

## Responsiveness of Local Villages in the Implementation of COVID-19 Protocols in the Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the responsiveness of barangays to the implementation of IATF protocols. By utilizing mixed methods research design, the study achieved its objectives by employing a modified questionnaire that determines the responsiveness of five barangays in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. Moreover, the study involved 250 local residents and 50 barangay officials who both willingly participated in the data gathering. For the data analysis, descriptive quantitative and thematic analysis were used. The results revealed that both perceived their respective barangays to be responsive in the implementation of IATF protocols. Results also portrayed a significant difference between the assessment of barangay officials and local residents. In addition, it was also found that there's a significant difference in the assessment of barangay officials and residents when grouped according to barangay profile. It was also revealed that despite the responsiveness, there were still issues and challenges that both barangay officials and residents experienced in implementing IATF protocols in their barangays.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since its first case in January 30, 2020, the Philippines did not escaped the continuous rise of COVID-19 cases as it already tallied 2.3 million cases with 170,000 active cases as of writing (Department of Health [DOH], 2021). In order to flatten the curve, the national government through its Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases implemented substantial policies and protocols. Not until March 7, 2020 when the country recorded its first local transmission, no one was more directly responsible in being responsive other than the barangays and government instrumentalities.

Local Villages, which in local language in Philippines is called barangays, are considered to be part of the Local government units which main purpose is to be the national government's helping hand in their respective local jurisdictions. This political unit plays a vital role in providing basic services and facilities, and supplementing the policies handed down to them by the national government. It serves as the primary delivering and planning unit of government projects, plans, programs, policies, and exercises in the community (Section 16 Local Government Code of the Philippines, 1991). On the other hand, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases or widely known as IATF, is an agency created through Executive Order No. 168 of former President Benigno Aquino III which was tasked to assess, monitor, contain, control and prevent the spread of a disease that would potentially cause an epidemic in the Philippines. The IATF is mainly responsible in framing protocols for COVID-19 response in the country. Through time, the national government decentralized more functions to local government units as a strategy to combat the disease. From the first recorded case until the present, barangays were facing continuous changes in policies in community quarantines to alert levels. As the virus continuously spread across the country, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG, 2020), urged all barangay officials to be more proactive in the enforcement of minimum health protocols in their respective communities. This is supported by Memorandum Circular No. 2021-050 of DILG, which stressed the role of local government units and local chief executives in implementing and observing minimum public health guidelines and policies of IATF.

However, with the heightened responsibilities of barangays, the abrupt change of working environment affected their response in facing the COVID-19 pandemic (Cruz et al., 2020). Despite proper delegation of functions and organized policies implemented on barangays, there are still challenges leading to an increase to the number of infected local people. Furthermore, there are limited researches which examine and study in specific, the responsiveness of barangays to the implementation of minimum health care protocols in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cruz et al., 2021; Flores & Asuncion, 2020). There were also limited studies discussing the means of implementation of strengthening risk governance including early warning systems in plans and policies (Gumiran & Dayag, 2021). In addition, there were insufficient investigations on determining the combined socio-ecological resilience of the Philippines at national and local scales which helps legislators in locating high-

vulnerability communities (Alhambra & Navarro, 2021). Due to this, there's a little to no highlight as to the need of help of barangays in improving response strategies, allowing context-sensitive risk mitigation, and strengthening community resilience during emergencies and crises (Bautista, et al., 2020).

Conducting a study which focuses more on the responsiveness of barangays in implementing IATF protocols and the challenges they are experiencing are indeed of the essence since they are the ones directly exposed to the issues brought by the pandemic. The Department of Health further stressed that the region's capital, Tuguegarao City, was at high-risk classification level from the later part of March to mid-November 2021 (DOH, 2021). With this, stricter measures and guidelines were made to curve the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the region, but what it signifies is not only a need for support in the health sector but also a policy enhancement which is possible through this research. The study was conducted to examine the responsiveness of local villages on the implementation of IATF protocols along movement of local residents, observance of minimum local health protocols, local isolation and quarantine facilities, conduct of intensive contact tracing, and local disinfection. It also explored issues and challenges experienced by the barangay officials and local residents on the implementation of IATF protocols.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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## **METODOLOGY**

This study made use of a mixed-methods research design in order to achieve the study's objectives. Descriptive method was utilized for the quantitative research design, in which it described the profile of the barangays and the responsiveness of barangays on the implementation of IATF protocols as assessed by the barangay officials and residents. For the qualitative research design, the study used the basic qualitative research by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). It gave meaning to the perception and assessment of people with their society, which in the context of this study, are the issues and challenges experienced by the respondents in the implementation of IATF protocols in their respective barangays.

