



Community awareness and performance of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in the City of Mati, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay (R-PSB) of the Philippine National Police has grown to be a mission to maintain the advancements made by government programs provided to the barangays, averting any possible resurgence of terrorists and protecting the public in general. This study determined the level of community awareness and performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in the City of Mati. A non-experimental quantitative research design with a descriptive-correlational technique was utilized, and the researcher examined the relationship between community awareness and the performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* team. There were 300 respondents chosen using a random sampling technique. Mean and Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to analyze and interpret the data. Results in the study revealed that most respondents were 24-29 years of age, most were female, and most were from the Mandaya tribe who were high school undergraduates. Results of the study showed that the community was aware of visibility while fully aware of the activity programs implemented. Regarding the performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* personnel, the findings also demonstrated a very high level of community safety and police-community ties, along with a very high level of law enforcement. The result of the study emphasized that police play a vital role in maintaining peace and security at the grassroots level of our communities. Thus, their presence significantly enhances safety and fosters a sense of security among residents.

Keywords: Activity programs, community safety, Davao Oriental, Mati City, Philippine National Police

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INTRODUCTION

Defeating insurgency and addressing any core grievances requires significant manpower, resources, and operative plan of action; this laid to the strategy of *Pulis Nyo Po sa Barangay* (PSB) under the PNP-Memorandum Circular 009 known as the *Barangayanihan* (Revitalized Barangay Operations Peacekeeping Operations) which established the clear guideline of having police officers in every barangay to serve as the go-between the PNP and the community and to clear the barangays from the influence of insurgents primarily (Tamayo et al., 2022). In support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which is the primary agency for the insurgency's suppression, the RPSB program aims to safeguard Filipino lives, property, and territory from the detrimental effects of the communist insurgency and guarantees the insurgency's defeat. The RPSB program was crafted with a similar goal as the international build-up forces in Somali territories, which operates peace operations and counter-insurgency, epitomized by, for example, the African Union's Mission in Somalia, which was mandated to reduce the threat posed by armed opposition groups circulating the country. In which this seeds extremism that threatens the government and the people, so the need to focus on localizing Somali authorities and policies against Al-Shabaab should be done to suppress its convergence and rampage in the community (Moe, 2018).

On the other hand, insurgency problems are likely to occur in the Philippines. A heatmap of Islamist group attacks in the Philippines shows that in 2018-2021, insurgent attacks were seen in fifteen of the seventeen administrative regions of the Philippines (Alifandi, 2021). Just in 2019, multiple involvements of terrorist groups took place in Sulu province in which a dual suicide attack on a military based in Indanan killed three civilians and three military personnel as well as the two attackers and another twenty-two people were also exterminated by it. Another twenty-seven people were also killed, and

civilians were injured as a result of bomb attacks at the Roman Catholic Cathedral on Jolo Island in Sulu Province (Government of U.K., 2024; Silva 2017). Moreover, the rise of insurgency in local areas shows the communist guerillas attacked the remote village of Maragatas in Lupon Town, Davao Oriental, and resulted in an armed encounter between the NPA and government forces, which endangers the safety of the community. This encounter enables the military to rescue a 17-year-old NPA rebel, and before the attack, the Brgy. Chiefs have called to resist the NPA's influence in the area to prevent more of this (Palicte, 2020). Thus, this shows the capability of insurgents to cause havoc in the community despite knowing the number of people that would be affected by it.

It is noteworthy that the problem of insurgency, especially in the local areas, causes several casualties and deaths in the community. Hence, the researchers wanted to excavate community awareness about the existence and performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in the City of Mati. The need to study this is important to determine if the community knows very well the presence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in the community and to know if the performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* was effective in reducing the number of casualties, particularly in the field law enforcement, community safety, and police-community relation which may pave away the possibility of insurgency in the community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This quantitative research method was used in the study to determine the level of community awareness of the RPSB and the level of performance of the RPSB in the community. Furthermore, the researchers have used a descriptive correlational research design for a quantitative approach that explains the relationship between two or more variables without making claims about cause and effect (Stangor, 2010). In connection to the

study, this is used to see if a significant relationship exists between the community awareness and performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in the City of Mati.

