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## **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS, ENABLING MECHANISMS AND STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION OF A LOCAL POLICE STATION**

**ZARAH GALIA MAGNO**

**Administrative Officer II**

Libacao Central Elementary School

zgmagno@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

This descriptive study examined public perceptions of the Libacao Municipal Police Station and its role in supporting Libacao’s goal of becoming a leading ecotourism destination in Aklan. It used surveys and interviews to identify key programs, activities, and best practices that enable effective public service. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather data from 100 respondents purposely selected to assess public perception. Additionally, 10 key informants were purposively chosen for in-depth interviews using a Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide to gather qualitative insights and support further research and hypothesis development. Findings showed that the community highly regard the Libacao Municipal Police Station for its professionalism, reliability, and public service, earning strong ratings in legitimacy, justice delivery, and service quality. Through community-based programs and crime prevention efforts, it supports public safety and Libacao’s Eco-Agri-Tourism goals, while its strategic actions address resource and geographic challenges to maintain a safe and welcoming environment.

**Keywords:** *Public Perceptions, Enabling Mechanisms and Strategic Plan of Action*

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## INTRODUCTION

Under Republic Act No. 8551, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is mandated to function as a service-driven, community-based organization dedicated to upholding public safety and social order. This legislation structures the agency to prioritize transparency and ethical conduct in decision-making, while simultaneously striving for high levels of operational competence among its personnel and various divisions (Deri et al., 2020).

During its early stages, the PNP faced significant growing pains; by the start of the 2000s, public opinion polls consistently identified the force as one of the most graft-ridden institutions in the Philippines. This reputational crisis sparked a national priority to investigate the root causes of these institutional failures, leading to comprehensive studies designed to implement sustainable reforms (Patrol Plan 2030, n.d.).

Extensive academic literature indicates that when law enforcement interacts with the public with fairness and respect, citizens are more likely to perceive the police as a legitimate authority and adhere to legal protocols (Bradford et al., 2009; Kane, 2005; Kochel et al., 2011; Tyler, 1990, 2003; Tyler and Huo, 2002). Ultimately, global research consistently demonstrates that establishing police legitimacy is key to encouraging law-abiding behavior within a community, even in the absence of direct supervision (Papachristos et al., 2009).

The Municipality of Libacao is a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) class municipality in the province of Aklan, though it is a “hot spot” for Communist Party New People Army National (CNN) in the province of Aklan, the municipality is thriving to develop and sustain its economy for its progress and better life of the populace. The municipality consists of twenty-four (24) barangays with 28,

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525 total populations according to Census 2024. The topographic features are mostly upland areas which is why the Local Government of Libacao is envisioning the Municipality as the next Eco-Tourism destination of Aklan.

The Libacao Municipal Police Station with thirty-one (31) members assigned, twenty-seven (27) are uniformed personnel and four (4) non-uniformed personnel render the protective service of the Municipality of Libacao. The local police department is responsible for sustaining daily security and public order across the municipality's twenty-four (24) barangays.

As the Local Government is currently aiming for the next Eco-Tourism of Aklan, Local tourist and the localities are already exploring the tourist destinations as the peace and order demands attention to secure the safety and security of the communities and tourist alike. The community response with police performance on securing the safety and security of the community and whether it satisfies the needs of the public is vital.

In Consideration of the fact that fifty-four percent of the barangays or thirteen (13) out of twenty-four (24) of Libacao are Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA), the researcher pursued the present study to generate evidence-based data that could be used in the evaluation of the perception of the community and the effectiveness of enabling mechanisms of the Libacao PNP.

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## MATERIALS AND METHOD

### Research Method

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research to collect and analyze both numerical and non-numerical data. This methodology was employed to establish generalizable facts while simultaneously gaining an understanding of concepts, opinions, and lived experiences. Furthermore, it allowed for the gathering of in-depth insights into the research problem and the generation of new ideas for future investigation.

### Research Design

In order to see the general picture of the challenges in the police performance, community response and satisfaction, the researcher used the descriptive research design.

Descriptive survey research offers the investigator pertinent and precise data by directly engaging the individuals central to the study's goals. This methodology is designed to address the "who, what, when, and how" of a given topic.

According to McCombes (2019), the primary objective of descriptive research is to systematically document or characterize the specific traits, actions, mindsets, viewpoints, or insights of a target group or population.

