

Leading the Way in Disaster Resilience: The Worklife of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (BDRRMO) Chiefs

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Abstract

This study explored the worklife experiences, coping strategies, leadership practices, and aspirations of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BDRRMO) Chiefs in selected barangays of Liloan, Cebu. Anchored on the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (1978), Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), and Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021), the study examined how competence, leadership, and resilience influence disaster preparedness and response effectiveness. A qualitative research design grounded in transcendental phenomenology was employed to understand the lived experiences of the participants. Data were gathered through Individual Depth Interviews (IDIs) with ten incumbent BDRRMO Chiefs selected through purposive sampling. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that preparedness, teamwork, communication, coordination, early warning systems, and organized relief operations were essential in ensuring effective disaster response. Participants emphasized that regular drills, clear delegation of responsibilities, and collaboration with local agencies improved operational efficiency and minimized disaster impacts. However, the study also identified challenges such as limited resources, inadequate communication systems, delayed external assistance, transportation difficulties, and community non-compliance with evacuation protocols. To address these challenges, BDRRMO Chiefs relied on adaptive leadership, community education, preparedness planning, and collaborative communication strategies. Their aspirations focused on strengthening communication systems, improving early warning mechanisms, establishing barangay-owned evacuation centers, enhancing training and simulation exercises, and increasing resource allocation for disaster preparedness and response. The study concluded that effective disaster risk reduction and management depend on competent leadership, institutional support, preparedness systems, and community participation. Continuous capacity-building, strengthened coordination, and improved disaster governance are necessary to enhance community resilience and disaster response effectiveness. This study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities through its emphasis on disaster preparedness and community resilience, SDG 13 on Climate Action through adaptive disaster response strategies, and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions through strengthened local disaster governance. The study contributes to sustainability by promoting resilient communities, improved local governance, strengthened institutional preparedness, and enhanced community participation in disaster risk reduction and management.

Keywords: Adaptive Leadership, Community Resilience, Coping Strategies, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Early Warning Systems, Leadership, Resilience, Thematic Analysis, Transcendental Phenomenology

1. Introduction

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) is a systematic approach that minimizes vulnerabilities and risks associated with natural and human-induced hazards through preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery initiatives. Effective DRRM requires collaboration among governments, organizations, and communities to ensure responsive and resilient disaster management systems (Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, & Davis, 2004). Globally, disaster resilience has become an essential component of sustainable development, particularly through frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which emphasizes risk understanding, governance, resilience investment, and preparedness (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2015). In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10121 institutionalized DRRM through a comprehensive framework that strengthens preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery at all levels of governance (Republic Act No. 10121, 2010). Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices (BDRRMOs) play a critical role in implementing localized disaster initiatives, especially in vulnerable communities such as Liloan, Cebu, where flooding and coastal hazards are prevalent. This study examines the worklife, experiences, leadership, resilience, and challenges of BDRRMO chiefs and explores how their competence, leadership styles, and adaptive capacities influence disaster preparedness and response.

1.1 Background of the Worklife of BDRRMO Chiefs in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) focuses on reducing disaster vulnerabilities through strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring of mitigation and preparedness measures (Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, & Davis, 2004). Global DRRM frameworks emphasize proactive disaster governance, community education, resilience investment, and preparedness to minimize social and economic losses (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2015; Shaw & Izumi, 2014). In the Philippines, DRRM is institutionalized through Republic Act No. 10121, which mandates comprehensive disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery systems across local government units (Republic Act No. 10121, 2010). The country's vulnerability to typhoons, flooding, earthquakes, and climate-related hazards necessitates strong local DRRM systems supported by coordination, community participation, and continuous capacity-building (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2010). Municipalities such as Liloan, Cebu face recurring flooding and coastal hazards due to geographical and environmental conditions. Hazard mapping initiatives identified vulnerable zones requiring proactive interventions and localized preparedness planning (LiDAR Portal for Archiving and Distribution [LiPAD], 2017). Consequently, BDRRMO chiefs serve as frontline leaders responsible for disaster preparedness, response coordination, community awareness, and recovery efforts. This study explores the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of BDRRMO chiefs in Liloan, Cebu. It seeks to understand how leadership, competence, resilience, and institutional support shape their effectiveness in disaster risk reduction and management.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Leadership, Competence, and Resilience among BDRRMO Chiefs

