

Tourist Police Officers' Compliance With Republic Act 9593

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ABSTRACT

The main role of tourist police officers is to ensure that the implementation of RA 9593 also known as Tourism Act of 2009 has been executed. The main purpose of this study is to assess the roles of tourist police officers in compliance with the said law, in Panglao, Bohol from the perspective of the stakeholders and the police officers themselves, in the year 2015. This will serve as the basis for the recommendation to improve

their services. The study employed the descriptive correlational method utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire based on the functions and responsibilities as contained in Republic Act 9593 as data gathering tool. The respondents were the fifty (50) barangay officials, fifty (50) community residents, twenty (20) businessmen, and thirty (30) tourist police officers. Findings revealed that majority of them were less compliant as perceived by the two groups of respondents. The problem mostly encountered by tourist police officers was the lack of cooperation on the part of resort owners. The study concluded that there is a need for tourist Police Officers and tourism-related stakeholders to be more compliant with Republic Act 9593.

KEYWORDS

RA 9593, Tourist Police Officers, Descriptive correlational, t-test, Panglao, Bohol, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The Republic Act 9593, Section 100 states that the Philippine National Police (PNP) shall create a Tourism Security Force to assist in the maintenance of peace and order in high tourist traffic areas. An Office Assistance Desk for Tourist Police shall likewise be established in such areas. The PNP shall coordinate with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in training the members of the force in cultural sensitivity, languages and relevant laws (“REPUBLIC ACT No. 9593 otherwise known as Tourism Act of 2009 and Its Implementing Rules and Regulations,” January 2010).

On December 13, 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the PNP and the Department of Tourism (DOT) at the PNP Headquarters at Camp Crame in Quezon City. The purpose of the said memorandum was to strengthen the partnership between the two government offices in ensuring safety and security of both the local and foreign tourists through the National TOP COP (Tourism Oriented Police for Community Order and Protection) Program. The program involved numerous training that will help the uniformed personnel in learning

proper ways of handling tourists (“National Tourism Oriented Police for Community Order and Protection program launched,” December 2010).

From November 2010 to May 2011, the DOT conducted and completed the Phase I of the training program, focusing on the police officers assigned in top tourist destinations in the Philippines. Since August 2011, tourist police officers have been deployed and were visible in Tourism areas such as Baguio City, Boracay Island, Metro Manila, and Bohol (“Tourist police ready for duty,” August 2011).

Bohol is one of the most favorite places both foreigners and Filipinos love to visit. Panglao is one of the popular tourist destinations because of its white beaches and five-star hotels. The Panglao Municipal Development Council on September 9, 2013, passed a resolution in answer to the increased tourism-related social concerns. These social concerns included peace and order, the proliferation of drugs, trafficking of women and children, child labor among others. The crime volume in the province of Bohol went up from 6,205 in 2013 to 7,842 in 2014 to 9,218 in 2015 (“Crime Volume Bohol Province (2013-2015)”, n.d.).

This study assessed the roles of tourist police officers in compliance with the Republic Act 9593, in Panglao, Bohol, in the year 2015. Based on the findings of the study, a recommendation to improve their services may be proposed.

Routine activity theory as a crime prevention method focuses on essential elements that make up a crime. This approach provides prevention strategies that will focus on the three elements: the offender, the target or the presence of capable guardians. (Reynald, 2011; Cohen and Felson, 1979).

A capable guardian has a ‘human element,’ that is usually an individual who, by their mere presence, would prevent potential offenders from perpetrating a crime. Some examples of capable guardians are security guards, police patrols, neighbors, door staff, co-workers, and friends. A CCTV could be a capable guardian, as long as someone is monitoring it at the other end of the camera. Routine activity theory viewed crime from an offender’s perspective. Crime will only take place if a likely offender thinks that there is a suitable target with no capable guardian. It is in the assessment of the situation that the offender determines whether a crime will take place (Reynald, 2011).

