



Lived Experiences of Stakeholders on the Implementation of the PNP Omnipresence Program in Cebu City

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Omnipresence Program in Cebu City. The research involved 12 informants, including PNP personnel, Barangay Public Safety Officers (BPSOs), and community residents from four selected police stations. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's method.

The study identified eight emergent themes: (1) creation of a happy and supportive community; (2) enhancement of community satisfaction and convenience; (3) experiences of police being tarnished and misjudged; (4) lack of full collaboration and trust from the community; (5) issues of insufficient manpower; (6) lack of logistical support; (7) deterrence of petty crimes; and (8) promotion of a safer community.

Findings reveal that while the program contributes positively to crime deterrence and public safety, it faces significant challenges such as limited resources, community mistrust, and inadequate logistical and manpower support. The study concludes that effective implementation of the PNP Omnipresence Program requires strengthened community collaboration, increased logistical and personnel support, and continuous trust-building efforts between the police and the public.

Keywords: Community policing, Crime deterrence, Cebu City, PNP visibility, Police omnipresence, Qualitative phenomenology, Stakeholder experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It has been said that patrol operations are the “backbone of a police department,” (Wain & Ariel, 2014) the most important component in a police organization, not only because it is the largest, but because patrol is in direct contact with the public; thus, it leads to create the omnipresence of the police in the community (Florendo, 2015). Omnipresence is the property of being present everywhere (Manwong, 2006). In police parlance, omnipresence is generally used to describe police presence which is existing or being everywhere at the same time or constantly encountered.

Patrolling is widely practiced in the U.S. and other countries around the world as it is the first line of defense in crime prevention (Hamzah & Suparno, 2022). These refer to the alertness of the police patrol officers in their area of assignment especially to crime-prone areas and to detect possible crimes and to discourage lawless elements from committing an act inviolable with the law.

Developing positive police-community relations is a critical aspect of beat patrolling, aiming to combat citizen mistrust and foster collaboration (Labata, 2024). Community-oriented policing strategies, such as town hall meetings and foot patrols, are designed to create partnerships between citizens and police,

ultimately leading to increased trust and reduced crime (Labata, 2024). These initiatives also aim to address issues where minorities often experience inequitable interactions with police, such as being stopped, searched, or arrested more frequently (McCandless, 2018). Studies in Tuvalu, a country with 17.8% of its population and 86.6% of its police officers surveyed, investigated stakeholder perceptions of police-community relations (Watson, 2018).

Additionally, in a southern California city, community members and local police agreed that police/community relations were largely positive in the context of a neighborhood intervention program (George & Twyford, 2021). Implementing community relations training, which sometimes includes role-playing difficult police situations, has been a focus in police academies since the 1960s (Stotland & Guppy, 1975).

Cebu City Police Office promotes and strengthened patrolling where police omnipresence will be established in an area where patrollers are tasked to rove. The word patrolling is accompanied by various types of functions such as foot, mobile, bicycle, motorcycle and other specialized patrols. The local PNP organization promotes more deployment of police in the field to deter lawless elements from victimizing people in the area. In line with the arising incidents which are commonly committed in the streets in urban areas, there are some local executives in metro Cebu who rewarded police officers who are able to apprehend or even kill hardened criminals, which also urged and motivates other police officers to effectively performed police duties and responsibilities (Kreuzer, 2016).

The omnipresence of the police is the most common solution for crime deterrence and prevention (2003), people are more confident and feel secure if they are aware of presence of the police personnel deployed in an area where a crime is frequently committed (Doyle et al., 2016). Thus, a police force needs to improve police visibility as a solution to address the numerous occurrence of incident (Dau et al., 2021). This type of police operation is very effective for crime deterrence and prevention in which the perpetrators are hesitant to commit such crime upon knowing the presence of police personnel in the area (Petersen et al., 2023). Policing and police visibility were consistently expressed as key factors in addressing the need for increased public reassurance (Innes, 2004), this established in the minds of perpetrators that policemen is everywhere (Telep et al., 2016). Essentially, a visible police presence was thought to allow for greater police engagement across communities with the expected outcome being a reduction in crime (Yesberg & Brunton - Smith, 2023).

