Police Performance in the Second District of Eastern Samar: A Quantitative Study of Filipino Youth Perceptions and Social Media Use

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ABSTRACT:
Government restrictions during the pandemic required police officers to assume the dual role of first responders and enforcers of newly established public safety measures. The absence of clearly defined pandemic-specific policing protocols placed officers in situations that demanded difficult enforcement decisions. Securing compliance through fear of punishment runs counter to the principles of community policing and risks weakening credibility and police–community relationships, especially among the youth. During this period, social media became the primary channel for public information. Consequently, police agencies utilized digital platforms both to support enforcement efforts and to strengthen public trust and legitimacy. This study investigated youth perceptions of the Philippine National Police (PNP) reform initiatives in the Second District of Eastern Samar and examined the relationship between public perceptions of police performance and youth social media use as a basis for policy formulation. A cross-sectional research design was employed. The 47-item survey instrument, adapted from Maslov (2017), Johnson (2019), and Nadal (2015), measured perceptions of police performance, public trust, legitimacy, police–citizen relations, and involvement in corruption. The instrument underwent validation using Cronbach's Alpha .94 and demonstrated excellent reliability. The respondents were youth aged 18–24 residing in the Second District of Eastern Samar. Using convenience sampling and the G-power sample size calculator, a sample of 146 respondents was determined from a population of 513,973 at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Data were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation to determine relationships among variables. Results revealed a significant association between public perception and police performance. Social media use was also found to influence public perception and evaluations of police performance. Findings indicate that youth perceptions of the police were generally positive, reflecting trust, favorable relations, and recognition of legitimacy, while views on police corruption remained neutral. The study suggests that youth perceptions are shaped by personal encounters and exposure to social media content. Positive portrayals of police on social media may enhance trust and legitimacy, whereas negative coverage may diminish public confidence. The study recommends the

development of policies guiding police use of social media to strengthen community engagement and participation.

Keywords: police perception, youth, social media, police performance

Introduction

Background of the Study

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (2020) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and urged countries to take immediate and forceful action. By late April, millions of infections and deaths had been recorded worldwide (Worldometers, 2020), and lockdown measures affected a substantial portion of the global population (Bucholz, 2020). Warran et al. (2020) reported that these restrictions limited movement and social interaction on an unprecedented scale. Roche (2020) observed that government responses during the first wave of the pandemic were influenced not only by epidemiological conditions but also by political culture and the strength of the rule of law.

As governments-imposed restrictions on social activity, police officers were required to act as first responders while enforcing public health regulations. Although police regularly assist during emergencies, pandemic policing presented unique challenges. Cave and Dahir (2020) noted that governments struggled to define enforcement roles while citizens were uncertain about expectations under rapidly changing rules. Farrow (2020) explained that the absence of pandemic-specific policing guidance complicated enforcement. Jennings and Perez (2020) emphasized that officers were placed in unfamiliar enforcement situations. White and Fradella (2020) further observed that unclear directives required officers to exercise discretion in implementing new policies. Cave and Dahir (2020) reported that officers were often compelled to make difficult and controversial enforcement decisions. Enforcement strategies grounded in fear of punishment risk undermining police legitimacy, whereas fair and procedurally just enforcement promotes voluntary compliance and strengthens public trust (Stott et al., 2020).

During the pandemic, social media became a primary platform for communication and information dissemination. Police agencies increasingly relied on digital platforms to share safety information, counter misinformation, and promote transparency. The widespread use of social media has transformed communication and information sharing (Statista Research Department, 2021). Hockin (2017) found that youth are among the most active social media users and often form perceptions of policing through online content even with limited direct contact.

Research on police perceptions has traditionally focused on adults. Geistman and Smith (2007) observed that youth perspectives remain underrepresented in policing studies. O'Connor (2009) noted that young people tend to hold less favorable views of police compared with adults. Stewart, Morris, and Weir (2014) emphasized that this gap limits understanding of youth–police relationships. Adolescence is a critical period in the formation of attitudes toward law enforcement (Hinds, 2009). Hurst (2000) explained that perceptions formed during adolescence may persist into adulthood. Chow (2011) found that negative perceptions of police reduce cooperation and trust and may increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior.

Indirect encounters also shape attitudes toward police. Murphy, Hinds, and Fleming (2008) emphasized that cooperative policing depends on positive public perceptions. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) explained that legitimacy influences public willingness to comply with the law. Tyler and Fagan (2008) found that negative perceptions weaken police effectiveness. Schuck et al. (2008) identified public trust as the cornerstone of police cooperation.

