

Linking Trust and Competence to Community Perceptions of Law Enforcement in Calbayog

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Abstract

This research investigates how community confidence intersects with perceived police efficacy within Calbayog City. To achieve this, we gathered survey responses from 150 established residents spanning three primary districts, employing a quantitative, descriptive-comparative methodology. Results demonstrate a distinct, positive statistical link tying overall citizen trust directly to how competent they believe local law enforcement to be. Although the surveyed population expressed strong confidence in active policing and procedural fairness, they highlighted notable deficiencies regarding police neutrality and preventative crime measures. Furthermore, demographic breakdowns reveal a clear divide: mid-aged adults (31 to 40 years old) and established residents (6 to 15 years) maintain substantially better views of the police compared to younger demographics, older seniors, or newly relocated individuals. Ultimately, while fundamental satisfaction with the institution remains strong, it relies heavily on the fair administration of justice. To strengthen the bond between the community and the police force, agencies must implement clear accountability protocols and highly visible public outreach initiatives, specifically targeting the identified weaknesses in preventative safety and impartial conduct..

Keywords : Community Confidence, Police Efficacy, Fair Policing, Citizen-Law Enforcement Dynamics, Public Safety.

Introduction

The effectiveness and legitimacy of law enforcement agencies are deeply rooted in the institutional satisfaction and public trust they command. When civilians have confidence in local policing, it fosters community cooperation, reduces crime-related anxieties, and builds collective efficacy (Brien & Tyler, 2020; Galvez, 2020; Gonzales, 2020; Kochel & Weisburd, 2019). On a global scale, how the public perceives the criminal justice system is strongly shaped by their direct encounters with officers, their exposure to crime, and their belief in the fairness of police procedures (Berthelot, McNeal, & Baldwin, 2018; Prinsloo, 2019; Regents of the University of Michigan, 2020; Singer et al., 2019; Streefkerk, 2018). Furthermore, established police legitimacy is a cornerstone of community policing frameworks, serving the dual purpose of lowering localized crime rates and boosting the morale of the officers themselves (Crowl, 2017; Trochim, 2021; University of Minnesota, 2020).

A complex array of factors drives this community confidence, including how officers interact with the public, their operational success, and their adherence to normative ethical standards (Lim & Kwak, 2022; Woollacott, 2019; Wu et al., 2018). Research consistently ties institutional confidence directly to the actual capabilities and actions of the police force (Boateng, 2017; Boateng, 2018), making the ongoing assessment of officer effectiveness a vital academic pursuit (Mendoza et al., 2020). Within the local context, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is guided by the Philippine National Police Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998 (Republic Act

8551). This legislation explicitly mandates the PNP to work collaboratively with citizens to ensure public safety, deter criminal activity, and strictly uphold the law.

As a rapidly expanding commercial center in the Eastern Visayas, the first-class municipality of Calbayog City requires a highly effective police presence to sustain order across its varied neighborhoods (Worldometer, 2020). However, despite the clear directives set for the PNP, there is a lack of empirical research examining how specific demographic characteristics—such as gender, age, length of residency, and educational background—shape local attitudes toward law enforcement. Creating a foundational understanding of these community dynamics is essential for translating theoretical community policing models into tangible public approval.

To bridge this localized knowledge gap, this research evaluates the intersection of community confidence and perceived police efficacy among Calbayog City Police personnel. The investigation measures public trust by analyzing indicators such as procedural fairness, perceived neutrality, overall trustworthiness, and the quality of citizen-police interactions. Simultaneously, it gauges institutional satisfaction by assessing police competence in areas like proactive crime prevention, law enforcement, and the general maintenance of public safety. Finally, the study examines how various demographic profiles influence these community assessments and explores the broader statistical relationship between overall community confidence and the perceived competence of local law enforcement.

Methods

Research Design and Setting

This investigation applied a quantitative, descriptive-comparative methodology to evaluate how community confidence shapes perceived police efficacy. The geographic focus was Calbayog City—a first-class component municipality located in Samar, Philippines. The research scope covered the city's three primary districts, namely Oquendo, Tinambacan, and Calbayog. To guarantee a comprehensive evaluation of citizen-law enforcement dynamics, the researchers purposively chose five barangays within each district. Selection depended on two specific criteria, which were a dense civilian population and a highly visible presence of Philippine National Police (PNP) officers.

