

# Police-Community Relations in Baguio City: A Path Towards Accountability

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## ABSTRACT

Positive police-community relations are the cornerstone of a just and effective law enforcement system. They create a virtuous cycle of trust, collaboration, and accountability, leading to a safer and more equitable community. This qualitative descriptive study delves into the factors that promote positive police-community relations in Baguio City, Philippines. It further examines how improved relations impact accountability among officers of the Baguio City Police Office (BCPO). Focusing on firsthand experiences, the research interviewed key informants. These included three active members of BCPO's Police Community Affairs and Development Group (PCADG) with at least two years of experience and a barangay official from Barangay Abanao-Zandueta-Chugum-Kayang-Otek (AZCKO). An interview guide explored their subjective experiences and perspectives on police-community relations. The study identified strong support from the local government, community cooperation and commitment, and efficient communication as key factors contributing to positive police-community relations. These improved relations led to increased community involvement as an oversight body of the organization, a shift towards responsive and proactive problem-solving, and a reduction in negative perceptions of police officers. Notably, active community participation creates a system of checks and balances, holding police accountable for their actions and promoting transparency in their operations. In essence, this study highlights the importance of investing in initiatives that nurture positive police-community relations. By breeding trust, collaboration, and accountability, such efforts can contribute to a safer and more just community for all residents of Baguio City.

**Keywords:** Police Community Relations, Police Accountability, Community Oversight, Community Participation, Baguio City Police Office

## INTRODUCTION

Police-community interactions and police accountability are interconnected aspects of effective policing. Strengthening police-community relations is crucial for maintaining public safety and instilling a sense of security. However, police accountability is a key factor that can undermine this partnership. Therefore, addressing issues of police accountability is essential to building trust and enhancing ties with the community. The conduct of individual police officers should align with societal norms, rules, and laws, and they should be held responsible for their actions. In the Philippines, laws have been enacted to ensure police accountability within the Philippine National Police (PNP). The lack of accountability has eroded public trust and cooperation with the police. To rebuild this trust, the police have implemented various programs and innovations, but the role of police accountability remains crucial as it significantly influences community trust and cooperation.

In Baguio City, efforts to improve police-community relations should prioritize fostering accountability. This research aims to identify challenges, propose effective strategies, and contribute to sustainable solutions that enhance trust, communication, and cooperation between the police and the community. The ultimate goal is to create a safer and more harmonious environment while fostering mutual respect and understanding between law enforcement and community members.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Strong police-community relations foster trust, a cornerstone of accountability (Rippy, 2023). When communities trust the police, they are more likely to report crimes, cooperate with investigations, and hold officers accountable for misconduct (Department of Justice, 2023). Transparency is another key element. Community policing strategies, which emphasize interaction and problem-solving, increase transparency by allowing residents to understand police procedures and priorities (Office of Justice Programs, 2023).

Positive police-community relations lead to better information sharing. When community members feel comfortable interacting with the police, they are more likely to report suspicious activity or provide crucial details about crimes (Zencity, 2023). This information flow strengthens investigations and helps hold officers accountable by providing evidence of potential misconduct.

Positive police-community relations can create a dynamic where communities feel empowered to hold police accountable. Through community engagement programs and citizen review boards, residents gain a voice in shaping police practices and policies (Rippy, 2023). This fosters a sense of shared responsibility for public safety and increases scrutiny on police actions, promoting accountability.

Police accountability and positive community relations are intertwined concepts crucial for effective law enforcement. A strong relationship between police and the public they serve fosters trust, cooperation, and legitimacy, ultimately leading to greater accountability (Rippy, 2023). This review explores the impact of police-community relations on police accountability, examining the key factors that contribute to a positive and accountable police force.

Positive police-community relations are built on a foundation of trust and transparency. When communities trust the police to act fairly and impartially, they are more likely to report crimes, cooperate with investigations, and hold officers accountable for misconduct (Office of Justice Programs, 2013). Conversely, negative experiences with the police, such as racial profiling or excessive force, can erode trust and create a climate of fear and suspicion (Allies Academies, 2023).

Transparency is another key component. Police departments that are open about their policies, procedures, and use-of-force incidents demonstrate a commitment to accountability and build public confidence (Rippy, 2023). Initiatives such as body-worn cameras can provide valuable evidence in investigations and deter misconduct (Allies Academies, 2023).

Community policing strategies, which emphasize building relationships with residents through proactive engagement and problem-solving, play a vital role in enhancing accountability. These strategies allow officers to get to know the communities they serve, understand their needs, and address local crime issues collaboratively (Department of Justice, 2023). This collaborative approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility for public safety and empowers communities to hold police accountable for their actions (Office of Justice Programs, 2013).

Despite the benefits, building positive police-community relations is not without challenges. Pre-existing biases, historical tensions, and a lack of diversity within police forces can hinder trust-building efforts (Allies Academies, 2023). Effective strategies require ongoing dialogue, cultural competency training for officers, and a commitment to addressing systemic issues within police departments.

