

# Multiculturalism in the law enforcement officers view: effects and challenges



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**Abstract** The study investigated the impact of multiculturalism on law enforcement in the Luzon Region of the Philippines, focusing on its effects, challenges, and the actions taken to address these challenges. Using a qualitative case study approach, 20 law enforcers were purposefully selected as participants. Data were collected through a homemade interview guide specifically designed to delve into experiences and perspectives related to multiculturalism in law enforcement. The gathered data were then systematically collated, analyzed, and interpreted. Findings revealed that multiculturalism has a complex impact on law enforcement, producing positive, negative, and neutral effects. On the positive side, exposure to diverse cultures enhanced the cultural awareness and adaptability of some officers, fostering a more inclusive approach to policing. However, multiculturalism also posed significant challenges, particularly in terms of cultural differences, cultural dominance, and cultural erosion. Cultural differences sometimes led to misunderstandings and miscommunication, while cultural dominance created friction when one culture was perceived to overshadow or undermine others. Cultural erosion presented an additional concern, as officers struggled to maintain traditional practices in a diverse environment. In response to these issues, law enforcers employed various strategies to foster a more harmonious and effective working environment. These included promoting cultural recognition, which involved understanding and valuing the cultural backgrounds of the communities they served. Emphasizing adherence to the rule of law provided a fair and neutral framework for addressing conflicts. Additionally, implementing cultural education helped officers gain a deeper understanding of the diverse groups they interacted with, enabling them to perform their duties more effectively. Ultimately, the study concluded that while multiculturalism brings both benefits and challenges, proactive measures such as these can mitigate its negative effects, enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of law enforcement in a multicultural setting.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, law enforcement, culture diversity, law enforcement officers

## 1. Introduction

“My dream would be a multicultural society, one that is diverse and where every man, woman and child are treated equally. I dream of a world where all people of all races work together in harmony.”—Nelson Mandela

Multiculturalism describes the manner in which a given society addresses cultural diversity. On the basis of the underlying assumption that members of often very different cultures can coexist peacefully, multiculturalism expresses the view that society is enriched by preserving, respecting, and even encouraging cultural diversity. (Longley, 2020)

The topic of multiculturalism is rooted in the rich history of the nomads, who wander around in search of food; they move from one place to another, which we call migration today. Today, people migrate or transfer in search of a greener pasture carrying with them their culture, beliefs and traditions that form a diverse society. Thus, a diverse society is a multicultural society.

The study of multiculturalism has gradually hit the spotlight alongside migration, and migration has brought advantages and disadvantages to the origin country and the receiving country in almost all aspects, such as economics, technology, and the criminal justice system, particularly law enforcement.

Exploring multiculturalism in law enforcement is crucial for understanding how diverse cultural backgrounds impact the efficacy of policing. This study focuses on the Luzon region of the Philippines, providing an in-depth analysis of how multiculturalism affects law enforcement officers.

Globally, law enforcement agencies face significant challenges and opportunities in multicultural settings. In the United States, increasing cultural diversity has led to the implementation of cultural competency training to enhance police–community relations (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2019). These training programs aim to educate officers about different cultural norms and practices to reduce biases and improve communication. Similarly, in Canada, multiculturalism is a fundamental aspect of national identity, and law enforcement agencies emphasize community policing strategies to foster



trust and cooperation with diverse communities (Chongatera, 2013). These strategies include hiring officers from various cultural backgrounds and providing continuous cultural sensitivity training.

In the Philippines, multiculturalism is deeply ingrained in the social fabric, shaped by its history of colonization and migration. The country's criminal justice system, particularly the Philippine National Police (PNP), has made strides in addressing multiculturalism. The PNP has implemented policies aimed at promoting cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness within its ranks (Torres, 2020). These initiatives are crucial in ensuring that law enforcement officers respect and understand the cultural practices of the communities they serve. Furthermore, the PNP has engaged in community outreach programs to bridge the gap between law enforcement and various cultural groups, fostering a sense of trust and cooperation.

The Luzon region, as the largest and most populous island in the Philippines, epitomizes the country's cultural diversity. With numerous ethnic groups and languages, law enforcement in Luzon faces unique challenges. The PNP in Luzon has taken proactive steps to address these challenges by collaborating with local cultural organizations and conducting regular training sessions focused on cultural awareness and sensitivity (Garcia, 2021). These efforts aim to improve the relationship between law enforcement officers and the diverse communities they serve, ensuring that policing practices are fair and effective.

