

# Experiences in the Enforcement of Minimum Health and Security Protocols: The Case of BPSO in Tolosa, Leyte

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**Abstract:-** This study pertains to the experiences of the Barangay Police Safety Officers in enforcing the Minimum Health and Safety Protocols in Tolosa, Leyte. This study aims to explore the experiences, problems encountered, and coping mechanisms of the participants of the study. This study utilized the Qualitative Research Design in a form of a Case Study. There were seven participants who underwent an individual interview with the aid of an Interview Guide and an audio recording device. An accomplished Consent Form by the participants was also secured by the researcher to signify the participants' voluntariness in participating in the data gathering. The researcher made-used Colaizzi's method in treating the gathered data. Out of the responses analyzed by the researcher, the following themes were formulated: *Community towards COVID-19 Protocol Implementation, Adaptation from the Changes in the New Normal, Barangay Council; Its Vigor to Mediate and the Legislative assistance as BPSOs problems arise.*

The findings of the study are as follows; From the experiences of the BPSOs, the researcher found out that the community responses had affected the performance of the BPSOs in the proper implementation of protocols. Also, each barangay varies in policy implementation, and the changes in the routine of work of the participants affect their personal time in looking for means of living. On the problems encountered by the participants, the researcher found that there was leniency in attendance and performance monitoring of the participants, insufficient support for Personal Protective Equipment, inconsistent remuneration for hazards, incidental fees, and allowances. Lastly, there were no concrete coping mechanisms employed by the participants. They just ignore and disregard the effects of the problems encountered. They don't undergo stress debriefing or intervention programs and when serious problems transpire in the community, they only rely on the LGU and Barangay Officials in dealing with the community.

**Keywords:-** *Enforcement of Pandemic Protocols; Experiences of BPSO, Minimum Health and Security Protocols.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Last December 31, 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) initially reported an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It was known as the Coronavirus disease 2019 or the COVID-19. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a global health emergency from which, the entire world was challenged. Its increasing numbers of confirmed positive cases have been reported across countries, having a significant impact on people's daily lives as well as the economic stability of each country. This pandemic is considered the third pandemic in the 21st century (Prasetyo, 2020).

On the other hand, the ability of sub national government units to control disease spread in the country is critical. Through its Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), the Philippine National Government outlined various quarantine measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. And while the IATF-EID was tasked and considered as the policy-making body crafting the minimum health and safety protocols to be implemented in the national community, its regional task force, led by the Local Chief Executives of Provinces and Municipalities, is tasked with carrying out those standard guidelines to its localities, with the Barangay as its augment being the local task force. Under the NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular 2008-013, the Barangay Police Security Officers who serve as an auxiliary of the Philippine National Police are considered one of the force multipliers. Furthermore, the Department of Interior and Local Government recognizes the critical role of barangays in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and has urged all barangay officials and personnel to proactively enforce the minimum health and security protocols in the irrespective communities to counteract the increase in COVID-related cases.

The DILG recognizes Barangay Police Safety Officers (BPSOs) as the agents of persons in authority to respond to any type of atrocity and public disorder at the barangay level. Furthermore, they serve as front-line responders during emergencies, disasters, and calamities and any threat to the barangays' peace and order and public safety. The DILG also recognizes them as the primary contributors and major stakeholders in the implementation of the government's peace and order programs, projects, and initiatives. Regardless of the BPSOs' involvement, they serve their barangays on a purely voluntary basis for

minimal or negligible financial remuneration.

Local Government Code of 1991, Republic Act No. 7160 states that the barangay tanod are responsible for maintaining peace and order at the barangay level, as well as the public reference to public safety. As provided in the DILG's trainers guidebook, Barangay Police Safety Officers (BPSO) are considered the basic political unit and are tasked with assisting barangay officials in crime prevention, promoting public safety, and assisting in the enforcement of national and local laws set forth. Additionally, as members of the local task force unit to combat the spread of COVID-19, BPSOs are employed to ensure that protocols addressing the pandemic are implemented.

Protocols are carried out in the Municipality of Tolosa with the participation of the Philippine National Police, Local Government Unit, Rural Health Unit, and other Task Force Units; the Barangay Officials, Barangay Health Response Team (BHRT), and the BPSOs. The following are the fundamental minimum health and security protocols that should be implemented: manning barangay checkpoints, strict implementation of social distancing and wearing of facemasks and regular hand washing, discouraging mass gatherings, and eating together in communal areas, curfew implementation, and regular cleaning and disinfection (Duddu, 2020, CSIS, 2020).

