

## Lived Experiences of Police Officers in the Implementation of Operational Plan Against Illegal Drugs

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### ABSTRACT

Illegal drugs pose a pervasive and longstanding problem in the Philippine Archipelago, requiring the efforts of law enforcement agencies to combat their proliferation. This study focused on exploring the lived experiences of Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel in dealing with the challenges associated with illegal drugs, specifically in the context of Ozamiz City. Through interviews with five police officers, using a research-made interview guide and applying Moustaka's Transcendental Analysis, the study revealed four main themes: compromised personal and family security, the need to suppress crime escalation, resistance from suspects, and the dilemma of conducting surveillance. The findings of this phenomenological study underscore the multitude of challenges faced by police officers in their mission to combat illegal drugs. One significant challenge is the compromise of personal and family security, as officers are often exposed to threats and retaliation from individuals involved in the drug trade. The escalation of crime resulting from drug-related activities further emphasizes the urgency for law enforcement to suppress this issue from the community. However, officers encounter resistance from suspects who are unwilling to cooperate and may resort to tactics that jeopardize the safety of the officers' families. To address these challenges, police officers should prioritize through surveillance to gather accurate information on suspects and their activities. This entails utilizing available resources and collaborating with other agencies and stakeholders to gather the necessary intelligence. Additionally, ensuring officers' personal and family security should be a paramount concern, with appropriate measures in place to safeguard their well-being.

**Keywords:** Police officers; Illegal drugs; Operational plans; Challenges encountered; Resistance.

### 1. Introduction

The Philippines is considered one of the international criminal courts after the President declared an all-out war on drugs to suppress its growing public alarm (Simangan & Melvin, 2019). As part of the strategy, the Philippine National Police initiated an intensive anti-drug operation in the entire Philippines, realizing the President's promise to suppress drugs and eradicate criminality (Ceniza, 2019).

Anti-drug operations aim to promote a safer and healthier community through coordinated efforts of the PNP and other law enforcement agencies to prevent use, treat dependency, and reduce the production and distribution of illicit drugs. This program prevents the youth from using illegal drugs by improving their understanding of the harmful social and health effects of illegal drug use and developing and implementing community-based interventions and initiatives to prevent it (Vearrier, 2019).

From a police chief's perspective, the drug problem presents distinguishable threats to community security (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2018). Most pressing is the violence associated with street-level drug dealing, particularly shabu. This violence involves youth gangs (Atun et al., 2019). Often the violence spills over into the general population, leaving innocent victims in its wake. There is also the worry that the practice of armed, organized violence is spawning the next generation of organized crime.

Also salient is the close link between drug use and street crime. Criminal activity is known to vary directly with levels of drug consumption. Many of those arrested for robberies and burglaries use shabu during the commission

of their crimes or steal to support their drug habit (Johnson & Fernquest, 2018). Among the small group of the most active and dangerous offenders, drug users are overrepresented. Thus, controlling drug use (and drug users) opens an avenue for reducing the robberies, burglaries, and petty thefts that have long been the focus of the police.

The third problem is that drug use undermines drug users' health, economic well-being, and social responsibility (Wogen & Restrepo, 2020). It is hard to stay in school, holds onto a job, or care for a child when spending all one's money and attention on getting toned. The families and friends of drug users are also undermined as their resources are strained by obligations to care for the drug user or to assume responsibilities that the drug user has abandoned (Raine, 2018). Fourth, drug trafficking threatens the civility of city life and undermines parenting. While parents can set rules for conduct in their homes, the rules are hard to extend to city streets and urban classrooms where drug trafficking has become a way of life. Although these threats affect all city neighborhoods, they are perhaps worst for those in the most deprived areas (Skogan & Hartnett, 2019). There, the community's capacity for self-defense and parents' ability to guide their children are not only the weakest but also the most in need of public support and assistance.

