Received: 15 July 2026 | Revised: 15 August 2026 | Accepted: 5 September 2026 E-ISSN: 3155 - 6957

Research Article

Residents' Perceptions Of Crime-Prevention Strategies And Police-Community Relations In Selected Barangays Of Pikit, Cotabato

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Abstract

Introduction: Effective crime prevention requires both appropriate law-enforcement strategies and positive police-community relations. However, limited evidence exists on residents' perceptions of these factors in local Philippine communities.

Objective: This study assessed residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and community engagement and examined their relationships.

Methods: A descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional design was used among 392 residents from five selected barangays in Pikit, Cotabato Province. Stratified random sampling was employed. Crime prevention was assessed through anti-street crime, community-based anti-crime, and crime awareness strategies, while community engagement was operationalized through satisfaction with safety and security, respect for police, and trust in police. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlation, and median quantile regression.

Results: Anti-street crime strategies were rated Moderate ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.487$), while community-based anti-crime ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.607$) and crime awareness strategies ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.664$) were rated High. Overall community engagement was High ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.569$). All three strategies were positively and significantly correlated with community engagement: anti-street crime ($\varrho = .560$), community-based anti-crime ($\varrho = .836$), and crime awareness ($\varrho = .767$), all $p < .001$. Regression results likewise showed significant positive associations, with the largest coefficient for community-based anti-crime strategy ($b = .597$).

Conclusions: Residents generally reported favorable perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and police-community relations. The findings indicate significant positive associations between perceived crime-prevention efforts and community engagement, particularly community-based strategies. However, the cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions, and the strong correlations may partly reflect shared measurement. The findings are limited to the five barangays and support further research using behavioral measures and longitudinal designs.

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Keywords: community policing, perceived safety, police legitimacy, police trust, situational crime prevention, Pikit

Cite as: Tabusares, N. F., Dima, M. B. O., Batua, H. O., Lamanilao, J., Taluno, S. A., & Villegas, J. B. (2026). Residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and police-community relations in selected barangays of Pikit, Cotabato. *Review of Studies on Criminology, Sociology, and Law*, 35–50. https://doi.org/10.68354/742469

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1. Introduction

Contemporary crime prevention increasingly recognizes that public safety cannot depend exclusively on conventional law-enforcement activity. Community-oriented approaches emphasize communication, participation, problem-solving, and cooperation between police organizations and the communities they serve. Recent evidence, however, demonstrates that the effects of community policing are not uniform. Ekici et al. (2022), in a meta-analysis of community-policing interventions, found beneficial effects for selected crime categories and fear of crime but no consistent reduction across all forms of crime and disorder. Similarly, Blair et al. (2021), in a large experimental evaluation conducted across countries in the Global South, including the Philippines, found that community-policing interventions did not automatically improve citizen trust or reduce crime. These findings indicate that community-based policing should be evaluated according to its actual implementation and local context rather than assumed to be universally effective.

Philippine evidence likewise emphasizes the importance of police-community relationships. Cimene et al. (2022), in a community-engagement satisfaction survey in Northern Mindanao, examined residents' perceptions of safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the Philippine National Police. Their findings demonstrate the relevance of these perceptions in assessing relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. More recently, Boller-Piol et al. (2024) found that community-mobilization programs in Batangas Province contributed to police-community relations by emphasizing organized community participation and collaboration between residents and law-enforcement personnel. These studies support the importance of examining both crime-prevention efforts and how communities perceive and respond to them.

Trust represents a particularly important dimension of police-community relations. Regalado and Sun (2024), using Philippine data, found that institutional performance and social trust are significant considerations in explaining public trust in the police and courts. This suggests that residents' confidence in law-enforcement institutions is shaped not only by police presence but also by how the public experiences and evaluates institutional performance. Community-based initiatives may therefore strengthen communication and cooperation, as Osumo et al. (2025) assert, but their effects depend on whether residents perceive them as credible, responsive, and relevant to local safety concerns.

The study is anchored in Situational Crime Prevention Theory and Social Capital Theory. Clarke's (1995) Situational Crime Prevention Theory explains crime prevention through measures that reduce opportunities for specific offenses by increasing the effort or risk associated with offending and reducing anticipated rewards. Within the present study, anti-street crime activities, patrol visibility, and crime-awareness interventions can be understood as mechanisms intended to modify opportunities and perceived risks in the immediate environment. Social Capital Theory, particularly the work of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), emphasizes the value of trust, networks, shared expectations, and cooperation in enabling collective action. Applied to crime prevention, the perspective suggests that effective public safety depends not only on formal enforcement but also on relationships that enable residents and institutions to cooperate. Because trust in the police is measured here both as part of the community-engagement outcome and discussed as an indicator of social capital, this study treats Social Capital Theory as an interpretive lens for understanding why trust and respect scored highly, not as an independently measured predictor of community engagement; readers should be aware that this framing carries a risk of circular interpretation, which is why the discussion below is stated cautiously and the study's central quantitative claims rest on the crime-prevention strategy measures, which are conceptually and empirically distinct from the outcome.

