

Procedural Justice In Policing And Community Satisfaction In Arakan, Cotabato

Seth Amiel B. Manojó¹  | Nico A. Verdadero²  | John Paul H. Gelacio³  | Kenth Rabbi H. Villanueva⁴  | John Lloyd P. Sanmillan⁵  | Irene M. Soledad⁶ 

¹⁻⁵ Central Mindanao Colleges,
Kidapawan City, Philippines

Abstract

Introduction: Public confidence in the police is shaped by perceptions of fair and respectful treatment, yet procedural-justice research remains limited in rural Philippine settings. This study examined these perceptions and their relationship with community engagement satisfaction in Arakan, Cotabato.

Objective: The study determined residents' perceptions of procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction and examined their relationship.

Methods: A cross-sectional, quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used. Participants were 397 residents selected through proportionate stratified sampling across 28 barangays. Procedural justice was measured in terms of trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice, while community engagement satisfaction covered safety and security, respect for police, and trust in police. Both instruments demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$ and $.85$). Descriptive statistics and Pearson's r were used.

Results: Procedural justice ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.584$) and community engagement satisfaction ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.607$) were rated very high. Trustworthiness received the highest procedural-justice rating ($M = 4.60$), while voice received the lowest ($M = 4.30$). Procedural justice was strongly and positively associated with community engagement satisfaction, $r(395) = .763$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.719, .801].

Conclusions: Residents reported highly favorable perceptions of procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction, with a strong association between the constructs. However, the cross-sectional, self-report design does not establish causality, and the high ratings may reflect ceiling effects, social desirability, or measurement overlap. Findings are specific to Arakan and warrant validation through longitudinal, behavioral, and multi-site research.

Correspondence

Seth Amiel B. Manojó, Central
Mindanao Colleges,
Philippines
Email: smanojó@cmc.edu.ph

Keywords: procedural justice, police legitimacy, public trust, rural policing, police–community relations, Philippines

Cite as: Manojó, S. A. B., Verdadero, N. A., Gelacio, J. P. H., Villanueva, K. R. H., Sanmillan, J. L. P., & Soledad, I. M. (2026). Procedural justice in policing and community satisfaction in Arakan, Cotabato. *Review of Studies on Criminology, Sociology, and Law*, 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.68354/742259>



© The Author(s) 2026. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License.

1. Introduction

Community engagement satisfaction remains a pressing issue, especially in rural areas where limited communication, scarce resources, and low participation hinder cooperation between citizens and authorities. In policing contexts, this challenge directly affects public safety efforts and public trust in law enforcement (Osumo et al., 2025). As Dobson et al. (2025) highlight, inconsistent and non-transparent engagement weakens collaboration and public confidence in institutions. In law enforcement, procedural justice policing provides an effective framework for improving relationships between the police and the public. It emphasizes fairness, neutrality, respectful treatment, and giving citizens a voice in every police interaction. Studies by Gold (2022), Hanway and Hambly (2023), and Cimene et al. (2022) show that when law enforcement demonstrates transparency and respect, citizens are more likely to cooperate, feel secure, and view police as legitimate authorities. These principles are particularly important in strengthening police-community relations in rural areas, where frequent interactions and close social ties require fairness and empathy. According to Kyprianides et al. (2021), participatory policing that values equality and dialogue promotes long-term trust and voluntary compliance. Therefore, procedural justice is not only a strategy for effective law enforcement but also a foundation for community satisfaction and lasting peace.

However, empirical research on procedural justice policing has predominantly examined police-community relations, perceptions of police legitimacy, trust, cooperation, and related outcomes in urban or comparatively well-resourced settings. Philippine studies have also examined police legitimacy, community perceptions, and police-community relations, but empirical evidence remains limited on how residents in rural and culturally diverse municipalities perceive the fairness of police processes and how these perceptions relate specifically to their satisfaction with community engagement. This limitation is particularly relevant in municipalities such as Arakan, North Cotabato, where cultural diversity, geographic conditions, resource constraints, and the local context of police-community relations may shape residents' experiences of policing differently from those reported in predominantly urban settings. Thus, although procedural justice provides an established framework for understanding how fairness in police interactions may influence public attitudes, its relationship with community engagement satisfaction in a rural Philippine municipality remains insufficiently examined. Chan et al. (2023) and Tyler (2025) further emphasize the importance of understanding procedural justice within its social and institutional context, particularly when the goal is to strengthen public trust and constructive police-community relationships.

