



Exploring Citizen's Satisfaction with the Police in Developing Society

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Abstract

To develop a harmonious and productive relationship between citizens and the police in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) it is important to first understand the impact of procedural justice and satisfaction with the police which was the aim of this study. A quantitative research methodology was used with an online survey of eight multiple-choice questions with responses aligned to a Likert scale. The results showed that 47.5% of participants were not satisfied with the police service, and only 10% felt very satisfied. The results indicated that officer did not use the correct procedures, disrespectful, undignified, unfair, lack transparency and inconsistent. The results highlighted the need for practice and policy changes in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service especially during a contact with citizens. It was suggested that there was the need for continuous professional development (CPD) towards improving officer's skills, knowledge, and behaviour (KSB) which could enhance officers and citizens relations.

Keywords: *Satisfaction; Policing; Citizens; Trinidad and Tobago; Post-Colonial*

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Police and citizens of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) are important coproducers of safer communities, supporting the moral fabric of society, reducing criminality and fear of crime (Mathura, 2022; Sani et al., 2022). For the police service to obtain citizens support towards achieving the institution's objectives of protecting citizens, it is imperative that citizens feel satisfied with the police (Murphy, 2009; Nivette & Akoensi, 2017). Citizens' satisfaction with the police is usually developed from personal or vicarious and positive or negative experiences (Lloyd & Foster, 2009; Sani et al., 2022) and such experiences could determine citizens' acceptance of the police service as legitimate or not (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012; Adams, 2019). It is imperative for citizens to have productive and satisfying experiences with the police service because dissatisfaction could undermine the legitimacy of the institution and negatively impact citizens moral obligation to comply with the law (Tyler, 1990; Mathura, 2019). According to Tankebe (2014) police legitimacy depend on citizens satisfaction with the police institution which is often influences by citizens support and acceptance of policing strategies (Maguire et al., 2017).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Previous research on policing in T&T by authors such as Deosaran (2002); Pino & Johnson (2011) and Mathura (2022) showed that citizens were dissatisfied with the performance of police officers, which negatively impacted on legitimacy and compliance with the law. According to Deosaran (2002) citizens of T&T highlighted that many officers in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) were forceful, rude, disrespectful, and unsympathetic when dealing with citizens. Another study conducted by Pino & Johnson (2011) found that deviance within the TTPS was an institutional problem and interactions with the public were extremely poor. It accentuated that some officers even participated in drug trafficking and gang activities. As a result, innocent citizens who reported illegal activities such as gang crimes to the police were often victimised because of some officers' involvement in gangs. A study from Mathura (2019) suggested that citizens in T&T held unfavourable and negative perceptions towards the TTPS. It stated that some officers were not held accountable for their actions, therefore, citizens did not trust the police service and many officers abused their power and authority for personal gains. Pino & Johnson (2011) demonstrated that misconduct in the TTPS permeated almost all levels of the institution and hindered growth, and development. Such poor relationship between officers and citizens caused the public to feel disenchanting and terrified of approaching the police institution.

It is important to note that previous studies often measured satisfaction with the police service and used variables such as demographic characteristics and levels of services provided. Those studies mainly focused on developed countries such as North America, Europe, and Asia. It must be acknowledged that there is a nascent body of research and literature that exists on policing in T&T and even less on satisfaction with the police service. When this study was conducted, there was no evidence to demonstrate that satisfaction with the police using procedural justice as an independent variable was attempted in T&T. Due to this lack of research and literature on the topic in T&T, a gap in knowledge was created and challenged the TTPS and its ability to serve, protect and enjoy a harmonious relationship with citizens in T&T.

1.3 Aim of the Study

This study was aimed at exploring citizens' satisfaction with the police in T&T using procedural justice. To achieve this goal, the following research questions needed to be addressed.

1. Do police officers in T&T use procedural justice when dealing with citizens?
2. If "YES," did it positively influence citizens' satisfaction with the police? 3. If "NO" do citizens, consider it important to have procedural justice in the future?

The aim of this study was not intended to generalise the findings and conclusion or develop a "one size fit all approach" but mainly to establish a foundation and add to the emerging scholarship on policing in T&T. Additionally, the findings and recommendations can become useful toward enhancing policing practice in T&T and other societies which might find it beneficial and applicable.

