

Community Satisfaction on Barangay Peacemaking Action Team (BPAT) Performance in Ozamiz City, Philippines

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Abstract

Owing to the role of Barangay Peacemaking Action Team (BPAT) in peacekeeping, it is paramount that a continuous effort to improve the delivery of BPAT services must be implemented. Obtaining the perception of the members of the community regarding their level of satisfaction on BPAT performance could be a kick-start to evaluate the delivery of its services. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the community satisfaction on BPAT performance in Ozamiz City, Philippines. An evaluative study design was utilized to gather data from 385 respondents from the 10 selected barangays in Ozamiz City. A validated questionnaire was the main instrument used. Key informant interview was conducted to obtain more information. Results revealed that the respondents have very high level of satisfaction on the services of the BPAT except in addressing crime prevention. When the respondents were grouped by profile, the age, gender, and place of residency (based on highest and lowest crime rate) exhibited no statistically significant difference in their level of satisfaction. Nonetheless, the civil status, educational attainment, and period of residency showed statistically significant difference. This study may provide the Philippine National Police baseline information whether the residents in Ozamiz City are satisfied with the BPAT performance. Furthermore, this study may give insights to policy makers for the improvement of peace and order at the barangay level.

Keywords: cooperation, crime, peace, policing, society

Introduction

The Philippine Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in its Memorandum Circular No. 2003-02 views the maintenance of peace and order as the key factor in the improvement of the community and the nation (Laru-an & Penny, 2015). The Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Local Government Unit (LGU), particularly at the barangay level, had innovated and created initiatives to enhance peacekeeping in the community (Alkire, 2003). However, most of the strategies and concepts of the PNP in the past against criminality were adopted from other countries and were found not suitable to the existing criminality situation in the Philippines. Thus, a peacemaking concept that is responsive to the unique peace and order conditions in the country had been crafted [Philippine National Police (PNP), 2009].

Since then, the community oriented policing system (COPS) of the PNP has gone a long way towards providing proactive police services to the citizens (PNP, 2009). In COPS, the barangay is the heart of the policing system. The precincts are located within the community where policemen and people interact as partners in promoting crime prevention and the maintenance of peace and order (Kraft, 2010). Based on this concept, the Barangay Peacemaking Action Team (BPAT) has been created to provide better police services to the community. The BPAT is then the implementor of Barangay Peacekeeping Operations (BPO) of the PNP. The BPAT is a national program of the PNP to encourage people empowerment from the community to address the real-time response in case a need arises, be it peace and order, security and rescue related matters (Williams, 2001; Rochon, 2014; Pajarillo-Guadamor, 2016).

Thus, the concept of BPAT basically calls for PNP members to lead in the fight against all forms of criminality distinct to their areas of responsibility, utilizing the active participation of the community (PNP, 2009; Hart, 2013). The community leaders are then expected to

take a unified stand against crimes, violence, and disregard for laws and commit to crime prevention and control programs (Adler & Kwon, 2002; San Juan, 2013). As enunciated in Section 391 (16) of the Local Government Code of 1991, the barangay may be responsible for the organization of a community brigade or community service as may be necessary to assist in the peace and order efforts of the LGU. Barangay peace and order committee was then created in agreement with Executive Order No. 366 (1996) to reinforce peacekeeping in communities. The BPAT is therefore a community brigade composed of civilian volunteers duly appointed by the Punong Barangay upon the recommendation of the Barangay Peace and Order Council (PNP, 2009).

Based on the Lead PNP Manual (PNP, 2009), BPAT functions in organizing and mobilizing various sectors of the community in support of the maintenance of peace and order and safety. It also conducts crisis management, disaster mitigation, search, rescue, and relief operations within the community. Another function of BPAT is to strengthen and support the Barangay Justice System. Lastly, it conducts crime prevention and deterrence measures to protect the vulnerable sectors of the community. Armed with nightsticks, BPAT members are often exposed to dangers (Estonio, 2014).

