Authentic leadership in law enforcement: Narratives of transformation

[1]Richie Rose B. Ginete & [2]Nicholas S. Caballero

Abstract

This study explores the transformational journey of Chiefs of Police in Negros Occidental, Philippines, using a qualitative phenomenological design. Its purpose is to uncover authentic leadership practices, the challenges of implementing such leadership, and strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Data were collected through purposive sampling, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings revealed six major themes: (1) Transformation in Law Enforcement Agencies, (2) Authentic Leadership, (3) Commitment to Community Service and Leading by Example, (4) Understanding the Organization, Personnel, and Resources, (5) Inherent Resistance to Change, and (6) Building Strong Character and Professional Development. These themes highlight the importance of personal growth, contextual leadership, and community engagement. The study emphasizes that effective law enforcement leadership requires adaptability, continuous learning, and a deep sense of authenticity grounded in personal experience. Limitations include its focus on a specific region and population, which may affect generalizability. Nevertheless, the research contributes to broader discussions on transformational and authentic leadership in policing. Recommendations include fostering continuous learning and professional growth among law enforcement personnel, cultivating authentic leadership through contextual awareness and adaptability, encouraging community service, and providing resources to enhance understanding of organizational structures and personnel. Additionally, developing strategies to manage resistance to change and investing in ongoing training, professional development, and mentorship programs can promote a culture of fairness and positivity.

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About the authors:
[1]Corresponding author. Master of Science in Criminal Justice major in Criminology. Faculty, STI West Negros University. Email: chengbur@gmail.com
[2]Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice, Dean, STI West Negros University Email: nicholas.caballero@wnu.sti.edu

1. Introduction

Authentic leadership has increasingly been recognized as a vital factor in shaping positive outcomes in law enforcement, including enhancing followers' motivation, organizational culture, and overall performance. According to Graciana et al. (2024), authentic leadership plays a critical role in fostering an innovative organizational culture, while Leroy et al. (2015) emphasize its capacity to inspire and motivate individuals toward achieving organizational goals. Banks et al. (2006) define authentic leadership as encompassing authenticity, a positive moral perspective, self-awareness, and effective communication. This multidimensional construct includes balanced processing, relational transparency, self-awareness, and an internalized moral perspective, highlighting that effective leadership extends beyond managerial skills to encompass moral integrity and relational trust.

In policing contexts, leadership models are increasingly studied not only for their impact on organizational performance but also for their ethical implications and ability to build trust (Lopez et al., 2015; Lyubovnikova et al., 2017). Authentic leadership in particular emphasizes ethical decision-making, self-awareness, and a balanced approach to addressing organizational challenges, making it highly relevant to law enforcement. Previous research has explored police chiefs' leadership styles (Guadamor et al., 2017; Flores & Mercado, 2023) and compared the effects of authentic leadership across different national contexts (Farr-Wharton et al., 2021). Despite this, there is a notable lack of local studies examining the authentic leadership practices of police chiefs in the Philippines, specifically in Negros Occidental.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the authentic leadership practices of chiefs of police in Negros Occidental through qualitative analysis of shared narratives and experiences, highlighting the transformative journey of these leaders in promoting personal growth, enhancing contextual awareness, and contributing to the advancement of their communities.

2. Theoretical Framework

The research espoused the Transformational Leadership Theory, which was brought in by Burns in 1978 and further expanded by Bass in 1985-doctrine emphasis on encouraging and motivating followers to transcend expectations through vision, motivation, and development of followers. The four elements included in the theory are Idealized Influence, Inspirational

Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These components promote innovation, trust, and commitment within an organization.

In recent years, transformational leadership has remained a dominant paradigm for understanding effective leadership, particularly in complex and evolving sectors such as public service and law enforcement. Contemporary studies emphasize the relevance of this theory in promoting ethical behavior, emotional intelligence, and organizational adaptability (Caillier, 2015). Leaders who practice transformational leadership are seen as agents of change who can foster professional development, enhance morale, and cultivate a shared sense of purpose among members of the organization. For example, in policing, transformational leadership has been associated with improved job satisfaction, community-oriented practices, and resistance to corruption (Campbell & Kodz, 2011). Such leaders empower followers by encouraging autonomy and participation in decision-making, thereby creating a more accountable and service-oriented organization. For transformational leadership theory, such leadership practices as Chiefs of Police potentially affect the way in which they lead teams and engage with the community. Therefore, it assists in analyzing leadership behaviors and identifying ways that would foster authentic leadership, professional development, and organizational transformation.

