

Poverty Alleviation Policies: From the Lens of Barangay Officials in Davao City

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ABSTRACT

The persistent occurrence of poverty in the Philippines continues to affect various families, particularly disadvantaged people in urbanizing communities, despite the government's implementation of poverty alleviation policies; progress remains elusive. This study aimed to explore and examine the lived experiences of barangay officials in Davao City at the local level, their views and insights on implementing poverty alleviation policies, and their recommendations for a responsive and sustainable approach. This qualitative study was conducted using a phenomenological method. Seven study participants were chosen explicitly from barangay officials in four barangays in Davao City using the purposive sampling method. This study utilized in-depth interviews (IDIs) and formulated an interview guide to collect the data. After analyzing the data, the results revealed that barangay officials in Davao City prioritize serving the least privileged due to encountering limited budget allocation, bureaucratic constraints, and inconsistent program support. Barangay officials implement livelihood opportunities, skills training, anti-gambling initiatives, and community partnerships as strategic coping mechanisms to support vulnerable groups. The results further revealed that while current poverty alleviation policies provide essential assistance, systemic challenges limit their effectiveness, underscoring the need for reform in policy implementation practices. The participants' views and insights concluded that Davao City barangay officials demonstrate active commitment to addressing poverty at the local level, requiring strengthened institutional support to enhance the reach and impact of poverty alleviation initiatives. Finally, it is recommended that both national and regional governments strengthen barangay autonomy and funding, as well as institutionalize community-specific poverty reduction frameworks.

Keywords: poverty alleviation, barangay officials, policy implementation, qualitative phenomenology, Davao City,

SDG Integration: #1 No Poverty

INTRODUCTION

People all around the world are struggling and grappling to make ends meet. Still, those who struggle the most are the underprivileged individuals who experience poverty, particularly in urbanizing regions where socioeconomic inequality is heightened by scarce resources and rapid population growth (The World Bank, 2024). Urban areas can generate wealth but lead to concentrated economic disadvantage, particularly in developing countries, where urban poverty and inequality are deep-rooted challenges that impose timely intervention (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2022). Aside from that, urban policy is a critical medium for government entities to examine the unprecedented consequences of poverty, which has affected the lives of numerous people in urban areas (FaithourCo, 2022). By focusing more on community engagement, urban policy seeks to explore the real-world intricacies of the people in urban peripheral regions, including the widespread challenges the implementers encounter (Hoeyi & Makgari, 2021).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Abdulhakeem (2024) across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) explores the direct efforts of four fundamental governance pillars, which argues governance plays a pivotal role in poverty reduction and through an in-depth examination of panel data from 41 SSA countries from 2012 to 2022 uncovers a compelling correlation between progress in crucial domains and a marked decrease in the poverty

levels. According to Nebo (2021), the disconcerting but frequently disregarded elements, such as politicians' calculated exploitation of poverty to consolidate and augment their authority, illustrate the persistent issue of poverty reduction that provides an in-depth investigation of the intricate connection between extreme poverty and political mechanisms in Africa, where it asserts that these frameworks are often compromised by politicians self-interest moves to perpetuate poverty, which results asserting the continuation of poverty is not merely a result of systemic governance failure, but rather a deliberate political strategy designed to sustain electoral and economic dominance. Moreover, Floreani et al. (2021) conducted a study in Afghanistan that illustrates how poverty has led marginalized individuals to be drawn to elicit actions for survival that undermine increased vulnerability to violence and social cohesion.

In the Philippines, a study supported by Mapia (2024) investigates the continuous issue caused by economic instability, high population density, and political-economic conflicts, highlighting the challenges, patterns, and programs related to poverty. Enhancing the political economy entails tackling political inefficiencies and corruption, which are crucial for alleviating poverty. According to Onsay and Rabajante (2024), the intricate nature of rural poverty in the most impoverished region of Luzon, Philippines, presents a framework for decomposing numerous dimensions of poverty, such as health, education, income, and living standards. This aimed to comprehend its underlying casualties better and inform targeted interventions, where it emphasizes a demand for multidimensional approaches to measure and address poverty that promote sustainable economic development, since the traditional financial performance indicators are inadequate for capturing the entire framework of poverty, and, by evidence-based data, it highlights the significance of policy innovations and community-based solutions.

Another study on the level of operation of poverty alleviation programs in Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines, investigates how social, physical, and economic development programs such as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Social Housing Program, and Farm-to-Market Roads (FMRs) influence people's ability to make a living on selected household beneficiaries, where the results show that the allocation of resources towards education is markedly affected by the educational attainment of parents, their employment circumstances, the tidal number of children residing in the household—significant economic resource problems (Chavez & Bulayog, 2023). Despite diverse studies about these at the international and national levels, no studies have examined the grassroots implementation of poverty alleviation policies, particularly from the perspectives of barangay officials who have an essential role in local governance. Hence, the researchers aim to explore and examine barangay officials' views and insights on implementing local poverty alleviation policies.

A study conducted in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte, where research gaps are evident by assessing the role of barangay officials in local-scale management, through which the scope of their capabilities and the challenges they encounter, reveals that budgeting is a crucial instrument for resource allocation. It can either enhance or impede the success of local poverty initiatives (Dagohoy, 2021). Further, it was estimated that in 2021, over 34.5% of households in Davao Occidental had incomes below the poverty threshold, translating to 345 out of every family, which illustrates the minimum income necessary to cover essential food and non-food expenses (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Other data reveals that Davao del Sur experienced a headline inflation rate of 6.4% in July 2024, indicating a modest increase compared to the previous month (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024). The difficulty for low-income families to afford essential items is due to high inflation that worsens poverty by diminishing the ability of households to buy goods and services, where inflation exacerbates financial pressure for families already grappling with poverty, increasing the instability of their economic existence and putting numerous households below the poverty threshold (Montejo & Bandiola, 2023).

Consequently, due to the lack of localized poverty alleviation policies and how barangay officials executed their roles and duties in shaping the success of poverty reduction, this study is urgent and necessary. According to Bai (2023), the insights and experiences of barangay officials in rural areas of Davao del Sur regarding the implementation and effectiveness of poverty programs are mostly in informal settlements, which likely underscores how local governance can either support or obstruct the success of these initiatives. Hence, the researchers aim to address the existing gap regarding the perspectives of barangay officials on implementing poverty alleviation policies, examining the socioeconomic and political landscape at local levels in Davao

City, underscoring the poverty programs for marginalized communities, and ensuring that local voices are integral to the discourse on poverty reduction, fostering more inclusive and sustainable approaches to poverty alleviation policies.

Additionally, this study aims to determine gaps in understanding the perspectives of barangay officials regarding poverty alleviation policies at the local level in Davao City. It also examined the factors influencing local policy implementations, their challenges, and their recommendations for improving poverty alleviation policies, which are essential but underexamined in existing studies. This study is specifically concerned with answering the following research question: (1) What are the views of the barangay officials on poverty alleviation policies? Moreover, (2) What are the recommendations of barangay officials regarding the poverty alleviation policies? The study's first question targets an in-depth understanding of how barangay officials implementing poverty reduction perceive the successes, practicality, and limitations of current poverty alleviation policies within their local communities, and the study's second question focuses on practical insights that could refine the poverty alleviation frameworks for more significant sustainability and inclusivity.

Furthermore, this study corresponds with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty), targeting to end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). Its objectives are to ensure that the poor and most vulnerable have equal rights to basic poverty services, economic resources, and land control (Babu & Srivastava, 2024). A comprehensive approach is required to address the leading cause of poverty, enhance access to social protection systems, and promote inclusive economic growth (Maity & Sinha, 2024). Hence, the researchers aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how poverty alleviation programs implemented in the locality can be enhanced to better serve marginalized people by focusing on exploring and examining the perspectives of barangay officials, and contributing to the broader goal of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) in the region. Addressing poverty at the grassroots level has transformative potential for local communities to serve marginalized people better and for broader global efforts towards sustainable development goals (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2024).

Consequently, the findings of this study provided valuable recommendations for enhancing policy frameworks and practices, which promote a more inclusive and sustainable approach to poverty alleviation policies and can assist barangay officials in improving policy implementation to overcome challenges and recommend solutions. Specifically, this study benefited the Local Government Units (LGUs) since the result of this study provides a guide for the refinement of poverty alleviation programs that ensure more effective allocation from the government and policy implementation at the grassroots level, and their voices are integral to the discourse on poverty reduction and social equity. By utilizing the findings of this study, policymakers can also benefit from this study, allowing them to address policy gaps and refine the existing programs; along with key stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can use this study to align their programs with local needs and strengthen collaborations with barangay officials. Ultimately, this study is significant for future researchers and academic institutions by enhancing curricula related to political science, public administration, and development studies with evidence-based findings.

Moreover, this study is grounded in three theories. Firstly, the Administrative Rational Model, presented by Herbert A. Simon, is a framework essential for examining institutional and organizational practices in considerable circumstances that determine institutional accountability and functions, aligning with societal purposes and ensuring legitimate and reliable performance (Davis, 1996). To elucidate further, it is conducted to comprehend how barangay officials create and implement decisions regarding poverty alleviation policies operating under bounded rationality. With limited resources, information, and time, barangay officials in Davao City are determined to make practical decisions rather than optimal ones. This theory illustrates the determination of barangay officials on whom to prioritize in assistance, how programs are developed under constraints, and why particular interventions are pursued over others, emphasizing that their administrative decisions align with their goal of delivering public services effectively and efficiently within local government.

