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Drug Clearing Initiative: Efficacy, Challenges & Recommendations

Noe S. Briguel [1], Michael L. Estremera [1,2], Ma. Jean D. Deuda [1]

[1]*Annunciation College of Bacon, Sorsogon Unit Inc., Sorsogon City, Philippines*
[2]*Sorsogon State University, Philippines*

Abstract: This paper sheds light to the efficacy of drug clearing initiative of Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) as well as identified some ensuing challenges of the initiative with recommendations from the grassroots level. The study employed a descriptive method, a systematic gathering and evaluation of data to describe, explain and understand the Barangay Drug Clearing Program in Sorsogon City. The study found that the program is highly effective in all its phases. Although there is a sufficient number of focal persons, the lack of logistical requirements was presented as the ultimate problem that hinders the program to reach its full capacity. Most significantly, it is recommended that the residents should participate more in the implementation of the said program through educating themselves further and by openly coordinating with their local officials regarding barangay drug activities. It is suggested that the BADAC members should improve their planning, strategizing, implementation, and evaluation of programs on drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation in their respective barangays. They are highly advised to maintain transparency and accuracy with all matters regarding the Drug Watch List. Further, it will be acclaimed if the City of Sorsogon undertakes the necessary steps to maintain their high functionality in terms of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program.

Key Words: Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council, Crimes, Drug, Drug Clearing Initiative, Empirical Analysis

1. Introduction

The strengthening of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program was institutionalized through the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) Resolution No. 3, Series of 2017. It is in line with the policy of the State to safeguard the integrity of its territory and the well- being of its citizenry from the ill- effects of dangerous drugs. Babor et al. (2010) in Drug Policy and the Public Good stated that governments around the world have developed a variety of laws and programs intended to influence whether or not individuals decide to use psychoactive substances and to affect the consequences of use for both the individual and the community. In the same vein, Caliwan (2020) reported that the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) adopted a three-pronged strategy to address the illegal drug problem in the country has resulted in a victory. Barangays are being freed from illegal drugs. Citizens are turned to become resistant to drug abuse. Negative impacts are turned into positive opportunities for drug offenders. PDEA, as the lead agency against illegal drugs, adopted a three-pronged strategy in the national anti-drug campaign which focuses on reducing its supply, demand, and harmful effects. To supplement, Clifford et al. (1997), observed that drug policy advocates must move beyond simplistic concepts of supply reduction and demand reduction. A realistic drug policy must differentiate between drug use and abuse and must avoid contributing to the harm done by drug use. A harm reduction approach requires a more refined model representing the interactions of the complex system of variables which influences the outcomes of the drug experience. Clifford et al.'s study is related to the present study for it supports the

notion of implementation of innovative drug policy programs such as the BDCP. The BDCP is primarily leaned towards the harm reduction side of the current Philippine Drug Policy. The present study aims to assess its contribution in the furtherance of such policy.

Research Questions and Assumptions

The scarcity of local and foreign studies in social science specifically along drug menace as one of the social ills is what the present study hopes to fill by providing philosophical data on its efficacy and challenges in the grassroots level. As such, this piece of work is grounded on the hereunder questions and assumptions to guide the researchers in providing philosophical answers and findings.

- What is the efficacy level of effectiveness of the drug clearing initiative by BADAC?
- What are the challenges encountered by barangays in Sorsogon City along drug clearing initiative?
- Is there a significant relationship between pre and during drug operations initiatives?
- What policy or innovations could be recommended for a smooth execution of the initiative?

On the other hand, this study assumes that:

- The efficacy level of the barangay drug clearing program falls under *fair* extent.
- The status of implementation of the barangay drug clearing program is *satisfactory.*
- There is no significant relationship between pre and during drug operations initiatives
- There are varied challenges encountered by barangays in Sorsogon City in implementing the program.
- There are policy enhancement programs and innovations available to improve the initiative.