Literature on DRRM emphasizes preparedness, leadership, resilience, community participation, and organizational competence as essential components of effective disaster governance. Studies indicate that countries and local governments adopting proactive DRRM strategies such as early warning systems, preparedness drills, and community education are more capable of reducing disaster-related losses (Shaw & Izumi, 2014). Preparedness and competence significantly influence disaster response effectiveness. Ronald W. Perry and Lindell (2003) found that training, prior experience, and preparedness programs improve emergency response performance and decision-making during crises. Similarly, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (2018) and Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2020; 2021) emphasized that continuous training, institutional support, and strong leadership enhance local disaster preparedness and resilience. Leadership studies further highlight the importance of participative and adaptive leadership in disaster management. Lewin's leadership framework identifies autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles as influential in organizational effectiveness (Kurt Lewin, 1939). Research revealed that participative leadership improves coordination, communication, and community mobilization during emergencies (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2019; Ronald W. Perry and Lindell, 2003). Constructive leadership behaviors also positively affect organizational efficiency and team performance (Ćwiakła et al., 2025). Resilience literature underscores the importance of adaptive capacities, leadership, institutional support, and community engagement in disaster recovery and preparedness. Masten (2021) described resilience as a dynamic process shaped by protective systems and adaptive mechanisms. Studies found that communities with organized leadership structures, training systems, and strong institutional capacity demonstrate higher resilience and faster recovery from disasters (Kathleen Tierney, 2014; Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020; National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 2018). Community participation and localized governance are also central themes in DRRM. Djalante et al. (2011) emphasized that transferring authority and capacity-building to communities strengthens disaster governance and resilience. Ridzuan et al. (2020), Nelson (2015), and Ridzuan et al. (2017) highlighted that community leadership, engagement, education, and awareness improve disaster preparedness and resilience.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Relation to BDRRMO Chiefs

Globally, disaster resilience is recognized as a major development priority through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which promotes risk-informed governance, preparedness, and resilience-building (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2015). Increasing disaster frequency and socio-economic losses continue to challenge governments worldwide (Harvey, 2005). Nationally, the Philippines remains highly vulnerable to disasters due to its geographical location and climate exposure (Lasco et al., 2009; Magalang, 2010). Republic Act No. 10121 and Republic Act No. 9729 mandate local governments to mainstream DRRM and climate change adaptation into governance systems (RP Gazette, 2012). These laws require the establishment of Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices and Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committees responsible for preparedness, mitigation, response, rehabilitation, and recovery initiatives (RA 10121; JMC No.2014-1). The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) supports local government capacities through DRRM and climate adaptation programs (Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), 2025). Barangays are mandated to lead localized DRRM efforts, ensuring community participation and contextualized risk communication strategies (Florano, 2014). At the local level, communities in Liloan, Cebu face recurring flooding and environmental hazards due to low-lying terrain and coastal exposure (LiDAR Portal for Archiving and Distribution [LiPAD], 2017). Effective disaster management in these areas depends heavily on the leadership, competence, and resilience of BDRRMO chiefs and barangay officials.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of the Worklife of BDRRMO Chiefs

This study is anchored on the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (1978), supported by Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939) and Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021). Competence Motivation Theory explains that individuals are motivated to engage in tasks when they perceive themselves as competent and effective (Harter, 1978). For BDRRMO chiefs, training, prior experiences, and successful disaster response operations strengthen confidence, motivation, and commitment to public service (Harter, 1982). Positive feedback, recognition, and institutional support further reinforce motivation and performance. Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939) identifies autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles that influence group behavior and organizational effectiveness. Democratic and participative leadership approaches are particularly relevant in DRRM because they encourage collaboration, communication, and community engagement during emergencies (Kurt Lewin, 1939). Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021) emphasizes adaptive capacity, protective systems, and positive coping mechanisms in responding to adversity. The theory highlights how leadership, institutional support, social cohesion, and preparedness contribute to community resilience and recovery during disasters. These theories collectively explain how competence, leadership, and resilience influence the effectiveness of BDRRMO chiefs in disaster preparedness, response, and community protection.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on the Experiences and Challenges of BDRRMO Chiefs

