

Causes of Vehicular Accidents in the Province of Ilocos Sur as Perceived by Police Officers

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess and determine the causes of vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur. The investigation was conducted through the joint efforts of the UNP Research Office and the Institute of Criminology in coordination with the Philippine National Police (PNP) through the police officers of the stations/substations of municipalities/cities along the national highway of Ilocos Sur. Solutions were cited by the PNP police officers. But these PNP police officers could not do it alone for they needed the assistance of other government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the people's organizations (now known as civil societies). The PNP police officers were the respondents of this study. A questionnaire supplemented with informal interview with the respondents was used in gathering the data. Frequencies, percentages, and means were used in the analysis of data.

Most of the police officer-respondents were 31-40 years old. Almost all of them were male. Majority of them were married. Most of them were either police officers or senior police officers. The respondents cited the top three causes of vehicular accidents in the following order: (1) overspeeding; (2) driver under the influence of liquor/drugs; and (3) unfamiliarity with the road.

The top three solutions/measures which were done by these PNP police officers are: (1) place road/traffic signs, markings, signals, and permanent markings by DPWH; (2) strictly enforce LTO policies on driving like the apprehension of drivers who are driving without license; and (3) monitor traffic violators along the national highway. The researchers considered these as traditional measures to avoid vehicular accidents. Therefore it's not surprising that measures done in partnership with the energized bureaucracy and the empowered civil society are lesser enforced.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Vehicular accidents are unexpected phenomena and consequences that are beyond control which cause loss of lives, injury, or damage to property. They occur anytime at the least expected moments. They happen in split seconds or minutes. Most of these vehicular accidents happen *in* the highways causing loss of lives, injury to pedestrians and/or passengers, or damage to property.

This study aimed to find out the causes of vehicular accidents thereby finding out possible solutions/measures accomplished by the PNP and the NGO's to minimize their occurrence. Furthermore, the study sought to identify the effects of these vehicular accidents to the riding public and to the pedestrians.

Most importantly, the researchers wanted to find out whether or not the PNP, being the primary agency involved on the problem of vehicular accidents, had involved other agencies of the government such as the Land Transportation Office (LTO), the academe particularly UNP, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the NGOs, POs (now referred to as civil societies) in solving accident related problems. A study on the causes of vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur as perceived by police officers was, therefore, timely and essential.

Objectives of the Study

In general, this study was conducted by the researchers to identify the causes of vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur as perceived by police officers.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Present the profile of the police officers of Ilocos Sur.
2. Identify the causes of vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur as perceived by police officers.
3. Identify the solutions/measures done by the PNP to minimize vehicular accidents.
4. Determine measures extended by the NGOs to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents.
5. Determine the effects of vehicular accidents to the riding public.

Review of Related Literature

Calderon (1970) stresses that vehicular/traffic accidents are never the result of a single cause, for accidents result from a series of actions and conditions that combine at a

given moment to produce some danger, damage, or injury to one or more traffic units. The immediate cause of accidents are some irregularities or some unusual conditions of the vehicles, the road, weather conditions, or a driver or pedestrian. This can happen any moment wherever one is, if this exists, because it is unexpected and unintended occurrence. On the other hand, the early cause of a traffic/vehicular accident is an act or negligence on the part of some persons or organizations that causes or permits a mediate cause to exist.

Padilla (1991) in his article entitled "Regional Cooperation in a Capability Building Program for Local Officials" said that networking reckoned to be an effective mechanism in pursuing development goals amidst the scarcity of resources, involves the following: 1) identification of common problems; 2) mutual and coordinated efforts in resolving said problems; 3) sharing of voluntary services; and 4) exchange of information expertise and experience.

Networking has been defined as a "form of development cooperation between and among countries and institutions at the international, regional and sub-regional levels.

Lamarca (2001), in his module of public administration, mentioned the fifth perspective of public administration, Civil Society Interface which emphasizes the values of social equity and client orientedness, in similar manner as Development Public Administration (DPA) and New Public Administration (NPA). Like Development Administration (DA), it concerns itself as well with sustained economic growth. Unlike DPA, however, it locates its bureaucracy more within its own society taking into consideration the socio-economic and psychological problems of the development partners, particularly the deprived, disadvantaged, and undeserved, as well as the capitalist tendencies of some private business that may pose as hindrance to the promotion of genuine social equity. Administrative capability according to this perspective, therefore, refers to the ability to formulate and implement policies that promote social equity and alleviate poverty, as well as attain sustained economic growth. The measures that enhance this capability include empowerment of the civil society and reinventing government to become catalytic and entrepreneurial. Consequently, programs and projects have been conceptualized through joint efforts of the energized bureaucracy, and the empowered civil society.