Most people encounter difficulties with this new way of life, which can result in a variety of reactions and perspectives. The community has been adversely affected and is constantly adjusting to the new normal setup. However, law enforcement, particularly local task force units, are confronting difficulties as well in implementing and pursuing the implementation of the new normal protocols. The researcher decided to conduct a case study on the experiences of Barangay Police Security Officers, exploring the challenges they faced in the implementation of the protocols and how they dealt with the problems that they have encountered. It is important to understand the experiences and consequences caused by the pandemic to the law implementers, the BPSOs for this study, in order to plan and look into appropriate interventions that would help improve and develop the capabilities of the law implementers as well as to give them adequate support to the needs that will be discovered during the conduct of the study; providing them appropriate training to best perform their duties and provide them with materials or equipment to be used for the performance of their tasks. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that there are only a few studies focusing on the experiences of the BPSOs in the implementation of the ordinances which the researcher

believes that this topic is somehow relevant because BPSOs are the basic police unit that is actively engaged in the community daily. Finally, the researcher believes that through this study which focuses on the various experiences that challenge law enforcers, particularly the local task force, policymakers will be lightened and informed about the factors that cause problems for enforcers and potentially impede the effective implementation of protocols and ordinances. The study's findings will benefit the Local Government Unit of the Municipality of Tolosa, as well as other municipalities in similar situations, by assisting them in improving existing protocols and addressing a rousing concern on the part of local task forces, particularly the BPSOs for this matter.

#### A. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to answer the following;

- To know the experiences of the BPSOs in the enforcement of the minimum health and security protocols in Tolosa, Leyte in a face of pandemic;
- To understand the challenges encountered by the BPSO; and
- To identify the coping mechanisms practiced by the BPSOs in dealing with the challenges encountered.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study will utilize the Qualitative Research Method through a Case Study Design. The researcher will employ a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of the BPSOs in the implementation of the health and security protocols in a face of the pandemic. This study will undertake the exploration through a variety of lenses to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Among the other approaches that can be employed under the qualitative approach is the case study design. The case study design is used to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Cresswell et.al., 2011). The researcher will be employing the case study design and extracting the significant responses of the participants.

#### A. Population and Locale

The participants of this study are the Barangay Police Security Officers (BPSOs) of the selected Barangays situated in the Municipality of Tolosa. A total of seven (7) BPSOs will be interviewed by the Municipality. The Participants should be BPSOs even before the pandemic for them to best compare and state their experiences in the enforcement of the ordinances before and during the pandemic. The following are the specific barangays where the study will be conducted; San Roque, Opong, Telegrafo, Capangihan, and Tanghas, Tolosa.

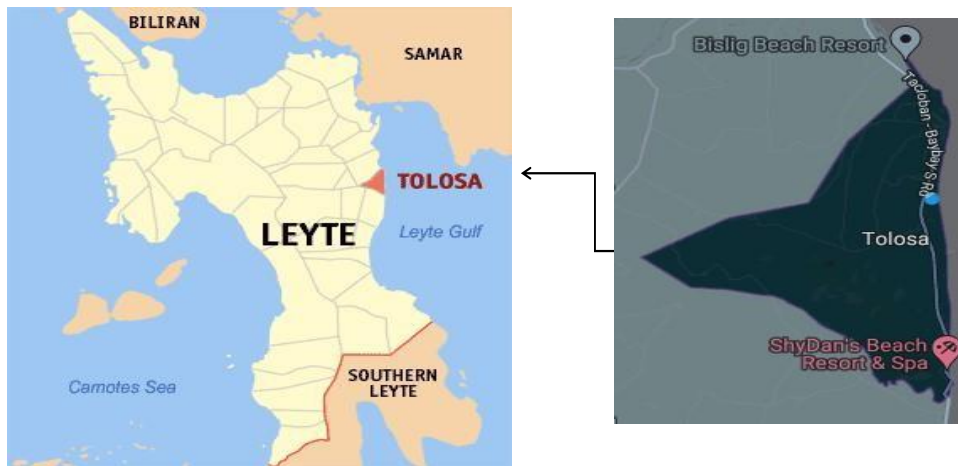


Fig. 1: The Location Map of the Study

Source: (<https://www.google.com/search?q=Tolosa+Map>)

### B. Data Gathering Tool

In conducting the study, it is relevant that the researcher must be of great knowledge as to the approach of the study she will be using. In this case study, the researcher prepared an interview type of questionnaire for informants with open-ended questions, prepared through conceptualizing and elucidating the issue to be studied. Purposely, I included questions regarding personal circumstances for only the purpose of participant identification during data transcription. The questionnaires will only be comprised of one part which will ask questions about the following: The experiences of the BPSOs in the enforcement of the Health and Security Protocols, the Problems encountered by the participants, and the coping mechanisms used by the participants. The Interview guide was subjected to validation through the approval during its presentation in the class. The researcher decided to use an interview questionnaire because the researcher believed that in the qualitative approach to conducting a study, more in-depth interviews with the informants are relevant because of their experiences during the implementation of them and protocols.

