

## PNP LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING TERRORISM IN DIPOLOG CITY: AN ASSESSMENT

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### Abstract

*The threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao—the country’s second-largest island—remains severe and persistent. This study aimed to assess the perception of 323 respondents, including Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel, barangay officials, and community residents of Dipolog City, regarding the level of preparedness in preventing and countering incidents of terrorism. Utilizing a descriptive research design, a questionnaire served as the primary tool for data collection. The gathered data were statistically analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, the Kruskal-Wallis H-test, and the Wilcoxon Rank Sum U-test. Findings revealed that the strategic, tactical, and operational components of counterterrorism efforts in the locality were highly prepared, with the PNP leading these initiatives. This suggests that robust counterterrorism measures are in place, characterized by comprehensive training, sufficient resources, and strategic planning aligned with national and regional security objectives. The findings also reflect effective collaborations with other agencies and community programs that enhance overall safety. Additionally, the study identified significant differences in the perceived level of preparedness across strategic, operational, and tactical dimensions when analyzed according to respondents’ profiles—specifically age, educational attainment, and occupation.*

**Keywords and phrases:** Counterterrorism Preparedness; Community Safety; Philippine National Police; Violent Extremism; Security Collaboration

### Introduction

Every nation holds a constitutional mandate to protect its citizens from threats like terrorism, insurgency, and violent extremism. National security is of utmost importance, enshrined in the constitution of sovereign states, including the Philippines. While this responsibility often falls on the military and police, combating terrorism requires a more comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach (Vicente, 2019). In the Philippines, Mindanao has long been a focal point of terrorism and ideologically motivated violence, with the country grappling with threats from various extremist groups since the 1970s (Rhoades & Helmus, 2020). Groups such as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic



Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) continue to endanger national security (Mendoza, Ong, Romano & Torno, 2021).

Recent terrorist incidents, including bombings in North Cotabato and Maguindanao in 2021, highlight the ongoing threat posed by these groups (CNN Philippines, 2022; U.S. Department of State, 2021). While the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) plays a crucial role in neutralizing armed threats, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is central in preventing and countering terrorism, particularly in urban areas. The Philippine government has been progressively shifting internal security responsibilities from the AFP to the PNP to allow the military to focus on maritime security and territorial defense (United States Department of State, 2016). This strategy emphasizes the PNP's role in crime prevention through active community engagement (Vicente, 2019).

The complexity of terrorism requires law enforcement agencies, particularly the PNP, to be well-prepared in countering terrorist threats. While the AFP's efforts in combating terrorism are well documented, the role and preparedness of the PNP, especially in urban areas, remain underexplored. This issue becomes even more pronounced in cities like Dipolog, which, despite its proximity to conflict zones in Mindanao, has limited resources to effectively counter terrorism.

The significance of local law enforcement preparedness cannot be overstated, especially as terrorism continues to evolve and target vulnerable regions (The Economist, 2021). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) stresses the importance of early intervention, intelligence gathering, and community collaboration in preventing terrorism (UNODC, 2019). Dipolog City, located in Western Mindanao, remains vulnerable due to its proximity to areas where terrorist activities are prevalent. Assessing the preparedness of the PNP in this area is critical, not just for local security but also for enhancing national counterterrorism strategies.

The transition shifts the focus of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to territorial defense and external security, while strengthening the capabilities of the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) to handle internal counterterrorism operations (U.S. Department of State, 2023). However, there is a notable gap when it comes to assessing the preparedness of local PNP units, especially in smaller, more vulnerable cities like Dipolog. Although there has been progress in decentralizing counterterrorism efforts to involve the PNP, research examining the effectiveness and readiness of these local law enforcement units remains scarce. Addressing this gap is crucial, as local police are often the first line of defense in preventing terrorist activities in urban settings.

Moreover, the findings from this study are expected to inform policy formulation by offering valuable insights into the preparedness of local law enforcement and highlighting critical areas for intervention. By assessing the level of preparedness of the PNP in Dipolog City during the academic year 2022-2023, this research aims to capture a comprehensive view of counterterrorism readiness from multiple perspectives, including those of community stakeholders. The insights gathered will contribute to the development of more effective and tailored strategies for enhancing local counterterrorism efforts, ultimately

strengthening the overall security framework in Dipolog City.