Methodology

This study was limited to the police officers of exterior municipalities/cities of Ilocos Sur. A total of 241 police officers were the respondents of the study.

A questionnaire was used in gathering the data. This was supplemented with informal interview with the respondents. Frequencies, percentages, and means were used in the analysis of the data gathered.

Discussion of Results

This portion presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered in this study.

Profile of Respondents

The profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, and position in the PNP is presented in Table I.

Table 1. Profile of respondents.

CHARACTERISTIC	NO.	%
Age (years)		
21 –30	53	21.99
31 –40	91	37.76
41 – 50	72	29.88
51 –60	22	9.13
No response	3	1.24
Sex		
Male	231	95.85
Female	10	4.15
Civil status		
Single	21	8.71
Married	209	86.72
Widower	1	0.42
Separated	1	0.42
No response	9	3.13
Position in the PNP		
•• Inspector	2	0.83
SPO4	13	5.39
SPO 3	35	14.52
SPO2	28	11.62
SPO I	32	13.28
PO3	47	19.50
PO2	50	20.75
PO 1	33	13.69
Investigator	1	0.42

Age. The greatest bulk of the police officer-respondents (31.76%) were 31-40 years old. More than one-fourth of them (29.88%) were 41-50; 21.99% were 21-30 years old; 9.13% were 51-60 years old; and 1.24% gave no response.

Sex.. Almost all (95.85%) of the respondent-police officers were male, while 4.15% were female. When the researchers went to gather data, i.e. float the questionnaires and interview these police officers, they saw that people manning these

different stations/substations were men. And if there was a policewoman, only one was seen. This implies that men still dominate the police force.

Civil status. Majority (86.72%) of the police officers were married; 8.16% were single; 0.42% each were widower and separated; and 3.73% had no response.

Position in the PNP. This ranged from investigator to inspector, although there were slightly more police officers (53.94%) than special police officers (44.81%). There were only two inspectors (0.83%), and one (0.42%) investigator. Less than one-fourth of the police officers were PO2 (20.75%) and PO3 was next (19.50%). The third greatest number of the respondents belonged to SPO 3 rank (14.52%). Slightly lower in numbers were the POI (13.69%) and SPO1 (13.28%). Other respondents were SPO 4 (5.39%).

Causes of Vehicular Accidents

The police officers were asked about the causes of vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur. These are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Causes of vehicular accidents.

CAUSE	NO.	%
Overspeeding	183	75.93
Driver under the influence of liquor/drugs	176	73.03
Not familiar with the road	133	55.19
Overtaking	130	53.94
Slippery road	129	53.53
Lost brake	89	36.93
Lack of roads/traffic signs and marking	75	31.13
Poor road condition	61	25.13
Overloading	59	24.48
Miscalculations	50	20.75
Reckless driving	40	16.60
Undisciplined driver	5	2.07
Ignorance of the right way	4	1.66

Overspeeding was the number one cause as perceived by 75.93% of the respondents. This was followed by "driver under the influence of liquor/drugs" (73.03%); not familiar with the road (55.19%); overtaking (53.94%); slippery road (53.53%); lost brake (36.93%); lack of road/traffic signs and markings (31.12%); poor road conditions (25.31%); overloading (24.48%); miscalculations (20.75%); and reckless driving (16.60%). Only a few stated the last two causes: undisciplined driver (2.07%) and ignorance of the right way (1.66%).

The results imply that most of the causes of vehicular accidents are faults or negligence of the drivers. Overspeeding, driver under the influence of liquor, drugs, not familiar with the roads, etc. are due to the faults of the driver. It could be observed that

these were the primary causes of vehicular accidents along the national highway of Ilocos Sur.

There were also causes outside the control of the drivers like slippery road and poor road condition.

Solutions/Measures Done by the PNP to Minimize Vehicular Accidents

The Philippine National Police (PNP) was tasked for the enforcement of traffic rules and regulations of the country. Hence, the researchers thought that they are the primary agency to give solutions/measures to minimize vehicular accidents particularly along the national highways of the province of Ilocos Sur. These measures are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Solutions/Measures done by the PNP to minimize vehicular accidents.

SOLUTION/MEASURE	NO.	%
Place road/traffic signs, markings, signals and permanent markings by DPWH	163	67.63
Strictly enforce LTO policies on driving like the apprehension of drivers who are driving without license	152	63.07
Monitor traffic violators along the national highway	106	43.98
Exchange of information or service among PNP personnel stations through seminars, workshops, fora, etc.	86	35.68
Coordination with the UNP Institute of Criminology and NGOs	52	21.58

The results prove that the PNP, as an agency of the government, co-exists with other agencies and departments of the government. The number one solution/measure was for the DPWH to place road/traffic signs, markings, signals and permanent markings (67.63%). The coordination of the PNP with the Department of Public Works and Highways is, therefore, necessary.

