

Assessing the Effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in Addressing Cases of Violence against Women and Their Children in Cavite City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC Desk Officer in Cavite City, focusing on three main areas: the efficiency of the desks, the assistance rendered, and the procedures in handling cases. Additionally, it will explore the significance of demographic variables such as age, sex, educational attainment, and the barangay in shaping effectiveness. Guided by Social Learning Theory, this research posits that individuals learn behaviors from their environments, influencing responses to VAW. The unique insights from the professionals working on VAW contexts provide a lens to explore underlying factors contributing to VAW, thereby highlighting the persistent nature of this issue in the Philippines. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive comparative research design. This study will involve purposive sampling of victim-survivors from Cavite City's Barangays. A structured questionnaire will measure effectiveness based on established criteria. Data will be analyzed using statistical methods, including ANOVA and T-tests. Findings reveal that the VAWC Desks demonstrate a high level of effectiveness, with mean ratings of 3.68 for efficiency and procedures in handling, and 3.66 for assistance rendered. Age and sex significantly influenced perceived effectiveness, with younger age groups rating the desks more favorably. Notably, Barangay 30 excelled with the highest scores across all metrics. Recommendations for enhancing effectiveness include targeted training for officers and improved community engagement strategies. Overall, the study highlights the vital role of VAWC desks in providing timely support and intervention for the victims, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement and resource allocation.

Keywords: Assessment, Barangay Violence against Women's and Children Desk, Cases

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Philippines faced a serious problem with Violence against Women and their Children (VAWC). Also, RA7610 known as the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act, is a Philippine law that protects children's welfare. It defined and penalized various forms of child abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological harm. The law also prohibited neglect, exploitation, and discrimination against children. Data from Lao M. (2023) shows a 68.86% increase in VAWC cases from 2022 to 2023, highlighting the urgency of addressing these limitations. According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in 2021 alone shows a staggering number of reported cases: 8,399 physical violence incidents, 1,791 rapes, and 1,505 instances of lascivious acts against women. The 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) revealed an even more concerning statistic: 17.5% of Filipino women aged 15–49 have experienced domestic violence, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse from their partners. These numbers from 2020 to 2022 highlighted a persistent issue. VAW Desks, established by the Magna Carta of Women, are intended to be a critical source of support for VAWC victims within communities.

Unfortunately, a study by Consignado et al (2022) suggested limitations that may hinder their effectiveness. The study points to a lack of necessary training for desk officers, potentially due to educational limitations or unclear definitions of their roles and responsibilities. This is concerning because the number of cases continues to rise.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) offered a range of programs and interventions for victims and survivors of abuse. These services include psychosocial care, and counseling, psychological and psychiatric assessments, professional health services, referrals for medicolegal exams, protections against various forms of exploitation, distribution of clothing and personal items, as well as legal and paralegal assistance. Efficiency of VAWC Desk, Assistance Rendered, and Procedures in Handling, these attributes were used to help the victims who filed the Barangay VAWC Cases on assessing the Effectivity of VAWC Officers. These variables were chosen since the approach of the researchers was Adapted Modified type of instrumentation. The demographic profile underscores the importance of targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by these individuals. Additionally, geographic context plays a crucial role; victims in rural barangays often encounter limited access to resources, increasing their susceptibility to violence (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). According to the Philippine Commission on Women, understanding RA 9262 is essential for both the general public and important stakeholders, including law enforcement, barangay officials, VAWC desk officers, and other government agencies. An informed community and well-trained officials contribute to the effective enforcement of the law, which helps protect the victims and hold offenders accountable. Increased awareness can enhance the overall effectiveness of interventions and improve victim's access to justice. Upon data gathering, the researchers have found that using a quantitative descriptive research design, the barangay VAWC Desk in Cavite City effectively addresses cases of Violence against Women and their Children. Overall respondents rated the efficiency, assistance rendered, and procedures in handling as Very Effective. VAWC Desk officers handle initial intake and documentation, offer immediate protection, and connect victims to relevant services.

The researchers will look for the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in addressing cases of violence against women and their children in Cavite City. There are limited studies regarding the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers. The study will benefit the chosen locale since there is no existing record corroborated with the study that could help lessen the VAWC cases.

Objective

Generally, this study will assess the effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women in Cavite City. It also determined the effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women in Cavite City in terms of: Efficiency of VAWC Desk, Assistance Rendered, Procedures in Handling. The significant difference in the effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women in Cavite City when grouped according to Barangay were also looked into.

