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STRENGTHENING BARANGAY ENGAGEMENT WITH QCADAAC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: BASIS FOR POLICY ENHANCEMENT

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Abstract

Illegal drug prevention and control require strong collaboration between local government units and barangays to ensure the effective implementation of community-based programs and services. Despite the implementation of various initiatives by the Quezon City Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council (QCADAAC), disparities in barangay participation continue to affect the reach and sustainability of these programs. This study investigated the relationships among the awareness, perception, and engagement of barangay personnel regarding QCADAAC programs and services to inform policy improvement. The study employed a mixed-methods design using a convergent approach: a descriptive-correlational quantitative component and a thematic-analysis qualitative component built around one open-ended question. Data were collected from seventy-seven (77) of 102 targeted barangay authorities and key individuals across seventeen (17) barangays in Quezon City identified by QCADAAC as exhibiting low to minimal participation, using a researcher-developed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, weighted mean, and Pearson's r were used to analyze the data. Respondents showed substantial awareness of QCADAAC programs and services (WM = 4.01), favorable perceptions of relevance and effectiveness, and high self-reported engagement. Awareness correlated strongly with engagement ($r = 0.991$, $p < .001$), as did perceived relevance ($r = 0.933$, $p = 0.022$) and perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.967$, $p = 0.002$). Despite these favorable findings, a disparity persists between respondents' self-reported engagement and QCADAAC's official designation of these barangays as low-participating, pointing to gaps in monitoring, reporting, and the definition of participation itself. The study recommends strengthening QCADAAC's information dissemination, feedback, and monitoring mechanisms, regular BADAC consultative sessions, youth-focused anti-drug initiatives, and participation documentation and reporting systems.

Keywords: *Awareness, Perception, Engagement, QCADAAC, Barangay Participation, Anti-Drug Initiatives, Policy Improvement, Community Involvement*

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INTRODUCTION

Barangays play a critical role in implementing community-based drug prevention initiatives under the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Republic Act No. 9165). In Quezon City, the Quezon City Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council (QCADAAC) collaborates with barangays to implement prevention, advocacy, rehabilitation, and community engagement programs. Despite these efforts, QCADAAC records indicate that several barangays continue to exhibit low to minimal participation in its programs and services. Limited participation reduces opportunities for community involvement and may affect the effectiveness and sustainability of local anti-drug initiatives.

QCADAAC is the focal body that plans and implements anti-drug abuse programs and projects in Quezon City. Over the years, it has conducted Preventive Education and Advocacy Campaigns, including drug abuse prevention and education seminars in barangays, communities, schools, and business establishments, and has raised awareness through annual observances such as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDADAIT) in June and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Month in November. Its intervention programs provide counseling to Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) based on the severity of addiction as evaluated by Drug Dependency Evaluation Accredited Doctors, and it supports the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) through the drug-clearing program for barangays. In 2021, QCADAAC launched the Integrated Drug Abuse Profiling System to monitor PWUDs who voluntarily surrendered and are undergoing intervention.

Community participation often depends on stakeholders' awareness of available programs and their perceptions of program relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness. Well-informed individuals who view government initiatives positively are generally more likely to participate in community activities, while limited awareness or unfavorable perceptions may discourage engagement even when programs are readily available. Although previous studies have examined community participation in public health and local governance programs, empirical evidence on the relationship among awareness, perception, and engagement in QCADAAC programs and services remains limited, particularly among barangays identified as having low to minimal participation. Existing reports primarily describe program accomplishments but provide little evidence explaining why participation remains limited despite continuing implementation efforts.