2. Method

This study employed the descriptive of qualitative method, a systematic gathering and evaluation of data to describe, explain and understand the Barangay Drug Clearing Program in Sorsogon City. The purpose of descriptive or qualitative method is to describe people, places, and to understand other phenomena (Estremera, 2017, 2018). It includes in-depth narrative that answers the question of what, when, where, and how, excluding why (Estremera & Estremera, 2018).

3.1 Site of Interest

Sorsogon City is a 3rd class City and capital of the province of Sorsogon in the Bicol Region. According to the 2015 census, it has a population of 168,110 people. The city was formed in the year 2000 by the merging of Bacon and Sorsogon towns. The city's total population spread across 64 barangays. It serves a trans-shipment point from the Visayas and Mindanao provinces, and is dubbed as the gateway to Southern Philippines Sorsogon City is one of the region's leading cities in urbanization and is one of the most promising city in terms of development. Sorsogon City covers a land area of 31,292 hectares (120.82 sq mi). It is at the southernmost tip of the Bicol Peninsula and of Luzon Island. The city is bounded by Castilla in the west, Manito in the northwest, Albay Gulf in the north, Prieto Diaz in the east, Gubat in the southeast, Casiguran in the southwest, and Sorsogon Bay in the south. Sorsogon is characterized by an irregular topography; mountain ranges on the north-west, sloping uplands on the central part of the city, plain areas south western and central north and southeast portion, and marshlands on the southeast deltas. It is also surrounded by water, with Sorsogon Bay to the west Albay Gulf to the north east, and Philippine Sea in the east.

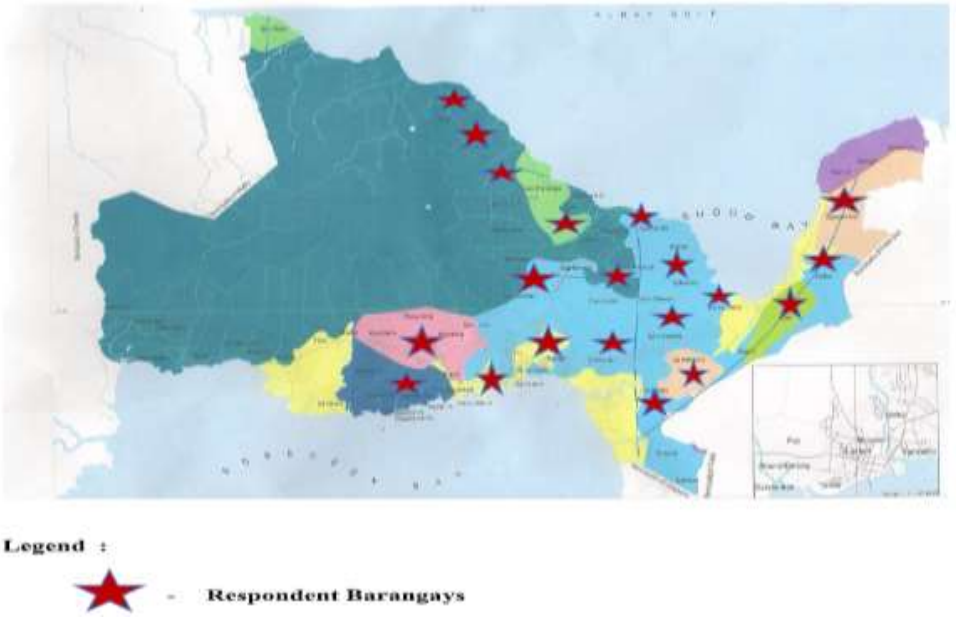

Figure 1: Research Site Accentuating the Respondent Barangays in the City (Google Map, 2020)

3.2 Delineation of Sampling and Participants

Researchers employed the stratified random sampling technique in determining the respondents depending on the drug affectation of a barangay. In the study of Estremera & Gonzales (2021), stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into a smaller sub-group known as strata. Similarly, Estremera & Gilbas (2022), posits that strata are formed based on member's shared attributes or characteristics such as income or educational attainment.

