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RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEW BREED OF POLICE OFFICERS; THEIR WORK WORLD

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of Lesbian Police Officers assigned in Cebu City Police Office (CCPO). Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: the experiences of the informants in the performance of their duties, the informants handling the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties and the impact of the informants' sexual orientation in the performance of their duties. This study utilized the qualitative research method and employed a phenomenological approach through in-depth interviews. Using a validated interview guide with open-ended questions prepared by the researcher, six (6) informants were all interviewed individually, while four (4) were in a focused group discussion. Colaizzi's thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The study was conducted in Cebu City. Three themes summarized the positive experiences of the informants. These were: *Family Is the Biggest Support System, Acceptance Is the Road to Change, Unwavering Dedication Towards Job, Turning into A New Leaf*. As to the negative experiences, the themes revealed were: *Dominated by Rules, Homophobic Remarks, Facing Barriers*. As to how do the informants handle the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties, the following themes are: *No Prejudice and Discrimination, Turn A Blind Eye, Optimistic View of Life*. Lastly, the Impact of the informant's sexual orientation in the performance of their duties, the themes are the following: *Wholehearted Commitment Towards Work, Triumph Over Fears, Organizational Diversity and Inclusion, Spirit of Camaraderie and Kindness*. The study further revealed that lesbian police officers are a vital part of the police force and breaks down stereotypes about the members of the LGBTQIA+ who wants to be a part of law enforcement. Women, in general are as capable and efficient in Police work.

INTRODUCTION

Women have served on police forces since the 19th century, the integration of women into law enforcement positions can be considered a large social change. Today, women especially lesbian play a major role and are a respected part of the police force. Despite the increasing acceptance of LGBTQ individuals around the world, report of harassment and homophobic comments are apparent among police officers and even students preparing for criminal justice careers. A lesbian is a member of the LGBT community which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and along with heterosexual they are terms used to describe people's sexual orientation or gender identity. Along with the controversy, in the world of law enforcement where it is dominated by male and heterosexual ethos has experience an increase in the number of women in the rank of file, specifically individuals who consider themselves as lesbian. Meanwhile, In the Philippine community, lesbians are called "tibo" or "tomboy", as a sign of their masculinity and also refers to a woman who is romantically, sexually or emotionally attracted to women. Many lesbians prefer to be called lesbian rather than gay.

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A lesbian is a member of the LGBTQIA+ community which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and along with heterosexual, these are terms used to describe people's sexual orientation or gender identity. According to ABS-CBN news - The Philippine National Police (PNP) does not oppose gay and lesbian law enforcers. PNP spokesperson Senior Superintendent Gene Cerbo issued the statement in response to a claim by Ang Ladlad gay rights group that 22 PNP officers are members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Cerbo said they can neither confirm nor deny Ang Ladlad's claim, as the PNP does not look at sexual orientation in the evaluation of police officers. The question was if they were aware if there was a third sex in the PNP which they abruptly answered they cannot answer directly because they do not count them. He added that the PNP does not discriminate against members of the LGBT community. Cerbo also elaborated the fact that once you are a part of the personnel of the Philippine National Police, they only looked at their performance as a police officer. "If you did your job well, and followed the rules and regulations then we're good with that" he said (Abs-cbn news, 2012). Members of LGBTQIA+ community are welcome to apply in the Philippine National Police. According to National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), former Regional Director

Rodolfo Grande Santos Jr. that there is no policy against these people and that the organization is open to all Filipino citizens who meet the age, height and educational requirements regardless of sexual orientation. (Philstar, 2016). Lesbian police force before usually limited to peripheral tasks such as administrative works and women's desk. They are responsible for the welfare of women and children. Until recently, they are already a part of the team who will conduct operations. In fact, in the Municipality of Maria, Siquijor introduced its first all women police station which they called "Mariang Pulis". According to Siquijor Colonel Angela Rejano, this is to strengthen the role of women in the context of policing in the law enforcement pillar. (Rappler, 2019). According to National Police Commission Regional Director Rodolfo Grande Santos Jr., that they have lesbian police officer in Nueva Ecija and they found out that they are more efficient and talented than their colleagues. (Philstar, 2016). This study was anchored by Performance theory by Don Elger, and supported by two other theories, Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory, and Self-efficacy theory by Albert Bandura.