Existing literature extensively discusses disaster preparedness, organizational resilience, leadership, and DRRM governance. However, limited studies specifically explore the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, leadership dynamics, and aspirations of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office chiefs at the barangay level. Previous research primarily focused on institutional structures, preparedness systems, and policy implementation (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 2018; Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020; 2021), with less attention given to the worklife experiences of frontline DRRM leaders in local communities. Furthermore, studies on leadership and resilience often emphasize organizational performance without examining the personal and operational realities faced by barangay-level DRRM personnel. This study addresses these gaps by examining the experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and aspirations of BDRRMO chiefs in Liloan, Cebu. Understanding these dimensions contributes to improving local DRRM systems, leadership development, institutional support, and community resilience.

1.6 Alignment of the Study on BDRRMO Chiefs with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities is reflected through the study's emphasis on disaster preparedness, community resilience, risk reduction, and local governance in disaster-prone communities. SDG 13 – Climate Action is relevant because the study addresses disaster preparedness, adaptive capacities, and local responses to climate-related hazards such as flooding and typhoons. SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions applies through the strengthening of institutional disaster governance, community participation, and effective local leadership in DRRM implementation. SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals is also reflected in the study's recognition of collaboration among local government units, communities, agencies, and organizations in disaster preparedness and response.

1.7 Importance of the Study on BDRRMO Chiefs to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

This study contributes to socio-economic sustainability by strengthening disaster preparedness systems that protect lives, livelihoods, and local economies from disaster impacts. Improved DRRM leadership and preparedness reduce vulnerabilities and enhance community stability. The study also supports community sustainability through strengthened local governance, community engagement, and participatory disaster management practices. Empowering barangay leaders and communities enhances collective resilience and adaptive capacity. In terms of institutional sustainability, the findings may assist local government units, disaster management agencies, and policymakers in improving training programs, organizational support systems, leadership development, and DRRM implementation strategies. The research additionally contributes to policy and governance sustainability by providing evidence-based insights that may strengthen local disaster governance structures, coordination systems, and disaster response effectiveness. Finally, the study contributes to environmental and climate sustainability by promoting preparedness and resilience strategies that reduce disaster risks associated with climate-related hazards and environmental vulnerabilities.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative research design grounded in transcendental phenomenology to explore the personal and professional experiences of BDRRMO Chiefs. Qualitative research enabled an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within natural contexts. The philosophical foundation of the study was transcendental phenomenology as conceptualized by Husserl (1931). Moustakas (1994) emphasized qualitative inquiry, the wholeness of experience, and the search for the essence of lived experiences through systematic phenomenological analysis. Transcendental phenomenology focused on participants' subjective experiences while requiring the researcher to bracket preconceived assumptions to understand the phenomenon authentically. Through in-depth interviews and textual analysis, the study examined the meanings, structures,