Servant Leadership Theory, conceptualized initially by Robert K. Greenleaf (1970), emphasizes that the primary motivation of a leader is to serve others. Unlike traditional leadership, which often prioritizes power or authority, servant leadership prioritizes the well-being, development, and empowerment of followers, aiming to enhance organizational and community outcomes.

In recent years, servant leadership has gained renewed interest as a model that fosters ethical behavior, participative decision-making, and long-term performance. According to Eva et al. (2019), servant leadership is characterized by seven key behaviors: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. Recent studies (e.g., Newman et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2024) highlight that servant leadership contributes positively to organizational trust, employee engagement, and resilience in the face of challenges, an increasingly relevant quality in dynamic and crisis-driven environments such as law enforcement or public service organizations. Moreover, Lemoine et al. (2021) argue that servant leadership promotes a "people-first" culture that encourages open communication,

psychological safety, and ethical conduct. Personal relationships formed through voluntary acts of love bring leaders to master channels through which common authority and institutional cohesion must be balanced.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, developed initially by Dansereau et al. (1975), focuses on the dynamic relationships between leaders and their subordinates. Unlike other leadership theories that view leadership as a one-size-fits-all approach, LMX emphasizes that leaders form unique relationships with each member, resulting in differentiated in-groups and out-groups. In high-quality LMX relationships, subordinates receive greater support, trust, autonomy, and access to resources. Conversely, low-quality exchanges are often transactional and characterized by limited interaction, leading to lower levels of satisfaction and performance. Recent studies (e.g., Ogunja et al., 2025; Wagner & Koob, 2022; Petrilli et al., 2024; He et al., 2021; Aggarwal et al., 2020; Mahbub, 2025; Martin et al., 2021) reinforce the impact of LMX on organizational outcomes such as employee engagement, innovation, and retention. In the context of policing and public leadership, high-quality LMX can foster trust, improve communication, and enhance officer morale and community-oriented service.

According to Yun et al. (2007), LMX plays a significant role in navigating organizational challenges, especially during times of change and uncertainty. High-quality leader-member exchanges have been found to buffer stress, increase commitment, and encourage discretionary behaviors that go beyond formal job roles. Cropanzano et al. (2014) argue that the quality of LMX relationships mediates the effect of leadership style on job satisfaction and psychological well-being. It is upon these insights that understanding of leadership effectiveness can begin, for it is clear that leadership effectiveness is not so much the result of leader behavior alone but of joint cultivation of trust and respect within these mutually dependent dyadic relationships. The current study examines how the type of relationship between leaders and their members or subordinates affects leadership outcomes, organizational climate, and follower behavior, as postulated by LMX theory. This framework thus provides a helpful approach through which to examine the relational dynamics embedded in individualized leadership practices and their consequences for organizational success.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research study focused on the lived experiences of Chiefs of Police in Negros Occidental and employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenology was appropriate because leadership experiences are inherently subjective and are best understood through the participants' perspectives. The proposed phenomenological approach provided a method to enhance the understanding of contemporary approaches in qualitative research inspired by phenomenology (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). Rooted in the philosophical assumption that reality is constructed through individual lived experiences, phenomenology enabled an in-depth exploration of how Chiefs of Police perceive and make sense of their leadership roles. The methods and procedures for data collection were flexible, and the analysis was customized to correspond with the theoretical and philosophical foundations of qualitative research. This approach allowed researchers to engage deeply with participants and their narratives, leading and authentic portrayal of their leadership experiences. This facet bore academic importance for conducting a comprehensive qualitative study that generated dependable insights (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022).

3.2. Participants of the Study

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants for the study. This approach was appropriate because it allowed the selection of individuals who could provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the leadership experiences of Chiefs of Police in Negros Occidental. A total of seven (7) participants were selected, consisting of current or former Chiefs of Police who had served for at least two years. Participants could be male or female, single or married. In qualitative phenomenological research, smaller sample sizes are justified because the goal is to obtain in-depth and detailed accounts rather than to generalize to a larger population. Thus, purposive sampling and the selected number of participants were appropriate to meet the study's objectives.

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

An unstructured in-depth interview guide was employed to collect data from the participants. The interview guide specifically focused on exploring authentic leadership practices among Chiefs of Police in the component cities of Negros Occidental. To ensure the credibility, accuracy, and ethical integrity of the questions, the printed guide was reviewed, critiqued, and evaluated by field experts. Their feedback was incorporated to enhance the

validity and reliability of the instrument. In addition to the interview guide, a discussion outline was developed to facilitate the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with selected participants.