Performance which assessed the informant's capability to strike back after all the challenges they went through. There is no single measure that will be even remotely close to measuring the performance of everything the police do. The process of measuring the success of the police work is far from straightforward. Police officers are one of various careers that are significant to the growth of national economic and social development because they have a key function and authority with regard to keeping the peace, maintaining public security and safety, and preserving common property for citizens in the community and society which are basic, physical needs in human society (Chokprachakhat, 2011). A range of factors influences individuals' career aspirations, including gender, socio-economic status, educational level, parents' occupations, parental expectation (Domenico & Jones, Citation2007), as well as the commonly perceived nature of a profession, career seekers' personal attributes, goals and other motivators. Among these influences, gender is powerful (Osipow & Fitzgerald, Citation1996). In policing—an archetype of the traditionally male-dominated institutions—women are still underrepresented across the globe and it is observed that recruiting female officers is a challenge facing police organizations (Raba-Hemp & Garcia, Citation 2020).

Performance theory also described the impact of validation of one's self. Most of the informants shared they are certain about their sexual orientation and is proud of their achievements. Performer's mindset includes actions that engage positive emotions. Examples include setting challenging goals, allowing failure as a natural part of attaining high performance, and providing conditions in which the performer feels an appropriate degree of safety. It is argued that police officers can achieve greater control in a psychiatric disturbance situation if they conceive of and treat the person more like a system of forces than a set of personality characteristics (Arcaya, 1989). The purpose and objective of this study is to explore the experiences of Lesbian Police Officers assigned in Cebu City Police Office. Moreover, this study revealed how the informants being tasked in a riskier and more dangerous situation because they are deemed strong and brave because of their sexual orientation. Performance theory explains that immersion in a physical, social, and intellectual environment can elevate performance and stimulate personal as well as professional development.

Elements include social interactions, disciplinary knowledge, active learning, emotions (both positive and negative), and spiritual alignment.

METHODS

To explore the informants' experiences in their work world, this study utilized qualitative research method and employed a phenomenological approach through in-depth interviews and focused group discussion. This study was conducted in Cebu City Police Office. It is a division of the Philippine National Police (PNP) which has jurisdiction over Cebu City and is under Police Regional Office VII (Central Visayas). Its headquarters is located in Camp Sotero Cabahug. As of October 1, 2022, the current CCPO Director is Police Colonel Ireneo Dalogdog. Cebu City is the regional center of Central Visayas. The city is a significant center of commerce, trade and education in Visayas and is considered as a 1st class highly urbanized city because of its growing economy. It has a land area of 315 square kilometers (122 sq. mi). Metro Cebu had a total population of 2, 849, 213 and comprises of 80 barangays. These are grouped into two congressional districts, with 46 barangays in the northern district and 34 in the southern district.

During the conduct of my study, the CCPO had only eleven police stations under it namely: Police Station 1 – Parian, Police Station 2 - Osmeña Boulevard, Police Station 3 - Waterfront Pier, Police Station 4 – Mabolo, Police Station 5 - Carbon Market, Police Station 6 - Sawang Calero, Police Station 7 - Poblacion Pardo, Police Station 8 – Talamban, Police Station 9 – Guadalupe, Police Station 10 – Labangon, Police Station 11 – Mambaling. Recently, the CCPO added two more stations to strengthen the police force; Police Station 12 - Barangay Malubog, and lastly Police Station 13 – Barangay Adlaon. The new breed of police officers were the informants of this study. Six (6) informants were all interviewed individually, while four (4) were in a focused group discussion. Field notes and an audio recording device were also used in the interview process to supplement the data collection and to accurately transcribe the informants' responses. I utilized Colaizzi's method of data analysis from transcribing of responses to assigning line numbers, coding of significant statements, providing formulated meanings of the statements, clustering of core meanings, to re-groupings of clustered themes to finally obtain the fourteen (14) emergent themes. The researcher employed the Colaizzi's method of analysis in this study. The informant's responses during the interview were interpreted appropriately and using the Colaizzi's coding factors it was considered to identify the informant's emotions, frequency and the extensiveness in which the researcher identified emergent themes. First, the researchers listened to the audio-recorded interviews several times and transcribed the data collected to get a general sense of the ideas presented. The transcription format was verbatim translated to English. The next step was to extract from the transcript phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the investigated problem to get significant statements (SS), then spell out the meaning of each substantial statement to arrive with formulated meaning (FM). The formulated meaning was then organized into themes, and these themes evolved into theme clusters. There was integration of results and the researchers wrote a detailed, and exhaustive description of the lived experiences of the informants. From this, the essential structure of the problem being studied was formulated.