The Local Government Code provides a maximum of 20 BPAT in each barangay and may create more if necessary (DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2003-42). The BPAT exercises its authority to settle disputes (PNP, 2009) and guards the neighborhood against lawless elements. Specifically, BPAT conducts surveillance on crime breeding areas, protects property, responds to community problems such as nuisance complaints, helps victims of crimes, responds to calls, and deals with traffic safety.

As reflected in the Mission and Vision of BPAT, their peacekeeping activities aim to organize a peaceful and orderly community that is expected to be responsive to their safety and security needs in cooperation with the local police (PNP, 2009). Since peace and public safety concerns are varied and constantly evolving, and their

concepts can differ from culture to culture and community to community (Rummel, 1981; Richmond, 2003; Anderson, 2004), the criteria to measure the performance of BPAT relative to their functions varies as well from one community to another. The peace and order of one locality may be different depending also on how this concept is defined.

In a social sense, peace is defined as a lack of conflict and freedom from fear of violence between individuals and groups (Galtung, 1981). However, peace does not only refer to the lack of hostility or the absence of dissension and violence. It is also an environment that is characterized by healthy interpersonal and international relationships, and acknowledgment of equality and fairness (Rummel, 1981). Peace and order are not only vital in sustaining political stability and social order, but also aid the progress of investments, attracts more tourists, and creates more employment for economic development (Grindle, 2004; Acharya, 2014). Hence, peace and order shall be realized in support to national development (Obama, 2010; Roman, 2013) in a sense that it is virtually impossible to accomplish things in a situation of lawlessness and disorder (Roxas, 2003).

The condition of peace and order in the Philippines is also unique and has been characterized as unstable (Valmores, 2004). The rate of violence and crime increases daily (Sylvester, 2010). Specifically, the peace and order in Ozamiz City in Northern Mindanao, Philippines is regarded as a serious issue. Relative to other places, the incidence of crime in the city could affect the quality of life of the citizens. In the study conducted by Caba-ong et al. (2015), the average monthly crime rate in the said city (index and non-index crime) from 2010-2012 was higher compared to the crime statistics in Region X. The shrillest increase in crime rate was recorded in 2013. These incidents are alarming to the community.

Peacekeeping is the basic function of the PNP and police visibility is one of the main thrusts of the peacekeeping activity. Without the police, it would be very difficult to maintain peace and order. This is where the police must share the mantle of responsibility for fighting

crime with the members of the community. Owing to the role of BPAT in peacekeeping and the varying challenges with peace and order that citizens may encounter in their locality, it is paramount that a continuous effort to improve the delivery of BPAT services must be implemented. Obtaining the perception of the members of the community regarding their level of satisfaction on BPAT performance could be a kick-start to evaluate the delivery of its services.

Hence, this study was conducted to determine the community satisfaction on BPAT performance in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The findings may provide the PNP baseline information whether the residents in Ozamiz City are satisfied with the BPAT services. Furthermore, this study may give insights to policy makers for the improvement of peace and order at the barangay level. The study delimits only on the functions and responsibility of the BPAT as enunciated by the Local Government Code.

Materials and Methods

Ozamiz City is nestled at the entrance of Panguil Bay in Northwestern Mindanao with an estimated land area of 16,407 hectares (Department of Tourism, 2014). The city comprises 51 barangays where 23 are classified as urban and 28 classified as rural (Pasay, 2013). It has a population of 141,828 (Census of Population, 2015). Of the 51 barangays, only 10 barangays were selected and included in this study. These are the top 5 barangays with the highest crime rates and top 5 with the lowest crime rates as of July 2016 (PNP Ozamiz Station). The total number of registered voters of the 10 barangays as of May 2016 was gathered from the Commission on Elections. The sample size was determined using Sloven's formula (Olatunde & Joshua, 2012) with 95% level of confidence. A total of 385 respondents (registered voters) were chosen through simple random sampling.