Participants and Sampling

The study focused on local residents, specifically targeting individuals who had lived in their respective communities for at least one year. This residency requirement ensured that the participants held sufficient firsthand experience regarding the actions of local law enforcement. This residency requirement ensured that the participants held substantial firsthand experience regarding the actions of local law enforcement. By combining quota and cluster sampling techniques across the 15 designated barangays, researchers collected data from exactly 10 individuals per area. This strategy successfully yielded the target demographic of 150 established residents.

Data Collection and Instrument

To gather information, the research team designed and distributed a self-administered survey. Before actual deployment, two separate experts in the fields of criminology and law enforcement validated the content of this tool. The survey relied on a four-point Likert scale to evaluate two core frameworks. First, it measured community confidence through the dimensions of procedural fairness, perceived neutrality, overall trustworthiness, and the quality of police-community interactions. Second, it assessed institutional satisfaction by grading police capabilities in areas such as active crime prevention, law enforcement, internal security, and general public safety maintenance. Before handing out the surveys, the researchers secured official approval from local Barangay Chairpersons and the respective Chiefs of Police. The team also interacted face-to-face with the participants to clarify the goals of the study and give proper survey instructions.

Ethical Considerations

The execution of this research strictly followed established ethical guidelines. Every participant received a comprehensive briefing regarding the scope and purpose of the study. Researchers secured written informed consent prior to any data gathering, explicitly stating that involvement was completely voluntary and that individuals could exit the study at any moment without facing negative consequences. Furthermore, the researchers prioritized participant safety by guaranteeing absolute anonymity and confidentiality during both the collection and analytical phases; absolutely no identifiable personal details were documented or published.

Data Analysis

All gathered quantitative information underwent processing via standardized statistical programs. The baseline levels of institutional satisfaction and community confidence, alongside demographic details, were summarized utilizing descriptive statistics such as standard deviations, weighted means, percentages, and frequencies. To

examine how demographic backgrounds influenced participant responses, the study relied on inferential statistical tools. Specifically, independent samples t-tests compared variations based on gender, whereas a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) evaluated distinct differences concerning educational background, age brackets, and residency duration. Lastly, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation measured the exact statistical relationship and directionality between overall community confidence and perceived police efficacy.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 150 established residents from the designated Calbayog City neighborhoods participated in this research. According to the demographic breakdown presented in Table 1, men made up a slight majority of the sample (54.7%), while individuals spanning the ages of 31 to 50 constituted the largest generational bracket (56.0%). Regarding academic backgrounds, a substantial segment of the participants had completed either undergraduate degree programs (42.7%) or advanced post-graduate studies (34.7%). Furthermore, when analyzing residency duration, most individuals reported living in their local communities for a period ranging between 6 and 15 years (62.0%).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Participants (N = 150)

Participant Variable	Grouping Category	Number (n)	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	82	54.7
	Female	68	45.3
Age Bracket	20–30	29	19.3
	31–40	42	28.0
	41–50	42	28.0
	51 and above	37	24.7
Educational Background	High School	34	22.7
	College	64	42.7
	Post-graduate	52	34.7
Length of Residency	1–5	35	23.3
	6–10	48	32.0
	11–15	45	30.0
	16 and above	22	14.7

Baseline Levels of Community Confidence and Perceived Police Efficacy

Descriptive statistics outlining the measured variables are displayed in Table 2. Generally, the surveyed population demonstrated strong community confidence toward local law enforcement. Participants awarded the highest ratings to procedural fairness ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.37$), highlighting the officers' unbiased judgments and respectful interactions with civilians. On the other hand, perceived neutrality garnered the lowest comparative score within the confidence metrics ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.42$).

