

POLICE TRUST AND CRIME-REPORTING BEHAVIOR IN KIDAPAWAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

The focal point of this study was to determine the significant relationship between police trust and crime reporting behavior in Kidapawan city. This study employed a descriptive correlational study design. The respondents of the study select 60 respondents who are residents of Kidapawan City, aged 18–60 years and they were selected by employing purposive sampling technique. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted using Mean and Standard Deviation and Pearson R Correlation. The results show that the level of police trust is moderate while the level crime reporting behavior in Kidapawan city is high. On the other hand, the test of relationship between variables indicates a statistically significant and positive relationship between police trust and crime reporting behavior.

Keywords: Criminology, Police Trust , Crime Reporting Behavior, Kidapawan City, Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

Police play a vital role in society, entrusted with upholding the law and maintaining public safety. This trust is essential for effective law enforcement. Researchers like Tyler and Huo (2003) demonstrate that public trust in police enhances their legitimacy, leading to greater cooperation with investigations and a decrease in crime (Tyler & Huo,

2003). Conversely, police misconduct erodes trust and hinders law enforcement efforts.

The Philippines faces significant challenges regarding police conduct. Despite reported decreases in overall crime rates, concerns about police brutality and extrajudicial killings remain a serious issue, particularly in the context of the war on drugs (Human Rights Watch, 2024). While some argue for police reforms, the lack of accountability and a culture of violence within the force contribute to the prevalence of police misconduct (Amnesty International Philippines, 2024).

Kidapawan City, situated within the Philippines, confronts a multifaceted challenge emblematic of many urban areas across the nation: the pervasive issue of police officers engaging in criminal activity. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as "police crime behavior," not only undermines public trust in law enforcement but also compromises the effectiveness of efforts to uphold law and order. Furthermore, it disproportionately affects specific demographics within communities, exacerbating social inequalities and perpetuating injustices (Commission on Human Rights Philippines, 2022).

Research by Smith and Coleman (2014) sheds light on the various factors contributing to police misconduct. They highlight stress, corruption, and a culture of secrecy within police departments as significant drivers of unethical behavior among officers. Similarly, Brown (2016) emphasizes the critical role of police-community relations, arguing that a lack of trust fosters an environment where officers feel less accountable for their actions.

In the Philippine context, investigations conducted by the Commission on Human Rights Philippines (CHRP) have uncovered troubling instances of police involvement in activities such as police corruption and abuse of authority in terms of violence (2022). These findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive interventions aimed at addressing systemic issues within law enforcement agencies.

Despite these revelations at the national level, empirical research specifically focused on Kidapawan City and the lived experiences of its citizens regarding police crime remains scarce. Understanding the unique dynamics at play in this urban center is essential for developing targeted strategies to combat misconduct and rebuild trust between law enforcement and the community. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the prevalence, nature, and impact of police trust and crime reporting behavior in Kidapawan City, with the ultimate goal of informing policy and practice to promote accountability, transparency, and justice within the local law enforcement system.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational design, a quantitative approach in which two quantitative variables were analyzed within the same group of respondents to determine whether a relationship existed between them (Creswell, 2002). Additionally, a descriptive correlation study design was used to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This descriptive method, often referred to as "fact-gathering" or "information gathering," involved systematically interpreting data to define phenomena more comprehensively (W. Fox and M.S. Bayat, 2007). The goal was not only data collection but also to gain deeper insight into existing challenges or issues by describing the situation more comprehensively than ever before with this method. Ultimately, the researchers chose a survey research strategy because it effectively addressed their study questions and objectives.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Region XII also known as SOCCSKSARGEN, which is located in the central-southern part of the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. The region is composed of four provinces namely; South Cotabato, Cotabato (North Cotabato), Sultan

Kudarat, Sarangani, and one highly urbanized city which is the General Santos city. The South Cotabato is located in the southern part of the Philippines on the island of Mindanao. It is bordered by Sultan Kudarat Province to the north and northwest, Sarangani province to the south, and Davao del Sur Province to the east. While North Cotabato is situated in the heart of Mindanao. It is bordered by Maguindanao province to the north, Davao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat provinces to the east, and South Cotabato province to the south. The capital of North Cotabato is Kidapawan City, which is also considered the regional center of Cotabato Province. As of the most recent census data available, which is likely from the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2020 Census of Population and Housing, the total population of Region 12 (Soccsksargen) in the Philippines is approximately 5.7 million people. On the other hand, Kidapawan City, the area where the study was conducted is generally considered safe for visitors and residents.