Furthermore, the survey research design was used for collecting data from a set of respondents (Gravetter et al., 2021). The study utilized this to extract data from the respondents from different barangays, which were then statistically analyzed to draw meaningful research conclusions.

Study area

The study was conducted within Mati City because this is where the respondents are situated and are fit for the needed resources, so random sampling was used for data collection. Only three selected barangays were required for this study:

Taguibo, Tagbinonga, and Don Enrique Lopez. Historically, these areas have had the most insurgency in Mati (NCIP, 2020). In 2015, following an attack on a police station in Mati City, Davao Oriental, by members of the New People's Army, at least two soldiers and a communist guerrilla were slain, while in 2021, government troops and rebels from the New People's Army (NPA) engaged in a 10-minute gunfight that left one soldier injured.

Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay among these barangays facilitates agencies and stakeholders in bringing the needed services to the geographically isolated disadvantaged areas and areas the government does not easily reach. The Philippine National Police initiated this initiative many years ago, and it is currently being resurrected to meet the goals of the Regional Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict.

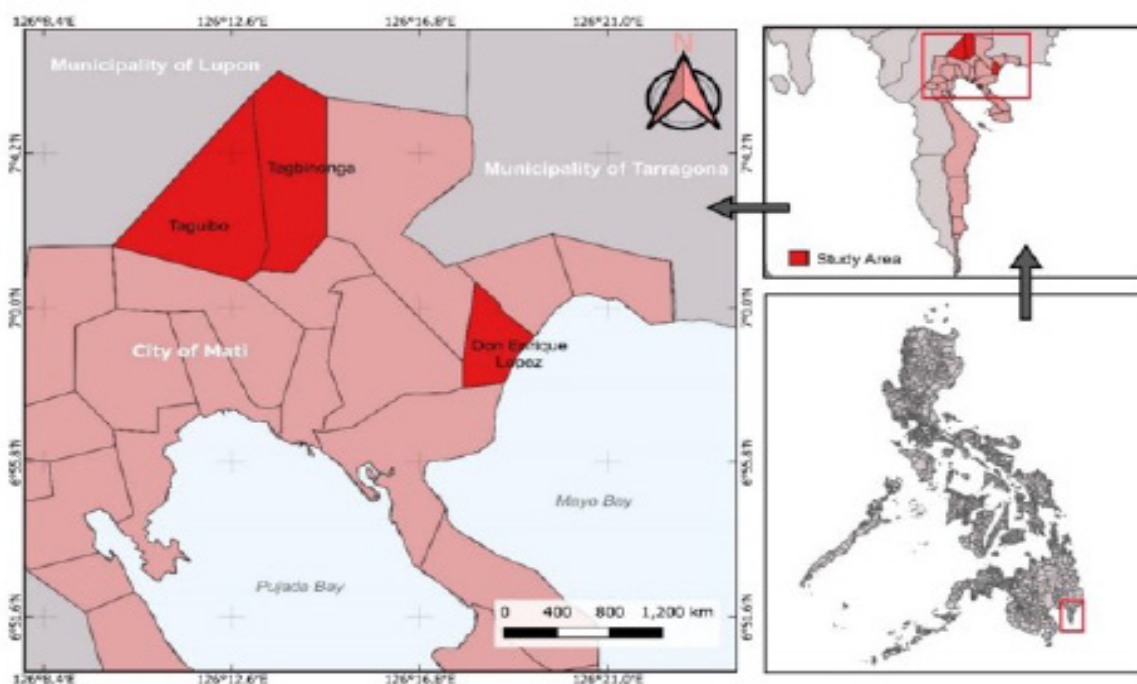


Figure 1. Map of the study area.

Data collection

The study was conducted in specific barangays within Mati City. Participants were randomly selected, giving everyone in the community an equal opportunity to be chosen. The researchers included 300

participants across barangay Taguibo, Tagbinonga, and Don Enrique Lopez Sr., and 100 survey questionnaires were distributed in each selected barangay in the city. This approach ensured that the study's results were relevant, ethical, and significant to the research area.



Figure 2. Data sampling in various barangays in Mati City selected for the study: Barangay Taguibo (A); Barangay Tagbinonga (B); Barangay Don Enrique Lopez (D).