### C. Treatment of Data

The data gathered was collated using Colaizzi's approach. Colaizzi's method is the process used to aid in extracting, organizing, and analyzing such narrative datasets. Also, Descriptive phenomenology is concerned with revealing the "essence" or "essential structure" of any phenomenon under investigation – that is, those features that make it what it is, rather than something else (Morrow, Rodriguez, and King, 2015). It must be noted that during the interview of the informants, all the dialogues must be well recorded through audio-taped recordings. The dialogues must be transcribed and put into writing by the researcher. Qualitative Data Analyzing involves such processes as coding, categorizing, and making sense of the essential meaning of the phenomenon.

### D. Ethical Considerations

Studies exploring the experiences of the participants can also be considered a sensitive issue. The researcher must consider the oral damages that might happen during the conduct of the study. So, the researcher must make sure that the pieces of information gathered from the participants must remain confidential. The researcher must also assure the anonymity of the subject for the protection and security of the course of the participants. To assure that the researcher followed the ethical standards that need to be practiced during an interview, the researcher must prepare the following documents: a letter to be sent to the organizations concerned stating the issue to be studied, the methodology of the study, and the ethical guidelines. The participants of this study must be informed of the name of the researcher and be given their contact number if ever they have some clarifications and queries about the research. The interview guide and the consent forms must be also explained well to the informants. The participants have the right to withdraw at any time he wants. The participants should also sign the transcription of the interview conducted for them to validate that all the statements written on the transcription are the exact answers he uttered during the interview. The researcher must be very considerate of allocations or behaviors informants should possess or show. As the researcher of this study, my primary concern is to uphold the rights of the informant; "Respect for persons, equity, non-discrimination and 'beneficence', that is avoiding harm and protecting the weak, this is according Butler 2000; Eby 2000; Graue and Walsh 1998, Seiber 1992. In dealing with the participants, showing them your affection and interest in listening to his statements would be the best way of capturing him. We must manifest an understanding and affection so that informants would feel free to talk and deliver their experiences spontaneously without any doubt. For the researcher to completely relate to the experiences of the informants, we should put ourselves in their own shoes and feel them as if we also experience what they have gone through. But remember, putting yourself in the participants' shoes doesn't necessarily

mean that you've got to take the study personally. The trust of the informant in the researcher is the key in deciphering the facts regarding his experiences; hence, the researcher must be guided with guidelines in conducting the research to make that information valid and reliable.

#### E. Presentation of Data

There were sixty significant responses that were extracted from the transcription of the interview of seven participants of the study. Out of those significant statements, the researcher was able to formulate the following emergent themes:

- a) Experiences of the BPSOs
  - Community towards COVID-19 Protocol Implementation;
    - Adverse Response of the Community; and
    - Coherence in the Protocols
  - Adaptation from the changes in the New Normal
    - The Covenant of work before and during the pandemic; and
    - Curfew Implementation
- b) Problems encountered by the BPSOs
  - Barangay Council; Its Vigor to Mediate
    - Duty Detail and Attendance Monitoring
    - Capability of the Council to support the BPSOs
- c) Coping Mechanisms
  - Legislative Assistance as BPSOs problems arise

The researcher selected substantial statements from the responses of the participants and extracted significant statements for the purpose of a more evocative elucidation of the emergent themes.

#### F. The Experiences of the BPSOs in the enforcement of the minimum health and security protocols

The legal problem of policing is figuring out how to limit police authority so that officers can enforce the law while also protecting individual liberty and minimizing the social costs imposed by the police (Harmon,2012). The BPSOs, as the basic political unit, are responsible for maintaining the barangay's peace and order by religiously enforcing the laws and ordinances. While BPSOs were given this authority to enforce, BPSOs are also vulnerable to various types of social impacts and reactions while performing their duties as barangay police.

#### G. Community towards the enforcement of protocols amidst pandemic

The community plays an important role, especially in the accomplishment of any endeavor for which the government is striving. The norm that it establishes is frequently dominant, which has a significant impact on the perspectives of its members. Nonetheless, how the majority responds or perceives a situation or issue reveals potential impacts, both positive and negative. In the enforcement of the minimum health and security protocols, for instance, the way the community responded to its implementation would somehow result in various

experiences for the law and ordinances implementer, particularly the BPSOs for this study.