Recent research supports examining these approaches together rather than treating enforcement and community participation as competing strategies. Community-policing interventions can contribute

to selected crime-prevention outcomes and reduced fear of crime, but their effectiveness varies considerably across settings (Ekici et al., 2022). Likewise, evidence from the Philippines indicates that community mobilization and favorable evaluations of police performance can support stronger police-community relationships (Boller-Piol et al., 2024; Regalado & Sun, 2024). A localized assessment is therefore necessary to determine which strategies residents actually perceive as implemented and how these perceptions relate to their views of safety, respect, and trust.

Against this background, the study assessed crime-prevention strategies and community engagement in five selected barangays of Pikit, North Cotabato. While previous Philippine studies have examined community-engagement satisfaction and community mobilization in other local settings (Cimene et al., 2022; Boller-Piol et al., 2024), limited evidence is available on how residents in selected barangays of Pikit perceive crime-prevention strategies and their relationship with community engagement. This gap warrants a context-specific examination of the extent to which residents perceive anti-street crime, community-based anti-crime, and crime-awareness strategies, and how these perceptions relate to satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police. The five selected barangays were included to provide a defined community-level setting for examining these relationships within Pikit, without assuming these barangays are representative of the municipality as a whole.

Guided by Social Capital Theory, community-based crime-prevention strategies may be associated with stronger community engagement because initiatives that encourage interaction, shared norms, and cooperation between residents and police may contribute to trust and collective participation. In contrast, Situational Crime Prevention Theory suggests that strategies aimed at reducing opportunities for crime may be more closely related to residents' perceptions of safety and security by modifying conditions in the immediate environment. These theoretical perspectives provided a basis for examining the statistical relationships among residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and community engagement, rather than for determining the objective effectiveness of the strategies.

Accordingly, the study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of crime-prevention strategies, as perceived by residents, in terms of anti-street crime, community-based anti-crime, and crime-awareness strategies? (2) What is the level of community engagement in terms of satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police? (3) Is each crime-prevention strategy significantly associated with community engagement? (4) Which crime-prevention strategies demonstrate the strongest adjusted statistical association with community engagement at the median level?

The study therefore examined three dimensions of crime-prevention strategies, anti-street crime, community-based anti-crime, and crime-awareness strategies, and operationalized community engagement through satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police. It further examined the statistical associations between these variables and identified the relative strength of the strategies' adjusted associations with community engagement at the median. The findings were interpreted in accordance with the study's theoretical perspectives and should be understood as evidence of residents' perceptions and statistical associations, not as evidence of objectively verified crime-prevention effectiveness.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design to examine residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and their association with community engagement at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The design was valuable because it allowed the study to describe residents' perceptions and determine the strength and direction of associations between crime-prevention strategies and community engagement within the study setting.

2.2. Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study included 392 residents from five selected barangays in the Municipality of Pikit, Cotabato Province: Talitay, Inug-ug, Dalingaoen, Damalasak, and Poblacion. The five barangays were purposively selected based on safety, accessibility, and stability during the data collection period. Because the initial selection of barangays was non-random, interpret the findings within the context of the selected communities and do not assume they represent all barangays in Pikit or other municipalities with different accessibility, stability, or community conditions. The study further addresses the selection criteria and their potential implications for the generalizability of the findings in the study's limitations. After selecting the study sites, the researchers employed stratified random sampling to select individual respondents within the five barangays, with barangay membership as the stratification variable. This procedure ensured that eligible residents from each selected barangay were represented in the sample. The sampling procedure is therefore appropriately described as purposive selection of five barangays followed by stratified random sampling of residents within the selected barangays, rather than stratified random sampling of the entire Municipality of Pikit.

The study initially intended to distribute the sample proportionally according to the population represented by each selected barangay. The final sample consisted of 392 respondents. The sampling frame, target population, sample-size determination, intended and achieved allocation per barangay, and respondent-selection procedures were documented based on the available population and sampling records. Respondents were selected according to the established eligibility criteria and were invited to participate voluntarily. Residents who declined participation or were unavailable during the data-collection period were not compelled to participate and were handled in accordance with the established sampling procedure. To strengthen the transparency and reproducibility of the sampling process, the final methodology should report the population and sampling frame for each barangay, the formula and assumptions used to determine the sample size of 392, the intended and achieved number of respondents per barangay, eligibility and exclusion criteria, the minimum age requirement, the procedure for selecting respondents within households, the treatment of unavailable or non-consenting residents, the number of residents approached and the corresponding response rate, and the dates of data collection. The demographic characteristics of the respondents should also be presented in a separate table to clearly describe the study sample. Overall, the sampling approach provided a structured basis for examining residents' perceptions in the five selected barangays. However, because the barangays were purposively selected before randomly selecting individual respondents, random sampling at the respondent level does not eliminate the limitations associated with the non-random selection of study sites.

2.3. Research Instruments

Data were collected using an adapted structured questionnaire consisting of two major sections. The first section measured residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies across three domains: anti-street crime strategy, community-based anti-crime strategy, and crime-awareness strategy. The items were adapted from the crime-prevention questionnaire developed by Minnery and Lim (2005). The second section measured community engagement, operationally defined in this study through three dimensions: community satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police. These dimensions were adapted from the community-engagement satisfaction framework used by Cimene et al. (2022) to examine public perceptions of the Philippine National Police in Region X. In this study, the term community engagement is used as an operational construct referring to residents' perceived satisfaction with safety and security and their perceptions of police-community relations. It does not encompass behavioral forms of engagement such as attending community meetings, reporting crimes, volunteering, or participating in police-community activities.