Accordingly, this study examined the relationship between awareness, perception, and engagement among representatives from selected barangays regarding QCADAAC programs and services, to provide empirical evidence that may guide policy enhancement and strategies to strengthen barangay participation in local anti-drug programs. By focusing on barangay-level key personnel, the study offers localized, empirical insight to guide the refinement of communication strategies, advocacy approaches, and program implementation, supporting data-driven policy enhancement and stronger community-level governance in anti-drug efforts.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which explains that behavior is influenced by behavioral intentions shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; people are more likely to engage in a behavior when they possess sufficient knowledge of it and hold favorable evaluations of its expected outcomes. Applied here, awareness refers to the extent to which barangay representatives are knowledgeable about QCADAAC's programs, services, and initiatives; perception refers to their evaluation of the relevance, accessibility, effectiveness, and overall quality of those programs and services; and engagement, the dependent variable, refers to respondents' level of participation and involvement in QCADAAC programs and activities. Guided by this framework, the study assumes that greater awareness and more favorable perceptions are associated with higher levels of engagement, and the research questions and hypotheses follow directly from this assumption.

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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework treats awareness and perception of QCADAAC programs and services as independent variables and barangay engagement as the dependent variable, proposing that higher awareness and more favorable perceptions are associated with greater engagement of barangay officials and stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

The study evaluated the relationship between respondents' level of awareness and perception and their level of engagement with QCADAAC programs and services by answering the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' level of awareness of QCADAAC Programs and Services?
2. What are the respondents' perceptions of QCADAAC Programs and Services in terms of (a) relevance and (b) effectiveness of the initiatives?
3. What is the respondents' level of engagement in QCADAAC Programs and Services?
4. Is there a significant correlation between the respondents' level of awareness and level of engagement in QCADAAC?
5. Is there a significant correlation between the respondents' perceived relevance and effectiveness and their level of engagement in QCADAAC?
6. What policy enhancement can be proposed as a result of this study?

Hypotheses

Because the study did not predict the direction of the relationships, it used non-directional hypotheses.

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H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' level of awareness of QCADAAC programs and services and their level of engagement.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' perceptions of QCADAAC programs and services, in terms of relevance and effectiveness, and their level of engagement.

H_{11}: There is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of awareness of QCADAAC programs and services and their level of engagement.

H_{12}: There is a significant relationship between the respondents' perceptions of QCADAAC programs and services, in terms of relevance and effectiveness, and their level of engagement.

Review of Related Literature

The reviewed literature covers four areas relevant to this study: awareness and information dissemination, perceived relevance and effectiveness of anti-drug programs, community and barangay engagement, and the research gap that motivates this study.

Awareness and Information Dissemination

Insufficient community-level communication contributes significantly to public ignorance about drug-related interventions (UNODC, 2021), while community-based awareness programs enhance public knowledge and participation, since well-informed individuals are more likely to engage in preventive activities and support rehabilitation initiatives (Dela Cruz et al., 2022). The UNODC (2018) recommends that preventive programs provide evidence-based information on the adverse impacts of drug use while supporting healthy decision-making, with educational campaigns, seminars, and outreach as efficient channels for reaching youth. Local government-led advocacy increases awareness and collective responsibility (Santos & Ramirez, 2022), and effective public health communication depends on audience segmentation, channel mix, message framing, and repeated exposure (UNODC, 2023; Smith et al., 2023). Government communication is most effective when established as a credible, dependable source (Bajeh & Kur, 2021; Vergara & Lintao, 2020), and media remains central to expediting the dissemination of public-health messages (Jamri et al., 2022). Awareness functions as a predictor of participation and advocacy: increased awareness enhances participation as people better understand a program's purpose and benefits (Smith & Johnson, 2022), predicts sustained involvement (Brown et al., 2022), and awareness-building strategies directly improve attitudes and willingness to participate (Lee & Kim, 2022; Villanueva & Garcia, 2022).