Research Participants

The study used purposive sampling to select 60 respondents who are residents of Kidapawan City. This sampling approach ensures that the respondents are directly aligned with the study's objectives and can provide meaningful insights into the relationship between police trust and crime-reporting behavior.

The researcher determined a sample size of 60 for the study on Police Trust and Crime Reporting behavior using the Raosoft sample size calculator. With a confidence level of 95%, an assumed population size of 1,000, and a proportion (p) of 0.5, the calculator suggested a margin of error of approximately 12.65% to achieve this sample size.

Research Materials

The study utilized the questionnaires adapted from different studies. The instrument is divided into four parts which include socio-demographic

profiles, Police Trust, and Crime-Reporting Behavior. Socio-demographic profile survey. This tool is adapted from Kiptoo (2017). This survey consists of 5 parts gender, age, level of education, socioeconomic status, and year of living. Police Trust survey. This questionnaire is adapted from Kiptoo (2017) while the Procedural Justice questionnaire is adapted from Murphy et al (2014). Crime-reporting behavior survey. This survey is adapted from Schnebly (2008).

Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

Means- The mean, or "average," is a statistical measure of central tendency that indicates the midpoint of a data set. Values in a dataset are added together and then the amount is divided by the total number of values. The mean is a useful statistic for making broad comparisons across a variety of groups and dimensions of data.

Standard Deviation- The standard deviation is a statistical measure of how spread out the data is in a dataset. It is calculated by taking the square root of the variance, which is the average of the squared differences of each data point from the mean. A high standard deviation implies that the data is widely spread out, while a low standard deviation says that the data is neatly concentrated around the mean..

Pearson Moment Correlation In statistics, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation is commonly used to evaluate the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to 1, is calculated to quantify this relationship. A coefficient of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, while a coefficient of 1 signifies a perfect positive correlation. If the r value between two variables is 0, it suggests no association between them. In social sciences, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation is frequently employed to analyze the relationship between two variables.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers was undergo several steps. First, they was seek permission from the Offices of the School President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and Dean of College of Criminal Justice Education of Central Mindanao Colleges to conduct the study. Once permissions are granted, the researchers was personally administer the survey questionnaires to the respondents. The researchers assured the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. When the desired sample size was achieved, researchers organized the data obtained from the survey questionnaires for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Police Trust

Table 1 shows the level of police trust with the overall mean of 3.01 with the standard deviation of .453 and description of moderate.

Table 1
Level of Police Trust

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. The community have high level of honesty in the police in Kidapawan City.	3.950	.9464	High
2. The community have high trust in the police in Kidapawan City.	3.816	.9653	High
3. Building and maintaining community trust is the cornerstone of successful policing and law enforcement in Kidapawan City.	3.883	.9930	High
4. The integrity of the police dictates the level of community trust in Kidapawan City.	3.883	.9930	High
5. Police share responsibility and decision-making with community improve the performance of community policing project in Kidapawan City.	3.950	1.032	High

6. Police try to be fair when making decisions	3.644	1.062	High
7. Police give people the opportunity to express their views before decisions are made	3.866	1.065	High
8. Police listen to people before making decisions	3.866	1.049	High
9. Police treat people with dignity and respect	3.950	.9987	High
10. Police are always polite when dealing with people	4.083	1.109	High

