

Lived Experiences of the Philippine Coast Guards Personnel in Performing their Functions

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ABSTRACT

The Philippine Coast Guard Personnel played a vital role on both the land and water, with its main responsibilities being the protectors of marine resources, the environment, and the lives and property at sea, as well as aiding in the enforcement of maritime laws under Philippine Jurisdiction. Their experiences in carrying out their duties include a variety of activities and problems. Each time they face harsh weather and tough situations in order to save lives and respond to distress calls, they risk their personal safety, witness difficult circumstances, and reap the benefits of supporting others in need throughout their lives. Their training, expertise, and commitment enable them to overcome challenges and carry out their responsibilities as Philippine coast guardians. The study explored lived experiences of the Philippine Coast Guard Personnel in performing their functions. The study included ten (10) personnel of Philippines Coast Guards participants of the study. This study was conducted during face to face interviewed. Results showed that the four (4) main themes based on the responses of the respondents such as: Family Centeredness, Sense of Service, Performing Challenging Duties and Responsibilities and Dealing with the Challenges. The personnel of Philippine Coast guard were continuously performing their duties and responsibilities for the safety of community travelers and living species in sea. Thus, safeguarding the sea and keeping citizens safe in voyage is evident that the personnel of Philippine coast guard were diligent in doing their duties and responsibilities.

Keywords: Challenges; Coast guard; Devotion; Duties and responsibilities; Experiences.

1. Introduction

Coast guard is a maritime law enforcement organization tasked with maintaining the security and safety of coastal waterways as well as safeguarding its marine resources (Kim et al., 2020). Countries with a sizable coastline are more likely to form coast guards, and depending on the needs of the country, the duties of the coast guard may change. As front liners in the maritime domain, coast guard personnel are challenged with a myriad of risks and responsibilities while executing their functions (Østhagen et al., 2020). Also, by exploring their various aspects of professional lives, such as training, work conditions, and personal challenges faced in fulfilling their obligations by these maritime guardians. These experiences will shape their resilience, dedication, and ability to adapt to dynamic situations in the line of duty (Barasa, 2018; Mbauand Gilson, 2018).

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is a maritime law enforcement agency that is responsible for promoting safety and security in the country's waters (Gacasa et al., 2022). Its personnel perform a range of functions that include search and rescue, maritime security, marine environmental protection, and maritime law enforcement (Force et al., 2021). One of the most significant challenges that Philippine Coast Guard personnel face is ensuring the safety and security of the country's vast coastline and territorial waters.

The Philippines is an archipelagic country, with over 7,000 islands, making it difficult to patrol and secure its maritime borders effectively (Morris, 2018; Paoli, 2018). The coast guard is in charge of a wide range of tasks, such as maritime search and rescue operation often the main organization in charge of carrying out such operations in the territorial waters of their nation as well as maritime safety enforcing maritime safety laws to make sure that ships operating in their waters adhere to safety regulations and avoid mishaps. maritime environmental protection; in charge of monitoring and upholding laws pertaining to marine environmental protection, such as responding to

oil spills and upholding laws pertaining to waste disposal and pollution prevention. Work to prevent and resolve marine security issues such as piracy, smuggling, and illicit fishing (Abi-Zeid, 2019; Morin and Nilo, 2019).

Philippine Coast Guard personnel have received extensive training and are provided with the tools they need to efficiently carry out their duties. Despite these difficulties, Philippine Coast Guard employees are renowned for their unyielding dedication to preserving the security and safety of the coastal towns and waterways off the Philippines (Cucharo et al., 2022). Philippine Coast Guard employees have led the charge in delivering aid and immediate support to impacted communities during times of crisis, such as during typhoons and other natural disasters. They have put their lives in danger to bring food, medication, and other necessities to those in need while rescuing those who were trapped at sea or in flooded regions (Hillier et al., 2018).

The Philippine Coast Guard has demonstrated its commitment to duty by working to safeguard the nation's marine resources and uphold maritime laws and regulations. Several interdictions and seizures of boats involved in smuggling, illicit fishing, and other maritime crimes have been carried out by Philippine Coast Guard troops (Kim et al., 2018). Overall, the professionalism and commitment of the Philippine Coast Guard's staff, who are devoted to serving the nation and guaranteeing the safety and security of its seas and coastal towns, is demonstrated by the organization's devotion to duty (Frittelli et al., 2019).

Like any organization, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) faces challenges and problems that need to be addressed. The Philippine Coast Guard is often faced with limited resources, including budget constraints and insufficient manpower. This can make it difficult for the agency to carry out its various responsibilities effectively. Philippine Coast Guard's equipment and assets are aging and may require maintenance or replacement. This can affect the agency's ability to respond to emergencies and carry out its various functions (Sutinen, 2018; Yahaya and Hirunruk, 2018).