Secondly, the New Institutional Economics, proposed by Ronald Harry Coase, is a method used to comprehend the role of administrators in facilitating or impeding economic growth in diverse institutions (North, 1986). It focuses on how institutions reduce transaction costs and address inefficiencies in economic interchanges. Subsequently, by utilizing this theory, the study explores and examines how barangay officials

operate within institutional impediments, including resource allocation issues, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inconsistent service delivery approaches. This theory explains how barangay officials' institutional role shapes the socioeconomic status of marginalized people and how their efforts can reduce systemic barriers that ensure the resources reach the intended beneficiaries effectively.

Lastly, the researchers employed the Social Justice Approach developed by John Rawls. This practical approach addresses the systematic and structural inequalities contributing to social injustice by considering the interplay of social, economic, and political factors (Reidy, 2022). According to this theory, justice must prevail to focus on improving the condition of the least advantaged, ensuring their rights and needs are central in the policy framework and implementation. In the context of this study, utilizing the social justice approach as it addresses the prevailing social injustices in peripheral communities in Davao City, which asserts a system of justice that prioritizes the considerably disadvantaged members of society, advocating for policies that ensure equal opportunities and redistribute resources to achieve social equity.

Together, these theories present a comprehensive framework critical to our study as they evaluate the ethical dimensions of poverty alleviation policies, which assess whether the policies implemented at the barangay level in Davao City efficiently promote social justice by addressing the needs of the most marginalized and impoverished communities. These theories explored and examined how barangay officials view their role in ensuring that the policies executed are distributed justly and equitably, ensuring that local executives' voices are integral to enhancing poverty alleviation policies and contributing to sustainable development.

METHOD

This study offers a comprehensive description of the research methodology. This section of the paper discusses the research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations to facilitate the reader's understanding of the study.

Design and Procedure

The researchers utilized a phenomenological qualitative research design. The phenomenological research endeavors to explore and comprehend individuals' experiences of a specific phenomenon by examining the perspectives of individuals who have encountered it, as Johnson (2024) noted. Utilizing the phenomenological qualitative research method, it delivers a theoretical instrument for the investigation of the study, enabling researchers the flexibility to explain and offer clarity on the views and insights of barangay officials involved in the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in Davao City (Gopal, 2022). As supported by Köhler et al. (2023), phenomenology is a method utilized to uncover the significance of individual experiences by immersing deeply into how people perceive, interpret, and make sense of their experiences in a specific scope. This data collection involves in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their opinions and emotions related to a phenomenon, which enables the researchers to accumulate insights exhibiting fine distinctions (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021).

Furthermore, phenomenological qualitative research is appropriate for investigating new occurrences and developing initial views and insights, as Land (2024) proposed. This framework provides an in-depth understanding of the barangay officials' experiences, insights, and challenges as they operate within their communities to address the continuous poverty. Phenomenological research delivers descriptions of several categories of interview questions and practical illustrations, which support interviews in diverse formats, such as phone calls, face-to-face, and online (Roberts, 2020). In this study, the researchers employed phone calls or online interviews with participants who volunteered to be interviewed. Hence, the qualitative approach is precise and clear, which is suited for investigating the complexities of local governance encountered by barangay officials and their impact on the success or failure of poverty alleviation measures at the grassroots level in Davao City.

This qualitative study utilizes an online interview using a prepared questionnaire to enable the researchers to address critical issues and anticipate questions that may arise during the interview, where an interview format would allow the researcher to interpret non-verbal cues and reactions necessary for data analysis. The data

collection process in this study was secured by obtaining authorization from the university's College of Arts and Sciences Education Research Office. Subsequently, the researchers submitted a letter of request to the Dean of the Arts and Sciences Education to seek permission to conduct the study beyond the university's premises. Following clearance, once the potential participants were selected, they were given a letter of informed permission from the researchers, who also explained the goal of the interview and the methodology used to gather the data, along with the informed consent form, a letter of approval, and any other paperwork the participants needed to sign during the interview, which the researchers had also prepared; this letter also gave assurance to the participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

The researchers carried out an in-depth interview approach, considering that this research was for the barangay officials who are elected and appointed leaders accountable for governing and managing the affairs of the locality, particularly in the execution of poverty alleviation policies for marginalized communities and underprivileged people. Therefore, the researchers proceeded to conduct the study through an online setting, such as either phone calls or online interviews, depending on participant preference, and each interview is expected to last approximately 30 to 40 minutes, allowing every participant to share detailed views and insights into their experiences and perspectives. To guarantee that all relevant information acquired from participants' responses was captured for the subsequent analysis, the researchers obtained consent from participants to record the interview. Further, researchers are predominantly interested in individuals' lived experiences, endeavoring to delve into the nuances of how individuals traverse and respond to the complexities in their personal and social environments. Under these circumstances, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) targets beyond merely summarizing firsthand accounts (Robinson & Williams, 2024). Instead, it attempts to comprehend the subjective experience of the individuals, which focuses on how they interpret, internalize, and respond to their lived realities within the context of poverty alleviation policies, as explained by Chiorri and Vannucci (2024). In addition, the researchers collaborated with the data analyst for result interpretations, after which they delivered and examined the data gathered during interviews.

Furthermore, considering this study's qualitative nature, the researchers used thematic analysis for data interpretation. As supported by Qaissi (2024), this is to demonstrate how qualitative data can be analyzed to produce themes, which involves familiarizing the researchers with the data by thoroughly reviewing the transcripts, and the initial coding will be done to identify significant statements and phrases related to the research questions. The data analysis also incorporates the study's theoretical frameworks, including Simon's Administrative Rational Model, Coase's New Institutional Economics, and Rawls's Social Justice Approach, to interpret the themes through the lens of institutional practices, economic implications, and social justice; this process provided a deeper understanding of how barangay officials navigate and implement poverty alleviation policies within their communities. This analytical theme ensures that the findings are descriptive and theoretically grounded, where the researchers considered thematic analysis to be a practical approach for analyzing the data, as it facilitates the exploration of individuals' lived experiences and perspectives concerning the issue, which enables the construction of concepts grounded in the collected data.

Ethical consideration is a set of moral principles that govern conduct maintained by a society or an individual profession (Resnik, 2021). These principles should be upheld to promote research goals such as facts, knowledge dissemination, and error prevention. Accordingly, the school administrators approved the researchers to conduct this study. The researchers intend to adhere to the temporal constraints imposed by the volunteers' willingness to divulge information and their self-imposed limitations (Cox et al., 2023). Prospective participants were aware that their participation was voluntary and anonymous to safeguard their privacy and receive comprehensive information regarding the study's objective and the agreement they acquired before their involvement. During the interview, if the participants had queries, they would be provided with information, and after considering it, they could decide whether to participate in the study. All data were strictly upheld and anonymized, with results provided in a way that conceals any specific participant's identity. According to Hailes et al. (2021), ethical standards emphasize the importance of duty and accountability to participants, highlighting the need for transparency in the research process. The researchers verified that the study adhered to the proper and precise approach for citing the ideas of other authors and experts. To achieve this, the researchers utilized Turnitin's plagiarism detection and Grammarly's assessments to guarantee the study's absence of plagiarized content and grammatical inaccuracy, as well as the analysis documentation to certify the exclusion of any invented or inaccurate information.

Participants

The participants of this study were selected through a purposive sampling method, directing efforts toward barangay officials in Davao City who are playing an active role in implementing poverty alleviation programs within their communities. The purposive sampling method is an instrument for knowledgeable findings about research methodologies in the social sciences, as noted by Stratton (2024). This denotes that the participants are particularly more interrelated to the research objectives and that the results are reliable and legitimate. The researchers utilize purposive sampling to select participants who can deliver the applicable and substantive data. Including these participants is essential as they have firsthand knowledge and experience of the challenges and strategies of translating national and local policies into practical ones, an actionable initiative within their communities. These local officials include two (2) barangay captains, two (2) barangay secretaries, and three (3) barangay council members, a total of seven (7) participants of barangay officials who are responsible for executing and overseeing poverty-related programs. To identify the participants, the researchers subjectively selected four (4) barangays in Davao City, specifically Matina Crossing, Ma-a, Buhangin, and Lasang. The procedure was finalized following the identification of the barangays in which the study was undertaken, concentrating on barangay officials responsible for local governance, particularly in implementing poverty alleviation policies targeting marginalized sectors and disadvantaged populations within the locality.

Materials and Instruments

The researchers conducted an in-depth interview (IDI) approach to connect with the barangay officials. They carefully crafted a validated interview guide questionnaire to collect data regarding their views and insights on implementing poverty alleviation policies in Davao City. The interviews utilized open-ended questions to enable each participant to examine the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies, their challenges, their resources at their disposal, and their recommendations for policy enhancements. According to Rutledge and Hogg (2020), any methodological discovery interprets the construction of knowledge, analysis of the data, and interpretation of the findings, which is predicated by the concept that before conducting a study, the researchers must consider what knowledge they desire to collect and the significance of how collection process influences the validity and relevance of their data to the survey.