## **Methods**

This study employed a descriptive survey method to collect quantitative data from 323 respondents, consisting of randomly selected PNP personnel, Barangay officials, and community residents in Dipolog City. Specific inclusion criteria were established for each group. PNP personnel should have a minimum of five years of service in either the Dipolog City Police Station or the Zamboanga del Norte 1st Provincial Mobile Force Company, with no record of criminal or administrative charges. Barangay officials should have served their respective barangays for at least three years, also with no criminal or administrative charges. Community residents qualified for the study if they had lived in their barangays within Dipolog City for at least five years, maintaining a clean record free of criminal and administrative charges.

The primary research tool was a standardized questionnaire adapted from Vicente (2019), serving as the data-gathering instrument. This method was chosen to assess the respondents' level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part gathered demographic information, including the profile of the respondents (sex, age, civil status, job position, length of service, and employment status). The second part assessed the respondents' perceived level of preparedness in terrorism prevention and countermeasures. Each category of preparedness, namely strategic, operational, and tactical, was evaluated using five targeted questions, offering a comprehensive analysis of readiness across all critical dimensions. The study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism, specifically in the strategic, operational, and tactical aspects, when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents. The researchers ensured that participation in the study was voluntary, and that the respondents met the qualifications required for the research.

To ensure reliability and validity, the standardized questionnaire underwent a thorough validation process. Expert validation was conducted to confirm the relevance and clarity of the questions. Reliability testing, such as Cronbach's alpha, was employed to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. These steps were crucial to guarantee that the instrument accurately captured the respondents' preparedness levels and provided dependable data for analysis.

Before data collection, the researchers sought permission from key officials in Dipolog City and obtained full consent from all participants. The protection and privacy of the respondents were guaranteed, and confidentiality of all research data was strictly maintained. Anonymity was also preserved throughout the process to safeguard the identity of the participants. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Throughout the research process, the researchers ensured that participants were not exposed to harm or intimidation. The study maintained ethical standards by obtaining informed consent from both the respondents and the relevant institutions, protecting their privacy, and guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity.

To analyze the data, frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the

respondents' profiles. The weighted mean was employed to determine the respondents' perceptions of their preparedness to prevent and counter terrorism. Additionally, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Poisson) test was used to assess the significant differences in perceptions of preparedness among different groups of respondents. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to assess whether the data followed a normal distribution, guiding the selection of appropriate statistical tests. This test is particularly suitable for this study because it evaluates the distribution of ordinal data and supports the use of non-parametric tests, such as the Wilcoxon Rank Sum U-test and Kruskal-Wallis H-test. By confirming the data's distribution, the K-S test ensured accurate and reliable analysis of the respondents' perceptions of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were meticulously observed throughout the study to safeguard the participants' rights and well-being. Before data collection, approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Jose Rizal Memorial State University, confirming that the research complied with established ethical standards. Informed consent was acquired from all participants, including academic heads, instructors, and students, who were thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits.

Confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained, with assurances that participants' identities would remain anonymous. Participants were also granted the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access, ensuring the confidentiality of participants' information. Upon completion of the study, all data were responsibly disposed of to maintain ethical standards and uphold data privacy. The research upheld the principles of honesty, integrity, and transparency, ensuring that findings were presented accurately and without bias.

### **Results and Discussion**

Problem 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, and occupation?

Most of the respondents were within the age bracket of 49 – 58 years old comprising 110 out of 323 respondents or 34.06% followed by those respondents within the age bracket of 39 – 48 years old comprising 83 out of 323 respondents or 25.70% and those respondents within the age bracket of 29 – 38 years old comprising 79 out of 323 respondents or 24.46% as compared to those respondents who were within the age bracket of 69 years old and above comprising 2 out of 323 respondents or 0.62%. The findings stressed that most of the respondents were within the age bracket of 49 – 58 years old which implies that majority were matured adults.

The data revealed that majority of the respondents were males comprising 196 out of 323 respondents or 60.68% as compared to females comprising 127 out of 323 respondents or 39.32% which implies that majority of the respondents were male dominated.

