



The Implementation of the Anti-Drug War Campaign of the Philippine Government

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Abstract: This study posed questions of whether this would have positive or negative implications to peace and order as well as its impact on communities who were affected directly and indirectly. It is the aim of this study to present statistical validation on the effectiveness of the implementation of the war on drugs of the President through the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) as the lead government agency. Variables such as awareness, efficiency, and transparency were among the key indicators assessed by the selected Barangay officials in Quezon City, particularly those tagged as seriously affected barangays by illegal drugs. The Philippine National Police (PNP) Crime rates in the National Capital Region (NCR) from 2014-2018 were also assessed to determine if the drug war could curtail crime rates in the Metro. Data revealed satisfactory results, which are a clear validation that communities were properly informed on the procedural and legal aspects of implementing the drug war. On the other hand, it was clearly manifested that some programs that encourage the community to divulge drug activities were not effectively disseminated, and trials of drug personalities were not frequently published through media. Moreover, it was also proven that there is no direct link to claim that the drug war had a significant impact in decreasing crime rates in NCR, given the comparison of crime volume before and during the implementation of the war on drugs. This study vividly presented the strong points and weak points of the war on drugs program of the current administration hence, a powerful anchor towards the continuous improvement of its processes through its proper implementation and evaluation of its effectiveness.

Keywords: Drug operations, illegal drugs, PDEA, peace and order, PNP, war on drugs

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INTRODUCTION

The link between drugs and crime has essentially been conceptualized in two ways by researchers: for some there is a causal link between drugs and crime; for others, the relationship is seen as correlational (Rehm et al., 2006). Among the proponents of a causal approach, some researchers argue that substance use leads to crime (Goldstein, 1985; Parker & Bottomley, 1996; Powell, 2011), while others conclude that the relationship is the opposite that it is crime that leads to drug use (Powell, 2011; White & Gorman, 2000). Supporters of the correlational approach on the other hand, argue that the relationship between drugs and crime is coincidental, or that it can be explained by a set of common causes (Besbes, 2016; Dembo, Williams, Wothke, & Schmeidler, 1994; Gatpandan & Ambat, 2017; Powell, 2011; Stevens, Trace, & Bewley-Taylor, 2005).

While it is important to note that the majority of drug users never commit crimes (MacCoun, Kilmer, & Reuter, 2003), there is a significant correlation between crime and the use of drugs in a number of countries. This is the case,

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for example, in Canada (ICPC, 2012) and the United States (National Association of Drug Court Professionals, 2015). Almost two-thirds of their respective prison populations have disorders linked to drug addiction, compared with only 10% of the general population of the two countries (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2014).

The study focused on the efficacy of the implementation of the drug operations campaign of the Philippine government before and after the implementation of the intensified drug operations. It will provide a glimpse on the impact of the drug campaign towards the peace and order situation in the NCR. It will also present how subjects perceive their awareness; its efficiency and transparency on how implementing agencies such as PDEA carry out the marching orders of the president. The study aims to present factual data to support the claims of its efficacy by determining significant or insignificant effects based on records of crime rate.

The city of Quezon was the primary locale utilized by the proponents of the study as the records of the PDEA has identified this part of the Metropolis to be one of the of the most affected by illegal drugs. To gather pertinent data and partial and conclusive information, this geographic location provided then the most robust and rich information needed to come up with findings that may be necessary in determining the most effective way of curtailing the proliferation of illegal drugs in the Philippines.

There is extensive evidence of “drug-corruption” among government officials and employees from numerous countries. In Afghanistan, the illicit opium industry has been found to be “a massive source of corruption that undermines public institutions” (Byrd & Buddenberg, 2006). Antonio Maria Costa, the United Nations anti-drug chief, reports that in Afghanistan police chiefs, governors, and various other government officials are profiting from the opium trade (Barker, 2006). Similarly, in Brazil, Arias (2006) documents the insidious ways that drug corruption “progressively undermines the rule of law, leads to higher levels of human rights abuses, and can pose profound challenges to democracy.” Drug corruption was rampant in Colombia during the height of Pablo Escobar’s rule as a key figure in the illicit cocaine trade during the 1980s. In dealing with officials, Escobar implemented an approach he called *placa o plomo* (silver or lead) in which government representatives were given a choice between accepting a bribe and facing assassination (Singer, 2007).

Given these contentions and the negative impact of drug proliferation to the society, the proponents of the study aims to present a perspective on how illegal drugs in the Philippines is being eradicated and provides and angle on the view point of personnel implementing the war on drugs program on the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation and its impact to peace and order.