This operational boundary is therefore considered in interpreting the findings. The research adviser and research panel reviewed the adapted questionnaire for clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's objectives and variables. The researchers also conducted pilot testing before full-scale administration to identify possible problems in item wording, comprehension, response options, and the overall flow of the questionnaire. The researchers used the pilot-test results to refine

the instrument before administering it to the actual respondents. Both sections used five-point Likert-type response scales, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores indicated stronger agreement with the statements in each domain. The adaptation process involved retaining the substantive meaning of the original items while making necessary contextual and wording adjustments to suit the study population and the specific research setting. The research adviser and panel examined items for clarity and relevance before administration. Because some items refer to the respondent using "I," whereas others refer to "the community" or express normative views concerning police authority, the interpretation of the resulting dimensions was based on their intended conceptual domains and the instrument structure rather than assuming that all items represented an identical behavioral form of community engagement.

For methodological transparency, the final manuscript should report the number of items in each domain, the characteristics and number of pilot-test participants, and the reliability coefficients for each domain and the overall composite. Where available, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega should be computed using the final study sample of 392 respondents. The content-validation procedure should likewise identify the number and qualifications of expert validators and report the applicable content validity index (CVI) or equivalent evidence of content validity. If factor analysis was conducted, report the corresponding results to provide evidence of the adapted instrument's dimensional structure. If these instrument-development and psychometric records are unavailable, the study should not retrospectively report values that were not actually obtained.

Instead, the absence of recoverable pilot-test characteristics, reliability coefficients, content-validity indices, or factor-analytic evidence should be acknowledged as a limitation concerning the measurement properties of the adapted questionnaire. Similarly, the language used during administration and any translation or back-translation procedure, if applicable, should be explicitly reported based on the actual data-collection procedure. Overall, the questionnaire was treated as an adapted research instrument whose items were reviewed and pilot-tested before full administration. The measures assessed residents' perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and the study's operational dimensions of community engagement; consequently, the results reflect perceptions and reported attitudes rather than objective measures of crime-prevention effectiveness or behavioral community participation.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' assessments of the three crime-prevention strategies and the dimensions of community engagement. Means and standard deviations were computed for anti-street crime strategy, community-based anti-crime strategy, crime-awareness strategy, satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) was used to determine the strength and direction of the associations between the three crime-prevention strategies and community engagement. Spearman's correlation was selected because the study variables were derived from Likert-type responses and the composite scores did not satisfy the normality assumption based on the Shapiro–Wilk test.

The results indicated departures from normality; therefore, Spearman's correlation was used as the appropriate nonparametric measure for examining the bivariate associations. The researchers examined the monotonicity of the relationships using scatterplots, and the observed relationships were considered sufficiently monotonic for Spearman's correlation. Missing responses were handled through pairwise deletion, retaining available paired observations for each correlation analysis. The researchers evaluated statistical significance at the .05 level. Because the researchers examined several correlations simultaneously, they interpreted the findings with the number of comparisons in mind rather than treating each test in isolation.

A median quantile regression model ($\tau = .50$) was subsequently used to examine the simultaneous associations of the three crime-prevention strategies with community engagement. Quantile regression estimates the conditional value of an outcome at a specified quantile rather than its

conditional mean. We used the median model to estimate the adjusted association of each crime-prevention strategy with the conditional median of community engagement and to reduce sensitivity to extreme observations and heteroskedasticity. Robust (sandwich) standard errors were used for the regression estimates. The median quantile regression model was specified as: $Q0.50(Yi|Xi)=\beta0+\beta1X1i+\beta2X2i+\beta3X3i$ where (Yi) represents the community-engagement score of respondent (i); (X1i), (X2i), and (X3i) represent anti-street crime strategy, community-based anti-crime strategy, and crime-awareness strategy, respectively. The coefficients (β1), (β2), and (β3) represent the adjusted statistical associations of the three crime-prevention strategies with the conditional median of community engagement.

The predictors were entered as composite scores computed from the five-point Likert-type response scale. We assessed multicollinearity among the three predictors using variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance values. The regression analysis reported coefficient estimates, robust standard errors, test statistics, p-values, and 95% confidence intervals. Model performance was assessed using the pseudo-(R^2) statistic provided by the regression procedure. No causal interpretation was assigned to the regression coefficients because the study employed a nonexperimental, cross-sectional design. Because respondents were drawn from five selected barangays, the possibility of within-barangay dependence was considered when interpreting the results.