Table 1: Sorsogon Ctiy Population & Participants

Sorsogon City Barangays	**No. of Respondents**	**Population Sample**	**North**	**No. of Respondents**	**Population Sample**
San Juan (Roro)	52	5191	Sto. Niño	23	2455
Burabod	28	2867	Osiao	35	3714
Sampaloc	47	4719	Rawis	12	1354
Talisay	26	2600	Polvorista	7	602
Bitan-o	32	3240	Caricaran	23	2371
District Total	**185**	**18,617**	**District Total**	**100**	**10,496**
South	**No. of Respondents**	**Population Sample**	**East**	**No. of Respondents**	**Population Sample**
Buhatan	**33**	3395	Sawanga	14	1533
Abuyog	**47**	4359	Bulabog	22	2443
Marinas	**8**	761	Bon-ot	6	623
Jamislagan	**6**	565	Buenavista West	17	1736
Cabid-an	**64**	7255	Gatbo	25	2494
District Total	**158**	**16,335**	**District Total**	**82**	**8,829**
Grand Total	**345**	**34,952**	**Grand Total**	**180**	**19,325**

3.3 Data Gathering Procedures

To the extent that the data gathering procedures has coincided with the upsurge of the Covid-19 pandemic where almost all of the social services have been shut-down, researchers deemed it right to follow communication protocols and health procedures in gathering the relevant data. Data gathering commenced from July to December 2019; however, prior to the empirical investigation, researchers floated a

communication to the proper authority relative to the conduct of the study. Upon securing the permit, questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents as highlighted in the foregoing table. Upon retrieval, unstructured interviews were conducted as well empirical exploration were also undertaken to come-up with philosophical data. In the study of Estremera (2022), empirical investigation was also exploited to enrich the study.

3.4 Research Instrument

To obtain philosophical data, research instrument must have measured what it intends to measure (Estremera, 2017b). Thus, the drafted questionnaire was subjected to *content validity* by experts in the field of research and language to avoid misalignments and be able to get the data accordingly and to contribute to the body of knowledge. After which, editing and revision were made to achieve high validity and reliability of the ensuing study. In effect, the contents of the questionnaires are as follows: (i) Status of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program in terms of Demographic Profile of the Focal Person; (ii) Effectiveness of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program in terms of the Pre-Operation Phase, Operation Phase, and Post-Operation Phase; (iii) Problems Encountered on the Implementation of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program; and, (iv) Client-Based Assessment on the Pre-Operation Phase, Operation Phase, and Post-Operation Phase, and Recommendations or Solutions Offered to Solve the Problems Encountered.

3.5. Data Analysis

As accentuated earlier, the chief aim of this current undertaking is the contribution to the body of knowledge along social science field specifically drug-associated concerns as one of the social nuisances not just in the research locale but presumably other countries as well. Hence, in order to interpret accordingly the collated data and to come-up with philosophical findings, descriptive analysis was considered most appropriate. This is necessary to determine the extent of efficacy of the initiative, highlight the challenges faced the implementers and cull-out policy recommendations from the grassroots level itself which will serve as an impetus for revision and program enhancement. This descriptive analysis involves simple statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and composite mean. Pearson r was used to determine significant relationships between and among variables. A five-point Likert scale was used to highlight the effectiveness of the initiative. Conversely, empirical analysis as employed in the study of Estremera (2022), involves the use of senses by the researcher/s to obtain observable data from the phenomenon being explored.

Table 2: Adopted 5-point Likert Scale

SCALE	RANGE	DESCRIPTION
5	4.45 – 5.0	Outstandingly Effective
4	3.45 – 4.44	Highly Effective
3	2.45 – 3.44	Effective
2	1.45 – 2.44	Fairly Effective
1	1.00 – 1.44	Poor

This involves, but are not limited to, documentations, narratives, interviews and other phenomenological measures to capture the essence of the study. This may require photo analysis as well as verbatim conversation which are ethnographic in nature.

