A Study on the Factors that Decrease the Reliability of the Korean Police in HUMAN Society

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Abstract

**Purpose:** Due to the nature of police work, most of the work regulates or restricts the activities of the people, so it is not easy to seek cooperation from the people, and it is not easy to increase the reliability of the police despite the legitimate law enforcement activities. Despite this environment of police work, efforts to improve police reliability are needed.

**Method:** It is necessary to seriously consider the “people variables, political variables, and legal variables” that make the police’s just activities impossible. We would like to find problems in the three variables and find ways to improve the reliability of the police in the legitimacy of police capacity building, police bureaucracy, and police activities.

**Results:** We analyzed the factors that deteriorated the reliability of the Korean police and looked at ways to improve the reliability of police work. There are many difficult conditions to enhance public trust due to people variables, political variables, and legal variables in police affairs. Despite this environment of police work, efforts to improve police reliability are needed.

**Conclusion:** The ways to restore public confidence in police work are as follows. In the process of police affairs, it shall be strictly followed by principles, and in the process, it is necessary to comply with the prescribed legal procedures. In addition, the top priority is not to lose trust in the people through fair handling of work and a friendly attitude.

**Keywords** Trust in the Police, Fairness of the Police, Police Activities, Police Duties, Protection of Crime Victims

1. Introduction

Most of the police activities correspond to law enforcement activities and often involve coercion, so even legitimate law enforcement activities often lead to resistance or opposition from the people[1][2].

Due to the nature of police work, most of the work regulates or restricts the activities of the people, so it is not easy to seek cooperation from the people, and it is not easy to increase the reliability of the police despite the legitimate law enforcement activities[3].

The people’s expectations and demands for the police are diverse and broad depending on the society, times, situations, and problems. Moreover, the public’s demands on the police are close to life and feel directly with their skin, so if they go wrong, they will cause complaints and conflicts with citizens. Therefore, attention should be paid to how to harmonize the expectations and needs of the people[4].
Due to the nature of police work, it further implies the possibility that the performance of police work may lead to a decrease in police trust depending on the police officer’s attitude to execute it rather than enhancing police trust[5].

Talking about trust in the police is the same as talking about police reform and innovation. But trust, reform, and innovation are not the same thing. Trust is abstract and has infinite value. The components are also abstract and infinite.

Even if abstraction and infinity are divided, they become abstraction and infinity, but not sphere and finite. However, the tasks of reform and innovation to enhance trust are specific and finite. Sphere and finite cannot fill abstraction and infinity. Therefore, there is no way to perfectly create the abstract value of trust.

Nevertheless, the factors determining trust must be reviewed. This is because human beings are specific and finite. Humans are beings that try to achieve abstraction and infinity with spheres and finiteness.

In order to achieve trust, it is necessary to reform, innovate and change the specific trust factor. In this respect, it is important to analyze the elements that make up trust. In the end, trust can only be achieved through specific and finite tasks of reform and innovation.

The factor determining trust, which is the concept of abstraction and infinity, must reflect the characteristics of trust. Trust is created as a result of a comprehensive evaluation of the state, society, institutions, institutions, and individuals.

Since trust is a holistic perception of the state, society, institutions, institutions, and individuals, the components of trust must encompass almost all of the objects of trust analysis. And trust is not built in a short time. formed over a long period of time.

Also, trust in a country, society, institution, institution, and individual comes from comparison with other countries, societies, institutions, institutions, and individuals.

The determinant of trust in the police should be able to explain almost everything about the police. The variables can be divided into distrust of the criminal and judicial institutions that the police themselves have created and are making, people variables, political variables, and legal variables.

Trust cannot be restored simply by working hard at a given task. It is not wrong to say that we should work hard on our assigned tasks. But it doesn’t do anything to build trust.

Despite this environment of police work, efforts to improve police reliability are needed.

2. Theoretical Background

Trust in the police has attracted attention by many studies as a driving force for police activities and as an evaluation metrics for police activities. Many studies measure reliability in various ways, such as police-related attitudes, evaluations, satisfaction, reliability, efficiency, and fairness, but their interpretation has been rather inconsistent[6].