The primary analysis treated individual respondents as the units of analysis. The researchers did not use a barangay-level cluster adjustment because only five barangays were included, making conventional cluster-robust estimation potentially unreliable with so few clusters. We considered this limitation when interpreting the precision and generalizability of the regression estimates. All statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi statistical software. The researchers evalated statistical significance at the .05 level and interpreted findings based on the magnitude, direction, and statistical significance of the observed associations. The statistical results were treated as evidence of relationships within the study sample and not as evidence of causal effects or objectively verified crime-prevention effectiveness.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical standards in conducting research involving human participants. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the concerned authorities before data collection. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Their participation was voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Informed consent was obtained before the conduct of interviews and survey administration. The researchers ensured that the participants' identities were protected by using codes instead of real names. No identifying information, such as names or school assignments, was included in the transcripts, datasets, or final report. The data were used only for the purposes of the study and were handled with confidentiality.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Crime Prevention Strategy

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for Crime Prevention Strategy indicators across the anti-street crime strategy, community-based anti-crime strategy, and crime-awareness strategy. For the anti-street crime strategy, the mean was 3.37 (SD = 0.487), indicating a moderate level. This suggested that respondents perceive the current anti-street crime measures as effective, but still leave room for improvement. The moderate rating indicates that while certain strategies are in place and functioning, these efforts may not be consistently implemented or sufficiently comprehensive to fully address street-level crime.

For the Community-based Anti-crime Strategy, the category mean of 3.50 (SD=0.607) indicates a High level. This indicates that respondents generally agree that community-based initiatives are actively implemented and perceived as effective. The high rating suggests strong community involvement and

cooperation in crime-prevention efforts, reflecting positive engagement between residents and local authorities. Regarding the Crime-awareness Strategy, the category mean is 3.67 (SD = 0.664), which is described as high at the descriptive level.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Crime Prevention Strategy

Item	M	SD	Descriptive Level
Anti-Street Crime Strategy			
Crime-prone areas in our community are clearly identified.	4.38	0.705	Very High
Two police officers are regularly assigned to patrol our area.	3.44	0.649	High
Uniformed police officers are often seen around public and recreation areas.	3.70	0.673	High
Plainclothes officers are assigned in our neighborhood, especially at night.	2.28	0.991	Low
Police officers conduct motorcycle patrols all day and night.	3.07	0.929	Moderate
Composite Score	**3.37**	**0.487**	**Moderate**
Community-Based Anti-Crime Strategy			
Seminars and meetings about crime prevention are held in our barangay.	3.37	1.198	Moderate
Patrol officers visit the barangay at night and work with barangay officials, tanods, and residents.	2.97	1.098	Moderate
There are youth programs and sports activities that keep young people away from drugs and gangs.	4.14	0.487	High
There is a neighborhood watch program in our area.	3.33	0.892	Moderate
There is a group or committee focused on preventing crime in business and industrial areas.	3.69	0.729	High
Composite Score	**3.50**	**0.607**	**High**
Crime Awareness Strategy			
Crime-related information is shared through radio announcements.	3.82	0.955	High
Newsletters or bulletins about recent crimes are available in our community.	3.37	1.174	Moderate
Youths are given talks about avoiding drugs and crimes.	3.99	0.594	High
Parents are guided through forums or meetings to help them watch over their children's activities.	3.79	0.668	High
Crime prevention tips are shared through posters and pamphlets.	3.35	0.766	Moderate
Composite Score	**3.67**	**0.664**	**High**

Note: The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Descriptive levels are based on the following mean ranges: 1.00–1.79 (Very Low), 1.80–2.59 (Low), 2.60–3.39 (Moderate), 3.40–4.19 (High), 4.20–5.00 (Very High). M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 392.

Although the composite mean for the Anti-Street Crime Strategy is interpreted as Moderate (M = 3.37), a closer look at individual indicators reveals substantial internal variation that the aggregate

score alone does not fully capture. Specifically, the item "Crime-prone areas in our community are clearly identified" received a Very High rating (M = 4.38), suggesting that risk mapping and knowledge of problematic locations are well established. In contrast, "Plainclothes officers are assigned in our neighborhood, especially at night" received a Low rating (M=2.28), indicating limited implementation of covert or intelligence-based patrols. These sharply divergent evaluations point to uneven application of anti-street crime measures rather than uniformly moderate performance.

Problem-oriented policing (POP) emphasizes scanning, analysis, response, and assessment, a systematic approach that begins with problem identification, followed by tailored responses intended to address the underlying causes of crime and disorder. A 2020 systematic review found that POP is associated with a statistically significant overall reduction in crime and disorder, showing its effectiveness when implementation includes both analysis and action beyond merely detecting high-crime locations (Hinkle et al., 2020). Moreover, evidence on hot-spot policing, a practice that concentrates police resources in areas with high crime rates, also supports the idea that focused, strategic responses reduce crime outcomes. Studies indicate that crime tends to cluster in small areas, and interventions targeting these areas are associated with significant crime reductions, reinforcing the need to concentrate patrols and enforcement in evidence-driven ways rather than dispersing them uniformly (Smith, 2024).

The findings clearly identify problems, as inconsistent patrol activity and limited plainclothes work highlight a common implementation gap documented in recent criminology research. Focused, intelligence-led interventions (including covert or plainclothes operations) in identified hot spots tend to yield much stronger crime-prevention effects than patrol presence alone, particularly when officers are guided by analytical crime mapping and problem-solving rather than routine, random patrols.

