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Effectiveness of Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization in Promoting Road Safety

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization (BMTEVO) in promoting road safety, while also highlighting the challenges it faces in fulfilling its duties. Using qualitative data, the study collected information from barangay officials, law enforcers, BMTEVO members and community members who have a good understanding of the functions of the BMTEVO members. The findings indicate that while BMTEVO plays an essential role in managing traffic flow and responding to incidents, its overall effectiveness is limited by several issues. Key challenges include a shortage of manpower, equipment shortage and job stability. Additionally, the research offers suggestions for improvement, such as making BMTEVO a permanent organization with ongoing funding, resources and personnel; implementing training programs; and creating clearer policy guidelines; and strengthening collaboration with the local government and volunteer enforcers to improve road safety in Bontoc.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Road safety and congestion are urgent global issues. The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety 20218 reports that global road traffic deaths rose from 1.25 million to 1.35 million annually since 2016, with 50 million injuries. Road traffic crashes are now the eighth leading global cause of death and the leading cause among people aged 5-29, underscoring the need for swift and comprehensive safety interventions.

Countries such as France have implemented innovative strategies, including the Vision Zero Plan, which expands pedestrian zones, increases the number of bike lanes, and enforces stricter speed limits. Additionally, France is a leader in smart mobility, utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies to enhance road safety. These measures include automated speed cameras and AI-driven law enforcement systems designed to improve compliance with traffic regulations and deter reckless driving. Such technological advancements are contributing to safer, more efficient and intelligent road networks in France.

In the Philippines, road traffic deaths are increasing. Based on the data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the road traffic deaths increased by 39%, from 7,938 in 2011 to 11,096 in 2021. Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among Filipinos aged 15-29, and a major killer among children. (WHO, 2023). The Department of Transportation (DOTr) also emphasized the growing burden of road-related fatalities and injuries, especially in rapidly urbanizing areas.

To address these issues, the Philippine Congress introduced House Bill 5245 to establish the National

Traffic Enforcement and Management Center. This center will provide formal training and instruction to the traffic enforcers in all areas of traffic enforcement and management, including enforcement, road safety, accident investigation, driver training, post-accident management, and understanding violations.

In an urban center like Metro Manila, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) plays a pivotal role in traffic enforcement. The MMDA is fundamental to ensuring the region runs smoothly and continues to develop sustainably. The agency formulates policies, coordinates programs, and implements projects to rationalize transport operations, ensuring the safe and efficient movement of people and goods across the region.

Shifting focus to Northern Luzon, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), characterized by mountainous terrain and narrow roads, faces its own set of traffic challenges. As the region experiences increasing tourism and economic activity, vehicular traffic is rising, making effective traffic management and enforcement essential for safety and sustainability.

In Mountain Province, traffic concerns have also intensified. A recent Resolution No. s.2024, adopted by the Mountain Province Police Provincial Office-Provincial Advisory Group for Police Transformation and Development (MPPPO-PAGPTD), highlights the increasing need for additional traffic enforcers in Bontoc, particularly those with the authority to issue citation tickets for traffic violations. This resolution underscores the growing challenge posed by increasing vehicular traffic, passenger jeepney overloading and other violations that affect road safety in the municipality. With

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limited resources for formal enforcement, the Bontoc LGU has called for additional personnel to strengthen the implementation of traffic ordinances and improve safety measures in the region.

To address local traffic issues, the Bontoc Local Government Unit established BMTEVO to improve traffic, reduce accidents, and promote road safety. Between 2019 and 2024, Bontoc reported incidents of property damage, homicide, and injuries due to reckless imprudence, underscoring a persistent threat to public safety and the need for an effective enforcement mechanism.

Despite its resource limitations, BMTEVO has gained public recognition.

