

Building Public Satisfaction through Trust: The Roles of Service Performance, Community Policing, and Technology Integration

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Abstract

Public satisfaction with law enforcement and public service institutions has become an increasingly critical issue in governance, particularly in contexts where institutional legitimacy is contested. This conceptual paper proposes a framework that integrates service performance, community policing, and technology integration as antecedents of public satisfaction, with trust serving as the central mediating construct. Drawing on Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory, the study argues that operational efficiency, inclusivity, and technological transparency are necessary but not sufficient conditions for sustaining citizen satisfaction. Instead, trust functions as the key mechanism that channels these institutional practices into lasting perceptions of legitimacy and confidence. Service performance is contributed by ensuring responsiveness and professionalism, while community policing enhances inclusivity and citizen engagement. Technology integration adds value by fostering transparency and efficiency; nevertheless, its ultimate effectiveness depends on the degree of institutional trust it generates. The proposed framework positions trust as both an outcome of institutional practices and a mediator that transforms performance and engagement into satisfaction. This paper makes theoretical contributions by combining operational, relational, and technological dimensions within a unified trust-based model of satisfaction. Practical and policy implications include the need for continuous investment in service performance, the institutionalization of community policing programs, and the responsible integration of digital technologies. By highlighting trust as the linchpin of satisfaction, this conceptual study guides future empirical research. It offers a pathway for strengthening legitimacy in public service delivery.

Keywords: Service Performance, Community Policing, Technology Integration, Trust, Public Satisfaction



1 Introduction

Public satisfaction with law enforcement and public service agencies has become a critical issue in contemporary governance. Citizens increasingly expect service performance that is professional, reliable, and responsive, coupled with transparent engagement and accountability (Alonso et al., 2022). In many societies, however, the relationship between law enforcement institutions and the public is fragile, with declining trust often reported in surveys on institutional legitimacy (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). This erosion of trust has significant implications, as public satisfaction is not only a measure of service quality but also a key determinant of institutional credibility, compliance, and cooperation (Stavrova et al., 2022). In Malaysia and other emerging economies, where community safety and effective governance remain top policy priorities, enhancing public satisfaction requires attention to multiple factors, including service performance, community policing initiatives, and the integration of technology into policing systems.

The role of service performance in shaping satisfaction is widely acknowledged in the literature on public administration and policing. High-quality service delivery, characterized by efficiency, responsiveness, and fairness, can significantly improve perceptions of legitimacy and satisfaction (Othman et al., 2021). Conversely, inadequate performance tends to erode public trust and reinforce negative attitudes towards institutions. Community policing, which emphasizes partnership, inclusivity, and proactive engagement, has emerged as another important factor in improving public satisfaction. By fostering stronger connections between police officers and citizens, community policing initiatives can generate greater trust and enhance cooperation, thereby strengthening the social contract between institutions and the public (Tankebe & Reisig, 2021).

At the same time, rapid advancements in technology have reshaped the way law enforcement agencies interact with citizens. Digital platforms, body-worn cameras, and data-driven policing strategies have introduced new levels of transparency and accountability (Li et al., 2023). Technology integration is therefore no longer optional but rather a necessity for agencies aiming to enhance efficiency and restore public confidence. Studies suggest that when citizens perceive institutions as technologically advanced, transparent, and capable of leveraging digital solutions, they are more likely to trust these institutions and report higher levels of satisfaction (Chen et al., 2022).

While prior research has examined service performance, community policing, and technology adoption independently, limited attention has been given to the *integrated effect* of these dimensions on public satisfaction, particularly with trust as a mediating factor. Trust is not only an outcome of positive institutional interactions but also a mechanism that transforms operational inputs into sustainable satisfaction (van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022). Citizens' willingness to accept outcomes, comply with regulations, and engage with institutions depends heavily on whether they perceive those institutions as trustworthy (Nguyen & Hoang, 2023). Thus, positioning trust as a central mediating variable provides a more comprehensive understanding of how service quality, community policing, and technology integration collectively shape public satisfaction.

This conceptual study seeks to address this gap by proposing a framework that investigates the direct and mediated effects of service performance, community policing, and



technology integration on public satisfaction, with trust serving as the mediating construct. By adopting Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), the paper argues that operational effectiveness alone is insufficient to enhance satisfaction unless accompanied by trust-building mechanisms. The framework reflects a multi-dimensional approach, integrating organizational performance, community engagement, and technological innovation within a unified model.

The significance of this study lies in its theoretical, practical, and policy contributions. Theoretically, it extends public administration literature by integrating diverse antecedents of satisfaction under a trust-based model. Practically, it provides law enforcement agencies and policymakers with actionable insights on how to prioritize service delivery, strengthen community partnerships, and invest in technological infrastructure to boost satisfaction. From a policy perspective, the model highlights trust-building as a critical pathway for achieving sustainable improvements in public satisfaction and institutional legitimacy.