Beat patrollers play a vital role in intelligence gathering and criminal investigations due to their direct engagement with communities (Ratcliffe & Guidetti, 2008; Junior, 2023 ; Regens et al., 2017). Training deficiencies in intelligence structures can severely hamper an agency's ability to gather information on emerging criminal areas (Ratcliffe, 2005). Specialized training in criminal intelligence and investigative interviewing is crucial for police officers to adapt and disseminate tactical and operational intelligence effectively (Harrison et al., 2020; Kathingi, 2021).

The integration of diverse skills and the propensity to undertake different types of police work can broaden the community policing philosophy and practice (Ramshaw, 2012)

1.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is anchored on the Routine Activity Theory of Cohen and Felson (1979), Organizational Support Theory of Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa (1986) and Competence Motivation Theory of Harter, S. (1978).

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) explains that the volume of criminal offences is related to the nature of the everyday pattern of social interaction. It emphasizes that, for a criminal event to take place, three elements must converge at a particular time and place. The first element is a motivated offender with both criminal inclinations and the ability to carry out those inclinations. The second element is a suitable target. The third element is the absence of capable guardians who can protect the target against violation or criminal event. This “routine activity approach” to criminality extends human ecology analysis to the explanation of crime and victimization rates over time. This theory argues that structural changes in the

routine activities of everyday life affect crimes against both person and property. If one of these elements is missing, then a crime will not be likely to occur (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Structural changes in routine activities influence those crimes through their effect on any one of three factors: (1) motivated offenders (for example, teenage boys, unemployed people, drug addicts), (2) suitable targets (such as unlocked homes or cars), and (3) the absence of capable guardians against a violation (for instance, the absence of police officers, home-owners, security system). Cohen and Felson (1979) maintain that all three of the factors are necessary for the successful completion of crimes. It is important to emphasize that it does not attempt to explain criminal motivation but, instead, assume that all people will commit crime unless they are prevented from doing so. Criminal activities are viewed as routine activities. They conclude that crime is so rooted in the legitimate opportunity structure of our society and in the freedom and prosperity that many people enjoy, that to reduce crime will require substantial modifications in our everyday way of life (Bohm & Vogel, 2010).

In the original formulation of routine activity theory, it was explained that crime is the product of the convergence of three minimal elements in time and space: likely offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians. Thus, the routine activity explanation of crime rate trends identified the capable guardians as the only actor within the crime event who has the power to prevent a crime from being executed. It further clarifies that the concept by providing examples of who are capable guardians and how they may function to prevent crime: a retired person at home might well discourage daytime burglary of his or her own home or even the home next door. Conversely, someone working away from home during the day contributes by that absence to a greater risk of burglary (Reynald et. al., 2011).

Routine activity requires that for a crime to occur more than just the convergence of criminals and targets are necessary. The offender must be motivated and will likely have performed the hedonistic calculus of weighing the risks and rewards. There must be a suitable target that provides the reward, and there must be a lack of guarded space that poses little or no risk to the adversary. Risks can be intensified through an effective guardian. Guardians can be security personnel but are more often simply the legitimate users of the facility who provide the requisite deterrence. Offender motivation may be reduced thorough an effective handler-a person who has direct influence over an offender and may include parents, teachers, parents friends, or employers. Most offenders do not have an effective handler and their motivation is more difficult to thwart; thus, more emphasis must be placed on place guardianship (Vellani, 2006).

Routine patterns of behavior affect the convergence of these three elements. Routine activities are defined as recurrent and prevalent activities, which fulfill an individual's physical, emotional, or social needs, whether they be biological or cultural in origin. Routine activities occur in the home, at work, and at other places outside the home where individuals frequently attend. The frequency of their convergence is also dictated by certain ecological factors such as the timing with which events occur and the placement of an offender in relation to the placement of the victim (Pourheidari & Croisdale, 2010).

Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986) holds that in order to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such Perceived Organizational Support (POS) would increase employees' felt obligation to help the organization reach its objectives, their affective commitment to the organization, and their expectation that improved performance would be rewarded. Behavioral outcomes of POS would include increases in-role and extra-role performance and decreases in stress and withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover.