Furthermore, given the status quo, seven (7) barangay officials grappled with, shared, and comprehended their perspectives on implementing and aligning government programs with poverty alleviation policies. By utilizing an in-depth interview, the participants were assisted in responding to the questions posed, and it was their choice to respond and justify their answers. This type of interview enables the formulation of supplementary questions, allowing the researchers to ask explanatory queries and providing a setting for participants to express their thoughts regarding significant matters. Consequently, the researchers obtained a comprehensive understanding of views and insights aligned with the objectives of this study. Coupled with this, to ascertain the validity of the interview guide questionnaire, the researchers ensured it was reviewed and assessed by the institution's research experts (Buschle et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study. Data were collected from four barangays in Davao City. The participants selected for this study were carefully chosen based on their in-depth knowledge and expertise as barangay officials. The research methodology involved interviews with these participants selected from various barangays across Davao City, specifically key areas such as Matina Crossing, Ma-a, Buhangin, and Lasang, spanning from March 3 to 21, 2025. This enabled a comprehensive understanding of the poverty alleviation programs and their challenges in various locales.

The study's conduct was facilitated through online platforms and phone calls, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives and experiences. During the interviews, the participants were enthusiastic about contributing and openly sharing their views, insights, firsthand experiences, and knowledge of poverty alleviation policies in their respective barangays. Their contributions provided valuable views and insights into the underlying factors of implementing and executing poverty reduction measures to alleviate poverty. Participants were

warmly welcomed, and the researchers provided an overview of the study and encouraged them to answer passionately.

This transparent approach fostered a sense of trust and openness, facilitating candid and open discussions. Throughout the interview process, it became evident that each participant had a unique and diverse perspective on the functioning of poverty alleviation policies at the local level, as well as the challenges that occur during their implementation, encompassing the approaches of policy delivery and the effects on various groups, particularly the marginalized communities within their barangay. It emphasized the essential role of local leadership in shaping the outcomes of poverty reduction efforts and highlighted the need for further evaluation of these programs to ensure effectiveness. The study involved seven participants, and their demographic composition was five men and two women, spanning from 30 to 75 years old.

To safeguard the participants' identities, pseudonyms are used instead of their names. According to Heaton (2022), a pseudonym is a substitute name utilized instead of the participant's real name in qualitative research; participants may be assigned a pseudonym or invited to select one. In this study, participants retained the right to determine their preferred pseudonyms. Participant 1 preferred to be referred to as "Gideon," Participant 2 opted to be called "Elmer," Participant 3 was named "Mariz," Participant 4 was "Lenora," Participant 5 was "Benedict," Participant 6 was "Ramil," and Participant 7 was "Leandro."

By focusing on the personal accounts and actual challenges barangay officials encounter in implementing poverty alleviation policies, the researchers provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of addressing socioeconomic issues at the grassroots level. Sharing the lived experiences of barangay officials underscores the complicated components and difficulties encountered in translating policies into actionable measures within communities. These valuable views and insights can help to enhance community engagement, refine existing programs, and strengthen barangays in Davao City's capacity to address systemic issues, particularly poverty and economic instability. This method aligns with the study's focus on understanding the human element in policy implementation, as it highlights how lived experiences can construct more effective and inclusive strategies. Focusing on the views and insights of barangay officials directly involved in governance and community support, the study supports the crucial role of localized, context-sensitive solutions in promoting sustainable development and social equity in Davao City.

Views of Barangay Officials on Poverty Alleviation Policies

The researchers aligned the themes with Davao City barangay officials' views regarding implementing poverty alleviation policies. These views centered on six (6) primary themes: Focusing on the Least Privileged, Limited Budget Allocation, Livelihood Opportunities and Financial Assistance, Skills Training for Economic Self-Sufficiency, Strengthening Support Networks Through Collaboration, and Significant Impact of Assistance.

Focusing on the Least Privileged. Participants emphasized the focus of the barangay officials on alleviating the least privileged within their respective barangays, based on the gathered data. According to Kuznetsova et al. (2021), poverty is a direct determinant of reducing the quality of life, limiting access to basic resources and education, and perpetuating systemic inequalities, especially among marginalized individuals. Participants recognize that many of their constituents live in extreme poverty, requiring urgent attention and sustained assistance, articulating deep awareness of the socio-economic realities within their respective barangay. Participant 1, or "Gideon," and Participant 3, or "Mariz," capture the recurring struggle and the urgent need to address the conditions of those at the lowest socio-economic levels.

"Mao gyud ni ang adlaw-adlaw nga pakigbisog kay makita man nato ang kahintang sa atong mga kaiguonan nga naa gyud sila sa ubos." (This is a daily struggle because we can see the condition of our fellow citizens who are truly at the lowest level.) Participant 1

"Kasagaran gyud diri kay kanang mga indigent, kanang walang-wala gyud." (Most of the people here are indigents, those who have absolutely nothing.) Participant 3

The study participants illustrate the need for central attention to experiencing extreme poverty within their communities, underscoring the necessity for targeted interventions to uplift the most impoverished residents. They emphasize that the barangay officials give the least privileged individuals salient attention to alleviate their disadvantaged situation. This was supported by Participant 4, whose given name is "Lenora."

"Kanang ang among gina-una gyud kay katong mga walang-wala gyud, bah! Unya, kanang tabangunon gyud kaayo." (We usually prioritize those who have absolutely nothing, those who are really in need.) Participant 4

These statements highlight the application of poverty-focused resource allocation, prioritizing the most economically disadvantaged. Accordingly, the Republic Act No. 11291, also known as the Magna Carta of the Poor, explicitly recognizes low-income people as those with no access to income and basic services, or those who have absolutely nothing (National Anti-Poverty Commission, 2020). Navon and Bowers (2023) emphasized advocating policies prioritizing vulnerable groups, particularly children, who cannot advocate for themselves, which affects their future outcomes. This underscores the indispensable role of barangay officials in implementing poverty alleviation policies within their respective communities, taking into special consideration those people who are least privileged or below the poverty line, giving them notable attention when it comes to amelioration distribution or any forms of activities that alleviate their situation, both in the short term and long-term effects. This also aligns with the findings of Davao City barangay officials as one of the immediate forms of government for the people, identifying and actively responding to the poverty circumstances that are neglected or unaddressed by broader government policies.

Furthermore, it requires a proactive mechanism for effective poverty alleviation, purposely inclusive of the poorest and most marginalized, overlooked in generalized policy applications (Wang et al., 2024). In the context of Davao City, barangay officials recognize that the prioritization of assistance must be differentiated to achieve significant outcomes, where the social and economic inequalities should be positioned to benefit the least advantaged members of society. This contextualizes an ethical and practical commitment to social equity, where barangay officials operate as essential actors in ensuring government interventions reach those who need them the most, reinforcing the study's broader objective of exploring localized dynamics of poverty policy implementation.

Limited Budget Allocation. The inquiry concerns the limited budget for development and poverty alleviation initiatives within their communities. Mazele and Amoah (2021) state that insufficient budget allocation is one of the immediate causes of poor infrastructure management, leading to declining public services. This underscores the need to force local officials to adopt satisfying strategies, prioritizing achievable solutions over optimal ones due to limited budgets. The limited budget allocation in bureaucratic organizations significantly hinders progress, revealing inherent weaknesses within decentralized institutions, and is detrimental to their achievement of goals. As Bach (2021) asserts, bureaucratic politics is one of the primary concerns regarding policy implementation. It emphasizes the significance of organizational roles in public policy due to the decision-making processes conducted by various interconnected individuals and institutions within the government, which benefit their constituents. Participant 1 and Participant 2, or "Elmer," expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations of their financial resources, although possessing defined obligations to satisfy local socioeconomic requirements.

"Mao na nga ang paningkamot sa barangay Ma-a, gihatagan mi og national tax allotment nga ₱68 million ug ang among real property tax kay mga ₱9.6 million. So, naa mi annual budget karong tuiga nga ₱78 million. Pero gamay ra gyud ang nabutang sa pondo nga nagtumong sa pagpalambo." (That is why the efforts of Barangay Ma-a have been supported with a national tax allotment of ₱68 million, along with our real property tax amounting to around ₱9.6 million. So, we have an annual budget of ₱78 million this year. However, only a small portion of the funds has been allocated for development.) Participant 1

"Gamay ra man gyud ang 1%, kung pwede nato dungagan pinaagi sa mga barangay resolution, i-augment ang mga budget." (The 1% allocation is indeed minimal; if possible, we should increase it through barangay resolutions to augment the budget.) Participant 2

Both statements underscore the shared sentiment that the existing budget for barangay institutions is insufficient to combat poverty effectively, requiring strategic reallocation and legislative measures. This indicates a significant disparity between the allocated funds and the needs of their communities, where the insufficient budget limits the ability of barangay officials to execute developmental programs and intensifies the difficulties encountered by underprivileged groups that depend significantly on these initiatives for their survival. This was supported by Participant 3, who expressed that the barangay is forced to prioritize solely the most impoverished due to financial constraints.