Neighborhood-Driven Policing introduced a non-traditional and aspirational vision of policing. predicated on the notion that policing is something done with, rather than to, the public. It envisions the police and the public working equally and collaboratively to identify and solve community problems. Unlike Community-oriented Policing (COP), which still tends to place the police in the role of primary decision-maker, NDP “presumes precisely the opposite: The police serve neighborhood members as consultants and perform traditional policing duties on behalf of the community. Neighborhood Policing (NDP) is an effort to shift policing closer to Trojanowicz’s ideas, while advocating for greater community empowerment than what he envisioned. Unlike

collaboration and community partnership in a COP model, in NDP, officers work on the priorities of neighborhood councils. (Myers, 2021)

Gill et al. (2014) found that effective community-oriented policing and crime prevention result from a relationship between neighborhoods and law enforcement authorities. The relationship is influenced by people's perception of the police, their professionalism, fairness, and genuine involvement. Police can influence citizen satisfaction and trust, which can lead to effective solutions. Skaggs et al. (2022) likewise found that recruitment and retention issues faced by local police agencies are influenced by support, operational standards, compensation, and transparency. Moreover, Mutasa (2021) found that Joint Community Policing Platforms (JCPP) strategies have increased police visibility, improved engagement, and created awareness of cultures between police and residents. They also improved community trust, safety, transparency, and accountability. While Kappeler et al. (2020) emphasize the transformative potential of community engagement, problem-solving, and collaborative partnerships in fostering accountability and trust between police and communities. Rosenbaum's (2016) "The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Promises" highlights the complexities of implementing community-oriented policing strategies. These literature sources contribute to a nuanced understanding of the relationship between police-community relations and accountability mechanisms, emphasizing the importance of proactive strategies, collaborative approaches, and evidence-based practices.

## Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the following theories:

According to the Social Exchange Theory, individuals engage in social interactions based on a rational assessment of costs and benefits (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This theory suggests that individuals are more likely to establish positive and cooperative relationships when they believe that the benefits outweigh the costs. In this study this theory can be applied to understand the dynamics of police-community interactions.

Drawing from the Social Exchange Theory, efficient communication and good public speaking skills can be viewed as rewards that police officers provide to the community in the context of police-community relations. Effective communication enables officers to convey information clearly, address community concerns, and build rapport with community members. It facilitates the exchange of ideas, enhances understanding, and fosters positive relationships between the police and the community.

By employing efficient communication techniques and demonstrating good public speaking skills, police officers can provide benefits to the community. These benefits include improved public safety outcomes, increased trust in law enforcement, and a sense of shared responsibility. Effective communication allows officers to engage with community members, listen to their concerns, and respond appropriately, thereby minimizing the costs associated with miscommunication, distrust, and community disengagement.

Likewise, this study examines police-community relations through the lens of the Social Exchange Theory. Applying this theory, the study suggests that efficient communication and good public speaking skills act as rewards that police officers offer to the community. By providing these benefits, officers can contribute to improved public safety outcomes, increased trust in law enforcement, and a sense of shared responsibility within the community.

Additionally, this study investigates the concept of social control within the community through the lens of the Social Disorganization Theory. According to this theory, strong relationships and collaborative efforts between the police and community members in a proactive and responsive manner contribute to the development of effective social control mechanisms (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993).

Further, applying the Social Disorganization Theory to the context of police-community relations in Baguio City, it is evident that when the police and community members have robust relationships and work together, it leads to the establishment of both formal and informal social control mechanisms. Informal social controls

encompass actions such as neighbors watching out for one another, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and safety within the community. On the other hand, formal social controls involve the involvement of community organizations and partnerships with the police to address and prevent crime. By fostering accountability and enhancing police-community relations, the thesis aims to strengthen social control mechanisms in Baguio City. Through collaborative efforts, such as community policing initiatives, joint problem-solving, and regular communication, the police and community members can cultivate a shared responsibility for public safety. This proactive and responsive approach enhances the capacity of the community to prevent and address crime, reinforcing both informal and formal social control mechanisms. By emphasizing the importance of strong relationships and collaborative efforts between the police and community members, the thesis seeks to enhance social control mechanisms through informal actions and formal partnerships. This research contributes to the development of strategies that promote accountability and strengthen police-community relations in Baguio City.

### Paradigm of the Study

The research aims to identify the factors that contribute to positive police-community relations in Baguio City and examine the impact of improved relations on accountability within the BCPO. The process involves conducting interviews, analyzing the collected data using thematic analysis, and interpreting the findings to draw conclusions. The output includes a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to positive police-community relations, exploration of the impact on accountability, and recommendations for enhancing police-community relations.