#### a) Adverse Response of the Community amidst pandemic

It has always been a challenge for law enforcers to efficiently enforce the law despite the support of the government. Various factors and hindrances may come out in the fulfillment of their duty which sometimes affect the performance and efficiency of our law enforcers. Mention among those factors and hindrances are the adverse or negative responses or reactions of the community towards the BPSOs. Participant number one stated one of his experiences, which he says;

*Some of them were agitated when they were denied passing through checkpoints, particularly if they did not have their gate pass with them and were ordered to return to their homes and bring their gate pass with them before entering or passing through,(P1.SS1).*

Another statement that supported this experience was based on the response of Participant number four;

*We are subjected to demoralizing branding from the community, which claims that we strictly enforce the law in an improper manner,(P4.SS10).*

Participant number five also had shared his experience while enforcing the minimum health protocols, he says;

*In each barangay, there are checkpoints. There are residents who do not follow the protocols and are upset with us because we are enforcing those protocols. We were turned into villains. We are not respected because we are only tanods especially since the Police Officers are not always on our post, (P5.S11).*

Based on the responses of the participants, while the community is adapting to the sudden transition from the normal way of life to the new normal setup, the participants also shared how equally difficult the situation was for them. That despite their intentions to purely carry out the protocols, unwanted circumstances may transpire and hinder its implementation.

On the other side, there are also members of the community who without any question, conform to the norms set forth by the law implementers. These are the types of people who coordinate and seriously and adhere

to the set of laws, the health and security protocols for this matter, imposed by the authorities.

b) Coherence of Protocols in a face of Pandemic

It is a common notion in the community to adhere to the laws and ordinances implemented by the authorities knowing that the intention of implementing such is for the common good of the community. During the pandemic, the IATF had released protocols to be implemented worldwide. This protocol was mandated purpose to control and mitigate the outspread of the pandemic; wearing facemasks and face shields, hand sanitizing, social distancing, and bringing gate passes and QR Codes are some of the highlights of this protocol. By complying with such, people would somehow understand that by simply following the set protocols, they will be safe from being infected by the virus. This idea was supported by the responses of the participants; Participant number three shared one of his positive experiences while implementing the protocols;

*On a positive note, there are residents who adhere to the protocols and collaborate with us. The Barangay Council is assisting us in putting the protocols in place. And if we have cases that we are unable to handle, we seek assistance from the LGU, who has always responded quickly, (P3.SS8).*

Participant number six also supported this idea as he shared his positive experience while implementing the protocols;

*We rarely have or encounter delinquent residents. The community is cooperating with us, especially since our Barangay Counsel informed and required the community to follow the protocols and as a result, they limit their business outside their premises,(P6.SS12).*

Knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) towards this pandemic must be developed and promoted well by the policymakers to help the law implementers in fulfilling the implementation of the said protocols (Lee,KangandYou,2021). It is indeed a challenge to effectively enforce the law and expect positive reactions from the community, however, based on the responses of the participants, if the barangay council would show full support and spearhead the implementation of any type of ordinance in the barangay, people have a large potential to be coherent and adhere with all those protocols.

Another challenge that the BPSOs had experienced during the implementation of the health and security protocols is the sudden transition of our way of living from a free

community to an environment with limited mobilization.

c) *Adaptation from the Changes in the New Normal*

The emergence of the COVID-19 Pandemic forced the community to adjust to the new normal way of life. With this new set-up, the usual flow of our schedule in work and classes were modified. Our travels became limited and were subject to many restrictions. Everyone was advised to stay at home if the business outside is not important. Indeed, it has caused many transitions to the normal routine of everyone.

H. The Covenant of work before and during the Pandemic

Assisting students on their way to school and traffic, especially during rush hours, conducting night patrols, and responding to incidents in the barangay were some of the BPSOs' usual routines prior to the Pandemic. At the onset of the COVID-19, the routine was modified, and had to adapt to the new setup of their jobs. The responses below support the idea of this concept. Participant number one shared his experience as he says;

*We used to report from our posts only at night before the pandemic, but now we have to report both mornings and nights to man the outposts and checkpoints, (P1.SS15).*

Participant number four shared also his experience as he says;

*There was a significant difference between today and before the pandemic because before, people could live their lives normally with no restrictions, whereas now, protocols must be properly observed and followed by the community,(P4.SS20).*

Another statement was delivered also by participant number 6, he said;

*We had an easier job before the pandemic because we were just assigned to a specific area of responsibility, unlike now, we are required to conduct regular patrol to reprimand residents who are violating the protocols, but the problem is that during the patrol, residents would just make sure that the enforcers had passed through their area, then they would come out of their houses again, and no one, not even the police officers, could stop them,(P6.SS23).*