Overall Mean **3.01** **.453** **Moderate**

The results illustrate the community's perceptions of police trust in Kidapawan City, as shown in Table 1. The question "The community has a high level of honesty in the police" achieved a mean score of 3.95 Standard deviation = 0.946, categorized as "Agree," indicating that residents generally perceive the police as honest. Similarly, the question "Police treat people with dignity and respect" also garnered a mean score of 3.95 Standard deviation = 0.999, reflecting consistent agreement regarding the respectful conduct of police officers. Among the questions, "Police are always polite when dealing with people" recorded the highest mean score of 4.08 Standard deviation = 1.109, demonstrating that politeness is a strongly evident trait of the police in the community. On the other hand, the question "Police try to be fair when making decisions" received the lowest mean score of 3.64 Standard deviation = 1.063, though still interpreted as "Agree," suggesting a potential area for improvement in ensuring fairness during decision-making processes. Other questions, such as "The community has high trust in the police" mean = 3.82, Standard deviation = 0.965 and "Building and maintaining community trust is the cornerstone of successful policing" mean = 3.88, Standard deviation = 0.993, also fall under the "Agree" category. This suggests a positive but not exceedingly strong level of trust, emphasizing the importance of sustained efforts to enhance community-police relationships. Furthermore, the questions "Police give people the opportunity to express their views before decisions are made" and "Police

"listen to people before making decisions" both scored a mean of 3.87 Standard deviation = 1.065 and 1.049, respectively, reflecting agreement but also highlighting opportunities to further engage the community in participatory decision-making. The overall mean score is 3.011 Standard deviation = 0.454, categorized as "Moderate," indicating that while the community generally agrees on the positive traits of the police, trust levels could be further strengthened through initiatives focusing on fairness, community engagement, and consistent integrity in policing practices. These findings underscore the necessity of continuous collaboration and transparency to foster deeper and more resilient community trust in the police force

Level of Crime-Reporting Behavior

Table 2 shows the level of Crime-Reporting Behavior with the overall mean of 4.32 with the standard deviation of .666 and description of High

Table 2

Level of Crime-Reporting Behavior

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. Would you report to the police if you witnessed an attempted murder?	4.216	1.059	High
2. Would you report to the police if you witness an attempted rape?	4.333	.9857	High
3. Would you report to the police if you witness an attempted kidnapping?	4.416	.8885	High
4. Would you report to the police if you witness an attempt to burn down someone's property (Arson)?	4.266	.8609	High
5. Would you report to the police if you witness a robbery?	4.350	.8197	High

6.	Would you report to the police if you witness an attempted burglary (illegal entry or an attempt breaking and entering into someone's property/house)?	4.283	.8252	High
7.	Would you report to the police if you witness a motor vehicle theft or attempted theft?	4.366	.8823	High
8.	Would you report to the police if you witness vandalism (e.g. hit and run, window smashing, etc.)?	4.266	.7782	Agree
9.	Would you report to the police if you witness assaults (face-to-face threat or assault with or without a weapon)?	4.266	.8609	Agree
10.	Would you report to the police if you witness a physical threat made to someone you know?	4.316	.9111	Agree
11.	Would you report to the police if you witness a physical threat made to someone you do not know?	4.433	.8309	Agree
12.	Would you report to the police if you witness a drug sale?	4.316	.8535	Agree
13.	Would you report to the police if you witness someone painting graffiti on the walls of a public/or private building?	4.183	.9476	Agree
14.	Would you report to the police if you witness someone illegally dumping oil on the ground (polluting the environment)?	4.366	.8823	Agree

15. Would you report to the police if you witness someone using illicit drugs? 4.450 .9099 Agree

Overall Mean	4.322	.6662	High Level of Crime-Reporting Behavior
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The question "Would you report to the police if you witness someone using illicit drugs?" recorded the highest mean score of 4.45 Standard deviation = 0.910, categorized as "Agree," indicating a strong likelihood of reporting such incidents. This is closely followed by the question "Would you report to the police if you witness a physical threat made to someone you do not know?", with a mean score of 4.43 Standard deviation = 0.831, reflecting similar levels of agreement. Conversely, the lowest mean score was observed for the question "Would you report to the police if you witness someone painting graffiti on the walls of a public or private building?" at 4.18 Standard deviation = 0.948. Although still categorized as "Agree," this indicates relatively lower motivation to report acts of vandalism compared to other types of crime. Other notable questions include "Would you report to the police if you witness an attempted kidnapping?" with a mean of 4.42 Standard deviation = 0.889 and "Would you report to the police if you witness someone illegally dumping oil on the ground (polluting the environment)?" at 4.37 Standard deviation = 0.882. These results indicate strong agreement and a high likelihood of reporting more severe and impactful crimes. The overall mean score across all questions is 4.32 Standard deviation = 0.666, which falls under the interpretation of a "High Level of Crime-Reporting Behavior." This suggests that the community is highly inclined to report various types of crimes to the authorities. However, the variation in mean scores across different questions implies that certain crimes, particularly environmental offenses and acts of vandalism, may require additional awareness campaigns or community engagement to encourage reporting. These findings underscore the community's proactive stance toward crime prevention and the need to sustain and enhance this behavior through trust-building initiatives and responsive law enforcement practices.