Organization Support Theory argues that agents acting on behalf of the organizations are often perceived as acting on organization's intentions rather than their personal motives (Levinson, 1965). This personification of the organization is enhanced by the organization's legal, moral, and financial responsibility for the actions of its agents; by organizational policies, norms, and culture that provide continuity and prescribe role behaviours; and by the power the organization's agents exert over individual employees. Due to this personification of organizations, employees base their judgments of their perceived value to the organization on how favourably the organization treats them. When the organization gives

resources to employees in a voluntary manner rather than under circumstances beyond their control, employees will view such aid as being genuinely valued and respected by the organization (Cotterell, Eisenberger & Speicher, 1992). Based on this principle, POS will be more effectively enhanced if employees view organizational rewards and favorable job conditions such as pay, promotions, job enrichment, and influence over organizational policies as voluntary behaviors of organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Another theory that supports this study is Competence Motivation Theory. A theory of achievement motivation based on a person's feelings of personal competence. According to the theory competence motivation increases when a person successfully masters a task. This encourages the person to master more tasks (Harter, 1978; White, 1959).

White (1959) argued that organisms are intrinsically motivated to engage in interactions with their physical and social environments. If such attempts result in success, then that individual receives intrinsic rewards like feeling of efficacy and pleasure and is motivated to continue effectance efforts.

Harter extended White's theory to develop a more complete framework that she initially identified as effectance motivation theory but was later more commonly referred to as competence motivation theory. Consistent with White, Harter also centered enjoyment as the reason why individuals are motivated to interact with the environment but he added number of other components. First, she introduced the idea that individuals' effectance or competence motivation can vary across achievement domains (cognitive, physical, social). Within each domain, individuals are motivated to engage in mastery attempts for the purposes of developing or demonstrating competence. If their mastery attempts result in success at an optimally challenging task and if they receive socio-emotional support from the significant individuals for such task success, then they will experience perceptions of competence, that is, the belief in their abilities in that domain, along with perceptions of performance control, that is the belief in their ability to control their performance (Horn & Harris, 2002).

When there is high perceptions of competence and control, in turn, this results in feelings of pleasure that lead to maintenance of or increases in effectance (competence) motivation (Weiss & Amorose, 2008). In contrast to White, Harter also proposed a negatively oriented path that specified that individuals who engage in mastery attempts but meet with failure at optimally challenging tasks and issues or absence or lack of reinforcement or disapproval from significant social agents will experience decreased perceptions of competence and control in that achievement domain, along with anxiety and shame. This combination of events will lead to decreased effectance motivation in that particular domain (Weiss & Amorose, 2008).

Competence motivation theory is a conceptual framework designed to explain individuals' motivation to participate, persist, and work hard in any particular achievement context. The central thesis of the theory is that individuals are attracted to participation in activities at which they feel competent or capable. The theory can be used by researchers and practitioners in sport and exercise psychology fields to identify why and how children, adolescents, and adults can be encouraged to participate and to exert effort in these achievement contexts (Elliot & Dweck, 2005; White, 1959).

Police visibility is the most common solution for crime deterrent wherein a rookie cops is commonly used for deployment; people are more confident and feel secure if they are aware of presence of the police personnel deployed in an area where a crime is frequently committed. Thus, a police force needs to improve police visibility as a solution to address the numerous occurrences of incident. This type of police operation is very effective for crime deterrence or prevention in which the lawless elements are hesitant to commit such crime upon knowing the presence of police personnel assigned in the area. Policing and police visibility were consistently expressed as key factors in addressing the need for increased public reassurance. Essentially, a visible police presence was thought to allow for greater police engagement across communities with the expected outcome being a reduction in crime.

Patrol is accomplished by the field officer moving about from place to place in the assigned district using an automobile, motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, bicycle, horse, jet-ski, scooter, or on foot. You will be assigned to a specific area of responsibility and theoretically held accountable for preventing crime and accidents in that area. For example, if a victim comes home or arrives at their place of business and finds that the place has been burglarized, your supervisor will want to know where you were and what you were

doing at the time the crime is believed to have been committed so that you can try to prevent another crime of similar nature from being committed at later time (Adams, 2004).

Basic patrolling activities have usually been referred to as routine patrol, although even the most mundane of your tasks should never be taken so lightly as to be considered routine, which is defined as a regular or unvarying procedure. As a matter of fact, it should be your routine never to patrol your district the same way twice or on any sort of a timetable that would-be miscreants could figure out. I arrested a burglar once who stood around the police station at shift change time, listened to the police radio, figured out how many units were on the street and what districts they were assigned to, and monitored their calls. On several occasions, he followed some of the cars to get an idea of their routine, and his journal showed that some of our officers kept to a very rigid timetable and route of travel. He was able to burglarize several parts of the district; he knew that he had so many minutes, or an hour or more, to carry out his crimes. According to his journal, he committed several dozen burglaries undetected until I arrested him in an orange grove where he has buried some of the loot from one his burglaries. When interrogated, he confessed to more than two dozen burglaries within the previous three to four months (Adams, 2004).