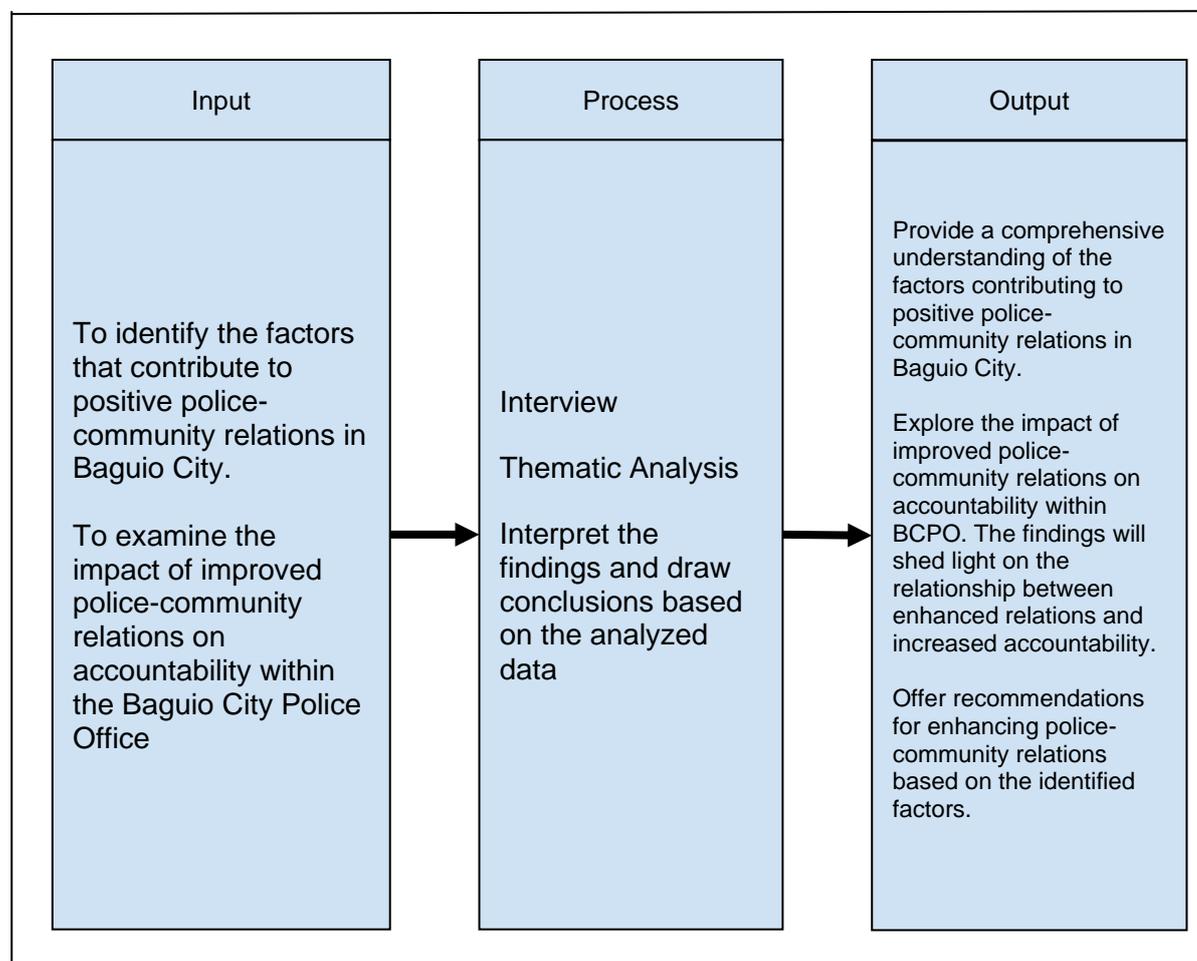


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

### Significance of the Study

This study is deemed beneficial to the following:

Philippine National Police. The study's findings will offer the BCPO valuable information on how improved police-community relations can positively impact accountability within the organization. It highlights the importance of building trust and engaging with the community to enhance accountability mechanisms.

Community Members. The findings of the study will provide community members with insights into the factors that contribute to positive police-community relations.

The PNP Stakeholders. With this study, different community sectors will become aware of the policies and practices that promote positive police-community relations and accountability.

Future Researchers. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on police-community relations and accountability providing valuable insights into the specific context of Baguio City and adds to the understanding of factors that contribute to positive relations and accountability within a local law enforcement agency and serve as a valuable reference for future studies in related fields.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the current state of police-community relations in Baguio City and identify pathways towards fostering greater accountability within these relationships. It specifically aims to:

1. To identify factors that contribute to positive police-community relations in Baguio City.
2. To examine the impact of improved police-community relations on accountability within the Baguio City Police Office.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Design**

The study is qualitative in nature, specifically employing a qualitative descriptive design. This design is well-suited for the research objectives, which aim to investigate the strategies employed by the BCPO to enhance police-community relations, focusing on the Police Community Affairs and Development Group (PCADG).

In a qualitative descriptive design, the emphasis is on obtaining a detailed and comprehensive description of a phenomenon or experience. This aligns with the study's focus on exploring the perspectives of key informants, including members of the BCPO-PCADG and barangay officials. This allows for a detailed exploration and description of these variables within the context of the BCPO-PCADG's efforts to enhance police-community relations. The design enables researchers to uncover the intricacies and nuances of these variables, providing a deeper understanding of the strategies' impact on fostering trust, cooperation, and mutual accountability in Baguio City.

### **Population and Locale of the Study**

The key informants for the study are three personnel from BCPO-PCADG who have been actively participating in the group for at least two years and hold specific roles, as they are the ones who are in charge of police-community affairs and who know the operation of PCADG. These police officers must currently be serving as members and have a history of involvement in community engagement initiatives. This ensures they have the experience and insights needed to understand the group's activities and their impact on police-community relations. The roles within the PCDG include community relations officers and project coordinators, providing diverse perspectives.