1.4 Justification for this Study

Previous research on satisfaction with the police often focused on factors such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, gender and asking people if they were happy with the police service (Sani et al., 2022). Most of these studies were conducted in developed countries such as Australia, Canada, USA, and UK whilst developing countries experienced lower levels of attention and research findings (Khuns et al., 2011). Due to the nascent body of research and literature that exists on citizens' satisfaction with the police in T&T, this study was instrumental for developing a body of knowledge on the topic. Because this study was conducted within T&T, it was fundamental towards expanding the present literature to include developing societies.

2. Previous Research

Mathura (2019) highlighted that the police institution has been in existence for a long time and its role and function is often debatable. He also stated that in T&T citizens depend on the police service for protection and guidance which frequently created a paradoxical scenario. On the one hand, citizens rely on services from the police and on the other hand, they frequently criticise and condemn officers' actions. Nonetheless, Ferdik et al. (2019) suggested that it was paramount that citizens perceived the police as legitimate figures of authority because it was necessary for good working relationship and moral compliance.

Bolger et al. (2021) and Ferdik et al. (2019) stated that within recent times police criticisms had continuously escalated, and complaints were directly connected to increased casualties and death that were attributed to policing and its law enforcement practices. Bolger et al. (2021) further added that citizens perceptions of the police was vital for sustainable relationships between both parties. Since the perceptions and views of the public were paramount, it was important to develop an understanding of citizens satisfaction with the police. It is not uncommon for authors to research the factors that influence citizens dis/satisfaction with the police (Sani et al. 2022; Ferdik, et al., 2022). A debate by Ferdik, et al. (2022) highlighted that policing was dependent on the public and citizens dissatisfaction could impede on officers' effectiveness and efficiency. While these authors supported such views, Merenda et al. (2020) debated that research on policing must be holistic and comprehensive and not solely focused on crime. This claim was made because these authors were convinced that the job specifications of many police officers extend beyond solving crime and often included regular and consistent interaction with the public, and the protection of citizens and community policing.

2.1 Satisfaction with the Police

Research on citizens satisfaction with the police conducted by Brown & Benedict (2002), Zhao et al (2014) & Bolger et al. (2021) identified three essential variables which were citizens demographics, prior contact with the police and neighbourhood conditions. Research on citizens satisfaction with the police should incorporate demographics of citizens. Ivkovic (2008) and Taylor et al. (2001) supported this perspective and claimed that females generally possess favourable attitudes toward the police. Further the socialisation of women renders them more peaceful, communicative, and cooperative. These qualities and attributes accredited to women frequently decrease potential tensions with the police (Ivkovic, 2008, Taylor et al., 2001). On the contrary, men were more confrontational and demanding of respect. Hence, they could be less courteous to officers and could easily discredit favourable view of the police (Johnson, 2015).

Like gender, the age factor is crucial and extensive research by Johnson (2015) found that mature people repeatedly express favourable attitudes toward the police than their younger counterparts. Aday & Krabill (2006) made similar findings and claimed that younger people were more likely to be interrogated vociferously and frequently by police officers. Therefore, younger people's satisfaction with the police is likely to be very low. Aday & Krabill (2006) further explained that officers frequently approach mature citizens with a high degree of discretion and professionalism. Moreover, they explained that community relations with mature citizens involved a sympathetic approach. While the perspective offered by Aday & Krabill (2006) was important, it must be noted that research on citizens satisfaction with the police cannot only be limited to age.

According to research from Davenport-Klunder & Hine (2023), the issue of race could be a possible demographic when conducting research on citizens' satisfaction with the police. It also supported this perspective but claimed that while some citizens may have positive attitude toward the police, many African Americans do not always view the officers in a positive manner, (Garcia & Cao, 2005, Reisig & Parks, 2000, Sharp & Atherton, 2007, Taylor et al., 2001). The interaction between citizens and police

officers could be another key factor that influences citizens satisfaction with the police (Cheurprakobkit, 2000). Citizens are generally more positive with the police when they initiate encounters with the officers rather than when the police initiate the contact. When the police initiate encounters that involve law enforcement and traffic violation, this is likely to develop great tension between citizens and the officers. Weitzer and Tuch (2005) suggested that when this occurs, citizens satisfaction with the police is often diminished and interpreted in a negative manner.