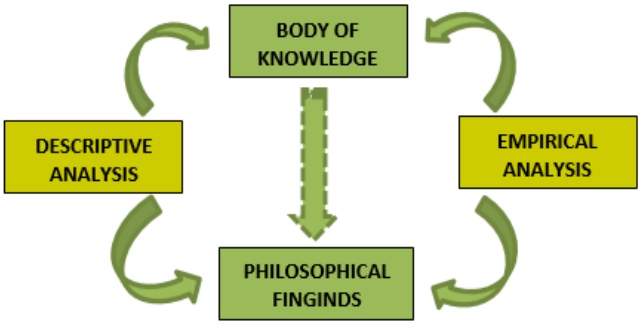

Figure 2: Combination of Descriptive and Empirical Analysis

3. Results

The following tables present the result of the effectiveness of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) in Sorsogon City in terms of the policy implementation on conduct of the pre-operation and druing-operation phase thereof.

Table 3: Efficacy of Anti-Drug Initiative (Pre-operation)

Initiative Indicators	5	4	3	2	1	Weighted mean	Descrip-tion
Activation of BADACs, BADACs Auxilliary Teams and SK for drug clearing activities.	91 (2.84)	35 (0.87)	28 (0.52)	4 (0.05)	2 (0.01)	**4.30**	Highly Effective
Capability enhancement of all stakeholders in barangay clearing operations.	98 (3.06)	46 (1.15)	9 (0.17)	4 (0.05)	3 (0.02)	**4.45**	Outstan-dingly Effective
Organization of house clusters with designated cluster leader in each barangay.	85 (2.65)	46 (1.07)	9 (0.35)	4 (0.08)	3 (0.03)	**4.18**	Highly Effective
Submission by the BADAC Chairman of report for the formulation and validation of watch list of drug personalities.	72 (2.25)	38 (0.95)	24 (0.45)	15 (0.18)	11 (0.06)	**3.89**	Highly Effective
Determination of priority drug-affected barangays for conduct of anti-illegal drug operations and advocacy.	84 (2.62)	46 (1.15)	18 (0.33)	7 (0.08)	5 (0.03)	**4.21**	Highly Effective
Enactment of City or Municipal ordinances regarding public nuisances pursuant to Section 52, Art. VII of Republic Act No. 9165.	120 (3.75)	18 (0.45)	10 (0.18)	8 (0.01)	4 (0.02)	**4.41**	Highly Effective
					∑/N	**4.24**	Highly Effective

As shown in table 3, all indicators in terms of pre-operation phase of Barangay Drug Clearing Program in Sorsogon City fall under *highly effective* category yielding a composite mean of 4.24. Notably, the perceived most effective measure as perceived by the respondents is along capability enhancement of all stakeholders in barangay clearing operations through the conduct of basic drug prevention and control seminars, giving emphasis to collection and analysis of drug-related information and prevention education with a mean of 4.45 as described to be *very highly effective*.

Table 4: Efficacy of Anti-Drug Initiative (During-operation)

Initiative Indicators	5	4	3	2	1	Weighted mean	Descrip-Tion
Arrest of identified drug users/pushers through "citizen's arrest", buy-bust operation, and service of search warrants and warrants of arrest.	97 (3.03)	35 (0.87)	18 (0.33)	8 (0.1)	2 (0.01)	**4.33**	Highly Effective
Administrative searches (regular inspections) of suspected drug dens, clandestine laboratories and chemical warehouses in coordination with City regulatory offices.	65 (2.03)	49 (1.22)	30 (0.56)	11 (0.13)	5 (0.31)	**4.25**	Highly Effective
Filing of complaints for abatement of public nuisance with the City Administrative Boards against places or premises used as sites of unlawful sale	120 (3.12)	18 (0.45)	10 (0.18)	8 (0.1)	4 (0.02	**3.87**	Highly Effective