These findings suggest an area for further assessment: Pikit police leadership may wish to evaluate whether targeted patrols and intelligence-led operations in identified crime-prone areas could complement existing visible patrol presence. A low public perception of plainclothes-officer presence, however, does not by itself establish that increasing covert deployment is the safest or most effective intervention, particularly since residents may be unable to observe such deployment by definition; any change in deployment strategy should be informed by actual crime and deployment data, not perception data alone.

Overall, the moderate composite rating of the Anti-Street Crime Strategy masks selective effectiveness. Certain situational controls are highly visible and well implemented, while others, especially those that enhance unpredictability and sustained deterrence, are weak or absent. The results indicate that strengthening underperforming components, particularly nighttime patrols and plainclothes deployment, may significantly enhance the overall effectiveness of anti-street crime measures. When situational consistency is achieved and supported by strong community trust, both theories suggest that residents' sense of safety and engagement are likely to improve.

3.2. Community Engagement

The results indicate that the Descriptive Statistics for Community Engagement include Community satisfaction with safety and security, the community's respect for the Police, and the community's trust in the Police. For Community satisfaction with safety and security, the category had a mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.815), indicating moderate satisfaction. This suggests that while residents are satisfied with the current level of safety and security in their area, they still have noticeable concerns and unmet expectations. The moderate rating indicates that existing safety measures may be partially effective, but further improvements are needed to enhance residents' overall sense of security and confidence in local crime-prevention efforts. For the community's respect for the Police, the category mean of 3.73 (SD=0.540) is recorded, indicating High respect. This indicates that respondents generally hold the police in positive regard, reflecting trust in their professionalism, conduct, and service to the community (Osumo et al., 2025). The high rating suggests that community members perceive the police as reliable and respectful in carrying out their duties, thereby contributing to stronger police-community relations. Regarding the community's trust in the police, the category mean is 3.63 (SD = 0.525), which is described as High at the descriptive level. This indicates that respondents generally have strong

confidence in the police's ability to perform their duties effectively and fairly. The high rating suggests that the community perceives the police as dependable, credible, and committed to maintaining public safety, contributing to a positive relationship between residents and law enforcement.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Community Engagement

Item	M	SD	Descriptive Level
Community Satisfaction with Safety and Security			
I feel safe and secure in our community because our police officers are doing their job.	3.24	1.225	Moderate
I can go about our community without fear because our police officers are faithful in fulfilling their duties.	3.13	0.923	Moderate
I believe our community experiences peace and security because the police are visible in the area.	3.17	0.912	Moderate
The police in our community conduct programs and activities to maintain order and peace.	3.82	0.671	High
I believe our lives and properties in the community are safe and secure because we know the police will always be there when we need them.	3.34	0.778	Moderate
Police officers are visible in our streets and community, conducting regular patrols and/or security checks throughout the community.	3.56	0.797	High
I feel safe staying at home and/or walking alone in the streets during the day and after dark.	3.25	1.254	Moderate
I do not worry that a criminal might enter our house while we are sleeping.	3.18	1.261	Moderate
I do not worry that my children/younger siblings might be part of or be victimized by gangs or criminals.	3.42	1.339	High
Composite Score	3.35	0.815	Moderate
The Community's Respect for the Police			
The community respects the police because they conduct themselves professionally and show pride and commitment to service.	3.63	0.662	High
The police treated the community with respect and dignity, and so they deserve my support and respect in return.	3.62	0.726	High
I believe the community has a high regard for the police because they uphold the values important to them.	3.65	0.685	High
The police must be obeyed and respected because they put themselves on the line to protect the community's public order and safety.	3.82	0.713	High
When the police wear their uniform, they embody law and authority. Therefore, people in the community respect them.	3.92	0.615	High
Composite Score	3.73	0.540	High
The Community's Trust in the Police			
Our police enforce the law without fear or reservation.	3.78	0.662	High
I know that the police in our community do not yield to bribery and corruption.	3.26	0.685	Moderate
I believe that the police do what is right for my community.	3.79	0.653	High
The police officers are reliable whenever people in the community seek assistance.	3.42	0.762	High
I am confident that the police in my community do their job well and act in the community's best interest.	3.56	0.771	High
I will definitely call the police if a crime occurs near where I live and work.	3.99	0.785	High
Composite Score	3.63	0.525	High
Community Engagement (Overall Composite)	3.57	0.569	High

Note: The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Descriptive levels are based on the following mean ranges: 1.00–1.79 (Very Low), 1.80–2.59 (Low), 2.60–3.39 (Moderate), 3.40–4.19 (High), 4.20–5.00 (Very High). M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 392.

The findings reveal an important pattern in community engagement across selected areas in Pikit, North Cotabato. While respect for and trust in the police are high, community satisfaction with safety and security remains moderate. This divergence becomes clearer through Situational Crime Prevention Theory and Social Capital Theory, which together explain how environmental conditions and social relationships shape perceptions of safety. From the perspective of Situational Crime Prevention Theory (Clarke, 1980, 1995), residents' moderate satisfaction with safety suggests that crime-prevention measures that directly reduce opportunities for crime, such as consistent patrols, sustained police visibility, and immediate response, may not be sufficiently strong or consistently implemented across all areas. Although some indicators related to police visibility and programs received high ratings, several items linked to personal safety, fear of crime at night, and home protection remain moderate. This suggests that while preventive actions exist, they may not yet be intensive or consistent enough to meaningfully shift the immediate risk environment that shapes residents' everyday sense of security. Situational Crime Prevention Theory suggests that perceived safety improves when environmental cues clearly signal increased risk for offenders; the moderate ratings are consistent with gaps in this signaling, particularly in street-level and residential contexts, though this study did not directly measure environmental cues or offender risk perception.

