



Assessment of Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams in Cotabato City and Nearby Municipalities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the preparedness, job satisfaction, and challenges of Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs) in Cotabato City, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and North Upi to better understand their role in community-based security. It aimed to identify the respondents' demographic profile, assess their level of preparedness, determine their job satisfaction, and describe the problems they encounter in performing peacekeeping duties. A descriptive research design was used, with BPAT members selected through stratified sampling, and data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, weighted means, and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The results showed that most respondents were middle-aged, predominantly male, and generally high school graduates. Their preparedness level was high in terms of training, supervision, materials, and equipment. Job satisfaction was very high in non-financial aspects but only fair regarding financial benefits. The main challenges included health risks, security threats, and inadequate compensation. Overall, the study concludes that while BPAT members are motivated by community service, improvements in training, resources, and financial support are needed to enhance their effectiveness and well-being.

Keywords: BPAT, Preparedness, Peace and Order, Local Governance, Community Policing

A. INTRODUCTION

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has had a lot of local security problems for many years, often because of conflicts within communities themselves (ABS-CBN News 2017; Delgado 2011). Events like the Maguindanao Massacre and the SPMS Box conflict show that instability can come from inside the community (Mordeno 2017). The Marawi Siege on May 23, 2017 made people even more concerned about local security, since the Maute Group's attack led to Martial Law in Mindanao through Proclamation No. 216 (Official Gazette 2017). Government reports also said that the same group carried out the 2016 Butig attack, with help from some residents in Marawi (Cabrera 2017). These incidents show that peace and order really depends on

local structures, especially the barangay, which the Local Government Code calls the main unit responsible for community policies and planning (Department of Interior and Local Government 2009).

In this setting, the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT) becomes very important. The Philippine National Police describes BPATs as frontline teams that help maintain local security and support law enforcement (Philippine National Police 2009; Philippine National Police ND). Their role can be seen in Cotabato City, where nine barangays reported zero crime in the first half of the year, which Police Director Rolly Octavio credited to coordination between BPATs and local officials (Punzalan 2018). But studies also point out that BPATs often face problems like low budgets, lack of manpower, insufficient equipment, and weak support from local governments (Estonio 2014). This shows why checking BPAT readiness is important, especially in areas people consider risky.

This study focuses on BPATs in Cotabato City, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and North Upi, which are part of the Bangsamoro region. Security here is shaped by history, clan conflicts, and post-conflict development (Politiko Mindanao 2017; Politiko Mindanao 2018). Since the region is often labeled as dangerous (OSAC PH 2017), this study looks at whether limited resources, training gaps, and work conditions affect BPAT readiness. By examining materials, equipment, training, and job satisfaction, the research hopes to give practical information that local governments can use to make BPATs work better.

The study asks: How prepared are BPATs in selected barangays in Cotabato City and nearby municipalities in Maguindanao for the 2019–2020 school year? More specifically, it looks at who the BPAT members are, how ready they are with materials, equipment, and training, how satisfied they are with financial and non-financial benefits and work conditions, what challenges they face, and what recommendations can be made from the findings. The study doesn't state formal hypotheses but assumes that BPAT readiness depends on available resources, training, and support at work, which other studies also suggest (Etcuban et al. 2018; Sunstar Cebu 2018).

The purpose of the study is twofold: (1) to give a clear picture of BPAT operations in the selected areas, and (2) to provide useful insights for local governments, residents, and BPAT members. LGUs can use the findings to make better decisions about safety, resources, and operations (Department of Interior and Local Government ND). Residents may feel safer if weaknesses are addressed. BPAT members can also learn about their needs and areas to improve, which could help with morale and performance. Lastly, the study can serve as a reference for other researchers interested in community security in post-conflict areas.

Data for this study were collected over a period of two months. Key terms such as BPAT, crime, satisfaction, training, salary and benefits, and materials and equipment were clearly defined to avoid confusion. By looking at both the local situation and previous studies, this research aims to provide practical insights that can help improve community security and support peacebuilding efforts in the Bangsamoro region.