This study was conducted in the barangays in one city in Northern Philippines. The participants of the study were the barangay officials and local residents. The researchers utilized a probability sampling, specifically cluster sampling for the selection of barangays. Moreover, a non-probability sampling, particularly a quota sampling of 250 participants from local constituents (50 from each barangay), was used while total enumeration was utilized for the barangay officials.

### *Research Instruments*

The instrument utilized in the study was a questionnaire based on a survey by Gundran (2021) which evaluated the COVID-19 response of selected urban and rural communities in the Philippines. The adopted questionnaire was modified to fit the context of the study and to answer its research questions. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

- a. **Profile of the Barangay** (2 sub-parts) – the profile of the barangay is based on the profiling released by the Department of Interior and Local Government (2020) which are the facilities, and barangay properties. The population and geographical location of the barangays were determined by the Philippine Statistics Authority.
- b. **Responsiveness of Barangays** (5 sub-parts, 15 items) – shows how the respondents perceive the responsiveness of their respective barangays
- c. **Issues and Challenges** (1 item) – an open-ended question that tackles the issues and challenges the respondents experience in the implementation of IATF protocols

The respondents answered one factual information in each question provided in the questionnaire. They also answered an open-ended question according to their own personal view. The said questionnaire underwent validation and reliability testing before the proper conduct of data gathering. Ethical considerations are strictly adhered in the conduct of this research. They were free to withdraw their participation at any time without negative impact on their social standing and reputation on their respective barangays as their responses to the questionnaire were kept confidentially by the researchers only. Moreover, data was gathered during the vacant hours of the respondents in order to not interfere with their daily work schedules. Enough time was given for them to answer. Given the researchers' position as students, the study was not merged with any quantity of money, financial incentive, or act of reimbursement about the study's expenditures.

#### *Data Analysis*

For the data analysis, the data gathered by the researchers were analyzed by making use of the following:

Frequency and percentage were utilized in describing the profile of the barangay along its population, location, land classification, facilities, and barangay properties.

Weighted mean was used for the responsiveness of barangays, with the following range and qualitative descriptions:

Table 1. Range and Qualitative Descriptions

<b>Range</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>
3.50 - 4.00	Fully Responsive
2.50 - 3.49	Responsive
1.50 - 2.49	Less Responsive
1.00 - 1.49	Not Responsive

To determine the significant difference in responsiveness of barangays assessed by barangay officials and residents, Independent Sample T-Test was utilized. Meanwhile, Independent Sample T-Test and One Way Analysis of Variance were used to determine the significant difference when grouped according to profile.

Thematic analysis was used to determine what were the issues and challenges experienced by the respondents in the implementation of IATF protocols. Lyons and Coyle (2021) pointed out how the thematic analysis was utilized for textual qualitative surveys by the use of coding. For this research, thematic analysis was done in the following phases:

1. **Familiarization and Coding:** Transcripts or data were familiarized. This phase requires a thorough reading of the transcripts while taking necessary notes for significant points. After which, coding was done by creating meaningful labels attached to specific segments of the dataset that are relevant to the research questions.
2. **Theme Development:** Codes were examined, and combined, clustered or collapsed together into meaningful patterns which developed a candidate theme.
3. **Reviewing and defining themes:** The candidate themes underwent quality control through the reviewing phase in order to guarantee that the themes work well in relation to the coded data, the dataset, and the research question. Then, the reviewed themes moved into the defining stage where analytic narratives from each theme is done to present the data extracted. With the finalization of each theme, descriptions were followed alongside some quotations from the transcript to allow concise interpretation of its meaning to readers.
4. **Producing the report:** An academic report of the data being examined and analyzed was generated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Profile of the Barangays

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Population		
Low (3,000 and below)	1	20.00
Moderate (3,000 - 6,000)	2	40.00
High (6,000 and above)	2	40.00
Barangay Geographical Location		
Urban	3	60.00
Rural	2	40.00
Presence of Barangay Facilities		
Barangay Hall	5	100.00
Multi-purpose Hall	5	100.00
Barangay Health Station	5	100.00
Satellite Market	5	100.00
Barangay Properties		
Service Vehicle	5	100.00
Disaster Risk Reduction Equipment	5	100.00
Office Equipment	5	100.00

Table 2 presents the profile of the barangays. Results in the table show that among the five barangays, there are two barangays each coming from moderate

and high population, and one from the low population. Moreover, there are three (3) barangays classified as urban while two (2) are rural barangays. Finally, for the presence of barangay facilities and properties, all five barangays showed to having such.