Framework

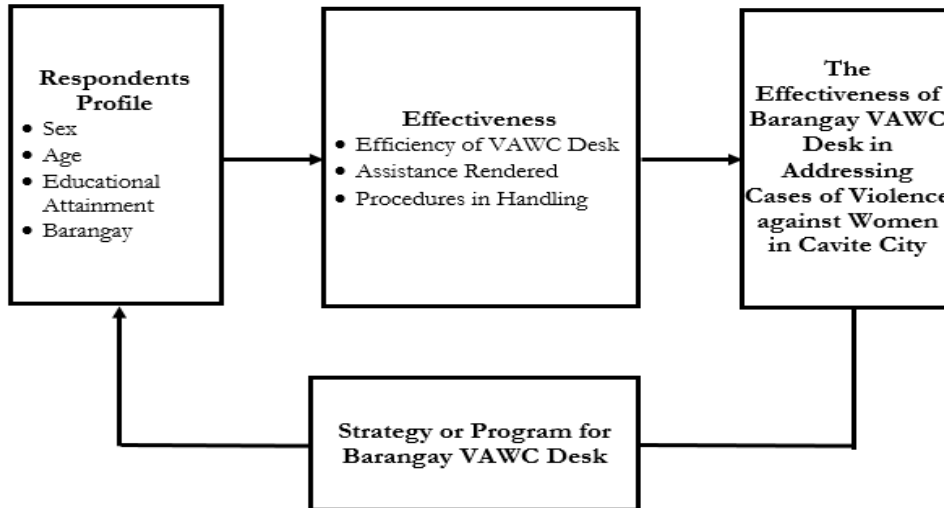
This research draws on Social learning theory, it asserts that individuals learn by observing and imitating others' behaviors, attitudes, and emotions (Andreev, 2021). It also emphasized that the childhood experiences of an individual mirrors their response to society (Crossman, 2019). In this context, women are often considered a marginalized group, potentially adopting dominant perspectives. However, individual experiences can still vary. The researchers opted to focus on the insights of professionals due to their unique vantage point on violence against women (VAW) in the Philippines. These perspectives enlightened the underlying factors contributing to VAW, ultimately supporting the study's claim that VAW is a persistent issue in the Philippines with identifiable contributing factors. Adolescents created role models through social learning which is most commonly carried through adulthood and resulted in committing such criminal behavior (Hofmans, L et al 2022). Social learning also contributed to bystander intervention even in the early stages of relationships such as dating (Pusch, N. 2022). In conclusion, the social learning theory served as an explanation on how individuals imitated behaviors from others that commonly lead into committing serious offenses such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and psychological abuse.

Conceptual Framework

The research on assessing the effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women in Cavite City focused on the cases of violence against women in different Barangay in Cavite City. The variables of the study include the sex, age, educational attainment, and the Barangay they belong to. The diagram

showed that the primary step in conducting the research is identifying the respondent and the variables needed. On the other hand, the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women were measured using the questionnaire adapted by the researchers. The result of the survey served as the basis for the Barangay VAWC Desk on developing strategies and programs to lessen the VAWC cases on Barangays.

Figure 1 Schematic Diagram



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to assess the perceived effectiveness of Barangay Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Desks in addressing cases of violence against women in selected barangays of Cavite City. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researchers to describe respondents' perceptions and compare effectiveness across barangays using statistical analysis. However, the study utilized a cross-sectional survey, which measures perceptions at a single point in time and therefore cannot establish causal relationships between Barangay VAWC Desk practices and service outcomes. Furthermore, the exclusive use of quantitative survey data limits the depth of understanding regarding the contextual factors influencing variations in effectiveness among barangays. Mixed-method approaches incorporating qualitative interviews and observations may provide richer insights into program implementation and service delivery.

The findings of this study should be interpreted within several methodological limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling limited participation to respondents from selected barangays with relatively higher reported VAWC cases, thereby reducing the generalizability of the findings to other communities. Second, the study relied solely on self-reported survey responses, which may be affected by recall bias and social desirability bias, particularly because respondents evaluated services received from Barangay VAWC Desks. Third, the quantitative design did not capture qualitative experiences that could explain why some barangays demonstrated higher perceived effectiveness than others. Finally, because the study employed a cross-sectional design, causal relationships between Barangay VAWC Desk practices and service effectiveness cannot be established.