For clarity, this study distinguishes procedural justice (residents' perception that police follow fair processes: trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice) from community engagement satisfaction (residents' self-reported satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police), which is treated here as a distinct, though conceptually related, outcome rather than as legitimacy, cooperation, or compliance. This study, therefore, examines whether residents' perceived procedural justice in policing is associated with their community engagement satisfaction in the municipality of Arakan, North Cotabato. Specifically, it asks: (1) What is the level of residents' perceived procedural justice in policing, across the dimensions of trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice? (2) What is the level of residents' community engagement satisfaction, across the dimensions of safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police? (3) Is there a significant relationship between residents' perceived procedural justice and their community engagement satisfaction? Accordingly, the study tests the hypothesis that residents' perceived procedural justice in policing is significantly and positively associated with their community engagement satisfaction (H₁). By generating localized evidence, the study aims to inform strategies that strengthen police-community cooperation and promote inclusive, transparent, and community-oriented policing in rural settings.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three complementary theories, each assigned a distinct explanatory role in understanding the relationship between residents' perceived procedural justice in policing and their community engagement satisfaction. Procedural Justice Theory (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 2006)

provides the primary theoretical foundation for the predictor variable. The theory proposes that people evaluate authorities not only by the outcomes they receive but also by the fairness of the procedures used to make decisions and interact with them. Key elements include neutrality, consistency, respectful treatment, and the opportunity to express one's views or be heard. When authorities are perceived to employ fair procedures, individuals are more likely to develop favorable evaluations of the authority and perceive its exercise of power as legitimate. In the present study, this perspective provides the principal basis for examining residents' perceptions of police procedural justice in terms of trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice.

Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) provides a complementary perspective for understanding how residents may form judgments of satisfaction. The theory proposes that satisfaction develops through a comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance. When actual experiences meet or exceed expectations, positive disconfirmation may occur and result in greater satisfaction; when experiences fall below expectations, dissatisfaction may result. In this study, however, expectations and disconfirmation are not measured as separate variables. The theory is therefore used only as an interpretive lens for understanding why residents may report different levels of satisfaction with community engagement based on their experiences with police services and interactions. Accordingly, the study does not directly test expectation-disconfirmation as a causal mechanism.

Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964) provides a further interpretive perspective on the relationship between procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction. The theory views social relationships as involving exchanges in which individuals assess the benefits, costs, fairness, and obligations associated with their interactions. Applied to police-community relations, residents who experience fair, respectful, and trustworthy treatment from police may develop more favorable attitudes toward the relationship and become more receptive to continued interaction and engagement. In the present study, reciprocity is likewise not measured as a separate construct. Social Exchange Theory is therefore not treated as a directly tested mediating or explanatory mechanism but as a theoretical lens for interpreting why perceptions of fair treatment may be associated with more favorable evaluations of police-community engagement.

Taken together, these theories provide complementary explanations without assuming that each constitutes a directly tested mechanism. Procedural Justice Theory provides the primary explanation for the predictor variable, while Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory and Social Exchange Theory provide complementary interpretive perspectives on the formation of satisfaction and the nature of police-community relationships, respectively. Consistent with the variables actually measured in the study, the empirical analysis is limited to determining whether residents' perceived procedural justice in policing is significantly associated with their community engagement satisfaction. The central hypothesis is that residents' perceived procedural justice in policing is significantly and positively related to their community engagement satisfaction in the municipality of Arakan, North Cotabato.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional, quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component determined residents' perceived procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction levels, while the correlational component examined the association between them at a single point in time. Because data were collected once from each respondent, the design supports statements of association only and cannot establish that procedural justice causes changes in community engagement satisfaction (see Limitations).