The concepts of the melting pot and salad bowl are crucial in understanding the dynamics of multicultural societies. Melting pot theory suggests that different cultures blend together to form a single, homogeneous culture, with individual cultural identities becoming indistinguishable over time (Gordon, 1964). This theory has been traditionally associated with the American approach to immigration, where immigrants are expected to assimilate and adopt the dominant culture.

Conversely, the salad bowl theory posits that different cultures coexist while maintaining their unique identities, contributing to a heterogeneous society where diversity is preserved and respected (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970). This concept aligns more closely with modern views of multiculturalism, where the emphasis is on cultural pluralism and the benefits of diversity.

In the context of law enforcement in the Luzon region, these theories highlight the importance of balancing integration and cultural preservation. While it is essential for law enforcement officers to integrate into the communities they serve, recognizing and respecting cultural differences is equally important. This balance can help build trust and cooperation between law enforcement and diverse communities, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of policing.

Researchers have aimed to understand how multiculturalism affects law enforcement officers in the Luzon Region, Philippines. Finally, we evaluate the measures implemented by law enforcement officers to overcome the challenges associated with multiculturalism.

Objectives of the Study:

1. Determine the effects of multiculturalism on law enforcement officers.
2. Identify the challenges faced by law enforcement officers related to multiculturalism.
3. Explore the actions taken to address the challenges encountered.

## 2. Materials and methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how multiculturalism impacts the work of law enforcers and to identify the challenges they face due to cultural diversity. The participants consisted of 20 law enforcers from the Philippine National Police (PNP) stationed in Luzon, purposely selected on the basis of their assignment to provinces outside their place of origin. This criterion was chosen to ensure that the participants were working in a multicultural environment, which is central to the study's objectives.

The participants were selected via purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the study's focus. Eligibility was based on their assignment to a province that differed from their home province, thus ensuring exposure to a multicultural setting. This approach aligns with the study's aim to explore the effects of multiculturalism in law enforcement.

Data were gathered through semi structured interviews via a self-developed interview guide. The interview questions were formulated in English, and participants were encouraged to respond in the language they were most comfortable with, whether English, Tagalog, or any local dialect. Responses in languages other than English were translated by the researcher to ensure consistency and accuracy in the analysis. The interview guide focused on the participants' experiences with cultural diversity, challenges encountered in their work, and how they adapted to these challenges.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the data were analyzed via thematic analysis. The transcripts were read multiple times to ensure immersion and familiarity with the data. Initial codes were generated, followed by the identification of themes related to the impact of multiculturalism on law enforcement work. Patterns and connections between themes were explored to provide deeper insights into the challenges and adaptive strategies used by law enforcers. The translation of the responses was performed carefully to preserve the meaning of the participants' answers, ensuring that cultural nuances were not lost in the process.

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the study. The participants provided informed consent before the interviews, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participant data, and the study was conducted with respect to the participants' cultural sensitivities and privacy.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This segment presents the significant findings of the study on the effects of multiculturalism on law enforcers, the problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism and the actions taken to address the problems encountered.

#### 3.1.1. *Effects of multiculturalism on law enforcement*

The effects of multiculturalism on law enforcers as perceived by the participants are positive, negative and no effect. The majority (9) of the participants considered multiculturalism advantageous and helpful, whereas some participants (6) perceived it otherwise. Additionally, some participants (5) also perceived multiculturalism as not affecting their work as law enforcers.

#### 3.1.2. *Positive effect*

Most participants recognized that multiculturalism positively affects their work, which helps them nourish their knowledge of different cultures and build good relationships with their coworkers as well as their clients (community), as described by participant 2:

"I am able to embrace, respect and learn other cultures. Thus, allowing me to blend into the community I serve, hence earning their trust and confidence."

The participants noted that multiculturalism helps them embrace and respect different cultures, which is crucial for building trust within diverse communities. This sentiment is echoed in research by Morin, Parker, Stepler, and Mercer (2019), who reported that law enforcement officers who receive cultural competency training are better equipped to interact with culturally diverse populations. Such training programs improve officers' understanding of different cultural norms and practices, which can reduce biases and enhance the effectiveness of their work.