“Mao nang kami, mamili gyud mi atong walang-wala kay igo ra man ang budget.” (We carefully select those in need, as our budget is limited.) Participant 3

Considering that the Philippines encounters significant challenges in addressing poverty, particularly at the grassroots level, this selective allocation of assistance depicts a prevalent issue in governance, where the balance between equity and scarcity often results in the exclusion of several deserving beneficiaries. Finn and Bandauko (2024) argue that decentralization allocates responsibilities to local governments without providing sufficient funding to implement and execute these obligations. This results in a significant infrastructure crisis as local authorities struggle to maintain services and infrastructure amid constrained financial resources. This illustrates that the limited budget allocation from national to local government stresses a foundation on the process of bureaucratic politics, determining the latter condition of the poor people in marginalized urban areas, where the local officials, being the sole institution in delivering basic assistance, must be proportionate to the availability of allocated budget. This demonstrates institutional inefficiency where rules and resource systems impede rather than enable effective local governance.

Notwithstanding local administrative capacity, barangay officials perform duties within financial frameworks with increased transactions and opportunity costs; however, due to limited budget allocation, they select the most disadvantaged beneficiaries. The study's inquiry also aligns with a moral dimension where the most impoverished become challenging to uphold when the financial capacity of local governments is limited. If only a few people experiencing poverty can be helped, then the rest are left behind; this is not because of negligence but due to systemic under-resourcing. Further, despite barangay officials' dedication and understanding of community needs, financial constraints profoundly affect their capability to implement sustainable and inclusive poverty alleviation programs, underscoring the complex relationship between resource allocation, governance efficacy, and the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies in the locality.

Livelihood Opportunities and Financial Assistance. The findings are derived from recognizing the significance of livelihood programs and financial assistance for supporting needy individuals and families. Habib et al. (2023) argue that livelihood opportunities are a proactive strategy for mitigating economic and environmental shocks and reducing poverty, particularly in urban areas of developing countries. Marginalized people are considerably disadvantaged in their source of income, descending to the edge of highly underprivileged conditions, and barangay officials are tasked with alleviating the situation within their constituents to the best of their capacity. Participant 5, named "Benedict," and 6, or "Ramil," shared their thoughts and inspirations for implementing livelihood programs.

“Daghan na pod gyud kaayo naka-benefit ani kay naga-allocate gyud mi og budget para sa mga livelihood programs nila. Same pod sa mga solo parents, naga-offer mi og livelihood opportunities para sa ilaha, in some way, these may help them alleviate their situations.” (Many have benefited from this initiative as we allocate a specific budget for their livelihood programs. Similarly, we offer livelihood opportunities to solo parents, which can help alleviate their situations.) Participant 5

“Naka-come-up mi og usa ka comprehensive nga strategy nga gi-approve namo sa council para maka-increase sa income katong naa sa pobre.” (We came up with a comprehensive strategy that was approved by the council to help increase the income of those in poverty.) Participant 6

These highlight the barangay's dedication to long-term poverty reduction, significantly shifting from stagnant welfare to operational support strategies, providing sustainable income sources to impoverished sectors. The implementation of strategic livelihood programs for marginalized sectors aligns with the broader goal of the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are constructed to allow individuals to be equipped with resources, skills, and opportunities that generate income sustainability and reduce dependency on external aid (Mante & Cruz, 2022). This emphasizes how strategic planning and policy formulation at the grassroots level aim to institutionalize support beyond emergency aid and ensure livelihood program interventions are embedded within the governance framework.

In an additional statement, to support impoverished individuals and families living below the poverty line within their respective communities, financial assistance programs also deliver immediate relief. Participants 3 and 7, also known as "Leandro," elaborated on diverse forms of financial assistance and their role in facilitating these programs to alleviate poverty.

"Kanang mga ayuda, like kanang para sa senior, kanang para sa women, sa solo parent, ug PWD. Like mga annual subsidy ana. Sa senior, naa pod siya'y annual subsidy ug naa pod siya'y monthly subsidy." (Such aid includes support for seniors, women, solo parents, and PWDs. These are annual subsidies. For seniors, there is an annual subsidy as well as a monthly subsidy.) Participant 3

"Ginaadto namo nang mga below poverty line, ginahatagaan na sila og ayuda, kanang 4Ps, mao na siya, barangay ang naga kuan ana, padagan ana, facilitate ana." (The barangay reaches out to individuals below the poverty line, providing them with aid such as the 4Ps program. The barangay is responsible for managing and facilitating this initiative.) Participant 7

Both statements underscore how they cater to specific demographic groups to avail of financial assistance programs, which hinge on barangay-level execution beyond national policy frameworks. Cepaluni and Driscoll (2024) note that financial assistance is an impactful initiative that most barangays implement for poverty reduction, where conditional cash transfer programs are designed to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of poverty by improving health and educational outcomes. These findings underscore the localized application of poverty alleviation policies executed at the barangay level, where barangay officials act as the welfare service delivery, providing financial assistance to their vulnerable recipients to cope with economic constraints, and demonstrating that effective poverty reduction necessitates a robust local governance involvement in social safety nets.

Additionally, Davao City's barangay officials proactively navigate financial constraints to provide immediate and sustainable assistance by implementing and executing livelihood opportunities and financial assistance. Accordingly, Davao City Executive Order No. 56, Series of 2022, an ordinance that supports providing livelihood opportunities and financial assistance by establishing the Davao City Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Program (DCSLEP) (Davao City Government, 2022). Implementing financial aid may offer temporary relief, but facilitating livelihood programs marks a substantial measure toward empowering communities to break the cycle of poverty. Micabalo (2022) underscores that although a prolonged process, livelihood programs are sufficient to reduce poverty as they provide a long-term effect on individuals' lives; similarly, cash transfer programs or any activity related to financial assistance positively impact the lives of the impoverished. This underscores an institutional bridge between formal national frameworks and community-specific needs, enabling the delivery of services and ensuring that interventions reach the selected beneficiaries. Adapting comprehensive and inclusive strategies contributes to the broader goal of eradicating poverty and promoting social equity, as barangay officials are the sole implementers and executors of these strategies in their communities.

Skills Training for Economic Self-Sufficiency. The barangay officials in Davao City are paying the most attention to investing increasingly in skills training programs to promote long-term economic independence and combat poverty. Participants recognize the capacity-building initiatives as a more effective approach than direct financial aid, which may only offer short-term relief, in favor of proactive skills training programs that aim to enhance individual employability, ultimately resulting in individuals having a source of income to improve their living conditions. Tan et al. (2022) underscore skills training as a process of learning and development to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness and a great avenue to refine individual productivity, improving job performance in the work environment. This highlights the indispensable role of skills training within the community in achieving economic self-sufficiency for marginalized

individuals and reducing poverty within their respective barangay. Based on the gathered data, skills training programs are one of the most effective instruments available for poverty reduction at the grassroots level. Participants 4 and 7 elaborated further on skills training as one of the primary mechanisms for livelihood development.

“Dako gyud kaayo ni og tabang sa kapobrehon, labi na gyud ning skills training program namo, nga daghan gyud pod ang matabangan.” (The initiative significantly alleviates poverty, primarily through our skills training program, which has benefited many people.) Participant 4

“Sa akoo, kanang mag-provide og trabaho, mao na kanang training skill nga gikuha ni Kap, mao ni ang pinaka-dako gyud.” (For me, providing employment is the most important, especially the skill training that the barangay captain provided.) Participant 7

Both statements underscore how local leaders act as significant actors in implementing employment-oriented training as a form of assistance and an instrument for economic empowerment to alleviate poverty effectively. Abdullah et al. (2022) state that training programs equipping individuals with real-world employability skills are needed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This indicates how technical and vocational education plays a role and a pathway to employment, allowing developing countries, particularly those experiencing poverty, to have access to formal education, leading to stable jobs. This was supported by Participant 2 and Participant 5, who shared their views on establishing a systemic framework to simplify skills training initiatives, ensuring that programs are accessible, efficient, and aligned with community needs.

“BLESSDEED na acronym para sa Barangay Livelihood Employment Skills Training Development and Information Desk. So, mao ni atong gibuhat nga sistema nga, kuan, mas dali gyud siya ma-address nato ang poverty.” (BLESSDEED, which stands for Barangay Livelihood Employment Skills Training Development and Information Desk, is the system we have implemented to more effectively address poverty.) Participant 2

“Dinhi sa barangay, naa ta’y Apo Agua, kanang sa Aboitiz, naa sila’y 30 ka tawo nga ilang gina-train para mahimong computer literate. Sa ing-ana nga paagi, makatabang nana siya sa unemployment status sa mga tawo kay naa na sila’y skills nga magamit para makapangita og trabaho.” (In the barangay, we have Apo Agua, a program by Aboitiz. They train 30 individuals to become computer literate. This targets individuals with basic computer knowledge, helping them gain skills to address unemployment by providing them with employable skills.) Participant 5

This proves that the barangay officials in Davao City adopt rational, localized systems, providing practical and achievable outcomes for their constituents. The significance of structured skills training programs lies in ensuring resources are effectively allocated and programs are tailored to the challenges encountered by impoverished individuals in their communities.