On July 31, 2023, four members of BMTEVO were recognized and received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Local Government Unit of Bontoc for their steadfast diligence and dedication in implementing the Municipal Traffic Code in the municipality, which led to the smooth flow of traffic and reduced traffic-related incidents and accidents. Then, Hon. Jerome Tudlong, Bontoc Municipal Mayor, noted that the presence of traffic enforcers is likewise important in ensuring the safety of motorists and pedestrians and the free flow of traffic (Malwagay, 2023).

Volunteer organizations like BMTEVO provide a cost-effective solution for traffic management while also fostering greater community involvement in road safety. According to Shamo-Nir (2024), volunteers may not have the same level of authority as formal officers, but they can be highly effective in promoting road safety when properly trained and integrated into the broader enforcement system. Volunteers can significantly reduce traffic violations, improve road safety, and support formal authorities by providing additional manpower and increasing public awareness of traffic laws. However, despite their contributions, there are limitations to what these volunteers can achieve- especially as traffic volumes continue to rise.

Given this context, the present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization in promoting road safety within the Municipality of Bontoc. Specifically, it seeks to assess the organization's effectiveness and to identify the challenges encountered in fulfilling its mandate.

The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into BMTEVO's performance in managing traffic safety and its influence on reducing accidents and violations. By analyzing the organization's strengths and weaknesses, the research seeks to inform ongoing efforts to improve traffic enforcement mechanisms, evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer-based programs, and identify areas where additional resources or personnel may be necessary to enhance road safety in Bontoc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impact of Traffic Enforcers on Road Safety

Traffic enforcement played a critical role in promoting road safety. According to Johnson *et al.* (2023), there appears to be an inverse relationship between traffic enforcement and traffic safety. When enforcement went up, serious injuries and deaths went down. When enforcement went down, serious injuries and deaths went up. Also, data can help determine where and when to deploy enforcement.

In the Philippine context, the role of traffic enforcers had also been recognized in legislative efforts. Gatchalian (2017), who authored House Bill 5241, otherwise known as "An Act Establishing the National Traffic Enforcement and Management Center, highlighted that traffic enforcers are essential in maintaining public safety and order on the roads. The bill underscores the importance of properly trained enforcers and the use of best practices in traffic law enforcement to ensure the safety of both motorists and pedestrians.

Similarly, Peden *et al.* (2004), in a global report by the World Health Organization, stated that law enforcement presence acts as a deterrent to reckless driving behavior, such as speeding, distracted driving, and failure to obey traffic signs. Also, Delos Reyes & Cruz (2019) studied local traffic enforcement units in Metro Manila and concluded that the effectiveness of traffic enforcers is closely tied to their level of training, the consistency of enforcement, and public trust. Moreover, Hauer (1997) noted that enforcement not only punishes violators but also reinforces normative behavior in society.

Taken together, these studies indicate that traffic enforcers play a pivotal role in road safety management. Their presence, visibility and enforcement capacity directly impact how motorists behave, how traffic flows and how safe roadways are for all users.

Challenges faced by Traffic Enforcers in fulfilling their mandate

Traffic enforcers, particularly those in volunteer groups such as the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer organization (BMTEVO), face numerous challenges in fulfilling their mandate. These challenges include resource limitations, legal and procedural barriers, insufficient training, technological constraints, and a low level of community engagement.

One of the most significant challenges for traffic enforcers is the shortage of resources, including personnel funding and equipment. According to Velasco (2021), traffic enforcement agencies in rural areas commonly struggle with limited staffing and inadequate funding, which undermine their efforts in maintaining road safety. In small municipalities like Bontoc, where the population may not justify a large, full-time traffic enforcement force, volunteers' ability to acquire essential tools, such as traffic monitoring devices, vehicles, and communication systems, thereby reducing enforcement effectiveness (Fanai *et al.*, 2021). The absence of such resources may force traffic enforcers to rely on manual, less efficient monitoring methods, which can be time-consuming and

less reliable.

