Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police, centering on Suwon City, have an impact on police trust, and to suggest ways to secure the reliability of the autonomous police activities in the future.

Method: In this study, 320 copies of the meaningful results obtained through the survey conducted on the citizens of Suwon were analyzed. For the analysis, the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police were set as an independent variable and trust in the police was set as a dependent variable.

Results: As a result of analysis on the impact of crime prevention activities (patrol, crime prevention environment creation, order maintenance) of autonomous police on police trust, it was found that patrol and crime prevention environment creation had a significant effect, and order maintenance No significant effect was found.

Conclusion: In order to actively prevent crime, it is necessary to support visible police activities, such as strengthening intensive patrols using foot patrols, motorcycles, and patrol cars, as well as supporting technical equipment for effective arrest. CCTV has a very useful value in that it can be used as an efficient means of arresting criminals by filling the public security vacuum caused by insufficient police manpower at the present time and converting data into a database. In addition, more practical equipment support should be provided by securing the police’s own budget to expand the development and expansion of a customized work system tailored to the local situation and to strengthen cooperative public order such as autonomous security guards and child guards.

Keywords: Autonomous Police, Crime Prevention Activities, Police Trust, Patrol, Crime Prevention Environment

1. Introduction

Based on the law enacted in December 2020, the Act on the Organization and Operation of National Police and Autonomous Police, the autonomous police system was expanded and enforced nationwide on July 1, 2021 to provide public security and administrative services in close contact with residents’ lives are doing In the autonomous police system, autonomous police affairs are commanded and supervised by city and provincial autonomous police committees, and local police affairs are stipulated for life safety, traffic, women, children, the elderly, and security for local events.

As one of the measures to promote practical local autonomy, the need for full-scale implementation of the autonomous police system has been constantly raised, and it has reached the present. In addition to the distribution of police authority, the provision of public security services considering the characteristics of the region is continuously required. In continuing the implementation of the autonomous police system, the role of the autonomous police is to reflect the demand for decentralization of police administration and enhancement of democracy, and to ensure that there is no gap in the safety of people’s lives [1].
However, the current autonomous police system can be seen as conducting autonomous police activities in the provinces as a part of the national police system. Autonomous police system refers to a form of police system that allows local governments to have all police-related authorities, such as police personnel, affairs, and finances. does not exist.

In the case of the United States, the autonomous police system is based on three criteria: ① limited authority, ② local control, and ③ fragmented law enforcement. is implementing the autonomous police system by securing responsibility for the operation of the police organization[2].

Korea’s autonomous police system is different from the existing autonomous police system, so it is necessary to establish autonomous police activities for each region. Rather than uniform police activities centered on the national police, regionally customized autonomous police activities suitable for regional characteristics should be carried out.

In this study, we examine how the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police, focusing on Suwon City, have an impact on police trust, and suggest ways to secure the reliability of the autonomous police activities in the future.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Autonomous police activities

In modern society, the police is generally a public service that protects the life, body, property and freedom of the people, guarantees their interests, and performs crime prevention and law enforcement to maintain public order and peace in society[3].

From an institutional aspect, the police can be divided into a national police system and a self-governing police system depending on who is the subject of police authority, the operation of the police organization, and the exercise of personnel rights[4]. In the case of the national police system, the police authority is part of the state power. Since it is exercised as a part of the local government, the authority and responsibility for maintaining the police resides with the state, and in the case of the autonomous police system, the authority and responsibility for maintaining the police resides with the local government because the police authority is exercised as part of the local government.

The autonomous police system is a system that autonomously carries out security duties based on the will of local residents, and can be called the police system of common law countries. Its main content is to function for the purpose of service administration for residents. In terms of police actions that are closely related to the daily lives of local residents, such as mainly security police action and maintaining public order and crime prevention in the region, it is desirable that the local police under the direction of the head of the local government perform the role. Those who want to change the current national police system, in which the same police force is directly under the state's control, can be called the self-governing police system. In other words, the self-governing police can be said to be ‘the police for the local residents that fit the realities of the region’.

In the process of introducing and stabilizing the autonomous police system, demands such as decentralization of police administration and enhancement of democracy must be reflected, and there must be no vacuum in public safety. In particular, it is necessary to respond to residents' demand for public security by securing connectivity between local administration and public security administration, and to provide public security services suitable for the characteristics and environment of the region.
Police affairs are divided into national police affairs and autonomous police affairs, and command and supervisory authority is distributed for each office, and the police committee of the metropolitan government directs and supervises the autonomous police affairs. It is divided into those related to life safety, traffic, security, and investigation in the jurisdiction.