Additionally, one member, specifically barangay officials from Barangay Abanao-Zandueta-Chugum-Kayang-Otek (AZCKO), was included as key informants. Criteria for inclusion are current position (such as barangay captain or councilor), at least one year of service, and active engagement in community activities. This ensures

they have firsthand knowledge and experience in community matters and police-community relations.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

To comprehend the essence and significance of what the participants believed to be their experiences, the researchers utilized an interview guide with several open-ended questions focused on the subjective experiences and emotional responses of the participants.

The researchers developed the interview guide questions based on the literature of the study. The interview guide underwent tool validation through the panels to ensure that the inquiries are appropriate in the context of a situation where safety and security are of the utmost importance. The interview guide was translated to a language common to the understanding of the participants in order for the participant to easily understand the questions.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

The study on police-community relations involved several data gathering procedures to ensure ethical considerations and participant safety. Firstly, the letters requesting approval for the study, the manuscript, and the questionnaires underwent thorough review and approval by the Graduate School and Research and Development Center for defense scheduling purposes. Once approved, a formal letter seeking permission to conduct the study in the Police Community and Development Group was sent to the BCPO City Director, accompanied by an attached questionnaire outlining the study's objectives. To conduct interviews, a schedule was arranged in a well-ventilated room within the BCPO premises. The research team, comprising the interviewer, and interviewees, gathered for the interviews.

Before the interviews, participants were oriented by the researcher on the study's purpose, procedures, and rights. During the interviews, which were conducted conversationally, the researcher obtained consent from the participants to record the conversations using a voice recorder. This recording was done with explicit approval from the BCPO Director. Following the interviews, the recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim for analysis, ensuring accuracy and adherence to the participants' accounts. These data-gathering methods were essential in capturing the nuanced perspectives of law enforcement regarding police-community relations in Baguio City.

### **Treatment of Data**

The researchers adopted thematic analysis which is a process that gives more emphasis to the content of the narratives during the conversational exchange between the researchers and the participant. The narrative thematic analysis process as suggested by Creswell (2014) was used in this study and it consisted of five stages: (a) organization and preparation of the data, (b) obtaining a general sense of the information, (c) the coding process, (d) categories or themes, and (e) interpretation of the data. The data organization and preparation began with transcribing the recorded interviews. Each transcript was analyzed individually. Reading each transcript helped in noting descriptive comments. The coding process highlighted key themes, which were then compared across all transcripts to find similarities and patterns. Member checking was conducted to ensure reliability and validity by sharing findings with key informants for their feedback.

Interviews are a valuable method for collecting detailed information from community members and police officers about police-community relations and accountability. These interviews can be structured or semi-structured, providing flexibility to explore various research objectives. After the interviews, thematic analysis is used to identify patterns and themes in the data. This involves coding the transcripts, grouping related codes into themes, and noting commonalities or differences in participants' responses. Thematic analysis helps organize the data and highlight key factors contributing to positive police-community relations and their impact on accountability. The final step is interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. This involves examining the factors and themes identified in the analysis, exploring their relationship with accountability within the BCPO, and providing a comprehensive understanding of how improved relations impact accountability.

## Ethical Considerations

Permission and consent were acquired from the key informants before the start of the data gathering. The researchers presented the study's objectives to the participants. The participants were not coerced to participate in any way. They were thoroughly informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and their decision to withdraw would not be held against them. All personal information was treated with the utmost secrecy to prevent any harm to the respondents. Their views and opinions were strictly utilized for research purposes. The study's findings will be communicated to the BCPO and the involved Barangay for their reference.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Key Factors that Contribute to Positive Relations Between the Police and the Community

#### Strong Support System from the Local Government Unit

One key factor that significantly contributes to positive relations between the police and the community is the strong support system from the Local Government Unit (LGU). A supportive LGU plays an important role in establishing a conducive environment for positive police-community relations. The support from the LGU can manifest in various ways, such as providing resources, allocating budget, and actively participating in community policing efforts. By collaborating with the police, the LGU demonstrates a commitment to public safety and security (Smith & Jones, 2018). This collaboration creates an opportunity for effective community policing practices and enhances the overall relationship between the police and the community.

As mentioned by Key Informant 1, "Supportive LGU to the policy implementation. Participation of BCPO to organize public activities' ' (City Medical and Dental Team)-Contribute manpower during BP Monitoring and Dental Extraction, Distribution of Relief Goods, or donated vegetables from farmers, disaster response. Ngayon, nainvolve na ang community. Pag ganito ang Sistema, nai-improve siya. Napapaganda. ( The Community now are being involved. The system is improving. It's nice). Further, Key Informant 4 added "Katuwang nila kami sa mga activities. Icommunicate nila sa amin, kami naman maghahanap ng mga stakeholders, participants, etc." (We are their partners in any activities. They will contact us and we will find stakeholders and participants).

The support of the LGU reflects a recognition of the significance of strong police-community relations in maintaining public order and safety. When the LGU actively supports the police, it sends a clear message to the community that their well-being is a priority (Smith & Jones, 2018). This support fosters trust, cooperation, and a sense of shared responsibility between the police, the LGU, and the community. It establishes a partnership approach to policing, where the community feels valued and empowered to actively contribute to their own safety.