The traditional police response to crime primarily consisted of random, routine patrols. It was believed that random patrols would deter crime through a consistent, unpredictable police presence. If patrols were unable to prevent crime, then officers, as a result of their distribution across beats, would be in a good position to observe the criminal activity and apprehend criminals. Finally, if this failed, detectives would be dispatched to investigate the crime and make arrests (Kappeler & Gaines, 2015).

The more random patrol a city receives, the more a perceived police visibility of the police deters crime in public places. The more precisely patrol presence is concentrated at the "hot spots" and "hot times" of criminal activity, the less crime there will be in those places and times. The higher the arrest rate per crime for each types of crime in a city and or in a highly urbanize municipality, the lower the rate of that type of crime. Individual offenders arrested for an offense are less likely to repeat that offense in the future than offenders who are not arrested. The more accurately police can identify and minimize proximate causes of specific patterns of crime, the less crime there will be. The more police can reduce the intersection of motivated offenders in time and space with suitable targets of crime, the less crime there will be (Hess et al., 2013).

An article written by Orosa (2013) stated that, patrolling in remotest areas has become an essentially part of police routine to prevent lawlessness. It cannot be denied that criminality thrives in the absence of security. However, crimes of different types will never succeed if safety measures are put in place. But how safe a certain place is greatly depending on how the police force works. Cebu City police are equipped with modern stuffs that are vital to their daily operations. This only means maintaining peace and order has become easier with the help of patrol cars, motorcycles, and street cameras, among others. There is no doubt that these pieces of equipment are giving the authorities the advantage against criminals. With all these resources, however, it would still boil down to visibility. The need for police presence in every street around the city is what counts in the heightened battle against criminality. A roving police team cannot only deter crime. It can also create a feeling of safety and security among the people (Orosa, 2013).

Routine patrol involves unstructured patrol throughout a beat, whether on foot, in squad, or via some other method, in an effort to deter crime by creating a sense of police visibility. It is often considered synonymous with random patrol, a strategy based on the theory of probability in which an ongoing patrol presence is presumed to (1) increase the chances that an officer will detect and disrupt crime occurring in public places and (2) deter potential offenders because the unpredictable nature of patrol means there is a chance a squad car or foot patrol will come a long time at any minute (Hess et al., 2013).

Patrol officers provide around-the-clock preventive patrol, respond to calls for service, perform traffic accident investigation, and enforce state and local laws. Patrol is responsible for initial crime investigation and protection of citizens. Patrol division is the face of the organization. The majority of contact that the public has with the police department is with the members of the patrol division. This fact is taken seriously by all officers assigned to the patrol division. When a citizen calls the police department needing service, a patrol officer is initially sent to the location. They begin the investigation by analyzing the

situation, examining the evidence and then making a decision on a course of action. If a report is warranted, the report is taken by a patrol officer and then referred to an investigator for a follow-up investigation (Florendo, 2015).

Senior police officers hope that high visibility operations will garner valuable information about the movements of the local criminals; produce fast and hard evidence by catching criminals ‘red-handed’; deter potential criminal; boost the morale of officers; reassure potential victims; create a local image of ‘police omnipresence’; and prove to the public that the police are capable of fighting crime. However, the strategy can also generate serious problems for the police. First, it can be perceived by those on the receiving-end as a crude and heavy exercise of power and authority which tends not to discriminate very effectively between the innocent and the guilty. Everyone in a given locale who corresponds to stereotypical representations of the ‘criminal’ is treated as suspect, which can cause widespread individual resentment and distrust, particularly among young people. Second, whole communities and neighborhoods may begin to complain vociferously of civil rights violations and blanket criminalization. Communities can contrast this over-policing with the lack of an adequate police response and ‘under-protection’ when they report incidents. Finally, police-community relations in certain areas may deteriorate to such a degree that both sides come to expect and prepare for conflictual contacts. Fighting war against crime can transfer these neighborhoods into ‘front-lines’ where the police lose the ‘hearts and minds of people (McLaughlin & Muncie, 2001).