Before the start of data collection, the purpose and objectives of the study were clearly explained to the informants, with particular emphasis on confidentiality and voluntary participation. Informants were given the opportunity to ask clarificatory questions, and informed consent was obtained through the signing of a consent form. Data were collected through individual In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). With the participants' permission, a voice recorder was used to document the information shared accurately. Upon the conclusion of each interview and discussion, participants were given small tokens of appreciation for their time and participation. Recognizing the possibility of emotional and psychological triggers during the sharing of experiences, a debriefing process was also facilitated after each session to ensure participants' well-being.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Colaizzi's method of phenomenological data analysis. First, the researcher read and re-read all the participants' descriptions to gain a general sense of their experiences. Second, significant statements related to the phenomenon of leadership among Chiefs of Police were extracted from the transcripts. Third, meanings were formulated from these significant statements, aiming to interpret the essence behind the participants' words. Fourth, these meanings were grouped into clusters of themes that captured the core aspects of their leadership experiences. Fifth, an exhaustive textual description was developed by integrating all the clustered themes to portray the participants lived experiences comprehensively. Sixth, from the textual descriptions, structural descriptions were created to explain how the Chiefs of Police experienced the phenomenon within the context of their organizational and community environments. Finally, data saturation was confirmed when no new themes, patterns, or insights emerged from subsequent interviews and discussions. Although formal participant validation was limited, the credibility of the findings was enhanced through prolonged engagement with the data and cross-verification among themes.

3.5. Research Ethics

The researcher adhered to ethical standards to ensure respect for all individuals involved in the process. The study emphasized social value by exploring the practice of authentic leadership among chiefs of police and how this approach can enhance their leadership practices. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were informed of their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Each participant signed an informed consent form outlining the limitations of their involvement. The participants, being mature adult professionals, were not considered vulnerable. However, the study acknowledged the possibility of psychological or emotional triggers during discussions of personal experiences; therefore, debriefing sessions were conducted to mitigate potential adverse effects. A key benefit of the research was the more profound understanding it offered of the authentic leadership of chiefs of police.

To uphold privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in place of actual names, and all data was securely stored with access limited to the researcher. The researcher's password-protected laptop was used for storing data, which was later disposed of using a machine shredder. Justice was observed through a fair and impartial selection process, and participants were given a token of appreciation for their time and contributions.

4. Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Embracing Transformation in Law Enforcement Agencies

The theme highlights the remarkable journey of the informants as they transition from humble beginnings as cadets to ultimately occupying prestigious leadership positions, such as Chiefs of Police, in numerous cities. The informants shared:

> *"I have been in the service for 20 years, including Cadetship." (IDI A. L:3).*
>
> *"I am presently the Chief of Police of Victorias City PS." (IDI A. L:1).*
>
> *"I am a member of PNPA Class 2006 graduated last 2006 and was assigned to different posts. I have been in Mindanao for eight years and here in almost ten years naman here sa negros sa Region 6." (IDI B. L:1-2)*
>
> *"I am a PNPA grad of 2006, including my cadetship. I was in the service for 21 years and five months." (IDI C. L:7)*
>
> *"I was assigned to Special Action Force as the battalion commander of the Rapid Deployment Batallion." (IDI C. L:6)*

These individuals generously impart their invaluable experiences, characterized by continuous growth, personal development, and the acquisition of vital leadership skills. This theme showcases their professional progress and highlights the power of dedication, hard work, and perseverance in shaping successful careers.

The informants' professional progress also supports the notion that education and training promote continuous improvement. It outlines the principles of shared leadership and vision, emphasizing that ongoing personal development is essential for leaders to inspire positive organizational change (Bynum, 2008). Moreover, the informants' experiences of being assigned to different posts, including the Special Action Force as a battalion commander, emphasize the diverse roles and responsibilities that leaders in law enforcement may undertake. This also emphasizes that law enforcement leaders must cultivate both soft skills (e.g., communication, empathy) and hard skills (e.g., tactical decision-making, legal knowledge). Assignments to diverse roles, such as battalion command positions, necessitate a versatile skill set to manage varied challenges and responsibilities effectively (Modise, 2023).

