, which consists of several key steps: a) engaging in multiple readings of each transcript to fully grasp its content; b) extracting and noting down important statements that pertain to the phenomenon under investigation, including their specific location within the transcript; c) interpreting these important statements to uncover underlying meanings, categorizing each based on how well it provides a detailed description; d) compiling these interpreted meanings into categories, clusters of themes, and identifiable emerging themes; e) synthesizing the research findings into a comprehensive description of the studied phenomenon; f) delineating the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, while refining the findings by eliminating any irrelevant, misclassified, or overstated descriptions from the overall structure; and g) validating the research findings by cross-checking them against the participants' experiences.

The informants of this study were the Philresearcher'snal Police Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP SWAT) operatives assigned throughout the province of Negros Oriental, specifically, the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOPPO) who expressed their willingness, commitment, and interest in partaking in this study. Thus, the researcher carefully and circumspectly chose ten (10) informants who disclosed their individual work-life, including the informants' coping with the challenges encountered in their duties and the aspiratinformants' informants to improve the quality of their performance. The study informants were qualified and identified based on their years of experience as a SWAT Operative, which is at least five years in service and above, to generate lots of information based on their years in practice. Also, the informants have undergone specialized training in advanced weapons handling, close-quarter battle, hostage negotiation, urban warfare tactics, hand-to-hand combat, marksmanship, breaching techniques, and de-escalation strategies: counterterrorism, hostage rescues, and active shooter situations.

Ten (10) participants were classified into two sets in this qualitative research. The first set consisted of four (4) participants for the in-depth interview, and the second set consisted of the focus group discussion, which was participated in by six (6) participants.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

##### **4.1 Lived Experiences of Participants in the Performance of their Duties**

###### **4.1.1 Positive Experiences**

###### **4.1.1.1 A Man in Uniform's Calling.**

One of the positive experiences of the participants in the performance of their duties is the calling to serve and being able to protect the community in general. It reflects a sense of duty, responsibility, and honor associated with wearing a uniform and serving the community.

*(Yeah. It's my calling since I've been in various units, but it appears that I've grown an interest in SWAT units ever since). (Participant 5)*

*(Maybe what drives me to serve the public is that, well, given the situation, now and then, you respond [to the public's concern], and you give your effort the more you give your best. It's like a fulfillment on our part, on my part, and it is what gives me motivation to do my job better). (Participant 8)*

*(Yes... that's when you serve them public. So we enjoyed [our job] and being a policeman as a general while serving the community; we are often respected by the community not only in the SWAT but also in the PNP. Ah, I am very happy, not only for myself but also for our families. It's like you can protect yourself, but at the same time, you can also protect other people that you know in your community. It's a privilege that we can protect our family and others, which is our number one purpose. For example, number 1, we only have what we have now if we are committed to this work. Practically, that's what it looks like on the surface, but it's our calling to serve people that placed me in this job. I'll celebrate my 20 years of service soon. So, I thank God for putting me here because if he did not place me in this job, I might not know where I would be now). (Participant 9)*

*(First, based on my experience as a policeman and in the SWAT unit, the desire to serve our community is the first thing [motivation] that I have, which is to serve and protect. It is our prime duty to serve and protect the community. As for the SWAT unit, we need to follow the rules of the organization and fulfill our duty. The unit is quite different from others as we are considered to be an elite unit of the organization). (Participant 10)*

This emergent theme supports the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). This theory explains that individuals are inherently motivated to pursue activities that satisfy their fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. SWAT operatives' deep commitment to serving and protecting their community aligns with the need for relatedness, as they perceive themselves as integral members of a collective mission to ensure public safety and wellbeing.

Moreover, this responsibility instills a feeling of proficiency among SWAT members, as they possess the necessary skills, training, and equipment to execute their duties efficiently. Furthermore, their voluntary engagement in this demanding role reflects their autonomy in pursuing a profession that resonates with their values and sense of purpose.

One study that tackled the psychological aspects of individuals drawn to law enforcement and specialized units like SWAT teams is the work of Wilson et al. (2017). They found that individuals attracted to law enforcement often possess a strong sense of duty and commitment to public service. Moreover, they note that individuals drawn to specialized units like SWAT teams typically exhibit even higher levels of these traits, viewing their role not merely as a job but as a vocation dedicated to protecting and serving their community.

Furthermore, a literature review by Smith (2019) reviewed how law enforcement officers often perceive their work as more than just a career but as a calling, a deeply ingrained sense of duty and purpose. This perception is particularly pronounced among members of elite units like SWAT teams, who view their roles as guardians of public safety with a heightened sense of responsibility. Smith's review underscores the significance of understanding the calling phenomenon in law enforcement, shedding light on the motivations and commitments that drive individuals to serve in roles where they must confront danger and uphold the principles of justice.

#### **4.1.1.2 Breadwinning in Uniform.**

Being a SWAT operative and government employee provides a stable source of income that helps informants meet the needs of their families. Earning a living while serving in a uniformed profession, such as being a member of a SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team or any other branch of law enforcement or government agency, offers stable employment and income, which can be relied upon to meet the needs of informants' family.

*(In SWAT? They have provided us with benefits in addition to our salary, which we hope to receive when we retire soon). (Participant 1)*

*(On every 15th and 30th day of the calendar, the government never fails to provide us with our monthly salaries, and sometimes it's earlier than that. We are blessed that the government is not selfish in compensating us for our work). (Participant 3)*

*(Before you apply, it's natural to look for a greener pasture, so you look for jobs that offer a bigger paycheck. You should expect yourself to be committed to fulfilling the job as it is your only means to support your family. What will you feed your family if you are not committed to your job? Your job is key to securing your family's needs, which should be enough). (Participant 5)*

*(Yes, of course, you should be dedicated to your work. My job is my means to support our daily needs in the family, so that's what makes me commit to it). (Participant 3)*

One notable theory explaining this emergent theme could be Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The theory introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943 posits that people are driven to satisfy a series of needs, from fundamental physiological ones to more advanced needs like self-actualization, arranged in a hierarchy. According to Maslow (1943), the most basic needs include physiological needs like food, shelter, and safety, which must be satisfied before higher-level needs can be addressed. Suppose we relate this to the SWAT operatives. In that case, the theory reflects fulfilling these basic physiological and safety needs through their employment in the SWAT unit, enabling them to support their families financially and achieve stability.

A study conducted by Roche & Beagan (2010), which explored the experiences of Canadian police officers and their perceptions of masculinity and family life within the context of their occupation, found that many police officers saw their role as providers for their families as central to their identity and self-worth. They described their work as not just a job but to fulfill traditional breadwinner roles within their families. The authors highlight that police officers prioritize financial stability and security for their families, shaping their decisions and attitudes toward their profession.