Fifth, the police executive knows, even before he commits his troops, that the police can accomplish little by themselves (Bartky, 2020). Drug arrests and prosecutions are exceedingly difficult, owing to the absence of complaining victims and witnesses. Even with these limitations, the police can make many more arrests than prosecutors can prosecute, courts can adjudicate, and prisons can hold. Furthermore, drug distribution systems, held together by the prospect of drug profits, will adapt quickly rather than collapse in the face of police action (Bartky, 2020). Finally, the police executive knows from bitter experience that in committing his force to attack drug trafficking and drug use, he risks corruption and abuses of authority. Informants and undercover operations-so essential to effective drug enforcement inevitably draw police officers into the close, potentially corrupting relationships with the offenders they are pledged to control. The frustrations of the task lead some officers to cynicism or desperate anger. As the police become more cynical or angrier, the dealers will stand there with cash in their pockets, ready to make a deal (Maynard-Moody, & Musheno, 2022). Alternatively, they will mock the police with apparent invulnerability and provoke indignant officers to plant evidence or pursue justice through other illegal means.

Republic Act No. 10640 is an act to Further Strengthen the Anti-Drug Campaign of the Government, amending for the Purpose Section 21 of Republic Act No. 9165, Otherwise Known as the "Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002" that was enacted into law last July 2014 (Candelaria, Leshen, 2020). The apprehending team having initial custody and control of the dangerous drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals, instruments/paraphernalia, or laboratory equipment shall, immediately after seizure and confiscation, conduct a physical inventory of the seized items and photograph the same in the presence of the accused (Martin, 2019), or the persons from whom such items were confiscated and seized, or his/her representative or counsel, with an elected public official and a representative of the National Prosecution Service or the media who shall be required to sign the copies of the inventory and be given a copy thereof (Martin, 2019). Those criminals commit crimes due to the influence of illegal drugs. The dominant individual is the ones who have the power to control the illegal activities

around the city. And most of their victims are children who can manipulate them to use illegal substances or even be used as drug couriers by drug dealers (Robinson et al., 2019). Illegal Drugs are rampant in society, and anyone can be a victim of a crime committed by those who intend to harm others. *Illegal drugs* are drugs that the government restricts. An individual caught taking an illegal drug may charge a penalty under R.A 9165, "The Dangerous Drug Act of 2002".

Nowadays, illegal drugs are a major problem law enforcement faces. The common victims of these substances are children who are vulnerable and can easily be manipulated by drug pushers or drug dealers. According to the report, around 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs worldwide in 2020, a 26 percent increase over the previous decade (Nwogu, 2022). Young people use more drugs, with use levels today in many countries higher than in the previous generation (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2019). In Africa and Latin America, people under 35 represent the majority of people being treated for drug use disorders. Globally, the report estimates that 11.2 million people worldwide are injecting drugs.

When Philippine President Rodrigo R. Duterte assumed office in 2016, his government launched an unprecedented campaign against illegal drugs (Simbulan et al., 2019). The drug problem in the Philippines has primarily been viewed as an issue of law enforcement and criminality, and the government has focused on implementing a policy of criminalization and punishment. The escalation of human rights violations has caught the attention of groups in the Philippines and the international community (World Health Organization. 2019).

One of the mechanisms initiated by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is the issuance of CMC No.16. This Command Memorandum Circular sets forth the general guidelines, procedures, and tasks of police in the conduct of the PNP anti-illegal drug operation in support of the barangay drug clearing strategy of the government and the neutralization of illegal drug personalities nationwide (Gacayan, 2020). It is a practical and realistic means of accelerating the drive against illicit drugs in affected barangays.

According to the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) (the government agency mandated to formulate policies on illegal drugs in the Philippines), there are 1.8 million current drug users in the Philippines, and 4.8 million Filipinos report having used illegal drugs at least once in their lives (Simbulan et al., 2019). More than three-quarters of drug users are adults (91%), males (87%), and have reached high school (80%). More than two-thirds (67%) are employed. The most commonly used drug in the Philippines is a variant of methamphetamine called shabu or "poor man's cocaine" (Lasco & Yu, 2021). According to a 2012 United Nations report, the Philippines had the highest rate of methamphetamine abuse among countries in East Asia. About 2.2% of Filipinos between the ages of 16 and 64 were methamphetamine users (Johnson & Fernquest, 2018).