Participant number seven also had shared his insights about this concept;

*Conducting patrol and assisting traffic during school hours were mostly our roles as tanods prior to the pandemic, and if we were done with those, we could go home or report to our other respective jobs. However, when the pandemic began, we were required to report both day and nighttime to our checkpoints, which affected our daily income and the worst part is that we do not have allowances to sustain our needs, but we have no other choice because the place was in total lockdown,(P7.SS25).*

The responses presented above show the change in the course of duties and shifts of the BPSOs and the difference that they have experienced before and during the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. One of the common responses also that was mentioned by the participants is the implementation of the Curfew Program before and during the pandemic. The participants had stated the relevance of implementing the curfew and how the conduct of this intervention program differs before and after the pandemic.

#### *I. Curfew Implementation*

Curfew is an order that clearly defines a period during which favorable rules should apply (Apujan,et.al.,2019). This program was originally designed for minors or those under the age of 18 to prevent them from staying outside their premises or houses at a specified time, which typically begins at 9:00 p.m. and ends at 5:00 a.m. This program had already been observed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. On the other hand, the program's implementation was strictly adhered to even during the pandemic. This was defined as a stay-at-home order during specific time periods with the goal of reducing the transmission of the coronavirus. The responses below express the responses of the participants on the Curfew Implementation. Participant number one shared his experience about the implementation of the curfew in the barangay;

*Curfew is also enforced, with the punishment consisting of weeding out the grass and cleaning a specific area in the morning; violators are turned over to the barangay, and the captain decides where they will be assigned,(P1.SS17).*

Participant number three made mention also on the implementation of a curfew in the barangay;

*I must say that enforcing curfew was preferable because dealing with the residents was easier. Before the pandemic,*

*one advantage was that because there were still classes, residents, particularly the young, could no longer be seen outside their homes, especially at eight o'clock in the evening,(P3.2219).*

The participants had a significant perception of the implementation of the curfew program and had mentioned how this program had contributed to them in the course of their duties. On the other hand, Chapter 1, section 384 of the Local Government Code of the Philippines, states that the role of the barangay as the basic political unit is to serve as the primary planning and implementing unit of the government policies. Moreover, the barangay is responsible for enhancing the delivery of basic services to the community. With this authority vested towards the Barangay, it is evident that they can be an aid to wards support and development of each component comprising the barangay, the BPSOs for instance, to further improve the performance as a law implementer.

#### *a) Barangay Council; Its Vigor to Mediate*

The Barangay Council serves as a collegiate body whose primary concern is to pass ordinances and resolutions for an effective administration of the barangay. They are tasked to ensure that the laws are properly implemented and that the community is peaceful and out of danger. Likewise, the Barangay Council also has a direct responsibility to each member of the barangay, specifically its personnel, the Barangay Police Security Officers for example. Being the locale policy implementers, the BPSOs do encounter various challenges and problems to fulfill their duties in the community, hence the council should support and provide the BPSOs with support and empower them to fulfill the policies that they are mandated to implement. The Barangay Council has the power and authority to intervene whenever situations concerning the BPSOs are arising and to provide them with help and assistance with shortcomings they are facing. With this, the following themes were formulated to represent the responses assessed by the researcher;

#### *J. Duty Detail and Attendance Monitoring*

Regular monitoring of the duty detail and attendance of the BPSOs is one of the keypoints that the BPSOs would like to raise in the Barangay. The common problem that the participants were able to share was the leniency of the Barangayin terms of the regular inspection and assessment of the performance of the BPSOs. Likewise, the BPSOs also signified their interest in the conduct of deliberations and consultations to be conducted by the Barangay for them to further improve and develop their attitudes towards their job also call an implementer. The following are the responses that would support this concept. Participant number six had share his insights on this concept;

*We forwarded our complaints to the barangay,*

*and they simply responded that we would first hold a meeting to discuss this issue,(P6.SS36).*

*We consider ourselves to be pure volunteers, but the problem is that we also require a reasonable income to meet our basic needs,(P6.SS35).*

Also, Participant number six added this statement;

*Others would resign on purpose because the barangay is lenient, especially when it comes to salary deductions because other tanods are religiously reporting every day, whereas others would commit absences and still receive a full salary,(P6.SS37).*

*Aside from our honorarium, we had received an additional allowance,(P2.SS30).*

Another response from the participants which had a significant difference is among all the barangays, only one barangay employed female tanods, and it is only the barangay San Roque, this was based on the response of participant number six;

*We also lack a female tanod in our barangay due to a lack of funds;prior to the pandemic, our total strength was sixteen; others resigned due to a lack of benefits,(P6.SS36).*

The participants said that if the Barangay would be stricter in monitoring and would implement the no work, no pay scheme, BPSOs would be more attentive and refrain from committing absences from their duties.