and interpretations underlying the experiences of BDRRMO Chiefs. This approach allowed the researcher to capture participants' decision-making processes, leadership styles, emotional responses, coping strategies, and experiences in disaster risk reduction and management. The methodology further enabled the identification of recurring themes related to resource limitations, community engagement, emergency response pressures, adaptive leadership, and disaster preparedness practices. The findings contributed to understanding effective DRRM leadership and community resilience.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Liloan, Cebu, Philippines, located in the Central Visayas region. Cebu Province has a land area of 4,943.72 square kilometers and a population of 3,325,385 based on the 2020 Census. Liloan is a first-class municipality within Metro Cebu known as the "Light of the North." It consists of 14 barangays and 237 puroks with an estimated population of more than 160,000 in 2021. Liloan is geographically vulnerable to several natural hazards due to its coastal location, low-lying terrain, and river systems. Common hazards include flooding, storm surges, coastal flooding, landslides, typhoons, strong winds, earthquakes, sea-level rise, and coastal erosion. These hazards significantly affect communities, infrastructure, and livelihoods. The study specifically covered the barangays of Yati, Catarman, Tayud, Poblacion, San Vicente, Jubay, Cotcot, Lataban, Santa Cruz, and Calero. These barangays were selected due to their vulnerability to flooding, typhoons, coastal hazards, landslides, and other climate-related risks. Several barangays experience severe flooding due to proximity to rivers, drainage limitations, and low elevation, while coastal barangays are exposed to storm surges and strong typhoon winds.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were ten incumbent Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BDRRMO) Chiefs from selected barangays in Liloan, Cebu. The participants possessed direct experience and active involvement in disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery initiatives within their communities. All participants had at least two years of experience serving as BDRRMO Chiefs. Their experiences provided valuable insights into leadership practices, disaster response operations, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and aspirations related to disaster risk reduction and management.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to select ten participants who possessed relevant knowledge and direct experience as BDRRMO Chiefs. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to gather rich and meaningful information from individuals capable of providing detailed insights into disaster management leadership and operations. Data were gathered through Individual Depth Interviews (IDIs), allowing participants to discuss their personal experiences, leadership approaches, and perspectives regarding DRRM practices. The use of IDIs facilitated comprehensive exploration of participants' lived experiences while providing a confidential environment for sharing sensitive information and reflections.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was an in-depth interview guide based on a structured interview protocol. The instrument was designed to obtain detailed narratives regarding the experiences, strategies, leadership practices, challenges, and aspirations of BDRRMO Chiefs. The interview protocol underwent validation by the research adviser, a panel of experts, and the Dean of the Graduate School to ensure methodological rigor and ethical compliance. Informed consent was secured from all participants to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions focusing on participants' positive and negative experiences, coping strategies in addressing challenges, and aspirations for personal and professional development in disaster risk reduction and management.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Following the successful proposal hearing, the researcher prepared the necessary research documents, including the transmittal letter, interview guide, and informed consent form. These documents underwent validation by the adviser and expert panel before approval by the Research Ethics Committee. The researcher secured permission from the Barangay Chairpersons of the selected barangays through formal letters approved by the University of Cebu-Graduate School and signed by the thesis adviser. After obtaining approval, the researcher explained the objectives and procedures of the study to prospective participants. Data collection was conducted through Individual Depth Interviews (IDIs) in private and confidential settings. A structured interview guide was used to facilitate in-depth discussions regarding participants' experiences and perspectives. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy of responses. Field notes were also taken to document contextual details and non-verbal cues. Throughout the process, the researcher maintained a supportive and empathetic approach to encourage honest and open sharing.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study utilized thematic analysis to systematically analyze the interview data. The analysis began with immersion in the interview transcripts to gain familiarity with participants' narratives. Initial coding was conducted by labeling relevant

data segments with descriptive and interpretive codes representing key ideas, experiences, and emotions. The codes were organized and examined to identify patterns, themes, and subthemes that reflected the lived experiences of the participants. Theme development involved repeated review and refinement of the data to ensure accurate representation of participants' experiences. The identified themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, theoretical framework, and existing literature on disaster management. This process enabled the researcher to understand the experiences, leadership practices, coping strategies, and challenges encountered by BDRRMO Chiefs.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles including beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy throughout the research process. The well-being of participants was prioritized by minimizing potential risks and ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Beneficence was observed by ensuring that the study contributed to understanding disaster risk reduction and management practices that may improve community resilience and disaster preparedness. Non-maleficence was maintained through informed consent procedures, confidentiality measures, and provision of support when discussing sensitive experiences. Justice was upheld by recognizing the contributions and challenges faced by BDRRMO Chiefs and advocating for greater support and recognition of their roles in disaster management. Autonomy was ensured by allowing participants to voluntarily participate and freely express their experiences and perspectives. To enhance trustworthiness, the study addressed credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, bracketing, and reflexivity. Credibility was strengthened through rigorous data collection methods and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability was ensured through detailed documentation of research procedures. Transferability was enhanced through rich descriptions of participants and contexts. Confirmability was maintained through member checking, peer debriefing, and bracketing (Creswell, 2013). Reflexivity, as described by Shenton (2004), enabled the researcher to recognize and minimize personal biases throughout the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Experiences of the BDRRMO Chiefs in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