Ozamiz City is one of the cities the Former Pres mentioned regarding illegal drugs. Rodrigo Roa Duterte because of the illegal activities that are circulating in the entire City (Johnson & Fernquest, 2018). The researchers aimed to determine the lived experiences of Police Officers in implementing the operational plan against illegal drugs in Misamis Occidental. The researcher receives much feedback regarding the lived experiences of Police Officers. Thus, this ignites the researchers to study this issue of lived experiences among Police Officers. Thus, this study will help the community appreciate the Police Officers.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing the phenomenological method, to delve into the lived experiences of police officers involved in the implementation of operational plans against illegal drugs. The phenomenological approach, based on Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), facilitated data analysis gathered from the study participants to uncover meaningful themes and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. By adopting a phenomenological research design, this study aimed to explore the subjective perspectives, perceptions, and challenges faced by police officers in their efforts to combat the proliferation of illegal drugs. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the officers' experiences, shedding light on the complexities, dilemmas, and emotions they encountered during their work.

By delving into the lived experiences of police officers, this research design aimed to provide valuable insights into their perspectives and highlight the unique challenges they face in implementing operational plans against illegal drugs. This deeper understanding can contribute to developing more effective strategies, interventions, and support systems to enhance the success of law enforcement efforts in addressing the issue of illegal drugs and its associated implications on public safety and community well-being.

The study was conducted in Ozamiz City, a 3rd class component city in Misamis Occidental, Philippines. The choice of Ozamiz City as the research setting was based on a significant number of police officers in the area, making it an appropriate context to explore the lived experiences of police officers involved in implementing operational plans against illegal drugs. Ozamiz City comprises 51 barangays with a land area of 169.95 square kilometers or 65.62 square miles, accounting for 8.47% of Misamis Occidental's total area.

According to the 2020 Census, the population of Ozamiz City was 140,334, representing 22.73% of the total population of Misamis Occidental province and 2.79% of the overall population of the Northern Mindanao region. By conducting the study in Ozamiz City, the researchers aimed to gain insights from police officers operating within a specific local context, contributing to a deeper understanding of their experiences and challenges in combating illegal drugs.

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select the participants who met specific criteria. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that involves selecting individuals based on their characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The researchers carefully chose five (5) police officers who fulfilled the predetermined criteria to ensure their experiences and insights aligned with the focus of the study.

The selection criteria for the participants were as follows: 1) the participants had to be active-duty police officers, 2) they should have served for at least five years, 3) they should have been involved in drug operations, and 4) they needed to express a willingness to participate in the study. By selecting police officers who met these criteria, the researchers aimed to gather rich and comprehensive data regarding the lived experiences and perspectives of police officers engaged in implementing operational plans against illegal drugs.

For data collection, the researchers developed an interview guide tailored to the study's objectives. The interview guide underwent a rigorous validation process, thoroughly reviewed and approved by the research adviser and

panel members. Given the nature of the study, the instrument was also validated by the police officers to ensure its relevance and appropriateness within the discipline. An audio recorder was used to capture the conversations between the researchers and the participants during the interviews. This recording method allowed for accurate and detailed documentation of the participant's responses, ensuring valuable information was noticed and understood. Using an audio recorder also facilitated the researchers' ability to review and analyze the data accurately during the subsequent stages of data analysis. The combination of a well-constructed research-made interview guide, validated by both experts and police officers and the use of an audio recorder provided a robust foundation for collecting reliable and comprehensive data for the study.

### **3. Data Collection**

Before data collection, the researchers followed a systematic process to ensure proper permissions and ethical considerations. Firstly, a formal letter seeking permission was submitted to the Dean of the College of Criminology, requesting approval to pursue the study and conduct interviews. Once approval was obtained, the researchers sought permission from the Officer in Charge of the Police Station to identify police officers with experience in illegal drug operations.

