

Public Safety Challenges Faced by Barangay Officers and Police: Towards a Stronger Policy Framework

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Date received: November 26, 2024

Date revised: December 10, 2024

Date accepted: December 25, 2024

Originality: 90%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Villafuerte, A. (2024). Public safety challenges faced by barangay officers and police: Towards a stronger policy framework. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(1), 249–257. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0639>

Abstract. This study examines public safety challenges and collaboration between Barangay Public Safety Officers and the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), aiming to enhance police-community partnerships and strengthen public safety measures in the National Capital Region. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 45 barangay public safety officers and 45 NCRPO police officers through questionnaires. The study explored correlations between identified challenges and the effectiveness of public safety measures to propose an improved policy framework. Findings reveal high effectiveness in current public safety measures, supported by excellent police service delivery, strong local executive backing, and robust community partnerships. Respondents, predominantly middle-aged male college graduates, consistently perceived public safety measures positively across demographic categories. However, critical challenges persist in community engagement, organizational support, and policing strategies, reflecting systemic issues common to other regions and departments. A perfect linear correlation was found between these challenges and the effectiveness of public safety measures, underscoring their direct impact on overall performance. The study emphasizes addressing these challenges to enhance public safety outcomes and foster stronger police-community collaborations, providing valuable insights for policy improvements in the NCR.

Keywords: Public safety; Collaboration; Barangay; Police-community partnerships; Policy framework.

1.0 Introduction

Building trust between law enforcement agencies and communities is essential for public safety and effective policing. Strong police-community relationships foster cooperation, encourage crime reporting and improve collective problem-solving. However, these relationships often face challenges, particularly in urban areas where police misconduct or controversial events can erode trust and cooperation. For instance, Kristin et al. (2017) noted that single acts of misconduct might cause lasting damage to police-community interactions, drawing national attention and reducing trust. Efforts to rebuild trust emphasize transparency and active engagement. Transparency, as Gove (2018) suggests, requires law enforcement agencies to share accurate and timely information about incidents and policies. This ensures that communities feel informed and involved. Additionally, cultural competency training and active community presence, as highlighted by Walker and Archbold (2018), are crucial for addressing biases and strengthening ties in diverse populations.

In the Philippines, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has adopted community policing strategies to foster collaborative efforts with residents. The Directorate for Police Community Relations (2015) identified community

policing as vital for crime prevention, public safety, and peace. However, despite initiatives such as the Integrated Command and Control Centre (iC3) launched by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) in 2017, challenges persist. High crime rates and low safety indexes suggest a gap between policies and outcomes in cities like Manila.

Previous studies emphasize the importance of police-community partnerships in crime prevention and public satisfaction with police services (Kole, 2016; Hawkins, 2018). These studies agree that mutual trust and collaboration improve law enforcement effectiveness. Similarly, local authors like Duque (2017) and Banaynal-Fernandez (2017) highlight the need for strong partnerships between barangay public safety officers and police to enhance community presence and reduce crime. However, gaps remain in understanding the specific challenges and needs of these partnerships in the Philippine context. This study focuses on assessing public safety challenges and collaborating between barangay public safety officers and the NCRPO. This research aims to strengthen police-community partnerships, improve public safety, and address persistent challenges in the National Capital Region by identifying obstacles and proposing an enhanced policy framework.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive correlational research design to determine the assessment and challenges encountered in public safety by barangay public safety officers and the national capital region police office toward an enhanced policy framework. According to Shuttleworth (2016), descriptive design is an appropriate methodology for investigating specific issues and as an initial step before doing more extensive quantitative studies. Moreover, according to Bueno (2019), the descriptive-correlational design involves collecting data to address inquiries about the matter's current state. Correlations examine the magnitude, direction, and strength of relationships or links. Furthermore, according to Sousa (2017), correlational research findings can serve as a basis for formulating hypotheses that can be tested in quasi-experimental and experimental studies. The current study employed a non-interventional methodology to evaluate the correlation between participants' scores on two measures without influencing the examined variables.