Another equally relevant factor that would address the concerns raised by the BPSOs is the support of the Barangay in terms of seminars, education, training, incentive support, and even livelihood programs for them to be motivated and encouraged to fulfill their sworn responsibilities.

#### *K. Capability of the Council to provide support to the BPSOs*

As important as the BPSOs' role in law enforcement is, the Barangay Council's intervention is equally important in the BPSOs' job performance. Given that the nature of the BPSOs' work is voluntary and only subject to a financial remuneration based on the IRA of the barangay, the way the council will support the BPSOs is one of the contributing factors for them to perform their job better. With this concept, the BPSOs shared their perspectives on the council's support in the performance of their duties. Participant number one had shared relative to this concept;

*We did not receive any allowances or increases, only the honorarium for being a tanod, but I recall receiving 500 pesos as a hazard fee last December, but only once,(P1.SS27).*

Participant number one had also added his insights about a follow-up question asking on the training of the BPSOS;

*We were not properly trained; they simply met with us and told us what to do on our post,(P1.SS28).*

In addition to the previous statement, Participant number six shared his own experience with this concept; *We don't get any extra allowances. We spend our personal money on alcohol and face masks solely to protect ourselves,(P6.SS34).*

The presentation of these statements demonstrated how the Barangays deal with their areas of responsibility differently. The BPSOs were vocal with their experiences and problems encountered in the performance of their duties, and other participants of this study had revealed how they deal with those problems. However, the researcher observed that the participants are dependent on the support of the Council and the LGU for them to solve the encountered problems and those consultations are the coping mechanisms that are being considered by the BPSOs.

#### *a) The Legislative assistance as BPSOs problems arise.*

Evidently, everyone does experience challenges and problems in our own everyday lives. May it be in our houses, schools or even in our respective workplaces. In this study, the researcher focused on the experiences of the BPSOs in the enforcement of the protocols that are mandated to them to be implemented in the community. The participants shared their challenges and problems encountered and how they deal with those encounters. Common responses that were collected by the researcher were in order for them to solve and cope with these problems, they seek assistance from the council with the support and assistance of the LGU. The responses are as follows. Participant number 1 shared how he deal with an encountered problem;

*The best we can do is explain to them that this implementation is not our decision, but rather a directive from the LGU to which we must adhere in order to prevent the virus from spreading, (P1.SS39).*

Participant number 2 also had shared his experience to an encountered problem;

*We will be called up to a meeting and asked to share our problems, after which the barangay and LGU will seek intervention,(P2.SS40)*

Participant number 3 stated his experience to an encountered problem;

*We warn or reprimand them, and if they still do not comply, we list their names and forward them to the Barangay, who will be the ones dealing with the violator, such as by giving fair consequences such as cleaning,(P3.SS41).*

*The local government would hold a seminar for us to help us improve our performance as tanods,(P3.SS42).*

In addition to responses, Participant number 4 stated his experience and how he deal with this encountered problem;

*We patiently understand the people's complaints and judgments because, even if we are on the right side, we should still deal with the community peacefully,(P4. SS44).*

Participants have shared that they deal with and managed their encountered problems through seeking assistance from the council and with the assistance of the LGU.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study used Colaizzi's method (Sosha,2012), to convey the experiences of the Barangay Police Security Officers (BPSOs) in Tolosa, Leyte. This method was used to formulate the emergent themes; Community towards the Implementation of COVID-19 Protocols; Adaptation from the Changes in the New Normal, Barangay Council; Its Vigor to Mediate and the Legislative assistance as BPSOs problems arise.

This study was anchored by theories that support and aid in the elucidation of the nature of the study; Social Control Theory by Travis Warner Hirschi which supports the concept of the behavior of the community that violates normative rules because of being influenced by a large number of the member of the community or from a powerful community; Terror Management Theory by Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski which provide an idea that an individual is stressed and threatened by their own mortality so as a result, following the protocols set will save them from their fears; and Self-Control Theory by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi which emphasizes how the BPSOs will be affected on how the community will react on the implementation of the protocols during the onset of the pandemic.

The themes that were formulated for the experiences of the BPSOs elucidate on the reaction and responses of the community towards the implementation of the

protocols and how they adapted on the new normal setup of work. These are as follows;

#### A. The Community toward COVID-19 protocols implementation

This theme was formulated to reveal the various reactions of the community members as the BPSOs are implementing the health and security protocols at the onset of the pandemic. The researcher was able to gather both the positive and negative experiences that the BPSOs were able to encounter.