or delivery of dangerous drugs pursuant to Sec. 52, Art. VII of RA 9165.							
Conduct of advocacy and/or preventive education seminars, in the anti-drug campaign, ill-effects and consequences of drug abuse. This includes the conduct of lectures on the proper procedures and counseling program for families with drug dependents to cope up with the trauma.	102 (3.18)	17 (0.42)	28 (0.52)	10 (0.12)	3 (0.18)	**4.26**	Highly Effective
Processing of application for voluntary or compulsory rehabilitation pursuant to pertinent DDB Regulations.	99 (3.09)	27 (0.67)	15 (0.28)	8 (0.1)	11 0.06	**4.2**	Highly Effective
					∑/N	**3.48**	Highly Effective

Table 4 presupposes that the during-operation phase of barangay drug clearing in Sorsogon City collectively *highly effective* as evinced by a composite mean of 3.48. Respondents likewise claimed that the most effective initiative is to arrest the identified drug users/pushers through citizen's arrest, buy-bust operation, and service of search warrants and warrants of arrest with a weighted mean of 4.33. This is followed by the conduct of advocacy and/or preventive education seminars, giving emphasis to the role of parents and children in the anti-drug campaign, ill-effects and consequences of drug abuse. This includes the conduct of lectures on the proper procedures on rehabilitation of drug dependents pursuant to RA 9165 and pertinent DDB Regulations counseling program for families with drug dependents to cope with the traumatic experience. Administrative searches (regular inspections) of suspected drug dens, clandestine laboratories and chemical warehouses in coordination with City regulatory offices had also been accentuated with a mean of 4.25. Interestingly, processing of application for voluntary or compulsory rehabilitation pursuant to pertinent DDB regulations has a weighted mean of 4.2. Be that as it may, filing of complaints for abatement of public nuisance with the City Administrative Boards against places or premises used as sites of unlawful sale or delivery of dangerous drugs pursuant to Sec. 52, Art. VII of RA 9165, earned the least score with a mean of 3.87 described as *highly effective*. Generally inferring, the composite mean of 3.48 may denote that the efforts on during-operation phase by the Barangay Drug Clearing Operation is consistent with the policy guidelines as ordered through Local Government Unit (LGU) circular issued to the field. Thus, the role of the barangay as the first level implementing unit in a war against drug proliferation is certainly indispensable in the country. In the same vein, the close monitoring, feedback generation as well as uniform execution and participation in the grassroots level is vital.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis between Pre & During Initiative

Pearson Product Moment Correlation - Ungrouped Data		
Statistics	**Variable X**	**Variable Y**
Mean	4.206	4.182
Biased Variance	0.033784	0.026056
Biased Standard Deviation	0.183804243694209	0.161418710191849
Covariance	0.00351000000000004	
Correlation	**0.0946428252991244**	
Determination	0.00895726438060059	
T-Test	0.164665316254315	
p-value (2 sided)	0.879677150873682	
p-value (1 sided)	0.439838575436841	

95% CI of Correlation	[-0.859382172712482, 0.901623518445137]
Degrees of Freedom	3
Number of Observations	5