After the respondents had answered the questionnaire, the same was retrieved, and the gathered data were scored using a 4-point Likert Scale, which was 4-Fully Aware, 3-Aware, 2-Unaware, and 1-Fully unaware. At the same time, regarding the performance of the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay*, the researcher utilized this descriptive interpretation, which was 4-Very High, 3-High, 2-Low, and 1-Very Low. Participation was voluntary, and no participant was required to complete the survey.

Data analysis

The researchers utilized frequency count to identify the number of responses of each barangay, particularly on the respondents' socio-demographic profiles, which comprised age, sex, ethnicity, and educational attainment. Moreover, the mean computation was used to obtain the summation of the product of the frequency and the assigned weight divided by the total number of respondents on the perceived

level of community awareness and performance of the RPSB Team. Finally, Spearman's rank-order correlation, often called Spearman's rho, is a measure of the association between two variables that have been ranked, which was used to determine the significant relationship between the level of community awareness and level of performance of the RPSB that has the highest result.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic profile

In terms of age, the highest percentage gained an average of 26.30%, with a frequency of 79 and an age interval of 24-29. The result determines that the female respondents have the highest percentage, which gained an average of 54.70% and a frequency of 164. This implies that female respondents are the most visible in the community and were able to determine if the Revitalized

Pulis sa barangay in the area have performed their duty.

Out of 300 total respondents, the high school undergraduate level has gained the highest frequency of 88 or 29.30% out of 100%. In contrast, the college graduate level has achieved the lowest frequency out of all the educational attainment levels, with a frequency of 19 or 6.30%. Mandaya has the most frequency and percentage among the respondents.

Community awareness of the existence of Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay in terms of visibility

The community awareness of the existence of the RPSB in terms of visibility has an overall mean of 4.49 with a descriptive

value of aware. The highest was a mean value of 4.57, which shows that the community is fully aware that the PNP Detail Personnel in all barangay, especially in crime-prone areas, are in proper uniform while on duty. The lowest among all the statements was 4.35, indicating that the community is aware of enjoining the community to act as witnesses in filing cases. This suggests that the level of visibility of RPSB is high. This means that the residents are familiar with the visibility actions that the RPSB team has done in terms of the conduct of patrolling, PNP detail Personnel in the barangay in proper uniform, employing stand-reaction team for quick dispatch, encouraging community participation, and enjoins community to act as a witness in filing cases.

Table 1. Awareness of the existence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB).

Statement	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1. I am aware that PNP Detail Personnel in all barangay, especially in crime-prone areas, in proper uniform while on duty.	4.57	Fully aware
2. I am aware that <i>Revitalized Pulis sa Barangay</i> personnel conduct patrol led by a Police Commissioned officer.	4.54	Fully aware
3. Encourage community participation in information gathering on crimes reported.	4.53	Fully aware
4. Employ a stand-reaction team for quick dispatch.	4.47	Aware
5. Enjoins the community to act as witnesses in filing cases.	4.35	Aware
Overall mean	4.49	Aware

The community awareness as to the existence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* in terms of the activity programs implemented shows an overall mean of 4.50, which means that the community was fully aware of the existence of the RPSB in terms of programs implemented in the selected barangays in the City of Mati. The highest mean value, which is 4.53, indicates that the community is fully aware that the RPSB volunteers to strengthen the peacekeeping institutions

in the barangay, including enveloping the skills and capability of the barangay Tanod. The lowest mean value was 4.47, which means that the community is aware that the RPSB volunteers to teach the children/people who cannot attend school. This indicates that the level of community awareness of the existence of RPSB in terms of activity programs implemented is very high. This implies that the community is entirely familiar with all the activities and

programs done by the RPSB for the progress and development of the community, away from risks of insurgency and criminality. Helping peacekeeping institutions strengthen

their forces would aid the RPSB in times of crisis. Their assistance and aid would contribute to the accomplishment of the operation, especially in battling insurgency.

Table 2. Community awareness of the existence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB) in terms of activity programs implemented.