Literature Review

The declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao, which was originally set for 60 days under Proclamation No. 216 (2017), was a response to threats from rebel groups in Lanao del Sur, especially after the Marawi siege. President Duterte later asked to extend Martial Law for another

year, and this was approved by the Senate (14–4) and the House of Representatives (226–23) to deal with continuing rebellion threats (ABS-CBN News, 2017).

At the community level, barangays serve as the basic political units in the Philippines and must have at least 2,000 residents to be established (Department of Interior and Local Government, n.d.). According to Section 391 of the Local Government Code, barangay councils are responsible for passing ordinances that promote public welfare. Barangay Peacekeeping Operations, including Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs), were created to maintain peace and order at the grassroots level (Philippine National Police, 2009). Former officials note that BPATs help build trust within the community, maintain tranquility, and counter threats from criminal groups and insurgents. The community policing framework emphasizes active citizen participation alongside the police to ensure effective crime prevention, disaster preparedness, and environmental initiatives (Iloilo Police Provincial Office, n.d.; Panelo, 2013).

BPATs are composed of PNP supervisors, barangay chairpersons, ex-officio members, and barangay tanods. Their responsibilities include organizing community sectors, managing crises, responding to disasters, supporting the Barangay Justice System, and implementing crime prevention programs (Philippine National Police, 2009). Memorandum Circulars stress the importance of citizen vigilance, community mobilization, and trust in the police for effective peacekeeping. Nationwide, approximately 38,569 barangays have BPATs with a total of 511,141 members, although implementation and effectiveness vary by region (Philippine National Police, 2015). Reports indicate that BPATs play a key role in maintaining security and managing emergencies, with cities such as Iloilo and regions like Eastern Visayas demonstrating positive outcomes (Balita, 2010; RPCRD, Police Regional Office 8, 2013; MetroPost, 2012). Volunteer participation has also been significant, with around 500,000 citizens supporting BPAT programs (Vargas, 2014).

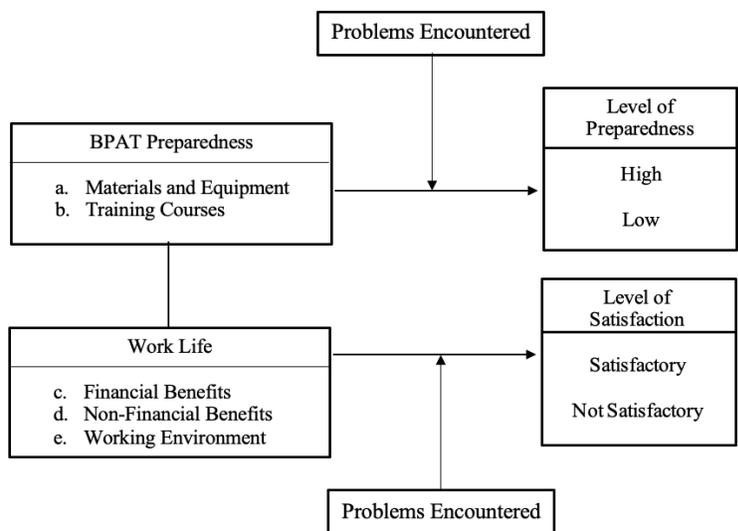
Training is required for BPAT personnel to enhance operational effectiveness. Programs cover first responder duties, basic handcuffing, human rights, and relevant laws such as RA 9262 (Crismundo, 2017; Delgado, 2011). Local Chief Executives supervise BPATs, allocate funds, and monitor compliance with peacekeeping mandates (DILG, 2009). Cities such as Cebu have invested significant resources, including allowances for BPAT members, to improve performance and public safety (“P8.2M for Peacekeepers Monthly Allowance Sought,” 2018). Recognition of BPAT contributions has also been observed in Bacolod City, where awards are given for participation in anti-crime initiatives (Pedrosa, 2017). Cotabato’s provincial government has strengthened BPATs in 17 towns to enhance their role as frontliners against crime (PGCot Strengthens Barangay Peacekeeping in 17 Towns, 2015).