Technology and social media offer opportunities to improve policing practices and strengthen community engagement when guided by clear policies. Social media platforms enable law

enforcement agencies to communicate with the public, share information, and improve police–community relations.

Despite increasing scholarship on police legitimacy and media influence, limited research in the Philippine context has examined youth perceptions of police and the role of social media during the pandemic, when direct interactions were reduced and information was largely consumed online. Additionally, indirect encounters with police through digital media remain insufficiently examined despite their potential influence on youth attitudes.

The Second District of Eastern Samar was selected as the study locale because it represents a predominantly rural provincial setting where access to police services, patterns of community interaction, and reliance on social media for information differ from those in highly urbanized areas. The district experienced pandemic enforcement measures similar to other provincial communities, making it an appropriate setting for examining youth perceptions in a localized context. Findings from this setting can guide community policing strategies and policy development tailored to provincial communities.

Understanding youth perceptions and the influence of social media is essential for strengthening police legitimacy, enhancing community engagement, and promoting cooperative relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Statement of the Problem

This research paper determined the relationship between public perceptions and social media use of the Filipino youth to police performance as a basis for policy formulation. This study specifically examined the:

1. What is the significant relationship of police performance based on the study results using the following public perceptions of the Filipino youth in Selected Municipalities in the Second District of Eastern Samar, in terms of?
   a. Public trust;
   b. Police-citizen relations;
   c. Police legitimacy; and
   d. Police involvement in Corruption?
2. What is the significant correlation of social media to police performance based on the perception of Filipino youths in Selected Municipalities in the Second District of Eastern Samar, in terms of:
   a. Public trust;
   b. Police-citizen relations;
   c. Police legitimacy; and
   d. Police involvement in Corruption?

What is policy can be drawn from the study results to ensure that the Filipino youth would restore and sustain its trust in the police as protector of the country, especially during this Covid 19 Pandemic?

Significance of the study

The study will be very significant for the following:

Communities in Eastern Samar. The study's findings will enable the people of Eastern Samar to communicate better and offer suggestions for programs they believe need to be improved. The study will highlight the difficulties with Police Community Relations initiatives. It will show how the public feels about the program and provide advice to the authorities on how to handle such situations.

Local Government of Eastern Samar. The study's findings will assist Tarlac's local government in determining its constituents' needs. The LGU of Eastern Samar will be able to recognize the urgent problems and difficulties that the area's marginalized population is facing. They will be better able to serve and provide services as a result.

Philippine National Police (PNP). The study's findings will assist the Philippine National Police (PNP) in determining the potential causes of some programs' lower efficacy compared to those of others and other ways in which they might be able to enhance the current programs. The outcome will assist them in improving their strategy to better serve the community they are responsible for and even in developing new programs to address other urgent issues.

Future Researchers. The study's findings will be used as a guide and a point of reference by our future researchers for their subsequent research projects. Future research that will be beneficial to the following generation will benefit from better treatment, analysis, and diagnosis.

Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on determining the community's overall satisfaction and perceptions of the Philippine National Police (PNP) transformation efforts in selected municipalities in the Second District of Eastern Samar. Although police records indicate positive outcomes in crime solution and crime prevention, assessing public perception is essential to maintaining community harmony and encouraging citizen participation. Respondents evaluated police performance, capability, and services through an opinion-based survey.

The study primarily examines two core police functions, crime solution and crime prevention, while also considering broader indicators of community trust and confidence in police personnel. Because effective community policing relies on public cooperation and support, community trust and confidence remain essential. While the PNP conducts internal public surveys, this study provides additional insight into how police functions influence community experiences.

This study is limited to selected municipalities in Eastern Samar and to respondents' perceptions gathered through a survey instrument. It does not measure actual crime rates or operational performance beyond the respondents' evaluations. Findings are therefore confined to the perceptions of participants and may not represent all communities in the province.

Related Literature

The Police–Community Interaction Survey (PCIS) was developed to measure public satisfaction and relationships with local police at both organizational and individual levels. It serves as a diagnostic and accountability tool that allows communities to evaluate the fairness and quality of police services while guiding organizational improvements. When used effectively, survey results can enhance police–community interactions, strengthen public trust, reduce conflict, and increase cooperation.