Corruption like many government agencies, the Philippine Coast Guard may face issues related to corruption, including bribery and nepotism. This can undermine the agency's effectiveness and public trust in its operations. As the nature of maritime security and safety evolves, the Philippine Coast Guard needs to ensure that its personnel are trained and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their functions effectively. This requires ongoing investment in training and professional development programs (Manglicmot et al., 2019). The Philippine Coast Guard needs to coordinate with other agencies, including other law enforcement agencies, local governments, and international organizations. Effective coordination is crucial to ensuring that the Philippine Coast Guard can carry out its functions effectively and efficiently (Cucharo et al., 2022).

From the literature reviewed, the researchers identified the Philippine Coast Guard Personnel faces variety of challenges in carrying of the duties. To address these challenges, the Philippine Coast Guard can take various steps, including securing more resources and funding, improving training and professional development programs, investing in new equipment and technologies, and enhancing coordination with other agencies and stakeholders. Moreover, it was also notice the lack of studies about coping mechanism of the Philippines Coast Guard with regards to measurement in preventing and addressing workload and burnout that may lead to poor performance and implementation of agency operation.

2. Materials and Methods

The qualitative research method was applied in this study. The project was carried out using a phenomenological methodology. Following Moustakas transcendental phenomenology, it is a method for analyzing study respondent's data to identify important themes (Moustakas, et al., 1994). A philosophy of experience is phenomenology. The lived experience of humans is the ultimate source of all meaning and value for phenomenology. All philosophical frameworks, scientific hypotheses, and artistic evaluations are abstractions from the ebb and flow of the experienced world. This research design is suited to explore the lived experiences of the Philippine Coast Guard personnel in performing their functions.

This study was conducted in two (2) stations of Philippine Coast Guard in Ozamiz City namely, Philippine Coast Guard Main Office Ozamiz at Cotta Beach, Purok 5, Brgy. Baybay Triunfo, Ozamiz City and Coast Guard Substation Ozamiz at the 2nd floor Villaseran Bldg., 127 port road, Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental. The City has a land area of 169.95 square kilometers or 65.62 square miles which constitutes 8.47% percent of Misamis Occidental's total area. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 140,334. This represented 22.73% percent of the total population of Misamis Occidental province, or 2.79% percent of the overall population of the Northern Mindanao. It is rich with agricultural resources and has become the center for commerce, health, transportation and education in this part of Mindanao thanks to its strategic location and its peaceful atmosphere. The Interesting places to be visit in the city include, the Our Lady of Immaculate Concepcion Pipe Organ, the only existing pipe organ in Mindanao and one of a few in the country, the Bukagan Hill which has a view of Ozamiz City and Panguil Bay and is home to four great bells installed in 1948.

That study participated by ten (10) Philippine Coast Guard personnel who was assigned in Ozamiz City. The participants were specifically chosen. They were chosen based on the following criteria: the profile of the participants in terms of gender, age, ranks, years of service, and lived experiences of the Philippine Coast Guard in performing their functions.

The interview guide, used to obtain the information of the Philippine Coast Guard in Ozamiz City to serve as the respondents in the study. The instrument is made up of three parts; opening inquires to determine the respondents willing to answers to our survey, who have experiences in the field and who identified the compliance of the safety.

A recorder sheet was used for content validation from the interview transcripts. Specifically, it documented interview questions and responses of the participants during the conduct of the interview.

A voice recorder was used to capture the essence of the interviewees' responses and provide an accurate, detailed account of the interview process. This allowed the researcher to refer back to the interview to ensure no details were missed in the transcription and description of the responses. The researcher assured that the material served as a source for data gathering purposes only, able to collect information and summarize thoroughly.

In this study, Moustakas (1994) data analysis technique of phenomenological reduction will be used. The transcripts of all respondents gathered from the interviews will be analyzed using the methods of Moustakas. The following are the steps in the phenomenological reduction which serves as guide in analyzing the data gathered: (1)

Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

3. Results and Discussion

This part of the chapter of the study discusses the profile participants. Based on the data, the researchers find that most of the respondents were all male with an average of 5 to 15 years in service with different ranking, specialization and responsibilities. Moreover, the average age of the respondents is ranging 27-38 years old. The (10) ten of the participants are all married.