Significant Relationship between Police Trust and Crime-Reporting Behavior

Based on the results below, there is a significant relationship between Police Trust and Crime-Reporting Behavior among the purposively selected citizens of Kidapawan City. The data shows that the Pearson R correlation is 3.23, with a p-value of .000, which is lower than the 0.05 significance level (2-tailed), indicating that the two variables are significantly related.

Relationship between the Variables

Table 3 shows the level of relationship between police trust and Crime-Reporting behavior with the P value of 3.23 with the R value of .000 it denotes us significant.

Correlations

Table 3. Relationship between Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	Crime-Reporting Remarks	R.	P value
Police Trust		.000	3.23 Significant

Tyler, T. R. (2014) explores the role of trust and legitimacy in encouraging cooperation with law enforcement, including reporting crimes. His work emphasizes the importance of procedural justice in fostering trust in police institutions. Moreover, Sherman, L. W. (2014) discusses the impact of community trust on police effectiveness. He examines how trust-building initiatives lead to increased community cooperation, including higher rates of crime reporting.

CONCLUSION

In this section, conclusions are derived based on the perceptions obtained from the study's findings.

1. The study revealed that the level of police trust among the purposively selected citizens of Kidapawan City is moderate, with an overall mean score of 3.01. While respondents generally agree that the police exhibit traits such as honesty, politeness, and respect, there remains room for improvement in areas like fairness in decision-making and participatory community engagement. On the other hand, the level of crime-reporting behavior is high, with a mean score of 4.32. Respondents demonstrated a strong willingness to report various crimes, especially severe offenses such as drug-related crimes, physical threats, and attempted kidnapping.
2. Furthermore, the findings establish a significant positive relationship between police trust and crime-reporting behavior, as evidenced by a Pearson R correlation of 0.323 and a p-value of .000. This indicates that higher levels of trust in the police positively influence the likelihood of citizens reporting crimes. These results align with prior studies, which emphasize the pivotal role of police trust in fostering public engagement. For instance, Bradford and Jackson (2010) highlighted that trust in the police is a critical determinant of the public's willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, including crime reporting.
3. Similarly, Tyler (2006) observed that procedural fairness and respectful treatment by police significantly enhance trust, encouraging citizens to actively participate in crime prevention and reporting. A study by Murphy, Hinds, and Fleming (2008) further corroborates these findings, revealing that trust in police legitimacy fosters a sense of obligation among citizens to assist law enforcement in maintaining social order. These related studies underscore the importance of strengthening police-community relationships to improve public trust and promote proactive crime-reporting behavior.

Recommendations

Strengthening police-community relations and enhancing crime-reporting behavior are essential steps toward fostering trust and ensuring public safety in Kidapawan City.

1. To strengthen police-community relations, it is recommended to enhance transparency and accountability in law enforcement, fostering deeper trust within the community. Conducting regular community dialogues and forums can engage residents in participatory decision-making and address concerns related to fairness and integrity. Improving fairness in decision-making is also crucial, which can be achieved by providing police officers with advanced training on unbiased decision-making and conflict resolution, ensuring equitable treatment for all citizens.
2. Promoting crime-reporting awareness is another vital step. Awareness campaigns should be initiated to encourage the reporting of less severe crimes, such as vandalism and environmental offenses, which currently show relatively lower reporting rates. Leveraging the positive relationship between trust and crime reporting is equally important. This can be achieved by implementing initiatives such as community policing projects and reward systems that recognize citizens' proactive efforts in crime prevention.
3. Finally, continuous assessment of police trust and crime-reporting behavior is necessary. Regular monitoring and evaluation through surveys and feedback mechanisms will help ensure the effectiveness of these interventions and maintain high levels of community engagement. By addressing these areas, law enforcement agencies can foster stronger trust, encourage comprehensive crime reporting, and promote safer communities in Kidapawan City.

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