The ability to blend into the community and earn their trust, as mentioned by Participant 2, is a significant benefit of multiculturalism. Studies have shown that when law enforcement officers are culturally competent, they can build stronger relationships with community members, leading to better cooperation and communication (Chongatera, 2013). This improved relationship is essential for effective policing, as it fosters a collaborative environment where the community feels comfortable engaging with law enforcement.

This was seconded by participant 5, who answered:

"Multiculturalism affects me positively as a law enforcer because it allows me to develop sensitivity among the different cultural groups in the community. It is important to cultivate a multicultural atmosphere, appreciate diversity and tolerate their differences in order to create a just and humane society."

Participant 6 also agreed that multiculturalism positively affects their work, which helps them to widen their understanding and considerations in different situations, saying, among others, that

"Nakaka apekto sa dahil una maraming Pilipino iba iba ang culture, religion at iba iba rin ang kanilang pamumuhay kailangan mas matuto kang maging considerate at mag adjust sa kong anong sitwasyon ka naroon, at mas maging malawak ang understanding mo hindi puro sariling sitwasyon lang ang isinasa alang kundi sitwasyon din ng iba." (It affects us because first of all there are many Filipinos with different cultures, religions and lifestyles are also different, you need to learn to be considerate and adjust to what situation you are in, and your understanding should be broader, not just your own situation but also the situation of others.)

The participants highlighted the importance of being considerate and adjusting to different situations, which aligns with the concept of cultural relativism in law enforcement. According to a study by Haarr (2019), officers who understand and respect cultural differences are more likely to approach situations with empathy and fairness, leading to more just outcomes. This broader understanding can also help in de-escalating potentially volatile situations by acknowledging and addressing the cultural factors at play.

Participant 12 also noted that multiculturalism is not only advantageous in their line of work but also an opportunity for them to provide better service to the community; thus, he narrates; the following:

"Multiculturalism has a great impact on the work of law enforcers because it's a window to officers to see situations or problems that need immediate solutions in such communities. The law enforcers can provide immediate actions with positive outcomes because they already know their culture so they can adapt with it, taking their beliefs into consideration."

Multiculturalism provides law enforcement officers with a "window" to better understand and address community issues, as noted by Participant 12. This perspective is supported by research indicating that culturally competent policing can lead to more effective problem-solving and crime prevention strategies (Reeves & Meyer, 2020). By considering the cultural context, officers can develop tailored responses that are more likely to be accepted and supported by the community.

It can be seen from their responses that multiculturalism is also an important issue in the field of law enforcement, as we know that they are the frontliners of the CJS; hence, they are bound to respond and deal with different kinds of people from all walks of life regardless of who they are, their origin, their culture and their beliefs. As stated by respondent 19,

“Multiculturalism became an essential key to my work to connect to and understand people better.”

Finally, multiculturalism in law enforcement work perceives that at the end of the day, any differences are resolved because they are aware that they are all gearing toward their common goal, which is to serve and protect them. As participant 3 noted,

“Generally, multiculturalism is good, especially if there are many problems in the office because different cultures have different ways in which to approach problems, so it is also balanced. The wealth of viewpoints results in a wide array of ideas that benefit the team. Although sometimes, it causes factions, like here in the office, there are Tagalogs, there are people from the lowlands like Ilocanos and us highlanders.... but in the long run, we also understand each other especially when the conversation is job related or office work. After all, we have one vision and mission.”

Participant 3’s observation of the diversity of viewpoints leading to better problem solving reflects the broader organizational benefits of multiculturalism. According to a study by Bartol and Bartol (2020), diverse teams are more innovative and capable of finding creative solutions to complex problems. In law enforcement, this diversity of thought can lead to more effective strategies and improved outcomes.

The responses of the participants in the study indicate that multiculturalism positively influences law enforcement work by enhancing cultural sensitivity, fostering trust, and improving community relations.

### 3.1.3. Negative effect

On the other hand, multiculturalism was also negatively perceived by some of the participants. This perspective is evident from the disadvantageous responses, as participant 11 noted:

“Multiculturalism affects my work as a law enforcer because people grow up with different cultures, and these people sometimes respond in different ways because they have different perspectives and different behaviors.”