This research undertaking will provide the government specifically its implementing agencies such as PDEA a founded basis to further improve the drug implementation through lawful means and considering the rule of law and considering the human rights of people involved. The results of the research will serve as a framework in conceptualizing policies that would decrease crime rates, improve peace and order situation and increase conviction rates among people involved in illegal drugs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The study attempted to validate claims of the effectiveness of the war on drugs of the Duterte Administration. Specifically, it sought to answer the following inquiries:

1. What is the level of awareness, efficiency and transparency on the implementation of the Anti-Drug War campaign of the Philippine government?
2. What is the trend in crime rate before and after the implementation of the operations against drugs?
3. What is the significant difference on the crime rates recorded before and after the operations of the anti-drug war campaign of the government was implemented?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis

H0: *There is no significant difference on the crime rates recorded before and after the operations of the anti-drug war campaign of the government was implemented.*

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

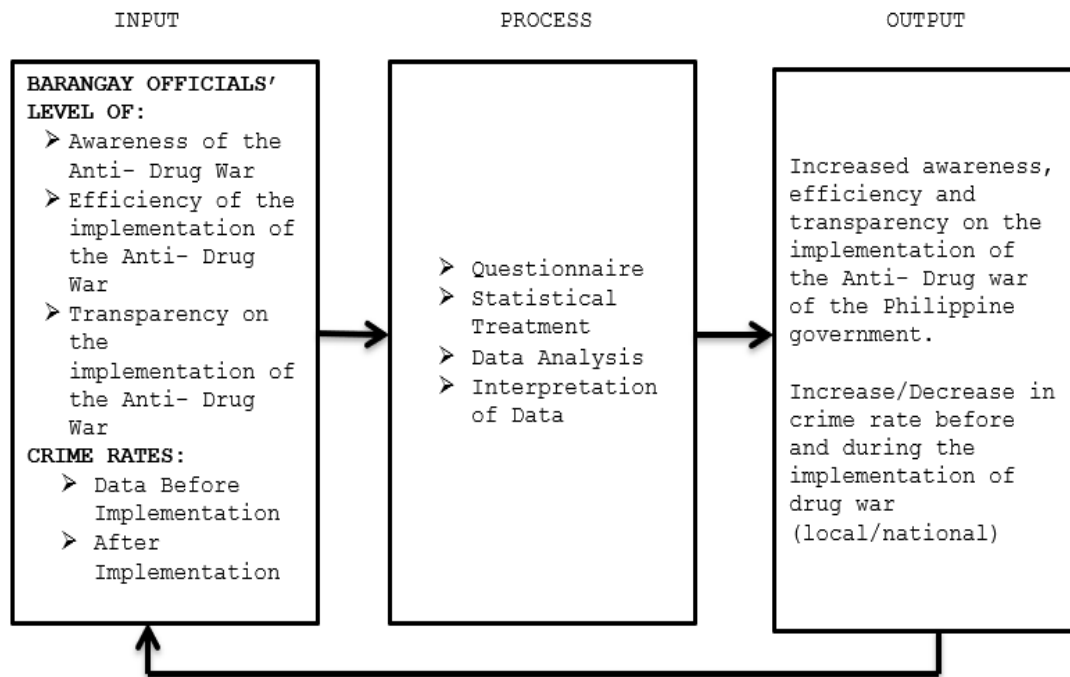


Figure 1 *Conceptual Model*

The study focused on the efficacy of the implementation of the drug operations campaign of the Philippine government before and after the implementation of the intensified drug operations. It provided a glimpse on the impact of the drug campaign towards the peace and order situation in the NCR. It also presented how subjects perceived their awareness; its efficiency and transparency on how implementing agencies such as PDEA carry out the marching orders of the president. The study aimed to present factual data to support the claims of its efficacy by determining significant or insignificant effects based on records of crime rate.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive method of research was utilized in this study which involves the collection of data in order to test a hypothesis concerning the current status of the subject of the study. The triangulation approach was also utilized to provide a multi- perspective and multi- sourced data rendering the research more reliable, verifiable and factual through questionnaire method, interview and data analysis.

The researchers opted to use this kind of research considering the desire of the researchers to obtain first-hand data from the respondents so as to formulate rational and sound conclusions and recommendations for the study.