The researcher used ethical principles in research in the conduct of the study especially during the data gathering procedure. The researcher ensured that during and after the conduct of the study, the research informants will not be subjected to harm in any way whatsoever. Likewise, respect for the dignity of research informants was also prioritized. Nevertheless, an informed consent form was signed by the informants in order to know their rights before the conduct of research. The signed form included the voluntary participation to the interview and to answer the questions according to their satisfaction. After the collection of data, the researcher was able to cinch an adequate level of confidentiality of the research data. Anonymity of individuals and organizations who participated in the research was also ensured. Nevertheless, an informed consent form signed by the informants in order for them to know their rights before the conduct of research.

Hence, to justify that the researcher addressed the ethical considerations aspect of this study, the following information was clearly stipulated in some sections of this study, to wit: 1. Voluntary participation of informants in the research is important. 2. The use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language needs to be avoided in the formulation of questionnaire/interview/focus group questions. 3. Privacy and anonymity of informants is of a paramount important. 4. Acknowledgement of works of other authors used in any part of the study. 5. Maintenance of the highest level of objectivity in discussions and analyses throughout the research. Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of four different components — credibility, the validity of the findings; transferability, the applicability of the findings to other contexts; dependability, reliability of the findings at another time; and confirmability, objectivity of the researchers while carrying out his/her research. The combination of these four terms constitutes towards the trustworthiness criteria, thus, forming conventional pillars for qualitative methodology (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Credibility is the first aspect or criterion that must be established. It is seen as the most important aspect or measure in establishing trustworthiness because credibility essentially asks the researcher to clearly link the research study's finding with reality in order to demonstrate the truth of the research findings.

The researcher was also able to establish transferability by providing a robust and detailed account of his experience during data collection. The researcher made explicit connections to the cultural and social contexts that surround data collection. This means talking about where the interviews occur, the general setup of the environment, and other aspects of data collection that help provide a richer and fuller understanding of the research setting. Thus, it constitutes to the idea that the research study's findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. Dependability, on the other hand, it was also important to trustworthiness because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. The researcher aimed to verify that findings are consistent with the raw data collected, making sure that if some other researchers are to look over the data, they would arrive at similar findings, interpretations, and conclusions about the data. This is important to make sure that there is not anything missed in the research study, or that the researchers are not sloppy or misguided in his or her final report. Confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness the researcher has to establish in this study. This criterion has to do with the level of confidence that the research's findings

are based on the informant's narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was founded on four essential objectives to explore the lived experiences of the new breed of Police Officers in Cebu City, Philippines. To gather detailed and relevant data to achieve the objectives of this study, there are a total of sixteen research questions that were answered by all the informants. Their responses became the fundamental basis of the fourteen themes discussed in this part.

Theme No. 1: Family is the Biggest Support System: The informants considered their family as their source of inspiration. They gathered strength with the thoughts of their family's unconditional support and motivation. They also found another source of inspiration in helping the people in the community especially those who experienced abused and injustice. The informants realized that there is happiness and satisfaction as a public servant and they valued the trust they received from the people. There was a time that one of the informants saw how the people appreciated their and efforts in the community and was inspired to do better as a police officer.