According to the informants, these experiences have shaped their competence and leadership capabilities, opening doors to new opportunities. Becoming chief of police is a challenging yet rewarding, requiring a delicate balance of professional and personal responsibilities. Chiefs must make tough decisions and bear the consequences, facing daily challenges. Before aspiring to this position, individuals should consider the impact on their families, the actual expectations of the job, security, salary adjustments, conflicts, and the broader community role. Despite the difficulties, the professional and personal rewards, the ability to make a positive difference, and the high level of personal satisfaction make the journey of becoming a chief of police worthwhile (Paoline & Gau, 2022).

Theme 2: Authentic Leadership - A Journey of Self, Flexibility, and Contextual Awareness

In this theme, the participants shared their perspectives on authentic leadership. Each informant provided unique insights into the concept, emphasizing different aspects of authenticity in leadership. Informant A highlighted the importance of being true to oneself, one's upbringing, and the learnings from one's background, including schooling and training. He emphasized that these factors contribute to forming an individual's leadership style.

"Authentic leadership is simply being yourself, as you were brought up. A significant aspect of it involves how you were trained and the institution you came from. The learnings you gained from your schooling and your various trainings contribute to what makes you a leader." (IDI A. L:4-5)

Informant A's emphasis on the importance of being true to oneself and the influence of one's background and training is supported by the study conducted by Walumbwa et al. (2008). They found that authentic leadership is positively associated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

According to Informant B and FGD 1, leadership is characterized by a flexible approach that adjusts based on the individuals being led. This adaptability is crucial in ensuring effective communication and management. Informant B said:

"Actually, leadership skills vary from one leader to another. For me, my leadership style is always adaptable. When I say adaptable, it depends on the individuals I manage. All of these individuals are unique, with distinct characters and behaviors, so handling them requires consideration." (IDI B. L:6-8)

FGD Informant 1 shared*:*

"Authentic Leadership means your original style will come up based on the people you handle, whether you will use an adaptable, autocratic or transformational type of leadership" (FGD 1. L:10)

This is consistent with research by Suryadi et al. (2024). They found that authentic leaders are likelier to adopt a transformational leadership style, which involves inspiring and motivating followers to achieve shared goals. In addition, Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal (2023), Meirinhos et al. (2023) and Khan et al. (2020) agree that leadership style varies depending on the discipline required. For instance, a more structured and stable leadership style is necessary when working with stationary forces. On the other hand, when dealing with mobile forces, a more agile and adaptive leadership approach is required to maintain efficiency and responsiveness.

Informant C explained that his leadership approach depends on their environment, adjusting their style to be diplomatic, autocratic, or transformational as needed. For Informant C, authentic leadership is about adapting to the organization's needs and environment.

"I will relate adaptive leadership to authentic leadership, which depends on your environment. For example, you will act with diplomacy when it needs to be

diplomatic. If you need to be autocratic, act as an autocrat. When the environment requires a transformational leader, act as a transformational leader." (IDI C. L:9-12)

This aligns with the study by Costa et al. (2023) that authentic leaders are more likely to adapt their leadership style to the context, including diplomatic, autocratic, or transformational. The informants' narratives suggest that authentic leadership is a multifaceted concept that involves being true to oneself, adapting to different situations and personnel, and drawing from one's background and experiences to develop a leadership style that resonates with the environment and organization.

"I simply remain true to myself, as long as I put genuine care and truly enjoy what I do. Your true self will always come out; you cannot pretend daily for how many years. Your true self will always come out, so be genuine and be true. Always keep in mind that your mandate is to protect and serve. You want to serve the people, bring peace, and preserve public order." (IDI A. L:13-14)

This aligns with the research conducted by Almutairi et al. (2025), who identified authentic leadership as a leadership style characterized by self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. Each informant's perspective adds depth to our understanding of authentic leadership, emphasizing the importance of flexibility, personal growth, and contextual awareness in effective leadership. The importance of contextual awareness in authentic leadership is further supported by the research conducted by Brown et al. (2005). They found that authentic leaders are more likely to consider the context when making decisions and taking action, which can lead to better outcomes for the organization and its stakeholders.

Theme 3: Commitment to Community Service and Leading by Example

Chiefs of Police (COPs) exemplify this theme by occupying their positions and dedicating themselves to serving their communities and the environment they are assigned to. They lead by example and through living for their people, emphasizing the importance of COPs' commitment to serving their communities, ensuring public safety, and promoting well-being. This was supported by the study by The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in 2016 that community policing involves not only police behavior and tactics but also

the civic engagement of communities to improve neighborhoods, quality of life, and the sense of safety and well-being.