Police, through their discretionary judgments, are street interpreters of law. In a practical sense, police selectively determine what and how law is to be enforced. They determine what services they will offer and under what circumstances and to whom they will offer them. Police discretionary decisions are most frequently street decisions, directly affecting individual citizens and neighborhoods. Conversely, discretion exercised by those same citizens affects what is reported to police. Whether or not witness will testify and how much support and cooperation the police will receive. Mutual respect and support between the police and the community they serve are often defined in terms of how fairly, objectively, and impartially police discretionary judgment calls are made (Hunter, Barker & Mayhall, 2004).

Basically, PNP Omnipresence was adopted from the theory of omnipresence which is the concept of the property of being present everywhere (Gaines, L. & Worrall 2012). The term omnipresence is most often used in a religious context as an attribute of a deity or Supreme Being, while the term ubiquity is generally used to describe something "existing or being" everywhere at the same time, constantly encountered, widespread, common. In police parlance, police omnipresence is basically the same things as saying the police are present everywhere, at the same time. Police omnipresence is responsible for a decrease in crime (Perea, 2016). This means that police omnipresence is vital to the peace and order in the community as this would deny opportunity of the would be criminal to desist from doing their criminalistics tendencies and that the law abiding citizens would be encourage to support and trust the police department.

The foregoing theories, literature and studies have enriched this present study as these contributed to the discussions of the results.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM / OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to delve into the implementation of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Omnipresence Program as experienced by the stakeholders.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following problems.

1. What are the positive experiences of the stakeholders on PNP omnipresence program?
2. What are the negative experiences of the stakeholders on PNP omnipresence program?
3. What issues arise from the implementation of the program?
4. How does the omnipresence program affect the stakeholders?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

I proceeded with this study using qualitative approach and utilizing phenomenological method. The research problems in my study required the articulation of the lived experiences of the informants concerning their experiences, observation, and thoughts about the police omnipresence program. As the researcher, I, therefore, resorted to an in-depth investigation that required me to personal interview the informants.

In substance, qualitative research focuses on the wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts; searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations; obtaining descriptions of experience; regarding the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behavior and as evidence for scientific investigations; formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology describes the meaning of lived experiences for individuals experiencing a particular phenomenon or concept. Experience, in phenomenological sense, includes not only the relatively passive experiences of sensory perception, but also imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition and action. In short, it includes everything that we live through or perform. Thus, we may observe and engage with other things in the world but we do not actually experience them in a first-person manner. What makes an experience conscious is a certain awareness one has of the experience while living through or performing it (Creswell, 1998).

Phenomenology aims to: gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of people's everyday experiences (Polit & Beck, 2008), and directing the understanding of phenomenon which is consciously experienced by people themselves (Polifroni & Welch, 1999).

The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is thought to be fluid and ever changing (Lichtman, 2013).

Particularly, my study follows the transcendental phenomenological method popularized by Edmund Husserl that brings added dimensions to the study of human experiences through qualitative research seeking to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). He aimed to establish a rigorous and unbiased approach that appears to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience (Shosha, 2012).

I deemed that this qualitative phenomenological approach is proper, appropriate and suitable in this present study as it delves into the implementation of the PNP Omnipresence Program as experienced by the stakeholders.

2.2 Research Environment

I conducted my study in Cebu City, particularly in four selected police stations that exercise jurisdiction on police matters in the barangays of Cebu City. These police stations are as follows: police stations 1 located in Barangay Pari-an; police station 4 located in Barangay Mabolo; police station 5 located in Barangay Ermita; and, police station 11 located in Barangay Mambaling.

Cebu City is the capital city of the island province of Cebu in Central Visayas and is the "second city" of the Philippines after Manila. Cebu City is a 1st city income class highly urbanized city where its political governance is independent and separate from the province of Cebu. According to the 2015 census, it has a population of 922, 611, making it the fifth most populated city in the country. In the 2016 electoral roll, it had 630,003 registered voters. In terms of economy, Cebu City is a significant center of commerce, trade and education in the Visayas and Mindanao regions. In terms of peace and order, the city of Cebu has a police department, Cebu City police office, which is under the administrative supervision of the Philippine National Police.

The Cebu City police office is located at Camp Sotero Cabahug, Cebu City and has administrative jurisdiction over 11 police stations of the city. In my research, the selected sites are the four stations aforesaid. They were selected on the basis of police deployment being places frequented by massive number of people because of business, religious and other socio-civic activities.

The first site is police station 1 located in Barangay Parian. Police station 1 has 43 police personnel and many of whom are involved in the implementation of the PNP Omnipresence Program. The barangay of Parian has a population is 1,574 per 2015 Census and has 20 appointed Barangay Public Safety Officers (BPSOs). It is close to Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral and Sto. Nino Church and part of the Colon area making it one of the most crowded areas in Cebu City.