Enforcing traffic laws is also hindered by complex legal procedures and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Batangan & Corpuz (2025) discuss the complexities traffic enforcers encounter when issuing citations, including slow legal processes and the challenge of ensuring penalties are effectively implemented. Traffic enforcers must deal with complex procedural requirements that can slow enforcement. For instance, issuing traffic citations, processing fines, and following up on non-compliance may involve multiple steps, each of which can be delayed due to administrative backlogs. Volunteer organizations, with fewer resources and less legal support, may struggle with these administrative hurdles, making it more difficult for them to fulfill their mandates effectively.

Another critical concern is the lack of structures and consistent training programs for traffic enforcers, particularly for those in volunteer roles. Otto *et al.* (2019) reveal that inadequate trainings a significant issue, limiting the enforcers' ability to perform their duties effectively. This challenge could be even more pronounced if they lack formal training programs tailored to traffic safety enforcement.

Technological tools, such as speed cameras, traffic monitoring systems, and communication devices, can aid traffic enforcement. However, technological limitations, such as malfunctioning equipment or a lack of modern tools, are common challenges for traffic enforcers. Luca (2024) highlights that outdated or poorly maintained technology can hinder the effectiveness of automated enforcement systems. In areas like Bontoc, where infrastructure may be limited, the absence of such technology may make it difficult for the BMTEVO to comprehensively monitor traffic violations. The lack of technology resources can create significant gaps in monitoring and enforcement. Without the proper equipment, such as traffic cameras or speed-detection devices, traffic enforcers have to rely on manual observation, which can be inconsistent and error-prone. Moreover, limited communication systems may hinder coordination between volunteer enforcers, making it more difficult to address violations promptly (Sivak & Schoettle, 2015). The technological gap makes it harder to monitor traffic flow effectively and to ensure that penalties are accurately enforced.

In addition to the challenges, community engagement and public awareness are significant factors in the success of traffic law enforcement. Effective traffic enforcement relies not only on law enforcement officers' actions but also on public cooperation. According to Valerio (2024), community engagement programs that involve public education on road safety can the consequences of traffic violations can help reduce violations and improve compliance with traffic laws. When communities are more informed about road safety, they are more likely to cooperate with traffic enforcers and adhere to regulations, leading to safer roads (Velasco, 2021). However, a lack of resources and an organizational structure to conduct widespread public awareness campaigns may lead to low

compliance rates, as individuals may not fully appreciate the importance of traffic laws or the consequences of violating them. Moreover, without active community involvement, volunteer organizations may face public resistance, making it harder for them to enforce traffic laws effectively.

The influence of urbanization and increasing traffic volume also compounds the challenges faced by traffic enforcers. Urban areas are typically more congested, with higher traffic volumes and a greater likelihood of traffic violations. This makes enforcement efforts more difficult and increases resource demands. According to Li & Zhang (2020), urbanization has led to more complex traffic management issues, and this trend is only expected to continue as cities expand.

The literature highlights several challenges faced by traffic enforcers, particularly those in smaller municipalities or volunteer organizations. These challenges-ranging from resource limitations and legal complexities to inadequate training, technological constraints and community engagement issues- reduce traffic enforcers' ability to fulfill their mandate effectively. Addressing these challenges requires not only improvements in training, resources and legal frameworks, but also the active involvement of the community and policymakers in supporting traffic safety initiatives.

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored in the Behavior Modification Theory, a cornerstone of psychology that speculates that behaviors can be learned or unlearned through a system of reinforcements and punishments. This theory has significant implications for road safety, particularly for the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization and its efforts to improve it. By leveraging visibility and presence, education and awareness, and community engagement, the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization can improve road safety.

Also, the Situational Crime Prevention Theory proposed by Ronald Clarke (1995) lays the foundation of this research. It focuses on reducing opportunities for crime by altering the physical and social environment where crime occurs. It operates on the principle that crime can be minimized by making it more difficult or less rewarding to commit, rather than focusing solely on offenders' characteristics. Using this theory, it is assumed that the presence of BMTEVO personnel increases the detection of traffic violations, thereby increasing the perceived risk of apprehending violators.