Most of the respondents were having baccalaureate degree comprising 135 out of 323

respondents or 41.80% followed by those respondents who were college level comprising 112 out of 323 respondents or 34.67% as compared to those respondents who were elementary level/graduate comprising 12 out of 323 respondents or 3.72%. The findings stressed that most of the respondents were baccalaureate degree holder which implies that majority of the respondents were highly educated.

The data revealed that majority of the respondents were working in the government comprising 230 out of 323 respondents or 71.21% followed by those respondents who engage in business comprising 28 out of 323 respondents or 8.67% as compared to those respondents were working in private agency and were farmers/fishermen/drivers both comprising 14 out of 323 respondents or 4.33%. The findings stressed that most of the respondents were working in the government which implies that majority of the respondents were government employees.

Problem 2. On the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City, in terms of strategic, tactical and operational as assessed by Dipolog City PNP Personnel, Barangay officials and community residents.

**Table 1. The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Strategic**

<b>The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Strategic</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. The standard training for the concerned units of DCPO as front line are met.	4.54	Highly Prepared
2. The anti-criminality campaign is implemented, monitored and evaluated.	4.50	Highly Prepared
3. Conduct linkages with barangay officials, schools, NGO officials and stakeholders.	4.49	Highly Prepared
4. The DCPO closely coordinate with the force multipliers (SCAA) as part of its community relations with other sectors in the community.	4.47	Highly Prepared
5. The programs on procurements for the needed resources such as firearms, vehicles and personnel are constantly evaluated and audited.	4.50	Highly Prepared
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>Highly Prepared</b>

Table 1 presents the strategic level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City. The table shows that most respondents perceived a high level of preparedness regarding the standard training for the frontline units of the Dipolog City Police Office, with a mean of 4.54. This was followed by high preparedness in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the anti-criminality campaign, as well as in the consistent evaluation and auditing of resource procurement programs (both with a mean of 4.50), compared to the close coordination with force multipliers (SCAA) as part of community relations, which had a mean of 4.47. The average weighted mean on this aspect is 4.50 verbally interpreted as highly prepared. The findings stressed that most of the respondents favored high preparedness on the standard training for the concerned units of the Dipolog City Police Office as front line are met which implies the strategic component

on the level of preparedness on preventing and countering incidence of terrorism in Dipolog City was to ensure that police officers undergone and equipped the appropriate training and seminars relative to the conduct of anti-urban terrorism.

The findings were supported by Rhoades & Helmus (2020), who emphasized that law enforcement officers must undergo specialized training and seminars related to anti-urban terrorism to effectively manage and respond to terrorist threats. This is crucial not only for their safety but also to enhance their ability to assess and respond to complex, high-stakes situations. The preparedness level observed in the Dipolog City Police Office reflects a proactive approach, where continuous training ensures that personnel remain up-to-date with evolving threats and tactics in terrorism prevention. Such preparedness, as highlighted by the study, demonstrates the importance of strategic readiness, where the ability to act swiftly and knowledgeably in terrorism-related incidents is a vital component of counterterrorism efforts.

Additionally, regular evaluations and audits of resources, including firearms and vehicles, play a pivotal role in reinforcing the police force's operational capacity, ensuring their readiness to respond effectively in high-pressure situations. The effective utilization of such resources, alongside critical intelligence, forms the backbone of any successful counterterrorism strategy. This requires the seamless execution of three essential tasks: acquiring accurate intelligence, conducting thorough analysis, and, most critically, ensuring its proper coordination and dissemination (Hoffman & Taw, 2017). By fostering close collaboration with community force multipliers, such as the Special CAFGU Active Auxiliary (SCAA), the police can enhance community relations and significantly boost their preparedness, aligning with modern counterterrorism approaches advocated by leading experts.

**Table 2. The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Operational**

<b>The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Operational</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. Facilitates the installation of CCTVs to business establishments and other critical places for the purpose of monitoring and recording significant events.	4.20	Moderately Prepared
2. Activation of the units under CMFC like K9, SWAT, MRT, Search and Rescue.	4.26	Highly Prepared
3. Coordinates with other law enforcement agencies such as Military units, fire, and other sectors are in place.	4.52	Highly Prepared
4. All emergency numbers and hotline numbers are memorized and or posted in strategic location in all offices and stations.	4.50	Highly Prepared
5. All activities on anti-criminality lectures are properly coordinated with the concerned barangays and authorities of schools and companies.	4.54	Highly Prepared