3.1.1 Strength in Preparedness: Coordinated Teams in Action

The findings revealed that preparedness, teamwork, and coordination were essential in ensuring effective disaster response. Informants emphasized the importance of communication tools, service vehicles, drills, contingency plans, and inter-agency coordination in facilitating quick response during emergencies. The participants shared that clear delegation of responsibilities and regular simulation exercises improved rescue operations and minimized damage during disasters. The findings demonstrate the importance of proactive leadership and preparedness in disaster management. The experiences of the BDRRMO Chiefs reflect Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), where effective leadership promotes coordination, accountability, and teamwork during emergencies. Their ability to organize drills, assign responsibilities, and maintain communication systems strengthened operational efficiency and responder confidence. Mercado (2024) similarly emphasized that collaboration between local leaders and external agencies enhances community resilience and disaster response effectiveness.

3.1.2 Early Alerts, Faster Response: Saving Lives in High-Risk Zones

The results showed that early warning systems, rapid mobilization, and hazard assessment enabled BDRRMO Chiefs to protect residents in coastal and high-risk areas. Informants described how immediate evacuation, area assessment, and quick deployment of responders reduced casualties during Typhoon Odette and other emergencies. Their familiarity with community vulnerabilities allowed them to act decisively despite dangerous conditions. These findings support the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (1978), which explains that individuals perform effectively when they perceive themselves as competent and capable. The BDRRMO Chiefs' confidence and quick decision-making reflected competence developed through training and disaster experience. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) emphasized that timely and people-centered early warning systems reduce disaster mortality, while the World Bank (2013) highlighted the importance of rapid and coordinated disaster response mechanisms. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2014) further noted that community preparedness and training improve disaster response effectiveness.

3.1.3 Secure Shelters, Swift Aid: Ensuring Efficient Relief Operations

The findings revealed that accessible evacuation centers, advance preparation of relief supplies, and coordinated relief operations were vital in protecting disaster-affected communities. Informants described how schools and temporary shelters were used during disasters and how relief goods, medical assistance, and emergency supplies were distributed efficiently through coordination with local government units and partner agencies. The use of quick response funds also enabled barangays to provide immediate assistance before external aid arrived. The findings reflect Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021), which emphasizes adaptability, recovery, and maintaining essential functions during adversity. The BDRRMO Chiefs demonstrated resilience through proactive planning, coordination, and resource mobilization that strengthened community recovery and safety. Cayamanda (2020) stressed that coordination between barangays and

institutions enhances disaster resilience, while Wang et al. (2016) described resilience as a process involving resistance, recovery, and adaptation through organized relief systems and proactive planning.

3.2 Negative Experiences Encountered by the BDRRMO Chiefs

3.2.1 Resilient Response: Overcoming Resource Challenges

The results showed that lack of communication systems, electricity, service vehicles, and transportation equipment significantly affected disaster response operations. Informants experienced delays in coordination, difficulties in contacting agencies, and limited mobility during emergencies due to insufficient resources. Despite these limitations, responders improvised using available equipment and alternative communication methods. The findings highlight the adaptive capacities of BDRRMO Chiefs and their teams in managing operational difficulties. These experiences support Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021), which explains resilience as the ability to adapt and continue functioning under adverse conditions. The respondents demonstrated persistence and problem-solving despite resource shortages. Nacaya et al. (2025) similarly noted that disaster response limitations in local communities are often linked to inadequate resources, communication systems, and governance capacity.