Moreover, implementing skills training is a pathway to sustainable livelihood and economic independence. According to Smith (2021), education is vital in promoting economic empowerment within local communities by equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for self-sufficiency, better employment opportunities, and social mobility within reach. From a theoretical perspective, this indicates the mechanisms for correcting structural inequalities, where the barangay-led initiative training programs support the most disadvantaged, who must benefit from public interventions. This also reflects the key institutional intermediaries where barangay institutions partner with external stakeholders, including Non-governmental Organizations and corporations, which reduces inefficiencies in program delivery and ensures skills training programs are culturally and economically aligned with the community's needs. Briggs et al. (2022) assert that skills training programs are transformative interventions that equip individuals with the instruments needed to secure employment, enhancing livelihood and breaking free from the cycle of poverty. In the context of Davao City, barangay institutions prioritize investing in local training programs for their constituents, developing a skilled workforce that meets the needs of local businesses, and providing a sustainable source of income. The barangay officials in Davao City empower their constituents, impoverished individuals, to move toward

economic independence by equipping people with employable skills rather than relying solely on short-term subsidies.

Strengthening Support Networks Through Collaboration. The inquiry concerns the significant impact of barangay officials on intergovernmental and multisectoral collaborations, aiming for a productive strategy to enhance poverty alleviation measures. Based on the gathered data, participants in partnership with multiple organizations for the welfare of the impoverished individuals, allowing a pool of resources that ranges from financial assistance to sustainable initiatives, considering the limited budget of the barangay institution, where in reality, they cannot provide provision for all those in need assistance, and by working together with different institutions, these entities can create a support system, addressing the specific need of the community more effectively than any single organization could. Riding et al. (2021) address multifaceted challenges that require urgent collaboration with private sectors, government agencies, and civil society organizations, which enhance employment, social welfare programs, and skills training. Participants highlight the requirement to go beyond the barangays' internal capacity and maximize available resources through strategic collaborations with government agencies and non-state actors to address poverty. Participants 2 and 4 elaborated on intergovernmental and public-sector collaborations for enhancing livelihood and employment facilitation.

"Pag-abot sa mga oportunidad sa trabaho, naa ko'y mga linkages sa DOLE, TESDA, DSWD, ug kanang sa Overseas Filipino Workers Office ug DTI sab, kay ang scope sa program apil man sa livelihood." (When it comes to job opportunities, I have linkages with DOLE, TESDA, DSWD, the Overseas Filipino Workers Office, and also DTI since the program's scope includes livelihood initiatives.) Participant 2

"Naga-invite pod mi og mga agencies nga naga-himo og mga paagi aron matudloan sila. Sila mismo ang mangita og employer para dili na maglisod og apply." (We also invite agencies that implement programs to teach them various skills. They were the ones personally looking for employers to make the application process more manageable.) Participant 4

The study participants highlighted bridging the gap between national developmental programs and grassroots beneficiaries, where the barangay is the sole intermediary. They perceived the local institutions to construct practical relations with higher-level institutions, showcasing grassroots governance adapting to the multi-layered core of work development. This was supported by Participant 1, who further elaborated on the notion of collaboration to include non-governmental organizations.

"Makig-collaborate mi sa NGOs, mandate pod na sa amoa nga makig-collaborate sa NGOs." (We collaborate with NGOs as it is also part of our mandate to do so.) Participant 1

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide complementary services, particularly at the grassroots level, where their involvement fills the gaps in service delivery, and interventions are tailored to the urgent needs of marginalized communities (Moshtari & Vanpoucke, 2020). This showcases the barangay's recognition of civil society organizations' partnerships, leading to more development. Participant 6 exemplified the more structural and metropolitan collaboration wherein the barangay contributes to broader municipal development goals.

"Ang gi-propose sa City Hall nga mahimong kontribyutor mi, mga 40% to 60% sa pagkaon sa syudad, ug ang Lasang maka-contribute gyud." (The City Hall proposed a proposal, aiming for us to contribute around 40% to 60% of the city's food supply, with Lasang playing a significant role.) Participant 6

This statement underscores barangay institutions' role as recipients of developmental assistance and active contributors to Davao City's food security measures. The barangay institution became one of the most pivotal components in the city's development, taking significant actions to provide assistance and employment to its constituents, stressing its potential to influence macro-level outcomes through coordinated local initiatives.

The local executives cooperating with intergovernmental and multi-sectoral collaborations foster productive strategies toward promoting social justice and a productive approach. Accordingly, this supports the Republic Act No. 9509, also known as the Barangay Livelihood and Skills Training Act of 2008, an enacted law to foster grassroots economic empowerment through establishing livelihood and skills training programs in each

barangay institution, which identifies the essential role of barangays in the national poverty reduction framework and normalizes their function as local development hubs (Republic Act No. 9509, 2008). Yang and Liu (2021) assert that when institutions collaborate, they bring multidimensional perspectives and expertise, providing substantial support to one another, particularly in identifying and targeting specific geographic urban areas with high poverty rates, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently. From a theoretical perspective, this reflects territorially aware governance by directly recognizing the poorest sectors and aligning support, particularly livelihood assistance, to the social geography of each barangay community. This sustains a decision-making framework under real-world impediments, allowing barangay officials to construct context-sensitive solutions. Fostering resilience and sustainability within the communities constructs a network of support involving various stakeholders, where local governments ensure that resources and services are more adaptable and sustainable over time.

Moreover, Sadabadi and Rad (2021) conducted a study based on cross-sector partnerships between researchers, local citizens, non-profit organizations, and public and private sectors, witnessing a noticeable improvement in their living conditions. In the context of Davao City, barangay officials strengthen support networks through collaboration, illustrating progressive governance and forming partnerships with national agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local government institutions; these positions local executives as implementers and co-creators of development. Strengthening support networks through collaborations allows barangay officials to expand their capacity to address poverty, improve service delivery, and integrate local communities into broader support systems, which fulfills this study's core objective.

Significant Impact of Assistance. Barangay-led initiatives' transformative and productive function improves the lives of marginalized individuals and communities within Davao City. The study's participants emphasize that personal success accounts for broader sectoral benefits, where assistance programs have produced tangible outcomes. Leal et al. (2023) argue that to enhance personal outcomes significantly, there is a need to construct sufficient strategic assistance programs, including skills training, financial aid, and educational scholarships. This underscores how poverty assistance programs contribute to the broader goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically to eradicate poverty, also known as SDG 1 (No Poverty), by constructing inclusive economic opportunities and social protection systems. Participants highlight the financial, educational, and livelihood programs, which immediately improve individual well-being, social mobility, and prospects. Participant 5 and 7 expressed their meaningful experience with the assistance brought to students, pointing out real-life success narratives derived from consistent barangay initiatives.

“Dako gyud kaayo siya og impact ilabi na sa mga estudyante, makatabang pag-ayo sa ilang pag-eskwela.” (It has a significant impact, especially on students, as it greatly supports their education.) Participant 5

“Daghan na ang na-okay, naa pod nakalampus.” (Many have improved their lives; some succeeded and graduated.) Participant 7

Both statements emphasize barangay-led initiatives such as educational assistance as long-term investment empowerment rather than temporary relief. The local institutions, along with their local executives who execute such initiatives, help reduce economic barriers, fostering educational continuity, which is crucial for breaking the continuous cycle of poverty. Viccaro et al. (2021) argue that true development hinges on expanding people's abilities and freedom to pursue a life they value with the resources they need, resulting in the principles of capability enhancement. This indicates how local institutions implement and execute support initiatives to provide income and access to education, employment, and personal growth, contributing to overall personal development and livelihood. Participant 3 further elaborated on the collective impact of assistance programs on vulnerable groups, emphasizing the broader societal advantages.

“Dako gyud og impact ilabi na atong mga tabanganan gyud, like what I’ve mentioned earlier; katong mga sectoral groups.” (It indeed has a significant impact, especially on those we are assisting, like the sectoral groups I mentioned earlier.) Participant 3

This highlights the collaborative nature of poverty alleviation policies, which assist in reaching isolated beneficiaries, particularly sectoral groups, including senior citizens, women, solo parents, and persons with

disabilities (PWDs). This approach reflects a multifaceted target strategy, ensuring that assistance initiatives are inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalized groups. From a policy standpoint, the barangay's initiative of prioritizing the most disadvantaged highlights the promotion of social equity and community cohesion. The study participants indicate the significant impact of assistance programs for both individuals, particularly vulnerable groups, highlighting educational, personal, and life improvements. Wiwad et al. (2020) assert that raising awareness of the struggles of marginalized groups leads to the implementation of targeted interventions, which lead to significant changes in societal attitudes and behaviors. Barangay officials are the primary observers of poverty constraints, enabling them to prioritize assistance and consistently reflect heightened moral and institutional responsiveness. Assessing how barangay officials implement poverty alleviation policies and produce observable improvements in people's lives within their communities can impact both personal and collective levels.

