

Satisfaction towards Policing during Pandemic an Undergraduate Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Department of Criminal Justice Education UM Digos College Digos City

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Science in Criminology, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.10100438>

Received: 21 January 2026; Accepted: 26 January 2026; Published: 11 February 2026

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes to people's everyday lives. Social distancing, lockdowns, and stay-at-home policies are ways police officers use to combat the pandemic. This study aimed to determine the level of satisfaction with the policing system in times of crisis, participated by 386 residents of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City, selected using random sampling, and analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U Test and the Kruskal-Wallis Test. The results of this study show that citizens' satisfaction with the policing system during crises is high, indicating that police officers primarily carry out policing. Moreover, there is no significant difference in satisfaction with the policing system among citizens during times of crisis when respondents are grouped by age, civil status, and educational attainment. In contrast, male residents are more satisfied than female residents. Further, the findings of this study strongly recommend that police officers and other persons in authority use this as a reference to improve their policing systems, prevent crime, provide effective police service, and maintain peace and order.

Keywords: policing system, level of satisfaction, COVID-19, and significant difference

INTRODUCTION

Citizens' perceptions of the police are critical in determining whether people view the police positively or negatively in terms of their policing system in times of crisis. During COVID-19 pandemic there is a strict implementation of social order, but pandemic did not stop illegal activities of human trafficking and migrant smuggling (Baldridge, 2021). Pandemics also increase intimate partner violence, and this phenomenon alarms the rise of domestic violence (Newman, 2021). There is a massive change brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the drop in the overall crime rate, yet in other cities, homicides and shootings are still rising (Corley, 2020).

A global health crisis with significant repercussions, the COVID-19 pandemic is also an issue for maintaining social order and has had a significant impact on social interactions. The government has attempted to establish a new (temporary) social order with new norms for interactions; it is imperative that policing and maintaining control over this social order be considered fundamental aspects of the present corona crisis (Terpstra et al., 2021). Social orders such as lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing are the top existing police duties, and they are expected to maintain order and continue this policing throughout the pandemic (Laufs & Waseem, 2020). Social distancing and stay-at-home orders were strictly enforced, as physical contact between law enforcement personnel and the public was suspended. Police faced a new challenge in how to modify their responses to the usual calls for service and crime prevention (Brooks & Lopez, 2020).

During the pandemic, Duterte's leadership tapped former military generals and PNP members to assume additional responsibility for maintaining social order and leading the state's pandemic response apparatus (David, 2022). Safety guidelines and the implementation of health protocols are also ways for police enforcers to strengthen their campaign against crime (Servallos, 2021). The crime rate in the Philippines dropped 47% over the past six months, even as the country is under a Covid-19 lockdown. Police commanders have been

ordered to maintain police visibility during the pandemic and to continuously coordinate with local government officials to strengthen peace and order at the community level (Xinhua, 2020).

Locally, there is no report examining levels of satisfaction with policing during times of crisis. Because of this, the researchers feel compelled to conduct a study in Digos City, Davao del Sur, to determine whether there is a significant difference in citizens' levels of satisfaction with policing during crisis, when grouped by demographic profile. This could raise concerns among the people who are supposed to benefit from the study.

According to Barrett (2018), the general deterrence strategy aims to reduce crime and victimization across the population as a whole. That is, reduced opportunity to commit crimes should translate into committing fewer crimes. From a theoretical perspective, curfews are primarily designed to prevent crime and violence by keeping criminals away from opportunities to commit crime. Some view them as part of a more vigorous law-enforcement effort, and others as identifying early stages of delinquency and providing opportunities for intervention programs.

This paper can benefit many groups. Specifically, Philippine National Police (PNP) they can use the result of the study as basis in order to further improve their policing performance in times of crisis; Public, the study can have a great benefit to the public as they could assess their level of satisfaction in the performance on policing of PNP operating in their locality; and, future researchers, they can use the study and make this as their reference for further research.

Research Objectives

This paper aims to determine the level of citizen satisfaction with the policing system during the pandemic. Specifically, it sought to address the following.

1. To determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of.

1.1 age;

1.2 sex;

1.3 civil status; and

1.4 Educational attainment.

2. To determine the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis.

3. To ascertain if there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction of citizens with policing in times of crises when grouped according to their profile.