Volunteer enforcers can help in "targeting hardening" by ensuring that vehicles and drivers comply with road safety regulations. This can include regular seatbelt checks, proper vehicle registration, and sobriety checkpoints, which reduce the likelihood of traffic violations in the first place. Enhancing Community Awareness: A key aspect of SCO is environmental design, which extends to social and educational interventions. BMTEVO's

efforts to educate the community about road safety, the consequences of violations, and proper traffic behavior can be seen as forms of situational prevention. It makes it clear that violations are not acceptable within the community, thus reducing the likelihood of risky driving behaviors.

The SCP framework, in this context, helps examine how BMTEVO's efforts can reduce traffic accidents and violations by changing the environment and the behavior of road users. Lining the two theories in the study can help assess the challenges volunteers encounter in improving road safety.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

In this study, the researchers employed a qualitative research design that focused specifically on interviews. This method enabled the researchers to collect in-depth information on respondents' opinions and experiences regarding the effectiveness of BMTEVO in promoting road safety, as well as the challenges they encountered in fulfilling their mandates.

Locale and Population of the Study

This study was conducted in the four central barangays of Bontoc, Mountain Province, namely Poblacion, Bontoc Ili, Samoki and Caluttit. These barangays are located at the heart of Bontoc, where the highest volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic occurs. As such, they served as the primary areas of operation for the traffic enforcers. These barangays also hosted key establishments, including government offices, markets and commercial centers, schools, churches and transport terminals. The presence of these institutions increased the flow of people and vehicles, which made these barangays ideal for assessing the effectiveness of traffic enforcement efforts. Moreover, these four central barangays reflected the urban conditions in Bontoc, making them a representative sample for evaluating the municipal traffic enforcers. While the outskirts had different traffic dynamics, the central barangays offered the best environment for observing both typical and extreme traffic scenarios.

The researchers involved a total of 17 key respondents, purposely selected for their relevance and involvement in traffic management within the Municipality of Bontoc. The participants included four law enforcement personnel from the Bontoc MPS, two Barangay officials from each of the identified central barangays (Caluttit, Samoki, Poblacion and Bontoc Ili), and five representatives from the community sector including a daily commuter and a representative from the BMTEVO.

The researchers selected these individuals because they believed that their experiences and opinions provided valuable insights into the organization. Through their input, the researchers aimed to evaluate the organization's effectiveness in promoting road safety.

Instrumentation

This study employed an open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face interviews to gather data from respondents regarding their perceptions of BMTEVO's effectiveness in promoting road safety, as well as the challenges that the organization faced in fulfilling its mandate. The interview guide questions were content-validated by the chief of the traffic section of the Bontoc Municipal Police Station and by two faculty members at Mountain Province State Polytechnic College, who have been teaching Traffic Education for 2 years.

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the research proposal review and ethics committee, the researchers sent letter to the Chief of Police of Bontoc Municipal Police Station, chairpersons of Barangay Bontoc Ili, Poblacion, Caluttit and Samoki, and the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcers Volunteer Organization to seek permission to conduct the study. Upon approval of the request, the researchers conducted interviews with the respondents. The researchers also personally interviewed a BMTEVO member to gather data on the challenges they faced and the coping mechanisms they used to fulfill their mandates. After the interviews, the researchers collected, coded and organized the data into respective themes. The researchers presented the study's results to the respondents through discussion for validation.

Analysis of Data

The researchers used thematic analysis to analyze interview data. They first obtained a comprehensive overview of all the collected data and organized it through coding. These codes enabled the researchers to summarize the main point and recurring meanings found throughout the data. The researchers then defined potential themes by clearly articulating what each represented and how it contributed to understanding the data. Finally, the researchers discussed, analyzed and supported the themes with existing literature.