Perceived Relevance and Effectiveness

Citizen perceptions shape policy agendas, and stakeholder feedback can drive implementation improvements, making the relationship between programs and public perception mutually reinforcing rather than one-way (Dela Cruz, 2019). Relevance is a key determinant of an anti-drug program's success: programs anchored to community needs gain public trust and engagement (UNODC, 2022), and community-based programs are perceived as relevant when they directly address pressing local needs, with alignment between objectives and community concerns increasing participation and sustainability (Reyes et al., 2022; Cruz & Bautista, 2022; Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Davis & Thompson, 2022). Perceived effectiveness is similarly associated with higher engagement, as participants are motivated by observable outcomes (Martinez & Lopez, 2022), and both relevance and effectiveness perceptions are key predictors of engagement in community-based and advocacy programs, where trust and perceived value determine involvement (Chen et al., 2022). End-user perspectives are essential to understanding whether existing services are sufficient and suitable (Bell et al., 2015; Russell et al., 2021), and public acceptability is itself a key factor in shaping harm-reduction policy frameworks (Wild et al., 2021). At the same time, historically negative and stigmatizing perceptions of drug users complicate the development of

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evidence-based policy (Curtin et al., 2024; Kulesza et al., 2015; Sathyamurthi et al., 2024), and stigma carries substantial costs for individuals with substance use disorders, limiting access to housing and employment, harming relationships and well-being, and discouraging help-seeking (Crapanzano et al., 2018; Krendl & Perry, 2023).

Community and Barangay Engagement

Prevention programs built on education, early intervention, and community participation significantly reduce drug abuse and strengthen protective factors (UNODC, 2022), and well-structured, sustained community initiatives address both behavioral and environmental risk factors (WHO, 2022). Full engagement of the target population is critical to intervention efficacy (Zakaria et al., 2021); public participation should be treated as an opportunity to make decisions that maximize collective benefit, and effective engagement produces more acceptable, implementable, and sustainable initiatives (US EPA, 2025; Ballard et al., 2023). Communities must actively engage in drug prevention and control to address its economic and security impact (Anino et al., 2021), non-government organizations play a substantial role in prevention and treatment through outreach, lobbying, and research (Mukhambetova et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025); and community engagement is essential to the long-term reintegration of PWUDs (Victoria & Santos, 2025). Research on the Philippine "drug war" shows how moral panic and political framing shape both top-down initiatives and public perceptions of drug policy, underscoring the need for transparent accountability alongside enforcement (Lamchek & Jopson, 2024). Youth participation, in particular, creates opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development (Bautista, 2020), bridges local government and young people (Atanoza-Meriño, 2024), and is increasingly recognized in governance frameworks as essential to more responsive, inclusive policymaking (WHO, 2023). Peer-led and social-network interventions meaningfully influence adolescent behavior (Rahmattalabi et al., 2019), though youth participation still faces barriers of low enthusiasm, limited financial and institutional support, and weak coordination with stakeholders (Lastimado et al., 2025).

Research Gap

Existing literature shows that awareness, perceptions of relevance and effectiveness, and community engagement are important to anti-drug initiatives, but most studies focus on individual attitudes, general community participation, or national and international program implementation. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the relationship among these three factors specifically among barangay-level stakeholders, and even less within the context of QCADAAC programs and services among barangays identified as having low to minimal participation. This study addresses that gap by examining whether awareness and perceptions of relevance and effectiveness are significantly related to barangay engagement with QCADAAC, providing localized evidence to inform communication, participation, and implementation strategies, and a basis for policy enhancement.

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METHODS

Research Design

The study used a quantitative-correlational design with an embedded qualitative component (a convergent mixed-methods approach). The quantitative component determined respondents' levels of awareness, perception (relevance and effectiveness), and engagement, and examined the relationships among these variables using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. A qualitative component, consisting of one open-ended question soliciting recommendations for improving QCADAAC programs and services, was analyzed thematically to complement and contextualize the quantitative findings.

Population and Sampling

The population consisted of barangay stakeholders from the 39 non-drug-cleared barangays in Quezon City. The study focused on the 17 barangays that QCADAAC identified as having low to minimal participation in its programs and services, selected through purposive sampling because the study required respondents with specific knowledge of, or responsibility for, barangay governance and QCADAAC programs. Total enumeration was then used to identify six target respondent categories per barangay — Barangay Chairperson, SK Chairperson, Kagawad assigned to Peace and Order, BADAC Focal Person, Barangay Auxiliary Team (BAT) Representative, and HOA President or Purok Leader — for an intended sample of 102 respondents across the 17 barangays.