2 Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Institutional Trust Theory

Institutional Trust Theory provides a foundational explanation for how citizens develop confidence in public institutions and why that confidence matters for satisfaction and legitimacy. Trust in institutions is not simply a reflection of individual experiences but is rooted in perceptions of fairness, transparency, competence, and shared values (Rothstein & Stolle, 2022). According to this perspective, citizens evaluate the performance of law enforcement or public service organizations through both tangible service outcomes and symbolic behaviors, such as fairness in decision-making or respect during interactions (Tyler & Jackson, 2021). These evaluations shape the degree of institutional trust, which in turn influences compliance, cooperation, and overall satisfaction.

In the context of policing and public services, institutional trust is especially critical because of the authority these institutions exercise over individuals. When people believe that institutions act with integrity and accountability, they are more likely to interpret service performance positively and perceive outcomes as legitimate (van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022). Conversely, the absence of trust can undermine even objectively reasonable service delivery, as citizens may doubt the motives or credibility of the institution. This demonstrates why trust functions as a mediating construct: it channels the effects of operational performance, community engagement, and technological innovations into satisfaction outcomes.

Recent empirical studies support this position. For example, Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2021) found that transparency in public service delivery strengthens institutional trust, which subsequently enhances satisfaction. Similarly, Kim and Lee (2022) highlighted that perceptions of fairness and accountability significantly predict institutional trust, which mediates the link between service outcomes and satisfaction. These findings suggest that institutional trust acts as a bridge, transforming service-related inputs such as performance, policing practices, and technology integration into sustained public satisfaction. In essence, Institutional Trust Theory positions trust not only as an outcome of institutional behavior but as a mechanism that magnifies the effect of service inputs on satisfaction.

2.2 Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)

Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) originates from consumer behavior literature but has been widely applied in public service research to explain satisfaction. The theory posits that individuals form expectations about services prior to experiencing them, then compare these expectations with actual performance. If the service experience confirms or exceeds expectations, satisfaction increases; if performance falls short, dissatisfaction emerges (Oliver, 1980; Bhattacharjee, 2001). In the public sector, this framework is particularly relevant because citizens often hold clear expectations about service delivery, community safety, and transparency in governance.

Applied to the present framework, ECT explains how citizens' expectations of law enforcement and public institutions, such as responsiveness, fairness, and technological efficiency, interact with perceived reality. For example, when citizens expect a timely police response and experience high-quality service performance, the confirmation of expectations enhances satisfaction. However, when service delivery fails to meet these expectations, dissatisfaction and distrust follow. This theoretical lens underscores why performance, community policing, and technology integration matter for satisfaction, they directly affect the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations.

More recent studies extend ECT by integrating the role of trust. Citizens' confirmation of expectations is often filtered through their trust in the institution. For instance, Chen et al. (2022) demonstrated that in digital government contexts, trust enhances the positive effect of expectation confirmation on satisfaction. Similarly, Kappelman et al. (2021) showed that when institutions are perceived as trustworthy, even minor service shortcomings may be tolerated, since trust cushions the gap between expectations and experiences. Thus, trust not only mediates service quality effects but also moderates the expectation-satisfaction relationship by shaping how citizens interpret outcomes.

In this conceptual study, ECT provides a logic for why service performance, community policing, and technology integration should directly influence satisfaction. At the same time, Institutional Trust Theory explains why these effects are amplified or transmitted through trust. Together, the two theories offer a more comprehensive explanation: performance and technology fulfill expectations (ECT). However, whether these outcomes translate into lasting satisfaction depends on the degree of institutional trust (Institutional Trust Theory).

2.3 Theoretical Integration

The integration of Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory strengthens the conceptual model by addressing both the *process* and the *mechanism* of satisfaction. While ECT focuses on the psychological process of expectation and confirmation, Institutional Trust Theory highlights the social mechanism that determines whether service experiences translate into public satisfaction and legitimacy. Combining these theories allows the framework to capture both micro-level (expectations and



perceptions) and macro-level (trust in institutions) dynamics. This dual-theory foundation provides a strong justification for examining trust as a mediating construct between service performance, community policing, technology integration, and public satisfaction.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Service Performance

Service performance has long been recognized as a cornerstone of citizen satisfaction with public institutions, particularly in contexts where trust and legitimacy are at stake. In public administration, service performance refers to the ability of institutions to deliver services efficiently, reliably, and fairly while meeting the expectations of citizens (Alonso et al., 2022). High levels of service performance signal competence, professionalism, and accountability, which are critical for shaping positive perceptions of government institutions. In policing and law enforcement, performance extends beyond the technical efficiency of operations to include responsiveness, fairness, and the perceived quality of interactions with citizens (Tankebe & Reisig, 2021).