	Statement	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1.	I am aware that RPSB volunteers help strengthen the Peacekeeping Institutions (ex: Barangay Tanod's self-defense training).	4.53	Fully aware
2.	I am aware that RPSB implements community outreach programs (feeding program, hatid tulong program, etc.).	4.52	Fully aware
3.	I am aware that RPSB provides basic essential services to the poor.	4.50	Fully aware
4.	I am aware that RPSB cooperates with and supports environmental protections (tree planting, clean and Green Program, etc.).	4.48	Aware
5.	I am aware that RPSB volunteers to teach the children/ people who are unable to go to school in the community.	4.47	Aware
	Overall mean	4.50	Fully aware

Table 3 the overall result of the performance of the RPSB team towards the community in terms of law enforcement, which shows that it has attained a mean value of 4.38, which means that the level of the performance of the RPSB team in terms of the law enforcement towards the community is high. Moreover, as presented in the table, the highest mean value was 4.45, which indicates that the level of the RPSB conducts checked points to prevent insurgency or outsider criminal conduct in the community is high. Then, the lowest mean value was 4.30, which indicates that the level of the RPSB intensifying efforts against terrorism, such as strengthening support assistance to other law enforcement

operations and internal security operations, is high. This indicates that the RPSB's level of performance in law enforcement is high, which means that the RPSB team should improve their performance in law enforcement to ensure that the community is safeguarded and secured from insurgents. If the RPSB does not enhance its law enforcement performance, it will reflect in the community. Conducting checkpoints to prevent insurgency contributes to the community's security; however, the RPSB should be more functional to ensure that no infiltrations of insurgents or threats would operate in the community.

Table 3. Performance of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB) team towards the community in terms of law enforcement.

	Statement	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1.	I have observed that RPSB conducts checkpoints to prevent insurgency or outsider criminal conduct.	4.45	High
2.	I have observed the result of RPSB's enhanced unit competency in police operations (police responsiveness and police investigations).	4.41	High

3.	I have observed that RPSB conducts accident investigations and takes safeguards to prevent further accidents by interviewing principals and witnesses.	4.37	High
4.	I have observed that RPSB enhances crisis preparedness and response.	4.34	High
5.	I have observed that RPSB intensified efforts against terrorism (intensified support to other law enforcement and internal security operations).	4.30	High
Overall mean		4.38	High

The results presented the highest mean value, which is 4.66, which indicates that the level at which the RPSB team conducts support disaster preparedness, disaster coordination, and calamity management, such as relief operations and distribution, is very high. Then, the lowest mean got a value of 4.49, which indicates that the level of the RPSB team promotes respect for human dignity and upholds a person's human rights, and the RPSB

follows up immediately on call for help is high. This implies that the level of performance of the RPSB as to community safety is very high, which means that the RPSB was significantly active in managing disaster preparedness, disaster coordination, and calamity management rather than promoting the rights and dignity of the citizens and protecting the women and children against the terror of violence and abuse.

Table 4. performance on the existence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB) in terms of community safety.

Statement	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1. RPSB conducts support Disaster Preparedness, Disaster coordination, and Calamity Management (Relief operations and distributions).	4.66	Very high
2. RPSB protects women and children from violence and abuse (R.A. 9262).	4.58	Very high
3. RPSB provides security primarily at community events.	4.55	Very high
4. RPSB promotes the respect of Human Dignity and upholds a person's human rights.	4.49	High
5. I have observed that RPSB follows up immediately on calls for help.	4.49	High
Overall mean	4.56	Very high

The overall mean value of the performance of the RPSB in terms of police-community relations was 4.54 mean. The result shows the highest mean value of 4.61, which is very high in its description, implying that the RPSB team promotes community awareness and maintains good interpersonal relationships with the citizens are always observed. This indicates that the RPSB always maintains an excellent relationship with the community by respecting and observing proper courtesy. Then, the lowest mean value was 4.47,

meaning that the level of the RPSB team addressing citizens in an appropriate tone is high. The RPSB often maintains its voice level when talking to the citizen. This implies that the level of performance of the RPSB team towards police-community relations is very high, and they are always on their act to exercise their responsibility to the community, including being good and kind towards them. Promoting community awareness and maintaining good interpersonal relationships with the citizens gives off a good perception of the community

towards the RPSB. Because of this, the RPSB would be able to communicate more with the residents and get their support and trust. If the community trusts and has confidence in the RPSB team then, it would be easier for the team to operate in the field because the community themselves has trust that the RPSB would not just

help them in paving away insurgency but also help the community in its drive for peace and order. This is what the RPSB should always maintain and do to avoid further conflict that could put the people at stake, especially the old and the children residing in the area.