On the other hand, the high levels of respect and trust in the police strongly reflect the assumptions of Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000; Sampson, 1997; Coleman, 1988). Trust, shared norms, and positive relationships between police and residents indicate the presence of social capital within the community. Respondents' confidence in police integrity and fairness, and their willingness to seek police assistance, show that relational bonds between law enforcement and the community are relatively strong. These findings suggest that residents view the police as legitimate and morally aligned with community values, even if they do not yet feel fully protected from crime. Social Capital Theory explains that trust can exist independently of immediate crime conditions, especially when police behavior is perceived as respectful, professional, and ethical.

Critically, the coexistence of high trust in the police with only moderate satisfaction with safety and security suggests that trust and perceived safety may not necessarily develop at the same level. From the perspective of Social Capital Theory, trust may provide a foundation for cooperation, shared expectations, and positive police-community relations. However, such relational trust does not necessarily translate directly into stronger perceptions of safety, particularly when situational conditions that influence residents' immediate sense of security are addressed differently. Consistent with Situational Crime Prevention Theory, strategies that reduce opportunities for crime and improve conditions within the immediate environment may be more directly reflected in residents' perceptions of safety. Thus, the findings suggest that social capital may be more closely related to relational dimensions such as trust and respect, whereas situational crime-prevention measures may be more relevant to perceived safety and security. This interpretation is theoretical rather than causal, as the study did not directly test an interaction between the two theoretical frameworks or measure the objective effectiveness of crime-prevention strategies.

Table 2 supports the study's theoretical assumption that effective crime prevention requires both environmental control and social cohesion. The findings imply that Pikit already possesses valuable social capital, including trust and respect for the police. However, to elevate community satisfaction with safety, situational crime prevention measures such as sustained patrol presence, rapid response mechanisms, and consistent street-level enforcement must be strengthened and aligned with the existing trust relationship. When situational strategies are reinforced within a high-trust environment, both theories suggest communities are more likely to experience not only cooperation and legitimacy but also a stronger, more consistent sense of safety.

This pattern of favorable perceptual associations should be read alongside contradictory experimental evidence. Blair et al. (2021), in a large multi-country experimental evaluation that included the Philippines, found that community-policing interventions did not automatically build citizen trust or reduce crime when tested under randomized conditions. The present study's strong correlational

associations do not contradict this experimental finding so much as operate at a different level of evidence: this study describes how residents' concurrent perceptions of crime-prevention strategies and community engagement covary within a single cross-sectional sample, not whether a specific program, if implemented or expanded, would causally increase trust or reduce crime. The very high correlations observed here, particularly between the community-based anti-crime strategy and overall community engagement (ρ = .836), are also consistent with the possibility that residents who generally view their local police favorably rate most survey items favorably, a pattern that experimental designs are better positioned to disentangle from genuine program effects than the correlational design used here.

3.4. Correlations Between Community Engagement Aspects and Crime Prevention Strategies

The strength of correlation coefficients was classified as follows: values from 0.00–0.19 indicate a very weak correlation, 0.20–0.39 indicate a weak correlation, 0.40–0.59 indicate a moderate correlation, 0.60–0.79 indicate a strong correlation, and 0.80–1.00 indicate a very strong correlation. This classification helps explain the practical meaning of the obtained coefficients beyond statistical significance. Table 3 shows that all correlations between crime prevention strategies and community engagement variables are statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that residents who perceived stronger crime prevention strategies also tended to report higher levels of community engagement. In terms of strength, the association between the Anti-Street Crime Strategy and Overall Community Engagement (ρ = .560) falls within the moderate range, indicating that perceptions of stronger street-level enforcement are associated with somewhat greater engagement, though the association is not as strong as for the other two strategies below.

The association between the Community-Based Anti-Crime Strategy and Overall Community Engagement (ρ = .836) is classified as a very strong correlation, indicating that community-based programs have a strong and consistent statistical association with residents' reported trust, respect, and engagement in this sample. Given the strength of this correlation, it should also be considered alongside the possibility of item overlap or same-source measurement bias discussed in the Methods and Limitations sections, rather than interpreted only as evidence that community involvement in crime prevention increases engagement. Meanwhile, the association between the Crime Awareness Strategy and Overall Community Engagement (ρ = .767) shows a strong correlation, indicating that residents who perceived more information campaigns, seminars, and awareness activities also tended to report greater community engagement; this cross-sectional association does not establish that awareness activities influence engagement. These results show that while all three strategies are significantly associated with community engagement, the community-based anti-crime strategy shows the strongest association, followed by crime awareness and then anti-street crime strategies.