Crime remains a pressing concern in the Philippines, including theft, assault, robbery, and drug-related offenses, with government efforts focusing on both enforcement and rehabilitation (“Philippines 2017 Crime & Safety Report,” 2017; De Jesus, 2017). Cotabato City reported reduced crime, including zero-crime rates in nine villages during the first half of 2018, attributed to active collaboration between the police and the community (Philippine News Agency, 2018; Punzalan, 2018; Ylagan, 2018).

Prior studies highlight the importance of local peacekeeping. Estonio (2014) emphasized that maintaining peace is essential to minimizing crime, while Etcuban et al. (2018) noted BPATs’ critical role within the PNP structure and the risks associated with their duties.

This study is theoretically anchored on Frederick Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which distinguishes factors that promote job satisfaction, called motivators, from those that prevent dissatisfaction, called hygiene factors (Toolshero, n.d.). Complementing this, Huse, as cited in Davis (1960), conceptualizes quality of work life as the extent to which work fulfills personal needs, including security, recognition, social interaction, skill development, and overall well-being. Key categories of work-life quality include compensation, safety, human capacity development, growth opportunities, social integration, and broader social relevance.

The conceptual framework of this study positions BPAT members’ preparedness, measured by materials, equipment, and training, and their work-life satisfaction, measured by financial benefits, non-financial benefits, and working environment, as dependent variables. Problems encountered by BPAT personnel are treated as intervening variables influencing these outcomes. The framework illustrates how operational challenges and resource availability affect both preparedness and satisfaction within the community policing structure.



C. METHOD

This study used a descriptive-evaluative design, combining numbers-based (quantitative) and interview-based (qualitative) approaches. The surveys measured how prepared BPAT members are and how satisfied they are with their work, while interviews explored problems they face while doing their duties. This design works well for studies that look at how programs are running, making it a good fit for evaluating BPAT operations in Cotabato City and nearby municipalities in Maguindanao.

Locale of the Study

The study was done in Cotabato City, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and North Upi in Maguindanao. Cotabato City has 37 barangays and had a population of 299,438 in 2015 (Philippine Cities, 2010). Datu Odin Sinsuat has 34 barangays, a land area of 461.80 square kilometers, and 99,210 residents in 2015 (PhilAtlas, 2015). North Upi is landlocked with 23 barangays, covers 742.95 square

kilometers, and has 53,583 residents (2015). These areas were chosen because they have active BPAT units and are relevant to the study.

Respondents and Sampling

The study included 150 BPAT members from 15 barangays: five in each area. Purposive sampling was then used to choose barangays with functioning BPATs. Then, a simple random sampling method picked the individual respondents. BPAT members were chosen because they are the frontline workers in barangay peacekeeping and can best answer questions about preparedness, satisfaction, and challenges.

Research Instruments

Three tools were used: (1) request letters to barangay chairpersons, (2) a survey questionnaire, and (3) interview guides. The questionnaire had two parts. Part I collected personal information such as age, sex, marital status, education, address, and other sources of income. Part II asked about preparedness, including training, materials, and equipment, and about work-life satisfaction, including pay, other benefits, and working conditions. Interviews were done with selected BPAT members to find out challenges they face on the job.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sent letters to barangay chairpersons to ask permission. After approval, questionnaires were given personally, and respondents were told their answers would be anonymous. Completed surveys were collected by the researcher. After surveys, one BPAT member from each barangay was interviewed to get more details about challenges in the field. Participation was voluntary and no payment was given.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used to encode and analyze the data. Frequencies and percentages were used for demographic information. Mean scores were calculated to see levels of preparedness and satisfaction. Interview answers were summarized and analyzed for common themes. Standard scales were used to interpret mean scores, and significance was tested at 0.05.

Scale for the Level of Preparedness.

MEAN RANGE	SCALE	DESCRIPTION
4.50 – 5.00	5	Excellent
3.50 - 4.49	4	Very High
2.50 – 3.49	3	High

1.50 – 2.49	2	Fairly High
1.00 – 1.49	1	Low

Scale for the Level of Satisfaction.