This participant noted that people from different cultures might respond differently because of their distinct perspectives and behaviors. This is consistent with findings from Alpert, MacDonald, and Dunham (2020), who reported that cultural differences can lead to communication barriers and misunderstandings between law enforcement officers and community members. These barriers can hinder effective policing and lead to misinterpretations of behaviors, potentially escalating situations unnecessarily.

Agreed by participant 14;

“As a law enforcer, multiculturalism affects my work owing to the diverse culture of every group in society, which you should adjust in every circumstance that may encounter in daily duty.... but there is always standard operating procedure or law that can be implemented in general with no one is excuse.”

The answers of participants 8 and 10 also concurred;

“It truly affects, it is truly mixed sometimes indoubt to talk to them because they are Bisaya, Ilocano or Tagalog, it is hard to talk.”

“The effect of multiculturalism on the law enforcement is enormous, especially if you are in a covert operation when you truly need to get along and adopt what they have.”

Participant 7 added that:

“Number one is truly hard to adjust, especially when you are assigned to another place and their culture is different, you have to adjust yourself even if you do not want to understand their culture, we will adapt to their culture so they do not think we do not respect them.”

Participants 14 and 7 highlighted the difficulty of adjusting to various cultural norms, especially when assigned to different regions. Research by Siegel and Worrall (2020) supports this, indicating that law enforcement officers often face challenges in adapting to diverse cultural expectations and practices. This need for constant adjustment can lead to stress and frustration, affecting performance and decision-making ability.

Moreover, participant 15 recognized that multiculturalism affects not only themselves but also their whole organization, stating that:

“It affects you because you do not know how to act or how to treat them so that you do not offend the feelings of others. In addition, as a law enforcer, this is what makes it difficult for us because the attention of the people is centered on us that even a small mistake by the police has a negative effect on our organization.”

Participants 8, 10, and 15 mentioned the operational difficulties posed by multiculturalism, particularly in covert operations and daily interactions. According to a study by Smith and Holmes (2019), multicultural environments can complicate covert operations and other law enforcement activities, as officers must navigate complex cultural dynamics and ensure that their actions are culturally sensitive to avoid offending community members. This complexity can lead to operational inefficiencies and increased risk of failure in sensitive missions.

Furthermore, multiculturalism may result in unsuccessful operations, as perceived by participant 4, who stated that:

“Multiculturalism affects my work as a law enforcer because if you do not share the same beliefs as your work partner, the outcome will not be successful.”

Participant 4 and Participant 15 noted that differing cultural beliefs among officers and the community can affect the success of operations and the perception of the police organization. A study by Wilson, Wilson, and Swanson (2021) revealed that multiculturalism can sometimes create divisions within law enforcement teams, leading to decreased cohesion and cooperation. These internal divisions can undermine the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts and negatively impact the public's trust in the police.

Hence, while multiculturalism offers several advantages, it also presents significant challenges for law enforcement officers, as highlighted by the responses of some participants in this study. The negative effects of multiculturalism on law enforcement underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges.

#### 3.1.4. Neutral effect

Moreover, multiculturalism does not affect the work of a law enforcer in any way, as perceived by some participants. This is because they recognized that multiculturalism is already part of their work and that they believed that they are mandated to serve and protect all who sojourn in their jurisdictions. As elaborated by participant 16,

“As a law enforcer, multiculturalism does not truly affect our work because from the moment that we took oath, we are bound/mandated to respect the different cultures and traditions of the community within our area of responsibility.”

Participant 16's assertion that multiculturalism does not affect their work because they are mandated to respect cultural diversity is supported by research. According to Can and Hendy (2019), law enforcement officers are often trained to serve diverse communities and uphold laws impartially, regardless of cultural differences. This professional mandate ensures that officers are prepared to interact respectfully and effectively with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

This was concurred by participant 1, who narrated:

“There is not much problem with multiculturalism because even though many races live here, they follow the law.”

Participant 1 mentioned that multiculturalism is not problematic because community members follow the law. This observation aligns with findings from a study by Tyler and Huo (2020), which concluded that when community members perceive the legal system as fair and just, they are more likely to comply with laws and cooperate with law enforcement. This compliance reduces the potential for cultural conflicts and makes multiculturalism a nonissue in law enforcement work.