3.1. Family Centeredness

Many people work primarily to support their families and make it as their motivation where a situation where intrinsic motivation is low, family motivation improves job performance. Family motivation boosts productivity at work by boosting energy and lowering stress, and it is particularly crucial. Family motivation is the desire to work hard for one's family. Therefore, it is a type of pro-social motivation where the target audience is the family in particular (Hong, 2019; Jeong and Downward 2019).

| Name Code | Responses |
|-----------|--|
| <i>P1</i> | <i>"We all know that being a Philippine Coast Guard officer is really difficult, but with the aid of my family, they urge me to pursue and encourage me not to give up until I become an officer".</i> |
| <i>P2</i> | <i>"My motivation to become a Philippine Coast Guard officer was to support my parents at that time, and now that I have own family, they are my incentive to aid and serve the Filipino people and our nation".</i> |

Given the circumstances, the Philippine Coast Guard provides assistance to a wide range of families, communities, and organizations with varied cultural backgrounds and worldviews. These differences must be taken into account in order to ensure that support services and communication tactics are sensitive to and appropriate for varying cultural settings. If the Philippine Coast Guard and the families of its employees are to establish enduring relationships, good communication is essential. It is crucial to have open and honest channels of communication, deliver frequent updates and information, and show openness to questions and complaints (Chua, 2019; Kadirvelu, 2019; Yasin, 2019; Choudhry and Park, 2019). The Philippine Coast Guard should ensure that all families, especially those who may live in rural areas or have little means, have access to support services. This might mean collaborating with nearby community groups or providing online resources and mobile support services. The Philippine Coast Guard, its staff, and the families it helps must collaborate in order for the Philippine Coast Guard to be family-centered. This might mean collaborating with community organizations to provide more resources and services, or it could entail collaborating with family members to develop individualized support and care plans (Zhang, 2020; Liao, 2020; Li and Colbert, 2020). Families should be able to actively participate in providing for and supporting their loved ones via the use of a family-centered strategy. This may include providing information and training, encouraging family involvement in decision-making and empowering families to advocate for their

own needs and preferences (Prosek, 2018; Burgin, 2018; Atkins, 2018, Wehrman, 2018; Fenell, 2018; Carter and Green, 2018).

3.2. Sense of Service

Being devoted to anything entails having a closer-exclusive attention on that subject. When you devote yourself to a cause, you strive to meet its objectives. You prioritize someone else's needs over your own when you are loyal to it especially in your work. The work they conduct takes up a large portion of their waking time. Their work plays a big role in which they are. Most people I know consistently put a lot of effort into their careers. In fact, it plays a significant role in their identity and sense of self (Østhagen et al., 2020).

| Code Name | Responses |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | <i>"As a Philippine Coast Guard member, I've learnt to be unselfish and to prioritize the task to which I've devoted myself. I learned how to interact with individuals from many cultures and faiths, as well as the significance of my profession".</i> |
| P5 | <i>"As a member of the Philippine Coast Guard, I've learned that devotion to duty, hard effort, courage and honesty are essential in completing my tasks".</i> |

The Philippine Coast Guard can honor and respect the sacrifices made by the families of its employees after taking all the relevant aspects into account, including the time spent apart and any potential hazards related to the tasks of their loved ones. This acknowledgment might encourage a sentiment of respect and admiration between people (Kim et al., 2018). They can promote and aid family participation in volunteer endeavors, especially those associated with the mission of the Philippine Coast Guard. This may encourage a feeling of unifying purpose and dedication to serving others. Also, provide family members the chance to participate in training sessions or pay visits to Philippine Coast Guard facilities to learn more about the organization's goals and operations. This may encourage a feeling of unity and mutual understanding (Østhagen, et al., 2020). When making decisions that might have an impact on their loved ones, such as transfer requests or deployment plans, they can ask for comments and advice from family members. This may encourage a spirit of cooperation and shared accountability. Build even further the bond it has with its employees and their families. In addition to ensuring that families are respected and supported as members of the Philippine Coast Guard community, this strategy may aid in the promotion of a culture of service and devotion (Spade et al., 2020).

3.3. Performing Duties and Responsibilities

In works and responsibilities is critical for each member to understand their roles and work duties. The roles and responsibilities should expand to the internal and external stakeholders of the project (possibly at a high level). In this challenges while performing the job the team members will assist the project manager in bringing onboard the appropriate resource for that role, by evaluating their skill set and finding the right match (Wu, 2019; Hu and Zheng, 2019). Being a member of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) entails carrying out difficult tasks and obligations. Working in challenging workplaces, responding to crises, and coping with trying or painful events are

a few examples of these obstacles. Take into account the fact that Philippine Coast Guard can offer assistance to people and their families in coping with the demands of their jobs. This may entail access to mental health resources, counselling services, and assistance for stressed-out or traumatized families (Cetindamar, 2021; Abedin, 2021).