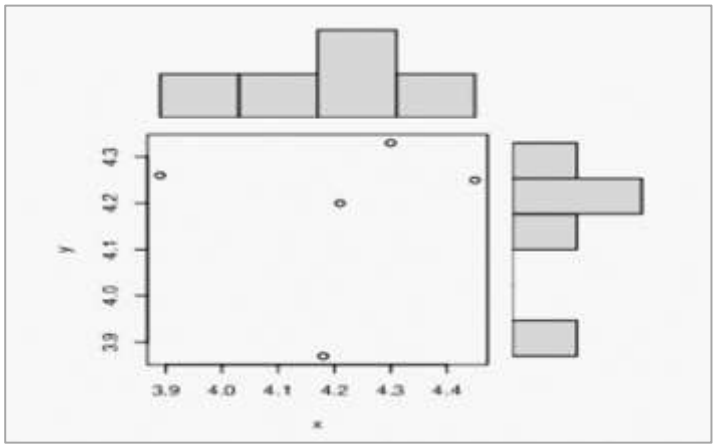

Figure 3: Dotted Correlation Graph between Pre & During Initiatives

Captured in table 5 and figure 3 is the correlation analysis between *pre* and *during* initiative activities of BADAC which would determine the consistency of implementation in the grassroots level as mandated. Hence, the *p-value* of 0.879677150873682 and *computed r value* of 0.0946428252991244 leads to the acceptance of null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between pre and during initiatives. This could mean that pre-implementation phase was executed more effectively as likened to the during-implementation phase. This may likewise imply that there may be initiatives that are outstandingly effective in both *x* and *y* variables.

Table 5: Challenges in the Grassroots Level

Perceived Challenges	***f***	***p***	***R***
No anti-drug campaign logistical requirement intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Operation (vehicles, equipment, etc.)	124	18.10	1
Lack of sufficient fund intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Program/Operations.	120	17.52	2
No fund support from the Anti-Drug Oversight Committee.	89	12.99	3
Lack of cooperation among other implementing agencies on the conduct of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations.	63	9.19	4
Inadequate of anti-drug campaign logistical requirements intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Operation (vehicles, equipment, etc.)	52	7.59	5
Difficulty in the provision of funds.	35	5.10	6
No fund intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Program/Operations.	34	4.97	7
Lack of coordination among other implementing agencies on the conduct of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations.	30	4.38	8
Lack of support from the community.	29	4.23	9
Lack of training and orientation to facilitate drug advocacy campaign programs.	27	3.94	10
No of appropriate trainings/seminars/orientations relative to the conduct of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations.	25	3.64	11
Cont. table 5			
Lack of appropriate trainings/seminars/orientations relative to the conduct of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations.	23	3.35	12
No designated focal person intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Program/Operations.	18	2.62	13
Lack of designated focal persons intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Program/Operations.	16	2.33	14
∑	**685**	**100**	

Table 5 reveals how the respondents categorized the problems they encountered in relation to the implementation of Barangay Drug Clearing Program in Sorsogon City. In this section, the total number of respondents is the combined number of barangay official or members of the BADAC with one hundred sixty (160) respondents, and five-hundred twenty-five (525) resident respondents, which gives the six hundred eighty-five (685) total. The two types of residents were added to secure the analysis of the problems encountered or most experienced by the barangays in Sorsogon City. Out of the thirteen (13) key indicators of problem, with three categories: Manpower, Budget, and Logistics, "No anti-drug campaign logistical requirement intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Operation such as vehicle, equipment, and facility has one hundred twenty-four (124) counts which is on the 1st rank or the most experienced problem among the respondent barangays as represented by the incumbent barangay officials and member of the BADAC. Lack of sufficient fund intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Program/Operations, ranked the 2nd with one hundred twenty (120) counts. This offers the logical explanation on why the most experienced or encountered problem is on the logistics.

4. Discussion

Efficacy

Drug addiction in the context of the current study has been of the one perennial and recurring social issue (Branch, 2011; Saah, 2005) that is seemingly insurmountable due to multifaceted causes and roots such as corruption, apathy, personal choice, greed for power, family-issues and even egoism of some. Despite this fact, it a collective issue that needs general involvement locally and internationally if we are to generate a brighter future for youths; hence, the conduct of the study. Deducing from the results, table 3 and 4 attempt to communicate the efficacy of the initiative considered to be *highly effective* in the research site *per se*. From this perspective, it must be noted that there are sub-indicator initiatives which are not that effective where problems may be occurring. These gray spots of the program are what the PDEA should look into in order to mitigate the ill effects of prohibited drug to the users themselves and the society where they interact. This statement links with the vista of Clifford et al. (1997) who posited that drug policy advocates must move beyond simplistic concepts of supply reduction and demand reduction. He accentuated further that a realistic drug policy must differentiate between drug use and abuse and must circumvent contributing to the detriment done by drug use. A harm reduction method necessitates a more refined model representing the connections of the complex system of variables which influence the consequences of the drug experience.