2.2 Research Participants

This study employed the simple random sampling technique to draw the samples of this study. There were forty-five (45) police officers in the NCRPO and forty-five (45) barangay police safety officers who answered the research questionnaire.

2.3 Research Instrument

The respondents were tasked to answer the researcher-modified instrument. The instrument contains three (3) parts. The first part contained questions about the respondents' profiles, such as age, sex, and educational qualifications. Part II primarily stipulated the respondents' public safety assessment regarding police service delivery, support of local executives, and community partnership. Lastly, Part III included the challenges encountered by the Barangay Public Safety Officer and National Capital Region Police Officer regarding public safety. The questions were based on research-modified instruments based on the Implementing Guidelines for City/ Municipal Community and Service-Oriented Policing System (CSOP); NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2015-342.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

The data gathering started after the colloquium or Pre-Orals and after the researcher-modified instrument had been evaluated by the researcher's mentor and face validated by at least three specialists in the field of investigation. The researcher considered all the necessary revisions on the research instrument. In order to make the administration of the instrument as easy as possible, the researcher sent a letter of request to pertinent departments in the NCRPO and barangays where the respondents are located. After a week of field surveying, the data was tallied and coded with the help of the researcher's statistician so that the researcher could never go wrong when treating the acquired data. The data was analyzed using the International Business Machines (IBM)-developed Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. (IBM).

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the respondents' assessments according to their profiles in terms of age, sex, and educational qualification.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the profile of the respondents

	Police Officers	Safety Officers	Frequency	Percentage
Age				
71 years old and above	0	1	1	1.11
61-70 years old	0	3	3	3.33
51-60 years old	0	7	7	7.78
41-50 years old	9	15	24	26.67
31-40 years old	26	12	38	42.22
20-30 years old	10	7	17	18.89
Gender				
Male	33	40	73	81.11
Female	12	5	17	18.99
Education				
Doctorate Graduate	1	0	1	1.11
Masters Graduate	5	1	6	6.67
Masters Units	14	1	15	16.67
College Graduate	25	4	29	32.22
College Level	0	8	8	8.89
Vocational	0	9	9	10.00
High School Graduate	0	7	7	7.78
High School Level	0	3	3	3.33
Elementary Graduate	0	10	10	11.11
Elementary Level	0	2	2	2.22

The data show the distribution of respondents across different age brackets, providing an overview of the age diversity within the sample population. This also affirms the study of Franssen et al. (2020), which investigates the correlation between demographic variables, namely age groups, and different health outcomes, such as chronic illnesses, mental well-being, and healthcare consumption patterns. The study examines the health experiences and management strategies of several age groups within the middle-aged population, such as individuals aged 31-40 and 41-50. Also, the data analysis emphasizes the distribution of genders among the respondents, emphasizes possible gender inequalities, and encourages reflection on the representativeness of the sample and the methodologies used for analysis. Although there is a growing emphasis on incorporating sex-disaggregated statistics into national programs and comprehending the impact of gender-based inequalities on overall health, there is still a dearth of data needed to uncover the root causes of gender disparities and develop successful intervention programs (Weber et al., 2021). Further, the table sheds light on the respondents' educational backgrounds, revealing various educational experiences, with college graduates making up the largest group. Understanding the educational background of the people under study may benefit from knowing this information. The result resonates with the study of Tondo et al. (2020).

3.2 Assessment of the Level of Public Safety

In terms of Police Service Delivery

Table 2 presents the mean and interpretation of the respondents' levels of public safety assessment in terms of police service delivery. As can be seen in the table, the overall assessment concerning public safety in terms of police service delivery" had an overall weighted mean of 3.85, which was verbally interpreted as "Highly Observed." All items related to police service delivery were rated within the 'Highly Observed' range, indicating a generally favorable perception of police services concerning public safety. The realization of the Filipino people's long-term vision of a matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay para sa lahat rests upon an environment that is safe, secure, and orderly. The government has to ensure that all Filipinos feel secure enough to walk and travel around all places in the country without fear of harming themselves and their property. They can go about their business, economic, and social pursuits. Moreover, as the country pursues greater economic development, the government must safeguard national interests, territory, and sovereignty (PDP 2017-2022). The first steps toward ensuring community safety are the vigorous pursuit of criminal behavior and the equally vigorous defense of each person's rights to privacy, independence, and tranquility (Martinez, 2019).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the level of public safety in terms of police service delivery