METHOD

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the citizens living in Brgy. Zone 1 Digos City, Davao del Sur, for at least 3 years, both male and female, aged 18 years old and above. Residents aged 15 or below who have resided in the barangay for less than 3 years are excluded from participating in the study. Also, stratified sampling was used to select the respondents. This sampling enables the researchers to obtain a sample that represents the entire population (Taylor, 2023).

Materials and Instruments

This study used the questionnaire developed by Werling, Chintakrindi, Clark, Morris, Perry, and Randol (2018). It consists of two parts: the first is the demographic profile of the respondents, including their names, ages, sexes, and educational attainment, and the second is the indicators. The respondent completed the questionnaire online via Google Forms and also via a face-to-face survey. The means are scaled from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), and the descriptive equivalent and interpretation are provided. The research personnel

validated the questionnaire used in the study before it was administered. Below is a guide for interpreting the results of this study.

Scale	Range of Means	Verbal Description	Descriptive Meaning
5	4.20 - 5.00	Very High	This indicates that a police officer always performs the item described in the questionnaire.
4	3.40 - 4.19	High	This indicates that police officers frequently perform the item described in the questionnaire.
3	2.60 - 3.39	Medium	This indicates that a police officer sometimes performs the item described in the questionnaire.
2	1.80 - 2.59	Low	This indicates that police officers seldom do the item described in the questionnaire.
1	1.00 - 1.79	Very Low	This indicates that a police officer never does the item described in the questionnaire.

Design and Procedure

This study employed descriptive research. The primary purpose of this design is to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of the measured variable (Cantrell, 2011). The researchers particularly described the level of satisfaction of citizens with the police officers' policing system, in terms of their engagement with the community, their responsiveness to citizens' concerns, and their actions to address problems in society, especially in times of crisis. This research design is appropriate for helping the researchers determine the level of citizen satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis.

Regarding data gathering, these are the procedures the researchers followed. First, ask for permission from the research office and the Dean of UM Digos College to conduct this study. Next, the researchers wrote a letter addressed to the Brgy. Captain of the Brgy. Zone 1, Digos City, Davao Del Sur, to have the list of the population in their Barangay, for the researchers to determine the number of respondents needed with the help of the statistician. Another letter was addressed to the Brgy. Captain to request permission to gather data from the residents. After that, the survey commenced. Lastly, the data were analyzed to produce results and recommendations aligned with the study's objectives.

The researchers then analyzed and interpreted the data and came up with the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The mean, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis test were employed as statistical tools in this study. The **mean** was used to determine the level of citizen satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis in Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. The **Mann-Whitney U Test** was used to identify a significant difference in satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis in Digos City, analyzed by sex. The **Kruskal-Wallis Test** was used to identify the significant difference in the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City when analyzed by age, civil status, and educational attainment.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with strong adherence to the ethical protocols and guidelines established by the UM Digos College Ethics Committee. In order to complete this study, the researchers seek out and obtained

consent from significant administrators and instructors. The researchers confirmed the value of the selected Barangays in Digos City. The respondents were given informed consent to ensure they were fully aware of the benefits of this study and to assure them that their rights, particularly regarding the management of the information, would be adequately protected. For the privacy and protection of respondents' identities, their identities shall remain anonymous. Also, the information the researchers collected from the respondents was protected and kept confidential to ensure their safety.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the characteristics of 386 residents of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. As for the sex, there were 185 males and 201 females; thus, most responses came from female residents. In terms of age, most responses came from 21-25-year-olds, with 97 responses. This was followed by 26-30 years old with 86 responses, then 18-20 years old with 71 responses, then 31-35 years old with 49 responses, then 41 years old and above with 48 responses, and lastly, 36-40 years old with 35 responses. Other characteristics of the residents included civil status: single residents were the lead contributors with 220 responses, followed by married with 181 responses, widower with 8 responses, and separated with only 7 responses. The last characteristic was the educational attainment of the residents, with college undergraduate receiving 158 responses, followed by high school with 121 responses, college graduate with 60 responses, others with 38 responses, elementary with 6 responses, and post-baccalaureate with only 3 responses.