Research consistently shows that service performance strongly influences satisfaction. For example, Othman et al. (2021) found that responsiveness and professionalism in local government services in Malaysia significantly predicted citizen satisfaction. Similarly, Kim and Lee (2022) highlighted that accountability in service delivery reinforces citizens' trust and enhances satisfaction with public institutions. In contexts where performance is inconsistent or perceived as inadequate, satisfaction levels tend to decline, even when other dimensions, such as technological tools or community engagement, are present (Nguyen & Hoang, 2023).

The relationship between service performance and trust is particularly significant. Institutional Trust Theory suggests that the perceived competence and fairness of public institutions form the foundation of citizen trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2022). In policing, citizens interpret service outcomes, such as response times, problem resolution, and fairness of treatment, as indicators of institutional reliability. When these outcomes align with expectations, trust is reinforced, and satisfaction is heightened. Conversely, poor service performance often erodes trust and diminishes satisfaction, even if community policing or technology initiatives are in place. This underlines the mediating role of trust in converting performance inputs into satisfaction outcomes (van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022).

Recent studies also emphasize the multi-dimensional nature of performance. Alonso et al. (2022) argue that performance should be assessed not only through efficiency metrics but also through equity and citizen-centric outcomes. Li et al. (2023) further show that technological innovations in policing can enhance perceptions of service performance when they improve transparency and accountability. Thus, service performance is not a static construct but evolves with changes in citizen expectations and institutional practices. In the context of this study, service performance is conceptualized as a direct antecedent of public satisfaction and an indirect determinant mediated through trust, reinforcing its central role in the proposed framework.

3.2 Community Policing

Community policing has emerged as a central paradigm in contemporary law enforcement, emphasizing proactive engagement, problem-solving, and partnership between police officers and communities. Unlike traditional models that focus primarily on reactive crime control, community policing prioritizes building trust, inclusivity, and collaborative responsibility for safety (Tankebe & Reisig, 2021). This approach seeks to strengthen social bonds and enhance legitimacy, thereby improving citizen satisfaction with policing institutions.

Theoretically, community policing aligns with Institutional Trust Theory, as it demonstrates responsiveness, fairness, and accountability, attributes that foster institutional trust. When citizens perceive police officers as approachable and collaborative, their trust in the institution deepens, which in turn elevates satisfaction levels (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). Research has shown that when community policing initiatives are visible and inclusive, citizens report higher levels of confidence in law enforcement agencies (Gill et al., 2022). For instance, joint community forums and neighborhood patrols not only improve perceptions of safety but also reinforce the idea that police are partners rather than distant authorities.

Empirical studies highlight the significance of community policing in mediating satisfaction outcomes. A meta-analysis by Gill et al. (2014) confirmed that community policing positively influences both trust and public satisfaction across diverse contexts. More recent studies echo these findings. For example, Masuda et al. (2022) observed that community engagement practices in Japan improved citizens' willingness to cooperate with police, while Tankebe and Reisig (2021) found that inclusivity in policing enhanced legitimacy and compliance. In Malaysia, Rahim et al. (2021) reported that neighborhood policing programs contributed to improved perceptions of safety and higher levels of citizen satisfaction.

The role of community policing extends beyond direct service provision to symbolic value. By engaging in community dialogue, listening to concerns, and visibly collaborating with local stakeholders, law enforcement communicates respect and fairness. These actions reduce social distance between institutions and citizens, enhancing trust in ways that go beyond the technical performance of policing (Tyler & Jackson, 2021). Furthermore, community policing is increasingly integrated with technology, such as community apps and social media, enabling more transparent communication (Li et al., 2023). This integration demonstrates how community policing adapts to evolving societal expectations.

In the context of this study, community policing is conceptualized as both a direct determinant of public satisfaction and an indirect contributor mediated through trust. While effective community policing initiatives can independently boost satisfaction, their long-term impact relies heavily on whether they successfully foster institutional trust. Thus, community policing plays a dual role, strengthening relationships and reinforcing trust, as part of the broader framework linking operational practices to public satisfaction.

3.3 Technology Integration



Technology integration in law enforcement and public service delivery has become increasingly essential for improving transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement. Broadly defined, technology integration refers to the adoption and use of digital tools such as surveillance systems, e-governance platforms, body-worn cameras, and predictive analytics to enhance institutional performance (Li et al., 2023). These innovations not only improve operational efficiency but also shape citizens' perceptions of fairness and reliability, ultimately influencing trust and satisfaction with institutions. In modern governance, technology is no longer a supplementary resource but a vital mechanism for bridging gaps between institutions and the communities they serve (Chen et al., 2022).

