

KRISANAPHONG POOTHAKOOL**Rangsit University, Royal Police Cadet Academy, Thailand, Thailand****PUBLIC AND POLICE OFFICERS' VIEWS TOWARDS THAILAND'S
BORDER PATROL POLICE.****Abstract:**

This is a quantitative research. It aims to examine public and police officers' views towards Thailand's Border Patrol Police in three main areas as follows: 1) public satisfaction towards border patrol police's services and practices, 2) public trust towards border patrol police's image, 3) the confidence of police officers in general towards border patrol police's image. This research explored satisfaction level of local people living in 2,470 target villages, the confidence level of public and police officer in general towards border patrol police. Data were collected through border patrol police working at local areas.

The research outcomes could be concluded as follows: 1) Civilian participants were satisfied with service provision system, serious crime prevention strategies and border patrol tactics respectively. 2) The level of public satisfaction towards border patrol police's image was rather high. More specifically, the participants were confident with border patrol police's responsibility and good governance. According to the participants' background, it was clearly explicated that the participants with higher educational level were more confident than those with lower educational level. Regarding the participants' career, those, who were government officials, were more confident when compared to other careers. In regard to partakers' incomes, those who earned in the range 25,001 to 50,000 baht (around \$834 to \$1,667) had confidence level higher than those who had income beyond this range. 3) Related to the police officers' opinions towards border patrol police, they were similar to civilian participants' views. In other words, the police officers who participated in this survey were very satisfied with border patrol police's activities and manners. It could be concluded that public and police officers' views towards Thailand's Border Patrol Police were positive.

Keywords:

Royal Thai Police; border patrol police; public satisfaction; good governance; public trust

Introduction

Generally speaking, the Royal Thai Police still embrace the concept of structures based on a military model in terms of rank and administration. However, these are not well suited to the police's roles and responsibilities. Obviously, a military model is easily controlled, as the officers have to follow orders. Military officers are strictly required to follow orders passed down in a hierarchical chain of command. However, in a modern policing era, officers should be able to work more responsively, with discretion and relative independence, using the law as their guide (Poothakool and Glendinning, 2013).

Nowadays, public participation is hugely important for policing achievement (Bayley, 1994; 2006). The core conception of policing in local communities requires a bottom-up approach. In fact, models of policing which employ quasi-military methods have been proven to be ineffective and counterproductive.

Nonetheless, the Department of Border Patrol Police in Thailand maintains military structures and supervision. The department actually has different roles and responsibilities when compared to other police agencies. Such different roles and responsibilities include public security across the border, military operation support, and also offender arrests. According to Thailand's history (Chaloemtiarana, 2007), it was found that the Border Patrol Police Bureau had a major role to play to fight against communist insurgency. Because of its roles and responsibilities, from the past to the present, the bureau needs to be developed in accordance with modern policing societies.

It is vital to investigate the public's and police officers' views towards the Border Patrol Police so as to increase public trust. In this study, there were three main areas explored: 1) public satisfaction towards the Border Patrol Police's services and practices, 2) public trust towards the Border Patrol Police's image, 3) the confidence of police officers in general towards the Border Patrol Police's image. This research aimed to measure the satisfaction level of local people living in 2,470 target villages, and both the public's and police officers' level of confidence in general towards the Border Patrol Police. Data was collected through Border Patrol Police working at local areas.

Research Method

This study used a quantitative method for data collection. The self-complete questionnaire surveys were decided for two participant groups. The former was local people living in 2,470 target villages and the latter was non-border patrol police. Due to time limitation, questionnaire contributions were made through chain of command. More specifically, for the participant group which consisted of local people, the questionnaires were distributed through local Border Patrol Police who worked throughout the country under the supervision of senior police managers. Actually, there were 256 local platoons of Border Patrol Police across the country. Two questionnaires were contributed to each platoon. In total, 512 questionnaires were completely done. Similarly, 512 questionnaires were completed through chain of command, supervised by senior police managers from Bangkok.

According to Brewer (1993), in his study of policing during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, it is often necessary for researchers to tackle the effects of sensitivity by making pragmatic compromises which depart from the textbook depiction of ideal research practice. Obviously, the present study had to compromise on what senior police managers required. The bureaucratic top-down study design was in keeping with the Thai context in which the research took place; within a centralized, hierarchical status-based chain of command and personal connections.

In this study, the confidence level was measured by using Likert Scales ranged from 1 to 5. The lowest score was 1, whereas the highest was 5.

