

Examining the Role of Police Accountability Mechanisms in Mitigating Misconduct and Restoring Public Trust: Lessons from District Gujrat, Pakistan

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Abstract

Police conduct and public trust indubitably plays a dynamic role in tackling the crimes. This research work is based on the fact that healthier policing strategies mainly the police behavior have a very strong relationship with gaining the public trust. The developed world looks to be relatively successful in achieving the goal of public confidence on them but the developing countries such as Pakistan are still motivated to have the subject need. The present study was based on quantitative methodology and a sample size of 385 respondents were selected through Multistage and proportionate random sampling techniques. The data was collected from the District Gujrat of the Punjab Police province of Pakistan. The data was analyzed through SPSS and various statistical tests were applied to see the level of connection between different independent and dependent variables. The results depicted that there is a very strong relationship among the police personnel and complainant's distrust. The study recommended to modernize the policing strategies and structurally strengthen the police department.

Keywords: Police, Public, Pakistan, Distrust, Department.

1. Introduction

In twenty first century, police is considered as an important and significant part of criminal justice system of any country. Police is a representation of the state nominated personnel to put in practice the enforced law, protect property and maintain social order in civilian matters. This term 'police misconduct' is mostly connected with police services of a national that are sanctioned to exercise the police power of that state within a defined legal or territorial area of accountability. Police department is often clarified as separate organizations from any military forces or other organizations involved in defending the state from foreign attackers (Police Study Institute, 2009). Schaefer (2000) describes police as a branch of government tasked with maintaining public order and tranquility, promoting public health, protection and morality, and ethics, and the expectation, detection and penalty of crimes. Abbas, Akram & Saud (2020) assessed that the complainants generally agreed that they have limited trust in the police and that political interference is one of the major causes of lack of public trust.

Packman (2009) identifies police misconduct as any unethical, unlawful or criminal action taken against established job requirements by a law enforcement official. He also described police corruption as he questioned police authority. It is a kind of misconduct where police staff breach

departmental rules and regulations. This kind of misconduct happens during the hours of duty. Tuch & Weitzer (2004) explain that there are four forms of police misconduct during disciplinary trials: verbal abuse, excessive force, unwarranted stoppages and corruption. Procedural wrongdoing states when an individual goes to the police station to report the case against someone, it is the start of legal proceedings.

Since the nation was formed in 1947, governments have usually not concentrated too much on reforming the criminal justice system, the police and their work, and their criminal investigation system, which could provide equal, free and easy justice to the people. A review led by Avdi & Avdija (2010), Indiana State University, recommends that police behavior is a principle determinant of attitudes toward police. The common man may face unconceivable complications in looking for justice throughout his life (Abbas, Akram & Saud 2020).

2. Literature Review

It has been shown that the organizational factors (such as fairness) and personality traits are related to employee behavior. Perception of fairness is one of the strongest performance-related organizational factors (Colquitt et al., 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2007), notably counterproductive work behaviors (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). It has been shown that the personality trait, "negative effect," is not only a strong predictor of detrimental job behaviors (CWB), but also a buffer between fairness expectations and many employee behaviors and attitudes

(Dalal et al., 2012; Penney & Spector, 2005). The main thing Police examine the complainants in view of financial status inside the organization recommends that greater part 79.5% of the complainants unequivocally concurred that police research the complainants considering socio economic related notoriety in the organization (Abbas et al., 2023). This is one explanation why some researchers proposed that both methods must be merged (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Christopher (2008) presumed that police are crucial indicators of how well the police are meeting their obligations and can influence police sharpening and open course of action in addition. Nonetheless, no work is under way on police actions by individuals. Police investigational framework connected with the police criminal wrongdoing. Information shows that the police investigational wrongdoing had measurably critical and great ($r = 0.302$, $p < 0.01$) relationship with police criminal unfortunate behavior (Abbas et al., 2023).

Taylor (2010) argued that this lack of police misconduct reporting, and by extending the historic lack of racial discussion of police brutality cases, represented the systemic propensity of police to ignore reports of violence. This association was also mediated by the convictions and satisfaction of officers in group policing practices with the organization (Myhill and Bradford, 2013).

Zubair (2014) states that the main duty of the police is to preserve the situation of law and order in the country and to investigate the crimes to ensure citizens ' protection and to ensure scientific investigation of the accused. Many inner-city African American residents are unhappy with the police misconduct and lack responsibility for their neighborhood abuse (Tuch & Weitzer, 2004).

3. Significance of Study

Misconduct in Pakistan Police has become a critical challenge because of this institution's undergoing transitional phase. Civil society, intelligentsia, and media have frequently questioned the effectiveness of police in maintaining peace in the society. This research is designed to investigate the principal factors of effective policing of Punjab police.

4. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in province of Punjab, Pakistan. Punjab represents a rich socio-economic and ethnic representation of Pakistan. The researcher targeted those complainants who visited and registered the FIR. The detailed data (Home address, Phone Number) of the respondents was

available in the FIR paper that was used to access the respondents for data collection process. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to gather the sample from the total population. Multistage sampling methodology was used to pick a total sample size of (385) respondents. The interview schedule was used to gather data from the respondents.