As one participant shared, their commitment to community service with good intentions creates a high-quality service that embodies authentic leadership. Informant B emphasized the importance of good intentions and the station's well-being. He believes that everyone can achieve their goals by working towards the station's mission, which is to provide good service to the community. This strategic alignment ensures that employee's effort is directed toward fulfilling the organization's mission, leading to improved performance and service delivery (Kiplimo & Odiyo, 2024). On the other hand, Informant C stressed the importance of being a role model and leading by example. According to him, if one demonstrates hard work and dedication, others will follow and respect the individual's position. This statement emphasizes the power of personal example and its influence on others in achieving common goals. Leadership traits such as accountability, role modeling, and a shared mission are important in shaping a positive police culture and improving community relations (Schafer, 2018). Informant B said:

> *"I do not have any bad intentions; all I want is for the betterment of the station. I desire good service in the community because that is our mission in this station."*
> *(IDI B. L:12)*

Informant C also shared:

> *"You set an example for them, so when they see you working diligently, they will follow and respect your lead. Consequently, you can easily achieve the common goals of police service." (IDI C. L:7)*

Theme 4: Understanding the Organization, Personnel, and Resources for Effective Leadership

The theme revolves around the significance of comprehension and familiarity with an organization's structure, its personnel, and available resources to lead effectively. This theme emphasizes the importance of setting an example through personal goal-setting, focusing on the greater good, and adopting a gradual, phased approach to leadership.

In this theme, Informant A and FGD 2 highlight the importance of setting an example by setting personal goals within the organization. This approach fosters a culture of accountability and motivation among subordinates, encouraging them to follow the leader's

example. This perspective on setting personal goals within the organization aligns with the concept of the LMX theory (Dansereau et al., 1975). By setting goals and serving as an example, leaders can foster a culture of accountability and motivation among subordinates. The Informants said:

> *"As the chief of police, being a leader, you should know your people and your resources, so when you start, you can serve as an example by setting your goals within your organization." (IDI A. L:6-7)*

> *"You will set yourself as an example to your subordinates so that if they saw you working towards the goal of the organization, they will certainly follow" (FGD 2. L:11)*

Informant B stresses the need to stay focused on the mission, even when faced with opposition or disapproval from some personnel. The goal of leadership is for the organization's greater good, and this perspective underscores the importance of not losing sight of the mission. Informant B's emphasis on the greater good aligns with the "Servant Leadership" approach (Greenleaf, 2002). This leadership style focuses on the well-being of people and the community, which can lead to better organizational outcomes.

> *"As the Chief of Police, based on my experience, not all personnel will appreciate your leadership style. However, I have always made it clear to them that the ultimate goal of my management and guidance is for the organization's greater good." (IDI B. L:11-12)*

Informant C emphasizes the significance of familiarizing oneself with the organization, its personnel, and the system before making significant changes or decisions. This phased approach ensures that the leader is well-equipped to navigate the complexities of their role effectively. Informant C's phased approach to leadership is supported by the "Strategic Leadership" model (Yukl, 2013). This model suggests that leaders should understand their organization, develop a vision, and implement strategies step-by-step.

> *"The first step in leading is to understand your organization. Familiarize yourself with your organization, its personnel, and the system. Become well-versed in everything and only then begin to know your organization, your people, and your resources. Gradually, after understanding the system and your people, you can proceed with managing and guiding them step by step." (IDI C. L:13-14)*

These three police chiefs share a common belief in the importance of understanding the organization, personnel, and resources as the foundation of successful leadership. By setting an example, focusing on the greater good, and adopting a gradual, phased approach to leadership, these seasoned professionals have navigated the challenging waters of policing and have led their organizations toward success.

Theme 5: Inherent Resistance to Change

This theme highlights that leaders cannot resist their subordinates' resistance, as different perspectives and personalities within a team can affect the acceptance of strategies. According to Rehman et al. (2021), Cieslak and Valor (2025) and Furxhi (2021), resistance is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by individual perceptions and organizational dynamics, including the challenge of satisfying everyone involved. Informant B stated that:

"Resistance is inherent because it is impossible to please everyone." (IDI B. L:15)

The informants acknowledged that resistance is a natural aspect when entering a new position or assignment, as established systems often face challenges when adapting to change. Informant A said:

"There will be resistance every time you come to a new position or assignment, as you will be entering an already well-established system." (IDI A. L:8)

Informants A and B believe that when individuals or groups perceive a threat to their current way of functioning, they may resist the proposed changes. This statement emphasizes the significance of transparent communication, building trust, and demonstrating the benefits of the proposed changes to minimize resistance. Informant A added:

"You cannot please everyone, but as long as they know your purpose, they will gradually understand and tend to go along with what you impose." (IDI A. L:10)

The informants' statements collectively indicate that resistance in new positions or assignments is common due to the established system, the inability to please everyone, and the perception of threatened comfort zones. Informant B mentioned:

"One of the problems that I encountered, especially during my early years, is the senior police officers. They claim that they are already old in the service and that

I am new, making me feel that I do not have the right to guide them or advise them on what to do." (IDI B. L:18-19)

To navigate these challenges, leaders should be prepared to successfully understand, adapt, communicate effectively, and address stakeholders' concerns to implement change (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Informant B's approach involves incentivizing personnel who perform well, treating them to free meals, and organizing outings to create a positive environment. This "Commander Style" helps overcome resistance within 2-3 months.

Theme 6: Building Strong Character and Professional Development

This theme emphasizes the importance of professional growth and leadership development among the informants. They highlighted the need for continuous learning, hands-on supervision, and mastery of various aspects of police work for junior officers aspiring to become high-ranking officials. Informant C stated that:

"You must attend seminars and training. Also, remember that every rank and designation have an attachment of responsibility." (IDI C. L:33)

Informant C's statement about attending seminars, training, and accepting the responsibilities of rank and designation is supported by a study conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in 2022. The study found that ongoing professional development is crucial for law enforcement officers to stay updated with the latest field trends, techniques, and technologies (IACP, 2022).

Informant B added that:

"Junior officers, who aspire to become Commanding Officers (COP) particularly, should inform all lieutenants that they must learn work ethics. Additionally, they must supervise hands-on activities within unfamiliar areas and strive to master or perfect these skills. This is because, upon entering the service, one will not know everything they will be doing; they will learn through the process and over time." (IDI B. L:24-25)

Informant B's emphasis on learning work ethics, hands-on supervision, and mastering skills aligns with the findings of a study by the United States Department of Justice's Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in 2023. The study suggests that effective

police leadership requires technical knowledge, interpersonal skills, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances (US DOJ, 2023).

Informant B further said that:

> *"They must know how to handle personnel and resources in financial management, which is important. Next, they should maintain a high service reputation by avoiding corruption. This will help preserve their valuable character at the highest level. They must also uphold work ethics, maintain a strong service reputation, and pray, as the best wisdom comes from above. Reminding them that being in an office is not a bragging right but a responsibility. If they get promoted, they should remember that their rank increase comes with appropriate responsibilities. The Philippine National Police (PNP) needs a leader who can carry out its mission and vision, not for personal interests." (IDI B. L:27-29)*

The informants' narratives convey the importance of personal integrity and responsible leadership. These qualities contribute to building a solid character and effectively serving the community while upholding the mission and vision of the police force. This is supported by a 2022 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The report highlights the importance of maintaining a high service reputation and avoiding corruption to preserve an officer's character and effectively serve the community.

5. Conclusion

Effective law enforcement leadership requires continuous growth, adaptability, and authenticity. Aspiring chiefs should prioritize community service, public safety, and the well-being of the community. Leaders should set clear goals, maintain focus on the mission, address resistance, and promote learning, supervision, and responsible leadership. It is recommended that the Philippine National Police foster continuous learning and professional growth among law enforcement personnel by exposing them to a variety of roles and experiences. This approach will better equip future leaders to handle challenges effectively.

To cultivate authentic leadership, law enforcement should emphasize contextual awareness and adaptability. Programs and initiatives should encourage community service and set positive examples for subordinates. Leaders should be provided with training and resources to understand their organization, personnel, and available resources, enabling them to manage

their teams efficiently. Strategies to manage resistance to change should include transparent communication, trust-building, and addressing concerns directly. Investment in ongoing training, professional development, and mentorship programs will nurture the growth of law enforcement officers and promote a culture of fairness and positivity.

This study successfully addressed the research questions by exploring how effective leadership traits, such as authenticity, adaptability, and commitment to community service, manifest among Chiefs of Police. However, the study focused on Chiefs of Police from Negros Occidental, which may not reflect experiences in other regions. Additionally, the small sample size, purposive sampling method, and qualitative design limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could examine leadership experiences in other regions or use longitudinal designs to better understand leadership development over time. Expanding the participant pool or employing mixed-methods research could further validate and enrich the findings.

ORCID

Richie Rose Ginete – https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5352-2058

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