Autonomous police affairs are performed by the head of the city/province police agency and are commanded and supervised by the city/province police committee, and investigation affairs are commanded and supervised by the head of the National Investigation Headquarters. According to Article 4, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 2 of the Police Act, autonomous police affairs can be divided into life safety activities for local residents, traffic activities, and traffic and safety management related to crowd gathering events. Affairs related to life safety activities include patrol and facility operation, resident participation method activities, emergency rescue support, tasks related to social protection, prevention of home/school/sexual violence, maintenance of social order, guidance and enforcement, etc. Affairs related to traffic activities include violation of traffic laws, traffic safety facilities and equipment, traffic safety education and publicity, traffic activities involving residents, and traffic-related permits and reports. Matters related to multi-group events refer to affairs related to congested traffic and safety management.

Investigation services include juvenile crimes, domestic violence and child abuse crimes, traffic accidents and related crimes, public obscenity and crimes related to trespassing to public places for sexual purposes, crimes related to basic order, and crimes related to runaways and missing children. It is stipulated that life safety, traffic activities, and activities related to group events are stipulated by city/province ordinances, and matters related to investigations are stipulated by Presidential Decree.

The purpose of the self-governing police system is to provide a variety of customized security services tailored to the local characteristics from the perspective of citizen-centered and citizen safety, and the focus is on improving the perceived safety of citizens. Therefore, in this study, in order to practically respond to citizens’ demands for safety, we propose patrols, crime prevention environment creation, and maintenance of order as autonomous police activities in the field of life safety to prevent crimes in areas closely related to citizens.

2.2. Police trust

The etymology of trust is ‘trost’ in German, which means ‘comfort’, but it is used interchangeably in various meanings depending on the academic background and research field. In the social sciences, the concept of trust can be defined as an expectation or belief that other people will behave in a predictable way as ‘confidence about the quality and characteristics of a person or thing or the truth of a statement’.

Trust in police is a broad concept that encompasses values, attitudes, perceptions, efficiency, fairness, etc., and it is not easy to define it uniformly, so no consensus definition of trust in police has been drawn. Lee Su-chang(2014) defined police trust as the public’s positive attitude towards the police or the evaluation of whether police activities meet the public’s expectations based on the concept of trust in the government. Taken together, police trust is the support of citizens for a police organization or a series of police activities. It can be defined as an attitude or perception of satisfaction and acceptance.

Trust in the police is a subjective evaluation index for whether the police are performing their roles well as the agents of the citizens, who are the subjects of power, and at the same time, it is also used as an important evaluation index in the evaluation of each police office in the actual police department. In addition, trust in the police is not only the foundation of police legitimacy, but also the driving force for citizens’ support for the police and voluntary cooperation. In other words, trust in the police is not simply a matter of legitimacy,
but also has a great practical meaning in that it is a social resource that can effectively maintain public order at a low cost by inducing support, cooperation, and voluntary compliance of citizens.

On the other hand, in previous studies, trust in the police is mainly measured using the method of surveys targeting citizens, which can be mainly divided into single-question methods and multiple-question methods. The single-item method measures trust in the police with a single question in the form of 'How much do you trust the police?'. In contrast, the multi-item method measures police trust by integrating multiple questions on satisfaction, fairness, efficiency, promptness, kindness, and responsiveness[18][22][23][24][26][27][28][29][30][31].

Therefore, this study aims to find out the citizens’ trust in the crime prevention of the Korean autonomous police. In addition, various factors that explain police reliability are empirically analyzed.

2.3. Autonomous police activities & police trust

Research on police trust began with similar studies on police image and satisfaction with police activities. Among them, studies have been conducted centering on the confidence model in which trust in the police is set as the independent variable and fear of crime as the dependent variable, and social conditions related to crime such as the crime rate and the responsibility model of trust in the police[32].

In addition, in a study approached with instrumental and expressive visual models, the instrumental visual model represents citizens’ perceptions of the traditional security activities of the police, and the expressive visual model represents the relationship between the degree of safety citizens feel in social life and trust in the police[20][28]. Regarding these two approaches, Pyo jung-hwan(2017) analyzes that Koreans generally have a low level of trust in the police. In addition, research was conducted on the relationship between demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, and marital status and police trust. In the case of demographic characteristics, groups with high household income generally showed high trust in the police[21][33][34], whereas Jang Hyun-seok(2013) found that the group with low household income showed high trust in the police. There is also a research result that trust is high[20]. Looking at these preceding studies, it is difficult to find studies on crime prevention, trust in police organizations, and trust in police officers, which are the basic activities of autonomous police.