It was also imperative that they received their family's encouragement which gave them confidence to perform their duties well. They also told me that they were able to overcome the challenges they encountered due to the support and motivation provided by their families. They were their source of inspiration to keep moving forward. One of the informants said that her source of inspiration is her family and the people in the community who needs help. Another statement from one of the informants said that she never gets tired of work because his family is on his mind all the time.

Theme No. 2: Acceptance is the Road to Change: This theme corresponds to the informant's relationship between their colleagues and to describe the sense of belongingness to the organization. It was noted that one of the informants shared that she never felt shame coming out even at an earlier age because her parents were always supportive and understanding towards her. They never judge their choices and trusted their preference, not only that but waiting for them to properly find their own place where they most felt comfortable. Based on the interview, one of the informants stated that she believed gender did not matter as long as applicants are qualified. Another informant said she was accepted by her colleagues like siblings.

Theme No. 3: Unwavering Dedication Towards Job: One of the responses of the informants was how they were able to achieved their childhood dream which is to be a part of the PNP organization. These were the results of dedication, enthusiasm and full of self-sacrifice. I gathered from the informants that they all share the same sense of responsibility to become a better version of themselves as they are a public servant and the people are looking up to them. When people learn how to learn and grow, they are empowered to create results that makes a difference. In this part, the informant shared that because of her job, she always tended to the victims of domestic violence and was able to learn from it even though she doesn't have experience about being in a violent relationship with a man. She aimed to improve her service to

the community in order to pursue her passion of helping and protecting innocent people. In addition to that, during the course of the interview, the informants all come to agree that if success would come easily to people, they would expect that good results can come easy and setbacks and failure might discourage them fast. It requires perseverance and continuous effort to stick around even when it's tough and come out stronger from the adversities they encountered through the performance of their duty as police officers.

Theme No. 4: Turning into A New Leaf: The informants who went into rigid training, humans as they are, learned to follow strict rules and regulations of their organization and evolved overtime as someone who is reliable and are strong members of the police force. During the course of the interview, one of the informants admitted to being unruly prior to becoming a police officer. Those hardships that she encountered during the training and the performance of her duties has made her a more sensible and mature person. It is important to note as well that their realization of their role in the society as law enforcement officers where people look up to them as someone with authority and discipline made them understood the level of influence they embodied especially to the community. The emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of a person can influence how they feel about their personal abilities in a particular situation. Thus, by learning how to manage anxiety and enhance their mood when experiencing challenging situations, individuals can improve their sense of self-efficacy. To give my own observation, the informants are strong-willed and most of them believed that being a lesbian is to their advantage because of the nature of their job. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean they are underestimating their straight colleagues, they just appreciate the opportunity they have to showcase their strengths and make women in general proud.

Theme No. 5: Dominated by Rules: It described the struggles faced by the lesbian police officers in the performance of their duties. Throughout the interview, I observed that at first, they were not comfortable to talk about their sexual orientation which gave me an impression that they might have negative experiences before while opening up about their sexual orientation to other people. One of the informants revealed how disappointed she was when some people cannot accept the fact that they existed. One also shared her experience of violating the rule in order to surprise her girlfriend. It turned out bad for her and her colleagues because they were all punished by their exercise instructor. One of the informants even shared that she had to hide her first girlfriend from her family for the fear of rejection and being judged. It turned out that her mother already suspected it but waited for her to come clean about it. The informants looked up to their seniors as their role model. They perceived them with similar goals in life, going through the same course of discipline and training and overcoming it to become who they aimed to be today.