Citizens who live in a neighbourhood with high crime rates are inclined to be less satisfied with the police. For the most part, residents of distressed neighbourhoods often express low satisfaction with the police and that is the case with communities with low socioeconomic status and prominent levels of poverty and unemployment (Gonzalez and Wang, 2022). Furthermore, frequent incidents of police coercion are usually reported within these communities and such behaviour from officers were more likely to cultivates a culture of mistrust and consequently, negative perception towards the police (Pino & Johnson, 2011).

2.2 Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

According to Sinclair (2006) and King (2009) the Colonial Policing model inherited its legacy from the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). The RIC was established to suppress uprisings and maintain order in Ireland but adopted military approach to achieve this (Anderson & Killingray, 1991). Many officers were ex-soldiers and maintain a military ethos such as foot drills, firearm training, and public order duties. When the British began colonising other countries (including T&T) they adopted the colonial policing model onto the colonies (Sinclair, 2006). On the new colonies, senior officers and most inspectors were white and recruited from the army because of their military training and to have minimal interactions with local citizens because they were foreigners. The junior officers (constable to sergeant) were recruited locally or from other colonies and never attained a management rank so was unable to change the objectives of colonisation which was aimed at enforcing British laws onto foreign countries (Sinclair, 2006; King, 2009). However, foreign officers were often met with hostility and rejection from local citizens because colonies varied in size, race, ethnicities, and culture and was different from Ireland. It was highlighted by Sinclair (2006) that the colonial model of policing was introduced to T&T around 1797 when the British ceded power. By 1843, the police institution had 12 stations and approximately 100 officers across the country (Pino, 2009).

Prior to T&T gaining independence in 1962, the duties of the police were mainly focused on public order maintenance, political tensions, and state affairs (Anderson & Killingray, 1991; King, 2009). These duties often involved the use of brutal force onto many innocent citizens, and this resulted in strained and fragile relationships between officers and citizens (Deosaran, 2002). According to King (2009) coercion was used to maintain a law-and-order paradigm and police officers were oppressive, disrespectful, unsympathetic, unsupportive, and intimidated citizens. As a result, officers of the TTPS perceived citizens as enemies and developed a poor reputation amongst the population whilst citizens alienated and held unfavourable perception towards the police (Pino & Johnson, 2011).

Job (2004) and Mathura (2022) suggested that there were numerous attempts to reform the TTPS. The Lee Committee in 1959 recommended changes to the rank structure, in 1964 the Derby committee recommended administration upgrades, accountability procedures, higher education and training and advanced investigation techniques. The Carr committee in 1972 also recommended changes for effectiveness and efficiency, in 1984 the Bruce committee recommended a comprehensive restructure of the TTPS, and the O'Dowd (1991) committee recommended improved resource management, advanced training and revised duties for all officers. However, most of these recommendations were completely ignored by the government (Pino & Johnson, 2011).

Whilst there is a nascent body of research on policing in T&T, studies from King (2009), Wallace (2011) and Pino & Johnson (2011) recommended several policy and practice changes within the TTPS. According to Wilson et al. (2011) during the early 2000s, in T&T there were several drug trafficking activity, homicide, kidnappings and gang-related violence which involved corruption and inefficiency within the TTPS. To forge a possible new direction, the government appointed a Canadian commissioner and deputy commissioner of police. Whilst the TTPS aspired to become a more service-oriented organisation there were several challenges. There were racial and political tensions and a scarcity of tangible evidence to support and corroborate evidence. There was also minimal evidence-based scholarship to inform and support organisational change. Pino & Johnson (2011) suggested that this approach demonstrated the challenges in reforming the TTPS and the behaviour of some police officers which impacted on citizens poor perception and satisfaction with officers.

