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ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL CRIME WATCH PROGRAMS IN BARANGAY SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of local crime watch programs in barangay settings and identified challenges in their implementation. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, with data collected from barangay residents, officials, and community volunteers using a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that community-based initiatives such as anti-drug campaigns, emergency response systems, and community policing are perceived as effective in promoting public safety. However, lack of resources and training emerged as a primary challenge. The study concludes that while crime watch programs are effective, strengthening institutional support is necessary. It is recommended that bargains enhance resource allocation, provide continuous training, and strengthen community engagement to sustain peace and order. Further, the College can collaborate with barangay officials to conduct information campaigns and training sessions addressing gender-based violence, including reporting mechanisms and victim support.

KEYWORDS: *Crime Watch Programs, Barangay Safety, Community Policing, Crime Prevention, Public Safety*

INTRODUCTION

Crime prevention at the community level plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and order, particularly in barangay settings where local participation is essential. Community-based approaches such as crime watch programs and community policing have been recognized as effective strategies in reducing crime and strengthening public trust in law enforcement (Delizo et al., 2023). In the Philippines, barangay-level initiatives, including police patrols and Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs), contribute significantly to crime prevention through active collaboration between residents and authorities (Petchon et al., 2018).

Despite these efforts, challenges such as lack of resources, insufficient training, and limited manpower continue to affect the effectiveness of these programs (Alipio, 2020). These issues highlight the need for continuous evaluation and improvement of local crime watch initiatives. Thus, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of crime watch programs in barangay settings and identify the challenges encountered in their implementation. Further, the result of this study will also serve as a basis for the development of an Extension Program focusing on how to enhance the efficiency of these programs, making them more powerful tool in community safety and crime prevention efforts.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to assess the effectiveness of local crime watch programs. Respondents included selected barangay residents, officials, and community volunteers chosen through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale. Prior permission was secured, and participation was voluntary and confidential. The weighted mean was used to analyze the effectiveness of programs and the challenges encountered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the Crime Watch Programs in Barangay

INDICATOR	WM
1. Neighborhood Watch Program - Organizing regular meetings with barangay officials and local police, train volunteers to recognize criminal activities.	3.53
2. Barangay Patrol - Conducting regular patrols of the barangay tanods and assigning them to specific areas for better coverage and visibility.	3.55
3. Community Policing - Conducting regular consultations between police and barangay members and hold community forums to discuss crime concerns.	3.57
4. Youth Engagement Programs - Conducting skill development program and recreational spaces to divert them from potentially criminal behavior.	3.43
5. Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign - Conducting information drives and establishing rehabilitation support for drug users.	3.61
6**. Gender-Based Violence Prevention** - Conducting gender sensitivity seminars for both men and women in the community.	3.43
7. Barangay Security Hotline and Emergency Response Team Establishing a 24/7 barangay command center with personnel assigned to monitor hotlines and CCTV feeds.	3.60

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As can be inferred from the table the highest indicator was the Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign with a weighted mean (WM) of 3.61, followed by Barangay Security Hotline and Emergency Response Team with a WM of 3.60 and Community Policing with a weighted mean of 3.57. These results indicate that respondents strongly appreciate initiatives that focus on drug prevention, rapid emergency response and police community collaboration.

On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean were Youth Engagement Programs and Gender-Based Violence Prevention with a WM of 3.43.

The findings agree with the study of Wagner et. al., (2010) stating that prevention campaigns are perceived positively when they are community-driven and culturally sensitive. Talcott & Downey (2013) also concludes that multifaceted community anti-drug initiatives significantly reduce youth drug experimentation and use.

Likewise in the study of Perry & Lindell (2003) they suggest that community-driven emergency response systems reduce chaos during crises and strengthen community confidence. Brown & Benedict (2002) also shows in their study that communities with established emergency hotlines report higher satisfaction and feelings of safety. This concludes that community emergency networks, including hotlines, significantly contribute to resilience and response readiness (Paton, 2003).

Overall, the findings reflect a high level of community satisfaction and trust in barangay crime prevention efforts. The strong ratings for anti-drug campaigns and emergency response systems highlight the community's priority on public safety, immediate action, and crime deterrence.