The concept of police reliability was divided into three stages. The first is a neutral concept in a broad sense that reflects the general attitudes and feelings of citizens toward the police. This includes citizens’ public opinion, perspectives, perceptions, attitudes, and evaluations as its concept. The second concept is related to perception and attitude. This is the most widely used concept in existing studies such as reliability, confidence, and satisfaction, and is a concept that reflects a positive evaluation of the police. The third concept is the concept of the narrowest sense. This reflects specific perceptions of police performance or activities such as efficiency, respect, fairness, priority, and integrity. Among these three concepts of police reliability, the reliability of the police included in the second concept classification is an indicator of police legitimacy. Since this was reasonably measured and verified by previous studies, this report explains it as a central concept for studying citizens’ perceptions of the police[7].

Trust in the police is one of the main indicators that enable us to know the legality of state management. When citizens perceive the police as legitimate social institutions, they will act
more law-abiding. Trust in the police acts as the basis for citizens' willingness to comply with the law as well as sponsorship and voluntary crime prevention activities. This is a key element required in the era of community police activities. As such, police activities based on citizens' trust will be more effective. If respected by citizens, police officers' job satisfaction and self-esteem will increase. It also reduces job-related stress in the police. In addition, there will be more tangible and intangible support from the local community. There are various reasons why the police should strive to gain citizens' trust, and it can be said that it is that important.

Figure 1. Research model.

3. Factors that Reduce the Reliability of the Korean Police

3.1. Distrust in criminal justice agencies

The low trustworthiness of the police is itself manifested as a need to reform and innovate the police. According to the principle of popular sovereignty, the ultimate basis for the existence of the police is the trust of the people.

And low trust in the police translates into high costs of police administration. The cost here includes not only a simple amount, but also the budget, time, and pain of the administrative execution process. Trust is a social common capital.

If it is not enough, it must be filled with something else. That's what shows up in budget, time, and pain. In order to avoid the suffering of the people, including the police, we need to talk about the trust of the police.

According to an analysis of the degree of trust and fairness in criminal justice agencies in the 2020 Social Integration Survey by the Korea Institute of Public Administration, the public confidence in criminal justice agencies such as courts, prosecutors, and police is low at less than 50%.

The credibility of the police among the criminal justice agencies is high. The reason is that the recent corruption in the courts and prosecutors was more serious than the corruption in the police. For the police, this might be considered a fortunate outcome.

However, there is only one criminal and judicial system in the country, and the trust that the people feel has also one root. The trust of the courts, the prosecution and the police is interlocked, not separate. Even looking at the public perception that the cause of distrust in the criminal justice system is the unfair enforcement of the law, it can be seen that the credibility of the criminal justice system is one.
Trust in the criminal justice system is low, but trust in the police alone cannot be high. This statistic shows that reform and innovation of the entire criminal and judicial system, not just the police, is necessary to increase trust in the police.

**Table 1.** Criminal justice agency reliability[15].

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
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In 2020, the reliability of Korean criminal justice agencies was 46.4% for police, 41.1% for courts, and 36.3% for prosecutors. The reliability of the police rose 9.9 percentage points from 2019, ahead of that of the court, but all three institutions still showed low reliability, with less than 50%.

**Table 2.** Criminal justice agency fairness[15].

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2020, the public's perception of fairness was 54.3% in court, 53.9% in police, and 49.7% in prosecution. Compared to reliability, courts, prosecutors, and police are all more than 7% higher. However, unlike courts and police, the prosecution showed that there is still a great "public distrust" with less than 50% of fairness awareness.
Although there are differences in perception about the purpose and level of disclosure of this information, the disclosure of information by criminal justice agencies will be part of a policy to gain trust from the public.

3.2. Factors that reduce the reliability of Korean police and variable factors

In a free and democratized Korean society, police frequently collide with the public and are criticized by the public. In accordance with laws and rules, it is not easy to escape from the "criticized police" despite hard work for the safety of the people[16][17]. Corruption police officers exist everywhere, and unjust police often appear in the media. Of the 115,000 police officers, only a small number of police or police organizations have problems, but criticism is directed at the entire police officers and police organization[18].

It is natural to criticize police officers who did something wrong, and there is no excuse for that. However, it is necessary to seriously consider the "people variables", "political variables", and "legal variables" that make just activities of the police impossible.

3.2.1. People variable

The people should trust the police. The police are on the side of law-abiding citizens and relatively weak people among the people. Those who hate the police are criminals and offenders. Those who commit crimes frequently criticize and condemn the police, making it difficult for the police to engage in just activities. The absolute majority of ordinary people and relatively weak people must clearly be on the side of the police. You should not disparage and criticize the police recklessly.

Only when public trust in the police is premised can the police work in a free and just way.

As a front-line public administrative agency, the police directly deal with and contact citizens. These are routine investigations and crime prevention missions. In this process, a certain relationship is formed between the police and citizens, and this relationship determines the trust of the police.