<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>Highly Prepared</b>
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Table 2 shows the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City as to operational. The table revealed that most of the respondents perceived high preparedness on all activities on anti-criminality lectures are properly coordinated with the concerned barangays and authorities of schools and companies having a mean of 4.54 followed by highly prepared on coordinates with other law enforcement agencies such as Military units, fire, and other sectors are in place having a mean of 4.52 as compared to moderately prepared on facilitates the installation of CCTVs to business establishments and other critical places for the purpose of monitoring and recording significant events having a mean of 4.20. The average weighted mean on this aspect is 4.41 verbally interpreted as highly prepared. The findings stressed that most of the respondents favored high preparedness on all activities on anti-criminality lectures are properly coordinated with the concerned barangays and authorities of schools and companies which implies operational component on the level of preparedness on preventing and countering incidence of terrorism in Dipolog City connotes concerted effort or a whole community approached to battle the presence and incidence of terrorism.

The findings were further reinforced by Sumad-on & Cawi (2021), who emphasized the critical role of sustained coordination between the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and local government units (LGUs) in combating terrorism. This collaborative effort, paired with well-structured anti-criminality lectures in barangays, schools, and companies, not only raises awareness but also fosters active community involvement in counterterrorism strategies. The high level of preparedness noted in the study, particularly in the coordination of these lectures, reflects a proactive operational framework where local authorities and law enforcement work cohesively to fortify community defenses against terrorist threats. Additionally, as highlighted by Taneski et al. (2023), there is a crucial need to empower frontline defenders—state and local law enforcement professionals—along with other government, civil society, and private sector partners, to effectively prevent and counter terrorism. This holistic approach underscores the importance of engaging various sectors in building a resilient defense network to mitigate terrorism at both the local and national levels.

According to Ajenikoko et al. (2020), improved video surveillance systems have emerged as a vital global tool in combating terrorism, preventing crime, protecting corporate assets, and enhancing public safety, while also streamlining forensic investigations for law enforcement. Despite the study's findings of only moderate preparedness in the installation of CCTVs in business establishments and critical areas, the strong coordination between the PNP, AFP, and LGUs ensures a comprehensive, community-based approach to terrorism prevention. This underscores the crucial role of local communities, where barangay officials and citizens actively contribute by reporting suspicious activities, such as the recruitment and operations of terrorist groups like the NPA, thereby reinforcing efforts to prevent and counter terrorism at all levels.

**Table 3. The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Tactical**

<b>The Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in Dipolog City as to Tactical</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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1. Enforces Spot Inspection regularly in designated places.	4.55	Highly Prepared
2. Implements information dissemination where residents are given information by police.	4.33	Highly Prepared
3. Facilitates the distribution of flyers, slogans, and posters on crime prevention tips to residents and posted in electronic billboard.	4.52	Highly Prepared
4. Employs joint patrol with members of the BPATs and Tanod.	4.50	Highly Prepared
5. Coordination with other law enforcement agencies such as Military, Fire and other sectors are in place.	4.59	Highly Prepared
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>Highly Prepared</b>

Table 3 shows the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City as to tactical. The table revealed that most of the respondents perceived high preparedness on coordination with other law enforcement agencies such as Military, Fire and other sectors are in place having a mean of 4.59 followed by highly prepared on enforces Spot Inspection regularly in designated places having a mean of 4.52 as compared highly prepared to implements information dissemination where residents are given information by police having a mean of 4.33. The average weighted mean on this aspect is 4.50 verbally interpreted as highly prepared. The findings stressed that most of the respondents favored on coordination with other law enforcement agencies such as Military, Fire and other sectors are in place which implies that tactical component on the level of preparedness on preventing and countering incidence of terrorism in Dipolog City connotes concerted effort of the entire governmental agencies as well as the private sector to combat incidence of terrorism.

The findings, as emphasized by Sumad-on and Cawi (2021), underscore the indispensable role of sustained coordination among the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and local government units (LGUs) in combating terrorism. Pillar (2023) further asserts that effectively reducing terrorist capabilities necessitates leveraging a combination of tools—each with unique advantages and constraints—including diplomacy, intelligence, financial controls, criminal justice mechanisms, and military action. Such collaboration is essential for crafting a unified and strategic approach to countering terrorism, ensuring seamless cooperation among various government entities. Equally important is the proactive engagement of local communities, particularly through Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs), which strengthens trust and facilitates effective grassroots-level intelligence gathering, ultimately enhancing the success of anti-terrorism efforts.