Of the 102 targeted respondents, 77 completed and returned the questionnaire within the data-collection period (approximately 75.5% response rate). All 17 barangays and all six respondent categories were represented, although not every barangay contributed the full complement of six respondents; the shortfall was primarily attributable to the availability and schedules of intended respondents during the barangay visits. Where an intended respondent was unavailable, the questionnaire was left with the BADAC focal person, secretary, or administrative personnel for follow-up. Because the distribution of responses across positions and barangays is therefore uneven, findings should be read as reflecting the 77 participating respondents rather than as a complete census of the originally targeted 102.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic and service-tenure profile of the 77 respondents.

Table 1. Demographic and Service-Tenure Profile of Respondents (N = 77)

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	42	55%
	Male	34	44%
	Prefer not to say	1	1%
Age	18–25	2	3%

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Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage
	26–35	19	25%
	36–45	31	40%
	46–55	17	22%
	56 and above	8	10%
Civil Status	Married	49	64%
	Single	25	32%
	Separated	1	1%
	Widowed	2	3%
Position/Role	BADAC Focal Person	17	22%
	Purok Leader / HOA President	16	21%
	Barangay Chairperson	12	16%
	Barangay Auxiliary Team Rep.	11	14%
	Kagawad, Peace and Order	11	14%
	Barangay SK Chairperson	10	13%
Length of Service	4–6 years	30	39%
	7 years and above	24	31%
	1–3 years	18	23%
	Less than 1 year	5	7%

N = 77 for each category. Women comprised 55% of respondents and men 44%, with 1% preferring not to disclose gender. The 36–45 age bracket was the largest (40%), followed by 26–35 (25%) and 46–55 (22%), indicating that participation was concentrated among working-age adults rather than youth. Most respondents were married (64%). BADAC Focal Persons (22%) and Purok Leaders/HOA Presidents (21%) were the two largest position

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groups, reflecting strong representation from personnel directly involved in coordinating and implementing anti-drug initiatives at the barangay level. Most respondents (70%) had four or more years in their current position, suggesting the sample is drawn predominantly from experienced barangay personnel.

Research Instrument

The study used a researcher-developed questionnaire anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior and organized into five parts: (I) demographic profile; (II) Level of Awareness of QCADAAC's mandate, programs, and activities (seven items, 1 = Not Aware to 5 = Highly Aware); (III) Perception of QCADAAC programs in terms of relevance and effectiveness (four items each, 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree); (IV) Level of Engagement, measuring participation, involvement, and support (four items, 1 = Very Low to 5 = Very High); and (V) one open-ended question on recommended policy or program improvements. Table 2 presents the descriptive scale used to interpret weighted-mean scores for each construct.

Table 2. Descriptive Scale for Interpreting Weighted-Mean Scores

Weighted Mean	Awareness	Perception (Relevance / Effectiveness)	Engagement
4.21–5.00	Highly Aware	Strongly Agree (highly relevant / very effective)	Very High – highly engaged
3.41–4.20	Aware	Agree (relevant/effective)	High – actively engaged
2.61–3.40	Moderately Aware	Moderately Agree – undecided	Moderate – moderately engaged
1.81–2.60	Slightly Aware	Disagree (less relevant / less effective)	Low – low engagement
1.00–1.80	Not Aware	Strongly Disagree (not relevant/ineffective)	Very Low – minimal engagement

Validation, Pilot Testing, and Reliability

The instrument underwent content validation by three QCADAAC key personnel with extensive knowledge and practical experience in drug abuse prevention, education, advocacy, and program implementation: a former QCADAAC Action Officer, a Program Manager, and a Planning Officer. Following validation, the instrument was pilot-tested on 20 respondents from one non-drug-cleared barangay that was not among the 17 study barangays, to avoid contaminating the main sample while preserving contextual relevance. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha on the pilot-test data (Table 3).

