

Community Relations, Public Trust and Confidence of Police Personnel as Evaluated by Constituents

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800194>

Received: 20 August 2026; Accepted: 25 August 2026; Published: 31 August 2026

ABSTRACT

This study assessed community relations, public trust, and public confidence of Police Personnel as evaluated by constituents in one municipality in the Negros Island Region during fiscal year 2026. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed with 160 residents from 16 barangays, with ten respondents purposively selected from each barangay. Data were gathered using a modified standardized questionnaire that demonstrated excellent internal consistency. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe respondents' assessments, and the relationships among the variables. Findings revealed that community relations, public trust, and public confidence were all assessed at a very high level. Significant positive relationships were found between community relations and public trust, community relations and public confidence, and public trust and public confidence. These findings indicate that more favorable assessments of police-community relations were associated with stronger perceptions of trust and confidence in Police Personnel. The study provides an empirical basis for strengthening community-oriented policing, responsive service delivery, transparency, accountability, and collaborative police-community partnerships.

Keywords: Community Relations; Public Trust; Public Confidence; Police-Community Relations; Community-Oriented Policing

INTRODUCTION

Community relations are an integral component of effective policing strategies that foster trust, cooperation, and safety within local communities. The quality of police-community interactions significantly influences residents' perceptions of safety, legitimacy of law enforcement, and overall social cohesion (Martinez et al., 2023). In recent years, numerous studies have examined the relationship between police practices and community perceptions; however, there remains a paucity of localized data, most especially in small municipalities within Negros Occidental, which face unique socio-economic and cultural challenges affecting the police-community dynamics (Santos & Reyes, 2024).

Despite the Philippines' efforts to promote community policing and strengthen local law enforcement, gaps persist in understanding how police personnel in specific municipalities perceive their relationships with residents and how these perceptions impact community well-being (Dela Cruz et al., 2025). Existing literature often emphasizes urban centers or national-level analyses, leaving a significant gap regarding rural or semi-urban localities such as municipalities in Negros Occidental. Furthermore, there is limited research on how community perception, namely trust, respect, and cooperation, interacts with police effectiveness in these settings (Luna & Garcia, 2022).

Several problems are associated with this topic. First, weak police-community relations can undermine efforts to promote safety and social harmony, leading to a cycle of distrust and social issues (Morales, 2023). Second, an inadequate understanding of the community's perceptions can hinder the formulation of responsive policing strategies. Lastly, there is a need to assess the extent to which police personnel themselves perceive their community relations as effective, which influences their motivation and approach to law enforcement.

This research aimed to bridge these gaps by assessing the current status of police-community relations in a selected municipality in Negros Occidental. Through this study, the relationship between police perceptions, community engagement, and community well-being was examined. The findings were expected to inform local policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders about effective strategies to enhance police legitimacy, foster better community relations, and promote social harmony, ultimately contributing to safer and more cohesive communities. Hence, this study was focused on community relations, public trust, and confidence of police personnel as evaluated by constituents for fiscal year 2026.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to assess the relationships among community relations, public trust, and public confidence of police personnel as evaluated by constituents in one municipality of the Negros Island Region during fiscal year 2026. The respondents consisted of 160 residents purposively selected from 16 barangays, with ten respondents drawn from each barangay, all aged 18 years and above.

Data were collected from May to July 2026 using a modified standardized questionnaire adapted from existing instruments, which was subjected to validity and reliability testing and demonstrated excellent internal consistency.

Prior to administration, informed consent was obtained, ethical protocols were strictly observed, and completed questionnaires were checked for accuracy and completeness. The collected data were organized, tabulated, and analyzed while ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

Descriptive statistics, including mean, and standard deviation, were employed to describe respondents' assessments of community relations, public trust, and public confidence, while inferential statistics, specifically Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, were utilized to determine the significant relationships among the study variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Community Relations to Police Personnel