5. Results and Discussions

Table 4.1 Distribution of the Respondents with Respect to Demographic profile

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender of the respondents		
Male	318	82.6
Female	67	17.4
Profession of the respondents		
Agriculture	261	67.8
Private Servant	51	13.2
Shopkeeper	26	6.8
Other	47	12.2
Marital status of the respondents		
Single	39	10.1
Married	311	80.8
Widowed	35	9.1
Total	385	100

Demographic/socio-economic variables play a significant role in the interpretation or evaluation of data performance. Demographic/socio-economic variables play a significant role in the interpretation or evaluation of data performance. More than half of the respondents (67.8%) were attached to agricultural profession while remaining belonged to private employment, shopkeeper or other labor work. The table also shows respondent's marital status. The vast majority (80.8%) of the respondents was married.

Table 4.2 Police investigational Misconduct

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Police investigate the complainants based on socio-economic status in the community		
Disagree	21	5.5
No Opinion	3	.8
Agree	55	14.3
Strongly Agree	306	79.5
Investigation officer ask you to nominate suspect for investigation		
Disagree	19	4.9
No Opinion	9	2.3
Agree	76	19.7
Strongly Agree	281	73
Investigation officer did not work on the complaint without any reference		
Disagree	14	3.6
No Opinion	2	.5
Agree	82	21.3

Strongly Agree	287	74.5
Total	385	100.0

The present research aims to provide basic statistical analysis to present data along with the usage of tables to analyze the response of the questions asked. Procedural misconduct is the part of independent variable in the present study. In response to the first item Police investigate the complainants based on socio-economic status in the community majority 79.5% of the complainants strongly agreed, which shows that only strong socio-economic background can get someone file a FIR while poor or middle-class respondents think before visiting police station. Around a quarter (73%) of the population strongly agreed that investigation officers ask you to nominate suspect for investigation. The second element of the table described that police officer demand the name of the suspected person for the further proceeding of the case. The third item of the table described the police officer's response while visiting the police station. These statistics showed that without political or any other strong reference police officer's do not properly work on the registration of case. In this table 74.5 percent of the respondents strongly reported that police do not look after the complainants without any reference.

Table 4.3 Means, Standard Deviations and T-Values of Study Variables as a Function of Their Gender

Variable		Mean	SD	t-value	95% CI		p-Value
					Lower	Upper	
Investigational Misconducts	Male	13.92	1.87	-.60	.33	-.62	.54
	Female	14.07	1.41				
Criminal Misconducts	Male	17.54	2.60	.79	.95	-.40	.42
	Female	17.26	2.43				
Civil Rights Misconducts	Male	13.29	1.86	-1.41	.13	-.71	.01
	Female	13.64	1.56				
Police Behaviour	Male	13.47	2.06	-1.80	.04	-1.01	.07
	Female	13.95	1.62				
Misconduct in Filing a Complaint	Male	8.96	1.42	-2.25	-.05	-.76	.02
	Female	9.37	.98				

Table presents the results of independent sample t-test conducted to see the effect of gender on study variables. The p-value of t-statistic for police investigational misconduct (Male Mean= 13.92, SD= 1.87, Female Mean=14.07, SD 1.41, 95% CI: 0.33 - -0.62) was not statistically significant ($t=-0.60$, $p > 0.05$). Based on these findings, it is concluded that gender of the complainants does not have any effect on their perception of investigational misconduct of police. The analysis did not reveal a significant difference in the variables gender of the respondents and police criminal misconduct. The p-value of t-statistic for police criminal misconduct (Male Mean= 17.54, SD= 2.60, Female Mean=17.26, SD 2.43, 95% CI: 0.95 - -0.40) was not statistically significant ($t=-0.79$, $p > 0.05$). Based on these answers, it is stated that there is not a significant variance in mean criminal misconduct and gender of the complainants.

Table 4.4 Parameters Estimates of SEM

Variables	Standardized Estimates
Police Misconduct	
Investigational Misconducts	.45***
Criminal Misconducts	.72***
Civil Rights Misconducts	.39***
Police Behaviour	.60***

Misconduct in Filing A Complaint (FIR)	.59***
Public Distrust	
Procedural Distrust	.26***
Out-come based Distrust	.35***
Police Misconduct on Public Distrust	.76***
$R^2=.58$	

Note: *** $p < .001$

The value of R^2 for observed variable points out that police misconduct explains .58% variance of the police misconduct on public distrust. These results support recent research that police misconduct (e.g. Investigational Misconduct, Criminal Misconduct, Civil Rights Misconduct, Police Behaviour and Misconduct in filling a Complaint (FIR) supports public distrust (e.g. Procedural Distrust and Out-come based Distrust) on police. This research also provides empirical evidence that police misconduct is associated with public distrust. Moreover, these results describe the police misconduct in different nature. Common people believed that police personnel were not fair and honest in dealing the cases. These findings showed that without political or any other strong reference, police officer's do not properly work on the registration of case.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The present study confirmed the assessment of public opinion about police performance. Public trust in police plays a vital role to promote peace in the society. The study was an effort to understand public opinion about police performance and their trust level on police. The common people faced unconceivable difficulties in seeking justice throughout their life. They tried to knock the doors of different law enforcement agencies in search of justice but by the irony of luck, all their efforts in this regard end in distrust. Their voice seems back unheard leaving them broken and shattered. The present study was an effort to know the public views towards police behavior. The respondents were strongly agreed that the procedural misconduct is one of the major causes of lack of public trust in police. In this research, researcher explained three major types of police misconduct. Government should revise and increase the funding meant to improve the relation between police department and community. These funds need to be used for the import of latest technology (Body Camera, Scanning machines and other latest equipment). It is the responsibility of media as well to show positive picture of police department.

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