| Code Name | Responses |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | <i>“One of the most significant functions of the Philippine Coast Guard personnel is to offer help to people and perform search and rescue operations in marine events within the maritime jurisdiction”.</i> |
| P3 | <i>“My experiences as a Philippine Coast Guard officer in assisting people by providing relief products to flood victims and generating messages using various jargons”.</i> |

The Philippine Coast Guard is able to identify and accept the effect that difficult tasks and duties may have on families. This might entail responding to the needs and concerns of families as well as educating people about the Philippine Coast Guard's work and any possible difficulties that may arise. The Philippine Coast Guard can encourage behaviors like exercise, a healthy diet, and stress management strategies to help employees and their families practice self-care and resilience. To encourage a sense of achievement and inspiration among employees and their families, the Philippine Coast Guard may commemorate accomplishments both big and small (Kouzes, 2023; Posner, 2023).

3.4. Dealing with the Challenges

Not only help us grow, but they also help us learn valuable lessons about ourselves and the challenges we face. No matter how difficult it is, always ask yourself how you contributed to the situation you found yourself in. Introspection allows you to take responsibility for your actions instead of blaming others (Kadir, 2019; Broberg and da Conceicao, 2019).

| Code Name | Responses |
|-----------|---|
| P2 | <i>“I coped with the challenges that I experienced by strengthening your mind so that are not distracted and impacted by your personal problems, which may affect your performance while on duty. We need to keep our personal lives separate from professional lives”.</i> |
| P5 | <i>“The worst situation that I faced while executing my duty as a Philippine Coast Guard employee was receiving a call from other agencies that severe rains and flooding necessitated that rescue of civilians. I deal with the problem by remaining calm and at ease in times of emergency and think quickly to solve the situation”.</i> |

Philippine Coast Guard employees and their families could experience a variety of difficulties, such as those affecting their personal well-being, work environment, and family relationships. The Philippine Coast Guard can give access to services that can assist troops and their families in overcoming difficulties. This might contain

details on financial assistance, parenting and family relations resources, and mental health services. To foster understanding, support, and problem-solving, the Philippine Coast Guard may enhance communication among employees and their families (Luthans, 2022; Broad, 2022). This might involve frequent get-togethers or meetings as well as having access to communication tools.

To help people and their families enhance their skills and confidence in overcoming obstacles, the Philippine Coast Guard can provide training and development opportunities. Workshops on communication, conflict resolution, and stress management may be included.

The Philippine Coast Guard may foster a supportive environment among its employees and their families by highlighting the value of cooperation, teamwork, and respect for one another. This may entail giving employees and their families the chance to provide and receive assistance as well as identifying and rewarding excellent actions (Majid et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

Insuring the security and safety of Philippine waterways, advancing maritime law enforcement, and reacting to crises and catastrophes are all important tasks performed by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). The Philippine Coast Guard employees must strike a balance between their job and family commitments while they carry out their obligations, which is one of many difficulties they confront. However, the Philippine Coast Guard can improve the wellbeing of its staff members and their families while fostering a culture of excellence, safety, and accountability by adopting a family-centered approach and addressing the elements that lead to effective and rewarding employment. The Philippine Coast Guard must put its employees' safety and wellbeing first while also making sure they have access to the tools, materials, and support services they need to do their jobs successfully. By doing this, the Philippine Coast Guard can maintain its status as a dependable and efficient maritime law enforcement organization and help to ensure the safety and security of the Philippines and its seas as a whole.

5. Recommendations

To guarantee an effective and diverse workforce, the Philippine Coast Guard may concentrate its efforts on retention and recruiting. Attempts to increase the number of women and people of color working for the company is one example of this, as are competitive pay and benefit plans. To tackle shared problems and accomplish similar objectives, the Philippine Coast Guard might work with other institutions and groups. This may entail collaborations with NGOs, community-based groups, and other marine law enforcement authorities. By providing the required tools, instruction, and assistance, the Philippine Coast Guard can put its employees' safety and wellbeing first so they can work safely and successfully. This can include offering mental health support services, encouraging work-life harmony, and putting safety standards and procedures in place. By encouraging moral conduct, recognizing diversity, and enforcing precise regulations and procedures, the Philippine Coast Guard may promote a culture of respect and responsibility. By doing so, you may increase employee accountability and foster a culture of trust and collaboration inside your company. By putting these suggestions into practice, the Philippine Coast Guard may improve its ability to carry out its duties successfully, improve the wellbeing of its employees and their families, and foster a culture of quality, safety, and accountability.

Declarations

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors have declared no competing interests.

Consent for Publication

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

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