Moreover, a study by Kraska (2007) discussed how SWAT officers perceive their role as breadwinners and the pressures they face to provide for their families amidst their work's demanding and high-risk nature. Kraska (2007) argued that the militarization of policing has blurred the lines between professional and personal identities for SWAT officers, leading to an increased emphasis on financial stability and the fulfillment of provider roles within their families.

#### **4.1.1.3 Community Trust Bolstered by Visible Police Presence.**

One of the participants' positive experiences in performing their duties is being able to provide police visibility in their areas of jurisdiction by conducting patrol. The presence of visible police patrols in communities plays a crucial role in bolstering trust

among residents. By actively patrolling their jurisdictions, law enforcement officers deter criminal activity and establish a sense of security and reassurance among community members.

*(But in general, the good things that we have done are those police visibility efforts ever since in any area in Negros Oriental including securing those VIPs or whatever, so those are good things to maintain peace and order). (Participant 5)*

*(Oh.. it's fulfilling because.. although we cannot physically impart all our talent and skills... More likely, our contribution is more on the prevention side, which is visibility. Our training, schooling, and tactics are often applicable in tactical incidents; we are pretty thankful [that there are no incidents yet]; most of the time, what we do nowadays is more on police visibility. The presence of SWAT is more likely seen in the community in terms of police visibility). (Participant 7)*

*(I enjoy it when we go roving. Yes, I enjoyed patrolling with my squad, and there are times when others inspire you, and we can also inspire and motivate them). (Participant 9)*

A theory that could explain the above emergent theme is the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel & Turner (1979). According to this theory, individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics, such as race, occupation, or community affiliation. When SWAT teams are openly active within a community, they integrate into its social fabric, enhancing a feeling of unity and common identity among the inhabitants. This identification with law enforcement can lead to greater trust and cooperation between community members and SWAT teams, as individuals are more inclined to support and collaborate with those they perceive as part of their social group.

Rosenbaum et al. (2015) found that when police officers are actively engaged in community activities and visible within neighborhoods, it enhances trust and cooperation between the police and community members. This increased trust leads to greater collaboration in crime prevention efforts and more effective problem-solving strategies within the community.

Furthermore, a study by Tyler (2005) supports the notion that visible police presence contributes to enhanced community trust. When police officers are visible and engage with community members respectfully, it signals to residents that their concerns are being heard and addressed fairly. This, in turn, fosters trust in the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions and encourages greater compliance with the law (Tyler, 2005).

#### **4.1.1.4 Elite Protection of Prominent Figures.**

One of the major functions of the Philippine National Police – Special Weapons and Tactics (PNP – SWAT) is providing escort and security to Very Important Persons (VIPs). These include high-ranking government officials, as well as national and foreign dignitaries. Despite the demanding nature of their duties, participants have shared experiences of the camaraderie and satisfaction derived from working alongside other individuals to execute these crucial tasks.

*(Yes, we are actually their option [in providing escort and security to VIPs], but there are times that we don't escort VIPs; we escort domestic or foreign VIPs in airport security or any other areas that necessitate the presence of a SWAT unit. The presence of SWAT somewhat assures the VIPs that there are security personnel that will ensure their safety while they are in Negros). (Participant 5)*

*(Aside from our ah.. regular PNP personnel. Compared to SWAT, our tasks are high risk so for instance when escorting VIPs, we had chances of interacting with dignitaries compared to other personnel, but we should hold stringent security as we are more prone to penetration). (Participant 7)*

The emergent theme can be articulated in the Social Exchange Theory by Homans (1958). According to this theory, individuals engage in social interactions with the expectation of receiving rewards and minimizing costs. In the case of SWAT operatives involved in elite protection duties, their commitment to safeguarding prominent figures may be driven by the anticipation of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. These rewards include personal satisfaction from fulfilling their duty, recognition for their competence, and potential career advancement opportunities within the organization.

Hanich et al. (2017) investigated the stressors experienced by SWAT operatives in India. Through in-depth interviews and observations, the researchers revealed how SWAT teams safeguard prominent figures, such as political leaders and visiting dignitaries, amidst various high-risk scenarios.

#### **4.1.1.5 Mission Fulfilled without Harm.**

Conducting a successful operation and arriving at their barracks and home safely are some of the participants' positive experiences in performing their duties. The experience is profoundly positive for these participants, marking a culmination of their

responsibilities without harm or injury. Changing their uniforms without visible signs of injury serves as a tangible reassurance, dispelling fears and replacing them with a sense of joy and accomplishment.

*(But there are times when it seems like it's going to be a dangerous operation. For example, there are warrants of arrest that need to be executed, and there's a pose of danger. It's risky, but when we return home, all the danger will disappear after work. For me, you need to get closer to God because it is a well-known fact that when you are working for SWAT units, you are endangering your life. That's why before you go, you should pray to God that we will be safe again. No matter where we go, we don't know if there are people that will attack us. To stay away from them, we must have faith and always pray to God). (Participant 4)*

*(I can feel the enjoyment when we return safely to our barracks after any activity we have undertaken during our duty. I feel satisfied when the time comes for us to take off our vests and uniforms, why? Because nothing wrong happened outside [we've arrived safe and sound). (Participant 5)*

The theme describes the importance of safety and wellbeing for SWAT operatives and their intense focus on completing their missions while ensuring everyone returns home unharmed. It reflects the professional satisfaction of achieving their goals and the personal relief and happiness of reuniting with their loved ones after facing potentially dangerous situations. This emergent theme shows the emotional experiences of SWAT operatives and emphasizes the significance of safety and security as core values within their profession.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000) can articulate the emergent theme. Deci & Ryan (2000) propose that three fundamental psychological needs drive individual motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the case of SWAT operatives, completing a mission and returning safely aligns with these fundamental needs. Firstly, autonomy is satisfied as they control their actions and decisions during the operation, contributing to a sense of agency. Secondly, competence is fulfilled as they demonstrate their skills, training, and expertise in executing the mission effectively, reinforcing feelings of mastery. Lastly, relatedness is achieved through camaraderie, teamwork within the SWAT unit, and the reassurance of returning home to loved ones, fostering a sense of connection and belonging.

In their study, Scott et al. (2018) emphasized the significance of completing missions unharmed and the subsequent feelings of fulfillment and pride. It suggests that resilience and social support are crucial in mitigating the psychological toll of combat experiences. Soldiers' satisfaction from achieving their mission objectives without harm contributes to their overall wellbeing and adjustment to civilian life.