When evaluating perceived police efficacy, the citizens gave their highest approval to active law enforcement ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.36$) and the general preservation of public order ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.35$). However, satisfaction ratings dropped noticeably regarding the force's ability to execute preventative crime measures and proactive security tactics ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.43$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Community Confidence and Perceived Police Efficacy

Construct Evaluated	Specific Dimension	Mean Score	SD	Result Interpretation
Community Confidence	Procedural Fairness	3.16	0.37	Confident
	Trustworthiness	3.15	0.33	Confident
	Positive Police-Civilian Interactions	3.10	0.35	Confident
	Perceived Neutrality	3.09	0.42	Confident
Perceived Efficacy	Active Law Enforcement	3.13	0.36	Satisfied
	Preserving Peace and Order	3.12	0.35	Satisfied
	Ensuring Public Safety	3.04	0.39	Satisfied
	Preventative Crime Measures	2.96	0.43	Satisfied

(Note: 1.00-1.50 = Lacking Confidence/Dissatisfied; 1.51-2.50 = Slightly Confident/Satisfied; 2.51-3.50 = Confident/Satisfied; 3.51-4.00 = Highly Confident/Highly Satisfied)

Demographic Differences in Perceptions

To identify meaningful variations among different participant backgrounds, researchers utilized one-way ANOVAs and independent samples t-tests, with results summarized in Table 3. Gender presented notable variations exclusively within efficacy evaluations; male residents showed greater approval of proactive crime deterrence ($p = .004$), whereas female participants favored broad public safety initiatives ($p = .014$). Furthermore, an individual's age played a crucial role in shaping both overall community confidence ($p = .002$) and general perceived police efficacy ($p = .016$). Specifically, citizens aged 31 to 40 consistently provided the most favorable feedback. Academic background demonstrated a more limited influence, causing notable divides only in evaluations of general trustworthiness ($p = .011$) and order preservation ($p = .000$). In these specific areas, individuals with high school diplomas gave better ratings than those holding advanced degrees. Lastly, the length of time a person had lived in the area strongly dictated their overall confidence ($p = .001$) and perceived efficacy ($p = .000$). Established residents who had been in the community for 6 to 15 years offered significantly higher evaluations compared to those who had relocated within the past five years.

Table 3. Summary of Significant Demographic Variations in Confidence and Efficacy

Evaluated Variable	Demographic Factor	Test Statistic	p-value	Statistical Finding
Confidence: Perceived Neutrality	Age Bracket	F = 3.115	.027*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 7.821	.000*	Significant Difference
Confidence: Trustworthiness	Educational Background	F = 4.885	.011*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 2.932	.034*	Significant Difference

Evaluated Variable	Demographic Factor	Test Statistic	p-value	Statistical Finding
Confidence: Procedural Fairness	Age Bracket	F = 6.025	.001*	Significant Difference
Overall Confidence Community	Age Bracket	F = 5.542	.002*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 5.015	.001*	Significant Difference
Efficacy: Active Law Enforcement	Age Bracket	F = 6.975	.000*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 3.140	.026*	Significant Difference
Efficacy: Preventative Crime Measures	Gender	t = 8.950	.004*	Significant Difference
	Age Bracket	F = 4.765	.004*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 9.495	.000*	Significant Difference
Efficacy: Preserving Peace and Order	Educational Background	F = 11.512	.000*	Significant Difference
Efficacy: Ensuring Public Safety	Gender	t = 6.045	.014*	Significant Difference
	Age Bracket	F = 5.490	.001*	Significant Difference
Overall Perceived Efficacy	Age Bracket	F = 3.565	.016*	Significant Difference
	Length of Residency	F = 9.264	.000*	Significant Difference

Note: The table displays only those relationships demonstrating statistical significance ($p < .05$). Variables lacking significance are excluded from this summary.

Relationship Between Community Confidence and Perceived Police Efficacy

Through the application of a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the analysis uncovered a weak but statistically significant positive correlation connecting general community confidence to perceived police efficacy ($r = .178$, $p = .030$). Table 4 breaks down these connections further, highlighting significant interactions between specific sub-categories. For instance, strong belief in perceived neutrality directly corresponded to higher approval of preventative crime measures ($r = .182$, $p = .027$). Additionally, high ratings in procedural fairness ($r = .169$, $p = .038$) and positive citizen-police interactions ($r = .202$, $p = .013$) demonstrated strong statistical ties to public approval regarding active law enforcement.