Ruano-Chamorro et al. (2021) suggested that procedural justice was instrumental for developing fair processes. Similarly, Martin et al. (2015) stated that procedural justice was also important for the decision-making process and incorporated the perception and experiences of those who were impacted by the quality of service provided to them. Lind & Tyler (1988) suggested that the perception of procedural justice often influenced emotions and attitudes, which had implications for subjective well-being and satisfaction amongst citizens. Tyler (2006) highlighted that when police interact with citizens and demonstrated a high degree of fairness, respect, and transparency, citizens were more likely to perceive the institution as trustworthy and legitimate. In a policing context, most procedural justice research focused on contact between the police and citizens. However, procedural justice amplifies the processes used, fair opportunities and equality offered to citizens during interactions between the police and citizens (Tyler, 1990). When processes are objective it addresses the facts, and when it is subjective it could be rational and judgmental (Lind & Tyler, 1988). To establish a high level of procedural justice and citizen satisfaction within police institutions, officers must perform their duties with dignity and respect whilst providing equality, respect, and transparency to all citizens.

A fundamental issue with previous studies and research on policing in T&T is the lack of research on citizens satisfaction with the police and this being measured using procedural justice as a variable. Whilst international research on this topic and variable have previously been conducted, it is imperative to acknowledge that T&T is a post-colonial developing nation and differs from developed societies where research has been done. Because of this "gap" in research and literature, the present study is important towards addressing such deficiency.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Considering the nascent body of research and literature on policing in T&T, this research was specifically designed to explore citizens' satisfaction with the police based procedural justice. A quantitative approach was used to acquire a spectrum of participants, views, and opinions on the topic. This approach was considered effective for reaching a more diverse and random sample amongst the population. According to Foster et al. (2021) quantitative data were more likely to provide a wider representation of the population making it more robust, dependable, and credible.

3.2 Research Population and Sample

T&T is the most southern islands in the Caribbean located northeast of the south American continent, (Brereton, 1996). The twin island state has approximately 1.3 million citizens from diverse backgrounds but, the two largest ethnic groups are those with an African and Indian heritage, (Brereton, 1996). Citizens from the general population were more likely to have personal views, opinions, and

experiences about police officers which was valuable towards answering the research questions. This study used an online survey which was distributed via social media platforms such as, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. The survey was initially distributed to 20 citizens of varying demographics who were acquaintances of the researchers and later snowballed to the wider population. The survey used eight multiple-choice questions which provided participants with several options for their response based on the Likert scale. Snowball sampling was used to access participants for this study because it allowed a small number of initial participants to distribute the survey amongst the wider population and promoted diversity to participants and responses (Parker et al., 2019; Foster et al., 2021).

3.3 Data Analysis Method

To analyse the findings a cross tabulation of the categories using a multivariate analytical approach was undertaken (Bryman, 2016). This online survey framework, (Jisc, 2023) was first used for familiarisation with the results. This allowed a simple comparative analysis of factors such as race/ethnicity, age, and geographic location to develop based on the questions so that correlations were established. Cross tabulation of the results obtained from questions asked and answered in accordance with the Likert scale was compared with participants socioeconomic demographic. This study used a quantitative methodology with eight closed-ended questions. Participation was free from any influences and provided complete independence especially from the researchers. The data collected was statistical and could not be misinterpreted by the researchers and these factors provided reliability and validity to the study (Bryman, 2016).

3.4 Ethics

Participants were not offered financial rewards and no personal data were requested so anonymity and confidentiality were always maintained. All data obtained will be destroyed after publication since there is no need for retention. To maintain ethical standards during this study, participants under 18 years were asked not to complete the survey which was made clear on the first page of the survey (participants information sheet). This study complied with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) of the United Kingdom which consisted of lawfulness, fairness, storage limitations, integrity and confidentiality and accountability when handing data involving human participants.

4. Results

4.1 Mode of Participation.

Table 1 highlight the platforms used to distribute the survey for this study. WhatsApp was the most used, followed by Facebook, then Instagram and the least used was LinkedIn. (See table 1).

Table 1: Platforms used to distribute the survey and participants choice of use.

Mode	<i>n</i>	%
WhatsApp	545	66.4
LinkedIn	44	5.4
Facebook	178	21.7
Instagram	53	6.4
Total Participants	N = 820	100%

4.2 How Satisfied Were Participants with the Police?

Table 2 presented five main categories. They are, “not satisfied” (47.5%, n = 390) and this was followed by “little satisfied” (24.1%, n = 198.8), then “satisfied” (15.8%, n = 131), “very satisfied” (10%, n = 82.5) and finally those who were indecisive stated “unsure” (2.1%, n = 17.2). (See table 2).