Respondents

This study was conducted at Cavite City, Cavite Philippines. Cavite City is divided into 5 Districts, 8 Zones and a total number of 84 Barangays. Each barangay has a Barangay VAW Desk appointed by the Barangay Chairman, to oversee the welfare of the people residing within the area.

This study employed purposive sampling, selecting only victims of violence against women and their children (VAWC) from barangays with at least ten recorded VAWC cases. Of the 259 target respondents, 180 participated

in the survey. The remaining target respondents were unavailable because of migration, work commitments, or unwillingness to participate. While purposive sampling ensured that participants possessed relevant experiences related to Barangay VAWC Desk services, it also limits the generalizability of the findings because respondents were drawn from only 12 selected barangays in Cavite City. Consequently, the results may not represent the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desks in other barangays or local government units with different demographic characteristics, organizational capacities, and service delivery systems.

Research Instrument

The first part of the instrument contains the demographic profile of the respondents such as sex, age, educational attainment, and Barangay.

The second part of the instrument was the questions pertaining to the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk. This includes a 4-item scale adapted from an instrument developed by Cabuen et. Al (2022) and Datinguinoo and Guevarra (2021). The instrument for effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk will be composed of three (3) attributes namely: efficiency of VAWC desk, assistance rendered, procedures in handling. First is the efficiency of the VAWC desk with a total of 5-item questionnaires. Then, assistance rendered includes a 5-item questionnaire. Lastly, procedures in handling which are composed of a 7-item questionnaire. All in all, the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk includes a 17-item questionnaire used a 4-point Likert-type scale.

Validity and Reliability

The adapted-modified questionnaires that were used in this study undergone content validity ratio by Lawshe. It involved five (5) validators who rated the items as either essential or not essential. All items had a content validity ratio that is higher than the critical value of 0.600. The computed validity index for the questionnaires is 0.8706.

The validated survey questionnaire was pilot tested to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha, with 30 respondents who were not included in the actual respondents. The pilot testing yielded an alpha coefficient 0.95.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate university authorities and concerned barangay officials. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the confidentiality of their responses. No identifying information was collected during the survey, and all data were used solely for academic research purposes. Considering the sensitive nature of VAWC cases, the researchers exercised caution to protect respondents' privacy and emotional well-being throughout the data collection process.

Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using the mean and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 The Effectiveness of the Barangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of Violence against Women in Cavite City in terms of Efficiency of VAWC Desk, Assistance Rendered, and Procedures in Handling.

Aspect	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.68	Very Effective
Assistance Rendered	3.66	Very Effective

Procedures in Handling	3.68	Very Effective
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Table 1 shows the research questionnaire included three attributes that demonstrate the effectiveness of the Brangay VAWC desk in addressing cases of violence against women in Cavite City: The Assistance Rendered has a low grand mean rating of 3.66, while the Efficiency of Barangay VAWC Desks and Procedures in Handling have the same grand mean rating of 3.68. The tailored assistance programs addressing specific needs - such as legal guidance, shelter, and emotional support - are essential for encouraging victims to seek and receive help. Standardized procedures ensure that VAWC cases are handled systematically, minimizing errors and delays. These procedures encompass everything from reporting violence to legal processes, ensuring that victims' rights are protected, and cases move efficiently, through the system. (Johnson,R.M. et al. 2023)

Table 2 Comparative analysis of the respondents on the level of effectiveness of barangay VAWC desks when grouped according to Barangay.

Barangay/Aspects		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
2	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.83	8	0.3848	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.80	8	0.405	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.82	8	0.3864	Very Effective
7	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.70	30	0.6212	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.75	30	0.5457	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.69	30	0.592	Very Effective
8	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.64	19	0.5035	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.66	19	0.5179	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.71	19	0.5304	Very Effective
11	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.53	12	0.724	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.50	12	0.701	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.27	12	0.9229	Very Effective
14	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.43	16	0.7424	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.09	16	0.8742	Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.27	16	0.7471	Very Effective
22	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.20	10	0.7559	Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.00	10	0.8806	Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.09	10	0.8295	Effective
30	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.94	27	0.2369	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.96	27	0.2068	Very Effective