Hypothesis 1: Autonomous police patrol activities will have a (+)positive effect on police trust.
Hypothesis 2: Autonomous police's activities to create a crime prevention environment will have a (+)positive effect on trust in the police.
Hypothesis 3: Autonomous police's activities to maintain order will have a (+)positive effect on trust in the police.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research model and hypothesis

In recent years, in Korea, as the demand for security has gradually increased and the contact between the police and residents has increased following the destruction of the autonomous police system, cooperation between the police and residents has become an indispensable factor in coping with crime problems. However, residents’ cooperation with the police is possible only when residents can trust and feel close to the police, but it seems that the police and residents have not yet reached a mutually organic relationship in our society. Therefore, accurately grasping the consciousness of the residents is very important for managing the image of the police and performing their duties smoothly.
In this context, many democratic countries have come to pay much attention to the consciousness and attitude of the people toward the police. This, in the end, is directly related to the perception that it is possible to obtain sufficient trust, support, and cooperation from the residents only when it is accurately grasped how the general public perceives and evaluates the police, and through this, the smooth execution and development of police work can be pursued.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between crime prevention activities of autonomous police and police trust. Therefore, in this study, the dependent variable was trust in the police, and the independent variables were constituted by the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police such as patrolling, creating a crime prevention environment, and maintaining order. And demographic characteristics were composed of gender, age, education, and occupation.

As described above, if the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable and the components for each variable is schematized, a research model such as <Figure 1> can be presented, and the hypotheses are presented in <Table 1>.

**Figure 1.** Research model.

![Diagram of research model]

**Table 1.** The hypothesis of the research model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Autonomous police's crime prevention activities will affect trust in the police.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>Autonomous police patrol activities will have a (+)positive effect on police trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>Autonomous police's activities to create a crime prevention environment will have a (+)positive effect on trust in the police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>Autonomous police's activities to maintain order will have a (+)positive effect on trust in the police.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.** Measurement of variables.

| Patrolling | Patrol activities in the area  
When 112 is reported, the police are dispatched to the scene  
Resident participation in crime reduction activities  
Intensive patrol of crime-prone areas according to the season |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Creating a crime prevention environment | CCTV installation  
Street light installation  
Safe return activity  
Convenience store emergency call |
| Maintaining order | Traffic enforcement  
Environmental crime enforcement  
Enforcement on school violence  
Police questioning |
| Police trust | Responsiveness  
Kindness  
Fairness  
Swiftness |
3.2. Data sources

In this study, an empirical study was conducted through a self-administered questionnaire survey to identify the relationship between self-governing police activities and police trust for community problem solving. This survey was conducted for a total of 345 citizens of Suwon from March 2nd to March 15th, 2023, and a total of 320 of them were used for the final analysis, excluding insincere response data.

3.3. Description of variables

Responsiveness, kindness, fairness, and promptness were used as indicators for the dependent variable, police trust, and as independent variables, the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police were patrolled, crime prevention environment created, and order maintenance indicators. The survey items consisted of patrol activities in the area, When 112 is reported, the police are dispatched to the scene, Resident Participation in Crime Reduction Activities, Intensive patrol of crime-prone areas according to the season for patrol, CCTV installation, street light installation, safe return activity, Convenience store emergency call for crime prevention environment, and traffic enforcement, environmental crime enforcement, enforcement on school violence, police questioning for maintaining order.

3.4. Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 29.0. First, a correlation analysis examined the relationship among the variables. Second, to verify the validity of the variables, a factor analysis was conducted, followed by a calculation of Cronbach’s a through a reliability analysis. Third, a regression analysis identified the causal relationship between Autonomous police’s crime prevention activities and Police trust.

4. Results

4.1. Feasibility and reliability analysis

In this study, the validity of the construct validation scale of survey items refers to how accurately the measuring tool measures the concept to be measured, and reliability refers to the ability to obtain the same measurement value when the measurement is repeated for the same concept.

For this purpose, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed for each item. The principal component analysis method was used, and the rotation of the factor matrix was based on the results of the verimax rotation method among orthogonal rotation methods. As a result of analyzing the validity and reliability of social capital and organizational commitment measurement scales, overall, the factor loading of all items on the corresponding scale exceeded 0.6, and as a result of reliability analysis, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of all scales showed a relatively high reliability of over 0.8. is showing Factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1, which indicates the amount of variance explained by a factor, were selected. In the case of factor loadings, the factor loadings were generally higher than 0.5, indicating a significant variable.

And the KMO value, which indicates the degree to which the correlation between variables is explained by other variables, was generally high at .913, and the Bartlett sphericity test value, which indicates the suitability of factor analysis, was 3710.766 and the significance probability was .001., it can be said that the use of factor analysis is appropriate and there are common factors.
The results of regression analysis were conducted to analyze the impact of crime prevention activities (patrol, crime prevention environment, maintenance of order) of autonomous police on police trust.