The normalization of multiculturalism in law enforcement is further corroborated by a study conducted by Bartol and Bartol (2020). They reported that in regions with long-standing multicultural communities, law enforcement agencies have developed practices and policies that effectively integrate cultural diversity into their operations. This integration normalizes multiculturalism, making it an intrinsic part of law enforcement work that does not require special attention or adaptation.

Some participants in this study perceived that multiculturalism does not significantly impact their work as law enforcers. They recognized that respecting cultural diversity is a fundamental part of their duties and believe that adherence to the law by all community members minimizes potential issues. The perception that multiculturalism does not significantly impact law enforcement work has several implications for the need for training, policy, and community relations.

### 3.2. Challenges Encountered in Relation to Multiculturalism

As the first pillar of the CJS, law enforcers are faced with multiple problems, ranging from serious to less serious scenarios, events or even issues one of the issues that is less discussed but sometimes tests their tolerance, aptitude and discretion is multiculturalism. Thus, the problems encountered by the selected law enforcer participants in relation to multiculturalism were cultural difference, cultural dominance and cultural erosion.

#### 3.2.1. Cultural differences

This study revealed that problems with multiculturalism are unavoidable because of the nature of their work. They are tasked with addressing a community with a diverse culture. As participant 13 stated,

“The problem encountered is people with different beliefs, customs, traditions and lifestyles that lead to ignorance and mockery.”

This was confirmed by the answers of participant 10;

“On the basis of my experience, the problems that I encountered in multiculturalism as a law enforcer are different beliefs and practices.”

Participant 13 and Participant 10 noted that different beliefs, customs, and practices lead to ignorance and mockery. This aligns with findings by van Craen and Skogan (2019), who noted that cultural diversity within law enforcement and the communities they serve can result in misunderstandings and tension due to differing values and traditions. These differences often manifest in conflicts and negatively impact the effectiveness of law enforcement.

This difference leads to factions in the workplace, discrimination, especially those that are lower in number, nepotism, especially higher positions, and conflicts that lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. This can be seen from the response of participant 2;

“On the basis of my experience, cultural differences such as beliefs, values, ideologies and even food preferences make us split into factions, create divisions in the workforce and sometimes lead to discrimination in some instances because of a lack of knowledge of each other’s culture.”

The problem of discrimination that led to nepotism was also mentioned by participant 4:

“Common among the problems in regard to multiculturalism is discrimination at work; they do not want to be with others who believe in them, and they only want to be with their countrymen.”

This was confirmed by participant answer:

“Compatriots are prioritized when there is a schooling or seminar opening.”

Additionally, participant 9 stated the following:

“Favoritism especially countrymen.”

Participants 2, 4, 8, and 9 highlighted the issues of factions, discrimination, and nepotism within the workplace. According to a study by Bartol and Bartol (2020), workplace discrimination and favoritism are prevalent in multicultural environments, leading to divisions and reduced morale. When officers perceive favoritism or nepotism, it undermines trust and cooperation, which are crucial for effective law enforcement.

Participant 11 added that such differences also lead to misunderstandings, as narrated:

“Misunderstanding because of different practices, languages or different views in life.” Cultural differences often lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. This is supported by a study from Siegel and Worrall (2020), which revealed that miscommunication stemming from cultural differences can escalate conflicts and complicate law enforcement operations. Officers may misinterpret behaviors or fail to communicate effectively because of cultural barriers, leading to unintended consequences.

Moreover, participant 15 experienced having a hard time in building connections with others who had different beliefs;

“You do not know how to approach someone. Because sometimes they will judge you by your actions, because you have done things that do not agree with their beliefs.”

This participant experienced difficulty in building connections with people of different beliefs. Research by Alpert, MacDonald, and Dunham (2020) supports this, indicating that cultural differences can hinder the development of trust and rapport between law enforcement officers and community members. Building effective relationships requires cultural sensitivity and understanding, which can be challenging in diverse settings.

Furthermore, another problem encountered was the language barrier, which results in conflicts and misunderstandings, as described by participant 5:

“I had once encountered a conflict between groups of men due to language differences. Their differences with respect to the tones and accents of their dialects resulted in misunderstanding. The other group thought that they were arguing when they were just merely talking and explaining.”