The study was conducted in Metro Manila, specifically Quezon City where fourteen (14) Barangays are severely affected by illegal drugs. There were sixty-two (62) barangay officials who were the primary respondents of the study. Primarily, the respondents were barangay officials in the selected Barangays in Quezon City and those who have had first person encounters and participation in the drug operations of the PDEA or PNP. These respondents were selected based on attributes that correspond to the data needs of the study - having had first-hand experiences from the drug operations conducted during the incumbency of the Duterte administration. The instrument was a survey-questionnaire constructed by the researchers, guided by an exhaustive review of previous researchers and literature related to the study. The locally constructed questionnaire prepared by the researchers underwent some revisions in terms of content and language structure.

The researchers utilized the online platform Google form to have the questionnaires answered by the respondents the most convenient way possible by providing laptop and internet connectivity; Selected barangay officials were also interviewed; Data gathered were kept confidential and were solely used using statistical treatments and were interpreted with utmost objectivity and impartiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers predetermined subjects in assessing the level of awareness, efficiency and transparency in the implementation of the drug war.

Table 1 *Level of Awareness*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Indicators of drug affectation: the presence of drug addicts, pushers, drug den maintainers and possible shabu clandestine laboratories in the community.	3.5806	Fully Aware
Ample and easy access to information by PDEA about the ill effects of illegal drugs.	3.4677	Fully Aware
Informative campaigns against illegal drugs via TV, print, radio and the internet.	3.4839	Fully Aware
PDEA Operation Private Eye which is designed to encourage private citizens to provide information on illegal drug activities in their communities.	3.4839	Fully Aware
PDEA Operation Private Eye for monetary reward.	3.1774	Aware
Hot spots for illegal drug trading and manufacturing.	3.2581	Fully Aware
Information drive is one of the priorities of PDEA.	3.6613	Fully Aware
PDEA and other law enforcement agencies collaborate and conduct joint anti-drug operations.	3.6613	Fully Aware
The barangays are proactive in anti-drug efforts i.e., Barangay Drug Abuse Councils (BADAC).	3.7903	Strongly Agree
Non-appearance in court of barangay officials as prosecution witness leads to the dismissal of drug cases.	3.3065	Fully Aware
Intensified anti-drug information campaigns of the government reach the barangay level.	3.6452	Fully Aware
RA 10640 requires the participation of barangay officials in the conduct of physical inventory of seized illegal drugs.	3.6613	Fully Aware
Overall	3.51479	Fully Aware

As to the awareness of the implementation of the war on drugs, data showed that respondents have a strong agreement with an average weighted mean of 3.51479 - interpreted as Fully Aware. It can be noted that the community involvement efforts of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (termed Preventive Education efforts) are instrumental in ensuring grassroots awareness of the thrust of the Philippine government, specifically via information drives by the Agency in collaboration with other government agencies such as the PNP, as well as engaging local government officials. Thus, this garnered a weighted mean of 3.6613 interpreted as Fully Aware.

From the respondent's response it can be deduced that PDEA is implementing an effective strategy in informing or disseminating information to the public. These strategies employed by PDEA provided readily accessible information on the government's anti-drug community efforts, such as: 1) Activation of BADAC; 2) Program for Drug-Free Workplace in hotels, restaurants, bars, condominiums, subdivisions and similar locations; 3) PDEA raises drug awareness through comics; 4) Publication of 2018: A banner year for the national anti-drug campaign; and 5) Preventive Education and Involvement Service (PECIS).

The level of awareness of the barangay officials on the government's anti-drug efforts is interpreted as fully aware. The result stemmed from the above-mentioned programs of the government. At the outset, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte asserts that all barangays will be cleared of illegal drugs by the year 2022. With the President Duterte's vision, the PDEA and other law enforcement agencies are mobilized and empowered to accomplish this goal.

One of the strategies utilized by the government is the activation of BADAC. This is the program of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) wherein the barangay officials and other stakeholders are used in efforts to address the drug problem in the barangay level. The DILG and PDEA jointly expounded its effort in the activation of

BADAC. The PDEA conducted training orientation for Local Government Units (LGU) nationwide regarding the parameters on declaring drug-cleared barangays.

At the core of the PDEA's community-based efforts is the PECIS which carries out demand reduction activities to the barangay level, different sectors in the community, private and public institutions, and colleges and universities in the Philippines, using lectures, seminars, meetings, and dialogues. These initiatives are envisioned to increase the awareness of the citizenry on the drug problem in the society and its ill-effects.