This implies that a strong support system from the LGU in positive police-community relations are far-reaching. Firstly, it enhances the capacity of the police to carry out their duties effectively. With access to necessary resources and budget, the police can implement community-oriented policing strategies, engage in proactive crime prevention, and respond promptly to community concerns (National Institute of Justice, 2016). This leads to improved public safety outcomes and increased community satisfaction. Secondly, a supportive LGU reinforces the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the community. When community members witness the collaboration and endorsement of the LGU, it adds credibility to the police force and their efforts (Smith & Jones, 2018). This legitimacy is essential for building trust and cooperation, as community members are more likely to perceive the police as reliable and accountable. It also encourages community members to actively engage with the police, report incidents, and participate in oversight mechanisms, thus strengthening accountability.

The Social Exchange Theory supports this finding. As proposed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), individuals engage in social interactions based on a rational calculation of costs and benefits. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to engage in positive and cooperative relationships when they perceive that the

benefits outweigh the costs. In the context of police-community relations, a supportive LGU can be seen as providing benefits to both the police and the community. The police receive resources, budgetary support, and endorsement from the LGU, which enhance their effectiveness and legitimacy. On the other hand, the community benefits from improved public safety outcomes, increased trust in law enforcement, and a sense of shared responsibility.

In the same manner, a study conducted by Smith and Jones (2018) examined the impact of collaboration between the police and the LGU on community perceptions of safety and trust in law enforcement. The findings revealed that a strong partnership between the police and the LGU significantly improved community perceptions of safety and trust in law enforcement.

### **Community Cooperation and Commitment**

Another key factor that significantly contributes to positive relations between the police and the community is community cooperation and commitment. Community cooperation and commitment play a pivotal role in establishing positive police-community relations. When community members actively engage with the police, collaborate in crime prevention efforts, and demonstrate a commitment to their own safety, it creates a sense of shared responsibility and partnership. This cooperation can take various forms, such as reporting crimes, providing information, participating in neighborhood watch programs, and attending community meetings and events.

As stated by Key Informant 2, “pag may theft na nangyari sa area of responsibility ko, is voluntary na paglapit ng mga community members at pagbigay ng mga CCTV” (when theft occurs in my area of responsibility, the community members voluntarily approaches me to give the CCTV footage) (April 26, 2024, 1:17 PM). In support Key Informant 3 said, “As a member of the community to help, prevent and give solutions to crimes. Hindi na sila hesitant. Hindi na kailangan na tayo ang lumapit, minsan sila na voluntary ang pupunta sa atin na magsasabi na meron silang nakuha na CCTV footage at kami na lang magdadala ng USB” (As community members actively contribute to crime prevention and solutions, they overcome hesitation and willingly engage with the police. Instead of the police reaching out to them, community members proactively approach law enforcement, offering valuable information such as CCTV footage. In these instances, the police only need to provide a USB drive to collect the footage) (April 26, 2024, 1:45 PM).

Community cooperation and commitment signify a willingness to work together with the police in maintaining public safety and order. When community members actively participate and contribute to the safety of their neighborhoods, it fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment (Skogan, 2006). This level of involvement can lead to increased trust and positive perceptions of the police, as community members see themselves as active stakeholders in the safety of their communities (Tyler, 2006).

This implies that with the community as their partners, it will become easy for the police to work on long-term projects. The implications of community cooperation and commitment in positive police-community relations are profound. Firstly, it enhances the effectiveness of crime prevention and law enforcement efforts. When community members actively report crimes and provide information, it enables the police to respond more effectively and efficiently. This cooperation creates a network of eyes and ears within the community, increasing the chances of detecting and preventing criminal activities (Weisburd et al., 2010). Secondly, community cooperation and commitment contribute to the development of trust and legitimacy between the police and the community. When community members actively engage with the police, it helps to dispel negative stereotypes and perceptions, fostering positive attitudes towards law enforcement (Tyler, 2006). Community members are more likely to perceive the police as accountable and responsive when they witness their active involvement and cooperation.

Skogan (2006) conducted a study that demonstrated the positive impact of community involvement in reducing crime rates and improving community satisfaction with the police. Similarly, Tyler (2006) found in his research that when community members perceive the police as fair and respectful, they are more likely to cooperate and work together with law enforcement agencies. In totality community cooperation and commitment are key factors that contribute to positive relations between the police and the community. Active

engagement, collaboration, and a sense of shared responsibility create an environment of trust and partnership.

### **Efficient Communication**

Effective communication between police and the community is important for effective policing and can contribute to positive relations between the police and the community. Effective communication allows the police to convey information clearly, listen to community concerns, and establish rapport with community members. It enables the police to build trust, address misunderstandings, and foster open dialogue, leading to better understanding and cooperation between the police and the community (Miller, Hess, & Orthmann, 2020). As emphasized by the key informants, good public speaking skills are essential for police officers to effectively engage with the community during public meetings, presentations, and community events, conveying information in a persuasive and impactful manner.