MEAN RANGE	SCALE	DESCRIPTION
4.50 – 5.00	5	Excellent
3.50 - 4.49	4	Very Satisfied
2.50 – 3.49	3	Satisfied
1.50 – 2.49	2	Fairly Satisfied
1.00 – 1.49	1	Not Satisfied

D. EXPLANATION

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Profile of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
a. Age		
60 – 69	4	2.6
50 – 59	42	27.1
40 – 49	41	26.5
30 – 39	48	31.0
20 – 29	20	12.9
Total	155	100
b. Educational Attainment		
College Graduate	13	8.4
High School Graduate	73	47.1
Elementary Graduate	69	44.5
Total	155	100
c. Address		
Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipality	52	33.5
North Upi Municipality	55	35.5
Cotabato City	48	31.0
Total	155	100
d. Sex		
Male	152	98.1
Female	3	1.9
Total	155	100
e. Marital Status		
Single	17	11.0

Married	131	84.5
Separated	7	4.5
Total	155	100
f. Other Sources of Income		
None	15	9.7
Driver	33	21.3
Carpenter	17	11.0
Construction Worker	10	6.5
Laborer	11	7.1
Farmer	48	31.0
Fisherman	11	7.1
Others	10	6.5
Total	155	100

n=155

The profile of the respondents shows that most are in middle adulthood, a stage often linked to stability, productivity, and community involvement. According to theorists like Erikson, people in this age group usually focus on contributing to their communities, which fits with their work in peacekeeping. Most respondents are male, few have college degrees, and many live in mostly agricultural municipalities. This suggests that BPAT work often complements farming or manual labor jobs. These demographic factors can affect how respondents behave at work, what motivates them, and how much they depend on income from barangay duties.

Table 2. Level of Preparedness in terms of Materials and Equipment

Indicator	Frequency					Mean	Description
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Provision of materials and equipment	11	43	51	44	6	3.06	High
2. Availability of the materials and equipment	19	41	67	27	1	3.32	High
3. Equipment maintenance	9	24	54	67	1	2.83	High
4. Availability of Patrol Car	21	28	18	30	58	2.51	High
5. Supervision of Brgy. Chairman on materials and other needs	49	58	42	6	0	3.97	Very High
6. Usefulness of the materials and equipment	11	46	78	20	0	3.31	High
<i>Over-all mean</i>						3.16	High

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very High
3	2.50 – 3.49	High
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly High

1 1.00 – 1.49 Low

Tables 3. Level of Preparedness in terms of Training Courses

Total Hours of Training	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Description
200-249	26	16.8	212.3	Excellent
150-199	120	77.4	165.9	Very High
100-149	8	5.2	123.0	High
50-99	1	0.6	88.0	Fairly High
0-49	0	0	0	Low
<i>Over-all Mean</i>			170.94	Very High
			hours	

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very High
3	2.50 – 3.49	High
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly High
1	1.00 – 1.49	Low

Table 4. Summary of Mean under the Level of Preparedness

Statement	Mean	Scale	Description
Materials and Equipment	3.16	3	High
Training Courses (hours)	170.94	4	Very High

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very High
3	2.50 – 3.49	High
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly High
1	1.00 – 1.49	Low

The results show that BPAT members have “high” to “very high” preparedness in terms of materials, equipment, and supervision, which suggests that barangay leadership is providing enough support. According to organizational readiness theory, having the right tools and supervision helps improve how well a team can perform, which is reflected in the overall mean of 3.16. Preparedness in training was rated “very high,” which supports human capital theory, as more training leads to better skills, efficiency, and performance. These findings show that BPAT

members are well-prepared both in terms of equipment and skills, which are important for their peacekeeping duties.