Similar approaches can be seen in New South Wales, Australia, where a structured response framework includes the Anti-Terrorism & Security Group, Coordinated Response Group, Operations Group, and State Protection Group (New South Wales Police Force, n.d.), illustrating how specialized, collaborative units can effectively combat terrorism. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of counterterrorism strategies in Dipolog City lies not only in the preparedness of law enforcement but also in the engagement of local communities. Strengthening the coordination between security forces and BLGUs, coupled

with a multi-layered response framework, can significantly enhance the city’s capacity to prevent and address terrorism.

Problem 3. Is there a significant difference on the perception on level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents?

**Table 4. Test of Significant Difference on the Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as to Strategic when Analyzed According to the Profile of the Respondents**

Profile of the Respondents	Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as to Strategic			
	U-Value	H-value	p-value @ 0.05	Action
<b>Age</b>		12.8079	0.02525	Ho Rejected
<b>Sex</b>	2753.00		0.3137	Ho Accepted
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		8.8741	0.03101	Ho Rejected
<b>Occupation</b>		40.8275	1.017 x 10-7	Ho Accepted

Table 4 shows the test of significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to strategic when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents. Applying Wilcoxon Rank Sum U-test and Kruskal Wallis H-test, it yielded p-value lower than the level of significance set at 0.05 which implies rejection of the hypothesis which states that there is significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to strategic when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents in terms of age, educational attainment and occupation. Thus, young and old, lowly or highly educated as well as employed and unemployed had different level of assessment on the preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Mendoza et al. (2021), who highlight that differences in perspectives often arise from variations in socio-economic factors, which shape individuals' understanding and insights on the issues at hand. This reinforces the notion that the Philippine National Police (PNP) must customize its preparedness strategies to address the unique needs and characteristics of different groups within the community. The significant differences in assessments of preparedness, as identified in this study, underscore the critical importance of aligning counterterrorism strategies with these socio-economic variables. This approach, grounded in the Contingency Theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), emphasizes the need for the PNP to be adaptable and responsive to the distinct contexts of various groups, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts in Dipolog City.

**Table 5. Test of Significant Difference on the Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as Operational to when Analyzed According to the Profile of the Respondents**

Profile of the Respondents	Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as to Operational			
	U-Value	H-value	p-value @ 0.05	Action
Age		23.0945	0.0003238	Ho Rejected
Sex	13653.5		0.1365	Ho Accepted
Educational Attainment		2.4699	0.4807	Ho Accepted
Occupation		34.1761	0.000002196	Ho Rejected

Table 5 shows the test of significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to operational when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents. Applying Wilcoxon Rank Sum U-test and Kruskal Wallis H-test, it yielded p-value lower than the level of significance set at 0.05 which implies rejection of the hypothesis which states that there is significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to operational when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents in terms of age and occupation. The findings suggest that younger and older respondents, as well as employed and unemployed individuals, have varying perspectives on the operational preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism in Dipolog City. These differences could be attributed to factors such as life experiences, professional exposure, and risk perception associated with age and employment status. Tailoring preparedness programs to address these diverse perspectives could enhance the overall effectiveness of terrorism prevention strategies.

The findings are supported with Renard (2021), who emphasizes that differences in perspective often arise from variations in socio-economic factors, particularly those related to maturity and survival. These factors significantly influence individuals' understanding of and responses to issues such as terrorism. The results from Table 5, which reveal a significant difference in the level of preparedness for preventing and countering terrorism based on age and occupation, further support this view. These findings align with the Contingency Theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), which asserts that the effectiveness of organizational strategies depends on their adaptability to various environmental and demographic factors. The significant differences in assessments across different age groups and employment statuses indicate that the Philippine National Police (PNP) must tailor its operational strategies to address the unique needs of these distinct demographic groups. By ensuring flexibility in its approach, the PNP can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of its counterterrorism efforts, recognizing that each group perceives and responds to threats differently. This adaptability is crucial in improving the overall preparedness of Dipolog City in countering terrorism.