Theme No. 6: Homophobic Remarks: This theme described how the informants handled the challenges they experienced during the performance of their duties. Most of them did not feel being discriminated openly but the way people joke about their sexual orientation made them hurt or uncomfortable. Citing this article by Annelise Mennicke, Jill Gromer, Karen Oehme & Lindsey MacConnie (2018) stated that Criminal justice culture values traditional masculinity, which has led to adverse workplace experiences for officers who identify as

lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). This study used focus group data to explore the workplace experiences of 10 law enforcement and 4 corrections officers in the US who attended an LGBT criminal justice conference in 2012. Gay men reported more severe and overt discrimination experiences, while women experienced more covert discrimination. Gay men in the focus groups described engaging in impression management behaviors by acting hypermasculine so as not to raise suspicions about sexual identity and to address presumptions about workplace competency. Additionally, participants believed that homophobia in the work environment created safety concerns for officers working in corrections settings, as participants did not trust that their co-workers would have their back or provide assistance in threatening situations. Conclusions underscore the need to foster supportive and non-discriminatory policies that value contributions across gender identities and expressions.

The informant told me she knew she will not be discriminated in the organization, but they always joked around about their sexuality to the point that these jokes became normal for them even if it hurts them most of the times. The informant continued to share that even if she cannot relate to some of their topics more specifically when they talk about marriage, she chose to ignore it and become used to it overtime and gave her full attention to her job as a police officer. Another informant admitted that she learned discipline the hard way by committing a violation during the training, she then realized that rules are made to be followed, not to be broken.

Theme No. 7: Facing Barriers: This theme highlighted the personal struggles of the informants not just in their personal lives but to their professional lives as well. the informants came to realized that they are not defined by what others perceived of them, but what they can do to improve their role as a police officer. This could involve in any kind of life situation of an individual, be it in their personal or professional life. Most of the informants felt the need to defend themselves whenever their colleagues joke around about their sexual orientation, even though they understood they were just joking, they always felt hurt by the fact that they cannot respect their gender preference. Adler's theory differed with the Freudian theory in that when Freud stressed on pleasure and sexuality, Adler emphasized the complexity of individual motivation. He also laid much emphasis on social conditions which Freud tended to ignore (IvyPanda, 2019). The informants have been comfortable with their feelings ever since they were able to recognize that they are different from other girls. Though, most of them have difficulties expressing themselves growing up due to the fear of rejection and judgement from the people.

One of the best lessons stated by one of the informants was to persevere and work hard even if she was not in her peak health condition, she was battling with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) while she was on training and for the entirety of her training, she was bleeding irregularly and her body felt lethargic all the time. She managed to stay course with her tasks and responsibilities as a police trainee and she realized that in order for them to be strong, they have to focus on their goals and to keep a positive outlook in life.

Theme No. 8: No prejudice and discrimination: The informants did not experienced discrimination openly within their organization but they always felt inferior because

according to one of the informants, they always become the center of jokes especially if it's about their sexuality. Sometimes, they are hesitant to talk because the questions being thrown are private. According to the study described in Ganjavi (2000), the overall quality of police service was rated as most important to the public, over other specific measures, such as the level of crime and the visibility of police in the neighbourhood. Moreover, there is a symbiotic relationship between the public and the police with respect to how effective the police are, or are deemed to be: "police depend heavily on the public to provide vital information about criminal or suspicious activities and to serve as witnesses in trials, both of which are predicated upon positive police-community relations" (Chow, 2011: 649). One of the criteria of the informants to be part of this study is they have to be a part of the Philippine National Police not less than five years and that they are fully-aware of their sexual orientation. Becoming part of the organization felt right for most of the informants because they believed they are capable of doing the job right. From the recruitment process, going through the selection of aspiring applicants, until they completed all the trainings, they came to agree that the organization does not care about their sexual orientation, although they also thought they could not please everyone, they constantly thought about their family, friends and their loved ones with their goals in mind to accomplish their long-awaited dreams, just like how one of the informants struggled with health issues while in training, she remained focused on her goal and achieved her goals in the end.

Theme No. 9: Turn A Blind Eye: It explained the informants' experiences from people who pass on judgement because of their sexual orientation. Even though most of the informants respected their opinion, they cannot help but feel disappointed because some would even say they are not a child of God because they are sinners. Instead of being affected by it, the informants used those as a motivation to become the bigger person and tried to understand them. One informant shared how she avoided misunderstandings to live a stress-free life.