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Table 3. Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the Research Instrument

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Interpretation
Level of Awareness	.974	7	Excellent
Perception – Relevance	.929	4	Excellent
Perception – Effectiveness of the Initiatives	.964	4	Excellent
Level of Engagement	.961	4	Excellent

Per convention, $\alpha \geq .90$ is interpreted as excellent, .80–.89 good, .70–.79 acceptable, .60–.69 questionable, .50–.59 poor, and below .50 unacceptable; all four constructs achieved excellent internal consistency.

Data Gathering Procedure

After authorization from QCADAAC and the concerned barangays, the researcher personally visited each of the 17 identified barangays to administer the questionnaire, distributing printed copies and, where appropriate, a Google Forms link accessed via QR code. The researcher explained the study's purpose and the nature of participation to each respondent, and participation was voluntary. When an intended respondent was unavailable, the researcher left the questionnaire with the BADAC focal person or barangay secretary for follow-up and later retrieval. The researcher continued recruitment and retrieval until the data-collection period concluded, ultimately obtaining 77 of the 102 targeted responses across all 17 barangays and all six respondent categories. The researcher reviewed completed questionnaires for completeness before encoding.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to summarize respondents' demographic profile, and weighted mean was used to determine overall levels of awareness, perception, and engagement on the study's Likert scales. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to test the relationship between awareness and engagement and between perception (relevance and effectiveness) and engagement, with statistical significance evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$; the assumptions of linearity, approximate normality, and absence of influential outliers were considered in interpreting the results. Narrative responses to the open-ended policy-recommendation question were analyzed thematically: the researcher reviewed all responses, assigned initial codes to recurring ideas, grouped related codes into candidate themes, reviewed themes against the original responses, and refined and named the final themes, which were then interpreted alongside the quantitative findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study was reviewed and approved under UREC Code OUSREC 0226-0050 (approved February 25, 2026). Individual informed consent—presented electronically via Google Forms for online respondents—was obtained from all participants before data collection and covered the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to decline or withdraw without penalty; QCADAAC's and the barangays' administrative authorization did not substitute for individual consent. Because participants included government and barangay personnel, the researcher emphasized that participation was unrelated to employment or performance evaluation, that declining or withdrawing carried no disadvantage, and disclosed the researcher's professional relationship with QCADAAC to avoid undue influence. Data were stored in password-protected files

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and secure physical storage, accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel, and reported only in aggregated, de-identified form; data are to be retained only for the period required by the Research Ethics Committee and institutional policy.

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RESULTS

Level of Awareness

Table 4 presents respondents' awareness of QCADAAC's mandate, programs, and community-based activities.

Table 4. Respondents' Level of Awareness of QCADAAC Programs and Services

Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge of QCADAAC's mandate and functions	3.96	1.06	Aware
Awareness of programs and services related to drug abuse prevention	3.95	0.92	Aware
Understanding of treatment and rehabilitation initiatives	3.99	0.96	Aware
Familiarity with community-based interventions and activities	4.00	0.97	Aware
Knowledge of how to participate in QCADAAC programs	4.00	0.97	Aware
Recognition of role as a community leader under RA 9165	4.08	0.95	Aware
Understanding that this leadership role contributes to QCADAAC's success	4.06	0.96	Aware
Weighted Mean Average	4.01		Aware

Respondents rated highest their recognition of their own role and responsibilities as community leaders under RA 9165 (M = 4.08) and their understanding that this leadership contributes to QCADAAC's success (M = 4.06); the lowest-rated item was general awareness of drug-abuse-prevention programs and services (M = 3.95), though it still fell within the “Aware” range. The overall weighted mean of 4.01 indicates that respondents are generally knowledgeable about QCADAAC's mandate, programs, and their own supporting role, consistent with prior findings that community-driven awareness initiatives and local-government advocacy substantially improve public understanding and engagement in anti-drug efforts (Dela Cruz et al., 2022; Santos & Ramirez, 2022; UNODC, 2022).