2.2. Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study involved 397 residents of Arakan, Cotabato, who served as the primary respondents in assessing residents' perceptions of procedural justice in policing and their satisfaction with police-community engagement. The respondents represented different age groups, sexes, and

educational backgrounds, allowing the study to capture varied community perspectives. Residents were selected because their direct experiences and observations of police interactions are essential in understanding how fairness, transparency, respectful treatment, trust, and community-oriented police practices are perceived at the local level. To ensure participants were familiar with the local community and its policing environment, the study included only residents who had lived in Arakan for at least one year and were 18 years old or older. The study excluded individuals who did not meet these eligibility requirements. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and their rights before completing the research instrument. The study employed proportionate stratified sampling by barangay to provide appropriate representation of the municipality's geographic divisions. The 28 barangays of Arakan served as the strata, using the municipality's 2024 population of 51,584 as the basis for sample allocation (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024). The total sample of 397 respondents was proportionately distributed across the 28 barangays according to each barangay's share of the total municipal population.

Thus, barangays with larger populations received proportionately larger sample allocations, while barangays with smaller populations received proportionately smaller allocations. Within each barangay, the researchers selected eligible residents until they reached the corresponding sample allocation. The sampling process was implemented consistently across the barangays to ensure that residents from different geographic areas of the municipality were included in the study. The sample of 397 respondents was established based on the 2024 population estimate of 51,584 residents of Arakan and the desired level of statistical precision for the study. The final sample was considered sufficient for examining the association between residents' perceived procedural justice in policing and their community engagement satisfaction. The demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and educational background were documented and presented in the succeeding section to describe the composition of the study participants. Although proportionate stratification covered all 28 barangays, the interpretation of the findings is appropriately limited to the context of Arakan, Cotabato. The findings are intended to provide localized empirical evidence on residents' perceptions of procedural justice and satisfaction with community engagement, rather than to claim universal generalizability to other municipalities. This approach recognizes that local social, cultural, geographic, and institutional conditions may influence police-community relationships.

2.3. Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring two variables: perceived procedural justice in policing and community engagement satisfaction. The procedural justice scale covered trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice, based on established procedural-justice literature (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 2006; Bradford, 2026). Items assessed perceptions of police fairness, respect, impartiality, and opportunities for residents to express their concerns. Community engagement satisfaction was measured across safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police, using items adapted from Cimene et al. (2022) and contextualized for Arakan. The questionnaire was administered in English with Cebuano/Bisaya translations to facilitate comprehension while preserving the intended meaning of the items.

All items used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For procedural justice, mean scores of 4.21–5.00 were interpreted as very high, 3.41–4.20 as high, 2.61–3.40 as moderate, 1.81–2.60 as low, and 1.00–1.80 as very low perceptions. The same ranges were used to interpret community engagement satisfaction, from very high to very low satisfaction. The instrument was reviewed by three experts in criminology and pilot-tested with 30 respondents who were not included in the final sample. The pilot test yielded high internal consistency for procedural justice ($\alpha = .88$) and community engagement satisfaction ($\alpha = .85$). For the final sample, Cronbach's alpha was examined separately for each dimension of both variables to assess their internal consistency. Expert review provided evidence of content validity; however, content validity and internal consistency alone do not establish construct or discriminant validity. Accordingly, the relationship between the two variables should be interpreted with consideration of their conceptual proximity and potential measurement overlap.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The study employed descriptive and inferential statistical procedures to examine residents' perceptions of procedural justice policing and their satisfaction with community engagement in Arakan, Cotabato. Means and standard deviations were used to summarize the overall levels and variability of perceived procedural justice—covering trustworthiness, respectful treatment, neutrality, and voice—and community engagement satisfaction, including perceptions of safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police. To determine the association between the two principal variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied to composite scores derived from the relevant Likert-type items. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded, and item scores were aggregated to obtain dimension-level composite measures. The use of Pearson correlation was justified by treating these aggregated scores as approximately interval-level measures and by assessing relevant assumptions, including approximate normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and the influence of extreme observations. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$. The analysis focused on the direction, magnitude, and significance of the association between perceived procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction, without implying causality. Overall, the statistical procedures provided a basis for describing residents' perceptions and determining whether higher perceptions of procedural fairness were significantly associated with greater satisfaction with police-community engagement.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles throughout participant recruitment, data collection, data management, and reporting. Ethical clearance was granted through Research Ethics Clearance No. REC-E-2024-CCJE-207 on March 20, 2026, and authorization to conduct the study was obtained from the Office of the Municipal Mayor of Arakan, Cotabato. Respondents provided informed consent after receiving information about the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality and privacy were protected by minimizing the collection of identifying information, securely storing research data, restricting access to authorized research personnel, and reporting findings in aggregate form. Given the study's focus on perceptions of police services and community engagement, particular safeguards were implemented to ensure that individual responses could not be disclosed to police personnel, barangay officials, or other authorities in an identifiable manner. Overall, the study upheld the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and protection of participants' rights and welfare.