### Respondents of the Study

**Table 1** *Profile of the Respondents*

Variables	N	%
As a Whole	100	100.00

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Sex		
Male	29	29.00
Female	71	71.00
Age		
25 years old & below	37	37.00
26 – 35 years old	27	27.00
36 – 45 years old	17	17.00
46 - 55 years old	11	11.00
56 years old & above	8	8.00
Educational Attainment		
Highschool Undergrad	3	3.00
Highschool Graduate	4	4.00
College Level	39	39.00
College Graduate	48	48.00
Post Graduate	4	4.00
Others	2	2.00
Sectoral Representation		
Student	31	31.00
Government Official/Employee	38	38.00
Professional	11	11.00
Church/Faith-Based Group	1	1.00
Private Employee/Worker	2	2.00
Business	3	3.00
Indigenous People	6	6.00
Farmer	2	2.00
Laborer	1	1.00
Others	5	5.00

## Sampling Design

The researcher employed purposive or deliberate sampling to identify and select 100 participants for this study. As noted by Bisht (2024), this method—frequently referred to as

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judgmental or expert sampling—relies on the researcher’s professional insight to intentionally choose respondents who meet specific criteria relevant to the study.

A survey form was given to 100 respondents to rate the performance of the Libacao MPS/PNP, while the key informants shared their opinions, recommendations, and feedback through its enabling mechanism.

### Research Instrument

The researcher used a researcher-made survey form that gathered the primary data on the performance of the Libacao MPS/PNP. This was supplemented by an interview guide used for key informants. The survey form content was validated by a jury of experts and the comments and suggestions were integrated in the final instrument.

The questionnaire has two parts. The first part contains the respondent’s personal information such as name which is optional, address, sex, age, civil status, educational attainment and sectoral representation. The second part contains statements on public perception in terms of service quality, justice delivery, citizen satisfaction and police legitimacy. The twenty (20) questions were Likert five-point scale type items.

### Validity of the Research Instrument

Before administering the survey, the researcher enlisted three specialists in research and public administration to assess the questionnaire's content validity. This appraisal followed the eight-point validation criteria established by Good and Scates. All recommendations provided by the evaluators were integrated into the finalized version of the instrument (Martines, 2022).

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## Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher gathered data using a researcher-made survey form. This survey-form underwent validity and reliability test.

Before administering the questionnaire, the research sought permission from the Dean of the Graduate School, PHINMA University of Iloilo to allow her to conduct the study.

The researcher formally requested authorization from the Provincial Director of the Aklan Police Provincial Office, which oversees the Libacao Municipal Police Station, by submitting a letter detailing the study's objectives and the survey process. Once approval was granted, a copy of the endorsed request was provided to the Officer-in-Charge of the Libacao Municipal Police Station. Throughout this process, all participant profiles and interview data were handled with strict confidentiality.

The survey was personally administered to the participants using a researcher-developed instrument. To ensure a high response rate and data integrity, the completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after the respondents had finished.

Finally, the collected data were systematically tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted through the application of suitable statistical methods.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was deemed suitable for this research as it effectively condenses the fundamental characteristics of the dataset. For the information gathered via surveys, descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize and illustrate the participants' feedback. This approach is particularly useful for Likert scale data, which usually presents a sequence of

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statements where individuals rate their level of agreement. According to Alkharusi (2022), performing a descriptive analysis on these scales is vital for investigators to accurately interpret the attitudes and perspectives of the target population. By employing descriptive statistical methods, a substantial volume of raw data was distilled into concise summaries. This information was then organized into structured tables featuring frequency counts and percentage distributions, complemented by detailed narrative interpretations. As noted by Martinez (2022), this process allows for the clear communication of complex data through a few essential indices, making the findings more accessible and manageable.

The interview questions aimed at eliciting relevant information about the police performance of the Libacao MPS/PNP in implementing the peace and order in the Municipality of Libacao. To address the responses from the open-ended interview questions, the researcher utilized thematic analysis as the primary analytical framework.

This qualitative approach is designed to detect, examine, and explain recurring patterns of collective meaning, or themes, within a dataset. According to McLeod (2024), this method is versatile and can be applied to various textual sources, including personal interviews, focus groups, or open-ended survey responses.

Thematic analysis requires the systematic coding of qualitative information into conceptual categories or similar clusters. As Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize, this process allows researchers to identify stable relationships and patterns between themes, ultimately facilitating the development of a theoretical explanation for the subject being investigated.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the study, the community has a favorable opinion of the Libacao Municipal Police Station across all key performance areas. Although there is a need to increase awareness of crime prevention operations, respondents gave the PNP high marks for service quality, especially in terms of work quality, response time, and competence.

In terms of delivering justice, the results show that the public is highly satisfied with and trusting of the police, as they are perceived as unbiased, fair, and efficient in conducting investigations, settling conflicts, and attending to community concerns. However, there is a need to enhance or level up performance regarding effective problem-solving.