#### B. Coherence of Protocols in a face of Pandemic

According to Terror Management Theory TMT by Thompson (2012),the specific way the people of the community will respond to a particular threat or fear is through eliminating the threat focal attention from which the communities' awareness of the possible result of not adhering to the protocols will save them from their fears of immortality or death. Because of the idea of the potential threat and fear of death caused by the virus, merely following the set protocols is their way of eliminating such stress on them.

#### C. Adverse response of the Community Amidst Pandemic

The Social Control Theory by Hirschi depicts the bond of the community, parent, school, friends, and jobs. Where if the strong bond will be weakened or broken, delinquency to a particular law is high. People tend to violate rules the community would see as a vulnerable point on the part of the implementers. One of which is when a certain group in the community has power or influence that could deviate from the norms set by the community. If this opportunity will transpire, some members of the community will grab and take this opportunity from deviating to set rules and standards. Relative to this study, the participants shared that the residents will give negative reactions to the implementation of the protocols if they will not see any support from the barangay it. Likewise, if the resident is influenced by other groups not to abide by the set rules, deviancy to rules will transpire.

Under this theme, the researcher had found the following;

- The community had various reaction so responses towards the implementation of the protocols in their barangays both in a positive and negative manner;
- For the positive side, there is a certain barangay that did not experience any difficulty in terms of enforcing the protocols while the other remaining barangays had various negative experiences of fulfilling the implementation of the protocols;
- The community is one of the major factors that affect the performance of the BPSOs duties;
- The reaction of the community varies depending on how the Barangay had informed them of this type of emergence;

#### D. Adaptation from the changes in the new normal



Embracing the new normal setup was never easy for everybody. Everyone had to adjust and adapt to the new way of doing things and must always consider and adhere to the protocols. This theme was formulated to reveal the adjustment and distinction of works before and during the pandemic.

#### *E. The Covenant of work before and during the Pandemic*

During the pandemic, the nature of the work of the BPSOs shifted to light modification, especially in terms of the duty detail and work of the BPSOs. Before the pandemic, the majority of the BPSOs are required to report only at night time and perform the mandated duties that they need to do e.g. patrolling and ensuring peace and order in each respective barangay while in the onset of the pandemic, the BPSOs were mandated and are required to report both in the day and night time. Aside from their usual job, additional responsibility was given to them; man, the checkpoints both at the point of entry and exits in each respective barangays, conduct patrolling to ensure that people are wearing facemasks, and social distancing, to reprimand those who are holding public gatherings and the like. With these modifications, the Social Cognitive Career Theory by Conner(2015) supported that the work or the goal of an individual can be affected or influenced by various factors; one of which is because of the internal and external environmental factors transpiring at that time. With the emergence of the pandemic, the BPSOs were mandated to fulfill the implementation of the protocols to combat the existing environmental factor which is the pandemic. And to fully implement such, the schedule of their work is needed to be modified or shifted to accommodate such changes.

#### *F. Curfew Implementation*

This intervention was one of the existing programs implemented by the barangays where the young people are involved especially during night time. With this implementation, juveniles would somehow be deterred and would rationally weigh consequences and would reduce the opportunities for the juveniles to be delinquent. At the onset of the pandemic, the implementation of this program continued but this time, it was more strictly observed. During the pandemic, the curfew was intended for everybody who do not have an official business outside, such as going to work or official travels. This implementation was supported by the Deterrence Theory by Beccaria (1764) which connotes that people tend to be discouraged to commit a crime or violate a specific law if they know the corresponding punishment for doing such. Relative to this study, since curfew implementation is strictly enforced and people who are caught and violate this should undergo corresponding consequences such as assigning them to clean a particular area or doing public services as punishment for violating the curfew rules.

Under this theme, the researcher was able to find out that;

- Policy implantation from each barangay differs, which causes differences in how the community will react and perceive the sudden limitations and restrictions; and
- Shifts or changes in the routine of schedule on the BPSOs also affect their personal living and income.

#### *G. Barangay Council: Its Vigor to Mediate*

The Barangay Council of each barangay serves as the basic unit of government. They plan and implement the government policies in the community with the help of the law implementers, specifically the BPSOs in its implementation. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the Council to look after and monitor the performance of duty of the BPSOs.

#### *H. Duty Detail and Attendance Monitoring*

Regular and strict monitoring of the duty detail and attendance of the BPSOs is one of the best practices that can be done by the barangay council to caution and deliberate the course of performance of the BPSOs. The Barangay Council should not be lenient in terms of conducting such actions to motivate and encourage the BPSOs to religiously fulfilling their duties as force multipliers of the law enforcement authorities.