Table 5. Level of Satisfaction in terms of Financial Benefits

Indicator	Frequency					Mean	Description
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Financial assistance	6	18	19	71	41	2.21	Fairly Satisfied
2. Provision of basic needs	3	11	16	40	85	1.75	Fairly Satisfied
3. Freeing from debts	2	2	8	29	114	1.38	Not Satisfied
4. Availability of emergency fund/savings	1	2	10	21	121	1.33	Not Satisfied
5. Sustainability of financial objectives	2	10	25	42	76	1.84	Fairly Satisfied
6. Provision of monthly honorarium	54	89	10	2	0	4.26	Very Satisfied
<i>Mean</i>					2.13		Fairly Satisfied

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very Satisfied
3	2.50 – 3.49	Satisfied
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Satisfied
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Satisfied

Table 6. Level of Satisfaction in terms of Non-financial Benefits

Indicator	Frequency					Mean	Description
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Betterment of personal being	67	82	6	0	0	4.39	Very Satisfied
2. Broader knowledge	72	73	10	0	0	4.40	Very Satisfied
3. Self-security improvement	67	73	15	0	0	4.34	Very Satisfied
4. Skills development	81	68	6	0	0	4.48	Very Satisfied
5. Critical thinking development	78	67	10	0	0	4.44	Very Satisfied
6. Development of self-integrity	92	61	2	0	0	4.58	Excellent
<i>Over-all mean</i>						4.44	Very Satisfied

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very Satisfied
3	2.50 – 3.49	Satisfied
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Satisfied
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Satisfied

Table 7. Level of Satisfaction in terms of Working Environment

Indicator	Frequency					Mean	Description
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Working environment	79	70	6	0	0	4.47	Very Satisfied
2. Relationship with workmates	101	52	2	0	0	4.64	Excellent
3. I can work properly with my workmates	91	63	1	0	0	4.58	Excellent
4. Approachable Brgy. Chairman	110	41	4	0	0	4.68	Excellent
5. Accessibility of workplace	45	82	26	1	1	4.09	Very Satisfied
6. Peaceful working environment	94	57	5	0	0	4.58	Excellent
<i>Over-all mean</i>	4.51						Excellent

n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very Satisfied
3	2.50 – 3.49	Satisfied
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Satisfied
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Satisfied

Table 8. Summary of Mean under the Level of Satisfaction in their Work Life

Statement	Mean	Scale	Description
Financial Benefits	2.13	2	Fairly Satisfied
Non-financial Benefits	4.44	4	Very Satisfied
Working Environment	4.51	5	Excellent

<i>Over-all Mean</i>	3.69	4	Very Satisfied
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n=155

Legend:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Range of Means</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	4.50 – 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 – 4.49	Very Satisfied
3	2.50 – 3.49	Satisfied
2	1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Satisfied
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Satisfied

The satisfaction results show a clear difference between financial and non-financial aspects. Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory explains that financial benefits are hygiene factors. When these are lacking, they can cause dissatisfaction, which matches the “fairly satisfied” ratings and comments about low honoraria. Non-financial benefits and the working environment, on the other hand, are motivators that increase professional fulfillment and personal growth. This fits with the “very satisfied” and “excellent” ratings, showing that intrinsic rewards, skills development, good relationships, and a safe work environment strongly influence BPAT members’ job satisfaction.

The qualitative findings reveal recurring problems that match occupational risk theory. BPAT members face threats, low pay, and physical strain, which are common stressors in community-based security work. Despite these challenges, members remain committed because their roles are tied to community expectations and identity. These findings also align with the Job Demands–Resources Model, where high demands such as responding to crime and managing health risks continue even with limited financial resources. Engagement remains high because of teamwork, social support, and shifts that allow time for rest and personal tasks. Qualitative results are best presented in narrative form with direct quotes, rather than in tables, as this method better captures respondents’ experiences.

E. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the functioning of Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams across Cotabato City, Datu Odin Sinsuat, and North Upi is shaped not only by the availability of training, equipment, and organizational support but also by broader socio-economic conditions that influence their satisfaction and operational capacity. The BPAT system benefits from strong intrinsic motivation, cohesive workplace relationships, and adequate supervisory structures, all of which sustain their performance even when financial provisions and structural incentives remain insufficient. These conditions indicate the need for institutional reforms that strengthen resource allocation, provide predictable training systems, clarify membership qualifications, and establish equitable compensation schemes to reinforce the sustainability of grassroots peacekeeping work. Ultimately, a more standardized, well-supported, and competency-driven BPAT framework is essential to improving community safety mechanisms and ensuring that barangay-level security personnel remain effective, motivated, and protected as community partners in local peace and order management.

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