Ethical Consideration

The research was cleared by the Institute Research Ethics Committee of Mountain Province State University. The researchers ensured that the interviewees understood the research and its implications before data collection began. They also protected participants' identities by maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of BMTEVO in Traffic Management

From the interviewees' responses, it was learned that community members benefit from activating the BMTEVO.

Skills and Training in Traffic Management. The effectiveness of traffic management efforts depends largely on the skills, training and practical experience of those who direct vehicular flow. In Bontoc, the BMTEVO

members demonstrate the necessary skills, which local officials and Bontoc law enforcers have observed and validated.

A barangay official from Brgy Caluttit remarked, “Well trained da ta nabayag da nga agmanmando ti traffic ken natrained da iti pulis.” (They are well trained because they’ve extensive experience in directing traffic and they were trained by the police officers). This statement shows the community’s strong trust and confidence in BMTEVO’s capabilities, which stem from their exposure to learning and training processes. Likewise, a barangay official from Poblacion emphasized that most BMTEVO members were former drivers, giving them an intuitive understanding of traffic rules and regulations. “Ti kaaduan ket drivers da sunga ammu da jay linteg ti kalsada.” (Most of them were drivers, so they know the rules on the road).

These insights align with Nonaka’s (1994) Model of Knowledge Dynamics, which emphasizes the importance of tacit knowledge-practical, experience-based knowledge that is difficult to articulate yet essential for competent performance. Bratianu (2010) argued that such knowledge underpins effective decision-making in dynamic environments, such as traffic management, where real-time judgement is vital.

A barangay official from Caluttit further underscored the skill required for traffic control, stating, “Managing traffic needs skills, hindi basta-basta magtraffic.” (Managing traffic needs skills; it’s not just a random job). This observation reinforces that traffic management requires cognitive ability, reflexes, situational awareness, and sound judgment. Acebuche (2017) noted that traffic enforcers with formal training regulate vehicular flow more effectively and manage the behaviors of road users that cause congestion. Similarly, Cali (2025) pointed out that properly trained traffic enforcers who apply best practices in enforcing traffic laws ensure safer roads for motorists and pedestrians.

Despite the BMTEVO’s dedication and visible presence, one community respondent raised a concern: “They are struggling to effectively manage traffic and improve safety outcomes; they are not really the ones managing the traffic and they have limited training”. This comment highlights the need to ensure that personnel not only demonstrate the right attitude and commitment but also possess the technical knowledge and competencies required for their duties.

Carpio (2020) identified three core components of effective enforcement: (1) knowledge of traffic laws and signals, (2) situational judgment, and (3) the ability to apply enforcement procedures appropriately. Enforcers without formal training risk misinterpreting laws or inconsistently applying them, which can erode public trust and legitimacy. To address this, traffic enforcers should continuously update their knowledge, skills and attitude through regular seminars and training programs. Training and development programs enhance traffic enforcers’ understanding of rules and regulations

(Torregoza, 2017). According to Sen. Gatchalian (SBN 994,2016), properly trained traffic enforcers who apply best enforcement practices can manage traffic flow more efficiently. Likewise, Acebuche (cited in Panay News, 2017) observed that well-trained traffic enforcers handled vehicular traffic more effectively and managed congestion-causing behaviors more appropriately.

Improved Traffic Flow and Public Safety. The BMTEVO’s presence has improved traffic flow and public safety, particularly in critical junctions such as the Bontoc Rotunda. Several barangay officials confirmed this improvement. A barangay official from Bontoc Ili stated, “At least naminimize ti traffic congestion (At least traffic congestion was minimized)”, underscoring the positive effects of the organization’s efforts. Similarly, a barangay official from Samoki observed that traffic conditions are more manageable when traffic enforcers are present, “Nu adda ti traffic enforcers, mayat ti raffle (When there are traffic enforcers, the traffic flow is smooth).”

External reports support these observations. Herald Express (2023) reported that traffic enforcers’ visibility and intervention help maintain smooth traffic flow and enhance the safety of motorists and pedestrians. Their authoritative presence encourages compliance with traffic laws and deters violations.