The crime prevention activities of the autonomous police, patrol, and the creation of a crime prevention environment were found to have a significant effect on police trust at the significance level of 0.001, and the explanatory power of the sample regression was 50.4%. When comparing the influence of each factor on police trust, patrol (β = 0.502) and crime prevention environment creation (β = 0.218) appeared in the order. Maintaining order (p < 0.154) did not appear to affect police trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Results of regression analysis (dependent variable: police trust).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent variable</td>
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<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrolling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating a crime prevention environment</td>
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<td>Maintaining order</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Note: * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.

4.2. Hypothesis test results

As a result of analysis on the impact of crime prevention activities (patrol, crime prevention environment creation, order maintenance) of autonomous police on police trust, it was found that patrol and crime prevention environment creation had a significant effect, and order maintenance No significant effect was found.

Through the above research results, the crime prevention activities of autonomous police that affect police trust can be summarized as patrol and crime prevention environment creation. In addition, the acceptance and rejection of the hypotheses set in this study are shown in <Table 4> below. ‘The patrol activities of the H1 autonomous police will have a positive effect on trust in the police.’, ‘H2 autonomous police’s activities to create a crime prevention environment will have a positive effect on trust in the police.’ were adopted. ‘The order maintenance activities of the H3 autonomous police will have a positive effect on trust in the police.’ was rejected.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 4. Results of hypothesis testing.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
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<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
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<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
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Note: Abbreviations. O, Acceptance of the hypothesis; X, Rejection of the hypothesis.
5. Conclusion

In the case of citizens, a higher level of trust is formed in voluntary contact with the police, rather than involuntary contact with the police due to involuntary situations such as drunk driving, unsuspecting checkups, and traffic signal violations[27]. Therefore, in order for the police to expand community policing activities, citizen participation committees where citizens can voluntarily participate in police activities, private-centered crime prevention and comprehensive problem-solving activities, citizen-friendly police activities and various protection activities for the underprivileged, it is necessary to expand the strategy to achieve C0-production by expanding interactive communication with the local community or citizens through social media[35].

In the case of hypotheses 1 and 2 of this study, it was found that the perception of the crime prevention activities of the local police had an effect on the trust in the police. This result can be interpreted as the fact that the crime prevention activities of the autonomous police recognized by the citizens are as important as the patrol work style and the creation of the crime prevention environment. In order to secure trust in the police, it is judged that the role of police officers is also important along with the promotion of crime prevention activities of police organizations.

It can be seen that crime originates from the desire to commit a criminal act and the conviction that it can do so, and it is possible to commit a crime if either one of the criminal desire and the opportunity to commit is eliminated. As the duty of the police is to protect the life and property of the people, it is the mission given to the police to maintain the peaceful life of the people through crime prevention.

In order to actively prevent crime, it is necessary to support visible police activities, such as strengthening intensive patrols using foot patrols, motorcycles, and patrol cars, as well as supporting technical equipment for effective arrest. CCTV has a very useful value in that it can be used as an efficient means of arresting criminals by filling the public security vacuum caused by insufficient police manpower at the present time and converting data into a database. In addition, more practical equipment support should be provided by securing the police’s own budget to expand the development and expansion of a customized work system tailored to the local situation and to strengthen cooperative public order such as autonomous security guards and child guards.

As the police's response to crime is directly related to the public's trust in the police, the National Police Agency needs to develop various policies and systems for crime prevention. In addition, efforts must be made to establish an appropriate system through periodic internal and external public safety monitoring.

One of the most basic activities of the police is crime prevention. Due to the nature of the role of the police, it limits the rights, duties and freedoms of the people to some extent, so public trust is an essential condition. The role of the police to improve the quality of life of citizens through police service, and trust through this, should not be limited to the police activity.

In the case of Hypothesis 3, which was rejected in this study, when police activities are exposed in public places where there are many residents, it gives residents anxiety that there is a crime problem in the surrounding area[36], resulting in a decrease in trust in the police. There is a possibility that it could not have had a positive effect, but the design of this study did not sufficiently explain it, so an in-depth analysis through follow-up studies is required.
6. References

6.1. Journal articles


6.2. Thesis degree

6.3. Books


6.4. Additional references


7. Appendix

7.1. Author’s contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial name</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>- Set of concepts ☑</td>
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<td>- Design ☑</td>
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<td>- Getting results ☑</td>
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<td>- Play a decisive role in modification ☑</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data ☑</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers ☑</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper ☑</td>
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7.2. Funding agency

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