Community engagement is a key factor in shaping public perceptions of law enforcement. Lockey et al. (2019) found that effective engagement strengthens police–community relationships and improves public perception. Lum et al. (2016) emphasized that community feedback enables police agencies to refine services and respond to local needs. In recent years, social media has become an essential communication platform for law enforcement. Its interactive features support transparency, information sharing, crime prevention, and community outreach, making it a valuable tool for strengthening police–community relations.

Police effectiveness and fairness play a central role in shaping public perceptions of legitimacy. Van Damme et al. (2013a) found that effective police performance influences perceptions of procedural justice, while Jackson and Bradford (2018) emphasized that fairness and effectiveness are closely linked to legitimacy. Public willingness to cooperate increases when citizens perceive police as trustworthy and acting with proper intentions (Jackson, 2018). Tyler and Fagan (2008) described cooperation as both individual assistance in crime-solving and collaborative partnerships between police and communities. Similarly, Van Damme et al. (2013b) highlighted the importance of joint problem-solving between police and citizens.

Trust and confidence are essential in fostering compliance and cooperation (Tsushima & Hamai, 2015). Tyler (1990) explained that perceived legitimacy encourages obedience to the law even in the absence of police presence. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) further noted that legitimacy strengthens public support for police policies. Community policing strategies contribute to legitimacy by strengthening informal community networks and relationships (Hawdon, Ryan, & Griffin, 2003). Cordner (1995) emphasized that non-crime-control

activities such as public assistance and order maintenance help build legitimacy. Despite evidence supporting community-oriented approaches, traditional policing methods continue to dominate practice (Mastrofski, Snipes, & Supina, 1996).

Citizen cooperation is essential for co-producing public safety, as police rely on citizens to report crimes and maintain informal social control (Tyler, 1990). Renauer (2007) found that both informal and formal social control influence fear of crime, while Tyler and Fagan (2012) noted that strong public support allows police to allocate resources more effectively.

In the Philippine context, policing reforms have emphasized improving organizational credibility and service delivery. The Philippine National Police (PNP), established in 1991, is mandated to maintain peace and order with community support. Public trust declined in the early 2000s due to corruption and operational issues, prompting the implementation of the PNP Integrated Transformation Program (2005) to enhance organizational capability, service delivery, and personnel welfare. This reform initiative evolved into the Performance Governance System and the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030, which aim to develop a competent, effective, and credible police service in partnership with the community. Efforts to strengthen Police Community Relations highlight the importance of public trust and community participation. Public confidence is essential for effective policing and encourages law compliance and cooperation (Public Safety Canada, 2004). Community involvement in peacekeeping initiatives demonstrates the role of citizen participation in maintaining peace and order. Structured public satisfaction surveys provide valuable feedback that guides policy improvements and strengthens police legitimacy.

Related Studies

Measuring public perception has become an essential component of modern policing because it provides insight into community satisfaction and police effectiveness. According to the study of Davis (2012), performance measurement functions as a powerful policy instrument that can influence police practices and organizational improvement. However, traditional indicators have limitations. Maguire (2003) argued that crime rates, arrests, and response times do not fully capture police performance. According to the study of Maguire (2004), more comprehensive evaluation methods such as community surveys, observational techniques, and independent assessments provide a broader understanding of police performance and public interaction.

Beyond measurement tools, research emphasizes the importance of efficiency and effectiveness in policing outcomes. According to the study of Drake and Simper (2001), police efficiency can be assessed through the relationship between resource utilization and service outputs. García-Sánchez (2009) explained that efficiency involves the optimal use of resources to achieve public safety outcomes. According to the study of Heaton (2010), effective policing contributes significantly to crime reduction and strategic resource allocation. Nevertheless, not all aspects of policing can be captured through numerical indicators. According to Fielding and Innes (2006), quantitative measures alone cannot fully represent policing outcomes, while Shilston (2008) emphasized the value of qualitative approaches in evaluating public confidence and service delivery. Scholars consistently identify legitimacy and trust as central to policing success. According to Tyler (1990), when police are perceived as legitimate, citizens are more likely to comply voluntarily with the law. According to the study of Sunshine and Tyler (2003), legitimacy strengthens public support for police policies and authority. Collier (2001) cautioned that excessive emphasis on performance targets may undermine human rights considerations, highlighting the need for balanced evaluation systems.