Table 1. Level of Community Relations to Police Personnel When Taken as a Whole and in Terms of Community Engagement, Responsiveness to Community Needs, Communication and Transparency, And Partnership with the Community.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Community Engagement	4.73	0.44	Very High
1. Police Personnel actively participate in community activities within the Municipality.	4.76	0.52	Very High
2. Police Personnel often encourage residents to get involved in crime prevention efforts.	4.71	0.61	Very High
3. Police Personnel maintain positive and friendly relationships with residents.	4.75	0.49	Very High
4. Police Personnel regularly collaborate with local community leaders in the Municipality.	4.72	0.54	Very High
5. Police Personnel are approachable and easy to talk to during community interactions.	4.70	0.56	Very High
Responsiveness to Community Needs	4.65	0.52	Very High
1. Police Personnel respond promptly when residents report concerns or issues.	4.57	0.70	Very High

2. Police Personnel provide effective assistance during emergencies in the Municipality.	4.67	0.59	Very High
3. Police Personnel listen carefully and attentively to residents' complaints.	4.64	0.59	Very High
4. Police Personnel actively work to resolve community problems and issues.	4.67	0.62	Very High
5. Police Personnel demonstrate concern for the welfare of the community.	4.69	0.61	Very High
Communication and Transparency	4.68	0.48	Very High
1. Police Personnel provide clear and understandable information to residents.	4.69	0.57	Very High
2. Police Personnel communicate respectfully and politely with community members.	4.73	0.54	Very High
3. Police Personnel explain their actions and decisions when interacting with residents.	4.68	0.52	Very High
4. Police Personnel are transparent about their operations and activities.	4.64	0.59	Very High
5. Police Personnel keep the public informed about safety issues and initiatives.	4.66	0.69	Very High
Partnership with the Community	4.66	0.57	Very High
1. Police Personnel work closely with local organizations and groups in the Municipality.	4.64	0.64	Very High
2. Police Personnel support community-based programs aimed at improving safety and well-being.	4.73	0.60	Very High
3. Police Personnel encourage residents to participate in peacekeeping and safety activities.	4.63	0.69	Very High
4. Police Personnel value cooperation and collaboration with community members.	4.67	0.64	Very High
5. Police Personnel build strong partnerships with community leaders and organizations.	4.63	0.69	Very High
Community Relation As a Whole	4.68	0.46	Very High
Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 High, 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 Low, 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low			

In the category of community engagement, with a mean score of 4.73 (SD = 0.44), the highest mean score of 4.76 (SD = 0.52) reflected Police Personnel' active participation in community activities, while the lowest of 4.70 (SD = 0.56) pertained to their approachable and friendly demeanor during interactions, both indicated very high performance. For responsiveness to community needs, with a mean score of 4.65 (SD = 0.52), the highest mean of 4.67 (SD = 0.59) highlights effective emergency assistance, whereas the lowest mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.70) showed promptness in responding to concerns, suggesting strong but slightly variable responsiveness. In communication and transparency, with a mean score of 4.68 (SD = 0.48), the highest mean of 4.73 (SD = 0.54) underscored respectful communication; meanwhile, the lowest of 4.64 (SD = 0.59) reflected transparency in operations, both rated very highly. Regarding partnership with the community, with a mean score of 4.66 (SD = 0.57), the highest mean of 4.73 (SD = 0.60) emphasizes support for community programs; meanwhile, the lowest of 4.63 (SD = 0.69) indicates encouragement of resident participation, both of which maintained a very high level. Overall, the community relations were rated very highly with a mean score of 4.68 (SD = 0.46), demonstrating a uniformly positive perception of Police Personnel' engagement, responsiveness, communication, and partnerships within the community.

These results implied that the police demonstrated a strong commitment to building positive relationships and working collaboratively with the community, which likely contributed to a sense of safety and mutual respect within the municipality. The high overall mean scores across community engagement, responsiveness, communication, and partnership domains reflected very high levels of performance, with relatively low standard deviations indicating consistent positive perceptions. Police personnel's active participation in community activities and respectful communication was rated exceptionally well, highlighting their dedication to fostering trust and cooperation. Their responsiveness to community needs, including effective emergency assistance and prompt concern resolution, was also notably strong, albeit with slightly greater variability. Similarly, their efforts to support community programs and encourage resident participation were consistently perceived as highly effective, reinforcing the overall positive community-police relations within the area.