#### *I. The capability of the Council to support BPSOs*

Through the dynamics of time, policing changes due to globalization. With the advent of the adaptation of the new normal and high technology ways in the community, the law enforcers should also keep up with these changes. Likewise, various situations are already arising in the community where the BPSOs are the frontline people to experience such. With this and with the responses of the BPSOs, it is indeed relevant to let the BPSOs undergo relevant seminars and training that will aid them in best performing their duties. In addition, in the emergence of the pandemic, dealing with this type of global problem must be well dealt with, and to address such, relative training or workshops should be conducted for the BPSOs for them to be well oriented and well versed in doing their jobs. On the other sense, the concerns of the BPSOs, one of which that was mentioned was son regarding the financial support and other miscellaneous support that must be granted to them to at least compensate for any additional job description that was mandated to them and to provide them with efficient personal protective equipment to ensure their safety to some hazardous and contagious disease that they might acquire in the course of their job.

Under this theme, the researcher found out that;

- The Barangay Council is lenient in terms of attendance checking and monitoring of duty details;
- The BPSOs can receive a complete salary even if they have many absences from their duty;
- The BPSOs provide their own PPE such as masks, face shields, and alcohol;
- The BPSOs donot receive hazard or incidental fees every month;
- Not all Barangays give additional allowance to BPSOs during the onset of the Pandemic as assistance; and
- There is no hands-on training or simulation conducted on how for BPSOSs on first aid, defense tactics, and proper conduct of checkpoints, especially during the onset of a pandemic.

#### *J. Legislative assistance as BPSOs problems arise*

It is indeed normal to encounter various types of challenges and problems while performing the BPSOs job for this matter. Likewise, it is usual to have various sorts of experiences because of the implementation of them and ate policies. How to deal with and handle those encounters is one of the most important support that the council and community could give to the law implementers. While it is true that sometimes law implementers are harsh and inconsiderate, we must also understand why they are strictly implementing those mandates to the community. Coping mechanisms are one of the ways and approaches where the BPSOs handle the encounters that they are experiencing in the course of their duty, regardless of how they deal with them. Based on the responses given by the participants, the support they are getting from the council and the LGU through debriefing them from the stresses that they experience is one of the mechanisms that they employed to cope. Also, the initiatives of the LGU to conduct seminars to somehow equip the BPSOs with knowledge on how to better perform their duty is also one of the coping mechanisms that they used to at least alleviate the hardships that the feeling. Indeed, if their complaints and sentiments are acknowledged and considered, the BPSOs are somehow motivated and highly encouraged in best perform their jobs.

Under this theme, the researcher was able to find out that;

- The BPSOs rely on how the Barangay Council and LGU will solve a particular situation in the Barangay Level;
- There was no stress debriefing for the BPSOs on the challenges encountered in implementing protocols in the community; and
- The BPSOs would disregard the negative experiences they have encountered.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study generally aimed to explore the experiences of the Barangay Police and Security Officers in the enforcement of the health and security protocols in Tolosa, Leyte. It also sought to answer the difference between policing before and during the pandemic, the problems encountered by the BPSOs in enforcing the protocols, and the coping mechanisms that they have employed to overcome the challenges they have encountered.

This study utilized the Qualitative Research Design specifically using the Case Study Method. The study was conducted in the selected barangays of Tolosa, Leyte, and had a total of seven BPSOs as Participants of the study. Anin-depth/individual interview was conducted with the aid of the Interview Guide and Recorder for data gathering. Along with the approved transmittal letter from the Local Government Unit of the Municipality of Tolosa, the researcher also provided the participants with the consent form to signify their freedom to answer or refuse from answering the prepared questions of the researcher.

The researcher made use of Colaizzi's approach in treating the data gathered to produce substantial ideas to elucidate the identified problems of the study. The data

collected were transcribed into writing and formulated emergent themes based on the responses of the participants.

Out of the findings presented, the researcher had formulated the following conclusion;

- Barangay Council, LGU, and the Law Enforcement should be firm and consistent in supporting the BPSOs in the protocol implementation to the community to control or deter them from deviating on the set protocols and that it would be easier on the part of the BPSOs to enforce any type of law or ordinance.
- Problems encountered by the BPSOs are rooted in the irregular monitoring and consultation of the Council towards the BPSOs and lack of training. The problems that they have encountered can be resolved and addressed if only being given attention and consideration.
- The coping mechanisms determined by the BPSOs are insufficient and could not fully address the unpleasant effects it may cause on the well-being of the BPSOs.

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