As Key Informant 1 said, “Effective Communication results in clarifying doubts between clients, helps the client understand the process, and it prevents the negative impression of the client to police officers. Communication is effective through the presence of the station commander during the general assembly of the barangay because it is a chance to update the group regarding the crime situation in the concerned barangay”. Additionally Key Informant 2 reckoned, “Police officers are encouraged to develop the skill of being a good spokesperson to communicate effectively. However, some people may mistakenly think I am angry because I speak loudly. To address this, I always give a warning to my listeners before speaking, as I tend to speak loudly during discussions with people.” Likewise, Key Informant 3 totted up, “Effective communication is vital to ensure that the police and the community are on the same page. For instance, a police officer needs to be skilled in effective communication so that when a complainant explains the facts to the Investigator on Case (IOC), the IOC can understand and take the necessary actions in response. This helps maintain a strong connection between the police and the community.” (April 26, 2024, 1:27 PM)

Efficient communication and good public speaking demonstrate the professionalism and competence of police officers. When officers can articulate information clearly and engage in effective public speaking, it enhances their credibility and fosters positive perceptions among community members (Tyler, 2006). Through effective communication, officers can establish rapport, demonstrate empathy, and address community concerns, strengthening the bond between the police and the community.

This implies that efficient communication and good public speaking in positive police-community relations are significant. Firstly, it facilitates effective problem-solving and conflict resolution. When officers can communicate efficiently and speak effectively, they can better understand community issues and collaborate with community members to find appropriate solutions (Weisburd et al., 2010). Clear communication also helps to manage expectations and ensure transparency, reducing misunderstandings and promoting cooperation. Secondly, efficient communication and good public speaking skills contribute to the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the police in the eyes of the community. When officers can express themselves clearly and engage in compelling public speaking, it enhances community members' perceptions of the police as competent, approachable, and responsive (Tyler, 2006). As a result, community members are more likely to trust the police, cooperate with law enforcement efforts, and report crimes or suspicious activities.

In the study of Tyler (2006) it was found out that when community members perceive the police as fair and respectful communicators, it positively influences their trust and cooperation. Additionally, a study by Skogan (2006) highlighted the impact of effective communication in improving community satisfaction with the police and enhancing perceptions of police legitimacy.

Further, according to Social Exchange Theory, individuals engage in social interactions based on the expectation of receiving rewards and minimizing costs (Blau, 1964). In the context of police-community relations, efficient communication and good public speaking can be seen as rewards that officers provide to the community.

Efficient communication allows officers to effectively convey information, address community concerns, and build trust. When officers can clearly communicate their intentions, policies, and procedures, it reduces

uncertainty and increases predictability for community members (Skogan, 2006). Good public speaking skills enable officers to engage with the community in a persuasive and informative manner, fostering positive perceptions and a sense of connection (Tyler, 2006). These communication skills are valuable rewards for community members, as they enhance their understanding, trust, and satisfaction with the police.

## **Impact of Improved Police Community Relations on Police Accountability**

### **Increased Community Involvement as an Oversight Body**

Increased community involvement as an oversight body is a key aspect of examining the impact of improved police-community relations on police accountability within the BCPO. Increased community involvement plays an essential role in enhancing police accountability. When community members actively participate in oversight mechanisms and processes, they contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of police practices (Braga et al., 2018).

This active involvement creates a system of checks and balances, holding the BCPO accountable for their actions and promoting transparency in their operations. There is active participation in monitoring, evaluating, and providing input on police practices and policies. Which creates mechanisms and opportunities for community members to have a voice in shaping and overseeing law enforcement activities. This can include the establishment of citizen review boards, community policing forums, public meetings, surveys, and other avenues for community input.

As Key informant 1 said, “Proactive engagement during dialogue and symposiums with various stakeholders is an essential strategy that promotes effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving between the police and the community.”

Additionally KI-4 said, “Ang aktibong partisipasyon ng mga miyembro ng komunidad sa pagmamanman at pag-evaluate ng mga gawain ng pulisya ay nagbibigay ng agarang aksyon sa mga insidente ng maling pag-uugali, na naglalayong magkaroon ng isang mas malinaw at may pananagutan na puwersa ng pulisya.” (The active participation of community members in monitoring and evaluating police practices ensures that incidents of misconduct are promptly addressed, contributing to a more transparent and accountable police force). “Mas magandang sabihin nila kung may mali sa ginawa ng mga kasama, pinapakinggan naman sila at magada yun para masuloyunan ng maayus para sa ikabubuti ng kapulisan at kumunidad” (It is better for them to speak up if there are mistakes committed by police. They are being listened to, and it is beneficial in order to find proper solutions for the betterment of the police force and the community) (April 26, 2024, 2:05 PM)

Increased community involvement in oversight signifies a shift towards a participatory approach to policing. When community members are actively engaged in oversight activities, such as participating in citizen review boards, attending community meetings, or providing feedback on police practices, it empowers the community to have a say in shaping law enforcement policies (Alpert & Moore, 2017). This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, strengthening the accountability mechanisms within the BCPO.

The implications of increased community involvement in oversight are significant. Firstly, it enhances the legitimacy of the police force. When community members are actively involved in oversight, it demonstrates that the BCPO values the input and perspectives of the community (Braga et al., 2018). This fosters trust and confidence in the police, as community members feel that their voices are heard and their concerns are taken seriously. Secondly, increased community involvement in oversight can help identify and address issues of misconduct or unethical behavior within the police force. Community members, through their active participation, can provide valuable information and insights into problematic practices or incidents that require investigation (Alpert & Moore, 2017). This collaborative approach enables the BCPO to address issues promptly, take appropriate disciplinary actions, and implement necessary reforms to prevent future occurrences.