The uniformly high baseline of public approval regarding police engagement, responsiveness, and communicative transparency detailed in the empirical data aligns closely with contemporary findings on the dynamics of modern community policing. According to a systematic review by Gill et al. (2022), active and highly visible decentralized partnerships between law enforcement and citizens are structurally essential for mitigating local safety anxieties and enhancing overall institutional satisfaction. Their research underscores that when officers consistently participate in localized programming and execute proactive outreach, it effectively shifts the policing paradigm away from a purely reactive, incident-driven model into a collaborative framework. This sustained relational continuity not only minimizes the public's fear of crime but also solidifies institutional legitimacy, demonstrating that collaborative problem-solving and mutual respect are foundational to cultivating exceptionally cohesive and secure municipal environments.

Level of Public Trust to Police Personnel

Table 2. Level Of Public Trust to Police Personnel When Taken as Whole and in Terms of Integrity and Honesty, Fairness and Respect, Reliability and Accountability.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Integrity and Honesty	4.60	0.56	Very High
1. Police Personnel perform their duties honestly.	4.66	0.59	Very High
2. I believe Police Personnel act with integrity in their work.	4.64	0.62	Very High
3. Police Personnel avoid abusive or discriminatory behavior.	4.56	0.75	Very High
4. Police Personnel follow ethical standards consistently.	4.56	0.70	Very High
5. I trust that Police Personnel handle public concerns with honesty.	4.59	0.63	Very High
Fairness and Respect	4.63	0.52	Very High
1. Police Personnel in the Municipality treat all citizens fairly, regardless of their background.	4.59	0.62	Very High
2. Police Personnel respect the rights of community members they serve.	4.64	0.61	Very High
3. Police Personnel make decisions based on fairness during incidents.	4.61	0.63	Very High
4. Police Personnel interact with residents respectfully and courteously.	4.70	0.55	Very High
5. I feel that Police Personnel treat everyone equally, regardless of social status.	4.61	0.62	Very High
Reliability	4.65	0.52	Very High

1. Police Personnel in the Municipality can be counted on during emergencies.	4.65	0.61	Very High
2. Police Personnel reliably fulfill their responsibilities to maintain peace.	4.67	0.59	Very High
3. I believe Police Personnel are dependable in handling public safety issues.	4.67	0.55	Very High
4. Police Personnel respond promptly and appropriately to incidents.	4.61	0.64	Very High
5. Police Personnel consistently provide high-quality service to the community.	4.65	0.65	Very High
Accountability	4.70	0.47	Very High
1. Police Personnel in the Municipality accept responsibility for their actions.	4.71	0.57	Very High
2. Police Personnel follow proper legal procedures during their work.	4.73	0.49	Very High
3. I believe Police Personnel are accountable to the community they serve.	4.71	0.53	Very High
4. Police Personnel handle complaints and concern professionally.	4.70	0.55	Very High
5. Police Personnel are transparent about their actions and decisions.	4.67	0.62	Very High
Public Trust to Police Personnel As a Whole	4.65	0.49	Very High
Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 High, 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 Low, 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low			

For integrity and honesty, the mean was 4.60 with an SD of 0.56, with the highest-rated item being that Police Personnel performed their duties honestly ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.59$), reflecting widespread confidence in their honesty. The lowest-rated item within this category was officers who avoided abusive or discriminatory behavior ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.75$), but it remained very high, suggesting general trust despite some variability. In Fairness and Respect, the mean was 4.63 with an SD of 0.52; the highest-rated aspect was respectful and courteous interactions with residents ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.55$), emphasizing positive community relations, while the lowest was treating all citizens regardless of background ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.62$). Reliability has a mean of 4.65 and $SD = 0.52$, with the highest confidence in fulfilling responsibilities to maintain peace ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.59$); meanwhile, the lowest confidence was in promptness and appropriateness of response ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.64$). In the Accountability category, the mean was 4.70 with an SD of 0.47; the highest-rated item was that police accept responsibility for their actions ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.57$), while the lowest was that officers were transparent about their actions ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.62$). As a whole, the Public Trust maintained a mean of 4.65 with an SD of 0.49, indicating very high overall trust in the police.