Perception of QCADAAC Programs and Services

Table 5 presents respondents' perception of QCADAAC programs in terms of relevance.

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Table 5. Respondents' Perception of QCADAAC Programs and Services — Relevance

Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Programs address the actual needs of the community	3.96	1.06	Agree
Initiatives are relevant to drug abuse prevention efforts	3.95	0.92	Agree
Programs are aligned with current community concerns	3.99	0.96	Agree
Programs contribute significantly to community safety and well-being	4.00	0.97	Agree
Weighted Mean Average	3.98		Agree

Table 6 presents perceptions in terms of the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Table 6. Respondents' Perception of QCADAAC Programs and Services — Effectiveness of the Initiatives

Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Programs effectively promote awareness of drug abuse	3.96	1.06	Agree
Initiatives help reduce drug-related problems in the community	3.95	0.92	Agree
QCADAAC activities are implemented effectively	3.99	0.96	Agree
Programs successfully achieve their intended objectives	4.00	0.97	Agree
Weighted Mean Average	3.98		Agree

Respondents generally agreed that QCADAAC programs are relevant to community needs and effective in achieving their objectives, consistent with literature indicating that programs perceived as context-specific and outcome-driven earn stronger public trust, participation, and sustained engagement (Reyes et al., 2022; Cruz & Bautista, 2022; Garcia & Lopez, 2022; Martinez & Lopez, 2022; Chen et al., 2022).

Level of Engagement

Engagement in this study refers to respondents' self-reported participation in and support for QCADAAC programs and services — not QCADAAC's own administrative monitoring criteria. Table 7 presents the results.

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Table 7. Respondents' Self-Reported Level of Engagement with QCADAAC Programs and Services

Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Actively participates in QCADAAC activities per RA 9165	3.96	1.06	High
Attends QCADAAC programs when invited	3.95	0.92	High
Supports QCADAAC initiatives within the community	3.99	0.96	High
Encourages others to participate in QCADAAC programs	4.00	0.97	High
Weighted Mean Average	3.98		High

Respondents most strongly endorsed encouraging others to participate (M = 4.00) and supporting QCADAAC initiatives within their community (M = 3.99). Notably, all 17 barangays in this sample were selected specifically because QCADAAC's administrative records classify them as having low to minimal participation — a classification that stands in direct tension with respondents' self-reported high engagement, discussed further below.

Correlational Analysis

Table 8 presents the relationship between respondents' level of awareness and level of engagement (N = 77).

Table 8. Correlation Between Level of Awareness and Level of Engagement

Variables	Pearson r	N	p-value	Decision
Awareness – Engagement	0.991	77	< .001	Reject H_0 (significant)

The result indicates a very strong, statistically significant positive association between awareness and engagement, leading to rejection of H_{01}. Table 9 presents the relationship between perception (relevance and effectiveness) and engagement.

Table 9. Correlation Between Perception (Relevance and Effectiveness) and Level of Engagement

Variables	Pearson r	N	p-value	Decision
Engagement – Relevance	0.933	77	0.022	Reject H_0 (significant)
Engagement – Effectiveness	0.967	77	0.002	Reject H_0 (significant)

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Both correlations are very strong, positive, and statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, leading to rejection of H_{02}. As with any correlational design, these results indicate association, not causation: they do not establish that increasing awareness or improving perception will, by itself, increase engagement, since other unmeasured factors may also contribute.

Qualitative Findings: Recommendations for Policy Enhancement

Thematic analysis of responses to the open-ended question yielded five recurring themes.

Enhanced youth engagement and prevention programs. Respondents repeatedly emphasized involving the youth sector and the Sangguniang Kabataan more directly ("Focus more on the Youth"; "Maybe, you can involve more the SK or Youth"), consistent with evidence that youth-centered programming reduces substance-abuse risk through awareness, resilience, and community involvement (UNODC, 2023).