3.2.2 Community and Compliance: Navigating Barriers

The findings revealed that some residents resisted evacuation and failed to comply with disaster protocols due to attachment to personal belongings, distrust, or impatience during relief distribution. Informants explained that these behaviors complicated rescue operations and increased risks during disasters. BDRRMO personnel repeatedly encouraged residents to evacuate and conducted assemblies, discussions, and risk awareness activities to improve compliance. These findings support Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), which emphasizes the role of leadership in influencing behavior, promoting cooperation, and ensuring public safety. The BDRRMO Chiefs demonstrated participative leadership through communication, persuasion, and community engagement strategies. Asio (2021) similarly found that gaps remain between disaster awareness and actual compliance with disaster protocols in communities, highlighting the need for continuous education and trust-building.

3.2.3 Swift Support: Bridging External Delays

The results showed that delays in receiving external assistance, lack of advanced equipment, and dependence on higher agencies affected the timely delivery of disaster response services. Informants shared that aid from provincial and municipal agencies sometimes arrived several days late, forcing barangays to rely on basic equipment and improvised solutions. The findings demonstrate the resilience and adaptability of BDRRMO teams in continuing operations despite logistical delays. This supports Resilience Theory by Ann Masten (2021), which explains that resilience involves maintaining functionality and problem-solving despite external constraints. Peralta et al. (2021) similarly found that transportation and infrastructure vulnerabilities significantly delay relief operations in disaster-prone areas, emphasizing the importance of local adaptability and preparedness.

3.3 Coping Strategies of the BDRRMO Chiefs in Managing Challenges

3.3.1 Connected in Crisis: Communication and Coordination

The findings revealed that effective communication, coordination, and information-sharing were essential coping strategies during emergencies. Informants emphasized the importance of emergency vehicles, radios, data gathering, trust among responders, and collaborative decision-making in ensuring smooth disaster operations. Coordination meetings and direct communication with agencies also helped resolve operational difficulties. These findings support Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), which highlights the importance of collaborative leadership, trust, and open communication in organizational effectiveness. The BDRRMO Chiefs demonstrated leadership through shared decision-making and mutual trust among team members. The National Research Council of the Philippines emphasized that community-based risk communication improves disaster response effectiveness by making information more relevant and credible.

3.3.2 Guiding the Community: Education and Compliance

The results showed that repeated community engagement, focus group discussions, visual aids, assemblies, and risk communication were used to encourage compliance with evacuation and safety protocols. Informants stressed the importance of patience, education, and explaining risks clearly to residents to improve cooperation during emergencies. The findings reflect Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), where leaders influence behavior and encourage collective action through guidance and communication. The BDRRMO Chiefs used participative leadership approaches to educate and persuade residents during disasters. Rico (2019) found that collaboration between schools and communities strengthens disaster preparedness, while Geronimo and Gonzaga (2021) emphasized the need for context-sensitive disaster education to improve preparedness and compliance.

3.3.3 Focused Action: Preparedness in Motion

The findings revealed that maintaining focus, following established plans, assigning personnel in advance, conducting drills, and using systematic communication improved disaster response efficiency. Informants explained that simulation

drills, delegation of roles, and organized communication systems enabled responders to minimize confusion and casualties during emergencies. These findings support the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (1978), which explains that individuals are motivated to perform effectively when they feel capable and prepared. Continuous drills and training strengthened the competence and confidence of BDRRMO Chiefs and responders. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) emphasized that preparedness planning and drills improve emergency response, while the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2014) highlighted the importance of capacity-building and community engagement in disaster readiness. The World Bank (2013) also stressed that integrating preparedness into local governance strengthens institutional resilience.

3.4 Aspirations of the BDRRMO Chiefs to Improve Disaster Services

3.4.1 Always Ready: Strengthening Preparedness and Coordination

The findings revealed that BDRRMO Chiefs aspired to improve communication systems, coordination mechanisms, and preparedness equipment. Informants emphasized regular equipment maintenance, functional radios, real-time communication platforms, and coordination meetings as important strategies for improving disaster operations. They also envisioned unified command systems involving barangays, health workers, volunteers, and local agencies. These findings support Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), which emphasizes strategic planning, collaboration, and collective decision-making in effective leadership. The BDRRMO Chiefs demonstrated aspirations toward stronger inter-agency coordination and organizational preparedness. The Department of the Interior and Local Government emphasized systems-based protocols, grassroots engagement, and anticipatory planning as essential components of disaster preparedness.