Table 3. Responsiveness of the Barangays on the Implementation of IATF Protocols

Dimensions	Barangay Officials		Residents		Overall Mean	
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Mean	QD
Movement of Local Residents	3.40	Responsive	2.95	Responsive	3.18	Responsive
Observance of Minimum Local Health Protocols	3.45	Responsive	3.03	Responsive	3.24	Responsive
Local Isolation and Quarantine Facilities	2.53	Responsive	2.66	Responsive	2.60	Responsive
Conduct of Intensive Contact Tracing	3.18	Responsive	3.06	Responsive	3.12	Responsive
Local Disinfection	3.43	Responsive	3.28	Responsive	3.36	Responsive
Mean	3.20	Responsive	3.00	Responsive	3.10	Responsive

Table 3 shows the responsiveness of the barangays on the implementation of IATF protocols. The table shows both the responsiveness of the barangays in the perspective of both barangay officials and local residents along the different dimensions present in the implementation of IATF protocols. In terms of the movement of local residents, both agree that barangays are responsive in making sure that, those who are allowed to go outside are the only ones who are going outside, there is a strict implementation of local lockdowns and movement of individuals in and out of the barangay. Barangay officials assessed a more responsive rate to this protocol compared to the assessment of local residents. Along the observance of minimum local health protocols, both still agree that barangays are responsive. Specifically, they see that barangays are responsive in implementing the use of face masks and face shields, social distancing, and prohibiting mass gathering. Local residents have a lower assessment to this particular protocol than the barangay officials. On local isolation and quarantine facilities, barangays are seen to be responsive as well. Specifically, local residents and barangay officials assessed that the barangays are responsive in making sure that there's enough isolation and quarantine facilities in the barangay, and that the barangays are responsive in transferring

and referring COVID-19 patients to the COVID-19 facility. Barangay officials have a lower assessment to this rather than the local residents. For the conduct of intensive contact tracing, both observed that barangays are responsive. Specifically, barangays have the capability of properly implementing contact tracing to COVID-19 cases in its local territorial jurisdiction. The assessment of barangay officials closely edged the assessment of local residents to this protocol. Lastly, along local disinfection, barangays are responsive in terms of conducting local cleaning and disinfection, and encouraging their constituents of proper hygiene. For this protocol, barangay officials assessed it greater than the local residents.

The study was conducted in order to examine the responsiveness of barangays in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan on the implementation of IATF protocols. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a huge task for the national government in addressing different issues to combat such disease. In these times, the critical role of local government units ensures the delivery of services and implementation of protocols to its local constituents. Barangays, considered to be the smallest local government units, are no exceptions. The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF, 2020) highlighted the responsibility of barangays in also ensuring quarantine facilities for residents who incurred the virus. The results of the study revealed that the five barangays conveyed a responsive approach on their implementation of IATF protocols. This means that in implementing IATF protocols, barangays were receptive. This is in parallel with a previous study where they found that local government units demonstrated a remarkable response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Talabis et al., 2021). Barangays are found properly performing their duties and functions as independent local government unit (Dagohoy, 2021). A case study by Ocampo and Yamagishi (2020) emphasized the implementation of minimum public health standards, limited movement of persons, and prohibition of mass gatherings which are the most crucial protocols for COVID-19 strategy. In the current study, both local residents and barangay officials perceived that their barangays are responsive in implementing protocols in terms of the movement of local residents, observance of minimum local health protocols, local isolation and quarantine facilities, conduct of intensive contact tracing and local disinfection. With the help of the local government units, and memorandums coming from the national government, barangays are provided with the rules that they will implement on their local jurisdictions (Wright, 2020; SunStar, 2021).