One of the central contributions of technology integration is its ability to enhance transparency. When digital systems provide clear records of institutional actions, citizens perceive greater accountability, which fosters trust (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2021). For example, body-worn cameras have been found to reduce perceptions of misconduct. At the same time, digital reporting systems increase the speed and accuracy of service delivery (Maskály et al., 2021). In this sense, technology acts as a trust-building tool, reinforcing the relationship between institutional actions and citizen expectations.

Technology also reshapes the nature of community engagement. Social media platforms, mobile applications, and online forums enable more frequent and accessible communication between institutions and the public (Mergel et al., 2021). This interaction fosters inclusivity and provides citizens with a sense of involvement in decision-making processes. In Malaysia, the use of digital applications for reporting crime and accessing government services has increased citizen confidence in institutional responsiveness (Rahim et al., 2021).

Recent research highlights that technology integration has both direct and indirect effects on satisfaction. Directly, technological improvements streamline services, reduce bureaucratic delays, and enhance citizen experiences (Alonso et al., 2022). Indirectly, technology fosters trust by signaling institutional competence, fairness, and willingness to adapt to modern needs (Nguyen & Hoang, 2023). However, scholars caution that technology alone does not guarantee satisfaction. Without trust, technology can be perceived as intrusive or as a tool of control rather than a service (Masuda et al., 2022). Therefore, its effectiveness depends on whether it aligns with citizens' expectations and is implemented with transparency and accountability.

In the proposed framework, technology integration is conceptualized as both a direct determinant of public satisfaction and an indirect factor mediated by trust. By enhancing efficiency, transparency, and communication, technology strengthens institutional trust, which then amplifies satisfaction. This dual pathway underscores the transformative role of technology in contemporary public service delivery.

3.4 Trust

Trust in public institutions is widely recognized as a cornerstone of citizen satisfaction and legitimacy. It is defined as the belief that institutions act reasonably and transparently. In the public's best interest, trust shapes how individuals interpret institutional performance and respond to policies (Rothstein & Stolle, 2022). In policing and public service delivery,



trust reduces social distance, fosters compliance, and strengthens cooperation, making it essential for achieving long-term legitimacy (Tyler & Jackson, 2021). Trust also mediates the relationship between institutional performance and satisfaction, acting as a psychological filter through which citizens evaluate their experiences (van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022).

The significance of trust lies in its ability to amplify positive perceptions of service performance, community policing, and technology integration. When institutions deliver high-quality services, citizens' trust in their competence and fairness increases, which subsequently enhances satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2022). Likewise, community policing initiatives foster collaboration and inclusivity and promote trust in officers and institutions (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). Technology integration further strengthens trust by increasing transparency and accountability, provided that digital tools are implemented responsibly (Chen et al., 2022). In this way, trust is not only an outcome of institutional behavior but also a mechanism that transforms operational practices into sustained satisfaction.

Empirical evidence strongly supports the mediating role of trust. Nguyen and Hoang (2023) demonstrated that institutional trust mediates the link between service delivery and citizen satisfaction in Asian contexts. Similarly, Stavrova et al. (2022) showed that trust in institutions significantly predicts subjective well-being and satisfaction over time. In policing studies, Tankebe and Reisig (2021) found that trust mediates the impact of procedural justice on satisfaction and compliance. These findings underscore the role of trust as a crucial mechanism, without which improvements in performance, community engagement, or technology may not translate into citizen satisfaction.

However, scholars also caution that trust is fragile and context-dependent. Once lost, it is difficult to restore, as negative experiences carry more weight than positive ones (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2021). Moreover, overreliance on technology without adequate safeguards can undermine trust if citizens perceive surveillance as intrusive or discriminatory (Li et al., 2023). Thus, sustaining trust requires continuous commitment to fairness, transparency, and inclusivity.

In this study's framework, trust is conceptualized as the mediating construct linking service performance, community policing, and technology integration to public satisfaction. By focusing on trust, the model captures both the instrumental and relational dimensions of satisfaction, highlighting that effective governance depends not only on delivering outcomes but also on cultivating confidence in institutional integrity.

3.5 Public Satisfaction

Public satisfaction is widely regarded as one of the most critical outcomes of public service delivery and institutional performance. It reflects the degree to which citizens perceive their needs, expectations, and rights as being met by government institutions (Alonso et al., 2022). In policing and governance contexts, satisfaction not only indicates approval of current services but also plays a vital role in sustaining institutional legitimacy and public trust (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). Scholars emphasize that satisfaction is more than an emotional reaction; it is a cognitive judgment shaped by performance evaluations, fairness perceptions, and institutional transparency (Stavrova et al., 2022).