When the government of Thailand realized the importance of tourists’ safety, they established a permanent Tourist Police Organization under

the Division on Crime Suppression. However, the original structure of the organization did not coincide with the responsibility of the tourist police which is providing safe and general services for tourists (Tipmontree, 2007). According to the official website of the Bohol Tourist Police, one of the functions of a tourist police is enforcing the law while preventing and controlling the crimes in their assigned area of jurisdiction. They need to ensure the public safety of both the tourist and locals. They are also responsible for facilitating and providing adequate assistance, service, and security protection for tourist (“Bohol Tourist Police Unit,” n.d.).

Tourism is seen as a global and intensely competitive industry. It is eminently susceptible to dangers, lack of safety and security. Crime represents a severe threat to travel and tourism than any other negative factors. (Sekhar, 2014 and “Safety and Security within the Tourism and Hospitality Sector In collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs,” 2012).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive-correlational method utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire. The locale of the study is Panglao Island where the tourist police officers are assigned. Panglao is an anchored tourist destination and famous for its white beaches and known resort establishments. In these establishments, there are also familiar activities like snorkeling, diving or island hopping. The respondents of this study were the 50 barangay officials, 50 community residents, 20 businessmen, and 30 tourist police officers. The researcher made use of a self-made questionnaire, which was based on Republic Act 9593 or Tourism Act of 2009.

The first part asked about the profile of the respondents which was divided into two: stakeholders and tourist police officers. The second part dealt on the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police as perceived by the respondents. The third aspect highlighted the problems encountered by the tourist police in their performance of their roles. Lastly, the fourth section reflects the significance of the difference between a profile and perceived level of compliance of the roles of tourist police.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

Tables 1 and 2 showed the profile of the stakeholders and police officers which included their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment and length of stay in the Municipality of Panglao and length of service.

Table 1. Profile of the Stakeholders

Age	<i>f</i>	%
Below 20 years old	2	1.67
20-29 years old	23	19.17
30-39 years old	32	26.67
40-49 years old	26	21.67
50-59 years old	23	19.17
60 years old and above	14	11.67
Total	120	100
Gender		
Male	54	45
Female	66	55
Total	120	120
Civil Status		
Single	43	35.83
Married	71	59.17
Widow/Widower	5	4.17
Separated	1	0.83
Total	120	100
Length of Stay		
Below 10 years	20	16.67
10-19 years	16	13.33
20-29 years	18	15
30-39 years	20	16.67
40-49 years	23	19.17
50-59 years	16	13.33
60 years and above	7	5.83
Total	120	100
Highest Educational Attainment		
Post-Graduate	3	2.5

College Graduate	51	42.5
College Level	22	18.33
High School Graduate	19	15.83
High School Level	11	9.17
Elementary Graduate	7	5.83
Elementary Level	7	5.83
Total:	120	100

Table 2. Profile of the Tourist Police Officers

Age	<i>f</i>	%
25-29 years old	11	36.67
30-34 years old	13	43.33
35-39 years old	5	16.67
40-44 years old	1	3.33
Total:	30	100
Gender		
Male	24	80
Female	6	20
Total:	30	
Civil Status		
Single	10	33.33
Married	20	66.67
Total:	30	100
Length of Service		
Less than 5 years	7	23.33
5-9 years	16	53.33
10-14 years	6	20
15-20 years	1	3.33
Total:	30	100
Highest Educational Attainment		
With Masteral Units	1	3.33
Baccalaureate Degree Holder	29	96.67
Total:	30	100
Eligibility		

Board Exam Passer	22	73.33
Civil Service Passer	3	10
NAPOLCOM Passer	5	16.66
Rank		
PO1	12	40
PO2	9	30
PO3	6	20
SPO1	2	6.67
SPO3	1	3.33
Total:	30	100

Age

The majority of the stakeholders were in the age bracket of 30-39 years old, with 32 or 26.67 percent, followed by the age bracket of 40-49 years old, which has a frequency of 26 or 21.67 percent. As to the tourist police officers, the data revealed that majority of them were in the age bracket of 30-34 years old with a frequency of 13 or 43.33 percent, followed by age bracket of 25-29 years which has a frequency of 11 or 36.67 percent.