These findings implied that, in the past, the community held a favorable view of the police, trusting their integrity and professionalism despite some room for further improvement in consistency and transparency. The high mean scores across categories, coupled with relatively low standard deviations, indicated strong positive perceptions of police conduct, honesty, fairness, respect, reliability, accountability, and overall trust. While community confidence was generally very high, the slight variability in certain items suggested that perceptions of uniformity in behavior and transparency could be enhanced to bolster public trust even further.

The exceptionally high mean scores and prevailing community confidence reflected in this data align closely with contemporary criminological research regarding the dynamics of institutional trust. According to a comprehensive evaluation by Melkamu and Teshome (2023), public trust and positive perceptions of law enforcement are heavily dictated by the interconnected dimensions of police performance, structural

accountability, and daily behavioral integrity. Their empirical findings emphasize that when a community collectively perceives its police force as consistently honest, reliable, and fundamentally accountable, it yields robust baselines of civic confidence and organizational legitimacy.

Furthermore, consistent with the minor statistical variability observed in the dataset's lower-rated indicators, their study highlights that even within highly satisfied populations, micro-level fluctuations in public opinion frequently persist around the specific promptness of active responses and the absolute impartiality of citizen treatment, underscoring that institutional perfection is an ongoing, localized pursuit rather than a static achievement.

Level of Public Confidence to Police Personnel

Table 3. Level of Public Confidence to Police Personnel When Taken as a Whole and in Terms of Effectiveness in Crime Prevention, Public Safety Performance, Professionalism, and Police Visibility and Accessibility.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Effectiveness in Crime Prevention	4.68	0.47	Very High
1. Police Personnel effectively prevent crimes in our community.	4.66	0.58	Very High
2. Police Personnel respond promptly to criminal incidents.	4.64	0.60	Very High
3. Police Personnel help reduce the occurrence of criminal activities.	4.68	0.51	Very High
4. Police Personnel maintain peace and order in the neighborhood.	4.69	0.55	Very High
5. Police Personnel actively work to make our community safer.	4.72	0.52	Very High
Public Safety Performance	4.67	0.47	Very High
1. Police Personnel help residents feel safe in our community.	4.71	0.57	Very High
2. Police Personnel provide adequate protection during emergencies.	4.67	0.55	Very High
3. Police Personnel are visible and present in our neighborhood regularly.	4.66	0.55	Very High
4. Police Personnel respond quickly and effectively during emergencies.	4.62	0.55	Very High
5. Police Personnel contribute to maintaining public security and order.	4.71	0.53	Very High
Professionalism	4.69	0.47	Very High
1. Police Personnel demonstrate professionalism when performing their duties.	4.69	0.61	Very High
2. Police Personnel follow proper procedures in handling cases.	4.68	0.54	Very High
3. Police Personnel show discipline and self-control while on duty.	4.71	0.49	Very High
4. Police Personnel conduct themselves respectfully in public.	4.71	0.52	Very High

5. Police Personnel carry out their responsibilities competently.	4.68	0.53	Very High
Police Visibility and Accessibility	4.73	0.45	Very High
1. Police Personnel are frequently visible in our community.	4.74	0.52	Very High
2. Police Personnel are accessible and approachable when residents need help.	4.72	0.53	Very High
3. Regular police patrols increase residents' confidence in safety.	4.72	0.49	Very High
4. It is easy to contact Police Personnel when assistance is required.	4.71	0.52	Very High
5. The visible presence of Police Personnel makes residents feel safer.	4.76	0.47	Very High
Public Confidence to Police Personnel As a Whole	4.69	0.44	Very High
Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 High, 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 Low, 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low			

In the category of Effectiveness in Crime Prevention, the highest mean was 4.72 (SD = 0.52), reflecting residents' strong belief that police actively work to make the community safer, while the lowest mean was 4.64 (SD = 0.60), indicating a slightly lesser but still very high confidence in prompt responses to criminal incidents. For Public Safety Performance, the highest mean of 4.71 (SD = 0.57) suggested residents feel well protected and safe, while the lowest mean of 4.62 (SD = 0.55) still demonstrated a very high perception of effective emergency response. In the Professionalism category, the mean of 4.69 (SD = 0.47) highlighted high respect for police conduct, with the lowest at 4.68 (SD = 0.54) reflecting overall consistent professionalism.