It is not until the moment when people encounter murder cases and are subjected to violence to seek the help of the police. When people are struggling and in trouble, they look for the police. However, even if only a small police corruption is found, they criticize and accuse the entire police.

3.2.2. Political variable

The police who practice justice must remain politically neutral. However, at the request of politicians, or voluntarily, more and more police officers are expressing their political tendencies.

For the police to be politically neutral, first, it is necessary to prepare an institutional foundation that guarantees political neutrality. Second, we need a democratic government that guarantees the political neutrality of the police. Third, it is necessary to make efforts by the police themselves to make the political neutrality of the police a tradition and establish it as a culture.

A citizen-friendly, human rights-friendly democratic government directly On the other hand, non-democratic governments are not friendly to police reform and police reform. promotes police reform and creates a favorable environment for police innovation. It ignores the main task of police reform and is lukewarm about innovation[19].

This is because they are trying to maintain the government by controlling and using the police. It is the productivity of politics that has a greater impact on the trustworthiness of the police than the character of the government.

If politics has high productivity and efficiency, then most social problems can be solved with politics. Many conflicts can be resolved with political leadership. But Korean politics is not like
that. The incompetence of Korean politics affects society and the police to a greater extent than the character of the government.

Political incompetence leads to distrust of the police. The incompetence of politics makes politics distanced and politics becomes individual law. People are coming out on the streets, and there are complaints and accusations. If this happens, the police will take over the politics, and distrust of politics will be transferred to the police.

At this time, if the police move along with the political power, distrust in the police will expand. If the police have autonomy and conduct independent administration, the distrust of the police is separate from the distrust of politics. It is a time when we need an autonomous police award in a democratic society.

Some politicians show a desire to make the police work for the state and the people faithful to their own political factions or to mobilize them to pursue ideologies in their favor. They recklessly enact and revise police-related laws and try to interfere excessively with police activities. They are distrustful of the police's autonomous and just activities and try to impose sanctions from time to time[20].

Political problems in Korea are often mistaken for police problems and affect the distrust of the police. As long as there is a close relationship between politics and society and the Korean police, you need to properly analyze politics and society to determine the exact status of the police. Through this, it is possible to identify elements of distrust that the police do not need to receive.

The extreme division of politics also afflicts the police. Political rallies and demonstrations at the National Assembly, political parties, and Gwanghwamun always make the police nervous. Political variables in the gaps between left and right, conservative and progressive, pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese, pro-American, and anti-American are affecting the reliability of the police[20].

3.2.3. Legal variable

The police need to prevent crimes and suppress criminal acts in advance. However, laws and regulations based on human rights in the democratic era make it difficult for the police to respond in advance and take autonomous safety measures.

Many activities necessary for public safety, crime suppression, and security must be based on the autonomous judgment of the police[21].

However, the police cannot play a proper role in a situation where the justice and the legitimacy of the police have not been guaranteed in advance.

Adjustment of investigative power is also possible on the premise of trust in the police. However, it will be difficult to adjust the investigative power in a situation where the police trust is disparaged by expanding and interpreting the misconduct of very few police officers.

4. How to Improve the Reliability of the Korean Police

The police act for the purpose of maintaining the safety, order, and property protection of the people. To this end, prevention, investigation, and suppression of criminal activities are prioritized. Article 3 of the Police Act presents the duties of the national police as follows.

- Protection of people's lives, bodies, and property
- Prevention, suppression, and investigation of crime
- Protection of crime victims
- Security guards, major personnel guards, and counter-terrorism operations
- Collection, preparation, and distribution of information to prevent and respond to risks to public well-being
- Traffic control and prevention of traffic hazards
- International cooperation with foreign government agencies and international organizations
- Maintaining the public well-being and order

All of this is inevitably related to the human desire for survival. All the people lead their lives, believing in the police. Police should be reliable to all citizens.

The police should be reliable and trustworthy.

4.1. Strengthening police capabilities

A professional police officer is also a police award that the people demand. When the police are competent and faithful to their mission, they can earn the trust of the people. Competent professional police officers are especially needed in today's society.

Modern society is a risk society. Urbanization, globalization, organization, informatization, centralization, diversification, and increased interdependence and mobility have made society an extremely dangerous society[22].

A tiny computer program malfunction can cause a plane to crash, and a tiny virus can become a national catastrophe. There is a need for competent professional police officers who can respond quickly and accurately to large-scale disasters while responding appropriately to the diversifying demands for security.