Upon receiving the necessary permissions, the researchers approached the potential participants and requested their voluntary participation. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the interview process, and the assurance of confidentiality for their responses. A schedule for the interviews was proposed, and appointments were set with the identified participants.

The researchers adhered to minimum health protocols during the interviews during the prevailing pandemic. The conversations were recorded with the participant's knowledge and consent, and measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of their responses. By following this comprehensive process, the researchers ensured that all necessary approvals were obtained, participants were fully informed and consented, and the interviews were conducted to respect ethical considerations and prioritize participant well-being.

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout this study. The researchers ensured that all participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by obtaining their informed consent. Before conducting the interviews, participants were provided with an informed consent form, and their signatures were obtained, indicating their willingness to participate.

To maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, their identities were protected during the interviews. The researchers refrained from mentioning any participant's name or including any unnecessary personal information that could compromise their privacy. The principles outlined in the Data Privacy Act of 2012, specifically Republic Act No. 10173, were strictly followed to safeguard the participants' personal information. By strictly adhering to ethical guidelines, the researchers prioritized the welfare and rights of the participants, ensuring their voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality, and respecting their privacy throughout the study.

This study employed Moustakas' Phenomenological data analysis. In the process of phenomenological data analysis, Moustakas' approach was followed, which provided a systematic yet accessible method for qualitative

research. The method involved transcribing all the information gathered from the interviews and analyzing it using Moustakas' framework (Moustakas, 1994). The Moustakas' Data Analysis, or transcendental phenomenological reduction, was deemed the most suitable methodological approach for this study, synthesizing the textural-structural synthesis and essence of the experiences or challenges.

The phenomenological reduction followed several steps, including bracketing, horizontalization, clustering into themes, textural description, structural description, and textural-structural synthesis. Bracketing involves suspending judgments and biases to ensure an open and unbiased inquiry. Conversely, horizontalization focuses on listing all relevant verbatim expressions while disregarding irrelevant or repetitive statements. Clustering entailed reducing the statements into meaningful horizons and creating core themes with single meanings. To validate the findings, other research studies using different methods were reviewed. The textural description provided an account of 'what occurred,' describing the participants' perceptions, while structural description integrated imaginative variation to analyze the details and structures of the experiences. Finally, in the textural-structural synthesis, the researchers collated the meaning units of each participant and developed a composite narrative representing their experiences.

The participants' responses were analyzed using the NVivo software, which facilitated the identification and organization of the final themes of the study.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

The analysis of the written transcript from the participants' in-depth interviews revealed four (4) common challenges encountered by police officers during illegal drug operations. With the prevalence of these experiences, the following themes were formulated: compromised personal and family security; suppression of crime escalation; suspect resistance; and surveillance dilemma. The participants of this study were five (5) police officers in Ozamiz City. Their age ranges from 34 to 45 years old, and all were male. Most are Police Staff sergeants with 10-15 years in service.

**Table 1.** Profile of the Participants

Code Name	Age	Rank	Years in service
P1	34	Police Staff Sergeant	10
P2	39	Police Staff Sergeant	12
P3	45	Police Master Sergeant	15
P4	36	Police Staff Sergeant	10
P5	38	Police Staff Sergeant	10

#### **4.1. Compromised Personal and Family Security**

This theme shows that one of the challenges of police officers in combating illegal drugs is that their personal and family security is compromised. When dealing with criminal drug cases, your safety and your family's safety cannot be ascertained. Drug addicts' cognitive reasoning is distorted, and they cannot act according to their sanity (Meloy, & Rahman, 2021). One thing that would be affected when you are addicted to illegal drugs is your sound and reasonable mind. You cannot think clearly and do things you ought not to do. Thus, when encountering such, security and safety are compromised.