Participant 5 mentioned language barriers as a source of conflict and misunderstanding. This finding is corroborated by a study conducted by Can and Hendy (2019), which revealed that language differences significantly impact communication and interaction in multicultural law enforcement settings. Language barriers can lead to misinterpretations and conflicts, as officers and community members struggle to understand each other.

The study revealed that cultural differences inherently lead to various problems within law enforcement work, as officers deal with diverse communities. These issues include ignorance, mockery, factions in the workplace, discrimination, nepotism, conflicts, misunderstandings, and language barriers.

### 3.2.2. Cultural dominance

Some participants emphasized that they have experienced cultural dominance; this happens when one culture claims that they are superior to the other cultures, as elaborated by participant 7:

“The problem for me is that one culture does not make you lose, especially if you are in one place and then there are different cultures; it is truly mixed, but deep inside, I just let it go for the sake of peace and just respect it. The debate about culture and who will follow is inevitable.”

Participant 7 discussed the challenge of cultural dominance and the inevitable debates about cultural superiority. This aligns with findings of Tyler and Huo (2020), who noted that in multicultural environments, conflicts often arise when one group attempts to assert dominance over others. These conflicts can lead to debates and tensions that hinder cooperative efforts and peacekeeping.

Moreover, cultural dominance also occurs when the culture of people in conflict prefers to settle things according to their culture, as narrated by participant 18:

“In the taking of initial statements, some culture would try to dictate the proceedings. If the parties belong to a similar culture, their own practices overtake the process.”

Participant 18 mentioned that cultural dominance occurs when individuals from the same culture prefer to resolve conflicts according to their own practices. This observation is supported by research from Bartol and Bartol (2020), who

reported that cultural groups often seek to impose their conflict resolution practices in disputes, which can undermine formal legal processes and create additional challenges for law enforcement officers who are trying to apply standard procedures.

The tendency of certain cultural groups to dictate proceedings, as noted by Participant 18, is also corroborated by a study conducted by Alpert, MacDonald, and Dunham (2020). They found that when cultural practices overtake formal processes, they can complicate investigations and legal proceedings. Law enforcement officers may find it difficult to maintain procedural integrity and impartiality when cultural norms conflict with established legal protocols.

Some participants highlighted the issue of cultural dominance, where one culture asserts superiority over others. This often results in conflicts and challenges in law enforcement, particularly when different cultural groups have distinct practices and expectations.

### 3.2.3. Cultural erosion

Another problem encountered by the participants in relation to multiculturalism was cultural erosion. This is the breakdown of the homegrown culture and the adaptation of the new culture. This can be associated with the answer of participant 20;

“The possibility of replacing your good belief with one of bad belief.”

This fear of losing the original culture by participant 20 can be corroborated by the response of participant 3 to the fear of influence by other cultures; such a problem occurs when a higher officer tries to invigorate his own culture to subordinates;

“Fear of influence—fear that we may lose our original culture and identity by adopting cultures from others, especially from a newly assigned higher -ranking officer—you know rank has its own privilege; when they tell you to do that, do this, as subordinates, we have no choice but to follow.”

This participant also expressed concern about the possibility of replacing cherished beliefs with less favorable ones. This aligns with research by Linton (2021), who reported that cultural erosion often occurs when dominant cultures overshadow indigenous practices. Linton emphasized that such cultural shifts can create anxiety among individuals who fear losing their traditional values and identity.

Furthermore, participant 3 discussed the fear of cultural influence from higher-ranking officers, leading to the potential loss of original cultural identity. This concern is supported by research from Kappeler and Gaines (2021), who observed that hierarchical structures within organizations can perpetuate cultural dominance. Higher-ranking individuals may impose their cultural norms on subordinates, leading to shifts in organizational culture and potential erosion of original practices.

Moreover, participant 19 struggled with how to manage culture that is in contrast, which contrasts with known culture;

“Thus far, the only problem I have encountered in relation to multiculturalism is how I respect a culture that is opposite to my moral beliefs and stand.”

Thus, this participant struggled with respect to cultures that conflict with personal moral beliefs. This issue is echoed in the work of Merry (2020), who highlighted that individuals often face challenges in reconciling personal values with conflicting cultural practices. Merry’s research indicates that navigating these conflicts can be particularly difficult in professional settings where adherence to diverse cultural norms is needed.