Henceforth, with Simons' Administrative Rational Model Theory, it is noticeable how barangay officials construct context-driven decisions under resource constraints, where they engage and determine satisfactory, practical solutions achievable within their administrative limitations rather than pursuing theoretically optimal policies. In the context of Davao City barangays, this was observable in how barangay officials managed limited budget allocations, and they still pushed for targeted livelihood support and community training programs within their respective communities. Furthermore, from Coase's New Institutional Economics Theory, the barangay-led interventions demonstrate how local institutions reduce transaction costs and address systemic inefficiencies. This was observable when barangays promoted collaborative networks and resource sharing, which allowed them to mitigate bureaucratic delays and align local needs with proactive service delivery. Moreover, Rawls' Social Justice Approach Theory finds its grounding in prioritizing the least privileged, where barangay officials direct them with aid and programs that fulfill the imperative of benefiting the most disadvantaged. This was visible where the significant impact of assistance emphasized the ethical commitment, showcasing measurable community improvements through equitable policy administration. Though bounded by institutional and scale limitations, Davao City's barangay officials' views and insights exemplify rational governance, institutional efficiency, and justice-oriented policymaking consistent with the study's core theoretical frameworks.

Valuable Recommendations of Davao City Barangay Officials Regarding Poverty Alleviation Policies

Considering the poverty alleviation policies implemented by the Philippine government, focusing on the locality, which have significantly influenced their experiences with policy implementation and execution, barangay officials in Davao City have shared valuable recommendations on how these policies can be enhanced to more effectively support their impoverished communities and address substantial impediments. Their recommendations are classified into five (5) primary themes. The themes were Anti-Gambling Measures to Prevent Financial Hardship, Skills Training for Employment Opportunities, Proactive Community Support Initiatives, Increase Job Opportunities Through Business and Investment, and Sustained Positive Impact of Community Support Programs.

Anti-Gambling Measures to Prevent Financial Hardship. The inquiry concerns the significant role of barangay officials in Davao City in implementing anti-gambling measures as a poverty intervention strategy in the locality. Azemi et al. (2023) underscore gambling as a legal issue affecting the economic and social hazard that undermines the community's well-being. It is imperative to strictly enforce anti-gambling measures as unregulated gambling directly contributes to worsening financial hardship, particularly among low-income families, based on the conclusions derived from the collected and analyzed data. Most participants recalled their reflective experiences and sought more focused, centralized poverty reduction solutions, as gambling is a destructive mechanism, directing individuals into debt that could lead to experiencing extreme poverty. Participant 4, or "Lenora," shared her thoughts on stressing the adverse effects of anti-gambling measures on impoverished households.

"Nabawasan na gyud ang sugal kay ginapadakop man aron dili na mosamot ang kapobrehon o malubong sa utang, labi na gyud katong mga naa'y namatyan. Kining mga hantak, ginapadakop na ni kapitan kay dili man na pwede. Hugot kaayo ang balaod ni kapitan bahin kining mga sugal kay kana man gyud ang makapadugang sa utang." (Gambling has significantly decreased because the authorities are making arrests to prevent further

poverty or debt, especially during wakes where some people engage in hantak. The captain has been actively cracking down on games like hantak since they are illegal. The captain enforces strict regulations against gambling, recognizing that it often worsens financial burdens.) Participant 4

This proves that barangay officials in Davao City are actively involved in actionable poverty reduction strategies, explicitly recognizing the negative impact of gambling on the financial stability of their community members and the strict enforcement of anti-gambling measures to prevent further debt accumulation and poverty. This observation is supported by Participant 7, or "Leandro," when he delineated the role of barangay-level enforcement in curbing gambling activities.

"Ginadakop pod sa barangay ang mga naga sugal para di masamot ka pobre, except sa lamay, pero kanang mga sugal lang nga naa sa balay, dili man gyud pod na siya pwede kay city ordinance man na siya, kay bawal gyud na siya." (The barangay also apprehends those who gamble to prevent worsening poverty, except during wakes. However, gambling inside homes is not allowed because it is prohibited by city ordinance.) Participant 7

Both statements underscore the socio-economic impact of gambling, in which the barangay officials view it as a moral issue directly contributing to cyclical poverty. Pérez et al. (2021) found that, in low-income urban areas, gambling has compounding effects on household poverty, which causes increased disruptions to family stability. Aligning with the rational model, barangay officials in Davao City can adopt a satisfying strategy by implementing gambling restrictions founded on pragmatic, context-aware decision-making. They implement realistic strategies rather than pursuing complicated or idealized solutions, addressing poverty within their jurisdictions. In deprived areas, people are more likely to engage in gambling, which is associated with higher rates of issues among individuals from lower socio-economic groups (Grumstrup & Nichols, 2021). From a theoretical lens, the enforcement of anti-gambling measures by barangay institutions operates to reduce institutional inefficiencies and mitigate the constraints of poverty. This indicates how local institutional interventions are needed to prevent gambling that could exacerbate community-level poverty.

Moreover, gambling is an individual behavior with foundational problems entrenched in socio-economic inequalities, which allows for more vulnerable individuals to directly engage in gambling due to elements contributing to financial desperation. The strict enforcement of anti-gambling calls for public institutions and preventive action to prioritize the welfare of society's most disadvantaged. This reflects the social justice approach, where barangay officials have a significant impact on duty to safeguard and play a role in equitable resource distribution. In the context of Davao City at the grassroots level, numerous low-income families are already grappling with financial distress due to inflation and limited economic opportunities, where gambling is perceived as an unnecessary financial strain that barangay officials aim to eradicate through proactive measures and leadership. The local policy enforcement against gambling is directly connected to poverty prevention and community welfare, allowing these measures to uphold legal ordinances and reflect an in-depth understanding of poverty's social sources, which substantiates the barangay officials' essential role in enforcing preventive measures that safeguard financially vulnerable populations in Davao City.

Skills Training for Employment Opportunities. The findings were derived from recognizing the significant role of barangay officials in addressing unemployment and enhancing employment opportunities through the implementation of skills training programs, specifically for marginalized groups such as youth and unemployed individuals. Otu (2024) underscores skills training as an instrument bridging the gap between unemployment and labor skill requirements, providing vocational, technical, and soft skills to individuals, enhancing employability. The skills training proactive strategy implemented by the barangay officials was viewed as a strategic capacity-building response to address the leading causes of persistent poverty, in light of the conclusions derived from the collected data. Participants predominantly recalled their experiences and recommended equipping individuals with relevant market-driven skills, enabling their constituents to access stable income sources, reducing economic dependency, and contributing to community development. Participant 4 and Participant 5, or "Benedict," shared their thoughts and aspirations for underscoring the potential of skills training to address unemployment challenges.

“Kining gi-provide namo nga skills training, unta mas daghan pa ang matabangan sa pagpangita og employment.” (We hope that the skills training we have provided can assist more individuals in finding employment.) Participant 4

“Kining skills training sa mga youth, mga existing working opportunities. Aron makahatag ug mas maayong career opportunities para sa ilaha, ilabi na ang paghatag ug office jobs.” (The skills training for the youth and existing working opportunities, aiming to provide better career opportunities for them, particularly through offering office jobs.) Participant 5

The skills training programs act as proactive strategic instruments to address unemployment and underemployment, especially for marginalized groups, including youth and low-income residents, which bridges the gap between the skills and the labor market demand (McGrath & Yamada, 2023). Prioritizing the disadvantaged members of society and advocating for policies ensuring equal opportunities and resources underscores the ethical dimensions of poverty alleviation policies. Participant 7 expressed that skills training can attract investment and generate job opportunities.

“Kaning mga training skills nga magdawat pa og investors sa community para madaghan ang matagaan og trabaho.” (The skills training programs attracts investors to the community help create more job opportunities.) Participant 7

This statement highlights barangay institutions' focus on employment and a larger economic method to attract external actors, including investors and businesses, allowing them to expand further employment opportunities. Bardales-Cárdenas et al. (2024) assert that employment is a personal outcome and a product of structural economic development, allowing competent human resources to become an asset, which improves a community's investment appeal. This reflects how local institutions can lower barriers to economic development, allowing communities to be equipped with the capabilities and infrastructure required for market engagement.

The significance of skills training stresses the potential of institutional arrangements that reduce inefficiencies and promote productive engagement. Shi and Bangpan (2022) emphasize the function of technical and vocational education and training interventions, especially for youth and low-income communities, where participation in these programs can influence individual experiences and outcomes, with implications for poverty reduction. The prioritization of marginalized groups enables barangay institutions to ensure that those economically disadvantaged are empowered to access formal employment and career advancement, reflecting redistributive and transformative purposes to address inequalities for long-term economic mobility. This also denotes satisfactory solutions as they concentrate on bounded rational decisions, proposing the highest practicality that could benefit the most significant number of individuals, and are effectively specialized to community demands.

Moreover, skills training programs are an influential instrument addressing individual and systemic barriers to employment, contributing to communitywide economic development and sustainable livelihoods (Cullo et al., 2024). Implementing skills training programs is a proactive strategy for poverty alleviation, which enhances employability, fosters long-term economic resilience, and aligns labor market needs, contributing to individual empowerment and community-wide development. In this regard, skills training programs serve as a structured response from institutions to economic stagnation, where the initiation of barangay officials to implement such a comprehensive strategy extensively invests in human capital. This promotes policies that empower the most impoverished sectors and expand access to equal opportunities. Driven by responsive policy design, supporting skills development programs can promote individual empowerment, community resilience, and economic inclusivity, leading to contributions to employment and poverty alleviation.