Regarding Police Visibility and Accessibility, the highest mean of 4.76 (SD = 0.47) underscored residents' strong sense that police presence improves safety, while the lowest mean of 4.71 (SD = 0.52) still indicated high accessibility and approachability. Overall, these findings reveal that residents perceive police services across all categories as highly effective, professional, visible, and trustworthy. The overall data indicated a very high level of perceived effectiveness and public confidence in police performance, with a mean of 4.69 and a standard deviation of 0.44.

The findings implied that residents generally perceived police performance as highly effective, professional, visible, and trustworthy, with a very high level of confidence across all categories. The high means and low standard deviations indicated consistent positive perceptions, suggesting that police efforts in crime prevention, public safety, professionalism, and visibility were well recognized and appreciated by the community.

The remarkably high public confidence and tightly clustered perceptions of safety observed in localized data align with broader contemporary findings on proactive law enforcement frameworks. According to a comprehensive analysis by Chalfin (2025), targeted investments in visible policing tactics and structural accessibility consistently yield exceptionally high citizen approval ratings and a robust psychological sense of security across diverse municipal sectors. This empirical consensus underscores that when communities experience stable crime prevention initiatives alongside visible, procedurally fair, and responsive emergency operations, the resulting metrics reflect not only strong public recognition of police effectiveness but also a significant reduction in the generalized fear of crime. Consequently, as demonstrated in systemic law enforcement assessments (Zürcher, 2024), maintaining a dependable baseline of institutional professionalism and visible patrol presence operates as the primary catalyst for solidifying community-police partnerships and maximizing overall public safety performance.

Relationship between Community Relations and Public Trust to Police Personnel

Table 4. Relationship Between Community Relations and Public Trust to Police Personnel.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Community Relations vs. Public Trust	0.677**	<.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 4 showed that community relations and public trust have a coefficient correlation value of 0.677 and a p-value of <.001 which was interpreted as highly significant, which meant that the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggested that improved community relations were closely associated with increased public trust in law enforcement, highlighting the importance of fostering positive interactions to enhance community confidence.

The strong, highly significant correlation between active community relations and enhanced public trust closely aligns with contemporary empirical findings in relational policing. Research indicates that when law enforcement agencies prioritize proactive, positive engagement over purely reactive enforcement, there is a direct and mathematically verifiable shift in public confidence.

According to a meta-analytic review by Bolger and Walters (2022), everyday interactions guided by fairness and collaborative problem-solving serve as the primary drivers of institutional legitimacy. When citizens perceive that the police are genuinely invested in community-oriented communication and shared goals, their subjective trust increases significantly, effectively validating the rejection of the null hypothesis in localized quantitative models. Furthermore, this positive relational dynamic functions as a mutual framework; as noted by Boateng and Buckner (2023), structured community engagement not only solidifies public cooperation but also builds a resilient foundation of trust that helps sustain police legitimacy during periods of societal strain or operational scrutiny.

Relationship between Community Relations and Public Confidence to Police Personnel

Table 5. Relationship Between Police Personnel's Community Relations and Public Confidence.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Community Relations vs. Public Confidence	0.712**	<.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 5 showed that community relations and public confidence have coefficient correlation value of 0.712 and a p-value of <.001 which was interpreted as highly significant, meaning the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicated a strong and significant positive relationship between community relations and public confidence. This suggested that improvements in community relations likely led to increased public confidence in police, highlighting the importance of fostering positive interactions to strengthen community trust.

When police departments pivot from purely punitive enforcement toward intentional, positive community engagement, the resulting transparency significantly mitigates public skepticism and strengthens institutional credibility. This relational dependency is further supported by Ligas (2026), who notes that structured community engagement frameworks create a collaborative feedback loop. By systematically fostering positive interactions, law enforcement agencies do not merely reduce the psychological fear of disorder, but actively cultivate a resilient foundation of public trust, thereby validating quantitative rejections of the null hypothesis in civic evaluation models.