Most of them learned how to adopt with the environment that sometimes felt hostile but they learned that experience is the best teacher and that's where they could learn so much, to prepare for a better future. In times the informants felt like they being subjected to criticisms and social stigma, they became stronger to face any challenges in the field and even in their personal lives.

A healthy sense of self-efficacy helps people to not be at the mercy of their negative emotional states that stem from failures and disappointment. Instead, they rise from the ashes of their failures gracefully, with a healthy dose of optimism and resilience; They believed that they can bounce back with determination and not to let their negative emotions block their future efforts is a critical outcome of self-efficacy — one that relates closely to the concept of emotional intelligence. (Heuven, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Huisman, 2006).

Theme No. 10: Optimistic View of Life: It represents the positive mindset of the informants. They believed that only God can judge them and as long as they are doing their job right and hurting no one would benefit them in the long run. They visualized themselves staying until retirement and live a stable life in the future. A 1976 U.S. study complements these findings (Marx, 1976) by highlighting the importance of correlating citizen behaviour, perceptions of personal safety,

levels of victimization and reported crime levels in order to achieve a true measure of police effectiveness. The informants had similar experiences where in people tried to mock them with the basis of religion and morality. Some people questioned their choices in life. When their colleagues talked about marriage and the informants find themselves in an awkward situation because most of the time, they get asked about their intimate relationship with someone too. The informants tried their best to protect their privacy and focused to get their job done properly rather than dwelling with people's negative remarks about religion and morality. Knowing how the public feels about the police can help maintain public order, increase community-police cooperation, develop appropriate policing policies and practices, as well as concentrate police efforts where they are needed the most (Ashcroft et al, 2003).

Theme No. 11: Wholehearted Commitment Towards Work: This theme showed how the informant's commitment in their line of duty. The informants shared how their family became a part of their motivation to strive harder. Other than that, the informants also take the task of helping and serving the community seriously as it gives them a sense of achievement to see happiness on their faces. According to this article entitled Diversity in Blue: Lesbian and Gay Police Officers in a Masculine Occupation. Men and Masculinities by Miller, S. L., Forest, K. B., & Jurik, N. C. (2003). The authors are interested in how multiple identities involving race-ethnicity, gender, and "out" versus "closeted" status shape officers' strategies for surviving in a potentially hostile work environment. The findings suggest that these officers support a more humane approach to policing and see themselves as particularly qualified to work within marginal communities. Despite the structural barriers of homophobia and sexism that tempered these officers' full acceptance and access to the police subculture, lesbian and gay officers struggled to balance job demands with their sexual orientation, gender, race-ethnicity, and other dimensions of their identities (Miller, et al., 2003).

One of the informants recalled how fulfilling it was to be in touch with the community. She said that it made her happy knowing people was learning to trust the organization again. During the interview I felt the sincerity of one of the informants when she said that her main goal is to continue to improve her skills so that she can help more people from the community, especially the children, women and the elderly. One also stated that her only aim is to help the community to the best of her ability and protect people from the criminals.

Theme No. 12: Triumph Over Fears: This shared the side of the informants that shows their humanity. Even though police officers are often portrayed as someone who is strong, rough and skilled, most of the informants agreed that they have to conquer their fears in order to reach their full potential. There is no single measure that will be even remotely close to measuring the performance of everything the police do. The process of measuring the success of the police work is far from straightforward. Police officers are one of various careers that are significant to the growth of national economic and social development because they have a key function and authority with regard to keeping the peace, maintaining public security and safety, and preserving common property for citizens in the community and society which are basic, physical needs in human society (Chokprachakhat, 2011).

The informants wish to encouraged other members of the LGBTQIA+ community by not letting the opportunities went by as policing might be their calling too. For female officers, particularly influential factors include “opportunity to help others,” “pay and benefits” and “job security” (Raganella & White, Citation2004; Todak, Citation2017); they may place more emphasis on service aspects of police work (Lester, Citation1983); and a lack of other job alternatives has also been identified as a strong reason for women joining the police (Foley et al., Citation2008). The informants adapted the idea that if you are a lesbian, you are expected to be tougher and stronger than straight women, hence, they believed that they have an advantage compared to them in terms of their position in the PNP organization. They pictured themselves as someone who would fit to be in a risky environment and more dangerous situations. The fact is that, overall, crimefighting, law enforcement and public order maintenance are deemed to be men’s fields of work (Shen, Citation2022). This theory emphasized the importance of gender equality, gender management and creating approaches to counteract sexism and other forms of discrimination in the organization.