In addition, these results suggest that barangays are also well aware of the protocols given by the IATF and more importantly, they are responsive when implementing such protocols on their local jurisdictions. For the movement of local residents, the results imply that the barangays are responsive in making sure that only the allowed people are the ones who are going out, there's a strict abidance in local lockdowns, and that people who are allowed to enter the premises of the barangays are strictly followed. The same goes for the observance of minimum local health protocols as barangays implement the usage of face masks and the prohibition of mass gathering in their respective

locality. These results are in parallel with another study which found that the implementation of social distancing, wearing of face masks, proper hygiene, and lockdown would increase the perceived effectiveness of COVID-19 preventive measures (Ocampo & Yamagishi, 2020).

Meanwhile, barangays officials and local residents are also confident that their barangays respond in providing local isolation facilities, and referring and transferring COVID-19 patients to hospitals and near isolation units. Lastly, the results imply that barangays are implementing conducting intensive contact tracing on positive cases, and administering local disinfection and cleaning. Overall, the results established that barangays are responsive enough with their responsibility of implementing IATF protocols. This is in parallel to the findings of a previous study where they found that there's a level of effectiveness on the implementation of public health and safety protocols on the households of a particular community in Mindanao (Lasanas et al., 2021).

Table 4. Significant Difference on the Assessment of Barangay Officials and Residents on the Implementation of IATF Protocols

Dimensions	Groups	Mean	t-value	P-value	Description
Movement of Local Residents	Barangay Officials	3.40	3.972	.000*	Significant
	Residents	2.95			
Observance of Minimum Local Health Protocols	Barangay Officials	3.45	4.018	.000*	Significant
	Residents	3.03			
Local Isolation and Quarantine Facilities	Barangay Officials	2.53	-1.133	.258	Not Significant
	Residents	2.66			
Conduct of Intensive Contact Tracing	Barangay Officials	3.18	1.032	.303	Not Significant
	Residents	3.03			
Local Disinfection	Barangay Officials	3.43	1.483	.139	Not Significant
	Residents	3.28			
Overall Responsiveness	Barangay Officials	3.20	2.556	.011*	Significant
	Residents	3.00			

\*significant at .05 level

Table 4 indicates the significant difference on the assessment of barangay officials and residents on the implementation of IATF protocols. The results show that there is a significant difference in the assessment of barangay officials and local residents in the responsiveness of barangay in the implementation of IATF protocols in movement of local residents, observance of minimum local health protocols, and the overall responsiveness of barangays. Hence, the first null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the assessment of barangay officials

and residents varies along movement of local residents, observance of minimum local health protocols, and overall responsiveness of barangays. More particularly, there's a difference in terms of how both local residents and barangay officials perceive the responsiveness of their barangay in implementing rules on the movement of local residents, and observance of minimum local health protocols. This means that the assessment between barangay officials and local residents varies in the dimensions where there is a significant difference. Moreover, what residents see with regards to the response they receive or observe is different with that of the perception of barangay officials, based on what they do on their actual implementation. Citizens' assessment of the responsiveness of their local governments differs from that of their officials. This result corroborates with the findings of a previous study which found out that the expectations of residents to the actual delivery of mandated barangay functions differ when compared to the assessment of barangay officials, who reported to have a higher percentages (Montes Jr. et al., 2020).

On the other hand, there's no significant difference in the response of barangay in local isolation and quarantine facilities, local disinfection, and conduct of intensive contact tracing. Hence, the first null hypothesis is accepted. This means that the assessment of barangay officials and residents does not vary along local isolation and quarantine facilities, conduct of intensive contact tracing and local disinfection.

### **Issues and Challenges Experienced by Barangay Officials and Local Residents on the Implementation of IATF Protocols**

The results of the open-ended question among barangay officials and local residents revealed six major themes in relation to the issues and challenges they experienced on the implementation of IATF protocols. These are the following: (A) Execution and proper implementation of protocols by the barangay, (B) Observance of minimum local health protocols, (C) Transfer and referral of COVID-19 patients, (D) Local disinfection and cleaning procedures, (E) Lack of barangay facilities, and (F) Cooperation and adherence from the local residents.