Indicators	Police Officers		Safety Officers		Composite Mean	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1) There is initiative and coordination with the local executives and members of the citizenry.	3.88	Highly Observed	3.80	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed
2) The local executives and community members are oriented on the policing system, and their support is solicited.	3.92	Highly Observed	3.88	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed
3) There is a consultation with all stakeholders in identifying problems in the community	3.84	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed
4) There are community assemblies for various sectors and marginalized groups.	3.78	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed
5) There are strategies to address the identified community problems.	3.75	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed
6) There is an opportunity to collaborate to address persistent crime, public safety, and problems related to delivering basic services.	3.87	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed	3.88	Highly Observed
7) Problem-solving is promoted to identify crime and community problems.	3.91	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed
8) Specific issues and concerns that most threaten the safety and well-being of residents in the area are identified.	3.83	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed
9) There are changes in the police systems and procedures in the precinct.	3.77	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed
10) The benefits of change are explained, steps for change to occur are identified, and an organization-wide commitment to change is created.	3.74	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed	3.78	Highly Observed
Overall Composite Mean	3.83	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Highly Observed, 2.50-3.25 Observed, 1.76-2.49 Less Observed, 1.00-1.75 Not Observed

In terms of Support of Local Executives

Table 3 presents the mean and interpretation of the respondents' assessment level concerning public safety in terms of support of local executives.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the level of public safety in terms of support of local executives

Indicators	Police Officers		Safety Officers		Composite Mean	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1) There is formulation and adoption of effective coordination, cooperation, and consultation mechanisms.	3.88	Highly Observed	3.80	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed
2) A three-year, term-based Peace and Order and Public Safety Plan exists.	3.92	Highly Observed	3.88	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed
3) There is a Peace and Order Council (POC) quarterly meeting or as often as needed.	3.84	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed
4) There is performance and exercise of other functions and duties as may be duly authorized by the NAPOLCOM.	3.78	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed
5) There is strategic planning for partnership.	3.75	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed
6) There is ensured assistance and support to the Integrated Area/Community Public Safety Plan.	3.87	Highly Observed	3.78	Highly Observed	3.83	Highly Observed
7) All partner agencies/organizations must cooperate fully in meetings, trainings, and seminars.	3.91	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed
8) Monitoring and evaluation activities are performed for the policing programs and projects.	3.83	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed
9) The necessary personnel are designated, and other resources are mobilized to ensure the successful implementation of community policing.	3.77	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed
10) Information, education, and communication activities are implemented.	3.74	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed	3.78	Highly Observed
Overall Composite Mean	3.83	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Highly Observed, 2.50-3.25 Observed, 1.76-2.49 Less Observed, 1.00-1.75 Not Observed

All aspects of public safety support from local executives, as assessed by police officers and barangay public safety officers, have been rated in the 'Highly Observed' range (composite mean scores between 3.74 and 3.92). This suggests a strong presence or implementation of the measures detailed in the table. The overall composite mean across all items is 3.84, reflecting consistent support execution across different public safety domains, with no significant deviations into lower observation categories. Despite the overall high ratings, the fact that certain items had slightly lower means than others suggests there are specific areas where police services might still improve, even within the context of generally high performance.

The City and Municipal Mayors, as defined under R.A 8551, shall have the power to direct, superintendent, and oversee the day-to-day functions of police investigations of crime, crime prevention activities, and traffic control by the rules and regulations promulgated by the commission. This also affirms the study of Campoy and Campoy (2022). The results indicated that the local chief executive's legal utilization of automatic deputation positively affected police operations. The mayor's ability to oversee and manage the Philippine National Police is a powerful tool of the government that ensures the provision of skilled and outstanding police services to the public.