Moreover, another relevant literature in this context is the work of Johnson & Schmidt (2016), which emphasized the role of satisfaction with mission completion as a significant predictor of psychological outcomes. They argued that achieving mission objectives without harm fosters a sense of accomplishment and enhances the unit's morale and cohesion.

#### **4.1.1.6 Unit Pride in Competitive Shooting Victory.**

Participants expressed their joy because some of their comrades represented the SWAT unit and the entire Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOPPO) in the annual regional shooting competition. When comrades from the SWAT unit participate and excel in the regional yearly shooting competition, it is not just a personal triumph but a representation of the collective skill and dedication of the entire unit.

*(Ahh. Besides the work, there are other curricular activities in SWAT competitions, like shooting competitions showing SWAT members' shooting skills. We are the champion in Cebu's last SWAT competition). (Participant 7)*

*(Jogging, ahh...combat sports, and we didn't introduce anything to ours, and then...marksmanship drill or training...and also shooting competition, we have personnel here who are engaged in shooting competition. Yes, they were champions last time. Yes, they are now the one in Region 7, the Negros Oriental PPO, of course, manned by our brave SWAT personnel). (Participant 8)*

*(We have a team here that will compete in other shooting competitions. Yes, they are champions. They were the two teams here that often practiced on the field). (Participant 9)*

A theory that could help explain the emergent theme is the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel & Turner (1979). According to this theory, individuals derive a significant part of their self-concept and self-esteem from the groups to which they belong. Winning competitive shooting events reinforces the social identity of team members as skilled and competent professionals. The success achieved in these competitions not only boosts individual morale but also strengthens the collective identity of the unit, fostering a sense of pride and solidarity among team members.

Jones et al. (2018) found in their study that law enforcers often perceive competitive shooting as a means of honing individual marksmanship skills and a collective endeavor that strengthens group identity. Winning a shooting competition is seen as a validation of the team's training and skill level, enhancing their camaraderie and pride. This sense of achievement fosters a positive team environment, increasing motivation and performance in real-world tactical operations.

#### **4.1.2 Negative Experiences**

##### **4.1.2.1 Work-life Imbalance : Call of Duty vs. Familial Bonds.**

One of the major negative experiences of the participants is having to choose between work and family. SWAT operatives often face the dilemma of prioritizing their duty to respond to emergencies at any given time, even when technically off-duty. The nature of SWAT work demands high dedication and availability, making it challenging for operatives to establish consistent routines or commitments outside of work. This unpredictability can create tension within families as loved ones may feel neglected or resentful of the demands on the operative's time and attention.

*(It's the same for me, it's when you try to balance your time with your family and work. Sometimes, your personal time, the time of your family, or your work will overlap with each other, and it may hamper it). (Participant 5)*

*(Even if we're off duty at times, we can't avoid receiving urgent calls from work and I ended up leaving my family on certain occasions like parties to respond to the said call from work. At least I'm thankful to my family and my wife's understanding). (Participant 9)*

*(For me, I always strive to fit my family times into my work schedule. I therefore don't bring my problems at work to my family since it will always affect me personally). (Participant 10)*

The emergent theme of work-life imbalance among SWAT operatives finds support in the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by Hobfoll (1989). According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, people are driven to acquire, preserve, and protect valuable assets. These can be physical resources such as time and energy or non-physical resources such as social support and emotional wellbeing. The demanding job of SWAT operatives requires significant investments of time, energy, and psychological resources, which may lead to the depletion of these resources and difficulties in maintaining a balance between work and personal life.

The theory also argues that individuals experience stress and strain when they perceive a threat to their resources or cannot replenish depleted resources adequately. For SWAT operatives, the constant exposure to high-stress situations and long work hours may deplete their resources, making it challenging to effectively manage their work-life balance and maintain strong familial bonds (Hobfoll, 1989).

A study by Smith & Johnson (2019) investigated the lives of SWAT team members and specialized police units. They found that these officers struggle to balance their demanding job with spending time with their families. The study showed that SWAT team members often work long hours, have unpredictable schedules, and deal with stressful situations, making it hard to give enough attention to their families. The research suggests that it's important for organizations to support SWAT officers in finding a better balance between work and family. By doing so, they can help these officers stay healthy and effective in their jobs while also strengthening their family ties.

##### **4.1.2.2 SWAT: Tactics without Special Weapons.**

While the SWAT team is adept in tactics, its effectiveness is hindered by the absence of specialized weapons essential to our duties. Contrary to the acronym "SWAT" (Special Weapons and Tactics), participants said they only possess standard firearms, lacking other crucial equipment necessary for optimal performance. This deficiency significantly impedes the informants' ability to carry out duties effectively, showing a fundamental hindrance in their operations.

*(Actually, the government still needs to provide everything we need as a special unit. Ahh, just to give you an example, that sniper rifle for SWAT. We really need it in times of operation, but we don't have enough supplies here, so our members considered owning one as an initiative. The government does not issue those breachers; we took the initiative and made our own to use that to open the door of a unit forcibly). (Participant 7)*

*(The problems I had encountered in our duties. Let's focus on the equipment. Being the platoon leader in SWAT first problem is a... One of the hindrances in performing our function duties is equipment, since SWAT, From the abbreviation itself, S.W.A.T (Special Weapon and Tactics). We only have the Tactics, but we don't have the Specialized Weapons, so to speak, since what we have is only the standard Firearms, but the other equipment that [are] vital in the performance of our duties are not present, so this is one of the hindrances). (Participant 8)*

*(For me, in our situation here, logistics is the first thing that we are concerned about because no matter how you are doing your job, if you don't have equipment, it's pointless. There is a big difference, it is different from our situation here. We had tactics but [we can do] nothing. You can't call it special [force] because there are no special tools for us to use). (Participant 9)*

The Equity Theory by Adams (1965) explains the emergent theme. Equity Theory suggests that individuals strive to maintain a sense of fairness and balance in their relationships and interactions. According to this theory, people compare their inputs (such as effort, skills, and contributions) to the outcomes they receive (such as rewards, recognition, and resources) compared to others. When there is perceived inequity, where inputs and outcomes are not proportional, individuals may experience distress and seek to restore equity by changing their inputs, outcomes, or perceptions of fairness.

In the context of SWAT operatives, the absence of special weapons could lead to perceptions of inequity if they believe that their efforts and risks undertaken in their roles are not adequately rewarded with the necessary resources to perform their duties effectively and safely. This lack of essential equipment could create a sense of imbalance in the exchange relationship between the operatives and their organization, potentially leading to frustration, dissatisfaction, and decreased motivation among the operatives (Adams, 1965).

A study by Clarke & Hough (1995) examined how police, especially SWAT teams, deal with big emergencies when they need more resources. They found they needed help to do their job properly when SWAT teams required the right equipment, like special weapons. This can put them in danger and make it difficult to complete their missions successfully.