Table 5. Performance on the existence of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB) in terms of police-community relation.

Statement	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1. RPSB promotes community awareness and maintains good interpersonal relationships with citizens.	4.61	Very high
2. RPSB coordinates with the barangay Tanod/ chief in public safety.	4.58	Very high
3. I see and notice that RPSB provides Police community assistance.	4.52	Very high
4. The RPSB approaches citizens in an acceptable behavior.	4.51	Very high
5. RPSB addresses citizens in an appropriate tone.	4.47	High
Overall mean	4.54	Very high

The table shows that the null hypothesis regarding community awareness regarding the visibility and activity programs implemented has been rejected. Likewise, the null hypothesis regarding law enforcement and police-community relations regarding the performance of the RPSB team in the City of Mati has also been denied, which implies that the level of community awareness is significantly essential in determining the level of

performance of the RPSB. If the level of community awareness is very high, then it will affect the level of performance of the RPSB team, which would also result in very high. However, the null hypothesis regarding community safety and the performance of the RPSB has been accepted. This implies that only the community safety of the performance of the RPSB shows no significant relationship to community awareness.

Table 6. Correlation between community awareness and performance of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* (RPSB) team.

Performance	Law enforcement	Community safety	Police community relation	Over-all (Performance)	Interpretation
Community awareness	0.240	0.005	0.126	0.197	Rejected
Visibility	0.012 ^a	0.934	0.029	0.001 ^a	
Activity programs implemented	0.234	0.010	0.169	0.205	Rejected
Over-all (Community awareness)	0.000 ^a	0.863	0.003 ^a	0.002 ^a	
	0.310	0.005	0.025	0.270	Rejected
	0.000 ^a	0.935 ^a	0.000 ^a	0.000 ^a	

^aSignificant at $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

Community awareness as to the visibility of *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* team

The details of PNP personnel, as emphasized by Weston (2020), have always

been prominent in public expectations of policing. This is because they symbolize the presence of protection and the capacity, albeit limited, to manage risks and threats to security. Hence, the police personnel deployed in a specific area within the community enables the residents to feel safe

and secure. With this, the residents could live comfortably without minding the possibility of danger in the area. Also, the residents would not be threatened or afraid to go outside because the presence of police designated in the area was good enough, which aided their feeling of uneasiness and fear of insurgency.

Furthermore, it is emphasized that uniformed presence is often identified as the lowest force police officers use. The appearance of a uniformed officer on the scene is usually enough to cause the actors to cease hostilities. The uniform also invokes certain protections for the officer, as using physical force against an officer is often chargeable as a severe criminal offense. Thus, the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* should always wear proper uniforms to be identified and recognized.

Awareness of activity programs implemented

A community relations program is essential because it empowers members of the organization to increase their visibility and become more engaged citizens. By implementing initiatives such as crime prevention, job training, environmental programs, community clean-up and beautification projects, recycling efforts, and restoration activities, the program significantly enhances the overall quality of life in the community (Calibo et al., 2021). In addition to engaging with the community, the RPSB actively supports enhancing the barangay peacekeeping action team, empowering them as force multipliers in the fight against crime. Therefore, the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay* should continue strengthening peacekeeping forces within the community to ensure the safety and security of residents against criminal activities. This approach will enable the peacekeeping team to become competent in protecting the community from potential threats.

Oplan Kalinaw was implemented in Davao City and included community service initiatives. This program allows security forces to conduct outreach activities that provide free medical check-ups, distribute vitamins and medicines, and offer crime prevention education to

empower residents. Proactive communication strategies, initiatives for community engagement, and comprehensive city security policies are vital elements of wider Police Transparency solutions. These initiatives encourage open dialogue, highlight police activities, guarantee accountability in using force, promote workforce diversity, and actively engage the community in policing issues (Delaney, 2020).

Community partnerships foster public trust. As such, the activity programs implemented by the RPSB significantly contribute to this trust by demonstrating the team's genuine commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community.

Performance of RPSB in terms of law enforcement

Checkpoints effectively reduce crime and should be expanded in high-crime areas or regions affected by specialized criminal activities. Their proven ability to deter criminal behavior, including terrorism, underscores their vital role in enhancing national security. To boost its effectiveness, law enforcement should get terrorist recognition and response training (Julian, 2023).