To address these concerns, police organizations have adopted performance management innovations. According to the study of Bratton and Malinowski (2008), CompStat improved accountability and crime reduction through data-driven decision-making. Moore (2003) described CompStat as a major administrative innovation in

policing. According to Moore and Braga (2003), performance measurement enhances both internal and external accountability, while Weisburd et al. (2003) found that data-driven systems support strategic policing practices and organizational reform.

In the Philippine context, policing reforms have focused on strengthening credibility and service delivery. The Philippine National Police (PNP) Integrated Transformation Program (2005) was implemented to enhance professionalism, operational capability, and public trust. This reform initiative later evolved into the Performance Governance System and the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030, which aim to develop a competent, effective, and credible police service in partnership with the community.

Ultimately, community trust and cooperation remain essential for effective policing. According to Public Safety Canada (2004), public confidence promotes compliance with the law and cooperation with authorities. Measuring public satisfaction and community perceptions therefore provides vital feedback that guides policy improvement, strengthens police legitimacy, and supports community-oriented policing.

Methodology

Research Design

This research adopted the quantitative-descriptive survey design. A descriptive study involves looking at data from a population at one specific point in time. The participants in the present study are selected based on particular variables of interest. The descriptive survey method examines the present circumstances and status of a particular event, a phenomenon on or, in this case, the perception of the youth of Selected Municipalities in Eastern Samar towards the local police and the factors that influence their public perception. The research data was gathered using a survey questionnaire which was prepared using Google forms. The same forms were sent to the respondents using social media such as Facebook, and their responses are automatically recorded in the Google form. The survey questionnaire is accompanied by informed consent, which must first be accomplished and acknowledged before the respondent can answer the questions.

Research Locale

The study was conducted on the selected Barangays within selected Municipalities in the Second District of Eastern Samar, which includes the Municipality of Balangiga, Giporlos, and MacArthur, Eastern Samar. These municipalities represent predominantly rural and coastal communities where dispersed populations and limited access to services influence community–police interaction. The locale was chosen because it reflects a typical provincial setting where social cohesion and community participation support peace and order. Residents often rely on direct engagement with local police units, making the area suitable for examining community satisfaction and perceptions of police performance. These municipalities have implemented police programs aligned with national reforms, providing an appropriate context for assessing public perceptions of police transformation efforts. The selected barangays offered varied community perspectives and allowed feasible data collection. Findings from this locale may guide community policing strategies applicable to similar provincial communities.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were composed of youth residents from selected municipalities in Eastern Samar. Specifically, the participants included individuals aged 18 to 24 who are living in the selected barangays of the Municipality of Balangiga, Giporlos, and MacArthur.

A total of 146 youth respondents participated in the study. Their responses provided the necessary data in assessing youth perceptions of police performance and community policing efforts in the selected municipalities.

Sampling Procedure

The study employed a convenience sampling technique to select respondents from selected barangays within the municipalities included in the Second District of Eastern Samar. This

method was used due to accessibility considerations and the need to obtain responses from individuals who met the study's specific criteria. The required sample size was determined using the G-Power online sample size calculator. Based on a youth population of 513,973, a confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error of 5%, a minimum sample size of 146 respondents was established. The respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) must be 18–24 years of age; (2) must be residents of the selected municipalities; and (3) must have had encounters with the police, such as reporting a crime, visiting a police station, or availing of police services. Individuals accused of crimes, suspects, and witnesses were excluded due to the sensitive nature of the information they may disclose.

Research instrument

The questionnaires were adapted from the previous study of Maslov (2017) [the performance of the police], Johnson (2019) [social media usage questionnaire], and Nadal (2015) [Perceptions of Police Scale. The respondents answered the 47-item survey about their perceptions of police performance, public trust, police legitimacy, police-citizen relation, and police involvement in Corruption. The respondent was asked to rate every item from the questionnaire, 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. The Perceptions of Police Survey (POPS) was included with five categories that will measure the perception of the youth towards the performance of their police and another two categories for social media usage and police performance. Participants will respond through a Likert scale wherein they were asked to rate on a scale of 1-5. A score of 1 being "I strongly disagree" and five indicating "I strongly agree." Sample questions include: "Police protect me," "Police are friendly," "Police treat people fairly," and "Police do not discriminate." Sample questions were written in positive form. The higher score were indicated their perception as favorable to the youth. At the same time, the lower scores were indicated as less favorable to the said .

The questionnaire can be answered for 10-15 minutes, depending on the pace of the respondent. The researcher guided the respondents if they had any questions about the survey before answering any of the questions in the survey; they should click the agree button to participate in the study after they had read in full the informed consent.