Public satisfaction is closely tied to the concept of legitimacy, as satisfied citizens are more likely to comply with laws, cooperate with authorities, and support public institutions (Tyler & Jackson, 2021). When institutions deliver services effectively and fairly, satisfaction strengthens the perception of institutional legitimacy. Conversely, dissatisfaction weakens confidence in institutions and reduces compliance and cooperation. This makes satisfaction both an outcome of operational practices and a predictor of future behavioral intentions toward institutions (Nguyen & Hoang, 2023).

Several factors influence public satisfaction, including service performance, community engagement, and technology adoption. Othman et al. (2021) showed that responsiveness and professionalism in Malaysian local government significantly improved satisfaction levels. Similarly, Gill et al. (2022) found that community policing initiatives enhanced perceptions of fairness, which in turn raised satisfaction. Technology also plays an increasingly important role; Chen et al. (2022) demonstrated that digital platforms and e-governance systems directly improve citizen satisfaction by promoting transparency and accountability. These findings highlight the multi-dimensional determinants of satisfaction, which combine service quality, inclusivity, and innovation.

Trust functions as a central mediator in these relationships. While citizens may initially evaluate institutions based on tangible outcomes, their satisfaction is ultimately filtered through trust (van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022). If trust is strong, even moderate performance or service limitations can still yield satisfaction, as citizens believe in the institution's integrity and intentions (Kim & Lee, 2022). Conversely, when trust is absent, even high levels of performance may fail to generate satisfaction, as skepticism undermines positive interpretations.

In the framework of this study, public satisfaction is conceptualized as the dependent variable that reflects the combined effects of service performance, community policing, and technology integration. The mediating role of trust highlights that satisfaction is not only about outcomes but also about relational confidence in institutions. This reinforces the argument that sustainable improvements in satisfaction depend on trust-based governance practices.

4. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The proposed conceptual framework positions **service performance, community policing, and technology integration** as the key antecedents of public satisfaction, with trust acting as the mediating construct. This framework integrates insights from Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT). It highlights that while operational and engagement factors directly shape satisfaction, their most potent effects are transmitted through trust. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model.

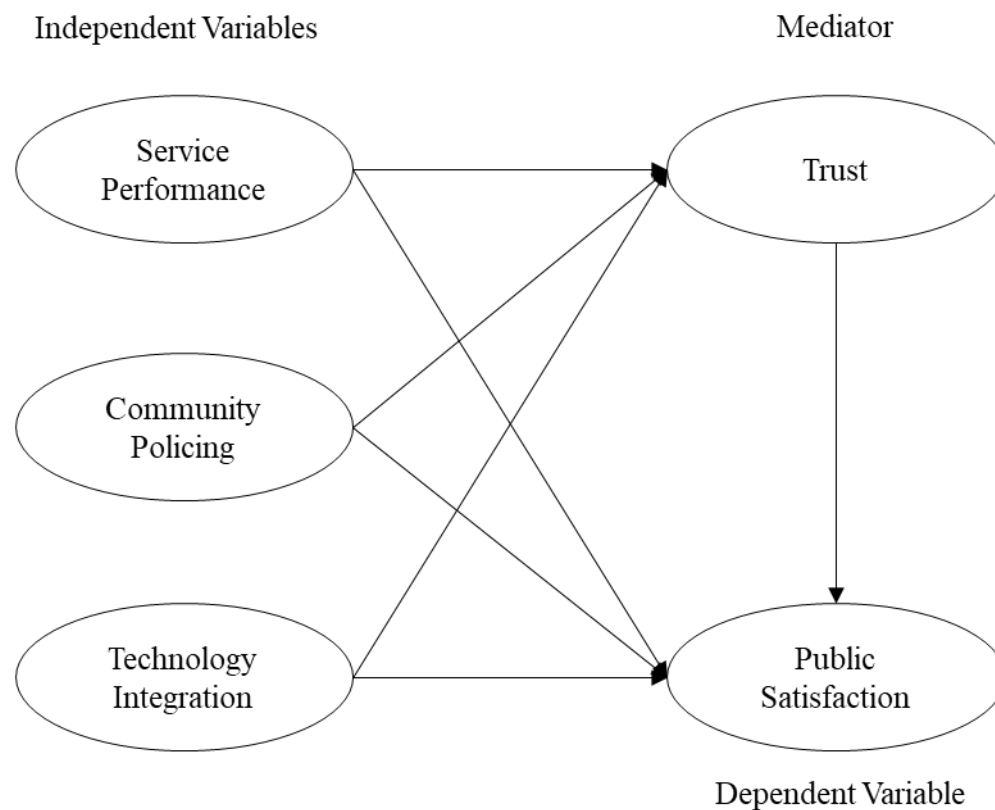


Figure 1: Research Framework

4. Hypothesis Development

4.1 Service Performance and Public Satisfaction

Service performance is a central determinant of public satisfaction. When services are delivered efficiently, fairly, and responsively, citizens evaluate institutions more positively (Alonso et al., 2022). Research in public administration shows that responsiveness and professionalism are among the strongest predictors of satisfaction with local government and policing services (Othman et al., 2021). Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) suggests that satisfaction arises when actual service outcomes meet or exceed prior expectations. In policing, prompt response times, clear communication, and fair treatment align with citizen expectations and reinforce satisfaction.