Table 1. Characteristics of 386 residents included in the study

Profile	F	%
Sex		
Male	185	47.9
Female	201	52.1
Age		
18-20 yrs. Old	71	18.4
21-25 yrs. Old	97	25.1
26-30 yrs. Old	86	22.3
31-35 yrs. Old	49	12.7
36-40 yrs. Old	35	9.1
41 yrs. old and above	48	12.4
Civil Status		
Single	220	57.0
Married	151	39.1
Widower	8	2.1
Separated	7	1.8
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	6	1.6
High School	121	31.3
College Undergraduate	158	40.9
College Graduate	60	15.5
Post Baccalaureate	3	.8
Others	38	9.8

Satisfaction Level on the Policing System in Times of Crisis

Table 2 shows respondents' satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis among the 386 respondents in Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. The level of satisfaction had a mean of 4.09 (SD=0.590) with a high verbal description, indicating that police officers frequently carry out policing. This can be justified by the means for each question, which are mostly high.

These findings conformed to the study by Muscato (2021), who stated that Police Community Relations is one of the important keys for citizens to gain trust in police officers, and with this trust, police work becomes effective, especially in preventing crime. In this regard, public trust serves to secure community cooperation in maintaining order and ensuring peace and security (Tamayo, 2018). With this, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) states that building a trust is important to have effective policing and since the question number 1, *the police officer develops a relationship with the community members (e.g., residents, organizations, and groups)* answered by the respondents has the highest mean of 4.37 (SD=0.664) this means citizens have trust and good relationship to the police officer that is why police officer can have effective policing and the citizen is satisfied to policing of the police officers.

Table 2. Level of satisfaction among citizens on the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City, n = 386

	\bar{x}	SD
Satisfaction with the policing system in times of crisis	4.09	0.590

Significant Difference on the Level of Satisfaction with the Policing System According to Demographic Profiles

The results show that age, civil status, and educational attainment do not differ significantly in their levels of satisfaction with the policing system in times of crisis, whereas sex does.

Sex. Table 3 illustrates a significant difference in satisfaction with the policing system

during a crisis by sex among the citizens of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. It shows that there is a significant difference between male (*mean rank* = 214.47, *Sum of ranks* = 39676.50) and female (*mean* = 174.20, *Sum of ranks* = 35014.50) residents' satisfaction on the policing system in times of crisis in Barangay Zone 1, Digos City, *Mann-Whitney U* (384) = 14713.500, *p* < .01. This means that males have higher satisfaction than females.

Table 3. *Mann-Whitney U* test results showing the differences in the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City, when analyzed by sex

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig.
Male	185	214.47	39676.50	14713.500	-3.545	.000**
Female	201	174.20	35014.50			

p*<0.05, *p*<0.01

Denney (2019) stated that males and females have experienced different crimes and different safety concerns, which is why gender equality should be integrated into policing to give safety and justice to all people. In regard to this, domestic violence and sexually violent crimes really affect women, which is why they need to improve the policing opportunities for women and for them to easily access justice (Sebrie, 2020). In addition, Profeta et al. (2021) state that the pandemic and associated economic crisis have impacted women differently than men, and that the unemployment rate for females has also increased. These men are the ones who rampantly go out and observe the policing system of the police officer, because men have equal access to our economy during the pandemic.

Age. Table 4 illustrates a significant difference in the age level of satisfaction with the policing system during a crisis among the citizens of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. A Kruskal-Wallis test on differences showed that there is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis in Digos City across age groups, *Chi-square* (5,380) = 4.173, *p* = .525. This result states that, regardless of age, citizens have the same level of satisfaction with the policing system; they have the exact wants and needs that police officers need to fulfill, especially in preventing crime.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis test on the differences in the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City, when analyzed by age

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
18-20 yrs. Old	71	176.11	4.173	5	.525
21-25 yrs. Old	97	202.80			
26-30 yrs. Old	86	202.09			
31-35 yrs. Old	49	195.50			
36-40 yrs. Old	35	173.10			
41 yrs. old and above	48	197.86			
Total	386				

* $p<0.05$

Community members, regardless of age, rely on police officers to protect the community from the spread of the virus and other crimes.