Evaluative study design was utilized. Permission from the barangay officials was obtained prior to the conduct of the study. The target respondents were also informed regarding the scope and purpose of the study, anonymity and confidentiality of their responses during the data collection, report writing, and dissemination of findings and their right to voluntary participation. After obtaining the informed consent from the respondents, they were asked to fill out the validated survey questionnaire that passed the Cronbachs' alpha reliability test (0.93 internal consistency). Items in the questionnaire were translated into Cebuano for better understanding. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I entails the respondents' profile such as age, gender, status, educational attainment, period of residency and place of residency. Part II has 10 items that describe the expected functions of BPAT which the respondents evaluated to indicate their level of satisfaction. These parameters include the following: crime prevention, surveillance, property protection, response to community problems, dealing with nuisance complaints and neighborhood disputes, assistance for crime victims, response to calls, visible presence, and traffic safety. These parameters are based on main thrusts of the barangay peacekeeping operations of the PNP. These items were rated on a 5 point Likert-type scale (1-Not Satisfied, 2-Less Satisfied, 3-Somewhat Satisfied, 4-Satisfied and 5-Very Satisfied) with verbal interpretation of very high (4.20-5.0); high (3.40-4.19); moderate (2.60-3.39); low (1.80-2.59); very low (1.00-1.79). The said instrument was supported by an in-depth interview with several key-informants who were also the respondents but volunteered to provide more information.

Analysis of the data gathered in this study was done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Descriptive statistics, independent t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were utilized to determine the significant difference on respondents' satisfactory level on BPAT performance when grouped by profile.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' profile

Table 1 shows the respondents' profile included in the study. Findings revealed that despite the variation in ages (39.34%), the majority of the respondents belong to the millennial age (18-33). Millennial age is currently 20-35 or born between 1980 and the end of 1994. They are also known as Generation Y because they follow the generation X (born 1965-1979) (Lyons, 2016). The millennial generation is confident, happy, and optimistic. People of this generation are into teamwork, group projects, service learning, and community service (Jonas-Dwyer & Pospisil, 2004; Howe, 2004). Furthermore, 61.87% of the respondents were women and married (76.62%). This result implies that mostly women were left at home during the day. In a traditional marriage, a wife usually stays at home to provide the domestic needs of the family such as house working and raising children (Boon et al., 2004).

Of the 385 respondents, many were high school and elementary graduates while only 15% were college graduates. It has been observed that since some of the barangays surveyed are located far from tertiary schools, the residents found it difficult to enroll in tertiary education. According to Gratz et al. (2006), parents' personal educational backgrounds and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children's education. They stressed that the education in which the children acquire is very much reliant on the education that their parents obtained when they were children. Research shows that the literacy of their parents strongly affects the education of their children (Sclafani, 2004). According to the National Statistics Office 2003 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey, the top reason for people aged 6-24 for not attending school is employment or "looking for work," high cost of education, and lack of personal interest. Other reasons include, among others, housekeeping, illness or disability, failure to cope with school work, and distance from school (Sisante, 2008).

Table 1. Profile of the respondents (N=385).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 – 25	74	19.22
26 – 33.	73	18.96
34 – 41	56	14.55
42 – 49	63	16.36
50 – 57	47	12.21
58 – 65	35	9.09
66 – 73	24	6.23
74 above	13	3.3
Mean	41.68	
SD	16.36	
Coefficient of variation		39.24
Gender		
Men	147	38.18
Women	238	61.82
Civil status		
Single	80	20.78
Married	295	76.62
Widowed	10	2.60
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Graduate	87	22.60
High School Graduate	216	56.10
Vocational	23	5.97
College Graduate	59	15.32
Period of Residency		
1 – 9	51	13.25
10 – 18	58	15.06
19 – 27	76	19.74
28 – 36	61	15.84
37 – 45	46	11.95
46 – 54	51	13.25
55 – 63	25	6.49
64 and above	17	4.42
Mean	30.41	
SD	18.21	
Coefficient of variation		59.88
Place of Residency		
Highest crime rate	285	74
Lowest crime rate	100	26

Furthermore, despite the variation in the period of residency (59.88%), a considerable number of the respondents have resided in their respective barangays for almost 19-36 years, and even few reside for 64 years and above (4.42%). These people resided in the barangay since birth and had strong family ties. People overwhelmingly stay in a locality because of family ties (Fischer et al., 2000: Florida, 2014).