Challenges

In the study of Greene et al. (2018) on the challenges drug substance addiction, he came-up with a model dubbed Exploration, Preparation, Implementation and Sustainment (EPIS) framework. The EPIS paradigm organizes implementation factors into those existing in the inner or outer context. The stages at which execution challenges and strategies may arise in the inner and/or outer context commence with the moment an organization distinguishes an opportunity and sightsees options to increase service provision (i.e., exploration phase), coupled by the choice to embrace a specific evidence-based policy (i.e., preparation phase), acquaint with the new strategy (i.e., implementation phase), and eventually upholding the implementation of the new approach (i.e., sustainment phase). To link the results of the current endeavor from the forgoing perspective may imply that there are still innumerable challenges faced by BADAC in a war against drug addiction and proliferation in the research site given the *highly effective* outcome and *no significant difference* initiative phases. In fact, some of the identified challenges have to do with lack of support from the Anti-Drug Oversight Committee; cooperation among other implementing agencies on the conduct of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations; inadequacy of anti-drug campaign logistical requirement intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Operation such as vehicles and other equipment; fund allocation; and, training and orientation to facilitate drug advocacy campaign program. Having accentuated the challenges denote that there are palpable inconsistencies between the initiative itself from upper authority as well as the execution by BADAC as the lowest implementing unit. However, the discrepancies could have been due to linked issues such as feedback generation, close monitoring, and the rest are culture-associated perchance. One striking tenet along these challenges are the roles of each implementing units have to play and the will to effect change.

5. Conclusion & Recommendation

Taking into account the *highly effective* adjectival rating for efficacy level leads to the rejection of the first assumption that the level of barangay drug clearing program falls under *fair* extent along with the second assumption that the implementation of the barangay drug clearing program is *satisfactory.* This presupposes that PDEA as the frontline government agency and Philippine National Police (PNP) as the conduit government agency in charge of the initiative has gone far insofar as participants of the present study are concerned. To supplement, the third assumption of no significant relationship between pre and during drug operation initiatives was also confirmed and accepted due to computed *r value* categorized under no significant difference. This means that both PDEA and BADAC are consistent in its initiative on drug prevention and spread in the site. Having cited these conclusions, researchers along with the participants during interview phase vehemently recommend locally, that BADAC must actively seek financial support from the city or municipal government or other higher agencies for the effective drug clearing operations. It implies that machinery and assets must be properly funded to fortify the drug clearing operations in the barangay. There shall have likewise been adequate of anti-drug campaign logistical requirement intended for Barangay Drug Clearing Operation such as vehicles, equipment, etc. to be provided. Moreover, there should be an updated and reliable list of drug surrenderees and personalities in the barangay. Consequently, residents could be aware of what is at stake in case the barangay officials neglected or renege on their duty of giving reliable information on drug situation in the barangay. Another recommendation that emerged is the active monitoring with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and law enforcement agencies over the drug clearing operations within the barangay. The barangay as the basic political unit of the society should be fully supported by the government on its endeavor. The DILG functions as the head and supervisory body for local sub-political divisions. Most significantly, the community should actively participate in the programs and activities relative to the Barangay Drug Clearing Operation for attainment of a drug-free community.

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Corresponding Author: Michael L. Estremera, Annunciation College of Bacon, Sorsogon Unit Inc., Sorsogon City, Philippines, Sorsogon State University, Philippines.

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