Empirical studies confirm this link. Nguyen and Hoang (2023) found that service delivery directly influences satisfaction, particularly when supported by trust. Similarly, Kim and Lee (2022) showed that accountability in service performance enhances citizen confidence, thereby improving satisfaction. Hence, service performance is conceptualized as a direct antecedent of public satisfaction.

H1: Service performance has a significant positive effect on public satisfaction.

4.2 Community Policing and Public Satisfaction

Community policing emphasizes proactive engagement, inclusivity, and partnership, which directly influence satisfaction by fostering closer relationships between institutions and

citizens (Tankebe & Reisig, 2021). Citizens who perceive police officers as approachable and collaborative are more likely to express higher levels of satisfaction (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). By promoting inclusivity, community policing strengthens legitimacy, which in turn enhances satisfaction.

Empirical support is substantial. Gill et al. (2022) observed that community-oriented policing programs consistently improve satisfaction across diverse contexts. Rahim et al. (2021) found similar outcomes in Malaysia, where neighborhood policing improved perceptions of safety and service responsiveness. Community policing thus enhances both perceptions of fairness and emotional satisfaction with institutions.

H2: Community policing has a significant positive effect on public satisfaction.

4.3 Technology Integration and Public Satisfaction

Technology integration represents a modern driver of public satisfaction. Digital tools, such as online reporting platforms, body-worn cameras, and predictive analytics, streamline service delivery and improve transparency (Li et al., 2023). Citizens view technology as a signal of institutional competence, which enhances satisfaction (Chen et al., 2022). By reducing bureaucratic delays and improving communication, technology creates a more seamless service experience.

Recent research highlights its relevance. Mergel et al. (2021) demonstrated that digital governance systems directly improve satisfaction by increasing service accessibility. In the policing domain, Maskály et al. (2021) showed that body-worn cameras increased perceptions of accountability, thereby improving satisfaction. These findings support technology integration as a direct contributor to satisfaction.

H3: Technology integration has a significant positive effect on public satisfaction.

4.4 Service Performance, Trust, and Public Satisfaction

Institutional Trust Theory suggests that the relationship between service performance and satisfaction is mediated by trust. Citizens interpret high-quality performance as evidence of competence and fairness, which fosters trust in institutions (Rothstein & Stolle, 2022). Once established, this trust enhances satisfaction by reinforcing confidence in institutional intentions.

Nguyen and Hoang (2023) confirmed this mediating mechanism, showing that institutional trust significantly explains how service delivery translates into satisfaction. Similarly, Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2021) demonstrated that transparency and performance build trust, which in turn enhances satisfaction. Therefore, trust is conceptualized as the psychological mechanism linking service performance to satisfaction.

H4: Trust mediates the relationship between service performance and public satisfaction.

4.5 Community Policing, Trust, and Public Satisfaction

Community policing initiatives strengthen trust by fostering inclusivity and fairness, which enhances satisfaction outcomes (Tankebe & Reisig, 2021). Institutional Trust Theory highlights that legitimacy and fairness are central to trust-building, both of which are

embedded in community policing practices. Citizens who trust their local police are more likely to interpret policing outcomes as fair, even in challenging situations, and this trust translates into higher satisfaction (Jackson & Bradford, 2023).

Empirical studies support this mediating pathway. Masuda et al. (2022) found that community policing enhances cooperation through trust. Rahim et al. (2021) similarly reported that trust mediates the link between neighborhood policing programs and satisfaction in Malaysia. These findings emphasize trust as the channel through which community policing influences satisfaction.

H5: Trust mediates the relationship between community policing and public satisfaction.

4.6 Technology Integration, Trust, and Public Satisfaction

Technology integration contributes to trust by signaling transparency, accountability, and competence. When citizens perceive digital tools as mechanisms for openness and fairness, institutional trust increases (Chen et al., 2022). However, technology may only generate satisfaction if it fosters trust. Without trust, technological adoption risks being interpreted as intrusive or controlling rather than service-oriented (Li et al., 2023).