Second in the list of solutions/measures was the strict enforcement of LTO policies on driving like the apprehension of drivers who drive without license (63.07%). This solution reaffirm the role of the PNP as law enforcers. The researchers observed that there are some drivers along the national highway who don't possess at all a driver's license. Hence, these drivers are nuisance along the national highway of the province of Ilocos Sur.

In some instances, police visibility along the national highway is no longer common. Police officers are supposed to be along the national highway to monitor traffic violators but in some instances police visibility along the national highway is no longer common. Thus, the third (43.98%) solution/measure to be done by the PNP to

minimize vehicular accidents was for them to monitor traffic violators along the highway.

The fourth solution/measure was the exchange of information or service among PNP personnel stations through seminars, workshops, etc. (35.68%). This measure enables the exchange of information, expertise, and experience. In these seminars, workshops, fora, etc., these police officers would be able to identify their common problems. Consequently, there would be mutual and coordinated efforts in solving said problems.

Finally, the fifth measure was for the PNP to coordinate with the UNP Institute of Criminology and non-governmental organizations or NGOs (21.57%). This measure would enable the partnership of the PNP and the academe and/or the NGOs in working hand in hand to minimize vehicular accidents along the national highway of Ilocos Sur.

Other Solutions/Measures Done by the PNP to Minimize Vehicular Accidents

The respondents were asked to give other solutions/measures that must be done by the PNP to minimize vehicular accidents. These were grouped as: a) without coordination with other agencies; and b) in coordination with other agencies of the government.

The following are other solutions or measures accomplished by the PNP to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents.

A. Without coordination with other agencies

1. To conduct checkpoint to check driver's license.
2. To post additional traffic policemen to busy places/roads, particularly along the national highways, schools, and in front of public markets.
3. To place additional traffic signs and markings.
4. To have total ban of tricycles, calesas, kuliglig, and cart along the national highway.
5. To have strict implementation of municipal ordinances.
6. To enforce strictly RA 4136 and other vehicular laws.
7. To apprehend overspeeding vehicles.
8. To conduct surveys of accident prone areas and to conduct a study as to why.
9. To enforce strictly all traffic laws/regulations with safety measures.
10. To provide more police assistance centers.
11. To maintain police visibility to implement rules and ordinances especially on busy streets to maintain smooth flow of traffic.
12. To arrest violators.

B. I coordination with other agencies of the government, etc.

1. To continually coordinate with operators and drivers giving emphasis on no driving under the influence of liquor.
2. To recommend to the LTO that all drivers should be required to undergo a drug test.
3. To coordinate with the LTO for a stricter process of issuing driver's license.
4. To require all drivers to know all precautionary measures and to be disciplined in driving.
5. To recommend to LTO to conduct rigid trainings/seminars for drivers before issuing a driver's license.
6. To recommend to LTO not to renew license to delinquent drivers.
7. To dispatch criminology students to perform duties as police interns in thickly populated areas.
8. To have additional PNP personnel.
9. To have frequent dialogue with drivers' association members regarding their observance of traffic rules and regulations.
10. To have periodic conduct of information campaign on traffic rules in coordination with the LTO.
11. To have proper screening of those who are applying for driver's license.

Measures Extended by NGOs to Minimize the Problem of Vehicular Accidents

The non-government organizations (NGOs) are potent partners of the government for progress. Hence, they are being tapped by the government to assist them in their problems. Some NGOs, on the other hand, volunteer their help/assistance. Table 4 presents the measures extended by NGOs to help minimize the problem of vehicular accidents.

Table 4. Measures extended by NGOs to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents.

MEASURE	NO.	%
Place signs or reminders directed to the drivers along the national highway like, "Don't drink when you drive"	137	56.85
Coordinate with the PNP on giving measures, cooperating to avoid vehicular accidents	125	51.87
Assist in the enforcement of transportation policies	112	46.47
Participate in seminar-workshops conducted to avoid vehicular accidents along the national highway	94	39.00
Help monitor traffic violators along the national highway	93	38.59

The results show that of the five measures extended by the NGOs to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents, the two major measures were the placing of signs or reminders directed to the drivers along the national highway like, "don't drink when you drive" (56.85%) and coordination with the PNP on giving measures; cooperation to avoid vehicular accidents (51.87%). Other examples of these signs or reminders prepared by the NGOs were:

1. Dangerous prone area; reduce your speed to 40 km/hr.
2. You only live once. Don't drive when you're drunk.
3. Check your brakes.

The third in the list was assistance in the enforcement of transportation policies (46.67%); fourth, participation in seminar-workshops conducted to avoid vehicular accidents along the national highway (39.00%); and last but not the least, help monitor traffic violators along the national highway (38.59%).