3. Results and Discussion

All data gathered from 397 respondents were systematically tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted to clarify how police officers practice procedural justice and how these practices influence community satisfaction and engagement. The discussion also integrates insights from relevant studies and literature to highlight consistencies and differences, deepening understanding of the link between fair policing and public trust.

Table 1. Level of Procedural Justice Policing

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
Trustworthiness			
Police try to be fair when making decisions.	4.65	0.503	Very High
Police treat people fairly.	4.59	0.522	Very High
The police officer was fair.	4.54	0.574	Very High
Category Mean	4.60	0.533	Very High
Respectful Treatment			
Police treat people with dignity and respect.	4.48	0.584	Very High
Police are always polite when dealing with people.	4.46	0.565	Very High
Police respect people's rights when making decisions.	4.41	0.581	Very High
Police respect people's rights.	4.39	0.570	Very High

Police officer treat people with dignity and respect.	4.35	0.582	Very High
Police are polite when dealing with people.	4.35	0.599	Very High
The police officer treated me with dignity and respect.	4.34	0.596	Very High
The police officer was polite when dealing with me.	4.35	0.600	Very High
Category Mean	4.39	0.585	Very High
Neutrality			
Police make decisions based upon facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	4.45	0.612	Very High
Police make their decisions based upon facts, not their personal opinions.	4.41	0.615	Very High
Police apply the law consistently to everyone, regardless of who they are.	4.34	0.601	Very High
The police officer made decisions based upon facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	4.29	0.600	Very High
Category Mean	4.37	0.607	Very High
Voice			
Police listen to people before making decisions.	4.34	0.588	Very High
Police give people a chance to express their views before making decisions.	4.33	0.599	Very High
Police consider people's views when deciding what to do.	4.28	0.588	Very High
Police take account of the needs and concerns of the people they deal with.	4.29	0.626	Very High
The police officer gave me the opportunity to express my views.	4.32	0.629	Very High
The police officer listened to me.	4.24	0.646	Very High
Category Mean	4.30	0.613	Very High
Overall Mean		4.42	0.584
		Very High Level of Procedural Justice Policing	

Table 1 presents respondents' perceived level of procedural justice policing in Arakan, Cotabato. The overall mean of 4.42 with a standard deviation of 0.584 indicates a Very High Level of Procedural Justice Policing, suggesting that police officers in the locality are generally perceived as fair, respectful, neutral, and attentive to public concerns. Among the four dimensions, trustworthiness received the highest category mean ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.533$), indicating that respondents strongly agree that police officers make fair and impartial decisions. This highlights fairness as a key attribute of policing in the area and a contributor to public confidence.