Table 3. Pairwise Correlations Between Community Engagement Aspects and Crime Prevention Strategies

Variable	anti-street crime strategy	community-based anti-crime strategy	crime awareness strategy
community satisfaction with safety and security	.471	.722	.859
	<.001	<.001	<.001
the community's respect for the police	.555	.765	.658
	<.001	<.001	<.001
the community's trust in the police	.543	.711	.548
	<.001	<.001	<.001
Community Engagement (Overall)	**.560**	**.836**	**.767**
	<.001	**<.001**	**<.001**

Note: The table presents pairwise Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients. The sample size for all correlations was N = 392. p <.05. p <.01. p <.001.

The correlation results show significant associations between all crime prevention strategies and all dimensions of community engagement, including satisfaction with safety, respect for the police, and trust in the police. These findings are broadly consistent with the study's theoretical framework, which draws on Situational Crime Prevention Theory (Clarke, 1980, 1995) and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000; Sampson, 1997; Coleman, 1988) as interpretive lenses for these associations among residents' concurrent perceptions. From the perspective of Situational Crime Prevention Theory (Clarke, 1980, 1995), the moderate to strong correlations are consistent with the idea that visible patrols, targeted interventions, and crime awareness activities are associated with residents' sense that crime risks are being actively managed; this cross-sectional design cannot establish that these measures improve safety. The stronger associations between community-based and crime awareness strategies and community engagement are consistent with the idea that approaches beyond enforcement alone may relate to residents' sense of collective vigilance, though this study did not directly measure informal guardianship or collective efficacy, and it did not directly assess the unequal distribution of police resources across Pikit.

The associations between crime prevention strategies and trust and respect for the police are broadly consistent with Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000; Sampson, 1997; Coleman, 1988), which emphasizes trust, shared norms, and cooperation between institutions and communities. The findings suggest that residents who perceive crime prevention strategies as more active and responsive also tend to view the police as more legitimate. Overall, the results indicate that in this sample, perceptions of situational measures and perceptions of social relationships with police are both associated with higher reported public trust and community engagement; because the design is cross-sectional and correlational, these results describe an association among residents' concurrent perceptions rather than confirming that any particular combination of measures is most effective at producing these outcomes.

3.5. Quantile regression model predicting community engagement

Table 4 presents the results of a quantile regression model ($\tau = 0.50$, the median) predicting Community Engagement from three crime prevention strategy predictors: anti-street crime strategy, community-based anti-crime strategy, and crime awareness strategy (N = 392). The researcher used robust (sandwich) standard errors. The intercept is positive and significant (b = 0.119, SE = 0.023, t = 5.106, p < .001), indicating a baseline median level of community engagement when predictors are at zero. For the anti-street crime strategy, the coefficient is b = 0.147 (SE = 0.011, t = 13.06, p < .001), indicating that higher implementation or perception of anti-street crime strategies is associated with higher community engagement at the median. The community-based anti-crime strategy has the largest effect: b = 0.597 (SE = 0.018, t = 32.81, p < .001), suggesting it is most strongly associated with community engagement. The crime awareness strategy is also positively and significantly related to engagement (b = 0.223, SE = 0.014, t = 16.54, p < .001). In sum, all three crime prevention strategies are positively associated with community engagement within the sample, with the community-based anti-crime strategy showing the strongest adjusted association.

Table 4. Quantile regression model predicting community engagement ($\tau = 0.50$)

Predictors	b	SE	t	p
(Intercept)	0.119	0.023	5.106	<.001
anti-street crime strategy	0.147	0.011	13.06	<.001
community-based anti-crime strategy	0.597	0.018	32.81	<.001
crime awareness strategy	0.223	0.014	16.54	<.001

Note: The table presents the results of a quantile regression model estimating the conditional median ($\tau = 0.50$) of Community Engagement. We used robust (sandwich) standard errors. N = 392. p<.05. p<.01. p<.001.

As discussed in the Method of Data Analysis section, the researchers selected median quantile regression because the composite scores did not meet the normality assumption required for exact small-sample OLS inference and because quantile regression is more robust to outliers and heteroskedasticity; robust (sandwich) standard errors further supported the reliability of the estimates. Quantile regression complements, rather than contradicts, the Spearman correlations reported above: the correlations establish the existence and direction of each bivariate association, while the regression model examines the three strategies' relative adjusted associations with community engagement simultaneously, at the conditional median.