Results show that participants mentioned how difficult it is to arrest drug addicts. They confirm that the more they apprehend, the more enemies they will face. They mentioned how scared they were for their family's safety. Some even declared how worried their family was about their safety, as drug-related operations are serious and cannot be taken lightly. Some even mentioned that their family got death threats which made them afraid for their family's safety. These were mentioned in the answers of the following participants:

*"It is not easy to arrest drug addicts because we will be facing more enemies. Our safety and our family's safety are compromised. I am afraid that they will get back on my family after being arrested."* (P3, 73-75)

*"My family is afraid and worried about my safety and their safety..."* (P1, 26)

*"I only got into illegal drug operations thrice. The third time I was into this case, someone threatened my family with a dead cat. I was afraid as my family's safety is compromised because of my line of work."* (P5, 127-129)

Law enforcement personnel and their families must be aware of the possibility of risk, even if efforts to murder cops at their homes are uncommon (Fader, 2021). According to a survey by the National Center for Police Advocacy, 80% of responding police officers had received violent threats if the criminal came across them while they were not in uniform (Shults, 2021). 20% of people have received threats from coworkers they came across at work while off duty. Both lawsuits and job loss threats are frequent, with 77% and 88%, respectively. It is terrible that the weight of their police officer must also fall on the family (Lennie et al., 2020). However, law enforcement personnel encounter opposition, particularly in recent times when so many people view anyone wearing a uniform negatively (Viano et al., 2021). One of the numerous sacrifices made by our police officers in the line of duty is this.

Findings show that involvement in criminal drug cases can compromise personal and family security. Due to the adverse effects of drugs on a person's mind, police officers cannot ascertain what the criminals are thinking. The fear of getting back on the family is what the police officers are most afraid of. The finding is consistent with the finding in the study of Fader (2021), Shults (2021), Lennie et al. (2020), and Viano et al. (2021) that the safety of police officers and their respective families is compromised. These were supported by Job Performance Theory which shows that the performance of police officers determines the safety of their own and their family.

This implies that involvement in illegal drug operations can compromise them and their families security. This entails how dangerous the police officer's job is in dealing with criminal drug cases. Being a police officer can be difficult and full of fear, mostly for the families left behind. The participants must conduct thorough intelligence to

ascertain that they are getting accurate information about the person they will be apprehending and their background. It ensures that no one will get back at them or their family. It is also suggested that participants take their jobs seriously to ensure the safety of their families and the people's safety.

#### **4.2. Suppression of Crime Escalation**

This theme shows that suppression of crime escalation motivates police officers to continue their work. It is observed that illegal drug addicts resort to crimes like theft or robbery if they do not have the money to buy. Some even would murder, rape, etc., as they are already not in their right minds. This is what police officers would want to combat. To suppress crime escalation, they continue to fight against illegal drugs.

Results show that participants would discuss how illegal drugs relate to crime escalation. They even mentioned why operational plans are made to suppress it. Someone even needed to combat illegal drugs to suppress motives and opportunities for crime. They wanted to combat illegal drugs to prevent people from resorting to crime. These were mentioned in the answers of the following participants:

*“Illegal drugs can be linked to crime escalation, that is why operational plans are conducted to eradicate it.” (P2, 35-36)*

*“...I felt the need to combat illegal drug cases to prevent the escalation of crime and completely eradicate motives and opportunities as to people resorting to crime.” (P3, 77-78)*

Around the world, there is a definite link between crime and drug use (Saya et al., 2019). For instance, even though only 9.2% of Filipinos use drugs, 60% of people imprisoned for most crimes test positive for illegal drugs upon arrest (Marmolejo et al., 2021). Therefore, it is evident that drug users are overrepresented among prisoners. As drug-related crimes and violence increase, social service funds are diverted to law enforcement and the criminal justice system (Blais et al., 2022). There are several ways that drugs and crime are associated. The use, possession, production, or distribution of drugs with potential abuse is, in the strictest sense, illegal (Brewster & Edwards, 2023). Drugs are also linked to crime because they alter a user's behavior, and drug trafficking leads to violence and other unlawful conduct (Kpae, 2019).