Other Measures Extended by NGOs to Minimize the Problem of Vehicular Accidents

The researchers also asked the respondents to specify other measures to minimize vehicular accidents. These other measures were classified again by the researchers into: (a) assisting PNP accomplish its functions; and (b) others.

The other measures extended by NGOs to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents are the following:

A. Assisting PNP Accomplish its Functions

Help PNP disseminate traffic rules

Request barangay tanod and civilian traffic aides to be deputized to enforce traffic rules and regulations on busy streets where they are most needed

Assist PNP in organizing traffic volunteers

Help monitor traffic violators and report to PNP and LTO for proper action

Dialogue with PNP on ways and means to minimize accidents

B. Others

Donate funds for the widening of roads and concreting of poor roads

Conduct seminars among drivers re- safe driving

Post traffic reminders/road signs on strategic places

Render immediate rescue to accident victims

Donate more traffic signboard

Recommend cancellation of driver's license if found delinquent

> Orient commuters to report to the traffic enforcers all delinquent drivers

} Provide ambulance, first aid and other accident paraphernalia

} Have active and alert involvement when accident occurs

Have frequent dialogue with drivers and operators on safety measures

Extend financial help in the conduct of seminars for drivers

Have concerted effort on dissemination of proper discipline for drivers
 Have alertness in identifying vehicle especially for hit and run and when accident occurs

Effects of Vehicular Accidents to the Riding Public

The effects of vehicular accidents to the riding public were classified into (a) basic, and (b) other effects. The basic effects are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Basic effects of vehicular accidents to the riding public.

EFFECT	NO.	%
Loss of lives	185	76.76
Damage to property	173	71.78
Physical injuries	158	65.56
Traffic congestion	106	43.98
Inconvenience	101	41.91

The results show that loss of lives (76.76%) garnered the top response from the respondents; damage to property (71.78%), second; physical injuries (65.56), third; traffic congestion (43.98%), fourth; and inconvenience (41.91%), the last.

- The other effects of vehicular accidents to the riding public were subdivided as:
- a. physical effects - creating misunderstanding among drivers, civil/criminal case, delay of routine travel of the public, etc.
 - a. social/psychological effects like insecurity of commuters.

Conclusions

Profile of Respondents

Most of the respondents were 31-40 years old, male, married, and were police officers.

Causes of Vehicular Accidents

The top three causes of vehicular accidents were: speeding; driver under the influence of liquor/drugs; and unfamiliarity with the road.

Aside from the top three causes, the other causes arranged from the highest to the lowest are: overtaking; slippery road; lost brake; lacks road/traffic signs and marking; poor road condition; overloading; miscalculation; reckless driving; undisciplined driver; and ignorance of the right way.

Most of the causes of vehicular accidents were faults or negligence of the drivers. However, there were also causes outside the control of the drivers like slippery road and poor road condition.

Solutions/Measures Done by the PNP to Minimize Vehicular Accidents

The Philippine National Police needed other agencies of the government in solving the problem of occurrence of vehicular accidents. The first suggested solution was that the PNP needed the assistance of the DPWH to place permanent markings. Furthermore, it needed to coordinate with the UNP Institute of Criminology and the NGOs. It was also suggested that the LTO will make policies on driving like the apprehension of drivers who are driving without license to be strictly enforced by the PNP.

Measures Extended by NGOs to Minimize the Problem of Vehicular Accidents

The police officers' responses as to measures extended by NGOs to minimize the problem of vehicular accidents were basically in the nature of coordination and assistance to the PNP's performance of its function of minimizing the problem of vehicular accidents.

Effects of Vehicular Accidents to the Riding Public

These effects were classified as (a) basic and other effects. The basic effects were loss of lives, damage to property, physical injuries, traffic congestion, and inconvenience.

Recommendations

Based on the aforesaid conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded:

1. The police officers should be more active and visible in the highways to remind drivers to be more careful in driving along the highway.
2. Drivers should drive carefully and should refrain from being high due to liquor/drugs when driving.
3. The problem of minimizing vehicular accidents should be a partnership venture of the PNP, other government agencies, NGOs and POs (or civil societies). In short, the energized bureaucracy should work hand in hand with an empowered civil society.
4. Seminar-workshops and/or fora on causes of vehicular accidents along the national highway should be sponsored jointly by the PNP, LTO and UNP Institute of

Criminology. In these seminar-workshops and/or fora, the people would be given opportunity to share opinions, ideas, and expertise regarding the problem on vehicular accidents in the province of Ilocos Sur.

5. The government should recruit more members of the police force and purchase necessary equipment needed for emergency situations.

6. Drivers under the influence of liquors/drugs should be penalized through the revocation of their licenses.

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