The second site is police station 4, situated in Barangay Mabolo. Police Station 4 has 69 police personnel where many of its personnel are deployed in the implementation of the PNP Omnipresence program. The barangay of Mabolo has a population of 22, 008 per 2015 census and has 20 barangay public safety officers. It has jurisdiction over several commercial areas such as shopping centers.

The third site is police station 5 which is located in Barangay Ermita. Police station 5 has 44 police personnel many of whom are deployed to implement the PNP omnipresence program. The Barangay of Ermita has a population of 8,451 per 2015 census. It is considered as one of the densely populated areas in Cebu City. It is a place where small and medium enterprises converge in addition to the presence of wet markets and retail merchandises.

The fourth site is police station 11 situated in Barangay Mambaling. Police station 11 has 47 police personnel. Barangay Mambaling has a population of 32, 564 per 2015 census and is one of the busiest areas in Cebu being a hub of both residential and business centers.

2.3 Research Informants

I have selected 12 research informants of this study who were selected to compose the three groups. The informants' selections were based on the set of requirement of the study, these are: (a) they must be at least 25 years old and above; (b) for PNP informants, they must be a bona fide member of the Philippine National Police who are assigned in the patrol functions for at least three years; (c) for BPSO informants, they are duly appointed barangay public safety officers (locally known as *tanod*) included in the covered locale of the study, and had been a *tanod* for at least three years; (d) for community residents, they must be residing in the area for at least three years and are familiar with the police omnipresence program, and (e) all of the informants must have willingly signified to participate in the conduct of the study.

For each of the four selected police stations and barangays, there were three informants, namely: one PNP personnel from the police station; one Barangay Public Safety Officer (BPSO), and one community resident in the barangay who has regularly observed the implementation of police omnipresence program in their area.

For purposes of this study and of confidentiality and privacy, I employed codes to identify each informant but their names and important personal distinctions are kept with utmost confidentiality. For the PNP group, they are coded as Informants 1 to 4; for the BPSOs, there are coded as Informants 5 to 8 and the barangay residents as Informants 9 to 12.

2.4 Research Instrument

I utilized an Interview Guide (IG), a voice recorder, and field notes during the conduct of the interview. The IG consisted of open-ended questions that dealt on the sub-problems of the study. Part I of the IG concerned with the positive experiences of the informants on the implementation of the PNP omnipresence program; part II looked into the negative experiences of the informants on the PNP Omnipresence program; part III investigated on issues that arose from the implementation of the program; and part IV delved into the impact of the program to the stakeholders. The IG has been examined, reviewed and validated by the Research Ethics Committee.

As part of my preliminary documentation, I utilized an Informed Consent Form which is translated in Visayan language, the language the research informants were well conversed, and where they expressed

their willingness to be the research informants by signing the informed consent form. To make more accurate the proceedings, I used a voice recorder to record every bit of the interview and field notes to scribe the important points of the responses as basis of follow up and follow through questions and where I wrote my observation on non-verbal expressions of the informants (Refer to Appendix C for the Informed Consent Form)

2.5 Research Procedures

After the approval of my research proposal by the panel, I proceeded to submit the Interview Guide (IG) for validation of the panel and prepared all transmittal letters to all concerned in compliance with conditions set for my dissertation. The panel-validated IG later became the basis of the interview. I later on submitted the approved transmittal letter addressed to the Cebu City Police Director formally asking for permission for me to conduct research and interview with the police informants. In like manner, I transmitted a letter to the Barangay Captains of the selected barangay for approval to conduct research and interview a BPSO in the barangay. For the community residents, I conducted preliminary inquiry and later on personally asked their permission for me to conduct interview with them.

2.6 Data Gathering

I conducted preliminary interviews of the intended informants and explained to them individually the purposes of the study, the process of the interview, the benefits and risks involved in the research, the privacy and confidentiality of their identity and some personal data. I asked them of their willingness to participate by presenting them the Consent Form which contained the conditionalities and assurance of the whole interview process, including their rights to stop and discontinue with the interview if they become uninterested to pursue (Refer to Appendix C for the Informed Consent Form).