#### *A. Execution and proper implementation of protocols by the barangay*

One of the prevailing issues and challenges experienced by local residents is the actual execution and proper implementation of IATF protocols by their barangay. Local residents perceived that there's a lack of strict adherence, clarity, cohesiveness, and follow up on the actual execution of the protocols set by the IATF in their respective barangays. Due to this, residents observe that there are a lot of law-breaking citizens who are relaxed despite the current pandemic. Majority of the responses from local residents are inclined with the execution and proper implementation of such protocols by their respective barangays. Most of the local residents observed that barangays are not strict enough, and that there's ambiguity or lack of clarity on their execution of the protocols. The local residents perceived that with this very reason, there are a lot of local residents who are not following the said protocols and are becoming

more relaxed because of the lack of strict adherence. This implies that the local residents could not feel the implementation of IATF protocols within their barangays which should be the primary function of these local government units. This also means that barangay officials are not properly implementing protocols because local residents still see other people within their barangay, disobey such protocols. A particular study suggests that barangays should be more involved as they should be collaborating with their communities in gathering insights and suggestions in order to obtain a more inclusive COVID-19 response. This previous study also added that the reason why local residents observe a lack of execution is that barangays are not dwelling towards on the ground approach where they seek information from their constituents to improve their response (Flores & Asuncion, 2020). Barangays are given the responsibility to provide the public, knowledge about health risks and take the required precautions to prevent exposure (Soriano et al., 2020). This is done by proper implementation and execution of the set protocols. Some of the responses from the local residents are as follows:

C43: *Parang walang pakiealam yung mga barangay officials kung sino sino nakakapasok sa barangay namin. Hindi maayos at strikto ang pag-implementa ng mga protocols na ibinibigay* (Our barangay officials seem to not care at all as to the people who are entering in our barangay. Their implementation of the given protocols are not clear and strict).

C15: *Walang sumisita na barangay officials sa mga taong lumalabag sa protocols gaya ng mass gathering at hindi pagsuot ng facemask* (There are no barangay officials who call out those who are not following the protocols like mass gathering and wearing of face masks).

C54: *Sa tingin ko, hindi higit na naisasagawa ang mga programa para sa IATF protocols. Imbes na maging mahigpit upang maiwasan ang mabilis na paglaganap ng COVID-19, maluwang pa rin ang pagpapatupad ng mga ito. Kaya naman, hindi rin na nadidisciplina ang mga tao sa pagsunod ng mga protocols* (In my perspective, the programs for IATF protocols are not well implemented. Instead of being strict so that we can avoid the fast spread of COVID-19, the implementation of these are still relaxed. This is the reason why people are not disciplined enough to follow these protocols).

#### B. *Observance of minimum local health protocols*

Another major issue and challenge among local residents is the observance of minimum local health protocols, which are the basic protocols followed in the new normal. Residents see that wearing face masks and avoiding mass gathering are still not followed. In the new normal, wearing face masks, prohibiting mass gathering, and maintaining social distancing are the ones considered to be part of the fundamental local health protocols. Most of the local residents see that there's not much attention given to this by their barangay as they responded that many fellow residents are still conducting mass gatherings even though it is prohibited. Some of the residents saw people

who are not wearing masks while walking freely on the streets. These violations are the ones that the residents saw to be the issue when barangays implement the IATF protocols. This implies that barangays are not monitoring people who are not observing local health protocols within their local jurisdictions. A study by Seale et al. (2020) saw that the strategies implemented by the government, like social distancing could affect the wellbeing of the community. In addition, it means that barangays are not making sure that their constituents are not engaging on mass gatherings and are following social distancing. This issue or challenge found in this study is further supported by a recent study which found out that enforcing health protocols to the local residents and following certain procedures or protocols given by the national government, are indeed a challenge in the COVID-19 response of a barangay (Cruz et al., 2021; Roxas, 2020). Some of their responses are as follows:

*C01: Ang problema na naranasan ko ay may mga taong nagkakaroon ng mass gathering at hindi nasisita kaya mataas pa rin ang kaso ng covid cases (The problem I experienced is that mass gatherings are not called out by the authorities that is why COVID cases are still high).*

*C24: May mga residente gaya ng kapitbahay naming nagecelebrate ng birthday at ang daming bisita, hindi na nila sinusunod yung protocols (There are residents just like our neighbor who celebrates a birthday with a lot of visitors. They do not follow the protocols anymore).*