Data Gathering Procedure

The survey was administered through Google Forms, and the link was distributed via social media platforms, particularly Messenger. Respondents were recruited through referrals and by posting invitations in Facebook groups and pages within the selected municipalities in Eastern Samar, including online seller groups, youth organizations, and study groups where most members are young people. A screening question was included to determine whether participants had prior encounters with the police; only those who answered affirmatively and provided voluntary consent by clicking the agreement button were included in the study.

Convenience sampling was employed due to its practicality and suitability for large and geographically dispersed populations. To increase participation, respondents were encouraged to share the survey link with other qualified individuals. Participation was voluntary. Responses from individuals who did not provide informed consent, left required items unanswered, or withdrew participation were excluded from the study. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, and no personal identifiers such as names or addresses were collected. All data were used solely for research purposes, stored in a password-protected file accessible only to the researchers, and will be retained for one year after the completion of the study before permanent deletion.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were systematically organized, coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures to address the objectives of the study.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondents' perceptions of police performance, public trust, police legitimacy, police–citizen relations, corruption involvement, and social media use. The **weighted mean** was computed to determine the level of agreement of the respondents for each indicator.

A five-point Likert scale was utilized to measure respondents' perceptions. This scale is widely used in survey research to quantify attitudes and opinions. The computed mean scores were interpreted using the following scale:

- **4.21 – 5.00** – Strongly Agree
- **3.41 – 4.20** – Agree
- **2.61 – 3.40** – Neutral
- **1.81 – 2.60** – Disagree
- **1.00 – 1.80** – Strongly Disagree

To determine the relationship between youth perceptions of police performance and their social media use, the Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (rs) was employed. This nonparametric statistical test is appropriate for ordinal data and measures the strength and direction of association between two variables.

Correlation values range from –1.00 to +1.00, where:

- a positive coefficient indicates that as one variable increases, the other also increases;
- a negative coefficient indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases; and
- values closer to ±1 indicate stronger relationships, while values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships.

The strength of correlation was interpreted using the following guide:

- 0.00 – 0.19 – Very Weak
- 0.20 – 0.39 – Weak
- 0.40 – 0.59 – Moderate
- 0.60 – 0.79 – Strong
- 0.80 – 1.00 – Very Strong

All statistical analyses were conducted to determine the level of youth perceptions and to establish whether social media use significantly relates to their perceptions of police performance.

Ethical Considerations

The informed consent form was placed at the beginning of the survey questionnaire. It outlined the respondents' rights and responsibilities, including voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, potential benefits and risks, and the purpose of the study. Respondents were informed that they could contact the researchers via message or call for clarification or assistance in completing the survey. Because data collection was conducted online, written signatures were not required. Instead, participants indicated their consent by clicking an agreement button; those who declined participation were not included. Respondents completed the questionnaire in approximately 10–15 minutes, and no follow-up questions were required. Participants could withdraw at any time by notifying the researchers, and their responses were excluded from the study. Participation involved no known risks, and only minimal information, such as age and email address, was collected. No personal identifiers were gathered to ensure confidentiality. All data were used solely for research purposes. The study aimed to provide insights into youth perceptions of the police, particularly during the pandemic, to help improve policing practices, strengthen police–community relations, and enhance the use of social media for building public trust. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw without penalty. There were no tokens of appreciation provided and no conflicts of interest declared.

Research Findings and Discussion

Public Perception of the Police

Findings reveal that Filipino youth in the selected municipalities hold a positive perception of the police, with an overall mean of 3.91 (Agree). The highest ratings were given to police providing safety and being helpful, suggesting that respondents recognize the protective and service-oriented role of the police. The lowest rating,

although still within agreement, was fairness in treatment, indicating that perceptions of impartiality remain an area needing improvement. These findings support legitimacy theory, which asserts that when authorities are perceived as fair and trustworthy, citizens are more likely to cooperate and comply voluntarily (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). According to Tyler and Wakslak (2004), fairness, respectful treatment, and credibility are key factors influencing perceptions of legitimacy.

Public Trust in the Police

Public trust recorded an overall mean of 3.87 (Agree), indicating that respondents generally trust the police and feel safe in their presence. The highest rating was police ensuring public safety, reinforcing the perception of police as protectors. Research indicates that trust in police encourages law-abiding behavior and cooperation (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Procedural justice and respectful treatment promote public compliance and willingness to report crimes (Tyler & Jackson, 2014).