Table 2: Participants satisfaction with police based on sociodemographic and procedural justice.

Sociodemographic Variable	Sample size	Very % (n)	Satisfied	Little	Not	Unsure % (n)
Gender -820						
Male	407	5 (41)	8.7 (72)	13.3 (109)	21 (172)	1.6 (13)
Female	343	3.9 (32)	6.4 (53)	13.9 (114)	16.4 (135)	1.1 (9)
LGBT+	70	1.1 (9)	1.3 (11)	2.3 (19)	3.2 (27)	0.4 (4)
Education -820						
Primary School	284	2.8 (23)	6.6 (54)	8.6 (71)	15.7 (129)	0.8 (7)
Secondary School	271	3.5 (29)	5.1 (42)	7.4 (61)	16.2 (133)	0.7 (6)
University	265	5.3 (44)	8.7 (71)	8.9 (73)	9 (74)	0.3 (3)
Age -820						
18 to 34	348	4.5 (37)	6.7 (55)	11.2 (92)	19 (156)	0.9 (8)
35 to 64	360	5 (41)	8.9 (73)	10.4 (86)	18.2 (149)	1.3 (11)
65 or above	112	2.4 (20)	4 (33)	2.3 (19)	3.7 (31)	1.1 (9)
Marital Status -820						
Married	208	2.8 (23)	4.9 (40)	4 (33)	13.3 (109)	0.3 (3)
Partnership	236	3.8 (31)	3.6 (30)	5.3 (44)	15.5 (127)	0.5 (4)
Single	262	1.1 (9)	2 (17)	9.1 (75)	19.4 (159)	0.2 (2)
Other	114	1.3 (11)	1.7 (14)	3.7 (31)	6.7 (55)	0.3 (3)
Professional Status -820						
Unemployed	246	2.1 (18)	4 (33)	6.3 (52)	16.7 (137)	0.7 (6)
Employed	310	3.2 (27)	5.6 (46)	9.5 (78)	18.9 (155)	0.4 (4)
Self Employed	264	5 (41)	5.9 (49)	8.1 (67)	12.5 (103)	0.4 (4)
Ethnicity -820						
Afro Trinidad/Tobago	247	2.8 (23)	3.8 (31)	5.7 (47)	17.2 (141)	0.6 (5)
Indo Trinidad/Tobago	303	3.9 (32)	5.3 (43)	11.7 (96)	15.6 (128)	0.4 (4)
Mixed	250	2.3 (19)	3.8 (31)	6.7 (55)	17.3 (142)	0.3 (3)
White	20	0.3 (3)	0.2 (2)	0.6 (5)	1.1 (9)	0.1 (1)
Location -820						
North Trinidad	164	1.5 (12)	3.2 (26)	3.8 (31)	11.3 (93)	0.2 (2)
South Trinidad	219	1.8 (15)	3.3 (27)	8.4 (69)	12.5 (103)	0.6 (5)
East Trinidad	151	1.6 (13)	3.3 (27)	3 (25)	10.1 (83)	0.3 (3)
West Trinidad	108	1.3 (11)	2 (13)	1.9 (16)	8.2 (67)	0.1 (1)
Central Trinidad	178	1.9 (16)	3 (24)	3 (24)	13.7 (113)	0.1 (1)

4.3 Variables Related to Dissatisfaction with the Police?

Table 3 below showed that most participants (40.2%, n = 330) felt that the officer did not use the correct procedure throughout the interaction. This was followed by 33% (n = 270) of the participants who were unsure and a minority of them (265, n = 220) who felt that the officer did use the correct procedure.

The results also demonstrated that most participants (41.6%, n = 341) felt that the officer was prejudiced during their interaction and 34% (n = 279) felt that the officer was biased. However, 24.4% (n = 200) of participants were unsure. When they were asked about having an input during the interaction, the majority (58.8%, n = 480) clearly stated that they did not, and 41.5% (n = 340) revealed that they had an input. According to the data obtained, 60.7% (n = 498) of participants revealed that they were not treated with respect and dignity during their interaction with the police, and 39.3% (n = 322) expressed that they were treated with respect and dignity. When asked about the officer being professional during the interaction, most participants (52.4%, n = 430) mentioned “yes” and 47.6% (n = 390) said “no.” The data obtained also indicated that most participants (56.3%, n = 462) expressed that the officer was not consistent throughout the interaction, whilst 43.7% (n = 358) felt that the officer was. When participants were asked about the fairness of the process during their interaction with the police, most (46%, n = 378) communicated that it was not fair, and 30.3% (n = 248) declared that they were unsure as to whether or not it was fair and the minority (23.7%, n = 194) declared that it was fair. The data demonstrated that most of the participants, (38.7%, n = 317) noted that their interaction with the police was not transparent and 33.3% (n = 273) expressed that it was. A minority of participants (28%, n = 230) expressed that they were unsure whether or not it was transparent. (See table 3).