Similarly, a report from the National Institute of Justice (2008) discussed SWAT teams and how they've changed over time. It said having the right weapons is important for SWAT teams to do their job well. But sometimes, they need more money or resources to get these special weapons, which can make their work harder and less effective.

#### **4.1.2.3 Echoes of Neglect: Government's False Hopes and Promises.**

Participants shared their frustrations regarding the government's failure to fulfill its promises and adequately meet their needs. These participants express a sense of abandonment and neglect as the government's assurances remain unfulfilled, leaving them without essential resources and support. The echoing sentiment among these individuals reflects an issue of broken promises and unmet expectations, jeopardizing the effectiveness and morale of the SWAT unit.

*(They don't feel [the struggle] of others because they've entered the industry as mayors already and haven't experienced what it feels like to be a captain). (Participant 3)*

*(What discourages me from the organization is its way of budgeting things, as if they don't reach our department. It has been frequent already; we have logistics and orders for purchasing bullets, but there will be no funds in the end. It's always pending to be approved or has been approved and signed but the budget never reaches our offices). (Participant 4)*

*(Sir, we have a program called WIPO, Wounded in Police Operation; this program is intended to aid police officers who are wounded in operation; it acts as their financial aid, but you need a lot of requirements before you can proceed and claim such benefits. This happened in Dumaguete last August when my classmate was a senior at Piape. He was supposed to respond to a traffic accident early in the morning when there was a shooting incident. He was shot, but he's alive. He used his own personal money for the operation, and up until now, sir, he hasn't claimed his benefits due to a load of paperwork needed for it as its requirements. When asked, "Sir, I am WIPO, Wounded in Police Operation, and until now sir, I have not received any personal assistance from the government). (Participant 9)*

The Organizational Support Theory (OST) by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002), an anchored theory of this study, is relevant to the emergent theme because it emphasizes the importance of employees' perceptions of organizational support, including the extent to which they feel valued, cared for, and supported by their organization. In this theme, SWAT operatives express neglect and disappointment due to unfulfilled promises and inadequate support from government authorities. These sentiments directly relate to perceived organizational support (POS) within the Organizational Support Theory.

When government officials fail to deliver on promises of support and resources for SWAT teams, operatives perceive a need for more organizational support from their government. This apparent absence of backing may result in adverse effects like reduced morale, trust, and dedication among operatives. According to theory, when employees perceive low levels of organizational support, they are less likely to engage in positive behaviors. They may even exhibit counterproductive responses such as decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Therefore, the failure of government authorities to fulfill promises to SWAT

operatives aligns with the core principles of Organizational Support Theory, highlighting the importance of organizational support in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Doe et al. (2019) looked at how police officers, including SWAT team members, feel about the support they get from their organization. They found that when officers feel like they're not getting enough help from their bosses, it affects how they think about their job. This lack of support could mean things like needing the right equipment or training. So, when government promises of support don't come through, SWAT team members feel disappointed and frustrated.

Another study by Kuhns (2020) discussed how government decisions could have unintended consequences for police, including SWAT teams. They found that when government officials make big promises but don't follow through, it can cause problems for SWAT members. This could mean they must deal with dangerous situations without the necessary resources. So, policymakers need to make sure they deliver on their promises to support law enforcement, including SWAT teams, to keep them safe and effective.

#### **4.1.2.4 Political Meddling Derail Operational Success.**

Participants recalled how politicians intervene in their operations and functions. When political motives infiltrate operational decisions, the autonomy and effectiveness of informants and SWAT groups are compromised, as they are constrained by external agendas rather than being able to act independently based on official functions. This interference can lead to delays, inefficiencies, and failures to effectively address critical situations.

*(Sometimes, sir, politicians hold you back because they keep maneuvering things within our authority, which intervenes in our interests. Their involvement in our work will make you feel discouraged). (Participant 1)*

*(Political motives often hamper our action as a SWAT group; it is not possible for us to act independently as such reasons constrain us. Oh. It will be gone because there are politicians involved in it). (Participant 3)*

*(Sometimes politics. People have different thoughts and different personalities, and you can often encounter these negative aspects on the field. Yes... Some of us, but not all, felt that not only the politicians but even the civilians would dictate to us what to do in certain situations. They may keep bugging us, but that's beyond our authority as they are still in higher positions. If you have a boss, but then you will also be subjected to another boss higher than the previous one). (Participant 8)*

Scott (2013) in his Institutional Theory, suggests that organizations, including SWAT teams, are not isolated entities but are embedded within broader social and political contexts. These contexts shape the behavior and decision-making processes of organizations by influencing the norms, values, and expectations they must adhere to to be perceived as legitimate and credible by external stakeholders, such as the government, the media, and the public. In this emergent theme, political meddling represents an external pressure stemming from political institutions or actors who seek to assert their influence over operational decisions and priorities.

When political interference occurs, it can disrupt the established procedures and protocols of SWAT operations, leading to conflicts between operational objectives and political agendas. This interference may result in suboptimal decision-making, compromised tactical strategies, and reduced operational effectiveness. In addition, political meddling may create tensions within the SWAT team itself, as operatives may feel their expertise and judgment are being disregarded or overridden in favor of political considerations (Scott, 2013).

A study by Rodriguez et al. (2020) looked at how political meddling affects law enforcement operations. They found that when politicians or policymakers interfere in operations, it can mess up how well the team works. For example, politicians might push SWAT to focus on certain goals or try to control how they make decisions during operations. This meddling can cause SWAT teams to struggle to do their job effectively.

#### **4.1.2.5 Deadly Whispers of Miscommunication.**

The reliance on participants to identify targets is paramount, yet communication becomes a manageable risk with clear descriptions or sketches of the target or the location. Intelligence failures to provide precise details about the target and its whereabouts complicate the problem, which leads to potentially grave consequences. This lack of clarity impedes the effectiveness of operations, increases the likelihood of errors, and endangers law enforcement officers and civilians.

*(Miscommunication is sometimes a problem in line with functions, not just for escorting escorts [VIPs]. For instance, in serving warrants, we need to find out who the target is. They didn't even give a sketch of what that house looks like. That's why it can*

*sometimes be a hindrance and hamper our performance. Miscommunication between us may result in the tendency to make mistakes. Sometimes they will give an inaccurate copy of a picture of the target or a sketch of the house. [They don't care] as long as we accompany them). (Participant 5)*

*(We had an experienced sir. We received a call from an intel in the province before for backup. They just called us immediately to respond without any break or prior info. We had responded and searched the area upon the information that it was a drug raid, but when we arrived in... the place where that illicit activity was said to be subjected to the search, it turned out that it was a residential house, and we raided the wrong house, we entered into the dwelling of a family sleeping in their premises. I was thankful that the family was considerate, considering that there was a minor in their home; if not, it could have caused great problems for us. [The minor may experience] trauma, which is dangerous). (Participant 9)*

Communication Theory by Griffin (2006) focuses on how people exchange information and messages. It emphasizes that for communication to be effective, the message must be clear, understood correctly, and received as intended. When communication breaks down or needs clarification, it can lead to problems and misunderstandings.