Findings

Table 1: Local people's confidence level towards border patrol police

Local people's confidence level towards border patrol police's images	Average score	S.D.
1.Roles and Responsibilities	4.01	.64
1.1 Border patrol system	3.98	.77
1.2 Serious crime prevention	3.96	.78
1.3 Serious crime suppression along the borders	3.94	.77
1.4 Legal development and public assistance	4.17	.73
2. Practices and services	3.92	.60
2.1 Be polite and service minded	4.15	.69
2.2 Faith and trust	4.04	.69
2.3 Acceptance of policing activity	3.95	.712
2.4 Good response	3.80	.76
2.5 Public relations regarding policing	3.67	.84
3.Good governance	3.90	.63
3.1 Equity and justice	3.99	.72
3.2 Law enforcement based on human rights and human dignity	3.97	.72
3.3 Police ethics and morality	4.00	.71
3.4 Transparency	3.95	.71
3.5 Open for public scrutiny	3.74	.79
3.6 Public participation and hearing	3.76	.88
3.7 Public and private sector involvement	3.79	.91
3.8 Informer and confidentiality protection when needed	4.07	.86
3.9 Agency development system	3.83	.82
3.10 Good public administration	3.85	.85

Table 1 shows the three main issues approached in the questionnaire survey. These include police roles and responsibilities, police practices and services, and good governance. With regard to the Border Patrol Police's roles and responsibilities, an average score was 4.01 from 5. It can be seen that the aspect of legal development and public assistance had the highest score at 4.17, followed by the border patrol system and serious crime prevention at 3.98 and 3.96 respectively. In addition to these, serious crime suppression along the borders had the lowest score at 3.94.

Looking at police practices and services, it was found that politeness and service minded were the most favorable to the public at 4.15. 'Faith and trust', 'acceptance of policing activity' and 'good response' were 4.04, 3.95 and 3.80 respectively. The lowest score was public relations regarding policing at 3.67.

In regard to good governance – 'informer and confidentiality protection when needed' was rated as the highest mark at 4.07, followed by 'police ethics and morality' at 4.00, whereas 'open for public scrutiny' was the lowest score at 3.74. 'Equity and justice', 'law enforcement based on human rights and human dignity' and 'transparency' were given average scores at 3.99, 3.97 and 3.95 consecutively.

Table 2: Individual's factors in relation to public confidence towards the Border Patrol Police's image

Independent variable	Roles and Responsibilities			Police practices and services			Good governance		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.
1. Gender			.333			.430			.177
Male	16.15	2.51		19.71	3.09		39.29	6.57	
Female	15.90	2.60		19.47	2.85		38.43	5.93	
2. Age			.570			.969			.723
Lower than 20 years	15.53	2.41		19.37	3.20		37.58	7.43	
20-29 years	15.77	2.46		19.61	3.06		38.75	6.20	
30-39 years	16.13	2.86		19.55	3.34		38.36	6.89	
40-49 years	16.33	2.23		19.67	2.63		39.47	5.50	
50-59 years	15.89	2.78		19.57	3.18		39.22	6.93	
Higher than 60 years	16.00	2.76		20.36	2.84		39.36	6.98	
3. Hometown			.183			.088			.010
North	16.23	2.03		19.75	2.75		39.58	5.15	
Central area	16.35	2.52		19.91	3.30		39.71	7.70	
South	16.10	2.94		19.62	3.40		39.08	7.46	
East	15.50	2.48		18.52	3.11		36.19	6.34	
Northeast	16.05	2.63		19.88	2.76		39.38	5.82	

West	11.00	.		16.00	.		27.00	.	
Other	19.00	.		22.00	.		44.00	.	
4.Educational level			.042			.001			0.20
Primary school or lower	15.27	2.56		18.35	2.38		36.63	5.65	
Secondary school	15.97	2.50		19.47	2.85		38.79	6.15	
Diploma	16.17	2.43		19.77	3.31		39.25	6.09	
Undergraduate	16.36	2.57		20.18	3.11		39.89	6.80	
Postgraduate	17.36	2.73		21.36	3.29		41.55	6.36	

Table 2: (Continued) Individual's factors in relation to public confidence towards Border Patrol