Differences in the respondents' level of satisfaction on the BPAT performance when grouped by profile

Table 2 shows the differences on the respondents' level of satisfaction on the services of the BPAT when grouped by profile. Findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of the three variables such as age, gender, and place of residency based on the recorded crime rate. This result implies that regardless of the disparity in age, gender, and place of residence (whether high or low crime rate) the respondents have comparable level of satisfaction on the services of the BPAT. The work of Laru-an & Penny (2015) showed no significant difference in the performance level of Barangay tanod as to their age but the respondents of this study were the tanod themselves.

In addition, it is noted in this study that those respondents residing on the barangays with the highest crime rate have similar level of satisfaction to those residing in the area with lowest crime rate. This result disagrees with the work of several researchers in which individuals with high crime rate areas are relatively less satisfied with life than those who lived in low crime areas (Fitzgerald, 2008; Posner & Sunstein, 2010; Scarborough et al., 2010). In-depth interview from respondents revealed that although their barangay has the highest crime rate as recorded by the PNP, most of the actual crime incidence happened somewhere in other places but cadavers were thrown and recorded in their barangay. In addition, some respondents articulated that there were instances that BPAT was able to report to the barangay officials the suspect of a crime from other places that were

found hiding in their barangay. Probably, although BPAT is doing its job well, the criminals are very quick that the BPAT sometimes could not recognize them.

Table 2. Difference on the respondents' level of satisfaction on the services rendered by BPAT when grouped by profile.

Variables	Computed value	P value	Remarks
Age	$F=1.17$	0.320	Not Significant
Gender	$T=0.35$	0.725	Not significant
Status	$F=6.004$	0.000	Significant
Educational Attainment	$F=2.029$	0.001	Significant
Period of Residency	$F=2.33$	0.024	Significant
Area of Residence (Highest & Lowest Crime Rate)	$T=0.836$	0.404	Not Significant

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

On the contrary, there is a statistically significant difference in the community's level of satisfaction when grouped by civil status, educational attainment, and period of residency. This finding implies that the differences in the mean score of these three variables are noteworthy in the respondents' satisfactory level.

To determine which category in each variable showed the disparity, the composite mean was computed and interpreted based on the continuum (Table 3). Regarding the civil status, although the coefficient of variation is 7.64%, the mean differences were statistically significant. It was found that both married and single individuals have relatively the same level of satisfaction (very high). However, the widowed respondents have a lower level of satisfaction. This result was also affirmed by Kennelly (2012) which stated that people who lost their spouses experience a long-term decline in life satisfaction. Most likely the widows involved in this study did not evidently see the actual performance of the BPAT since most of them chose to leave and focus on seeking jobs in order to sustain their daily needs.

Table 3. Respondents' level of satisfaction on the services of BPAT when grouped by profile.