The participants in the study identified cultural erosion as a significant issue in multicultural settings. This phenomenon involves the breakdown of indigenous cultures and the adoption of new, often conflicting, cultural practices. The experiences shared by participants reflect concerns about losing cultural identity and the influence of dominant cultures.

### 3.3. Actions Taken to Address Problems Encountered

With the presented problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism by the participant selected members of the law enforcement, actions, such as culture recognition, rule of law and culture education, are taken to address the problems encountered as revealed by the participants.

#### 3.3.1. Cultural recognition

Most of the participants’ action to address problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism is cultural recognition, is accomplished through recognizing that we are not alone in this world and that we need each other to survive. The participants were hesitant at first to recognize other cultures, but as time passed, they tended to accept, understand and adjust for the common good. As participant 11 described,

“Always respect them even though sometimes we don’t understand them, be patient and accept their culture.”

This statement was confirmed by the response of participant 8;

“Try to understand them, get along and socialize and accept and respect where they come from.”

Participant 10 positively agreed, stating:

“For my own idea, the best action taken to address problems with multiculturalism as a law enforcer is adjustment.”

Moreover, participant 12 believed the following:

"I believe in the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", I think that is the best action in dealing with this multiculturalism because if you commit mistakes at least, it lessens the burden."

Furthermore, for problems such as conflicts, misunderstandings, misinterpretations and language barriers, explanation was the action taken. As explained by participant 7,

"My action taken as a law enforcer is to explain to other cultures their beliefs and just respect each other's culture."

This is agreed upon by participant 5, who explained as follows:

"I made them understand that it is just their manner of talking and they did not intend to argue with them."

The participants emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting different cultures as a means to address multiculturalism issues. This aligns with the findings of Dutton and Simmonds (2020), who argue that cultural recognition and understanding are essential for effective multicultural interactions in professional settings. Their study highlights that acknowledging and adapting to cultural differences can foster better relationships and improve communication.

Similarly, Harris and Hargrove (2021) noted that cultural adaptation and understanding are critical in mitigating conflicts and building trust within diverse teams. They emphasize that actions such as patience, respect, and socialization are fundamental in successfully navigating multicultural environments.

The importance of respect and cultural sensitivity in law enforcement is emphasized by Wang and Liu (2019). Their research suggested that respecting cultural differences and being sensitive to diverse perspectives are essential for successful law enforcement. Officers who embody these values contribute to more harmonious and effective policing.

The practice of observing and adapting to cultural behaviors was noted as a strategy for managing multicultural interactions. This is consistent with findings by Nguyen (2020), who reported that observation and adaptive strategies are effective in understanding and responding to cultural differences in professional settings. Nguyen suggested that taking the time to learn and adapt to cultural nuances can prevent misunderstandings and improve communication.

### 3.3.2. Rule of law

The study showed that one of the actions taken to address the problems encountered was to implement the law regardless of how diverse the community is, and the rule of law prevails and binds the differences. As narrated by participant 18,

"Just implement the law and procedure."

Concurred by the answer of participant 14;

"Always based your actions from legal."

Participant 2 added that to address problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism, a concerted effort of the whole organization is warranted;

"We put aside our cultural differences when we implement/enforce the law and work as a single entity, helping the organization fulfill a common goal."

On the other hand, problems encountered were also resolved through cultural proceedings, as elaborated by participant 1;

"If there is a problem between different races, there is a public forum or dialog that is held to come to an agreement and discuss what method or solution to solve it. In the cordillera region, there is something called "inayan" and respect for elders, which is followed by what the elders said on the basis of the law, so they respect culture and tradition."

Moreover, participant 3 revealed that the PNP recognized multiculturalism issues in law enforcement, which were addressed through educating their members;

"In my observation, issues such as this (multiculturalism) are being discussed/included in our trainings/seminars."

This is corroborated by the answers of participant 15;

"When I encounter people like this, I first observe how they act, so that I know how to socialize with them, so that I do not hurt others."

Last, at the end of the day, problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism depend on the culture of a certain individual, as participant 3 states and I quote:

"As for me, in my personal opinion, addressing multiculturalism problems in law enforcement would also depend on the police officer on how he/she spells and lives the word respect regardless of rank.