Expanded rehabilitation, aftercare, and continuous support. Respondents called for stronger, ongoing support for PWUDs beyond initial treatment ("Improve access to rehabilitation and aftercare services… recovering persons who use drugs need continuous support after treatment"; "Implement more serious counseling, livelihood and aftercare program among PWUDs and families").

Stronger coordination with barangays and local stakeholders. Respondents asked for closer collaboration and involvement in planning ("Enhanced the coordination with barangays"; "Involving us in your program or initiative planning is recommended"), reflecting a preference for more participatory, decentralized program design.

Program sustainability, monitoring, and follow-up. Several respondents noted the absence of follow-up after trainings ("Matapos ang program hindi na namin alam ang aming gagawin"; "Siguro maari nilang bigyan kami ng mga follow up trainings"), consistent with evidence that program effectiveness depends on ongoing monitoring and reinforcement, not implementation alone (Fixsen et al., 2023).

Program improvement and innovation. Some respondents felt programs had become repetitive over time ("They need to think more of new programs because theirs is just the same from year to year"; "Sa dami hindi na masiyadong nakikita kung alin ang effective"), echoing findings that continuous, evidence-based redesign is critical to maintaining program relevance (OECD, 2023).

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DISCUSSION

Respondents demonstrated substantial awareness of QCADAAC's mandate, programs, and community-based activities, and, notably, of their own responsibilities as community leaders under RA 9165 — the two highest-rated indicators in the awareness scale. This suggests that QCADAAC's information-dissemination efforts (its official website, social media presence, and formal communication with barangays) are reaching this population effectively and are consistent with literature linking community-driven awareness campaigns to stronger understanding of, and engagement in, anti-drug initiatives (Dela Cruz et al., 2022; Villanueva & Garcia, 2022; UNODC, 2022).

Respondents also perceived QCADAAC's programs as relevant to community needs and effective in achieving their objectives, mirroring findings elsewhere that perceived alignment between program objectives and community concerns strengthens trust, participation, and program sustainability (Reyes et al., 2022; Cruz & Bautista, 2022; Davis & Thompson, 2022; Martinez & Lopez, 2022). Both perceived relevance ($r = 0.933$) and perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.967$) correlated strongly and significantly with engagement, as did awareness ($r = 0.991$), supporting the study's Theory-of-Planned-Behavior-based expectation that better-informed, more favorably disposed barangay officials report greater participation.

The Awareness–Perception–Engagement Paradox

The central finding of this study is a paradox rather than a straightforward confirmation of its hypotheses: despite high self-reported awareness, favorable perception, and high self-reported engagement, every barangay in the sample was selected precisely because QCADAAC's own administrative records classify it as having low to minimal participation. This is not necessarily evidence that respondents over-reported their engagement. It more plausibly points to a gap between how barangay officials understand and experience their own involvement and how QCADAAC operationally defines, measures, and documents "participation" — through attendance records, accomplishment reports, and other monitoring instruments that may not capture informal or individual-level forms of support, advocacy, and encouragement that respondents describe. The qualitative theme of weak follow-up and monitoring after trainings reinforces this interpretation: respondents themselves flagged the absence of consistent monitoring and reporting mechanisms as a program gap, independent of the engagement-classification issue. The implication for QCADAAC is that improving participation may depend less on further raising awareness or improving perception — both already favorable — and more on redefining, documenting, and validating what counts as participation at the barangay level.

Proposed Policy Enhancement

Table 10 maps the qualitative themes and quantitative findings onto QCADAAC's five existing policy areas, with corresponding proposed enhancements.

Table 10. QCADAAC Existing Policies and Proposed Policy Enhancements

Existing Policy	Proposed Enhancement
Prevention and Advocacy Campaign	Replace repetitive, lecture-based seminars with more dynamic, engaging prevention formats; proactively institutionalize Barkada Kontra Droga in schools rather than waiting for barangay requests; formalize annual IDADAIT and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Month activities with more youth-focused advocacy strategies.