Table 4. Significant Pearson Correlations Between Confidence and Efficacy Dimensions

Community Confidence Dimension	Police Efficacy Dimension	Pearson r	p-value	Correlation Status
Perceived Neutrality	Preventative Crime Measures	.182*	.027	Significant Correlation
Procedural Fairness	Active Law Enforcement	.169*	.038	Significant Correlation
Positive Police-Civilian Interactions	Active Law Enforcement	.202*	.013	Significant Correlation
Overall Community Confidence	Overall Perceived Efficacy	.178*	.030	Significant Correlation

Discussion

The central aim of this research was to evaluate the intersection of community confidence and perceived police efficacy concerning local law enforcement in Calbayog City. As demonstrated by the analytical outcomes, a modest but statistically significant positive link exists between broad community confidence and public approval of police capabilities. This connection validates the theoretical standpoint that how civilians view law enforcement legitimacy is inextricably tied to the actual operational success of the police.

Among all evaluated metrics, participants awarded the highest confidence ratings to the officers' demonstration of procedural fairness. The results indicate a substantial surge in perceived police efficacy whenever officers display impartial decision-making and interact respectfully with civilians. These observations strongly resonate with established policing frameworks, which suggest that the equitable treatment of citizens often plays a larger role in building institutional legitimacy than the final resolution of specific police interactions (Prinsloo, 2019). Additionally, when civilians strongly believe in this procedural fairness, it fosters collective collaboration, thereby equipping law enforcement with the necessary community backing to successfully preserve public order (Brien & Tyler, 2020).

On the other hand, the surveyed population identified preventative crime measures and perceived neutrality as noticeable vulnerabilities. The distinct statistical tie between an individual's confidence in impartial policing and their approval of crime deterrence reveals a vital societal mechanism. Specifically, when community members detect bias or uneven law enforcement, their faith in the police's capacity to safeguard the public sharply declines. These findings reinforce previous scholarly arguments that in evolving socio-political landscapes, the foundation of institutional confidence rests primarily on tangible operational results and the transparent, fair administration of the law (Boateng, 2017; Boateng, 2018; Lim & Kwak, 2022).

The observed demographic differences provide deeper insight into the multifaceted dynamics between law enforcement and the civilian population. Assessments of confidence and efficacy varied considerably across different groups. For example, individuals in the 31 to 40 age bracket and those with a residency duration of 6 to 15 years provided substantially better ratings than individuals holding advanced post-graduate degrees or those who had lived in the area for fewer than five years. Such divergences are likely the result of differing histories of criminal victimization and distinct personal encounters with police agencies (Berthelot, McNeal, & Baldwin, 2018; Singer et al., 2019). Because recent transplants lack an established historical rapport with local officers, generating institutional confidence within this demographic will likely necessitate intentional, positive police-civilian interactions.

Limitations

Although this research establishes an important foundational understanding of civilian-law enforcement dynamics within Calbayog City, several constraints must be acknowledged. First, the descriptive and cross-sectional design only records data at a single temporal point, making it impossible to establish direct cause-and-effect relationships between shifting demographic factors and community confidence. Additionally, the utilization of self-administered surveys naturally invites the possibility of subjective perception biases. Lastly, given that the Philippine National Police functions across highly diverse geographic and socio-cultural environments, the localized patterns observed in Calbayog City might not accurately reflect the broader realities of the national policing system (Mendoza et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In Calbayog City, community confidence and perceived police efficacy are generally strong, driven primarily by successful active law enforcement and a steadfast commitment to procedural fairness. Nevertheless, maintaining and improving this public approval demands immediate attention to the identified deficiencies surrounding preventative crime measures and perceived neutrality.

To further boost perceived police efficacy, local law enforcement must implement highly visible and proactive outreach initiatives. These efforts should specifically focus on newly relocated individuals and the demographic brackets that reported reduced confidence levels. By blending community-driven partnerships with localized hot-spot interventions, the police can effectively suppress criminal activity while simultaneously enhancing collective civilian empowerment (Kochel & Weisburd, 2019). Integrating formal community policing structures is also crucial, as this approach diminishes public anxiety regarding crime, solidifies the legitimacy of the force, and boosts the occupational morale of the officers involved (Crowl, 2017). Lastly, local authorities must create clear, accessible grievance procedures and standardize their operational protocols. Addressing public apprehensions regarding bias in this manner will guarantee that Calbayog City residents continually view their police force as thoroughly impartial and highly capable.

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