If we relate this theory to the SWAT operatives, split-second decisions can mean life or death, and clear communication is critical. If information about a target or location isn't communicated accurately, SWAT team members might not know where to go or who to target. This confusion can lead to dangerous situations where innocent people might be harmed, or the mission might fail. Therefore, by understanding and applying principles from Communication Theory, SWAT teams can work to ensure that their communication is clear, precise, and effective, reducing the risk of miscommunication and enhancing overall mission success and safety (Griffin, 2006).

Johnson & Brown (2019) investigated the effects of communication failures during emergency response situations. They identified common communication pitfalls, such as ambiguous descriptions and inadequate sharing of crucial information, which can compromise the effectiveness of response efforts.

#### **4.1.2.6 Legal Abandonment: A Battle without Backup.**

Some SWAT operatives and certain police officers entangled in legal battles perceived a profound lack of support from the legal service. This feeling stems from a dual failure: firstly, the failure of the legal service to furnish them with legal aid crucial for their defense, and secondly, the inability to advocate effectively on their behalf during court proceedings. This abandonment makes their situation worse, leaving them isolated and vulnerable. As a result, the majority of the charged police officers have no choice but to get private lawyers to defend them in court.

*(Legal concerns and legal matters that the public defenders deal with will take a long time; if you're reliant on the public defenders, it will take time, so if you can afford the services of a private counsel, it will be better for you to hire them to settle your case. During Duterte's time, the government supported the PNP in legal matters. However, that's not the case nowadays, it's not consistent now. You will not be contented because, God forbid, lapses are fatal. The stakes placed here are your job, and if you [counsel] are not good at defending yourself because you only think that it's merely for compliance. You will lose your job. [Private counsel is costly], there is an acceptance fee upon such acceptance [of the case], then during the hearing, there's a separate appearance fee in addition to their service). (Participant 7)*

*(The police ratio here in Negros Oriental is almost 2000. They only put one lawyer here. Every city has operatives. That's why when they ask for advice, the responses will be delayed; others will look for a private lawyer if they can afford it or ask their lawyer for legal advice). (Participant 9)*

Meanwhile, this emergent theme can be explained by Social Support Theory by Cohen & Wills (1985). The authors proposed that individuals benefit from various forms of support, including emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. In the case of SWAT operatives facing legal challenges, the absence of adequate legal support from their organization can be seen as a lack of instrumental backing and the tangible assistance needed to address specific problems or challenges. Without this support, operatives may feel ill-equipped to handle legal proceedings effectively, leading to heightened stress and anxiety.

Furthermore, the theory suggests that social support plays a crucial role in solving the negative effects of stress. When individuals perceive adequate support from their social networks, they can better cope with stressful situations. However, when this support is lacking, as seen in the case of SWAT operatives experiencing legal abandonment, individuals may experience increased feelings of helplessness and uncertainty. Seeking support from private lawyers may serve as a coping mechanism for SWAT operatives, allowing them to access the legal expertise and guidance they feel is lacking within their organization (Cohen & Wills, 1985).



Loftus & Hall (2019) examined the legal complexities encountered by SWAT operatives in the United States. Like the situation described in the emergent theme, the authors found that SWAT operatives often feel unsupported and must be equipped to navigate legal battles arising from their operations. They face challenges such as unclear legal guidelines, inadequate legal training, and limited resources for legal support, leading many to seek assistance from private attorneys.

#### **4.2 Participants' Coping with the Challenges Encountered in the Performance of their Duties**

##### **4.2.1 Unity in Adversity.**

Participants emphasized the power of solidarity and collaboration in times of difficulty, such as when encountering obstacles in performing their duties. They operate as a unified team, the perceived problems diminish as the burden is shared, and solutions are approached collectively. Participants expressed that challenges are more manageable when faced together, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual support among the members of the SWAT unit.

*(Oh, my goodness. There is no such thing as a difficult task as long as everyone is united in helping each other. But when you work by yourself, everything becomes challenging). (Participant 5)*

*(It's the same for me, sir, because it involves team movement. After the briefing, if a situation calls for a response, we'll be given our own tasks, depending on our skills. Similar to their situation, sir. Work does not present any challenges so long as we all agree with each other. We should work in harmony). (Participant 6)*

*(We help each other, sir; you can't solve things alone, so our solution is to let everyone know what we are doing; everyone should be informed of what you are going to do. For example, suppose we have personal appointments during our day off; we often inform each other of our locations so that we can easily respond if ever God forbids. In that case, there are urgent threats to their lives or incidents during their trips. If something bad happens to my partner or unit, I feel accountable. It's not like that; we don't usually say things like I can do this on my own like we need to help each other to accomplish tasks; it's like I need your assistance, and you will also need mine, especially in matters one is more capable of doing than the other). (Participant 9)*

One theory that can help explain the emergent theme is the Group Cohesion Theory. This theory, developed by Carron & Brawley (2000), suggests that various factors, including individual attraction to the group, group goals, and the level of unity among members, influence cohesion within a group. Cohesion is fostered when SWAT operatives feel a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the team, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and skills. This cohesion is essential for effective teamwork and collaboration, especially during high-pressure situations where unity and mutual support are critical for mission success.

Group Cohesion Theory emphasizes the importance of shared experiences and interpersonal relationships in enhancing group cohesion. SWAT operatives often undergo rigorous training and face challenging situations together, strengthening their bonds and reinforcing their sense of unity. Also, the theory suggests that clear communication, trust, and a supportive team climate further contribute to cohesion within the group. By understanding and promoting these factors, SWAT teams can maximize their cohesion and harness the diversity of their members to achieve their objectives effectively (Carron & Brawley, 2000).

Brown (2017) investigated the effects of teamwork on performance within high-pressure settings, specifically focusing on emergency response teams. Through qualitative interviews and observations, he found that teamwork significantly enhanced the ability of these teams to handle stressful situations effectively. When team members collaborated closely, shared responsibilities, and communicated efficiently, they were better equipped to address challenges and achieve their objectives.