Theme No. 13: Organizational Diversity and Inclusion: It elucidated the informants’ experiences and give light to this pressing issue of diversity and inclusion in the organization. Diversity climate is the extent to which employees perceive their organization to be supportive of underrepresented groups, both in terms of policy implementation and social integration. Most of the informants shared they are certain about their sexual orientation and is proud of their achievements. It is argued that police officers can achieve greater control in a psychiatric disturbance situation if they conceive of and treat the person more like a system of forces than a set of personality characteristics (Arcaya, 1989). The need to adopt new recruitment methods to attract LGBTQ individuals was a topic discussed at length in a 2016 law enforcement forum on recruitment in the 21st century hosted by the COPS Office and Strategic Applications International (SAI). Forum member William Shepard of the New York City Police Department (NYPD), who is also a member of the Gay Officers Action League New York (GOAL NY), pointed out that simply “changing photos, putting gender on the paperwork, and creating forums for discussion has created a good critical mass of transgender people joining the police department (Dispatch, 2021).

One of the informants said that she believed that diversity should start in the recruitment process of the organization, she believed that it is not gender-biased, and everyone is welcome as long as they share the same goal, and that is to serve and to protect. The informants shared some of the times when they were hesitant to show their true feelings because their parents might not understand them but they were lucky to have supportive families that respected their decision and their sexual orientation. Just like these new breed of police officers who identified themselves as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, they shared the same approached in the performance of their duties, and they developed a sense of commitment to their job, they all likely to overcome swiftly from disappointments and took the challenges as steps for their success in the future. Difficulty and failure don't mean defeat; instead, these individuals redouble their efforts and look for new ways to overcome (Cherry, 2022).

Theme No. 14: Spirit of Camaraderie and Kindness: It described the best feeling according to our informant. On one of my interviews, the informant told me the best feeling for her is when she earned the community’s trust. She was worried because police officers are widely used as villains in the television so some people like children and the elderly do not trust them easily. She was thankful for the community relations program because that way, they can serve the community and show them that they this generation of police officers are doing their best to be trusted. narrates the informants’ statements about being tasked in a riskier and more dangerous situation because they are deemed strong and brave because of their sexual orientation. Using survey data collected from a sample of law enforcement officers in a large urban police agency in the southeastern United States, this research examines the differences between male and female officers in terms of perception of stressors in policing and coping strategies used in response to stress. The findings indicate that female officers have significantly higher mean stress scores on several items (particularly those regarding safety factors) and are significantly more likely to use positive coping strategies compared to male officers (Bonner, H. S., & Brimhall, A. 2022). Another article talked about the Recommendations for Recruitment and Work Environment of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community who would like to join the police force. The forum members agreed that more changes in policies and practices are needed, not only to recruit from the LGBTQ community, but also to promote a departmental culture in which people of all sexual orientations and identities can thrive. To achieve this, they suggested additional actions: a.) Actively recruiting candidates in locations and places that welcome the LGBTQ community. b.) Adopting policies and procedures that accommodate officers seeking to transition. c.) Asking sworn officers who identify as LGBTQ to educate and mentor LGBTQ recruits. d.) Consulting with advocacy and affinity groups on best practices and strategies to recruit members of the LGBTQ community. e. Declaring zero tolerance for discrimination against or exclusion of LGBTQ officers. f.) Emphasizing that the LGBTQ community is supported in all aspects of policing. g.) Meeting regularly with advocacy and affinity groups to monitor community sentiment and emerging issues impacting the LGBTQ community. h.) Paying attention to gender identification language, such as the use of appropriate and accurate pronouns. i.) Promptly responding to bias from fellow officers or departmental staff (Dispatch, 2021).