The law enforcement nature of counter-insurgency, which underpins the police functions, further developed the link of the police with the community at the local level (Tamayo et al., 2022). This claim is supported by Vicente's study (2019) in the case of Baguio City PNP in its counter-insurgency campaign. The importance of community relationships in policing is well understood. In his research on the role of police in Baguio City in combating the threat of terrorism, he observed that a strong community engagement serves as a vital resource in significantly reducing the potential for terror attacks in the summer capital of the Philippines.

Therefore, the *Revitalized Pulis Sa Barangay*, by implementing checkpoints as a precautionary measure to deter the entry of insurgents, effectively address and prevent potential threats at the barangay level.

Community safety

Harmful situations can arise from both internal and external forces. Internal forces might involve crimes occurring within the community. In contrast, external forces can include threats from outsiders, such as terrorism or natural disasters, significantly affecting the community's sense of safety and security. A notable portion of respondents, around 18% to 21%, expressed uncertainty regarding safety and security, indicating that some individuals still have concerns about their safety in the region. In the Bicol Region, community ratings about safety and security were the lowest among the seven indicators, which signifies that the community still felt some harmful situations that may be brought in their respective area, which is supported by the 4.33% and 4.84% unfavorable rating for public safety and public security, respectively (Dio et al., 2021).

Conversely, in the City of Mati, the community perceived the RPSB team's performance in community safety as the highest mean. This implies that RPSB provides security in deterring crimes and insurgency and responding to disasters, events, and emergencies.

Police community relation

Mazerolle et al. (2013) postulated that when a citizen perceived that the police acted procedurally by treating people with dignity and respect and being fair and neutral, they viewed the police as legitimate and more likely to comply with directives and cooperate with the police. Furthermore, Nalla et al. (2018) stated that Slovenian residents appeared to have respect and confidence in the police and were more likely willing to cooperate in crime prevention and community policing activities.

Therefore, the RPSB should demonstrate the importance of police-community solid relations to encourage community cooperation with police operations and missions. Trust is crucial; if the community loses confidence in the RPSB team, their willingness to engage will diminish. The team must consistently exhibit respectful and professional behavior

to foster a sense of trust and confidence among residents. Building this trust is essential for smoother operations and greater community participation in the barangay.

In the study of Innes and Roberts (2007), community intelligence is essential in maintaining community safety. The RPSB, as a frontline, needs to stay informed about the community's issues and concerns to identify areas requiring attention or improvement, thereby avoiding mistakes that could endanger the community. Understanding potential threats such as crime and insurgency is crucial, as these can pose significant risks to property and vulnerable groups, especially the elderly and children. To ensure a safe and secure environment, the RPSB must thoroughly understand the factors causing community problems and implement effective solutions to address them promptly, thereby preventing harm and protecting residents.

Correlation between community awareness and performance of RPSB team

Law enforcement executives constantly strive to preserve a positive, ethical image of their departments to the public they are sworn to serve and protect. However, several reasons may influence the community's perception of its local police (Deri, 2021). This indicates that the performance of the police forces in its drive for peace and order, maintenance, and law enforcement is significantly interrelated with the level of awareness of the community, which determines that what the police force performance is displayed towards the community relates to how the residents in the community respond to it. Likewise, this indicates that if the residents became fully aware of the course of actions of the RPSB team in the prevention and suppression of criminality, then they would likely cooperate with the operations of the RPSB team in its drive for peace and order.

CONCLUSION

The *Revitalized Pulis Sa Baranga* fosters a safe, orderly, supportive community environment through law enforcement,

community engagement, and support services. The result affirms the study of Ludwig von Bertalanffy called the System Theory in the RPSB and the community as more open and interactive to one another to create a flexible and harmonious environment for all. The community became more aware of the RPSB due to the interactive nature of its activity programs. Through these programs, the RPSB effectively addressed local concerns and issues, including the development of Peacekeeping Institutions in the area. Also, the community contributes to the operation of the RPSB in terms of community safety by supporting and not causing further problems. The RPSB team should be more visible in the community to enable the community to recognize their presence and be active in the community. Their presence contributes to making communities safer and more secure.

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