Proactive Community Support Initiatives. The inquiry underscores the active involvement of barangay officials in community support initiatives that foster local development and address challenges. The barangay officials often exert personal initiative and resourcefulness to respond directly to the immediate needs of their constituents rather than depending solely on formal institutional frameworks. Sulasula (2024) emphasizes how local officials actively implement programs such as community development, participatory governance, and

resource allocation that have successfully improved governance outcomes at the grassroots level. These proactive actions present a people-oriented approach to governance, which is strengthened through sustained engagement and visible care, where a responsive form of leadership is crucial in poverty alleviation, ensuring interventions are tailored to the unique socio-economic realities of marginalized communities. Participants reveal that their active experiences rely on institutional mechanisms and take personal initiatives to assist their constituents. Participant 6 emphasized the "Foot Groove Ordinance" promoted by their barangay captain as part of a localized intervention strategy.

“Actually, si Kapitan man naga-promote siya og Foot Groove Ordinance. Karon mi ka-realize sa among session, may mga cases kami na og ma-report sa amo, everyday man naga-walking si Kapitan, ginatutokan gyud na niya, gina-face-to-face, gina-pa-family counseling, ah, gina-home visit act through sa iyahang Foot Groove Ordinance. Kung kinahanglan og mga policy change, gina-diskasan namo na sa council. So, nindot man pud ang among session.” (Actually, our Captain is promoting the Foot Groove Ordinance. During our session, we realized that there were cases reported to us. Since the Captain walks around daily, he closely monitors these situations, addressing them through face-to-face interactions, family counseling, and home visits as part of the Foot Groove Ordinance. If there is a need for policy changes, we discuss them in the council. Overall, our sessions are quite productive.) Participant 6

This demonstrates that the barangay captain's proactive initiatives within their respective communities show direct engagement with the community, presenting a governance model in which policies are developed in close consultation with constituents. This statement was supported by Participant 7, underscoring the personal commitment of barangay officials to utilize personal funds to support community needs.

“Motabang gyud ang mga kagawad sa paghatag, usahay ilaha na gyud sariling kwarta. Ang uban nga scholars sa barangay kay naka-graduate na gyud, ug ang uban nga gisuportahan sa mga barangay officials.” (The councilors genuinely help by providing assistance, sometimes even using their own money. Some of the scholars in the barangay have already graduated, and others are being supported by barangay officials) Participant 7

Both statements underscore the profound commitment of barangay officials to uplift their communities by implementing proactive community support initiatives, which often go beyond their official duties to ensure tangible outcomes. Accordingly, this aligns with Republic Act No. 7160, also known as the Local Government Code of 1991, which is the legal foundation of decentralization in the Philippines, authorizing Local Government Units (LGUs), including barangays, to independently implement and execute programs and enact policies addressing the demands of their respective communities (Congress of the Philippines, 1991). The barangay officials' efforts advocate for policies that prioritize the disadvantaged and redistribute resources to achieve equity.

Moreover, Nebrida and Ojeda (2024) emphasize the significance of community engagement, capacity building, and collaborative governance to address social challenges through supporting resources and personal time, embodying the ethical dimensions of governance, which ensures marginalized sectors receive the proper support they need. Aligning with the concept of rational, context-based decision-making, barangay officials make pragmatic decisions tailored to their community's specific demands, operating within the available resources and knowledge to select solutions attainable within the real-world constraints of poverty. To contribute to the broader economic stability and development within their communities, barangays operate as an efficient and transaction-reducing institution, eliminating or reducing friction in the delivery of services. The proactive initiatives of barangay officials showcase adaptability with a genuine commitment to address multifaceted challenges, particularly alleviating poverty, where this approach strengthens community relations and enhances the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts. In the context of Davao City, through active engagement, personalized support, and participatory governance, barangay officials play a crucial role in constructing responsive and inclusive community frameworks that uplift vulnerable groups and promote social equity.

Increase Job Opportunities Through Business and Investment. The study's findings recognize the active role of barangay officials in encouraging local employment by promoting business expansion and attracting investors

within their respective localities. Adenutsi (2023) argues that addressing the core causes of poverty requires engaging in entrepreneurship to empower individuals to access the means of generating a source of income, and by attracting investors, it can construct sustainable employment opportunities. Participants emphasize that job creation depends on government employment programs, which can be achieved through private-sector partnerships and proactive engagement with business institutions. This showcases the evolving active role of local executives in providing services as economic mediators within their jurisdictions. Participant 7 elaborated on the significance of attracting large-scale investors to create sustainable job opportunities for its constituents.

“Mas maayo gyud nga maghimo og daghang oportunidad sa trabaho para sa mga tawo. Kay si kapitan man gud, naga-invite gyud siya og mga dagkong investors sama sa malls ug Jollibee, nag-endorse gyud siya og mga tawo nga kung kinahanglan nila og karpentero o mga staff sa ilang mga negosyo.” (It is indeed better to create more job opportunities for the people. The barangay captain has invited large investors, such as malls and Jollibee, and has endorsed individuals who may need carpenters or staff for their businesses.) Participant 7

This reveals the active role of barangay officials in utilizing external resources by inviting and attracting investments, which establishes operations within the community and addresses unemployment constraints. Allowing investors to enter the local community reflects the entanglement of economic development and poverty alleviation, which boosts employment, job markets, and income circulation within the barangay. This was supported by Participant 5, who elaborated further on the role of local entrepreneurs and business-minded residents in voluntarily providing job opportunities to help disadvantaged individuals.

“Usahay, naay mga kauban nato nga mga higala nga adunay negosyo ug gusto motabang sa atong barangay” (Sometimes, we have friends or acquaintances who own businesses and want to help our barangay.) Participant 5

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is an essential institution that fosters local governance by promoting investments and supporting businesses at the grassroots level. This was supported by Gumpad (2024), asserting how DTI assists local businesses and attracts investments in micro and small enterprises (MSMEs), reflecting broader economic development of localized initiatives and addressing poverty and unemployment. This aligns with the concept of bounded rationality, where the policy effectiveness increases when decision-making is grounded in local capacities and adaptive learning. Reflecting on institutional economics, efficient institutions are those institutions that minimize the cost of economic interchanges, and DTI programs serve as intermediaries to formalize small businesses, stabilize the enterprise environment, and facilitate public-private coordination. This underscores the importance of local governance engaging in public and private sector collaboration, enhancing development outcomes for its constituents, and helping to alleviate poverty.

Furthermore, Acharya et al. (2021) support the idea that implementing Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) directly impacts the principles of justice, ensuring marginalized communities benefit from business and investment opportunities and reflecting ethical responsibility to provide resources and address socioeconomic imbalances. The gathered data shows that attracting and investing constructs connections between barangays and businesses, reducing transaction costs, producing institutional efficiencies, promoting local employment, and enhancing livelihood. This also reflects rational decision-making, allowing barangay officials to optimize available opportunities, fostering job creation within existing administrative and economic impediments. The local community-centric strategies for implementing sustainable development programs ensure that interventions are designed for socio-economic circumstances. Davao City's barangay officials play a pivotal role, centered on their function as intermediaries promoting partnerships, generating employment opportunities, and fostering economic growth to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

Sustained Positive Impact of Community Support Programs. The barangay-led support programs in Davao City have proven to be a foundation of localized poverty alleviation, generally consisting of financial aid, skills training, safety measures, and livelihood assistance, which are designed to respond directly to the everyday challenges encountered by residents, particularly those impoverished individuals and families. Liu et al. (2021) assert that poverty alleviation-based industrial development significantly impacts farmers' livelihood capital, where they were mostly the disadvantaged sectors, underscoring the role of sustainable and community-

focused programs to improve social and economic outcomes. This highlights how targeted, proactive interventions can enhance farmers' ability to secure stable livelihoods and sustain well-designed initiatives promoting long-term improvements in marginalized communities. The study's participants emphasized the crucial role of barangay officials in the long-term effectiveness of sustainable initiatives that are increasingly seen as transformative, which empower marginalized individuals and households, achieving social mobility and financial stability. Participants 4 and 5 shared the significant impact of community support programs on livelihood opportunities.

“Ang among natabangan, dako gyud kaayo ang positive impact kay tanan sila makabaton og panginabuhi.” (The individuals we have assisted experienced a significantly positive impact because all of them were able to obtain a livelihood.) Participant 4

“Dako man sad ang impact ug improvements bahin sa among mga programa.” (There was a significant impact and improvement in relation to our programs.) Participant 5

These statements underscore the perceived comprehensiveness and inclusivity of the barangay support mechanisms that successfully translated into livelihood opportunities, which enable its constituents to have a source of income, reduce dependency, and participate fully in the local economy. Participant 7 further elaborated on the observable and measurable outcomes of initiatives.

“Makita gyud ang improvements labi na kining mga assistance program sa barangay gikan.” (The improvements are clearly evident, especially the assistance programs coming from the barangay.) Participant 7

The efficiency of governmental interventions such as skills training, financial assistance, and unlimited access to essential resources significantly impacts rural areas, enhancing living conditions and access to services, as supported by Hoang-Duc et al. (2024). This underscores the importance of implementing community programs with access to information and unlimited resources. Through context-sensitive judgment and continual adaptation, barangay officials or leaders can choose practical, structural actions responsive to reality constraints. Reflecting on the theory of justice, this permits prioritizing the welfare of the most disadvantaged and structuring society to ensure fairness in opportunity and distribution, directly benefiting those at the margins of society.