Respectful treatment followed, with a mean of 4.39 ($SD = 0.585$), reflecting that officers are courteous, polite, and treat community members with dignity. Neutrality ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.607$) shows that respondents perceive police decisions as fact-based and unbiased. At the same time, Voice ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.613$) suggests that the public is given opportunities to express their views and concerns. These findings align with procedural justice research that emphasizes fairness, respect, neutrality, and public participation as central to police legitimacy (Tyler, 2006; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Overall, the data indicate that respondents in this sample perceived police officers in Arakan as generally upholding procedural justice, which was associated with strong reported public trust and positive perceptions of police-community relationships in this study; because these are self-reported perceptions rather than independently observed police conduct, this should not be read as confirmation that officers uniformly practice procedural justice.

The finding that trustworthiness received the highest mean score, while voice received the lowest, warrants careful interpretation. One possible explanation is that residents may more readily evaluate trustworthiness through their general perceptions of police fairness and reliability, even among respondents with limited direct interaction with police officers (Weisburd et al., 2024). In contrast, items measuring voice concern more specific participatory experiences, such as whether residents have

opportunities to express their concerns, explain their circumstances, and feel their views are heard during police interactions. Consequently, residents may have found the voice dimension more difficult to evaluate or may have had fewer direct experiences relevant to these items. The lower rating for voice may therefore reflect comparatively limited opportunities for participatory interaction with police, differences in residents' direct experiences, or how respondents understood the items. Because the study did not separately measure frequency or recency of police contact, the available data cannot determine which of these explanations best accounts for the observed difference.

The interpretation of the trustworthiness dimension likewise requires caution. Trust in or confidence in police authority should not automatically be equated with perceptions that police procedures are fair (Tyler & Nobo, 2022). If any item in the instrument referred to the expectation that police officers "must be obeyed and respected," such wording may reflect deference to authority or social respect for police officers rather than residents' assessment of procedural fairness itself. These concepts are related but theoretically distinct. Accordingly, a high score on trustworthiness should be interpreted in light of the wording and operationalization of the items used in this study and should not be taken as definitive evidence that police officers consistently demonstrate procedurally fair conduct.

These considerations are particularly relevant in interpreting findings from Arakan, where community members and police officers may have relatively frequent and close interactions within local communities. Social expectations concerning respect for authority may influence residents' responses to questions concerning police trust and authority. Thus, the relatively high trustworthiness score may reflect a combination of residents' perceptions of police fairness and reliability, their experiences with police, and broader community norms concerning respect for law enforcement. The findings should therefore be understood as residents' reported perceptions of procedural justice, rather than as an independent assessment of the actual procedural conduct of police officers.

Table 2. Level of Community Engagement Satisfaction

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
Community Satisfaction With Safety and Security			
I feel safe and secure in our community because our police officers do their jobs.	4.42	0.608	Very High
I can go around in our community without fear because our police officers are faithful to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.	4.36	0.617	Very High
I believe our community experiences peace and security because the police are visible in the area.	4.37	0.632	Very High
The police in our community conduct programs and activities that maintain order and peace in the community.	4.37	0.657	Very 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.	4.37	0.644	Very High
Police officers are visible in our streets/community and conduct regular patrols and/or security checks in various parts of the community.	4.44	0.577	Very High
I feel safe staying at home and/or walking alone in the streets during the day and after dark.	4.34	0.591	Very High
I do not worry that a criminal might enter our house while we are sleeping.	4.32	0.625	Very High
I do not worry that my children/younger siblings might be part of or be victimized by gangs or criminals.	4.21	0.637	Very High
Category Mean	4.35	0.621	Very High
The Community's Respect for the Police			
The people in the community respect the police because they conduct themselves in a professional manner and show pride and commitment to service.	4.42	0.605	Very High