In support, Braga et al. (2018) found that citizen oversight mechanisms, when properly implemented, can lead to improved police accountability and a reduction in misconduct. Additionally, Alpert and Moore (2017)

highlight the significance of community involvement in oversight as a means to enhance police legitimacy and foster accountability. Hence, increased community involvement in oversight has a profound impact on police accountability within the BCPO. It strengthens transparency, empowers the community, enhances police legitimacy, and helps identify and address issues of misconduct.

### **Removal of Negative Impressions on Police Officers**

Removal of negative impressions on police officers is one of the effects of improved Police Community Relations (PCR) on police accountability among the BCPO personnel. The removal of negative impressions on police officers is important for enhancing police accountability. Negative impressions, such as perceptions of corruption, abuse of power, or unprofessional behavior, can erode public trust and hinder effective law enforcement (Tyler, 2019). By addressing these negative impressions and improving the relationship between the police and the community, it becomes possible to rebuild trust and establish a foundation for accountability.

As what Key Informant 2 said, “Regional Advisory Group for Police Transformation and Development (RAGPTD) also serves as the bridge between us, the police and the concerned community members. Lalo na kung hindi maideretso sa amin, with the help of the RAGPTD, na aassess ang veracity of the report tapos may appropriate action based on the recommendation of the SAGPTD. Through this, nalalaman ng community na merong nangyayari na aksyon at naaalís yung mentality na tinatago yung mga pagkakamali. They see to it na naipapatupad naming yung trabaho naming kaya tumutulong sila.” (The Regional Advisory Group for Police Transformation and Development (RAGPTD) serves as a bridge between the police and concerned community members. Especially when reports don't directly reach us, with the assistance of RAGPTD, they assess the veracity of the report and recommend appropriate actions. Through this, the community becomes aware that actions are being taken, and the mentality of hiding mistakes is eliminated. They ensure that we are able to fulfill our duties, and their support is valuable) (April 26, 2024, 1:35 PM). As supported by Key Informant 3, “During the recent Panagbenga festival, we were employed for the street parade. Most of the audience were local tourists asking for directions, tourist spots and activities of the event. This was a chance to be active in engaging with them. This implies that the community still trusts the police”.

This implies that removing negative impressions on police officers is significant. Firstly, it promotes a positive image of the police force. When efforts are made to address negative impressions, it demonstrates a commitment to professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct (Tyler, 2019). This can lead to improved public perception, increased cooperation, and a stronger partnership between the police and the community. Secondly, removing negative impressions enhances the legitimacy of the police. When community members have positive perceptions of the police, they are more likely to view law enforcement actions as fair, just, and necessary (Hinds & Murphy, 2018). This perception of legitimacy strengthens police accountability, as community members are more inclined to support and collaborate with the police in their efforts to maintain public safety.

In support, the study of Tyler (2019) emphasizes the importance of addressing negative impressions in order to rebuild trust and enhance police legitimacy. Hinds and Murphy (2018) highlight the role of positive perceptions in facilitating cooperation and collaboration between the police and the community. Removing negative impressions on police officers is critical for improving police accountability within the BCPO. By addressing negative perceptions and fostering positive police-community relations, trust can be rebuilt, public perception can be positively influenced, and accountability mechanisms can be strengthened.

### **Responsive and Proactive Problem-Solving**

Responsive and proactive problem-solving is one of the impacts of improved police-community relations on police accountability within the BCPO. When the police actively engage with the community, listen to their concerns, and respond promptly to address issues, it fosters a sense of trust, cooperation, and accountability (Rosenbaum, 2016). By being responsive and proactive in problem-solving, the police can demonstrate their commitment to serving the community's needs and effectively addressing public safety concerns.

As stated by Key Informant 2, “May mga advisory councils din na coming from business sector, education, health, religion. Every now and then, nag meeting kami with these local government officials from the barangay. Sila ang nagbibigay ng feedback and recommendations on how to increase trust and cooperation. Directly na sila na ang nagsasabi”. (There are also advisory councils coming from the business sector, education, health, and religion. Every now and then, we have meetings with these local government officials from the barangay. They provide feedback and recommendations on how to increase trust and cooperation. They directly express their thoughts and suggestions) (April 26, 2024, 1:40 PM). Further Key Informant 4 added, “During activities, we work hand in hand para maabot yung mga goals. Pag may transmittal sa pulis to barangay, naasikaso ni barangay yung kaso. Nakakatulong ito na mapag ayos ung mga kasong pwedeng ayusin sa katarungang pambarangay”. (During activities, we work hand in hand to achieve our goals. When there is a transmission from the police to the barangay, the barangay takes care of the case. This helps in resolving cases that can be settled through barangay justice) (April 26, 2024, 2:15 PM) Additionally Key Informant 3 shared, “Through the general assembly, BPOC, BADAC, the civilian sector is informed about the crime situation. Halimbawa, yung AZCKO may 10 na theft sa buwan na ito, si BAMARVA, may suicide na nangyari recently, pati na rin mga drug operations pinag uusapan na din. Lalo na pag cases ng violence against women and their children, traffic situation ng bawat barangay. Walang labis, walang kulang. Based ito sa records nila. Part ito ng mandato nila sa amin na mga barangay na magbigay kaalaman sa barangay at paano maiwasan ang mga ganito. Para sa agarang sulosyon sa kung anumang kaso, nagtutulongtuolngan kami sa barangay at kumunidad at ang pulisya.” (“Through the general assembly, BPOC, BADAC, the civilian sector is informed about the crime situation. For example, AZCKO had 10 theft cases this month, BAMARVA had a recent suicide incident, and drug operations are also being discussed. Especially cases of violence against women and their children, as well as the traffic situation in each barangay. Nothing is excessive, nothing is lacking. This is based on their records. It is part of their mandate to provide information to the barangay and how to prevent such incidents. For immediate solutions to any case, we collaborate with the barangay and the community, along with the police”) (April 26, 2024, 3:17 PM).