Table 3: Inferential factors for predicting satisfaction with the Police based on Procedural Justice

Question	Distribution % (n)
Did the officer use the correct procedure throughout the interaction?	
Yes.....	26.8% (220)
..... No	40.2% (330)
Unsure.....	33% (270)
..... (N)	820
Was the officer biased at any time during the interaction?	
Yes.....	34% (279)
..... No	41.6% (341)
Unsure.....	24.4% (200)
..... (N)	820
Did you have any input during the interaction with the officer?	
Yes	58.5% (480)
No.....	41.5% (340)
..... (N)	820
Were you treated with respect and dignity during the interaction?	

5. Discussion

It was suggested that police officers were the most visible sign of law enforcement in a given state. Generally, they manage citizens moral compliance towards social policies, practice, and legal principles (Reiner, 2010; Wallace, 2011). Authors such as Tyler (1990), Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) and Sani et al. (2022) stated that the police were instrumental towards preventing and solving crime and its associated fear but cannot achieve this mandate on their own because they require citizens' cooperation, information, and compliance. However, for police officers to accomplish this task, citizens must first become satisfied and accept that the police have the community's best interest and officers perform their role and function in a professional manner, (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Maguire et al. 2017). According to Tyler (1990) it is imperative for officers to give respect and gain legitimate acceptance from citizens which is possible when officers practice procedural justice whereby citizens are treated with respect and dignity during interactions (Tankebe, 2014). Whilst it is important to understand citizens' satisfaction with the police from a global perspective, it is also significant to develop an emerging body of knowledge and literature on citizens' satisfaction with the police in a developing nation such as T&T considering the nascent body of research that presently exists. It is also important to understand the developments in such a society because of citizens needs and community dynamics. By developing a body of knowledge, this is more likely to enhance working relationships between citizens and the police, promote sustainable communities, foster citizens' satisfaction with the police and implement change and development for police practice and policies, (Sani et al., 2022). When citizens feel satisfied with the police, this could enhance trust and confidence between both parties. This could also strengthen community policing mandates and promote information dissemination and shared values, (Tankebe, 2014; Adams, 2019).

The majority group of participants (40.2%) stated that the police did not use the correct procedures throughout their interaction and only a small number (26.8%) stated the police did. These results were supported by the work of Tyler (1990) and Tyler & Huo (2002) who suggested that people often evaluate the procedure used by police officers when making decisions. These authors demonstrated that citizens felt more satisfied when officers used the correct procedures towards making decisions which led to police legitimate. However, a debate by Jackson & Bradford (2010) noted that whilst it was imperative to observe and respect the power and authority of the police, it was crucial to justify the process of how such power is used. The data from this study emphasised that the majority group of participants (58.5%) mentioned that they did have an opportunity to contribute during their interaction with the police and (41.6%) felt that the police were not biased. However, the majority group (60.7%) indicated that they were not treated with respect and dignity during their interaction. This data also suggested that whilst citizens were able to contribute and officers were not biased, they still felt dissatisfied due to a lack of respect and dignity from officers. These findings are aligned to the work of Beetham (1991) and Maguire et al. (2017) who suggested that it was important for citizens to feel valued and included in police initiatives since this could enhance legitimacy. Jackson & Bradford (2010) debated that police were required to treat citizens with respect and dignity because these factors were instrumental towards achieving citizens trust, cooperation and ultimately, legitimacy. Whilst the majority group of participants (60.7%) stated that they were not given due care and attention during their interaction with the police, this could be seen as a major contributor to the overall dissatisfaction with the police. The results also indicated that the majority group of participants (52.4%) expressed that the police were professional during their interaction. However, more than half (56.3%) of the participants stated that the police were inconsistent and (46%) highlighted that officers were unfair and (38.7%) noted that officers were not transparent during the interaction. According to Sunshine & Tyler (2003) and Tankebe & Asif (2016) it was important for the power holder (police) to be consistent when distributing their authority because any form of inconsistency could foster unfairness and a lack of transparency which could affect how satisfied citizens are with the police.