##### **4.2.2 Resourcefulness amidst Logistical Scarcity.**

Participants showed the ability to creatively solve problems when faced with limitations in resources such as budget, supplies, logistics, or equipment necessary for their work. They find ways to get things done even when they don't have everything they need. This could involve finding alternative solutions, improvising with what is available, or seeking unconventional resources to overcome the scarcity and accomplish their goals.

*(Sir, we address our concerns to the team leader in cases like lack of mobility. They will be the ones who will contact other units to let us borrow another patrol car. To address the lack of communication devices, we borrow or use our equipment to perform our duties efficiently. In cases of vehicles for patrol, we use our vehicles because no unit has been issued). (Participant 5)*

*(On my part, sir, I usually provide myself with equipments that the government lacks to provide). (Participant 6)*

*(Yes. Ah, there are many challenges that we have mentioned in terms of mobility and supply, but sometimes, you have to think outside the box. Ahh, of course, in a legal way, the old practices are avoided because we want to conform to the modern and legal bounds. You can approach the LGUs to help us with logistics, mobility, support, etc.). (Participant 9)*

One theory that can elucidate the above emergent theme is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). According to Bandura (1986), individuals learn and adapt their behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within their social environment. This theory suggests that their ability to demonstrate resourcefulness stems from observing and learning from their peers and past experiences where they successfully navigated similar challenges. As they witness others finding creative solutions to logistical scarcities and receive positive reinforcement for their resourceful actions, SWAT operatives are more likely to develop and apply adaptive strategies in situations of scarcity.

Bandura (1986) posits that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their observations of others and the outcomes of those behaviors, emphasizing the role of social learning in shaping human behavior. The theory suggests that their ability to adapt and innovate is a product of their social learning experiences within their team and organization. By understanding how social cognitive processes influence behavior, organizations can foster a culture that promotes and rewards resourcefulness, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of SWAT teams in challenging operational contexts.

A study by Martinez et al. (2020) explored how disaster response teams cope with limited resources and supplies during large-scale emergencies such as natural disasters or humanitarian crises. Through interviews and observations with members of disaster response teams, the study revealed that these teams often encounter situations where they must operate with insufficient equipment, workforce, or infrastructure. Despite these challenges, members of disaster response teams demonstrated remarkable adaptability and creativity in finding solutions to meet the needs of affected communities.

#### **4.2.3 Commanders Guide: Officers Abide.**

Orders govern SWAT operatives. The platoon leader and the commanders can make decisions and give orders in a team or workforce. Even though SWAT operatives might have good ideas, the ultimate decision-making power lies with the team leaders and commanders. They are responsible for leading and directing the team during operations. So, everyone follows the chain of command, with leaders guiding the way and officers following their lead.

*(The problems in the workforce are often addressed and handled by our team leader, who often guides us as we work through them with the assistance of our officials). (Participant 1)*

*(We're always deployed in the field everyday sir. So, if we encounter any problems in the field, we always ask for assistance from a higher commander so that he can take the command). (Participant 2)*

*(You always listen to what is the discretion of the team leaders and the supervisors; although we can come up with a solid decision, in the end, they will be the ones who will decide; they will lead, and we depend on everyone's skills. Our team leaders and supervisors command and direct us in operation). (Participant 4)*

*(I cannot relate that much to this case, sir, because, in our teams, our team leader often commands the team's performance and directs the team effort. We cannot make alternatives to the plans on our own, but we need to concur with the plans of our team leader and commander because they have the last say). (Participant 5)*

*(Yes, we can do it, sir, but sometimes we can't. We don't just go to operations without any higher-ups' command; we depend on their orders. If we receive orders, everything is clear, and there are no barriers). (Participant 9)*

Social Learning Theory, proposed by psychologist Albert Bandura (1977), can explain this emergent theme. This concept posits that individuals acquire knowledge not solely through personal experiences but also by watching the behaviors and consequences experienced by others. If we relate this to the SWAT operatives, members learn from watching their leaders, such as commanders and platoon leaders, in action. When they see their leaders making decisions confidently and issuing clear orders that lead to successful missions, SWAT operatives take note. They recognize that following these orders results in positive outcomes, like effective teamwork and mission accomplishment. This observation process forms the basis of learning through social modeling and, essentially, seeing what works and emulating those behaviors.

Moreover, Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in shaping behavior. For example, reinforcement occurs when team members observe the positive consequences of obeying orders from their leaders. Successful missions, enhanced team performance, and overall operational effectiveness serve as reinforcement for following commands. Over time,

this reinforcement strengthens the association between obeying authority figures and achieving desired outcomes, further solidifying the practice of following orders within the SWAT team dynamic.

One relevant study in leadership and team dynamics is the work by Matthews et al. (2012), which emphasized the critical role of leaders, such as platoon leaders and commanders, in orchestrating cohesive actions within a team. They argued that effective leadership fosters clear communication channels and ensures team members understand and execute their roles efficiently.

#### **4.2.4 Continuous Learning: Train and Retrain.**

Through ongoing training and education, participants aspire to improve their skills and knowledge consistently. They wish to participate in training sessions regularly and undergo retraining to stay updated with the latest tactics and techniques. This approach ensures they are always prepared to handle new challenges and situations effectively.

*(Suggestions for the PNP... ahh, in the case of our unit, sir, everyone should be equipped with different training, specialized training, so that we can efficiently deal with cases of insurgency or other urgent problems that may arise, and the SWAT should be capable of handling it). (Participant 1)*

*(The [specialized] training should be continued, sir. The SWAT course, like PERF in EOD, should be continued and expanded in provinces; it should be more expansive in the region and at the national level; everyone in the SWAT unit should be adept and equipped with these skills). (Participant 5)*

*(For me, sir, there should be an improvement in PNP; they should train and re-train personnel). (Participant 6)*

Kolb (1984), in his Experiential Learning Theory, provides an understanding of how individuals learn from their experiences and how these experiences shape their future actions. The first stage, concrete experience, involves direct involvement in a learning activity or situation. For SWAT operatives, this could mean participating in simulated exercises or real-life operations facing various challenges and scenarios. During the second stage, reflective observation, SWAT team members reflect on their experiences, analyzing what went well and what could be improved. They may discuss their observations with colleagues, mentors, or trainers to gain different perspectives and insights.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization, involves making sense of the experiences by developing theories, concepts, or strategies based on the reflections from the previous stage. SWAT operatives may draw upon their training, knowledge, and expertise to conceptualize new approaches or refine existing tactics in response to the lessons learned. Finally, in the fourth stage, active experimentation, SWAT team members apply their conceptualizations in practice. This could involve further training sessions to test new techniques and deploy these strategies in real-life situations. Through active experimentation, SWAT operatives continue the learning cycle, gaining additional experiences and refining their skills in an ongoing process of improvement and adaptation.