Profile	N	Mean	StDev	Remarks
Age				
18 – 25	74	4.38	0.76	Very high
26 – 33	73	4.21	0.78	Very high
34 – 41	56	4.43	0.82	Very high
42 – 49	63	4.32	1.02	Very high
50 – 57	47	4.33	0.88	Very high
58 – 65	35	4.66	0.48	Very high
66 – 73	24	4.30	0.84	Very high
74 above	13	4.52	0.76	Very high
Coefficient of variation		3.22%		
Gender				
Men	147	4.34	0.95	Very high
Women	238	4.38	0.76	Very high
Coefficient of variation		0.65%		
Status				
Single	80	4.40	0.81	Very high
Married	295	4.37	0.81	Very high
Widowed	10	3.83	1.18	High
Coefficient of variation		7.64%		
Educational Attainment				
Elementary Graduate	87	4.19	0.75	High
High School Graduate	216	4.24	0.88	Very high
Vocational	23	4.52	0.70	Very high
College Graduate	59	4.65	0.61	Very high
Coefficient of variation		4.81%		
Period of Residency				
1 – 9	51	4.09	0.75	High
10 – 18	58	4.13	1.06	High
19 – 27	76	4.53	0.61	Very high
28 – 36	61	4.40	0.86	Very high
37 – 45	46	4.50	0.71	Very high
46 – 54	51	4.44	0.87	Very high
55 – 63	25	4.46	0.71	Very high
64 and above	17	4.37	0.86	Very high
Coefficient of variation		3.17%		
Place of Residency				
Highest Crime Rate	285	4.38	0.82	Very high
Lowest Crime Rate	100	4.31	0.84	Very high
Coefficient of variation		1.14%		

Considering that most of the respondents in this study were women, several studies have indeed found that widowhood is generally a crucial problem financially for women than men, and has an adverse impact on the social and psychological well-being of women (Schuster & Butler, 1989; Trivedi et al., 2009). Confronted with the loss of resources in widowhood, women have only a few options available to improve their economic status (Sevak et al., 2004). With these complications in life, the widows might have less time to appreciate the efforts of others.

Furthermore, regarding the respondents' period of residency, despite the variation of 3.17% the findings depict that those who reside longer in the community had a very high level of satisfaction. This observed variation could be because long-established residents have a higher level of satisfaction on the BPAT performance since they more likely feel a sense of belongingness to their community, create rapport with the people, and view their neighborhood as a good place to raise children (Florida, 2014). The attachment to the social and natural environment is distinctively predicted by length of residence, social interaction, and socio-demographic characteristics (Brehm et al., 2006). The residency was a stronger predictor of attachment to the social environment while social interaction was a stronger predictor of attachment to the natural environment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Newcomers tended to be less satisfied with interpersonal relationships and community services and facilities than the long-established residents (Brown, & Wardwell, 2013). Finally, the level of satisfaction was greater among those who had lived longer in an area.

Likewise, looking into the significant mean differences in educational attainment of the respondents, it was clearly shown that those who have the lower level of educational attainment relatively have the lower level of satisfaction or vice versa. This result is supported by Brown & Wardwell (2013) emphasizing that the high levels of educational attainment are linked to higher levels of satisfaction with interpersonal relationships with the community.

Educational status does not just govern the occupational status and income, but it also affects every aspect of life. Education has frequently been shown to be closely related to life satisfaction (Moen et al., 2001; Moody, 2002). Finally, educational attainment might serve as the baseline on how the respondents coherently understand the statements in the instrument given. Although the statements were discussed to them and translated into Cebuano, some respondents might have difficulties in grasping the concept introduced.

Respondents' satisfaction with BPAT performance

Figure 1 depicts the respondents' level of satisfaction on the services of the BPAT. A very high satisfactory level was noted in almost all of the performance indicators included in this study. This finding implies that BPAT was serious and dedicated in performing its task as law enforcers in the barangay level (Laru-an & Penny, 2015). Dealing with traffic safety and providing visible presence obtained the highest level of community satisfaction. It has been observed that most BPAT members set up their outpost near schools and along the roadsides, thus enhancing security and safety of the streets. According to the DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2003-42 (2003), BPAT should assist in facilitating smooth flow of traffic and report to the concerned barangay officials the occurrence of any crime, public disturbance, accident, fire, and environmental degradation activities and other untoward incidents in the Barangay (Barangay Tanods – LGUpdates, 2013). Most likely the BPAT in Ozamiz City is well-motivated and properly oriented to the task allocated for better performance in compliance with the provision of the local government code and revised penal code. Thus, in this study community satisfaction on BPAT performance is very high.