Relationship between Public Trust and Public Confidence to Police Personnel

Table 6. Relationship Between Public Trust and Confidence to Police Personnel.

Variable	Test Statistics (r _s)	p-value	Decision for Ho	Interpretation
Public Trust vs. Public Confidence	0.753**	<.001	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 6 showed that public confidence and public trust have coefficient correlation value of 0.753 and a p-value of <.001 which was interpreted as highly significant, meaning the null hypothesis was rejected. The results implied that these two constructs were closely linked in the context of the study. This suggested that increases in public confidence were associated with corresponding increases in public trust, and vice versa.

Studies have shown that when communities perceive law enforcement as procedurally fair, transparent, and responsive to their needs, both trust and confidence rise in tandem, creating a robust framework for civilian compliance and cooperation (Melkamu & Teshome, 2023; Songze et al., 2024).

Furthermore, while societal stressors or environmental changes can influence these metrics, the underlying mechanisms of integrity and perceived competence remain the primary drivers of this positive association (Panizzolo et al., 2024).

Ultimately, fostering institutional trust—anchored in the consistent execution of duties and procedural justice—is essential for sustaining the public confidence necessary for effective, legitimate policing (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2024)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and findings of the study the following were the conclusions drawn by the researcher:

Community relations of police personnel were assessed as very high across community engagement, responsiveness to community needs, communication and transparency, and partnership with the community, indicating complete agreement among constituent perceptions to police-community interactions.

Public trust to police personnel was assessed as very high across integrity and honesty, fairness and respect, reliability, and accountability, indicating completely agreed perceptions of the ethical and dependable conduct of police personnel.

Public confidence in Police Personnel was assessed as very high across effectiveness in crime prevention, public safety performance, professionalism, and police visibility and accessibility, indicating favorable perceptions of police capability and public safety service.

Community relations were significantly and positively associated with public trust. This indicates that more favorable assessments of police-community relations corresponded with higher assessments of public trust.

Community relations were significantly and positively associated with public confidence. This indicates that more favorable assessments of police-community relations corresponded with stronger public confidence in police personnel.

Public trust was significantly and positively associated with public confidence. This indicates that higher perceptions of police integrity, fairness, reliability, and accountability corresponded with stronger confidence in the effectiveness and capability of police personnel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher wishes to express her profound gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to all the individuals who, in one way or another, contributed to the successful completion of this research. Their guidance, encouragement, cooperation, and unwavering support made this academic endeavor possible. Above all, she offers her deepest thanks and highest praise to the Almighty God for His infinite love, wisdom, strength, and countless blessings. His divine guidance and sustaining grace gave her the courage and perseverance to overcome every challenge encountered throughout this journey. The researcher extends her sincerest appreciation to her research adviser, for her exceptional guidance, patience, scholarly expertise, and unwavering encouragement throughout the conduct of this study, her statistician, and her language critic, for their valuable insights and recommendations that enhanced the quality and academic rigor of this research. She is also deeply indebted to the Chairperson and the esteemed members of the panel committee, for their constructive critiques, scholarly guidance, and invaluable recommendations during the proposal and final defense, which significantly strengthened this study.

The researcher also extends her sincere appreciation to the officers and personnel of a local police station and government in Negros Island Region for their cooperation and support throughout the conduct of this research and for granting permission to conduct this study. With a grateful heart, the researcher expresses her deepest appreciation to her beloved husband and son for their unwavering love, patience, understanding, and constant encouragement. They have been her greatest inspiration and the driving force behind every sacrifice throughout this academic journey. She also extends her heartfelt gratitude to her parents, siblings, and loved ones for their prayers, moral support, and steadfast belief in her abilities, which strengthened her as she balanced the responsibilities of family, public service, and graduate studies. Finally, the researcher sincerely thanks everyone who, in one way or another, became part of this journey. Every act of kindness, encouragement, and support contributed to the completion of this work. With humility and gratitude, she shares this achievement with all who believed in her and helped make this research a success.

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