The demographic characteristic of participants also played an instrumental role throughout the finding of this study. An important observation made from the results of was the absence of participation from citizens in Tobago. The results showed that all participants who completed this survey were from Trinidad. Another salient observation was the small number of participants belonging to a white ethnicity group. These participants accounted for only 2.4% of the overall sample size. Male participants accounted for the majority group (gender) who were “not satisfied” with the police. These results could be aligned to the work of Krasha & Kappeler (1995) which found that some male officers treated male citizens with disrespectful, hostility, demonstrated male dominance, authority and machoistic control but treated females more favourable mainly to pursue sexual relationships. Another important observation was the age of participants. The age group of 65 and over accounted for 13.6% of the overall sample size and this could be aligned to the work of Heinz et al. (2013) and Vaportzis et al. (2017) who found that older people were less interactive with technological devices such as smart phones, PC computers and tablet computers. Because this research used an online survey which was only accessible via an electronic device, this could explain the low participation for this specific age group. A final observation was the marital status of participants. Single participants accounted for the least satisfied group and simultaneously accounted for the most dissatisfied group. This data when compared to age had a clear pattern of similarity. A previous study by Mcara & Mcvie (2005) noted that young single citizens often occupy public spaces whilst enjoying their independence and freedom as opposed to mature and married people who spend most of their free time at home and with their family. Because young single people frequented public spaces, they were more likely to experience elevated contact with the police which could lead to dissatisfaction.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore citizens’ satisfaction with the police in T&T. To accomplish this task, three research questions were used.

1. Do police officers in T&T use procedural justice when dealing with citizens?
2. If “YES,” did it positively influence citizens’ satisfaction with the police?
3. If “NO” do citizens, consider it important to have procedural justice in the future?

The results demonstrated that most participants felt dissatisfied with officers from the TTPS. According to the results obtained, procedural justice can be linked to the country’s colonial policing system whereby officers were unprofessional in performing their duties. Such unprofessionalism led to poor community relations, failure to comply with institutional policies, poor accountability, officers’ lack of respect for citizens and failure to modernise the institution and its practices. Based on the finding from this study, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the TTPS could benefit from institutional reform. Some of these reforms should include advanced training such as customer services, accountability, and improved management of the institution. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) could be imperative for improving officers’ skills, knowledge, and behaviour (KSB) which could improve the services offered to citizens and ultimately enhance officers and citizens relations.

Whilst the data showed that most participants were dissatisfied, many citizens were indecisive towards satisfaction with the police. This indecisive position demonstrated a non-committed pattern of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and raised major concerns. Citizens’ satisfaction with the police should be unwavering and a meaningful relationship between both parties capable of promoting dignity and pride.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

When studying citizens' satisfaction with the police it is imperative to consider the sociodemographic of participants because these variables showed significant importance and fluctuation within this study and was critical towards the results obtained. Variables such as gender, education, age, marital status, professional status, ethnicity, and location were also fundamental throughout this research. A fundamental implication of this study was the research settings. It was conducted in a post-colonial developing society whilst most previous research on this topic was conducted in developed societies. Therefore, future research should consider both developed and developing societies because the literature could develop separate variables and implications and should not use a "one size fit all approach".

6.3 Future Research

This research used a quantitative methodology to collect data and answered the research questions. It also used an online survey which consisted of closed-ended questions which was aimed at achieving greater diversity amongst participants. However, it will be beneficial for future research to use a qualitative methodology whereby open-ended questions and face-to-face interviews are conducted and in-depth explanations obtained. This methodology could provide researchers with more control and flexibility on the selection of participants through probability sampling and thus, promote greater diversity especially amongst the responses especially participants 65 and over. It is important to consider that throughout this study, there were no representation from participants in Tobago. Therefore, further research to establish citizens' satisfaction with the police on both islands could be beneficial towards developing a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

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