However, challenges remain, despite smoother traffic; several officials and community members noted that some drivers still disregard traffic rules. A barangay official from Caluttit stated, “Wen, traffic got better, ti problema ket jay drivers ta haan da ammu ti linteg” (Yes, traffic has improved, but the problem lies with the drivers because they do not know the rules). This indicates a gap in public education on traffic regulations among drivers.

Wan Agyl (2023) argued that ignorance of traffic rules and their consequences leads to non-compliance and risky driving behavior. When the public underestimates these risks, accidents become more likely and enforcement efforts lose impact. Paje *et al.* (2022) emphasized that disciplined motorists reduce road accidents and ease traffic enforcers’ workload, benefitting everyone.

Decrease in traffic accidents and injuries. Traffic enforcers play a vital role in reducing accidents near schools by promoting safer roads and influencing driver behavior. In Bontoc, local officials and law enforcement personnel reported fewer traffic accidents and injuries, attributing this improvement to BMTEVO’s active participation.

A barangay official from Bontoc Ili, shared, “Awan ti incidented ta ada ag banbantay ijay uubing.” (There are no incidents because someone is watching over the children). This highlights the importance of enforcer visibility near schools and pedestrian zones to ensure pedestrian safety and security.

Rolison *et al.* (2018) explained that traffic enforcement prevents accidents by addressing safety risks before they occur. Bull *et al.* (2018) added that trained traffic enforcers and police officers, familiar with urban routines, are especially effective in school zoned where traffic and pedestrian movement peak. They help organize traffic

flow and guide users to ensure safety.

Elvik (2019) found that consistent traffic enforcement significantly reduces accidents, especially in high-risk areas. Delaney *et al.* (2005) further noted that even the perceived presence of authority figures influences driver behavior and promotes safer conduct.

A barangay official from Poblacion confirmed this impact, stating, “So far awan in ti records of accidents dita circle” (So far there are no recorded traffic accidents at the circle/rotunda). However, a barangay official from Samoki pointed out that while accidents decreased in central barangays of Bontoc, outer barangays still face challenges due to limited enforcement. “Haab unay ti outside Bontoc ngem inside Bontoc ket binmaba met ti traffic accidents” (Haven’t decreased much outside Bontoc, but within Bontoc, traffic accidents have significantly gone down). This suggests the need to expand BMTEVO’s coverage to ensure equal safety benefits across barangays.

Demonstrate remarkable attitude/ behavior. Barangay officials and Bontoc MPS personnel commended the BMTEVO for consistently demonstrating professionalism and respect while performing their duties. Many officials shared that “Awan ti bastos” (No one is rude) and “So farm awan ti bastor” (So far, no one is rude), affirming that volunteers’ civility even in challenging situations.

Despite facing verbal aggression and resistance from undisciplined drivers, BMTEVO members maintain composure and professionalism. A barangay official from Poblacion observed, “Normal no agsao da karo nu nagcommit ti mistake dagiti drivers” (It is normal for them to speak firmly when drivers commit mistakes). Another from Caluttit noted, “Naanus da uray mapukpukawan da” (They remain patient even when they are being shouted at), further emphasizing the enforcers’ commitment to maintaining order with tolerance and patience.

Nadal (2020) explained that law enforcers commonly experience harassment and resistance, yet BMTEVO’s calm and professional response reflects their commitment to public service. This behavior aligns with procedural justice principles, which state that respectful treatment promotes voluntary compliance (Tyler, 2006).

BMTEVO also prioritizes education over punishment. A barangay official from Samoki stated, “They give education or bagbaga ijay drivers, santo da ikkan ti ticket” (They first educate drivers and only issue tickets if necessary). This practice reflects a community-oriented, rehabilitative approach that aims to change behavior rather than merely penalize.