	Procedures in Handling	3.96	27	0.2018	Very Effective
58-A	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.58	8	0.5006	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.70	8	0.464	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.75	8	0.4369	Very Effective
61-A	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.92	20	0.2726	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.94	20	0.2777	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.97	20	0.1671	Very Effective
62-A	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.59	15	0.7727	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.63	15	0.6733	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.66	15	0.6769	Very Effective
62-M	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.65	15	0.4791	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.68	15	0.4696	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.79	15	0.4089	Very Effective
Total	Efficiency of VAWC Desk	3.68	180	0.5877	Very Effective
	Assistance Rendered	3.66	180	0.6206	Very Effective
	Procedures in Handling	3.68	180	0.6128	Very Effective

Although all participating barangays generally received ratings ranging from Effective to Very Effective, noticeable differences were observed in perceived service delivery. Barangays with higher ratings may possess stronger institutional support, better-trained VAWC Desk officers, more accessible referral systems, and stronger partnerships with local government agencies and civil society organizations. Conversely, barangays with relatively lower ratings may face resource limitations, insufficient personnel training, or reduced accessibility to specialized support services. These findings support the principles of Social Learning Theory, which emphasize that effective institutional practices are reinforced through continuous learning, modeling, and organizational support. Similar observations have been reported in community-based VAW intervention programs in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries, where organizational capacity and interagency collaboration significantly influence service effectiveness.

Table 3 ANOVA for the Perceived Effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in Addressing cases of Violence against Women and their Children when Respondents grouped by Efficiency of VAWC Desk

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.3325	10	0.2332	12.8692	0.0000
Within Groups	0.7975	44	0.01812		
Total	3.13	54	0.05796		

Note: Sig. Value .00 is < .05 significant Reject the null hypothesis

The analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in addressing cases of violence against women and their children across the selected barangays ($F(10, 44) = 12.869, p < .001$). This finding indicates that the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk operations is not uniform, suggesting that variations exist in the quality of service delivery, implementation of standard procedures, availability of resources, and institutional capacity among barangays. These differences may also reflect disparities in the level of training, administrative support, and coordination with partner agencies responsible for responding to VAWC cases.

From the perspective of Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, organizational competence develops through continuous learning, observation, reinforcement, and experience. Barangay VAWC Desk Officers who receive regular competency-based training, mentoring, and supervision are more likely to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to implement victim-centered interventions effectively. Conversely, limited training opportunities, inadequate organizational support, and inconsistent supervision may contribute to variations in officers' performance and, consequently, in respondents' perceptions of service effectiveness.

The findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that institutional capacity and continuous professional development are critical determinants of effective community-based responses to violence against women. Sardinha et al. (2022) reported that communities with accessible support services, trained frontline personnel, and coordinated referral systems are better positioned to provide timely and comprehensive assistance to survivors. Likewise, García-Moreno et al. (2023) highlighted that strengthening organizational capacity through multisectoral collaboration among local governments, law enforcement agencies, health providers, and social welfare institutions enhances the quality and consistency of services for women experiencing violence. These findings underscore the importance of standardizing operational procedures, strengthening interagency partnerships, and institutionalizing continuous monitoring and competency development programs to reduce disparities in service delivery and improve the effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk operations across communities.

Table 4 ANOVA for the Perceived Effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in Addressing cases of Violence against Women and their Children when Respondents grouped by Assistance Rendered

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.7821	10	0.4782	25.3119	0.0000
Within Groups	0.8313	44	0.01889		
Total	5.6134	54	0.104		

Note: Sig. Value .00 is < .05 significant Reject the null hypothesis

The statistically significant differences in the assistance rendered by Barangay VAWC Desks among the selected barangays indicate that the quality and responsiveness of victim support services vary across communities. These differences suggest that while all barangays are mandated to provide assistance to survivors of violence against women and their children, the extent and quality of service delivery may depend on organizational capacity, availability of trained personnel, accessibility of referral mechanisms, and the level of institutional support provided by local government units. Barangays that demonstrated higher effectiveness are likely to have stronger coordination with partner agencies, including the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), local health offices, and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), enabling them to deliver more comprehensive and timely assistance to survivors.

The findings may be interpreted through Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which explains that professional knowledge and appropriate helping behaviors are acquired through observation, continuous learning, reinforcement, and practical experience. Barangay VAWC Desk officers who receive regular training, mentoring, and technical supervision are more likely to develop competencies in crisis intervention, victim-centered communication, and referral management. In contrast, limited opportunities for professional

development may reduce officers' confidence and consistency in providing assistance, thereby affecting the quality of services received by survivors.