**Table 6. Test of Significant Difference on the Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as to Tactical when Analyzed According to the Profile of the Respondents**

Profile of the Respondents	the Level of Preparedness in Preventing and Countering Terrorism as to Tactical			
	U-Value	H-value	p-value @ 0.05	Action

Age		21.7556	0.0005827	Ho Rejected
Sex	13532.5		0.1784	Ho Accepted
Educational Attainment		3.7586	0.2887	Ho Accepted
Occupation		62.1304	$4.407 \times 10^{-12}$	Ho Rejected

Table 6 shows the test of significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to tactical when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents. Applying Wilcoxon Rank Sum U-test and Kruskal Wallis H-test, it yielded p-value lower than the level of significance set at 0.05 which implies rejection of the hypothesis which states that there is significant difference on the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism as to tactical when analyzed according to the profile of the respondents in terms of age and occupation. The results suggest that younger and older respondents, as well as those who are employed versus unemployed, have varying perceptions of tactical preparedness. This variation may be attributed to differences in experience, exposure, and professional responsibilities, which can influence how individuals assess tactical measures such as emergency response, resource allocation, and operational readiness

Renard (2021) underscores that differences in perspective often stem from variations in socio-economic factors, particularly those related to maturity and survival. These factors significantly influence how individuals understand and respond to complex issues like terrorism. The findings presented in Table 6, which reveal significant differences in the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism based on age and occupation, are in line with the Contingency Theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). According to this theory, the success of an organization’s strategies depends on its ability to adapt to the unique needs and characteristics of its environment. In this case, the variations in assessments across different age groups and employment statuses suggest that the Philippine National Police (PNP) must develop tactical strategies tailored to meet the distinct needs and perspectives of these demographic groups.

### Conclusions

The study revealed that the strategic, tactical, and operational components of countering and preventing terrorism in the locality are highly prepared, with the Philippine National Police leading these efforts. However, there is a need to enhance the operational function, specifically in facilitating the installation of CCTVs in business establishments and other critical areas to improve monitoring and recording of significant events. This implies that while the PNP has laid a strong foundation for counter-terrorism efforts, addressing gaps in surveillance technology is crucial to ensuring comprehensive security and timely response to potential threats. Furthermore, the findings show a significant difference in the level of preparedness in preventing and countering terrorism, particularly in the strategic aspect, when analyzed according to respondents’ age, educational attainment, and occupation. Similarly, significant differences were observed in the operational and tactical aspects when analyzed based on age and occupation. These insights emphasize the importance of addressing specific gaps to further strengthen terrorism prevention efforts.



The findings of this study align with the Situational Crime Prevention Theory (Clarke, 1970), which suggests that crime prevention, including counter-terrorism, should focus on altering the environment to reduce opportunities for crime. The study highlights the need for enhanced surveillance, such as installing CCTVs in critical areas. This mirrors Clarke's theory by increasing the visibility of target areas, making them less vulnerable to exploitation. Improved surveillance would help the Philippine National Police (PNP) monitor and respond more effectively, thereby reducing opportunities for terrorism and enhancing security in key locations.

The Contingency Theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) supports the study's findings, especially regarding the significant differences observed across demographic groups. This theory suggests that organizational effectiveness depends on aligning strategies with the specific needs of the environment. The varying levels of preparedness based on age, education, and occupation indicate that the PNP should tailor its counter-terrorism strategies to the unique characteristics of each group. By adapting their approaches to these demographics, the PNP can improve the overall effectiveness of their efforts in Dipolog City.

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### **Disclosure: Use of AI Tools**

In compliance with Threshold's guidelines for the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) and automated tools in academic research, the authors disclose the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT for enhancing the quality and clarity of the manuscript. ChatGPT was utilized to assist in refining the language, structure, and formatting of the text, ensuring a high level of academic rigor and coherence. The authors confirm that all data analysis, critical interpretations, and conclusions presented in this manuscript were conducted independently by the research team. The AI tool was employed strictly for editorial assistance and did not influence the scientific content or ethical considerations of the study. All intellectual contributions from the AI tool are in accordance with the authors' original intentions and have been reviewed and approved by all co-authors. The use of ChatGPT complies with Threshold's ethical standards and guidelines for transparent reporting of AI involvement in research. The authors remain fully responsible for the integrity and accuracy of the content presented in this paper.



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