Gender

The majority were females with a frequency of 66 or 55.00 percent, while the male has a frequency of 54 or 45.00 percent for the stakeholders.

For the tourist police officers, the majority were male with a frequency of 24 or 80.00 percent, while the female has a frequency of 6 or 20.00 percent.

Civil Status

The majority of the stakeholders were married with 71 or 59.17 percentage rate and followed by single status which has a frequency of 43 or 35.83 percent. Similarly, a majority also of the tourist police officers were married with a frequency of 20 or 66.67 percent while the single has 10 or 33.33 percentage rate.

Length of Stay

The greater number of stakeholders stayed in the Municipality of Panglao for 40-49 years with a frequency of 23 or 19.17 percent.

Length of Service

The greater number of the tourist police officers had served 5-9 years with a frequency of 16 or 53.33 percent followed by less than five years in the service with a frequency of 7 or 23.33 percent.

Highest Educational Attainment

As to the educational attainment of the stakeholders, the highest frequency of 51 or 42.50 percent was college graduates, followed by college level with a frequency of 22 or 18.33 percent. As to the tourist police officers, the greater proportion had baccalaureate degrees with a frequency of 29 or 96.67 percent.

Eligibility

Most of the Tourist Police Officers are Board Exam passers with a frequency of 22 or 73.33 percent, followed by NAPOLCOM passer which has a frequency of 5 or 16.66 percent.

Rank

As to rank, most of the tourist police officers were PO1 with a frequency of 12 or 40.00 percent, followed by PO2 which had a frequency of 9 or 30.00 percent.

Table 3 presents the perception of the two groups of respondents on the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police officers.

Table 3. Level of Compliance of the Roles of Tourist Police Officers as Perceived by the two groups of Respondents

Level of Compliance of the Roles of Tourist Police Officers as Perceived by the two groups of respondents	Stakeholders		Police	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Patrolling in beach areas/ hotel premises	2.81	Compliant	3.07	Compliant
2. Entertain complaints of tourists	2.57	Compliant	2.4	Less Compliant
3. Responds to reports of incidents involving tourists	2.69	Compliant	2.17	Less Compliant
4. Initiates investigation involving tourists	2.34	Less Compliant	1.67	Less Compliant
5. Observes and monitors gathering within tourist premises	2.4	Less Compliant	1.77	Less Compliant

6. Responds to child trafficking activities in tourist premises	2.04	Less Compliant	1.6	Less Compliant
7. Responds to illegal gambling activities within tourist premises	1.93	Less Compliant	2.2	Less Compliant
8. Assists in the implementation of measures against illegal drug within tourist premises	2.03	Less Compliant	2.23	Less Compliant
9. Proper procedure for arresting violators	2.33	Less Compliant	2.03	Less Compliant
10. Proper procedure for search orders	2.33	Less Compliant	2.23	Less Compliant
11. Proper procedure for seizure orders	2.23	Less Compliant	2.23	Less Compliant
12. Proper procedure for resolving conflicts	2.2	Less Compliant	2.43	Less Compliant
13. Observing values of tourists	2.34	Less Compliant	2.4	Less Compliant
14. Observing customs/ traditions of tourists	2.24	Less Compliant	2.17	Less Compliant
15. Observing risk reduction in handling patients (tourists)	2.31	Less Compliant	2.53	Compliant
16. Observing first aid applications	2.23	Less Compliant	1.93	Less Compliant
17. Observing good communication protocols	2.19	Less Compliant	2.2	Less Compliant
<i>Composite Mean</i>	<i>2.31</i>	<i>Less Compliant</i>	<i>2.19</i>	<i>Less Compliant</i>

Table 3 shows the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police officers as perceived by the stakeholders and tourist police officers.

As perceived by the stakeholders, the highest three on the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police officers, “patrolling in beach areas/ hotel premises” got the highest weighted mean of 2.81 or compliant, second was “responds to reports of incidents involving tourists” with a weighted mean of 2.69 or compliant, and the third was “entertained complaints of tourists” with an average of 2.57 or compliant.