In terms of Community Partnership

Table 4 presents the mean and interpretation of the respondents' levels of public safety assessment in terms of community partnership.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the level of public safety in terms of community partnership

Indicators	Police Officers		Safety Officers		Composite Mean	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1) Considering the police's inadequacies in manpower, mobility, communications, and firepower, help is needed to fill the gap in policy deficiencies.	3.88	Highly Observed	3.80	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed
2) Partnerships and alliances exist with all interested groups, NGOs, and civic organizations.	3.92	Highly Observed	3.88	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed
3) There is an explanation of specific tasks, contributing resources, identifying accountabilities, and sharing responsibilities.	3.84	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed
4) There is a community policing information and education advocacy program.	3.78	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed
5) There is data, information, and input from police and local executives on problems, issues, and concerns.	3.75	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed
6) There is mobilization and organization of volunteers as force multipliers who can assist in intelligence information-gathering, incident or crime reporting, neighborhood watch or <i>Ronda</i> system; medical and traffic assistance; and emergency and disaster response	3.87	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed	3.83	Highly Observed
7) Resources are shared, and assistance is provided in implementing community policing programs, projects, and activities.	3.91	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed
8) There is work within the established and existing local interagency coordinating mechanisms in the locality.	3.83	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed
9) There is conduct of regular and structured meetings ("long-long") and public fora or dialogues with the community	3.77	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed
10) There is planning and implementation of neighborhood watch or other self-help mechanisms that encourage local community involvement in policing	3.74	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed	3.78	Highly Observed
Overall Composite Mean	3.81	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.83	Highly Observed

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Highly Observed, 2.50-3.25 Observed, 1.76-2.49 Less Observed, 1.00-1.75 Not Observed

The table shows that the respondents' public safety assessment regarding community partnership had an overall composite mean of 3.83, with an interpretation of "Highly Observed." The community partnership aspects related to public safety are overall highly observed, with composite mean scores ranging from 3.74 to 3.92, indicating strong engagement in public safety efforts. The overall composite mean for both Police Officers and Barangay Safety Officers is 3.83, which falls into the 'Highly Observed' category and illustrates a strong overall engagement between the community and the safety officers in terms of partnerships for public safety.

Low legitimacy and lack of trust limit the state's capacity to provide public goods and services. This problem is particularly pertinent to policing, where officers need information about what is happening in the community to provide services effectively and efficiently. Citizens give the police information about the most pressing problems, the location of crime hotspots, concerns about suspicious people or activities, and reports of crimes. The police use this information to allocate their limited resources to prevent crime and ensure public safety.

Summary

Table 5 summarizes the respondents' assessment level concerning public safety regarding police service delivery, support of local executives, and community partnership.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the level of public safety

Indicators	Police Officers		Safety Officers		Composite Mean	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1) police service delivery	3.83	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed
2) support of local executives	3.83	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed
3) community partnership	3.81	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.83	Highly Observed
Overall Composite Mean	3.82	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed

All three categories have all items within the 'Highly Observed' range, which indicates a strong agreement or frequency of observation by the respondents across all safety aspects. The highest composite mean score of 3.85 in this aspect, seen in both Police Officers and barangay public safety officers, reflects that respondents most positively review police service delivery. The overall mean across all the variables (3.84) is within the 'Highly Observed' category, signifying a general perception that all areas reviewed are strongly implemented regarding public safety measures. The close range of scores and the consistently high rating for all categories for both groups indicate a consensus in the perception of these aspects of public safety across both types of respondents. While all items have high observations, specific nuances in their composite scores can identify potential areas for further improvement or highlight existing strengths in public safety efforts.

The results affirm the study of Micah et al. (2023). The findings suggest that effective police service delivery, support from local government officials, and strong community partnerships significantly improve public safety outcomes and increase community satisfaction. The research emphasizes the significance of cooperation among law enforcement organizations, local government authorities, and community stakeholders in advancing efficient community policing strategies.