These findings are consistent with the work of Sardinha et al. (2022), who emphasized that effective community responses to violence against women require accessible support services, coordinated referral systems, and adequately trained frontline personnel. Similarly, García-Moreno et al. (2023) highlighted that multisectoral collaboration among law enforcement agencies, health providers, and social welfare institutions is essential for improving service accessibility and ensuring survivor-centered care. The present findings therefore emphasize the need for continuous competency development, standardized service protocols, and strengthened institutional partnerships to reduce disparities in assistance provided across Barangay VAWC Desks.

Table 5 ANOVA for the Perceived Effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk Officers in Addressing cases of Violence against Women and their Children when Respondents grouped by Procedures in Handling

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.0558	10	0.6056	28.7395	0.0000
Within Groups	1.3907	66	0.02107		
Total	7.4465	76	0.09798		

Note: Sig. Value .00 is < .05 significant Reject the null hypothesis

The significant differences in the procedures for handling VAWC cases indicate that the implementation of prescribed protocols is not uniform across the selected barangays. Although respondents generally perceived the procedures as effective, variations among barangays suggest differences in procedural compliance, organizational practices, availability of resources, and officers' competencies in managing VAWC cases. Such inconsistencies may influence the timeliness, consistency, and quality of services delivered to survivors and may ultimately affect public confidence in Barangay VAWC Desks as frontline service providers.

From the perspective of Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, procedural competence develops through continuous learning, observation, reinforcement, and practical application of acquired knowledge. Barangay VAWC Desk officers who regularly participate in specialized training, mentoring, and simulation exercises are more likely to internalize standardized procedures and consistently apply victim-sensitive approaches in handling cases. Conversely, inadequate training opportunities and limited institutional support may contribute to variations in procedural implementation across barangays.

The findings also support previous research emphasizing that standardized protocols and continuous professional development improve the quality of services provided to survivors of gender-based violence. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022), effective case management requires clear operational guidelines, coordinated referral systems, and sustained collaboration among local governments, law enforcement agencies, health institutions, and social welfare organizations. Likewise, UN Women (2023) stressed that strengthening institutional capacity through continuous monitoring, regular training, and interagency cooperation contributes to more consistent implementation of gender-responsive services and improves survivors' access to protection and justice. These findings suggest that establishing standardized monitoring mechanisms and expanding competency-based training programs may further strengthen procedural consistency and enhance the overall effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk operations.

CONCLUSION

Given the findings, the following conclusions are hereby drawn:

First, the findings of the study further support Social Learning Theory, which suggests that individual and organizational behaviors are shaped through observation, reinforcement, and continuous learning. Barangay VAWC Desk officers who receive appropriate training, mentoring, and institutional support are more likely to demonstrate effective practices in assisting victims and implementing standardized procedures. Likewise, barangays with stronger organizational cultures may reinforce positive service behaviors that contribute to higher perceived effectiveness.

Second, it indicates that respondents generally perceived Barangay VAWC Desks in the selected barangays of Cavite City as Very Effective in terms of efficiency, assistance rendered, and procedures in handling cases involving violence against women and their children. Significant differences among barangays suggest that organizational practices, resource availability, and implementation capacity vary across local communities. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously because the study employed purposive sampling, relied exclusively on self-reported quantitative survey responses, and was conducted only in selected barangays of Cavite City. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all barangays or establish causal relationships between Barangay VAWC Desk practices and service effectiveness. Nevertheless, the results emphasize the importance of continuous training, institutional support, standardized service protocols, and interagency collaboration in strengthening community-based responses to violence against women.

Additionally, the researchers recommend the development of a comprehensive capacity-building framework for Barangay VAWC Desks. This framework should include: (1) standardized competency-based training for VAWC Desk officers focusing on trauma-informed care, gender sensitivity, crisis intervention, and legal procedures; (2) establishment of regular monitoring and performance evaluation systems to ensure compliance with national standards; (3) strengthened collaboration among barangays, local government units, the Philippine National Police, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Philippine Commission on Women, and non-government organizations to improve referral services; and (4) continuous program evaluation using measurable performance indicators.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to employ mixed-methods research designs by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews involving VAWC Desk officers, survivors, barangay officials, and partner agencies to obtain deeper insights into implementation challenges and best practices. Longitudinal studies involving a larger number of barangays across different provinces are likewise recommended to improve the generalizability of findings and evaluate the long-term effectiveness of Barangay VAWC Desk interventions.

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