Table 2 *Level of Efficiency*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Information report from barangay or concerned citizens were acted upon immediately by PDEA.	3.4032	Highly Efficient
Information are properly validated by PDEA through the conduct of casing, surveillance, and other mode of intelligence build-up.	3.5484	Highly Efficient
Operation Private Eye (OPE) of PDEA is encouraging concerned citizens to report suspected illegal drug activities.	3.5000	Highly Efficient
Most of the arrested suspects in anti-drug operations are known to the public as users and pushers.	3.4516	Highly Efficient
PDEA was able to reduce the drug affectation in the NCR.	3.5161	Highly Efficient
PDEA and other law enforcement agencies are suppressing and preventing the supply of dangerous drugs by conducting High Impact Operations (HIO) and arresting High Value Targets (HVT).	3.5000	Highly Efficient
PDEA arrested High Value Targets.	3.4516	Highly Efficient
PDEA accomplished its mandate to apprehend big-time drug traffickers, neutralize shabu laboratories and seize high volumes of dangerous drugs.	3.4677	Highly Efficient
Most of the arrested people involved in drug pushing, maintenance of drug dens, and manufacturing of dangerous drugs are convicted and jailed.	3.3065	Highly Efficient
Apprehended drug suspects witnessed by Barangay officials and Media or Department of Justice (DOJ) representatives during physical inventory were eventually convicted in court.	3.2581	Highly Efficient
Overall	3.44032	Highly Efficient

As to efficiency of the implementation of the war on drugs, data revealed that respondents have a relatively acceptable view with an average weighted mean of 3.44032 interpreted as Highly Efficient. Validation of information through casing, surveillance and other modes of intelligence build-up is one of the strengths of the implementation of the drug war with a weighted mean of 3.5484 interpreted as Highly Efficient. Because of the involvement of barangay officials, media or the DOJ, respondents find the conviction rate to be Highly Efficient which should be consistently observed for every anti-drug operation, having tallied a weighted mean of 3.2581. But despite compliance to proper processes for apprehension of drug suspects, the resulting data from this study indicates a low appreciation for current conviction rates of drug cases.

Efficiency in the context of the drug war presents the ability of the lead government agencies to properly implement procedures with credibility and allay any suspicion of tampering or unnecessary intervention. This requires, procedural and legal compliance on all parties involved in the apprehension of drug users, traders and manufacturers and eventually conviction of drug personalities.

As a continuous effort to recognize PDEA operating units and personnel who contributed significant accomplishments to the attainment of PDEA's goals, the Agency regularly conducts ceremonies to award plaques and certificates of recognition to its deserving personnel and other personnel of anti-drug law enforcement units. Likewise, to ensure that drug law enforcers are provided with enough legal tools to effectively and efficiently address the drug problem, PDEA initiated the approval of lawmen. Lawmen is an incentive program that provides for the reward of monetary

incentives to law enforcers who participate in the conduct of successful anti-drug operations. This is in line with the provision of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 on the Grant of Compensation, Reward and Award. 2. Board Regulation No. 2, Series of 2016, Amending Section 2.

As a result, apparently lawmen stimulate in the efficiency of all drug enforcement units.

Table 3 *Level of Transparency*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Anti-drug operations are properly coordinated with Barangay Officials, Media or DOJ representatives after arrests are made.	3.4516	Highly Transparent
PDEA Agents respect the human rights of the apprehended drug suspect/s at all times.	3.3548	Highly Transparent
Police (PNP) Drug Enforcement Units (DEU) observe human rights of the arrested drug suspect/s at all times.	3.2419	Transparent
Drug enforcement officers apprise every apprehended drug suspect of the Miranda rights.	3.3387	Highly Transparent
PDEA Agents properly conduct marking and inventory of seized evidence.	3.4839	Highly Transparent
Markings of all seized items were made at the place where the drugs are confiscated to ensure that the evidence recovered from the crime scene is untampered until it reaches the court for presentation.	3.3871	Highly Transparent
PDEA Agents ensure that marking of evidence is done properly because it serves as the starting point in the custodial link.	3.5000	Highly Transparent
PDEA Agents take photographs of the seized drugs while the same is being marked in the presence of the suspects.	3.5000	Highly Transparent
The physical inventory and documentation via photographs of seized evidence is done in the presence of the suspect and witnessed by a representative of the DOJ or a member of the media.	3.4194	Highly Transparent
It is essential that the witnesses such as Barangay officials, Media or DOJ representatives must be present during the physical inventory of seized items from the drug suspect.	3.5000	Highly Transparent
Signatures of witnesses must appear in the copies of physical inventory forms and to provide copies to each of the witnesses.	3.4355	Highly Transparent
Precautionary measures are taken to preserve the integrity and evidentiary value of seized drug evidence.	3.4355	Highly Transparent
Barangay officials and Media or DOJ representatives attest to the integrity of evidence recovered.	3.4677	Highly Transparent
Details of arrests and operations are allowed to be aired by the media to ensure transparency.	3.3387	Highly Transparent
PDEA destroys all confiscated dangerous drugs through thermal decomposition in the presence of DOJ representatives, barangay officials, DILG, non-government organizations and media partners.	3.4032	Highly Transparent
Barangay and Media are informed about the conviction or acquittal of drug offenders cases.	3.2581	Highly Transparent
All drug cases either resulting to dismissal or conviction are aired on media.	3.1290	Transparent
Overall	3.3903	Highly Transparent