3.3 Comparison of the Assessment of the Respondents Concerning Public Safety When Grouped According to their Profile

Table 6 shows no significant difference between the police officers and the barangay public safety officers when grouped according to age. This is indicated in the computed chi-square value of 7.7 with a p-value of 0.103, which is at the 0.05 significance level. Since the null hypothesis has been accepted, there is no significant difference in the respondents' ages. The study conducted by Maskály et al. (2021) implies that there is no statistically significant disparity in age between the two groups, indicating that the demographic characteristics of these law enforcement professionals are similar. The study also examines the consequences of hiring, educating, and working together between police and community safety personnel to enhance public safety.

Table 6. Analysis of the difference in the assessment of the respondents concerning public safety when grouped according to their profile

Profile	X ²	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Age	7.70	0.103	Not significant	Accepted
Sex	9.52	0.072	Not significant	Accepted
Educational Qualification	8.92	0.061	Not significant	Accepted

Also, there is no significant difference when grouped according to sex. The chi-square value is 9.52, with a p-value of 0.07, higher than the 0.05 significance level. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the sex of the respondents was accepted. Hence, gender does not seem to be a discerning characteristic among the groups in the sampled population. Harvey's (2017) study examines disparities in communication methods, conflict resolution strategies, and attitudes toward community involvement among male and female officers. The

study also reveals how gender norms and societal expectations influence officers' comprehension and implementation of caring in their policing tactics.

Finally, no significant difference exists when grouped according to their educational qualification. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the respondents' educational attainment was accepted. Mubita et al. (2022) state that higher education often correlates with improved employment chances. However, other characteristics, including field of study, work experience, and socioeconomic background, also play important roles in determining an individual's career trajectory. The study emphasizes the importance of considering various factors when analyzing the connection between employment outcomes and schooling.

3.4 Challenges Encountered

It can be gleaned from Table 7 that the respondents perceived challenges encountered by the Barangay Public Safety Officer and National Capital Region Police Officer in terms of public safety as “Highly observed,” with an overall mean of 3.84. indicating that, generally, these public safety challenges are a real and frequent concern for both the Barangay Public Safety Officer and the National Capital Region Police Officer. Helfers and Nhan's (2021) research shows that increased collaboration between barangay public safety officials and the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) is needed to handle complicated public safety issues successfully. The study also covers implications for practice and policy in enhancing law enforcement operations and fostering community safety in the NCR.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the challenges encountered

Indicators	Police Officers		Safety Officers		Composite Mean	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1) The community does not play a more active and coordinated part in enhancing peace and order.	3.88	Highly Observed	3.80	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed
2) The police do not have a new responsibility to devise appropriate ways of associating the community with law enforcement and maintaining order.	3.92	Highly Observed	3.88	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed
3) The police stations do not collaborate with their communities to resolve crime and quality-of-life issues.	3.84	Highly Observed	3.90	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed
4) There are no developed ways to identify community problems and concerns.	3.78	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed
5) No resources are available from the police station and the community to provide viable solutions.	3.75	Highly Observed	3.82	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed
6) There are no fundamental changes in the policing strategy.	3.87	Highly Observed	3.79	Highly Observed	3.83	Highly Observed
7) There are no organizational changes that support problem-solving in the communities.	3.92	Highly Observed	3.87	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed
8) There is no stimulation of the policemen, and more satisfaction within the community and the establishment of a contemporary police station are not produced.	3.83	Highly Observed	3.89	Highly Observed	3.86	Highly Observed
9) Community policing is viewed not as a quick remedy but as a long-range effort with specific evolutionary phases.	3.77	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed
10) The police officers and private citizens are not working together in creative ways.	3.74	Highly Observed	3.81	Highly Observed	3.78	Highly Observed
Overall Composite Mean	3.83	Highly Observed	3.85	Highly Observed	3.84	Highly Observed

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Highly Observed, 2.50-3.25 Observed, 1.76-2.49 Less Observed, 1.00-1.75 Not Observed

3.5 Policy Framework

This enhanced policy framework for public safety is based on the study's results on challenges encountered by barangay public safety officers and the national capital region police office regarding police service delivery, support of local executives, and community partnership. Public safety is essential in building the foundation for inclusive growth, a high trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy. People feel safe wherever they are in the country and are able to go about their business, economic, or social pursuits as long as they do not violate other people's economic, social, and cultural rights. Such a condition enables the free flow of goods and services.