Recent studies highlight this mediating role. Chen et al. (2022) found that digital governance builds trust, which then enhances satisfaction. Similarly, Nguyen and Hoang (2023) demonstrated that trust explains the relationship between technology-enabled service delivery and satisfaction. This underscores the dual role of technology: while it directly improves satisfaction, its most substantial influence operates through trust.

H6: Trust mediates the relationship between technology integration and public satisfaction.

5. Methodology

This study will employ a quantitative research design based on a cross-sectional survey approach. The choice of a quantitative design is justified as it will allow the systematic measurement of constructs such as service performance, community policing, technology integration, trust, and public satisfaction. These constructs will be operationalized through validated multi-item scales, and the relationships among them will be examined through hypothesis testing. Since the research aims to validate a theoretically driven model with complex relationships, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS will be the preferred technique. PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for predictive models, exploratory studies, and theory development in emerging contexts such as public service satisfaction (Hair et al., 2021).

The methodological framework for this study is guided by Saunders et al.'s (2019) research onion. At the philosophical level, positivism will underpin the study, emphasizing objectivity, measurement, and hypothesis testing. The study will adopt a deductive approach since hypotheses are derived from Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory and will be subjected to empirical validation. The strategy will rely on a structured survey method, which is effective for gathering standardized data from a large population of respondents. A mono-method quantitative design will be followed to ensure consistency, while the time horizon will be cross-sectional, focusing on data collected at a single point in time. Data will be analyzed through structured statistical

procedures in SmartPLS, allowing the assessment of both measurement and structural models.

The target population will consist of Malaysian citizens who interact with public service and law enforcement institutions. These individuals may include those who have engaged with neighborhood policing initiatives, reported incidents through official channels, or accessed government service platforms. Given that not every citizen may have such interactions, purposive sampling will be used to ensure that respondents are relevant and knowledgeable. This non-probability technique is suitable because it allows the inclusion of participants with direct experience, which is essential for obtaining meaningful responses (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The minimum sample size will follow the rule of thumb in PLS-SEM, which requires at least ten times the maximum number of structural paths pointing to a construct. Since public satisfaction in this framework is predicted by three constructs, the minimum requirement is 30 respondents. However, to ensure reliability, statistical power, and generalizability, the study will aim to collect responses from at least 300 to 400 participants, aligning with best practices in SEM research (Kline, 2016).

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online and in person. Online dissemination will be conducted through email, community groups, and government platforms. At the same time, in-person surveys will be facilitated at selected service centers and community policing forums. Respondents will be provided with an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. To refine the instrument, a pilot test will be conducted with 30 respondents. The pilot results will be examined for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable. Expert panels consisting of academics and practitioners in public administration and policing will evaluate the items to ensure content and face validity, and any issues identified during the pilot phase will be revised before the main data collection.

Measurement of the constructs will rely on adapted items from prior validated studies, employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Service performance will be measured using five items adapted from Othman et al. (2021) and Alonso et al. (2022), focusing on dimensions such as promptness, reliability, and professionalism. Community policing will be assessed using four items adapted from Gill et al. (2014) and Rahim et al. (2021), which capture collaboration, inclusivity, and engagement with community members. Technology integration will be measured with three items derived from Chen et al. (2022) and Li et al. (2023), emphasizing digital platforms, transparency, and efficiency. Trust will be measured with four items adapted from Kim and Lee (2022) and Nguyen and Hoang (2023), addressing confidence in the fairness and integrity of institutions. Public satisfaction will be measured with three items adapted from Alonso et al. (2022) and Jackson and Bradford (2023), reflecting overall contentment with institutional performance. The varying number of items across constructs is deliberate, as it ensures construct validity and reflects the multi-dimensional nature of each variable.

The data analysis process will be conducted using SmartPLS 4.0, following two stages: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. In the first stage, the

reliability and validity of the constructs will be established. Indicator reliability will be assessed through outer loadings, with values above 0.70 considered satisfactory. Internal consistency reliability will be confirmed if both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceed 0.70. Convergent validity will be evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with thresholds above 0.50 indicating adequacy. Discriminant validity will be examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), with acceptable values below 0.85 (Hair et al., 2021).

In the second stage, the structural model will be tested. Multicollinearity will be checked using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values below 3.3 ensuring the absence of collinearity issues (Kock, 2015). Path coefficients will be tested for significance using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples. A path will be considered significant if the t-value exceeds 1.96 at a 5 percent level of significance. Explanatory power will be assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), where values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 indicate weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power, respectively. Effect size (f^2) will be evaluated, with thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 denoting small, medium, and large effects. Predictive relevance will be measured through Stone-Geisser's Q^2 , with values above zero confirming predictive relevance of the model. Mediation analysis will be conducted by testing indirect effects, particularly the mediating role of trust, using bootstrapping procedures recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008).