I conducted interviews on the informants with the use of a voice recorded and in different dates and it took me several appointments on each of the informants to make sure that the needed data is gathered accurately. I documented the interviews and follow ups and transcribed the recorded interview as part of my preparation for better analysis of the responses. My interviews with the informants spanned an entire five months during which period I have interviewed the three groups of informants who were engaged in my research. My intent was to ground my discussion and reflections in the intricacies and complexities of a personally experienced (and thus personally meaningful) police omnipresence program.

Further, as a researcher, I was concerned about the quality of the relationships that would develop between me and the other informants. In this matter, I am in total agreement with Hart (2002) who contends that the way in which we know is tied up in our relationships with our research participants. I wanted not only to develop an insider's perspective on police omnipresence but also to work towards the sort of research relationship described by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) where participants feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their experiences.

Interviewing was central to my research where it created opportunities to pause and reflect with informants about what they remembered, valued, liked, and disliked, and aspired about the program. Among other things, interviewing allowed the informants to make explicit certain feelings, beliefs, and opinions which might otherwise have been left unsaid and/or passed unnoticed.

I proceeded on the assumption that both the discursive and non-discursive dimensions of police omnipresence practiced were key to understanding its transformative potentials. Recognizing the difficulty of accounting for unspoken dimension of experience in words, I hoped to be able to fully immerse myself in, and attend to, the phenomenon I was trying to understand for which reason I engaged in my research interview for about five months.

The kind of interview using open-ended questions and follow through made the informants felt freer to express themselves in their own words and attended to what was most important to them. As a result, there was a considerable degree of variation among the interviews, with comments sparking unanticipated questions and leading, at times, into lengthy digressions but I was able to lead back to the main targets of the interview. In some instance, there were moments of stillness, meaning the informants did not immediately answer my questions and I respected that and allowed this to happen. This was the thing that my research

adviser has always emphasized that the moment of stillness during the interview is part of the reflective dimension to the interviews as the informants would still gather their thoughts and later share their experiences and insights about the police omnipresence program.

I am in full agreement with my research adviser that the interview process was not without surprises. I have learned a lot from his discussion on how to get a good start with the interview. Before beginning the interviews with the police, for example, I showed them a list of the questions I intended to ask. My intent was to set their minds at ease so that their stories would flow. I was surprised; however, the list of questions seemed to heighten the anxiety of two personnel that I interviewed. They were liked being proud to tell their stories and share their experiences without break. Reinharz (1992) suggested a technique that for research participants to be at ease was to begin each interview in such a way that they could discuss something, about which they were eminently knowledgeable in this case, their own experiences.

I asked the police, tanods, and community residents to describe their experiences, insights and emotional dimensions vis-à-vis the police omnipresence program that is implemented in their communities. The police visibility activities, a question which, by and large, served nicely to get the conversations flowing. In all cases, these exchanges helped me to clarify and validate the significance of informants' involvement and to set a friendly and respectful tone for the remainder of the interviews.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The process of validation and pre-interview requirements which I have complied was part and parcel of my bounden obligation as a researcher. I valued most the confidentiality and privacy as the prime ethical considerations of this study. I undertook before the informants that all their responses would be coded, as I did, and their identities would all remain private, that is, I would protect the identity of the informants from being exposed to the public. In like manner that I exercised much caution in selecting the venue for my interviews because I wanted a more free and conducive environment where my informants would feel comfort and convenience without pressure from any other persons. These undertakings of mine to ensure confidentiality and privacy were much part of the conditions of the panel and Ethics Research Committee. My adviser largely supervised me in ensuring compliance with these conditions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed diverse perspectives from police personnel, Barangay Public Safety Officers (BPSOs), and community residents regarding the implementation of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Omnipresence Program in Cebu City. Through Colaizzi's phenomenological analysis, eight emergent themes were generated and organized into four major domains: positive experiences, negative experiences, implementation issues, and program effects.

3.1 Positive Experiences. The program was perceived to foster a *happy and supportive community* by strengthening interaction and collaboration among stakeholders. Police visibility was also found to contribute to *community satisfaction and convenience*, as residents felt reassured by the presence of law enforcers, particularly during emergencies and public disturbances. This sense of security enhanced trust and created an environment conducive to peaceful communal life.

3.2 Negative Experiences. Conversely, some participants expressed discontent regarding the implementation of the program. Several officers reported being *tarnished, burdened, and misjudged* by community members due to lingering stereotypes and accusations of misconduct, despite performing their duties diligently. Moreover, the program suffered from *limited collaboration and trust*, as some community members and establishments hesitated to provide information during police investigations, thereby impeding crime prevention efforts and lowering police morale.