To this end, scientific policing is required to enhance information judgment and analysis capabilities.

The police must have the power and capabilities necessary for protecting the lives of the people, maintaining order, and preventing crime.

Police capabilities include coercion against violators of laws; physical power to overpower criminals; the ability to use guns, knives, or tools for arresting criminals; cool-headed rationality, reasoning, and extensive wisdom necessary for crime prevention and investigation. These competencies are required by the overall police organization rather than by all police officers at the individual level. When these capabilities are considered sufficient, the people trust the police[23].

4.2. Police bureaucracy

The police must be strict enough to be responsible for the enforcement of laws and regulations, hierarchical order, and the spirit of following orders. The illegal crime groups are organized like gangsters, have a strict hierarchical order, and possess tremendous destructive power. Therefore, the police responding to this must also be an organization with a strict hierarchy[24].

The police are a rank-oriented organization. The police bureaucracy, a rank-oriented one, must have a strict system of command and following orders.

The police exist for the "people and state." Since all efforts must be made to maintain public safety and national order, the police must always think from the perspective of the people and devote themselves to the people.

Article 4 of the Police Act stipulates, "When performing its duties, the national police respect the freedom and rights of the people in accordance with the Constitution and laws, must protect fairness and neutrality as service providers to the entire people, and shall not abuse the granted authority."

If the police stick to these conditions, the people will trust and support them.

4.3. The legitimacy of police activities

Police activities must be justified against the people and the state. Justification means acting in accordance with laws or organizational rules but always maintaining correct and straight demeanor.
In a situation where all possible cases of cases that may occur in the process of performing police work cannot be set by law, justice can be a standard of police behavior. This process must be fair and not narrow, and careful in determining what is just and right[25].

It seeks to find the possibility of restoring trust in the police in the "protection of crime victims" stipulated in Article 3 of the Police Act and Article 2 of the Police Officer’s Job Execution Act.

Until now, the police have put all the efforts to arrest criminals and secure evidence. However, from now on, police capabilities against crime victims can be exercised.

Looking at the Criminal Procedure Act, it is easy to find various devices to protect criminals in the entire process, including the police stage, the prosecution stage, the court stage, and the correction stage[26].

The police have only been interested in arresting criminals and sending them to the prosecution during the investigation. As a result, it was not easy to show a positive image to the people. The police will be able to restore trust to the people when it becomes a reality with an interest in protecting crime victims.

5. Conclusion

The starting point for trust in the police is consolidated into one. They are gathered as autonomous police officers in a democratic society. Only the autonomous police in a democratic society can build trust in the police[27].

The autonomous police in a democratic society are first members of a democratic society. The Korean society the police are in, and the Korean society the police are supposed to belong to is a democratic society. In a non-democratic society, the police do not exist for citizens. Only in a democratic society can the police work with citizens and residents and gain their trust. The police should be reformed according to the changes in society and become a human rights police officer.

The police need to change and reform in line with the already developed and developing democratic and human rights society. It must also respond to new security demands to control and prevent risks. However, it should not be misunderstood as an obligation to unconditionally comply with the demands of citizens or residents. However, we must not forget that the fundamental power of the police comes from the citizens.

Building trust in the police is fundamentally up to the police. And the starting point is a change in the perception of the police itself. The trust in the police will only begin when policies are established and implemented to enter the citizenry by establishing an autonomous police image in a democratic society, and when high-ranking police officers are competent and successful in doing this[28].

So far, the factors that deteriorate the reliability of the Korean police were analyzed and measures to improve the reliability of police work were examined.

Due to people variables, political variables, and legal variables in police affairs, it is difficult to increase public trust in many ways. In particular, unlike other administrative agencies, due to the nature of police work, it is difficult to get close to the people due to the nature of tasks with strong regulations such as control and crackdown on the people rather than public benefit work.

However, if such police work is regulated from the perspective of individual citizens, there may be complaints or grievances, but in general, the inevitability is recognized from the perspective of the entire people. Therefore, there is a need to harmonize with the question of the necessity and inevitability of police regulation and how to minimize public complaints and grievances.

In other words, it is necessary to strictly follow the principles in handling police affairs and comply with the prescribed legal procedures in the process. In addition, it is considered that the
most priority is not to lose trust in the people through a fair and kind attitude when handling police affairs.

6. References

6.1. Journal articles


6.2 Books

6.3 Additional references

7. Appendix
7.1. Authors contribution

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<td>-Design ✓</td>
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<td>-Getting results ✓</td>
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