Regarding citizen satisfaction, most locals strongly approved of the police presence, accessibility, and dedication to public safety; yet, there is room for improvement in community outreach and educational initiatives.

The Libacao PNP enjoys a high degree of public trust regarding police legitimacy; respondents acknowledge its moral authority, integrity, and respect for human rights. The study also discovered that the Police Station supports the municipality's Eco-Agri-Tourism objectives by implementing several enabling mechanisms, such as community-based programs, crime prevention efforts, tourism safety patrols, stakeholder collaboration, and public safety campaigns.

Nonetheless, a number of difficulties were noted, including a lack of personnel and resources; a lack of financial and appropriate logistical requirements, specifically for Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA); geographical obstacles; a lack of

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specialized training in security tourism for GIDA; insufficient road infrastructure; uneven community collaboration; and the difficulty of striking a balance between regular law enforcement and tourism-related duties.

In response, the PNP has created a strategic plan of action that focuses on bolstering community policing, improving safety protocols, encouraging tourism-friendly security measures, expanding awareness campaigns, forming alliances, and guaranteeing long-term, sustainable support for Libacao's growth as an Eco-Agri-Tourism destination.

Overall, the results indicate that although the Libacao PNP is operating efficiently and enjoying great community trust, ongoing development and strategic innovation are crucial to maintaining public trust and advancing the municipality's long-term development objectives.

According to the study's findings, the community holds the Libacao Municipal Police Station in high respect for its skill, professionalism, and dedication to public service. The results of the survey show high levels of satisfaction regarding police legitimacy, civilian satisfaction, justice delivery, and service quality. According to the respondents, the Police Station exhibits high levels of trust, moral authority, and respect within the municipality and is fair, unbiased, and capable. Public opinion generally highlights confidence in the PNP's capacity to uphold peace and order, despite slight differences in opinions regarding crime prevention and community outreach.

The Libacao PNP provides services through a variety of community-focused programs, regular patrols, efforts to reduce crime, and public safety campaigns. Its implementation of best practices, such as transparency, citizen involvement, and cooperation with local

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government entities, has been supplemented by particular initiatives that promote Libacao's goal of becoming an Eco-Agri-Tourism destination. These include stakeholder coordination for safe events and agro-tourism activities, education campaigns on responsible tourism and environmental protection, data-driven policing for ongoing improvement, crime prevention training, youth and civic development initiatives, and tourism safety patrols.

Despite its successes, the Police Station still faces a number of difficulties, including a shortage of staff and resources, financial and logistical constraints, a need for specialized training, geographic limitations, insufficient road infrastructure, a sporadic lack of community engagement, and the requirement to strike a balance between regular law enforcement and proactive activities that promote tourism. Coordination with various parties, budgetary constraints, and handling new security issues brought on by increased tourism are further difficulties.

As a result, the Libacao PNP has created a thorough strategic plan of action that will bolster community policing, improve public safety measures, implement security procedures that are friendly to tourists, run awareness and educational campaigns, encourage stakeholder collaboration, increase staff capacity and creativity, and incorporate sustainability into long-term planning. These programs guarantee that law enforcement, community involvement, and tourism preparedness cooperate to establish a secure, friendly, and sustainable environment for locals and tourists alike.

All things considered, the Libacao Municipal Police Station is essential to the municipality's strategic objective of being one of Aklan's top eco-agri-tourism destinations. In

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addition to upholding public safety and order, the PNP actively promotes community development, tourism growth, and the welfare of the local populace through its programs, services, and strategic initiatives, solidifying its standing as a reliable and successful organization in the eyes of the general public.

## Conclusions

The Libacao Municipal Police Station should improve its efforts to prevent crime and raise police visibility through frequent patrols, public awareness campaigns, and open reporting. According to the study's findings, optimal police visibility leads to higher positive feedback and personnel compliments from the community.

In order to promote active participation in safety, environmental preservation, and responsible tourist practices, the station should also enhance community engagement by expanding and enhancing outreach programs and forming stronger alliances with barangays, schools, and civic organizations.

Additionally, increasing operational capacity by adding more staff, funding, logistical equipment, and specialized training is crucial, especially to address issues regarding budget dependency, insufficient staffing, and remote, geographically isolated locations.

In order to guarantee a secure and friendly atmosphere for guests, the Police Station should institutionalize tourist-oriented security measures by creating standardized procedures, carrying out tourism safety patrols, and closely collaborating with force multipliers and tourism partners.

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Finally, in order to integrate public safety with sustainable Eco-Agri-Tourism development and ensure long-term benefits for both locals and tourists, it is crucial to strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration by working closely with local government units, tourism offices, farmers' groups, and community organizations.



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