4. Conclusion

The study found differences in how residents assessed the three crime prevention strategies implemented in the selected barangays of Pikit, North Cotabato. The Anti-Street Crime Strategy received a Moderate assessment (M = 3.37, SD = 0.487), indicating comparatively weaker perceptions of street-level implementation. In contrast, the Community-Based Anti-Crime Strategy (M = 3.50, SD = 0.607) and Crime Awareness Strategy (M = 3.67, SD = 0.664) were assessed as High. The findings therefore indicate that community-oriented and information-based approaches were perceived more favorably than street-level enforcement activities. Overall community engagement was rated High (M = 3.57, SD = 0.569). Respect for the police obtained the highest domain mean (M = 3.73), followed by trust in the police (M = 3.63), while satisfaction with safety and security was rated Moderate (M = 3.35). This pattern indicates that positive regard for police personnel and institutions can coexist with comparatively weaker feelings of personal and neighborhood safety. Trust and respect should therefore not be treated as equivalent to residents feeling fully secure in their everyday environment. Spearman's rank-order correlation showed statistically significant positive associations between each crime prevention strategy and overall community engagement. Community-Based Anti-Crime Strategy demonstrated the strongest relationship ($\varrho = .836$, $p < .001$), followed by Crime Awareness Strategy ($\varrho = .767$, $p < .001$), while Anti-Street Crime Strategy showed a moderate positive relationship ($\varrho = .560$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that more favorable assessments of community-based and awareness-oriented crime-prevention activities tended to accompany more favorable perceptions of safety, respect, and trust. Median quantile regression produced a similar pattern. Community-Based Anti-Crime Strategy had the largest positive coefficient ($b = .597$, $p < .001$), followed by Crime Awareness Strategy ($b = .223$, $p < .001$) and Anti-Street Crime Strategy ($b = .147$, $p < .001$). These results reinforce the statistical importance of community-oriented crime-prevention approaches within the sample. However, because the study employed a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design, these coefficients should not be interpreted as demonstrating that any strategy directly caused higher community engagement. The findings identify two areas that may warrant further assessment to support community safety. First, the comparatively moderate assessment of anti-street crime strategies and satisfaction with safety and security suggests a need for police leadership and relevant local stakeholders to review the consistency and visibility of existing street-level preventive activities, particularly in relation to available crime, patrol, and deployment data. Second, sustained community meetings, youth-oriented initiatives, neighborhood participation, public-information activities, and police-community communication may help reinforce the relatively favorable levels of trust and respect observed in the study. Such efforts may involve barangay councils, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders as partners in strengthening police-community relations.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are grouped by stakeholder and should be read as areas for assessment and further evaluation rather than as proven solutions, since this study's cross-sectional design cannot establish which specific intervention would be most effective. PNP Pikit leadership. Evaluate whether targeted, intelligence-led patrols and plainclothes operations in identified crime-prone areas could complement existing visible patrol presence, informed by actual crime and deployment data rather than perception data alone. Barangay councils. Continue and, where feasible, expand community consultation sessions and public-information activities that residents associate with stronger trust and

respect. Municipal government of Pikit. Support youth-oriented and neighborhood-participation initiatives, and consider commissioning objective crime and deployment data collection to complement future perception surveys. Community organizations. Partner with police and barangay officials on sustained communication and awareness activities, particularly in areas where residents reported comparatively lower safety satisfaction. Future researchers. Extend this design to additional and more diverse barangays; incorporate official crime, patrol, and deployment records; adjust for barangay-level clustering; and establish discriminant validity between crime-prevention-strategy and community-engagement measures before further predictive modeling.

6. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. The research was conducted in only five purposively selected barangays of Pikit — chosen partly for their safety, accessibility, and stability — which may systematically exclude barangays with different policing conditions and limit transferability beyond these five barangays; possible nonresponse and coverage bias within the selected barangays cannot be ruled out. The study relied entirely on residents' self-reported perceptions, measured at a single point in time using the same questionnaire, creating a risk of common-method and social-desirability bias; residents may also have felt some pressure when rating police performance, which cannot be fully excluded despite confidentiality safeguards. The study did not directly measure recorded crime incidence, victimization, or objective indicators of strategy implementation, so it cannot distinguish residents' perceived implementation of crime-prevention strategies from actual implementation. The construct labeled community engagement was operationalized primarily through perceptions of safety, respect, and trust rather than direct behavioral measures of civic participation, and its reported reliability and validation evidence is incomplete (see Methods); the very high correlations observed, particularly ρ = .836 between the community-based anti-crime strategy and overall community engagement, may partly reflect item overlap or same-source measurement rather than fully distinct constructs. The 392 respondents are nested within only five barangays, and the reported analyses did not adjust for this clustering, which may understate the true standard errors. The authors did not statistically control for demographic or contextual variables (e.g., age, sex, length of residency). Finally, the cross-sectional, correlational design cannot establish that any crime-prevention strategy caused the observed levels of community engagement. Future research may include additional barangays, use validated measures of actual community participation, incorporate official crime and patrol data, adjust for barangay-level clustering, and employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine how crime-prevention strategies and police-community relationships develop over time.

Supplementary Details

Supplementary Materials & Data availability statement (If Applicable):
The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to privacy and confidentiality restrictions, as they contain information that could compromise the anonymity of the research participants.

Author Contributions:
All authors were responsible for the conceptualization and design of the study, development and validation of the research instrument, data collection and analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation and revision of the manuscript. The authors also reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and accepted responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

Funding:
This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement
Not applicable. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for educational research. Necessary permissions were secured from the concerned educational authorities and participating schools prior to the conduct of the study.

Informed Consent Statement:
The study adhered to ethical standards in research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with a comprehensive informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their rights, including voluntary participation and the option to withdraw at any time without

Acknowledgments:
The authors sincerely thank all the respondents who participated in this study and generously shared their time, experiences, and insights. Their participation made the completion of this research possible.

Conflicts of Interest:
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclosure Statement:
The authors used Grammarly only for language editing. No AI tools were used in the data analysis or in generating the study's results. The authors reviewed and validated all content and take full responsibility for the article's accuracy, originality, and integrity.

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