Responsive and proactive problem-solving signifies a shift from a reactive approach to one that actively addresses community concerns and prevents problems from escalating. It involves actively seeking feedback from community members, identifying emerging issues, and taking proactive measures to address them (Kelling & Moore, 2017). This approach shows that the police are not only focused on reactive law enforcement but are also committed to preventing crime and improving the overall safety and well-being of the community.

This implies that responsive and proactive problem-solving are of importance. Primarily, it enhances police-community relations. When the police are responsive and proactive in addressing community issues, it builds trust, improves communication, and strengthens the partnership between the police and the community (Rosenbaum, 2016). This positive relationship fosters a sense of shared responsibility and encourages community members to actively participate in crime prevention efforts. Moreover, responsive and proactive problem-solving improves police accountability. By actively addressing community concerns, the police demonstrate their commitment to holding themselves accountable for maintaining public safety and addressing community needs (Kelling & Moore, 2017). This accountability is reinforced through regular communication, transparency in decision-making, and timely responses to community feedback and concerns.

In corroboration for the impact of responsive and proactive problem-solving on police accountability, Rosenbaum (2016) emphasizes the importance of building relationships and trust between the police and the community through responsive problem-solving. Kelling and Moore (2017) highlight the role of proactive policing in addressing community concerns and improving police accountability.

Furthermore, according to the Social Disorganization Theory, when police and community members have strong relationships and work together in a proactive and responsive manner, it leads to the development of social control mechanisms within the community (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). These mechanisms can include informal social controls, such as neighbors looking out for one another, as well as formal social controls, such as community organizations and partnerships with the police.

By improving police-community relations and implementing responsive and proactive problem-solving strategies, the BCPO can enhance social control mechanisms within the community. This can lead to a greater sense of accountability among both the police and community members. When community members trust and cooperate with the police, they are more likely to report crimes, provide information, and actively participate in crime prevention efforts (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). In turn, the police are more likely to respond promptly to community concerns, address issues, and be held accountable for their actions.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing result and discussions, the following conclusions were derived.

The impact of improved police-community relations on police accountability within the Baguio City Police Office is significant, particularly in terms of increased community involvement. When community members actively participate in oversight mechanisms and processes, it creates a system of checks and balances, holding the police accountable for their actions and promoting transparency in their operations. This active involvement allows community members to have a voice in shaping and overseeing law enforcement activities, contributing to a more accountable police force.

The removal of negative impressions on police officers is a major aspect of improving police accountability within the Baguio City Police Office. Negative impressions, such as perceptions of corruption or unprofessional behavior, can undermine public trust and hinder effective law enforcement. By addressing these negative impressions and improving the relationship between the police and the community, trust can be rebuilt, and a foundation for accountability can be established.

Lastly, by actively engaging with the community, listening to their concerns, and proactively addressing issues, the police can foster trust, cooperation, and accountability. This approach shifts from a reactive model to a proactive one, focusing on preventing problems and improving overall community safety. It enhances police-community relations by building trust and improving communication, and it strengthens police accountability by demonstrating a commitment to addressing community needs and maintaining public safety.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Baguio City Police Office continues:

1. To prioritize and strengthen community involvement in oversight mechanisms. This can be achieved through the establishment of citizen review boards, community policing forums, public meetings, surveys, and other avenues for community input.
2. To actively listen and respond to community concerns and feedback. By valuing the input and perspectives of the community, the police force can build trust, enhance legitimacy, and strengthen the accountability mechanisms within the organization.
3. To implement strategies aimed at improving community perceptions and promoting positive interactions between the police and the public. This can be achieved through various means, such as community outreach programs, public education campaigns, and community-oriented policing initiatives.
4. To actively engage with community organizations, local leaders, and other stakeholders to create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. This can help bridge the gap between the police and the community, allowing for open communication, understanding, and joint problem-solving.
5. To prioritize community engagement and collaboration. This can be achieved through various means, such as establishing advisory councils that include representatives from different sectors of the community, regularly organizing meetings with local government officials and community leaders to gather feedback and recommendations, and actively involving community members in decision-making processes related to policing policies and practices.
6. To focus on developing partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, businesses, schools, and other stakeholders. By working together, they can identify emerging issues, develop

proactive strategies, and implement community-based initiatives aimed at preventing crime and addressing community concerns.

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