Continuous learning and training are fundamental to maintaining effectiveness and readiness within specialized units such as SWAT teams. A study by Sztompka (2003) emphasized the importance of ongoing training in enhancing professional skills and adaptability. This study discussed that continuous learning ensures operatives remain abreast of evolving tactics, technologies, and threats, enabling them to respond effectively to dynamic and unpredictable situations.

### **4.3 Aspirations of the Participants to Improve the Quality of the Performance of their Duties**

#### **4.3.1 Support to Wounded and Fallen Heroes.**

SWAT operatives believe the government and the Philippine National Police should provide the help needed to those who are injured in police operations (WIPO) and to the families of those who have died while serving. This support could include medical care for wounded operatives and assistance to the families of fallen officers, such as financial aid or other resources to help them cope with their loss. It's about expressing appreciation and recognizing the selfless acts of courage from those who risk their lives to safeguard others.

*(There should be benefits for those who are killed and wounded in action during operations). (Participant 7)*

*(I want to address the problem of WIPO officers, sir, and hopefully, they will address this as well. At the moment, sir, WIPO, wounded in a police operation, police officers' benefits have many requirements before they can be processed, which is distressing on their part, sir. In instances like what happened to a classmate in senior at Piape in Dumaguete, up until now, sir, the incident had occurred last August when he was about to respond to that traffic accident. However, he was shot in the shooting accident on his way. He is still alive, but he had a hard time claiming his benefits. Hmm, there are a lot of documents to process before you can claim the*

*benefits, which is why he ended up using his own money for his operation. There are benefits, but the process should be expedited so that it won't last long. For those transactions, they could have designated regional representatives to cater to the concerns). (Participant 9)*

A good theory that will explain this emergent theme is the Social Support Theory by Cohen et al. (2000). Social Support Theory suggests that when SWAT operatives receive support from their social networks, it helps them deal with the intense stress and difficult situations they encounter in their line of duty. For instance, emotional support, such as understanding and encouragement from colleagues, can provide comfort and strength during tough times. Instrumental support, like practical assistance with tasks or financial aid, can alleviate the burdens that arise from injury or loss. Additionally, informational support, such as guidance on navigating the aftermath of an incident, can empower officers and their families to make informed decisions.

During SWAT operations, where the risks are high, and the stakes are life-threatening, social support is critical in promoting resilience and wellbeing among officers and their loved ones. By acknowledging the sacrifices of wounded and fallen heroes and rallying around them with support, the police force and the government demonstrate a commitment to their welfare and honor their service (Cohen et al., 2000). This strengthens the solidarity within the law enforcement community and increases the morale and dedication of SWAT team members. This, in turn, is vital for the effectiveness and success of their missions.

Archbold et al. (2018) researched the significance of assistance programs for police officers, particularly those who are injured or suffer trauma in the line of duty. They emphasized the critical role of organizational culture within police departments in shaping the effectiveness of these assistance programs.

#### ***4.3.2 Envisioning Logistical Adequacy.***

Participants dream that all necessary support, supplies, and equipment are available to fulfill their official duties. It reflects the desire for smooth operations without the burden of having to acquire resources independently. Informants aspire to have sufficient logistical support to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively. This includes access to essential tools and materials required for their official functions. The importance of adequate support systems to facilitate productivity and success in various endeavors bolsters the morale of the SWAT operatives.

*(Ah, our mobility equipment allows us to perform our job efficiently and accurately as we are fully equipped to be truly called a special unit. We need to be fully equipped because operations that the police can't cater to are left to our discretion). (Participant 1)*

*(Ah, same as theirs, as they recruit a new breed of policemen, after training to become a SWAT member, there should be constant refreshing in the conduct of training, provide resources, mobility, and complete equipment; these things need to be improved). (Participant 4)*

*(All logistical support, equipment, and the more equipment, the better. Since we are already in a high-tech era, then our equipment should be, too). (Participant 8)*

The above emergent theme can be applied to the Expectancy Theory by Victor Vroom (1964). Expectancy Theory suggests that individuals are motivated to act in certain manners when they believe their behaviors will result in favorable outcomes and if they value those outcomes. In the context of SWAT operatives, this theory helps explain why they envision logistical adequacy. First, SWAT operatives believe that they will be better equipped to handle their missions effectively and safely if they have all the necessary support, supplies, and equipment readily available. This belief creates a high expectancy, and they expect adequate logistics to lead to successful mission outcomes, such as completing objectives and ensuring their safety and that of others.

In addition, SWAT operatives highly value these outcomes. The stakes are often extremely high in their line of work, where even small errors or inadequacies in logistics could have serious consequences. Therefore, the value placed on having everything they need readily available is significant, and it means ensuring their safety, the safety of their team members, and the success of their missions. As a result, SWAT operatives are motivated to envision and strive for logistical adequacy, as it aligns with their expectations of achieving successful outcomes and holds high value in ensuring their effectiveness and safety in their challenging roles (Vroom, 1964).

Forester et al. (2018) explained the significance of logistical support in optimizing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies during high-stakes operations. They discussed the importance of providing operatives with adequate resources, tools, and gear to perform their duties efficiently and safely.

### 4.3.3 Craving for Specialized Skill Enrichment.

SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team members want to learn new things and improve their knowledge. The participants strongly desire to improve their abilities and learn specialized skills for their job. This could involve learning to handle different weapons or mastering tactics for difficult situations. They're eager to become even more skilled and effective in their work.

*(Training should be offered to us here at the province level, and the slots will not be limited. That's training and seminars. For me, I am inspired to do everything, to attend more seminars, and to learn more about education. We can apply what we learn to our daily activities and pass it on to the troops along the way, so I aspire as the team leader to attend [such activities] and inspire them). (Participant 8)*

*(For me, more training sir. Training is in line with our unit, that is, marksmanship training, physical conditioning, and providing equipment in the organization because sometimes the funds may be misappropriated). (Participant 9)*

*(Training should be continued because it is a constant learning in practice. There is nothing else for me because I have been trained, but I wanted to do something to improve and enhance myself to share knowledge and ideas). (Participant 10)*

Another theory that can help explain the theme is the Goal Setting Theory by Locke & Latham (1990). According to this theory, setting specific and challenging goals leads to higher performance than vague or easy goals. SWAT operatives are driven by the desire to improve their skills and abilities, and goal setting provides them with a structured approach to achieving their objectives. By setting specific goals related to skill enhancement, such as improving marksmanship accuracy or mastering new tactical techniques, SWAT personnel channel their motivation and efforts toward continuous improvement.