Devlin and Cornibert (2020) stated that social distancing and other measures were implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, police officers and the government are ensuring the public and the people in the community, regardless of their age, are protected not only from the threat of public health being brought by COVID-19 but also from other crimes such as domestic violence, gangs, and drugs (Jones, 2020).

Civil Status. Table 5 illustrates a significant difference in civil status levels of satisfaction with the policing system during a crisis among the citizens of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. A Kruskal-Wallis test on differences showed that there is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis in Barangay Zone 1, Digos City, across civil status groups (*Chi-square* (3,382) = 4.541, $p = .209$). This states that even though people differ in their civil status, there is still no significant difference in their level of satisfaction with policing during times of crisis.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis test on the differences in the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City, when analyzed by civil status

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Single	220	194.18	4.541	3	.209
Married	151	192.97			
Widower	8	131.69			
Separated	7	254.14			
Total	386				

* $p<0.05$

It is due to that situation that all the rules and regulations implemented during the pandemic are applied equally to all, regardless of their civil status.

Mehdizadeh and Kamkar (2020) stated that every citizen, regardless of their civil status, has the duty to follow and respect social distancing, and they observed police officers' alternative policing measures during the pandemic. In addition, the government restricted social life to enforce new safety measures to respond to this crisis, and the decisions of the police department were fair as evaluated by the citizens (Maskaly, Ivkovic, & Neyroud, 2021).

Educational Attainment. Table 6 illustrates a significant difference in educational attainment in the level of satisfaction with the policing system during a crisis among the citizens of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City. A Kruskal-Wallis test on differences showed that there is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis in Barangay Zone 1, Digos City, across

educational attainment groups (*Chi-square* (5,380) = 9.893, *p* = .078). This means that regardless of your educational attainment, there is no significant difference in satisfaction levels, and you are not exempt from the effects of COVID-19.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis test on the differences in the level of satisfaction among citizens with the policing system in times of crisis in Digos City, when analyzed by educational attainment

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Elementary	6	272.33	9.893	5	.078
High School	121	207.44			
College Undergraduate	158	195.55			
College Graduate	60	167.28			
Post Baccalaureate	3	175.83			
Others	38	170.93			
Total	386				

**p*<0.05

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on an individual's quality of life. It resulted in a global public health crisis, and whatever your educational attainment, you are not exempt from its effects. The closure of workplaces, schools, and social interactions was being reduced (Darmody, Smyth & Russell, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings revealed the demographic profile of the respondents in this study: 201 females and 185 males participated, and those aged 21-25 years had the most responses. Also, single individuals had the highest response rate, and lastly, college undergraduates had the highest response rate. When it comes to the level of satisfaction among the citizens of Barangay Zone 1, Digos City on the policing system in times of crisis, the results is high, meaning that the policing was frequently done by police officers as observed by the residents that even though in times of crisis, police officer still do their jobs in serving the people, maintaining peace and order, having good relations with the community, and imposing policing system that helps them to protect the public and to prevent crimes. When respondents were grouped by age, civil status, and educational attainment, there was no significant difference in their level of satisfaction with the policing system during times of crisis. This is because, regardless of age, civil status, or educational attainment, the policing implemented during times of crisis is applied to all. While sex shows a significant difference, it suggests that males have been more frequently observed by police officers.

Based on the results of this study, the researchers of this quantitative research present the following recommendations:

The **Barangay Captain** is encouraged to give importance to the results of this study. Also, to encourage the community member to maintain the relationship, support the officer, and follow the ordinances created by the officer, since this is one of the keys to citizens trusting officers and to the police being effective in preventing crime.

The **Residents** should positively cooperate and actively participate in all police department activities to maintain peace and order in the community. They also need to continue building trust with the police officers so that it is easier for the officers to communicate with and build relationships with the public. In this way, police officers can easily do their job and be effective in preventing crime.

The **police officers** shall be informed of the findings of this study, as they can help determine the problems citizens have encountered with crime and the services they want. In this way, they can determine how they can improve their policing system and how they can prevent future crimes to protect the public. Thus, this study can serve as a reference for police officers to improve their service.

Future Researchers may use this as a reference and should strengthen the knowledge and conclusions of this research study. They can go deeper into the different perspectives of this study that were not adequately addressed.

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