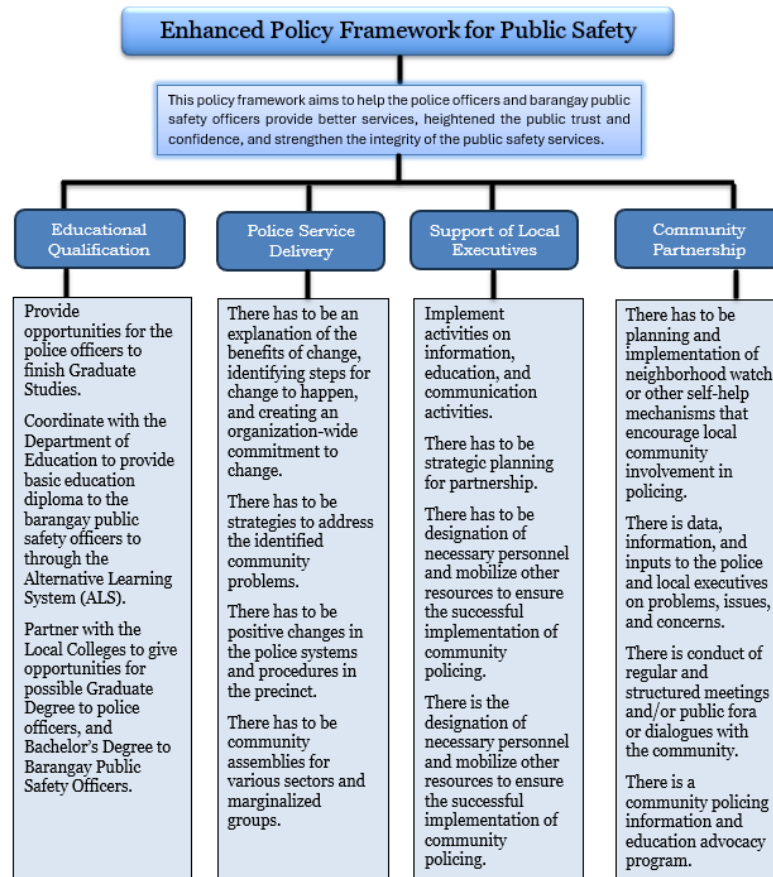


Figure 1. Proposed policy framework

Therefore, along with the current peace, security, public order, and safety of the government, the researcher has proposed additional recommendations for an enhanced policy framework for public safety. This framework aims to help police officers and barangay public safety officers provide better services, heighten public trust and confidence, and strengthen the integrity of the public safety services.

4.0 Conclusion

The study underscores the high effectiveness of public safety measures within the community under investigation, as evidenced by excellent police service delivery, strong local executive support, and robust community partnerships. These elements contribute to a well-received and efficient public safety framework. Demographically, the respondents are predominantly middle-aged males, many of whom hold college degrees, reflecting an educated population actively engaging in public safety assessments. Importantly, perceptions of public safety were consistent across demographic categories such as age, sex, and educational attainment, suggesting a broad agreement on the effectiveness of public safety measures.

Despite this positive assessment, the study identifies critical challenges faced by Barangay Public Safety Officers and National Capital Region Police Officers, particularly in community engagement, organizational support, and policing strategies. These challenges are consistent with those encountered in other regions and police departments, indicating systemic issues within public safety frameworks. The findings further reveal a perfect linear correlation between these challenges and the effectiveness of public safety measures, highlighting their direct impact on the system's overall performance. This correlation emphasizes the urgent need to address these challenges to maintain and enhance public safety outcomes.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and beliefs, it contains material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for award or any other degree.

6.0 Funding

Non declared.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

Non declared.

8.0 Acknowledgment

I wish to express my deep appreciation to my colleagues in the academe, whose generous support and intellectual contributions were essential to the successful completion of this research. Their guidance and collaboration proved invaluable throughout this process.

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