Research respondents submitted a high appreciation for the proper marking of evidence in drug cases and photographs taken in the presence of suspects, as well as inventory of seized illegal drugs conducted in front of barangay officials, media or representatives from the DOJ. On the other hand, media coverage and attention on the dismissal or conviction of drug cases are identified as lacking.

The result of the assessment of respondents is a positive feedback to the procedural aspect of the implementation of drug war, with observance to entities that serve as witness to these procedures. However, it was also clear that the public has an interest in gaining access to information regarding the dismissal or conviction of drug personalities through media, as the results could be a validation of the effectiveness of the initiative of the government.

Convictions of drug cases being made more known to the public could also be a deterrent for people involved or being recruited in the illegal drug trade.

Table 4 *Crime Rate in the NCR*

Total Crime Rate From 2014-2018			
Before Implementation	Total Crime Volume	During Implementation	Total Crime Volume
Total	82272	Total	32438

The above-mentioned data presents the tallied five-year crime rate within the NCR from 2014 to 2018, representing the years before and during the implementation of the war on the drugs by the Duterte Administration. Qualitatively, there is a decrease in crime rate equivalent to 60% which shows that somehow the effort to curb the drug problem is working. However, despite aggressive approach to implementing the drug war of the government, statistically it was noticeable that the numbers unconvincingly do not meet the required drop to consider the decrease is significant and it can be inferred also that the drug war may not be an absolute deterrent in decreasing crime occurrence.

Contrary to the barangay officials who were interviewed and they confidently claimed that the crime rate before the implementation of the drug war was at its all-time high although no estimate or numerical value was mentioned by the interviewees but during the implementation of the drug war the crime rate was brought down to as much as 0% in their respective barangays.

Table 5 *Hypothesis Testing*

Crime Rate	Mean	S.D.	Critical Value	t- Stat	Decision	Remarks
Before Drug War	151617.5	1126500.5	12.70620474	7.546188341	Accept H ₀	There is no significant difference
During Drug War	143203.5	6960180.5				
<i>df</i> = 1; significance level = 0.05						

As to testing the hypothesis that there was a significant decrease in the crime rates before and during the implementation of the war on drugs, the *t*-Stat value of 7.546188341 is less than the Critical value of 12.70620474 with a level of significance of 0.05, therefore there is no statistically observable difference on the crime rates recorded before and after the implementation of anti-drug war campaign of the government.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It was validated that barangay officials of selected barangays in Quezon City has full awareness about the current implementation of the government war on illegal drugs and it was revealed that the war on drugs has proven to be highly efficient and transparent. Given these observations, it is therefore necessary that the PDEA and other law enforcement agencies continuously spearhead an intensified information campaign to encourage the citizenry to be vigilant and divulge any illegal drug activities in their respective barangays.

Moreover, the rate of crimes against person and property in NCR from 2014-2018, which represent the status of crimes before and during the implementation of the war on drugs, shows no significant decrease in terms of the crime volume recorded. It is therefore recommended that there must be an increased police visibility and helpdesks to intensify campaign against criminality. Reported criminal activities should be properly documented to have a credible data in assessing how effective the drug war is against criminality.

Finally, there is no significant difference on the crime rates recorded before and during the anti- drug campaign of the government was implemented. Therefore, it can be inferred that the drug war cannot be credited as a significant deterrent in decreasing the volume of crimes, in general. It is then necessary to mandate other programs apart from drug war as a means of augmentation to effectively decrease the crime rates, especially crimes related to illegal drug.

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