Police–Citizen Relations

Police–citizen relations obtained a mean of 3.93 (Agree), showing that youth perceive police as approachable and helpful. Adequate assistance received the highest rating, suggesting effective service delivery. Strong police–community relationships enhance cooperation and crime prevention efforts. Transparency, visibility, and engagement strengthen trust and reduce negative perceptions (Lum et al., 2016).

Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy yielded a mean of 3.79 (Agree). Respondents view police as responsible and fair, though transparency and equal justice received slightly lower ratings. According to Tyler (1990), legitimacy is built through fairness and procedural justice. When citizens perceive fairness, they are more likely to accept authority and cooperate.

Police Involvement in Corruption

Perceptions of corruption resulted in a mean of 3.30 (Neutral), indicating uncertainty regarding police integrity. This neutrality suggests neither strong trust nor strong suspicion.Corruption undermines public confidence and damages police legitimacy (Kutnjak Ivkovic, 2005). Public trust is strengthened when accountability and transparency mechanisms are visible. Overall results show favorable perceptions of police performance, particularly in safety provision and community relations. However, neutrality regarding corruption indicates a need for transparency and accountability measures.

Public Perception and Public Trust

A weak relationship was found between perception and trust (rs = -.139). This suggests that even if perceptions vary, trust may remain stable due to institutional reliance and necessity. Trust is influenced by broader social and institutional factors beyond perception alone (Goldsmith, 2003).

Public Perception and Police–Citizen Relations

A moderate relationship (rs = .400) indicates that positive perceptions enhance police-community relationships. Fair treatment and respectful encounters improve cooperation (Tyler, 2005).

Public Perception and Police Legitimacy

A weak relationship (rs = .359) suggests that legitimacy is influenced by multiple factors beyond perception, including fairness and procedural justice (Tankebe et al., 2016).

Public Perception and Corruption

A moderate relationship (rs = .500) indicates that perceptions influence beliefs about corruption. Public exposure to misconduct reports may shape attitudes toward integrity.

Social Media Usage of the Youth

Social media usage obtained a mean of 3.51 (Agree), indicating that Facebook plays an important role in youth communication and daily routines. Social media has become a major platform for information dissemination and shaping public opinion (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

Social Media Usage and Public Trust

A strong relationship (rs = .638) shows that social media engagement significantly enhances public trust. Police presence online increases transparency and accessibility. Digital communication strengthens legitimacy and trust when used for community engagement (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2015).

Social Media Usage and Police–Citizen Relations

A moderate relationship (rs = .500) indicates that social media improves communication and accessibility, strengthening relationships between police and the community. Two-way communication fosters transparency and cooperation (Crump, 2011).

Social Media Usage and Police Legitimacy

A moderate association suggests that social media presence enhances legitimacy by demonstrating transparency and responsiveness. Legitimacy improves when agencies maintain open dialogue with stakeholders (Suchman, 1995).

Social Media Usage and Corruption Perception

A strong relationship indicates that social media increases awareness of misconduct while also promoting accountability. Exposure to online content influences perceptions of corruption. Social media enables public oversight and encourages accountability (Crump, 2011).

Conclusions

The current study fills a gap in the existing literature on youth attitudes toward the police and provides insight into the nature of youth-police relationships. The findings support the advancement of community policing initiatives targeted at youth. The study demonstrates that positive relationships between youth and police can be achieved through community programming. Further, study findings highlight how much control individual police officers have in influencing youth perception of themselves and the police force in general. Police officers must be mindful of the powerful impact their behavior has on generating specific attitudes toward the police; they should continuously strive to engage in positive contact with youth to promote trusting and cooperative youth relations with the police.

Results partially support the idea that exposure to positive police contact through social media will increase cooperation with the police. There was an increase in overall willingness to contact the police across all youth participants at the end of the program, but this effect was not maintained during the follow-up period.

The benefits of social media as a cost-effective tool for law enforcement agencies are numerous. Among these benefits are increased community outreach, service development, officer and volunteer recruitment, and enhancement of criminal investigations. When establishing a social media program, agencies should develop an overall social media strategy to be integrated with their overarching communications and outreach plan, as well as accompanying policies and procedures guiding the program's use. In addition, agencies must address personal use of social media by employees, to include prohibited behavior. This should be accompanied by training and education regarding the responsible use of social media, as well as the possible results of its misuse.

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