*C58: Marami pa ring tao ang hindi sumusuot ng face masks sa labas nang maayos. May mangilan ngilan kang palakad lakad sa labas na walang suot na face mask. Napakadelikado nito dahil may covid pa rin at ang pagsuot ng face masks ay kailangan pa rin natin. (There are still a lot of people who are not using their face masks properly. There are some who are walking outside without wearing a face mask. This is dangerous because COVID is still here and we still need to wear our face masks).*

### *C. Transfer and referral of COVID-19 patients*

Local residents also highlighted the issue on the transfer and referral of COVID-19 patients. They noticed that barangays have a hard time transferring or referring COVID-19 patients who reside from their barangay to a near quarantine facility. The study of Roxas (2020) suggests that reporting and identifying COVID-19 patients should be done by the barangay. Local residents observed that barangays find it difficult to notify the city health office or transfer positive patients from their household to near isolation units or facilities. Residents also saw that some patients who incurred the virus are not made known to barangay officials. These patients are doing their own quarantine protocols at the comforts of their homes. This implies that transferring and referring COVID-19 patients to the nearest isolation facility has been a challenge for barangays on their COVID-19 response as part of their implementation of IATF protocols. Lastly, this issue is also addressed in a recent study which emphasized the duty of barangay health emergency

response teams on the referral of patients with mild symptoms, isolation precautions, and making sure that there's an adequate space or room for isolation at home to community facilities (Cruz et al., 2020). Some of their responses are the following:

C06: *Hindi kaagad natratransfer and covid positive patients sa quarantine facility* (COVID-19 positive patients are not immediately transferred to a quarantine facility).

C44: *Hindi maayos na natratransfer ang mga nagpositive. Home quarantine ang mga positive imbes na mailipat sa isolation area* (Transferring positive patients is not done properly. Those who are positive are home quarantined instead of being transferred to an isolation area).

C28: *Hindi agad nalilipat ang mga may virus sa quarantine facility. Walang action na ginagawa kapag may nagpopositive kaya mabagal ang pagresponde* (Those who incurred the virus are not immediately transferred to a quarantine facility. There's no action done if there's a positive patient that is why the response is that slow).

#### D. *Local disinfection and cleaning procedures*

In addition, part of the issues and challenges faced is the conduct of local disinfection and cleaning procedures in each of the barangays. According to local residents, there is little to no local disinfection done in their communities. Meanwhile, some of the respondents observed that procedures in conducting such protocols were not followed such as wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In the span of the ongoing pandemic, local disinfection in the communities is done moderately (Zalsos et al., 2021). This is the reason why local residents see it as one of the issues or concerns in the barangays. Furthermore, a study also claimed that conducting local disinfection has been a struggle for barangays as what was before a morning sweepings on streets is now a wider and comprehensive cleaning as abidance to IATF protocols (Cruz et al., 2021). The implication of these results is that the local disinfection of the barangays is seen to be a challenge as not all local residents felt the conduct of such protocol, while some observed that procedures are not followed for a precise implementation. Here are few of their responses:

C05: *Napansin ko na hindi sa buong barangay ang kanilang isinasagawang local cleaning at disinfection* (I observed that the local cleaning and disinfection they conduct does not cover the entirety of our barangay).

C27: *Kakulangan sa PPE lalo na pag nagdidisinfekt. Importante pa naman ito kapag nagkakaroon ng ganitong aktibidad* (Lack of Personal Protective Equipment most especially when they are disinfecting. This is important if they are to conduct such activity).

C45: *Wala akong nasaksihan na kahit anong disinfection sa aming lugar* (I did not witness any disinfection activities in our place).

E. *Lack of barangay facilities*

or the barangay officials, they admit that there is indeed a lack of barangay facilities in their respective barangays. This is one of the issues and challenges they observed on implementing IATF protocols. Majority of the barangay officials answered that the lack of barangay facilities affects how they respond to the protocols given to them by the national government. Local residents do agree to this as they also observed some to be lacking of facilities for the betterment of their barangay's COVID-19 response. As mentioned in the study of Cruz et al. (2021), securing that there are health facilities in barangays is important. Since barangays are the first point of contact of any local resident to the government, the challenge of ensuring facilities is indeed one of the problems that barangay officials experience. Even though most of the barangays have barangay halls, health centers, and multi-purpose halls, there are still facilities such as barangay information centers which can increase the number of human force (Roxas, 2020), that would boost the response of barangays (Montes Jr. et al., 2020). Despite the presence of other equally-important facilities, this challenge according to barangay officials implies that there's a room for improvement as to addressing the lack of some barangay facilities. Some residents also agreed in such. These are some of their responses:

C44: *Dahil nga hindi naman kalakihan ang barangay naming wala masyadong covid facilities lalo na sa transportation kailangan pa munang itawag sa RHU para kunin* (Our barangay is not that big that is why there is not enough COVID-19 facilities more importantly the transportation in which there is still a need to call the Regional Health Unit to get one).

B06: *Wala masyadong mga tao at pasilidad sa barangay kaya nagkukulang kami sa pagresponde at pagtulong sa mga nangangailangan ngayong pandemic* (There's not enough officials and barangay facilities that is why our response and the help we give to those who are in need this pandemic is not enough as well).

B02: *Hindi sapat ang mga facility na mayroon sa barangay kung gayon, hindi natutuganan kung minsan ang mga particular na pangangailangan ng mga tao* (There's not enough facilities present in the barangay that is why, we sometimes cannot provide the particular needs of the people).

F. *Cooperation and adherence from the local residents*

Lastly, many barangay officials claim that the main issue or challenge they face and currently experiencing is the lack of cooperation and adherence from the local residents despite their implementation of IATF protocols. Even after numerous warnings, barangay officials observed that they do not pay attention to what they are implementing. Moreover, they see that the lack of cooperation from the local residents is evident when they are not wearing face masks and when local residents go out beyond the curfew hours set. A study also agrees to this result as it showed that barangay officials have challenges in encountering

hard-headed residents (Roxas, 2020). This is further supported by another study which observed the problem of barangay front-liners on residents who don't want to obey the minimum protocols that were intended to prevent the spread of the disease (Ayeo-eo et al., 2022). This particular result in the study indicates that in the eyes of the barangay officials, in order to have a responsive implementation of IATF protocols there's a need for cooperation and adherence from the local residents as well. Some of their responses are the following:

B01: *Ang isyu na naranasan ko bilang opisyal ng barangay ay yung paglabas labas ng mga tao sa hindi tamang oras o lugar lalo na sa kasagsagan ng pandemya at yung mga pasaway na mga tao* (The issue I experienced as an official of the barangay is the practice of people going out at the wrong time or place most especially in the middle of a pandemic and those people who are hard-headed).

B09: *Kung minsan meron taong kahit pagsabihan na bawal ang ginagawa ayaw making. Ito talaga yung isyu para sa aming barangay official* (Sometimes, there are those who are not listening despite telling them not to. This is really the issue for us barangay officials).

B15: *May mga constituents na matitigas ang ulo at hindi sumusunod sa health protocols gaya lamang ng pagsuot ng face mask at face shield* (There are hard-headed constituents and people who are not following health protocols just like wearing face mask and face shield).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study concludes that barangays are responsive to their implementation of IATF protocols. Even though the barangays show the responsiveness, local residents and barangay officials still found issues and challenges that affected their barangay's implementation of IATF protocols.

With the results of the study shown, Barangays may continue their approach on their implementation of IATF protocols to ensure that the responsiveness perceived by local residents remains. They also need to look into their execution of protocols by making sure that every zone in their jurisdiction is abiding with the protocols and that there's no special treatment among select local residents. In partnership with the city government, barangays should design a system or a comprehensive strategy as to how they would conduct weekly or monthly local disinfection and cleaning. As such, the city government should also give more support and empower barangays in their implementation of IATF protocols by providing necessary materials, and additional facilities or funds.

For possible extension of this research, a broader approach is recommended to look into the implementation of IATF protocols of barangays from different municipalities or cities in the region. Other departments may also conduct similar studies that would look into the responsiveness of hospitals, restaurants, engineering firms, and other establishments affected, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholders should also look into this study as a benchmark for future pandemics as the results would give them the proper knowledge to respond and know appropriate measures for such health events and prevent any severe spread of disease. And finally, Local Government Units may utilize the findings of this study as a tool for adopting COVID-19 strategies and policies in situations similar to or related to pandemics.

### ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every research has limitations; thus, you can describe them here and briefly provide suggestions for further research.

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