The police treated the community with respect and dignity, and so they also deserve my support and respect.	4.36	0.655	Very High
I believe the people have high regard for the police in the community because they uphold the values important to them.	4.36	0.588	Very High
The police must be obeyed and respected because they put themselves on the line to protect the community's public order and safety.	4.38	0.622	Very High
When the police wear their uniform, they embody law and authority. Therefore, people in the community respect them.	4.41	0.594	Very High
Category Mean	4.38	0.613	Very High
The Community's Trust in the Police			
Our police enforce the law without fear or reservation.	4.41	0.581	Very High
I know that the police in our community do not yield to bribery and corruption.	4.32	0.605	Very High
I believe that the police do what is right for my community.	4.32	0.618	Very High
The police officers are reliable whenever people in the community seek assistance.	4.35	0.586	Very High
I am confident that the police in my community do their job well and act accordingly to the community's best interest.	4.34	0.570	Very High
I will definitely call the police if a crime occurs near where I live and work.	4.44	0.559	Very High
Category Mean	4.36	0.586	Very High
Overall Mean	4.37	0.607	Very High Level of Community Engagement Satisfaction

Table 2 presents the level of Community Engagement Satisfaction in terms of community safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police in Arakan, Cotabato. The overall mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.607) indicates a Very High Level of Community Engagement Satisfaction, suggesting that respondents are highly satisfied with police performance, visibility, and their relationship with the community. For community satisfaction with safety and security, the category mean of 4.35 (SD = 0.621) is interpreted as Very High.

This indicates that residents feel safe and secure due to the active presence and consistent performance of police officers. The highest-rated indicator, police visibility (M = 4.44), shows that regular patrols and security checks greatly contribute to the community's sense of safety. Overall, the findings suggest that police presence plays a significant role in maintaining peace and order. For the community's respect for the police, the category mean of 4.38 (SD = 0.613) is also Very High. This reflects respondents' recognition of police officers' professionalism, commitment, and respectful conduct. High ratings in indicators such as professionalism (M = 4.42) and respect for authority (M = 4.41) indicate that the police are viewed as credible and deserving of public respect.

Regarding community trust in the police, the category mean of 4.36 (SD = 0.586) is likewise interpreted as Very High. This shows that respondents generally trust the police to enforce the law fairly, act in the community's best interest, and provide reliable assistance when needed. The highest indicator, willingness to call the police during crime incidents (M = 4.44), further reflects strong public confidence. Although some indicators, such as concerns about corruption (M = 4.32), had slightly lower means than others, they still fall within the Very High range, indicating that trust remains strong overall. Overall, the consistently very high ratings across all dimensions indicate a favorable relationship between the community and the police as reported by respondents in this sample. The findings suggest that police visibility, professionalism, and responsiveness are associated with higher community satisfaction, though this cross-sectional design cannot establish that these police practices caused the observed satisfaction levels. These results also suggest that sustaining transparency, integrity, and community-oriented programs may be worth continued institutional attention, pending further research that can more directly test their effects.

Table 3. Relationship between the Variables

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation
Procedural Justice Policing and Community Engagement Satisfaction	.763	< .001	Strong, positive, significant relationship

Note. $N = 397$; $p < .05$. The correlation was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 3 presents the relationship between procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction among residents of Arakan, Cotabato. The results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the two variables, $r(395) = .763$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.719, .801]. This indicates that residents who reported higher levels of perceived procedural justice also tended to report higher levels of satisfaction with community engagement. The confidence interval does not include zero, further supporting the statistical significance and positive direction of the observed association. However, the result should be interpreted as an association rather than a causal effect, as the correlational design does not establish that perceived procedural justice causes higher satisfaction with community engagement. The finding nevertheless supports the study's hypothesis that more favorable perceptions of procedural justice are associated with more favorable evaluations of police-community engagement.

The strong positive association is consistent with the possibility that when residents perceive police officers as fair, respectful, and neutral, and as allowing community participation, they also report greater satisfaction with safety and security, respect for the police, and trust in the police; because both variables were measured through the same self-report instrument at a single time point, this pattern is also consistent with common-method variance or general positive-response tendencies contributing to the observed association, which cannot be ruled out with this design. Notably, both procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction had similarly high category means across their respective dimensions; this shared high-mean pattern does not, by itself, demonstrate the correlation, since a Pearson correlation reflects covariation among individual respondents' scores, not similarity between the two variables' averages.