Findings show police officers found out how illegal drugs would escalate crimes. In order to suppress it, police officers continue to conduct operational plans, seminars, and other things to combat illegal drugs. The finding is consistent with the finding in the study of Saya et al. (2019), Marmolejo et al. (2021), Blais et al. (2022), Brewster & Edwards (2023), and Kpae (2019) that crime escalates when illegal drugs are involved that is why police officers are motivated to fight illegal drugs to suppressed the escalation of crime. These were supported by the Self-Determination Theory, which focuses on the development of police officers and their determination toward a certain goal. Being motivated to combat these illegal drugs to prevent the escalation of crimes is supported by this theory.

This implies how crime escalates when illegal drugs are involved. To satisfy the cravings of the addicted person, they would resort to crime. This entails how motivated the police officers are to combat illegal drugs to prevent escalating other crimes. This will allow peace and order within the area. Police officers must have the same motivation to work effectively and efficiently in suppressing the crime escalation.



### **4.3. Suspect Resistance**

This theme shows that one of the challenges of police officers in combatting illegal drugs is the suspect's resistance. Most, not all suspects, would forcefully resist getting apprehended. Addicts would refuse to surrender, making it difficult to apprehend them. Police officers do not have a choice but to pursue the suspect until apprehended. If every suspect surrendered, they would have had an easier job. This is the very challenge that police officers were prepared to fight, as not everyone would surrender on their own.

Results show that participants mentioned how most suspects resisted and refused to surrender and cooperate. No one would want to be put behind bars. Some even mentioned how challenging it is to apprehend such kind of suspect. They even added that because of the resistance, sometimes it would result in a game of tag between the suspect and the police officers. These were mentioned in the answers of the following participants:

*"Most if not all drug cases I am with, suspects will resist and will not cooperate." (P4, 98-99)*

*"It is also a challenge for me especially when the suspect apprehended would forcefully resist and sometimes would result to running and catching the criminal." (P5, 125-127)*

One is considered to resist arrest when they prevent a law enforcement officer from effecting a lawful arrest (Campesi & Fabini, 2020). In a few states, the crime is known as "obstruction." Resistance to arrest sometimes results in felony charges since it often includes using force or jeopardizing an officer's safety (Chenoweth, 2021). Generally speaking, resistance also involves physical activities, such as bodily restraint or actively running away (Beer et al., 2021). Suspects are more tenacious when carrying contraband (such as illegal firearms, narcotics, or stolen property) or when they are subject to community supervision (such as parolees, probationers, or escapees). Resistance is also positively related to mental illness, illicit drug use, and alcohol intoxication (Whichard & Felson, 2019).

Findings show that suspects tend to resist and refuse to surrender when apprehended. Police officers find it challenging to arrest and apprehend illegal drug suspects as they are uncooperative and resist forcefully. The finding is consistent with the findings in the study of Campesi & Fabini (2020), Chenoweth (2021), Beer et al. (2021), and Whichard & Felson (2019) that during the conduct of operational plan against illegal drugs, suspects resist and refuse admittance. These were supported by the Competence Motivation Theory, which shows how competitive suspects are in avoiding the police officers and how motivated the police officers are in apprehending the suspect. This implies that suspects would try to resist as much as possible. It also entails that police officers would try their best to apprehend the suspect resulting in a game of tag. It also implies how resistant the illegal drug addicts are and how uncooperative they are. Police officers should conduct a surprise raid if they find out how resistant the suspect is. If they show signs of unwillingness, police officers should have another plan to apprehend the suspect in case of a plan to escape.

### **4.4. Surveillance Dilemma**

This theme shows that a challenge for police officers in combatting illegal drugs is the surveillance dilemma. During the conduct of surveillance, people tend to give off little but not no information at all. People do not want to

get involved, especially in drug-related cases. Some even are closely related to the suspect who would mislead the police officers, gives off wrong information, and protect their relatives or acquaintances. This would make surveillance difficult for the police officers creating a dilemma for their information-seeking.