In Davao City, barangay officials implement and execute community support programs, highlighting the visible and measurable impact of such initiatives, which foster public trust and credibility in local governance. Participants witnessing the results of program initiatives allow them to strengthen their barangay-led development and encourage broader civic participation. Barangay institutions, along with their local officials, utilize old programs repeatedly and learning from their outcomes, allowing them to refine strategies and ensure support mechanisms remain highly applicable to the changing needs of their constituents. This demonstrates how barangay officials play a pivotal role in providing poverty alleviation measures to combat poverty that are still ongoing, consistently evolving, and improving, which offers a dynamic approach to policy implementation and enhancements.

Henceforth, grounded in Simons' Administrative Rational Model Theory, the recommendations of barangay officials underscore how they adopt contextually practical and resource-bound strategies in response to the persistent poverty, where they choose realistic interventions such as antigambling enforcement, increase job opportunities through business and investment partnerships, and livelihood training that matches their administrative capacities, and these rational choices made within limited structures that maximize achievable over what is ideal. Aligning with Coase's New Institutional Economics Theory, the community-centered strategies underscore how barangays operate as transaction-reducing institutions, facilitating access to employment, training skills, and public services while minimizing bureaucratic inefficiencies. The recommendations also reinforce Rawls' Social Justice Approach Theory, where barangay officials consistently strive to uplift the most disadvantaged, particularly those trapped in cycles of poverty, joblessness, and social exclusion. The barangay officials' proposals reflect a deliberate effort to create conditions that favor equity, opportunity, and dignity for the disadvantaged. These actionable insights reflect the ethical imperative to

reduce inequality and advocate for systemic reforms that institutionalize fairness and uphold justice at the local governance level.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The researchers' implications and conclusions are purposely covered in this section. The study concentrates on the lived experiences of Davao City barangay officials regarding poverty alleviation policies implemented in their respective communities, their personal views and recommendations, and the challenges they encountered during implementation.

Conclusion

This phenomenological inquiry effectively achieves the intended outcomes by exploring and examining the lived experiences of barangay officials during policy implementation and execution, their challenges, and their valuable recommendations on enhancing poverty reduction initiatives in Davao City at the local level. A qualitative phenomenological approach was selected due to its capacity to explore the experiences, insights, and challenges of barangay officials directly implementing these poverty alleviation policies. Using valuable perspectives provided by barangay officials, the selected participants of the study reveal how poverty alleviation policies are an essential but constrained instrument to address the multifaceted realities of poverty. Barangay officials acknowledge that these policies, such as cash assistance, skills training, livelihood opportunities, health support, and educational aid, have provided immediate relief and opportunities for their respective marginalized constituents, which advance inclusivity and optimism. Nevertheless, they view these policies as frequently inadequate due to the limited budget allocation, inconsistent assistance, and a shortage of targeted programming, leading to interventions that focus profoundly on the least privileged. To put it another way, barangay officials witness that policies are designed to address poverty. However, their effectiveness often diminishes during implementation and execution due to insufficient coordination among government agencies, a lack of monitoring, and limited community engagement in the planning phases. Barangay officials also expressed their concern that certain assistance and mechanisms may unintentionally construct dependency among beneficiaries, which emphasizes the need for policies to build the capacity of families to sustain themselves over the long term.

In light of these views, barangay officials provide recommendations for the development and enhancement of poverty alleviation policies that are embedded in proactive and sustainable approaches, which emphasize the significance of livelihood opportunities, skills training, anti-gambling, proactive community support initiatives, and inter-agency collaborations, facilitating the delivery of services and ensure timely release of funds and resources, reducing bureaucratic impediments that hinder policy impact. They further recommend enhancing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the grassroots level to assess the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs and allow adjustments based on real community needs that promote data-driven decision-making. Moreover, the ongoing proactive and sustainable assistance has become essential for effectively reducing poverty at the grassroots level. Although short-term interventions may offer immediate relief, ongoing efforts and programs that foster resilience and economic self-sufficiency are essential for attaining visible and positive change. Dushkova and Ivlieva (2024) assert that implementing community programs fosters a culture of empowerment, enabling communities to participate actively in their advancement. Programs and policies that prioritize sustainable development and empowerment enable communities not only to endure but also to prosper. As the implementers and executors of poverty programs, Barangay officials are critical representatives of poverty modification that work within an intricate institutional network to deliver dignity, justice, and opportunity to their communities.

Implication

This study examined the lived experiences of barangay officials in Davao City in implementing poverty alleviation policies, illuminating the impediments they encounter and the approaches they implement and adopt. The results of this study emphasized the importance to the local executives of broader initiatives focused on poverty eradication. Seven (7) selected barangay officials from four (4) different barangays were interviewed regarding their truthful perspective and experiences. The findings of this study indicate several

specific factors that impede poverty reduction. The local executives should focus on three (3) aspects: first, the importance of examining social and economic imbalances in urban and peripheral regions, emphasizing the need to focus on the most marginalized groups in the community, and catering to the urgent needs. It is integral for decision-makers to focus on directing resources towards the most impoverished residents, ensuring that policies aimed at reducing poverty are comprehensive and specifically deliberated to meet the needs of wider community members. Second, resource mobilization, local governments often face a scarcity of financial resources needed to implement comprehensive poverty alleviation programs. Intergovernmental collaboration can mobilize funding and resources, accelerate and broaden the implementation, and create sustainable programs such as skills training. Skills training within the barangay equips individuals with specific competencies and knowledge that increase their chances of securing stable employment or starting their businesses. Community members can access better job opportunities with improved skills, leading to increased household income.

The researchers anticipate that this study provides the means for the local government to refine its poverty alleviation policies within communities, facilitating the prevention of subsequent crises. The meaningful responses from the barangay officials, drawn from their personal experiences and perspectives, along with the recommendations from this study, can significantly impact and enhance local governance regarding current policies. The ongoing challenges experienced by individuals in underprivileged communities demonstrate that poverty is a significant and persistent problem in various barangays in the Philippines. As supported by David et al. (2021), poverty is perpetuated using limited sources of income, insufficient business knowledge, and reliance on seasonal agricultural labor. The marginalized sectors struggle with limited resources and insufficient support, underlining the need for local government to implement proactive and sustainable strategies, with poverty reduction as their priority, equipping barangay officials with enough resources to execute poverty reduction initiatives properly.

Furthermore, barangay officials raised concerns regarding the insufficient funding due to the limited allocation of financial resources, which became one of the substantial impediments to achieving the successful implementation and execution of poverty alleviation programs. This demonstrates the challenges encountered by the barangay officials in overseeing local budgeting processes, particularly in resource allocation and financial management, stemming from constrained budgets, which necessitate the need for improved budget allocation and a reassessment of resource distribution at the local level. Policymakers must enhance the financial resources provided to local institutions, given their decisive role in poverty alleviation, as budget limitations frequently hinder the ability of local institutions to implement effective programs. In addition, this study also identified that livelihood opportunities, coupled with financial assistance and skills training, are fundamental to reducing poverty, where barangay officials have pursued the success of providing livelihood programs, particularly those that construct sustainable job opportunities and support financial independence. Accordingly, the impending policies and programs must have had direct attention not solely on short-term financial assistance but also on developing sustainable livelihood strategies to escape the cycle of poverty.

Grounded in the gathered data, this study identified that strengthening support through collaboration with multiple organizations, including NGOs, non-state actors, and state actors, can enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs. As supported by Tabiolo (2025), the role of local governance in the Philippines maintains an essential function that focuses on applying decentralization in addressing challenges such as poverty and inequality. In the context of Davao City, this exemplifies how barangay officials demonstrate that collaboration with diverse stakeholders can optimize resource allocation and promote public services, ensuring strategies for poverty reduction are comprehensive and adequately supported. Further, the enforcement of anti-gambling policies is implemented to reduce financial instability within vulnerable households, where barangay officials concluded that engaging in gambling intensifies financial hardships for low-income families, directing them to advocate for stronger policies to counter the activity. This exhibits the urgency of tackling detrimental behaviors that exacerbate the economic challenges of impoverished families.

This study denotes the need for proactive community support initiatives beyond proactive measures. By directly engaging with community members and ensuring their needs are met, especially for people with disabilities (PWDs), solo parents, and senior citizens, who often require support. Proactive approaches, such as

visiting door-to-door and providing personalized support, can prevent the acceleration of problems and construct a more resilient and sustainable community.

Henceforth, the implications of this study offer purposeful insights not only at the local level in Davao City but also in similar cities and regions nationally. Enhancing financial support, prioritizing sustainable solutions such as skills training and livelihood initiatives, and promoting external collaborations will empower local governments to tackle the underlying causes of poverty more effectively. These actions will reinforce a more sustainable and practical approach to reducing poverty intensively. Moreover, this study encourages future researchers to tackle and assess the long-term effects of the following approaches. To create and explore more innovative poverty alleviation strategies. This study will assist future researchers as it addresses real and factual situations that occur in real life, and thereby it has the potential to evolve or improve over time.

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