Shinar (2017) identified patience, empathy, and respectful communication as critical interpersonal skills for traffic enforcers. Paje *et al.* (2022) noted that calm, respectful interactions help de-escalate conflict and resolve issues quickly, fostering cooperation from violators.

Negative community feedback. While the presence of the BMTEVO is generally appreciated, several structural and social challenges continue to complicate effective traffic management. Personnel from Bontoc MPS cited limited spaces as a major cause of congestion. One police

officer explained, “Ti maysa nga problema ket parking areas, awan unay ditoy Bontoc” (One of the problems is that Bontoc has limited parking areas). Without enough infrastructure to accommodate vehicles, even well-coordinated traffic control measures achieve only limited results. This aligns with Litman (2019), who explained that insufficient parking facilities and restricted road space are structural obstacles that reduce the effectiveness of traffic management, often resulting in persistent congestion and public dissatisfaction.

Community views on BMTEVO’s effectiveness also vary. While many acknowledge its contribution, some doubt its impact. One respondent stated, “I believe they are not effective. The reason for this is that they are not really the ones managing the traffic. In fact, for the past few years, we have only noticed two BMTEVO members assisting the Bontoc police in traffic management.

Others criticized the attitude of some BMTEVO members, describing them as discourteous or arrogant. “Some members display discourteous and arrogant tendencies, at times assuming a demeanor akin to that of law enforcement personnel.” Shared by one respondent. De Ona *et al.* (2016) emphasized that public satisfaction with enforcement depends on fairness, consistency, and professionalism. When enforcers act arrogantly or inconsistently, public trust and compliance decline.

Challenges faced by BMTEVO. In their efforts to promote road safety, law enforcement agencies and volunteer organizations frequently encounter obstacles that impede their effectiveness. Despite their hard work, the BMTEVO is not exempt from these operational challenges.

This section identifies and analyzes the main challenges BMTEVO faces, including internal organizational issues and resource constraints. Drawing insights from interviews with current and former members, as well as law enforcement personnel, the analysis reveals the factor that prevents the organization from fully fulfilling its mandate. Understanding these challenges enables stakeholders to design targeted interventions and build support systems that strengthen BMTEVO’s performance and effectiveness.

Lack of manpower. A lack of manpower severely affects traffic management, especially in densely populated areas such as Bontoc. One BMTEVO member stated that Volunteer Traffic Enforcers in Bontoc struggle to effectively monitor every corner of the central barangay. “Nu malpas to road clearing operation iti maysa nag area, ket agalis ti kapulisan ken daduma nga traffic enforcers, agsubli manen nga ada ag illegal park” (When they finish conducting road clearing operations in one area and then move to another, violators often return to park illegally.) This recurring situation causes the community to perceive traffic enforcers as ineffective.

A barangay official from Caluttit explained that the police force lacks sufficient manpower and relies on volunteers to help manage road safety, “Kasapulan ti traffic aide, kulang ti manpower ti pulis, kasapulan ti volunteers”.

People are an organization's most valuable resource, and without skilled, motivated and committed members, even the best plans fail. Therefore, agencies must provide traffic management staff with proper status, clear career paths and reasonable salaries. Without these, organizations create a workforce with little initiative or job satisfaction (Yilma, 2014).

Effective traffic management depends on competent planning, implementation and enforcement, skills that are often lacking in developing regions. Local government must establish traffic management units with sufficient authority to design and execute effective traffic control schemes (Akbar, 2002). Similarly, the absence of adequately trained staff within regulatory agencies restricts institutional efficiency and regulatory reform (Ismail and Venter, 2007).

Despite these constraints, BMTEVO continues to manage traffic control and promote public safety. The organization maximizes its limited manpower by coordinating with Bontoc MPS personnel to ensure smooth traffic flow and road safety.

Lack of equipment. Limited resources prevent BMTEVO members from accessing essential equipment such as megaphones and radios. Law enforcers in Bontoc observed that "Awan piman ti sarili nga radio ken megaphone da, sunga agbulbulod da" (They have no issued radio and megaphone, so they borrow). Radios and megaphones were distinct but complementary purpose—radios support coordination, while megaphones facilitate public communication.