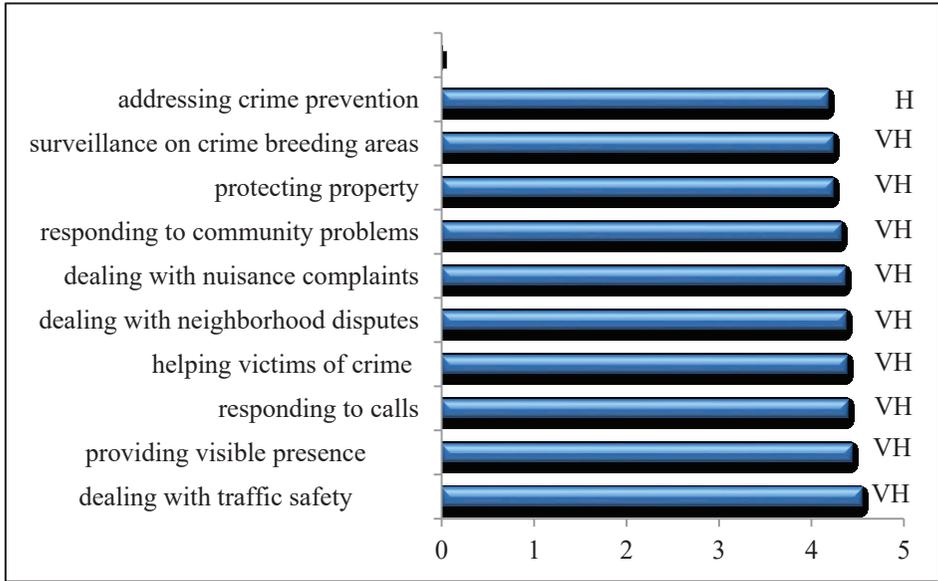


Figure 1. Community satisfaction on the services rendered by BPAT.

On the other hand, the way how BPAT addresses crime prevention obtained the lowest rank. The results could be associated to lack of proper facilities and training for crime prevention. In their uniforms, BPAT members are equipped with flashlight and armed with nightsticks only while conducting night patrols around the vicinity of the barangays. In this situation, they are exposed to danger in the hands of criminal elements and other wayward members of society. Members of BPAT are volunteers who are responsible for peacekeeping activities in the barangay (Caparas & Agrawal, 2016). Based on the information gathered during the interview with the respondents, despite the lack of proper facilities for crime prevention, BPAT members do not hesitate to risk their lives just to safeguard the security of the people in their respective barangays. The result may imply that there is a need to empower the BPAT members and equip them with proper facilities for

crime prevention. It is important also for the PNP to conduct BPAT training for crime prevention.

Despite insufficient supply of facilities to prevent crime, BPAT conducts community-based information campaign and activities in support of the PNP's internal security operation, anti-criminality effort, disaster management and control program (Delgado, 2011). The BPAT coordinates diligently with the barangay officials and police/local authorities in the move against all forms of crimes such as smuggling, terrorism, carnapping, drug pushing, illegal gambling, drug trafficking, the crime against women, child abuse, and all forms of vices and syndicated crimes (Barangay Tanods – LGUpdates, 2013). It has been witnessed by the respondents that BPAT, barangay officials, and police officials in Ozamiz City work together in operation on "war on drugs" or the so-called "Oplan Tokhang." When the curfew hour was implemented in the City, the BPAT also helps the local officials to execute the said order properly.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Community satisfaction on BPAT performance in Ozamiz City is very high. The residents positively perceive the outstanding commitment and dedication of BPAT in performing its task as law enforcers at the barangay level. However, the delivery of BPAT services on crime prevention has to be improved. Provision of proper facilities and training for crime prevention may be helpful for BPAT members. The Local Government officials and PNP in Ozamiz City may also consider what other support to provide for BPAT that will make it more effective in performing its duties.

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