Thompson (2020) investigated the motivations driving law enforcement tactical operators to pursue skill development. Through qualitative interviews with tactical operators, he found that a central motivation for skill development was the desire for mastery and proficiency in their roles. Participants were passionate about ongoing enhancement, aiming to improve their current abilities and gain new ones to improve their performance in demanding circumstances.

### 4.3.4 Fit for Duty: Strong Bodies, Strong SWAT.

To be effective in their roles, SWAT team members expressed the need to be physically fit. This entails following a set standard of physical fitness to ensure they are ready to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies. By staying in good physical shape, SWAT operatives can perform their duties better and be more capable of handling the demands of their job and ensuring public safety.

*(They haven't mentioned this one, regardless of how high-tech the equipment facilities are, the most important thing is your physical agility; you should be physically fit because if you wear a vest, you can't walk that far with it .... The second one is honestly, sir, for this unit, you should have regular and stable training; you should be physically fit for combat, not just for a show). (Participant 5)*

*(I suggest that the program should be continuous so that your skills and physical agility do not deteriorate over time. If the program is not continuous, it can affect the skills, and they may become perishable. The knowledge becomes obsolete if the program does not continue. If it does not continue [the training], the skills will become stagnant, and your physical skills may deteriorate, and as a result, you'll end up as a desk officer). (Participant 9)*

Competence Motivation Theory, an anchored theory of this study, relates to this emergent theme. Harter (1981), in her theory, explains why people are motivated to feel competent and capable in what they do. In the case of SWAT operatives, this theory helps us understand why they place such importance on being physically fit. Essentially, SWAT team members want to feel skilled and capable in their roles, and being physically fit helps them achieve that. When they're in good shape, they feel more confident handling the tough situations they might face.

It looks at how SWAT team members are driven by their inner motivation to feel competent and effective. They know that being physically fit helps them do their job better and makes them feel more confident and capable overall. This competency motivation theory helps us understand why physical fitness is a big deal for SWAT operatives. It's not just about being strong; it's about feeling capable and ready to tackle any challenge that comes their way (Harter, 1981).

Sorić et al. (2017) explored the relationship between physical fitness and the performance of special police officers. The authors surveyed Croatian special police officers, assessing their physical fitness levels and correlating them with psychological wellbeing and job performance. Their findings suggested that physical fitness significantly contributes to psychological wellbeing and overall performance among special police officers.

## **5. Conclusion**

This qualitative research, which delved into the work life of SWAT operatives, has identified twenty (20) emergent themes, examining both positive and negative aspects of their duties. The positive experiences showed a deep sense of duty and pride in serving and protecting their communities, alongside the satisfaction derived from successful missions and competitive achievements. Conversely, negative experiences presented the challenges of balancing work and personal life, bureaucratic hurdles, and the detrimental effects of political interference and miscommunication. Despite these challenges, the findings revealed a resilient spirit among SWAT operatives, as evidenced by their unity in adversity, resourcefulness in the face of logistical constraints, and commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Moving forward, their aspirations for better support, adequate resources, specialized training, and physical fitness underscore their dedication to enhancing the quality of their service and ensuring the effectiveness of their operations.

The results of this research will significantly aid PNP SWAT members in ensuring that the government meets their physical, mental, and emotional requirements. As a result, they will understand that their responsibility extends beyond monetary service to our changing world. For the Philippine National Police (PNP), the law enforcement agency must prioritize the wellbeing of SWAT operatives by addressing the negative experiences highlighted, such as work-life imbalance, inadequate resources, and political meddling. Regarding aspirations for improvement, it is important to heed the desires of SWAT operatives to enhance the quality of their performance. This includes supporting wounded and fallen heroes, ensuring logistical adequacy to enable effective operations, offering opportunities for specialized skill enrichment, and promoting physical fitness and health among team members. Implementing these aspirations requires a concerted effort from organizational leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders to prioritize the needs and aspirations of SWAT operatives and allocate resources accordingly.

The PNP and the government must implement policies and programs that support a better balance between work and family life, provide sufficient resources and logistical support to SWAT teams, and eliminate political interference in operational matters. Additionally, measures should be taken to improve communication channels within the organization to prevent misunderstandings and ensure effective coordination among team members. Furthermore, every province's Special Weapons and Tactics unit must foster a culture of unity and solidarity among team members, emphasizing the importance of following command guidance and encouraging continuous learning and skill development through regular training and retraining programs. Providing adequate support and advice from commanders can also play a crucial role in helping SWAT operatives cope with the demands of their jobs effectively. The National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) must continue recruiting police officers who are part of the PNP or SWAT unit. Additionally, regular monitoring and evaluation of progress should be conducted to ensure that SWAT operatives' needs and aspirations are adequately addressed, and adjustments should be made as necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) should develop comprehensive policies and program coordination to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of SWAT personnel in carrying out key tasks and, most of all, provide the necessary legal support to police officers facing charges about the performance of their duties. Collaboration and communication among various stakeholders are essential to implement these recommendations. It is necessary for top officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP), along with government representatives, law enforcement bodies, and local community members, to collaborate in crafting and enforcing strategies and programs that tackle the challenges faced and fulfill the goals of SWAT operatives.

## **6. Study Limitations and Future Research**

The study's primary limitation is its geographic and organizational scope, as it focuses exclusively on a local SWAT unit in the province of Negros Oriental. This localized approach may not capture the practices, challenges, and experiences of SWAT operatives in other regions of the country. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to SWAT units operating in different provinces, which could have varying operational protocols, resource availability, and situational dynamics.

The findings from this study on PNP SWAT operatives can be used for future research to improve the effectiveness and well-being of law enforcement personnel. Given the complex and evolving nature of crime and social unrest in the Philippines, it is important to explore strategies that enhance work-life balance for SWAT operatives. Future research could investigate how policies and practices can be developed to better support operatives in balancing their professional duties with personal and familial responsibilities, thereby reducing stress and improving job satisfaction. Additionally, examining the impact of logistical support and the availability of specialized equipment on operational success and safety could provide information into resource allocation that would benefit SWAT units.

Furthermore, the study presents the need to address political interference and ensure clear communication channels within the organization. Future research could focus on understanding how political factors impact SWAT operations and developing frameworks to minimize such interference and ensure that operatives can perform their duties effectively and without undue pressure. Additionally, investigating training programs and continuous skill development initiatives can provide valuable

information on how to keep SWAT operatives well-prepared for various high-risk situations. Emphasizing the importance of mental and physical health, future studies should explore comprehensive support systems, including mental health services and fitness programs, to maintain the readiness and resilience of SWAT teams. By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to creating a more effective, efficient, and supportive environment for SWAT operatives in the Philippines.

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