Being a part of the PNP organization, there are many skills that a police officers should possess. Aside from being able to serve and protect the community, it is necessary to understand interpersonal communication concept to be able to relate to various topics, resolve conflicts, actively listening to build rapport and practice empathy in the performance of their duties. The informants all have the sincerity and genuine desire to connect with the people around them like their colleagues, family, friends and even the people in the community. These values they shared would be a great example for the aspiring applicants regardless of their sexual orientation.

CONCLUSION

The LGBTQIA+ community must continue to celebrate their uniqueness, vibrance, and diversion. They must continue to preach their rights not to drag others but to come up with a peaceful resolution that could benefit not only their diverse

community but all mankind and the organizations who keep the peace and order as well. It is important to note that they should use their platform to promote peace, equality, justice and culture. The Lesbian Police Officers who are the informants of this study must continue to devote their time in the service of the Filipino people in the community. They must not find validation from other people or the organization, rather they must seek that acceptance within themselves. Hold on to the unwavering support of their family and aim to inspire other people by sharing their light, genuine intentions and commitment to their duties and responsibilities as a new breed of police officers. The government must consistently promote gender sensitivity seminars and symposiums for public awareness, provide opportunities for other members of the LGBTQIA+ community to be heard and showcase their skills and talents to the community. The study further revealed that the new breed of police officers who identified themselves as a member of the LGBTQIA+ often faced discrimination from their colleagues, the community and even from their families. These lesbian police officers have chosen to stay committed and dedicated to serving and protecting their communities. They are also confident to raise awareness and encourage police aspirants who claimed to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA+) who are maybe considering a career in the police force or other law enforcement agencies.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher has listed a series of recommendations on how to improve the experiences of lesbian police officers and other members of the LGBTQIA+ in their workplace. These include; For the Police Superintendent and Direct Officers, they should uphold gender equality in the recruitment of police officers and remove gender restrictions in recruitment and selection process, be consistent with the national policy on Gender and Development and remain to be responsive to perennial gender issues and concerns, like gender equality and empowerment of women. For Cebu City Police Office (CCPO), they must continue to improve their system to ensure transparency and integrity of administrative processes, particularly in recruitment and selection to eliminate possible opportunities for irregular practices of undue influence, favoritism, fraud and corruption. Promoting inclusivity and diversity in the organization is one of the best steps to foster a positive work environment. For National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), must provide efficient programs on gender equality, be consistent on raising awareness on pressing issues such as discrimination, gender stereotype, bullying and work harassment especially towards the members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Actively seek out new perspectives and ideas and observe diverse traditions. Celebrates differences and encourage a more productive and peaceful workplace. For the Local Government Unit (LGU), they should allocate funds for the formulation of programs and assistance for members of the deprived members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Provide assistance in educational aspects as well as livelihood programs. Provide opportunities for them to learn new skill sets to learn or improve. Other recommendations for the Philippine National Police (PNP). They must be aware of the importance of their role in the community to attain peace and order. They must lead in delivering seminars and symposiums about gender sensitivity, gender equality and other pressing matters concerning the LGBTQIA+ community.

This will give confidence not only to the lesbian police officers but to the people in the community because they can trust the law enforcement. The police applicants must also be respectful and ready to set boundaries as to not force their belief upon others. This can be useful if they have a difficulty expressing their sexual orientation, or knew someone who might. This will help them create rapport to their fellow applicants and to their seniors as well. Finally, the community must also be educated about respecting other people's sexual orientation. Whether they are pro or anti LGBTQIA+, they must be educated of these matters as well. Not only limited to the members of the LGBTQIA+ community but to all types of gender. Being disrespectful and mistreatment of the members of the LGBTQIA+ police officers break down trust, inhibits communication, and prevents officers from effectively protecting and serving their communities. To create a diverse and inclusive workplace for the new breed of police officers, these recommendations would help to ensure that they are able to serve their communities with the best of their skills and abilities without feeling inferior nor superior with the counterpart.

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