The study will adhere strictly to ethical standards. Participants will be informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any point without consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained, and the data will be used exclusively for academic purposes. Approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review board before data collection begins, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines.

6. Expected Outcomes and Implications

The proposed framework is expected to demonstrate that service performance, community policing, and technology integration have both direct and indirect effects on public satisfaction, with trust playing a central mediating role. It is anticipated that service performance will positively influence satisfaction by ensuring efficiency, fairness, and professionalism in service delivery. Community policing is expected to contribute by fostering inclusivity, engagement, and shared responsibility between citizens and institutions. Technology integration is likely to enhance satisfaction through improved transparency, responsiveness, and accessibility of services. However, the strongest pathway to satisfaction is expected to be through the mediating role of trust, which transforms operational inputs into enduring perceptions of legitimacy and confidence in institutions.

From a theoretical perspective, this study will contribute to public administration and policing literature by integrating multiple antecedents of public satisfaction within a trust-based framework. Previous research has often examined service performance, community engagement, or technology adoption in isolation, but few studies have attempted to combine them into a single model with trust as the mediating mechanism. By doing so, this study will extend Institutional Trust Theory by empirically demonstrating that trust is not only an outcome of performance and engagement but also a key channel through which

these factors translate into satisfaction. The findings will also reinforce the application of Expectation-Confirmation Theory in the public sector by showing how expectations of service delivery and fairness are confirmed or disconfirmed through performance and community interactions, with trust amplifying their effects on satisfaction. This dual theoretical grounding will strengthen the conceptual framework and offer a novel perspective on how institutional practices shape citizen perceptions.

The expected outcomes will also generate significant practical implications for public service agencies and law enforcement institutions. First, the results will provide evidence that improvements in service performance are essential for enhancing satisfaction, but that performance must be consistent, fair, and transparent in order to build trust. This suggests that investments in training, capacity building, and performance monitoring will be critical for sustaining citizen satisfaction. Second, community policing will emerge as a vital strategy for strengthening satisfaction through engagement and partnership. Police officers and service providers will need to adopt collaborative approaches that prioritize listening to community concerns, engaging in joint problem-solving, and demonstrating inclusivity. These practices will not only enhance satisfaction but also build long-term trust, which in turn sustains institutional legitimacy. Third, technology integration will offer practical pathways to enhance satisfaction, particularly by reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and improving communication channels. However, the study will caution that technology must be implemented with transparency and accountability in order to avoid perceptions of surveillance or control that may erode trust.

For policymakers, the findings will highlight the importance of designing reforms and policies that prioritize trust-building as the foundation of institutional legitimacy and citizen satisfaction. Policies aimed at enhancing service delivery must go beyond efficiency and incorporate elements of fairness, inclusivity, and citizen-centeredness. Trust-building should be explicitly recognized as a policy goal, with mechanisms such as independent oversight, transparent reporting, and community engagement embedded into institutional practices. Policymakers will also need to invest strategically in digital transformation initiatives that are citizen-friendly and transparent. For instance, platforms that allow citizens to report issues, track responses, and evaluate services can significantly enhance both trust and satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings will suggest that community policing programs should be institutionalized as part of long-term policy frameworks rather than treated as short-term initiatives. Embedding community engagement into the DNA of institutions will ensure that trust and satisfaction are continuously reinforced across generations of citizens.

The expected contributions of this study will also extend to broader societal outcomes. High levels of public satisfaction and trust in institutions are associated with stronger compliance, cooperation, and civic engagement (Jackson & Bradford, 2023). As citizens become more satisfied and trusting, they are more likely to support institutional initiatives, comply with laws, and participate actively in community development. This creates a virtuous cycle in which trust and satisfaction reinforce institutional legitimacy, which in turn enhances institutional effectiveness and performance. By emphasizing the mediating role of trust, this study will underline that public satisfaction cannot be sustained merely

through operational efficiency or technological innovation, but requires a deep and consistent commitment to fairness, transparency, and engagement.

In conclusion, the expected outcomes will demonstrate that trust is the linchpin connecting service performance, community policing, and technology integration to public satisfaction. The theoretical contribution lies in extending Institutional Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory into a unified framework that integrates operational, relational, and technological antecedents of satisfaction. The practical contribution lies in offering strategies for service providers and law enforcement agencies to enhance satisfaction by prioritizing performance, engagement, and technology, with trust as the central focus. The policy contribution lies in guiding reforms that institutionalize trust-building practices, digital transparency, and community engagement as pillars of sustainable governance. Together, these outcomes will provide a comprehensive foundation for both academic advancement and practical application in improving public service delivery and legitimacy.

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