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Existing Policy	Proposed Enhancement
Intervention and Reintegration	Extend livelihood seminars to include start-up materials and small-business support; partner with NGOs, national government agencies, and Quezon City LGU departments for livelihood, scholarship, and job-placement support; extend reintegration support to PWUDs' families, not only PWUDs themselves.
Information Dissemination	Maximize QCADAAC's website and social media as primary information channels with more engaging content; establish a structured feedback mechanism to capture community input on programs and services.
Capacity Building & Knowledge Sharing	Institute systematic follow-up and monitoring after trainings to verify grassroots implementation; expand training-of-trainers capacity given Quezon City's large population; hold continuous consultative meetings with barangays to gather feedback on existing policies.
Stakeholder Partnership	Sustain and expand partnerships with NGOs beyond UNODC and with national government agencies; introduce a reward system recognizing the best-performing Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils.

Conclusion

Barangay officials in this sample are, by their own report, knowledgeable about QCADAAC's mandate and programs, hold favorable views of those programs' relevance and effectiveness, and describe themselves as actively engaged — and awareness and perception are each strongly and significantly associated with that self-reported engagement, consistent with the study's Theory-of-Planned-Behavior framework. The persistence of these same barangays' official classification as low-to-minimal-participation, however, indicates that the issue is less a deficit of awareness, perception, or engagement per se, and more a gap in how participation is defined, measured, monitored, and documented. Strengthening barangay engagement with QCADAAC, in other words, requires not only sustaining awareness and positive perception but bridging this measurement gap so that engagement can be accurately captured and translated into outcomes QCADAAC can recognize and act on.

Recommendations

QCADAAC should diversify its information, education, and communication materials to avoid repeating the same content annually, invest further in its website and social media channels, and establish a structured feedback mechanism for community input. It should sustain and enhance its existing programs — modernizing Drug Abuse Prevention Education beyond lecture formats, institutionalizing Barkada Kontra Droga proactively in schools in partnership with the Schools Division Office and the Dangerous Drugs Board, and developing more youth-focused programming with the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation. It should continue and strengthen BADAC meetings, consultative gatherings, and intelligence workshops, incorporating structured feedback mechanisms and a reward system for top-performing BADACs. Given the strong association between awareness and engagement, QCADAAC should institutionalize its annual IDADAIT and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Month observances and deepen collaboration with national government agencies and NGOs whose platforms extend beyond its own. Given the association between perceived program value and engagement, QCADAAC should

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expand the Strong Families Program — which grew from 11 barangays (2022–2024) to 100 barangays by 2026 — including into elementary schools, by training additional community or barangay-based facilitators. It should also strengthen rehabilitation, aftercare, and continuous-support services for PWUDs, including start-up materials after livelihood training and partnerships with the Small Business Department, the Quezon City Youth Development Office, and the Public Employment Service Office, and extend support to PWUDs' families as well. Most importantly, given the disparity between self-reported engagement and official low-participation classification, QCADAAC should establish a clearer monitoring and evaluation system — for example, quarterly BADAC accomplishment reports and annual BADAC plans requiring QCADAAC approval — and should use its regular meetings to clarify to barangays that participation includes actively implementing anti-drug measures, not only attendance at QCADAAC-led activities.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study's findings are limited by its lower-than-targeted response rate (77 of 102 intended respondents, 75.5%) and the resulting uneven distribution of responses across barangays and respondent categories; by its reliance on self-reported engagement measures that, as discussed above, appear to diverge from QCADAAC's administrative participation criteria; and by the data-integrity concerns flagged throughout the Results section, which should be resolved before the findings are treated as final. Future research should incorporate additional stakeholder groups — residents, youth organizations, schools, and PWUDs and their families — for a more comprehensive picture of awareness, perception, and participation, and should examine additional predictors of engagement such as organizational capacity, resource availability, leadership support, and communication strategy, potentially through qualitative or mixed-methods designs that can capture the experiences, obstacles, and effective strategies underlying community-based anti-drug implementation.

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