Independent variable	Roles and Responsibilities			Police practices and services			Good governance		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.	\bar{X}	S.D.	Sig.
5.Occupation			.001			.000			.000
Government official	16.59	2.40		20.55	2.78		41.31	6.11	
State enterprise	16.14	2.66		20.57	3.03		39.57	7.30	
Company staff	16.10	2.57		18.71	3.72		37.10	7.54	
Company owner	16.16	2.33		19.41	2.77		38.51	5.25	
Employee	15.28	2.68		18.81	2.81		37.36	6.18	
Student	15.25	2.68		18.95	3.39		37.15	7.30	
Other	16.81	2.28		19.94	2.91		39.23	5.42	
6.Income			.000			.000			.000
Lower than 12,000 baht	15.46	2.49		18.94	2.80		37.43	6.13	
12,001-25,000 baht	16.33	2.31		19.87	3.07		39.77	6.29	
25,001-50,000 baht	17.15	2.66		21.07	2.80		41.56	5.87	
Higher than 50,000 baht	14.91	2.76		18.18	2.50		36.05	6.01	

Table 2 shows Individual's factors in relation to public confidence towards the Border Patrol Police's image in three main aspects. These include police roles and responsibilities, police practices and services, and good governance. Each individual factor was surveyed and analyzed. Such individual factors were gender, age, hometown, educational level, occupation and income.

In relation to table 2, it can be concluded that participants felt confident with the Border Patrol Police's roles and responsibilities, practices and services, and good governance. According to the participants' background, it was clearly explicated that the participants with a higher educational level were more confident than those with a lower educational level. Regarding the participants' career - those who were government officials were more confident when compared to other careers. In regard to partakers' incomes - those who earned in the range of 25,001 to 50,000 baht (around \$834 to \$1,667) had a confidence level higher than those who had income beyond this range.

Table 3: Police officers' confidence level towards border patrol police

Police officers' confidence level towards border patrol police's images	Average score	S.D.
1.Roles and Responsibilities	4.05	.68
1.1 Border patrol system	4.01	.81
1.2 Serious crime prevention	3.96	.79
1.3 Serious crime suppression along the borders	3.98	.81
1.4 Legal development and public assistance	4.23	.75
2. Practices and services	4.06	.59
2.1 Be polite and service mind	4.22	.71
2.2 Faith and trust	4.17	.69
2.3 Acceptance of policing activity	4.12	.72
2.4 Good response	3.88	.71
2.5 Public relations regarding policing	3.91	.79
3.Good governance	4.05	.59
3.1 Equity and justice	4.11	.68
3.2 Law enforcement based on human rights and human dignity	4.08	.68
3.3 Police ethics and morality	4.12	.66
3.4 Transparency	4.10	.71
3.5 Open for public scrutiny	3.96	.80
3.6 Public participation and hearing	3.97	.77
3.7 Public and private sector involvement	4.01	.76
3.8 Informer and confidentiality protection when needed	4.20	.72
3.9 Agency development system	3.97	.82
3.10 Good public administration	3.95	.86

Table 3 displays the outcomes of the questionnaire survey in three key aspects. These include police roles and responsibilities, police practices and services, and good governance. With regard to the Border Patrol Police's roles and responsibilities, the average score was 4.05. The aspect of 'legal development and public assistance' had the highest score at 4.23, followed by 'border patrol system' and 'serious crime suppression along the borders' at 4.01 and 3.98 respectively. 'Serious crime prevention' was rated as the lowest score at 3.96.

As regard to police practices and services, it was found that 'politeness and service mind' had the highest score at 4.22. 'Faith and trust', 'acceptance of policing activity' and 'public relations regarding policing' were given average scores of 4.17, 4.12 and 3.91 respectively. The lowest score was 'good response' at 3.88.

With regard to good governance – 'informer and confidentiality protection when needed' was rated as the highest mark at 4.20, followed by 'police ethics and morality', and 'equity and justice' at 4.12 and 4.11 respectively. 'Public participation and hearing'; and 'agency development system' had an equal average score at 3.97. 'Good public administration' was given the lowest score at 3.95.

Conclusion

It is broadly admitted that the Royal Thai Police still embraces the concept of military structures and ranks, and implements them into their administrative structures. In particular, the Department of Border Patrol Police, which has different roles and responsibilities when compared to other police agencies that run policing activities militarily on a daily basis. The questionnaire survey was decided to explore the satisfaction of both the public, and of police officers in other agencies, towards the Border Patrol Police.

It is obvious that the police officers' opinions towards the Border Patrol Police were similar to civilian participants' views. In other words, the public's and police officers' views towards Thailand's Border Patrol Police were positive. More importantly, all average scores of the three main issues given to the police officers who took part in this survey, were higher than those who were civilian participants. Interestingly, the police officers who participated in this survey were very satisfied with the Border Patrol Police's activities and manners. It is challenging police officers serving in the Department of Border Patrol Police how to increase public trust in respect of good governance. As mentioned previously, public involvement is a key achievement of policing in a modern era.

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