3.4.2 Drilled to Act: Training and Early Warning for Swift Response

The results showed that BDRRMO Chiefs aspired to strengthen disaster response through continuous training, seminars, simulation drills, and improved early warning systems. Informants emphasized the importance of refresher courses, solar-powered sirens, SMS alerts, centralized data centers, and strategic deployment of responders in improving disaster readiness and response speed. These findings support the Competence Motivation Theory of Susan Harter (1978), which explains that training and repeated practice strengthen confidence, competence, and motivation. Continuous drills and preparedness activities improved responders' readiness and decision-making abilities. Dennis S. Mileti (1999) emphasized that preparedness activities and drills improve emergency response behavior, while United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2012) stressed that education and training are necessary for effective use of early warning systems.

3.4.3 Safe Havens: Efficient Shelters and Relief in Action

The findings revealed that informants aspired to establish barangay-owned evacuation centers, improve relief distribution systems, strengthen peace and order during emergencies, and enhance shelter safety assessment. Proper listing of evacuees and relief goods, organized reporting systems, and increased local budget allocation were identified as important strategies for improving evacuation and relief operations. These findings support Leadership Theory by Kurt Lewin (1939), which highlights the importance of structured leadership, organized systems, and resource management in maintaining order and efficiency during emergencies. The BDRRMO Chiefs demonstrated aspirations toward more organized and community-controlled shelter operations. Nacaya et al. (2025) noted that barangay disaster committees still face operational and resource limitations, while the JICA Comprehensive Disaster Prevention study emphasized the importance of structured evacuation management and role assignment in ensuring orderly shelter operations and fair relief distribution.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study explored the worklife experiences, coping strategies, and aspirations of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BDRRMO) Chiefs in Liloan, Cebu. The findings revealed that effective disaster management relies heavily on preparedness, coordination, communication, leadership, and resilience. Positive experiences highlighted the importance of coordinated teams, early warning systems, and efficient relief operations, while challenges included resource limitations, communication breakdowns, delayed external support, and community non-compliance during emergencies. The informants coped with these challenges through strong coordination, community education, preparedness planning, and focused disaster response strategies. Their aspirations emphasized the need for strengthened preparedness systems, continuous training, improved early warning mechanisms, efficient evacuation centers, and organized relief operations to further enhance disaster resilience and service quality in their communities.

Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BDRRMO) Chiefs, local government units, and disaster management agencies should strengthen disaster preparedness through continuous training, regular simulation drills, effective communication systems, and improved coordination among agencies and community stakeholders. Adequate allocation of resources, establishment of barangay-owned evacuation centers, enhancement of early warning systems, and strengthening of community education programs should also be prioritized to improve compliance, reduce delays, and ensure efficient disaster response operations. Furthermore, future studies focusing on communication systems, inter-agency

coordination, community compliance, risk perception, and capacity-building initiatives may provide additional evidence-based insights for improving barangay-level disaster risk reduction and management practices.

This study was limited to ten (10) BDRRMO Chiefs from selected barangays in the Municipality of Liloan, Cebu, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other municipalities or disaster management contexts. The study also relied solely on qualitative phenomenological inquiry through in-depth interviews, making the findings dependent on the personal experiences, perceptions, and responses of the informants. Additionally, the study focused only on the lived experiences, coping strategies, and aspirations of BDRRMO Chiefs and did not include perspectives from other stakeholders such as community residents, MDRRMO personnel, or partner agencies involved in disaster risk reduction and management.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study observed the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy throughout the research process. Participants' well-being was prioritized through confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, informed consent procedures, and supportive interview practices. The study also ensured credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, bracketing, and reflexivity through rigorous qualitative procedures, including triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, and detailed documentation of research processes.

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