Results show that participants would declare how hard it is to gather information and conduct surveillance. Surveillance is one way to confirm that the suspected person is truly using drugs and that the information from the informer/informant is true and accurate. Participants even mentioned how people refuse to give off information, especially when related to the person suspected. Some people would remain silent and refuse to get involved, making them uncooperative and difficult to extract. These were mentioned in the answers of the following participants:

*“The very challenge is making surveillance.” (P2, 46)*

*“It is very difficult to conduct surveillance as people related to or who knew the drug addicts protects them and hides their information. Sometimes, they would remain silent to avoid getting involved in the case.” (P4, 96-98)*

We know that surveillance helps deter theft and other crimes and that when they occur, they can give information and evidence (Irvin-Erickson & Ricks, (2019). We put a certain degree of trust in surveillance, expecting it to work successfully and efficiently, generate valuable data, and be closely monitored (Fidler, 2019). Most people are now so accustomed to monitoring that relying on it to identify suspects accurately is practically automatic (Muñiz, 2021). However, it is important to consider some of the remaining surveillance-related difficulties, such as distrustful and dishonest subjects (Louis et al., 2019). It becomes a dilemma for police officers to conduct surveillance.

Findings show that police officers sometimes would experience surveillance dilemmas. It also shows how uncooperative people can be and how they would remain silent to protect themselves and not get involved. The finding is consistent with the findings in the study of Ervin-Erickson & Ricks (2019), Fidler (2019), Muñiz (2021), and Louis et al. (2019) that the police officers have the dilemma in conducting surveillance with unwilling people around. These were supported by Self-Determination Theory which shows how determined people can protect the suspect and how it creates a dilemma for the police officers.

This implies that conducting surveillance is difficult and tiring, especially when things will not go on your way. This also entails the dilemma the police officers were facing in the conduct of surveillance. Police officers should start a good, friendly relationship with the suspect's neighborhood or even his friends. They should take measures and conduct surveillance carefully and thoroughly without being detected.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the study results, it is concluded that the study has observed that being a police officer when dealing with criminal drug cases, your safety and your family's safety cannot be ascertained. This entails how dangerous the police officer's job is in dealing with criminal drug cases. This implies how crime escalates when illegal drugs are involved. To satisfy the cravings of the addicted person, they would resort to crime. Most, not all suspects, would forcefully resist getting apprehended. Addicts would refuse to surrender, making it difficult to apprehend them. It

entails that police officers would try their best to apprehend the suspect resulting in a game of tag. It also implies how resistant the illegal drug addicts are and how uncooperative they are. During the conduct of surveillance, people tend to give off little but not no information at all. People do not want to get involved, especially in drug-related cases. This implies that conducting surveillance is difficult and tiring, especially when things will not go on your way. This also entails the dilemma the police officers were facing in the conduct of surveillance.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendation is now: Police officers must conduct thorough intelligence to ascertain that they are getting accurate information about the person they will be apprehending and their background. It ensures that no one will get back at them or their family. It is also suggested that participants take their jobs seriously to ensure the safety of their families and the people's safety. Police officers should take things seriously and find motivation to do their job effectively and efficiently. Police officers should take time to build a strong community relationship for future reference. It is also important for police officers to seek the help of other agencies to lessen the workload they are carrying and making use of all the resources they have at hand. Thus, future researchers can use these findings to support their prospective investigation, particularly in the lived experiences of PNP personnel, specifically in dealing with illegal drugs in Ozamiz City.

### **Declarations**

#### **Source of Funding**

The study has not received any funds from any organization.

#### **Competing Interests Statement**

The authors have declared no competing interests.

#### **Consent for Publication**

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

#### **Ethical Approval**

Firstly, a formal letter seeking permission was submitted to the Dean of the College of Criminology, Philippines requesting approval to pursue the study and conduct interviews. Once approval was obtained, the researchers sought permission from the Officer in Charge of the Police Station to identify police officers with experience in illegal drug operations. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout this study.

#### **Informed Consent & Consent to participate**

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the interview process, and the assurance of confidentiality for their responses. The researchers ensured that all participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by obtaining their informed consent.

#### **Authors' Contributions**

All the authors took part in literature review, research and manuscript writing equally.

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