Two-way radios enable real-time communication among officers and between field enforcers and command centers, significantly improving operational efficiency during incident responses and coordination (Chen *et al.*, 2019). Radios also outperform mobile phones in reliability, especially in areas with limited cellular coverage, and allow for hands-free operation, which is crucial during enforcement actions (Wang & Lin, 2021). Hernandez (2022) emphasized that portable megaphones with clear audio output improve compliance with verbal instructions, especially in multilingual areas, as enforcers can use pre-recorded messages in various languages.

When used together, radios and megaphones produce synergistic benefits. Radios allow traffic enforcers to coordinate strategy, while megaphones enable them to communicate those strategies directly to the public. This dual-channel system proves highly effective during parades, road closure or accidents (Kim & Zhao, 2020). Despite limited equipment, BMTEVO strives to maximize available tools to perform its duties effectively. However, the lack of sustained funding for traffic management agencies prevents them from maintaining, monitoring and improving operational systems, as well as from recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Sustainable and successful traffic management requires ongoing financial support for planning, implementation and evaluation (Yilma, 2014). Without adequate funding, local governments cannot sustain competent traffic management operations.

Lack of job sustainability. Job sustainability ensures that a profession offers stable, secure and long-term employment. A former BMTEVO member emphasized the lack of job sustainability due to insufficient municipal funding incentives: "Kulnag ti support, mayat kuma nu masustain jay trabaho as traffic enforcers" (The support is not enough, it is better if the job as traffic enforcers will be sustained). A community respondent added that changes in local leadership often lead to funding withdrawal for BMTEVO operations and salaries. Consequently, many traffic enforcers lose their positions, reducing manpower within the municipality.

Despite these challenges, some former members continue to volunteer in managing traffic and road safety. They remain committed and hopeful for the eventual sustainability of traffic enforcement roles or the creation of permanent positions within the municipality. They demonstrate flexibility and professionalism in handling violators and resolving issues respectfully, an essential quality of effective traffic enforcers (Paje, *et al.*, 2022).

One of the main challenges that traffic enforcers face is job precarity, marked by short-term contracts, inadequate labor protections, and a lack of social security. LGUs often hire traffic aides on a contractual basis with low pay and no formal qualifications required. Studies show that traffic enforcers in developing countries are frequently employed on a contractual or casual basis, making them vulnerable to job loss and financial instability (JICA, 1999). Moreover, budget constraints in local governments often lead to hiring freezes or layoffs, further worsening job insecurity (Ahmed & Syed, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions and recommendations were derived. This study found that the Bontoc Municipal Traffic Enforcement Volunteer Organization (BMTEVO) is crucial to local road safety and traffic management. BMTEVO has improved traffic flow in congested areas, reduced accidents near schools and shown professionalism in public interactions. BMTEVO members' practical experience and law enforcement training make them effective in various traffic situations. However, BMTEVO faces challenges, including insufficient manpower, a lack of equipment, limited funding, low driver discipline, and inconsistent training. Urban planning issues and poor public awareness further limit its effectiveness. Despite BMTEVO's value, systemic issues constrain its impact, highlighting the need for coordinated interventions from the local government and community.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend institutionalizing BMTEVO with sustainable funding, increased manpower and making members full-time employees for wider coverage. Regular, standardized training on traffic laws is urged. The Chief of Police suggests creating bylaws and a clear organizational structure to promote consistency,

transparency, and accountability. Further, the researchers recommend providing BMTEVO with radios, uniforms, safety gears and traffic signs, and securing job stability and funding by making BMTEVO a regular LGU unit. The study also advises regular public education campaigns and resolving urban planning issues, such as establishing designated parking areas.

Implementing these recommendations will strengthen BMTEVO's performance, improve traffic management and road safety, and enhance its community image.

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