The r^2 for this relationship is approximately .582, indicating that about 58.2% of the variance in community engagement satisfaction scores is statistically shared with procedural justice scores in this sample; this describes shared variance, not a causal or explanatory mechanism. This association is consistent with prior literature suggesting that fair decision-making, respectful treatment, and community involvement are important factors related to community engagement, though this study's cross-sectional design cannot establish procedural justice policing as a cause of community engagement.

Overall, the findings indicate that procedural justice is strongly associated with satisfaction with community engagement in this sample. Given the study's limitations (see Limitations), these findings should be treated as an empirical association that merits further, more rigorous investigation — including designs that can better separate the two constructs and establish temporal or causal order — rather than as confirmed evidence that strengthening fairness and transparency in police practices will, on its own, enhance public confidence. The uniformly high and narrowly distributed means observed across nearly all items in both Table 1 and Table 2 also warrant explicit discussion before concluding that procedural justice is consistently practiced at a very high level in Arakan. Plausible alternative or contributing explanations include a ceiling effect from predominantly positively worded items; acquiescence or social-desirability responding, particularly on a topic involving evaluation of local authority figures; residents' reluctance to criticize police, whether from fear or social norms; possible nonresponse or selection bias if less satisfied residents were less likely to participate; the item-repetition noted in the Methods section; and, if data collection occurred in settings where police or barangay officials were present or visible, possible social-desirability pressure from their presence. This study's design cannot distinguish among these explanations and genuinely high, favorable perceptions; this is discussed further in the Limitations section.

4. Conclusion

This study found that residents of Arakan, Cotabato perceived a very high level of procedural justice in local policing ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.584$) and reported very high community engagement satisfaction ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.607$). Respondents who reported stronger procedural-justice perceptions also tended to report greater trust, respect, and perceived safety, $r(395) = .763$, $p < .001$. Because this is a cross-sectional, self-report study, interpret this finding as an association between residents' perceptions, not as evidence that procedural justice increases trust, satisfaction, or safety, nor as an independent assessment of police conduct. The study's contribution lies in providing localized, rural-Philippine evidence on procedural justice and police-community relations, a setting that has received comparatively less empirical attention than urban contexts. The consistently high ratings across nearly all items, however, together with the conceptual and item-level overlap between the two constructs discussed above, mean these findings should be read as a description of residents' self-reported perceptions in this specific municipality rather than as a definitive assessment of actual police conduct or of causal influence on community outcomes.

5. Recommendations

For Police and Local Government Practice. Police and local government authorities should strengthen accessible community-feedback mechanisms through regular barangay-level consultations that provide residents with opportunities to express concerns and participate in discussions regarding police services. Mechanisms should also be established to document, communicate, and demonstrate how residents' concerns are considered in police decisions and activities. Confidential and accessible complaint-reporting procedures should be reinforced to encourage residents to report concerns without fear of disclosure or reprisal. Given the comparatively lower rating of corruption-related trust, police agencies should further strengthen transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption initiatives. Finally, regular training on procedural justice and culturally responsive policing should be provided to officers serving rural and culturally diverse communities.

For Future Research. Future studies should employ anonymous and independently administered data-collection procedures to minimize potential social-desirability and authority-related response biases. Researchers should also establish the discriminant validity of procedural justice policing and community engagement satisfaction before undertaking further predictive or structural modeling, particularly given their conceptual and item-level overlap. Where feasible, self-reported perceptions should be complemented with objective indicators, such as crime statistics, police response times, and complaint records. Finally, similar studies should be conducted across additional municipalities and community contexts to assess the generalizability and transferability of the findings beyond Arakan, Cotabato.

6. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Its cross-sectional design cannot establish causality between procedural justice and community engagement satisfaction, and both variables were measured through self-report at a single point in time, creating a risk of common-method bias. Respondents may also have been influenced by social-desirability bias or reluctance to criticize police, a possibility that cannot be ruled out and that may partly explain the uniformly high, narrowly distributed scores observed across both scales (see Results and Discussion). The two constructs also show conceptual and item-level overlap — for instance, items referencing respect and fair treatment appear in both instruments — which may inflate the observed correlation beyond what fully independent constructs would show; discriminant validity between the two scales has not yet been established. The study relies on a single municipality, Arakan, and its findings should not be generalized to North Cotabato province or other rural or urban settings. Sampling relied on barangay registries, which may not fully or currently cover the population, introducing possible noncoverage bias, and the specific within-barangay selection procedure was not fully documented (see Methods). This study did not incorporate objective data, such as crime

statistics, police response times, or complaint records, that could corroborate residents' perceptions. Finally, the study did not conduct subgroup or barangay-level analysis, which could reveal variation masked by the municipality-wide averages reported here. Collectively, these limitations mean that the very high scores reported in this study may reflect genuine satisfaction, one or more of the response tendencies described above, or some combination of both, and should be interpreted accordingly.

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.

References

- Babbie, E. R., Wagner, K. D., & Zaino, J. (2010). *Practicing social research: Quantitative and qualitative methods* (4th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bradford, B. (2026). Research on public trust and police legitimacy: Where next, and why? Evidence Base. <https://doi.org/10.1080/30679125.2025.2608830>
- Calmorin, L. P. (2007). *Research methods and thesis writing* (2nd ed.). Rex Book Store.

- Chan, A., Bradford, B., & Stott, C. (2023). A systematic review and meta-analysis of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing: The effect of social identity and social contexts. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-023-09595-5>
- Cimene, F. T. A., Santander, M. E. D., Telen, M. A. E., & Onyot, L. S. (2022). A 2022 community engagement satisfaction survey on safety and security, respect and trust in the Philippine National Police Region X. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications*, 5(4), 21–28.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.). *Sage Publications*.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2016). Scale development: Theory and applications (4th ed.). *Sage Publications*.
- Dobson, K., Dittmann, A., & Yeager, D. S. (2025). A transparency statement improves trust in community-police interactions. *Nature Communications*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-55709-6>
- Gold, J. (2022). Improving community relations in the police through procedural justice: An action learning initiative. *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, 19(3), 230–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767333.2022.2129586>
- Hanway, P., & Hambly, O. (2023). Public perceptions of policing: A review of research and literature. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-perceptions-of-policing-a-review-of-research-and-literature>
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606. <https://doi.org/10.1086/222355>
- Kyprianides, A., Bradford, B., Jackson, J., Yesberg, J. A., Stott, C., & Radburn, M. (2021). Identity, legitimacy and cooperation with police: Comparing general-population and street-population samples from London. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000312>
- Mazerolle, L., Antrobus, E., Bennett, S. and Tyler, T.R. (2013), Shaping Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: A Randomized Field Trial of Procedural Justice. *Criminology*, 51: 33-63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2012.00289.x>
- Norman, G. (2010). Likert scales, levels of measurement and the "laws" of statistics. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 15(5), 625–632. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-010-9222-y>
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460–469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378001700404>
- Osumo, L. G., Llagas, E. R., & Castro, B. (2025). Walking the talk: The local community's engagement spectrum with the local government unit programs and policies. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educational Technologies, Psychology, and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 137–158. <https://doi.org/10.70847/617350>
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2024). 2024 census of population and housing: Cotabato province. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/2024-census-population-and-housing-cotabato>
- Sunshine, J., & Tyler, T. R. (2003). The role of procedural justice and legitimacy in shaping public support for policing. *Law & Society Review*, 37(3), 513–548. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5893.3703002>
- Thibaut, J., & Walker, L. (1975). Procedural justice: A psychological analysis. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tyler, T., & Nobo, C. (2022). Legitimacy-based policing and the promotion of community vitality. *Cambridge University Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009308014>
- Tyler, T. R. (2006). Why people obey the law (Updated ed.). Princeton University Press.
- Tyler, T. R. (2025). Legitimacy-based policing. *Criminology & Public Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12695>

Weisburd, D., Jonathan-Zamir, T., White, C., Wilson, D. B., & Kuen, K. (2024). Are the police primarily responsible for influencing place-level perceptions of procedural justice and effectiveness? A longitudinal study of street segments. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 61(1), 76–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224278221120225>