Table II presents the perceptions of community members and local leaders regarding the effectiveness of the programs

INDICATOR	WM
1. Neighborhood Watch Programs are effective in preventing crimes due to the actions of the neighborhood watch members.	3.57
2. Barangay Patrol Program is effective in reducing street-level crimes, such as loitering or petty theft.	3.56
3. Community Policing Program is effective in gaining the trust of the community to the local authorities.	3.54
4. Youth Engagement Program is effective in decreasing juvenile crime rates.	3.50
5. Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign Program is effective in decreasing the number of drug-related arrests or drug users in the community.	3.49
6. Gender-Based Violence Prevention Program is effective in helping Gender-Based Violence victims.	3.47
7. Barangay Security Hotline and Emergency Response Team is effective in mitigating crimes or emergencies through hotline reports.	3.57

As can be deduced from the table, the highest weighted means were obtained by Neighborhood Watch Programs and Barangay Security Hotline and Emergency Response Team (WM=3.57). This high rating reflects strong confidence in collective vigilance and community involvement. Respondents believe that the active participation of residents in monitoring and reporting suspicious activities contributes significantly to crime prevention. Likewise, the respondents strongly agree that hotlines and emergency teams effectively mitigate crimes and emergencies through prompt action.

The findings agree with the study of Perry & Lindell (2003) suggesting that community driven emergency responses systems reduce chaos during crises and strengthen community confidence. This shows that communities with established emergency hotlines report higher satisfaction and feelings of safety (Brown & Benedict, 2002).

As a result, the data show that barangay crime watch programs are perceived as effective and reliable, especially those emphasize community participation and fast emergency response.

Table III presents the challenges and barriers faced by the implementors of crime watch programs in Barangay

INDICATOR	WM
1. Lack of Trust - Residents are reluctant to report crimes to local authorities because they feel their concerns are ignored or mishandled.	2.61
2. Low Community Participation - Lack of awareness or motivation of the residents to participate, coupled with a perception that crime prevention is solely the responsibility of Law Enforcement.	2.60
3. Fear of Retaliation - Residents may fear that by reporting criminal activity or being visibly involved in crime watch program, they could become targets for retaliation from criminals.	2.53
4. Communication Issues - Lack of clear, organized communication system, such as hotline, messaging app, or regular meetings can result in slow reporting, confusion, or miscommunication during incidents.	2.71
5. Lack of Resources and Training - Insufficient funding for proper training, tools (such as radios or cameras) or even materials to raise awareness within the community.	2.93

As can be deduced from the table the highest weighted mean is the Lack of Resources and Training (WM=2.93) while the lowest weighted mean is the Fear of Retaliation (WM=2.53). The highest indicator reflects the most critical challenge faced by implementors. Insufficient funding, limited access to equipment and inadequate training hinder the effective execution of crime watch programs. Likewise, the Fear of retaliation is not a dominant concern among respondents.

The above findings are consistent with the study of Seckler et al., 2020 and Mathieson et al., 2021 stating that inadequate funding, insufficient staffing and limited training opportunities as persistent obstacles to effective program delivery. Further, in the study of Oweidat et al., 2023 and Dworkin 2004, individuals are often reluctant to report problems or participate fully in program implementation due to fear of blame, punishment or social repercussions.

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Overall, the data reveal that while barangay crime watch programs are in place, their implementation is significantly challenged by resource limitations and communication gaps.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Anti-Drug Abuse Campaigns, Barangay Security Hotlines and Emergency Response Teams, and Community Policing are highly effective and widely supported safety initiatives, indicating the importance of prevention, rapid response, and police-community collaboration.
2. Neighborhood Watch Programs and emergency response systems play a vital role in enhancing community safety, demonstrating that active citizen participation and accessible reporting mechanisms significantly contribute to crime prevention.
3. The primary challenge in implementing barangay safety programs is the lack of resources and training, while fear of retaliation is a lesser concern, indicating that operational limitations hinder program effectiveness more than community reluctance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Barangays should strengthen and sustain Anti-Drug Abuse Campaigns by implementing continuous awareness programs, preventive education, and partnerships with law enforcement agencies to further reduce drug-related incidents.
2. Local government units should enhance Barangay Security Hotlines, Emergency Response Teams, and Neighborhood Watch Programs by improving accessibility, response efficiency, and encouraging greater community participation.
3. Authorities should prioritize the allocation of sufficient resources and provide regular training programs for barangay personnel and volunteers to improve their skills, readiness, and overall effectiveness in maintaining peace and order.
4. The College can collaborate with barangay officials to conduct information campaigns and training sessions addressing gender-based violence, including reporting mechanisms and victim support.

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