3.3 Issues in Implementation. The study highlighted critical challenges in operationalizing the program. These included a *shortage of manpower*, which constrained the police's ability to comprehensively cover designated areas, and a *lack of logistical and equipment support*, such as vehicles and communication tools, which hampered mobility, visibility, and effective crime response.

3.4. Effects of the Program. Despite these challenges, the PNP Omnipresence Program demonstrated notable benefits. It contributed to the *deterrence of petty crimes*, such as theft, snatching, and robbery, by instilling in potential offenders the perception of constant surveillance. Furthermore, the program was instrumental in the *promotion of a safer community*, as stakeholders consistently reported increased feelings of safety, orderliness, and confidence in the presence of police patrols.

The results suggest that while the PNP Omnipresence Program significantly strengthens public safety and community satisfaction, its sustainability and long-term effectiveness are hindered by inadequate manpower, insufficient logistics, and persistent community mistrust. Thus, successful implementation requires enhanced organizational support, continuous trust-building mechanisms, and active collaboration between law enforcers and the public.

Table 1. Significant Statements

Significant Statement Number	SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	Participant Number	Line Number
1	(<i>P1C1L1:SS1</i>)Actually, I do roving to the area where I was assigned, I approximately spend 2 hours in every area, for example in UV I usually perform roving or foot patrol within the area, For the whole day I rendered a 12 hours duty and approximately rendered 2 hours in every designated spot, in rendering police visibility police visibility I exercised it through traffic functions in case of events.	1	1
49	(<i>P3C1L25:SS49</i>)In my experience when I conduct roving I usually transfer from one area to another every 30-45 minutes I transfer to another and stay there for a while.	3	25
31	(<i>P2C1L25:SS31</i>)In my experience, when I'm assigned in an area I usually would approach the establishments in the area and ask of any help I can extend or whom I can get information; try to know who were the usual lawless elements in the area or known theft. But with God's mercy since I was assigned in the area I was able to apprehend two robbers, three snatchers and two pick pockets, I am the arresting officers for all those cases. I was also able to handle a case and recovered the stolen cellphone and was charge with the crime currently incarcerated in Kalunasan awaiting trial.	2	31
58	(<i>P4C1L1:SS58</i>)Actually, the biggest challenge for us is to be able to respond immediately on the call of the stakeholders especially from the big establishments in the area. It is also necessary that police are always visible and alert of the area of responsibility. I think the only concern is that stakeholders like the police especially if we respond immediately if they need us and we only coordinate to our station for back-up	4	1
2	(<i>P1C2L2:SS2</i>). Last month I have somebody I've helped, and I felt happy about it, that there is someone who needs for police help, of course we are happy to help them, for example they ask for police help and it so happened as police officers we were present on the scene and was able to help the person , then the say thank you as a gratitude, that makes me feel happy, or they could in cases of accidents and need to call for ERUF (Emergency Response Unit) as police I can immediately call for help.	1	2
24	(<i>P2C2L6:SS24</i>).When one is assigned as beat patroller we gain friends, we encounter different people there are those that are	2	6

	sarcastic, some are pleasant but when you're not around to make negative remarks about you. Those remarks can never be avoided because before police were ridiculed for being corrupt. But despite that police are the first people called to respond so first when we are assigned there we familiarize the people and the area and get as much info that could help us in our work.		
27	(P3C2L2:SS27)I also conduct PCR, I approach establishment under my beat and gave them my number so that they can immediately contact me in case of emergency	3	2
60	(P4C2L3:SS60). These to are related, as beatpatroller we also utilize PCR in order to seek friendly response from people in the community and eventually solve problems in the community.	4	3
157	(P5C3L27:SS157).The police is a big help first since they are the officials in the area who provides us the knowledge on areas we do not know. Tanods have less knowledge because we were not able to finish our studies. So they provide us with lecture to make us knowledgeable on arrest.	5	27
339	(P10C3L1:SS339).In my observation here in my area in Mabolo, the police provide good assistance, when you seek assistance they immediately arrive to respond.	10	1
375	(P11C3L2:SS375)One time there was a vehicular accident near the area then in matter of 5 minutes the police immediately arrived assist the flow of traffic and he was able to settle the parties to the accident and avoid further traffic congestion, seeing that makes me happy that a police is assigned near the area.	11	2

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