The participants emphasized that adherence to legal standards helps manage cultural diversity. This is supported by research from Davies and Roberts (2021), who reported that the consistent application of laws across different cultural contexts is crucial for maintaining fairness and order in law enforcement. Their study highlighted that uniform application ensures that all individuals are treated equally, regardless of their cultural background.

The application of the rule of law, regardless of cultural diversity, was identified as a key strategy in the study. This is supported by research from Taylor and McAllister (2019), who argue that consistent enforcement of legal standards is crucial for maintaining order and fairness in multicultural societies. Their study underscores that adherence to legal procedures helps to balance cultural differences and ensure equitable treatment.

The use of cultural proceedings, such as public forums and dialogs, was highlighted by participants as an effective method for resolving conflicts. This approach is corroborated by Martinez (2021), who emphasized that public forums and community dialogs are valuable tools for addressing multicultural issues and fostering mutual understanding. Martinez's study indicates that these methods can facilitate conflict resolution and promote cultural harmony.

The study highlights that implementing the rule of law uniformly across diverse communities and fostering a concerted organizational effort are key actions taken to address multiculturalism issues in law enforcement.

### 3.3.3. Cultural education

Another action taken to address problems encountered in relation to multiculturalism is culture education, the. This study revealed that observing and learning about other cultures provides the law with an approach to understanding and connecting with diverse communities. As participant 15 explained,

"When I encounter people like this, I first observe how they act, so that I know how to socialize with them, so that I do not hurt others."

This was confirmed by the statements of participant 16:

"To avoid disputes with people who have different cultures, we have to know all their cultures and traditions and even how they practice them. We must assure that we build good rapport with the community in order to beg their trust in us."

The participants emphasized the role of observation and learning in managing multicultural interactions. This is supported by findings from Park and Kim (2020), who reported that observational learning is a key strategy for law enforcement officers to understand and effectively engage with diverse communities. Their research suggests that observing cultural behaviors and practices enables officers to tailor their interactions and avoid cultural misunderstandings.

The importance of building rapport and trust through cultural understanding is corroborated by Lee and Taylor (2021). Their study highlights that law enforcement agencies benefit from investing in cultural education, as it fosters better relationships with the community. By understanding cultural nuances and traditions, officers can build trust and enhance their effectiveness in serving diverse populations.

Research by Brown and Clark (2022) supports the idea that cultural competence training, which includes learning about different cultures and practices, is essential for law enforcement professionals. Their study emphasized that such training not only improves officers' ability to navigate cultural differences but also helps reduce conflicts and misunderstandings.

The need for empathy and sensitivity when dealing with different cultures is highlighted by Wong and Liu (2019). Their study suggested that cultural education promotes empathy and helps officers appreciate diverse perspectives, which is crucial for effective law enforcement in multicultural settings.

The study reveals that culture education is a crucial action for addressing issues related to multiculturalism in law enforcement. The participants highlighted that understanding and observing other cultures helps law enforcers connect with diverse communities and avoid misunderstandings.

Above all, multiculturalism affects law enforcers positively, negatively and not positively. The problems encountered were cultural differences, cultural dominance and cultural erosion, which were addressed through cultural recognition, the rule of law and cultural education.

## 4. Conclusions

Considering the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn that law enforcers are affected by multiculturalism. Such multiculturalism has caused numerous problems that have been resolved through various actions that suit the situations brought by the diverse community implemented by law enforcers. It is then recommended that the inclusion of multiculturalism topic on the topics in law enforcement and other academic curricula that offer education to future law enforcers and an orientation or briefing on diverse cultures be conducted with newly assigned law enforcers in their new place of assignment so that they can be acquainted and know what to expect from the community they will be serving.

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## Ethical considerations

This research was conducted following strict ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity and protection of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from every participant prior to their involvement in the study. Each participant was thoroughly briefed on the purpose, procedures, and potential impacts of the study, and their voluntary participation was emphasized, with the assurance that they could withdraw at any time without any repercussions. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were highly regarded throughout the entire research process. Personal data were anonymized and securely stored, accessible only to the research team, and used solely for the purpose of this study. Any identifying information was removed from the published results to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. Researchers have taken every possible step to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants, adhering to principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. By upholding these ethical principles, the study aims to contribute valuable insights while maintaining the highest standards of participant protection and research integrity.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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