The lowest three on the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police officers as perceived by the stakeholders were “response to child trafficking activities in tourist premises” with a weighted mean of 2.04 or less compliant, “assists in the implementation of measures against illegal drug within tourist premises” with a weighted mean of 2.03 or less compliant, and “responds to illegal gambling activities within tourist premises” with a weighted mean of 1.93 or less compliant.

The data revealed that there is a need for the tourist police officers to improve their respective roles to ensure peace and order of their assigned tourist vicinity.

The highest three as perceived by the tourist police officers on the level of compliance of their roles were “patrolling in beach areas/ hotel premises” with a weighted mean of 3.07 or compliant and “proper procedure for resolving conflicts” with a weighted mean of 2.03 or less compliant.

The lowest three on the level of compliance of the roles of tourist police officers as perceived by themselves “observed and monitors gathering within tourist premises” with a weighted mean of 1.77 or less compliant, followed by “initiates investigation involving tourists” with a weighted mean of 1.67 or less compliant and “responds to child trafficking activities in tourist premises” with a weighted mean of 1.60 or less compliant.

The data indicate that the tourist police officers were not in compliance with some of their roles.

The overall mean is 2.31 or less compliant as perceived by the stakeholders and 2.19 or less compliant as perceived by the tourist police officers.

Problems Encountered by the Tourist Police Officers

Table 4 presents the problems encountered by the tourist police officers in the performance of their duties.

Table 4. Problems Encountered by the Tourist Police Officers

Problems Encountered	<i>f</i> (n=30)	(%)	Rank
Highest to Lowest (n=30)			
1. Rampant sale of illegal drugs by resort staff/workers	19	63.33	9
2. High political intervention when criminal incidents occur	8	26.67	10
3. Lack of support of the barangay officials	25	83.33	2.5
4. Lack of cooperation on the part of resort owners	27	90	1
5. Insufficient training through the National Tourist-Oriented Police for Community Order and Protection (NTOPCOP) Program	22	73.33	6
6. Presence of organized group	22	73.33	6

7. Offer of bribes from resort owners/operators	22	73.33	6
8. Communication skills in dealing with tourists	25	83.33	2.5
9. Language barrier in conducting investigation	23	76.67	4
10. Cultural/religious reactions to police investigation procedures	20	66.67	8

Table 4 shows the problems encountered by the tourist police officers in the performance of their duties.

It is shown that 27 or 90.00 percent of the tourist police officers considered “lack of cooperation on the part of resort owners” as the number one problem. It is followed by “lack of support of the barangay officials” and “lack of communication skills in dealing with tourists,” both with a frequency of 25 or 83.33 percent, next in rank is the “language barrier in conducting investigation” with a rate of 23 or 76.67 percent.

Tourist Police Officers need to reach out among business establishments as well as the resort owners for them to be fully effective and accessible into services for the benefit of tourism to the destination area.

Result on the Difference between the Level of Compliance as Perceived by the Stakeholders and Tourist Police Officers

Shown in Table 5 the result of the test on the significance of the difference between the Level of Compliance as perceived by the Stakeholders and Tourist Police Officer.

Table 5. Significance of the Difference between the Level of Compliance as Perceived by the Stakeholders and Tourist Police Officers

Variable	Computed t-value	Critical Value	Decision in Ho	Interpretation
Level of Compliance as Perceived by the Stakeholders and Tourist Police Officers	1.3145	1.976	Do not Reject Ho	No Significant Difference

On the level of compliance as perceived by the stakeholders and tourist police officers, the computed t-value of 1.3145 is lower than the

critical value of 1.9761 leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

The test revealed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of the stakeholders and tourist police officers on the level of compliance.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that majority of tourist police officers were less compliant as perceived by the two groups of respondents. The most common problem they encountered was the lack of cooperation on the part of resort owners. The study concluded that there is a need for tourist Police Officers and tourism-related stakeholders to be more compliant with Republic Act 9593.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore of utmost importance to continuously evaluate and improve the services of the tourist police unit to gain the confidence on the capability of the tourist police to ensure the welfare particularly the safety and security of local and foreign tourists.

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