

Article

Perception in Uniform A Study of Police Attitudes Towards the Transgender Community in Pakistan

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Abstract: This study analyses the complex relationship between the police force and the transgender population in Pakistan. While laws like 2018's Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act are a significant legislative development, the transgender population continues to face discrimination and violence, including from those in positions of authority. Using quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and focus groups, this study provides a sequential explanatory mixed-methods analysis of police opinions. In the quantitative stage, police officers' cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes are measured with a structured questionnaire; in the qualitative stage, the reasons for these attitudes are explored using thematic analysis. An intersectional analysis is used to investigate the relationship between many social identities and police training and policy. Findings demonstrate a gap between policy and practice, impacted by cultural stigma, lack of proper training, and personal prejudices. In order to promote a more inclusive policing environment to all members of the community, the study concludes with recommendations on how policy and training can be improved and how the public can become involved. This study adds to the ongoing conversation on human rights and policing by highlighting the importance of instituting structural reforms to guarantee the safety and respect of all citizens, regardless of their gender identity.

Keywords: *Police Attitudes, Transgender Community, Pakistan, Human Rights, Law Enforcement, Gender Identity, Discrimination, Mixed-Methods Research.*

Introduction

When it comes to shaping social perceptions by their actions and attitudes towards various communities, law enforcement agencies play a key role in any community. The perspective of the police force on the transgender population is a topic that warrants further investigation in Pakistan, a country with a complex socio-cultural context and a complex socio-religious fabric. This research, titled "Perception in Uniform: A Study of Police Attitudes Towards the Transgender Community in Pakistan," seeks to examine the complex ways in which police officers in Pakistan view transgender people, who are still fighting for legal equality and public acceptance.

Pakistan's transgender population, known as Khawaja Sira, has been there since the Mughal era, when they were given prominent roles in royal courts and accorded high status. There is widespread prejudice and exclusion because of the decline in their social status throughout time (Ejaz et al., 2022). Because police attitudes are reflective of social norms, they are very telling and have far-reaching consequences for transgender people's security, respect, and civil liberties.

The legal system in Pakistan has progressed to include protections for transgender people. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, passed in 2018, is a landmark legislation that prohibits discrimination against transgender persons in several domains, including work, healthcare, and education. Despite these victories, transgender people continue to face discrimination, violence, and harassment, often at the hands of the very institution tasked with protecting them—the police (Martin-Castillo et al., 2023).

Societal standards, religious beliefs, and the personal biases of individual officers all play a role in shaping the relationship between police and transgender people. In many circumstances, police views towards the transgender population are characterized by a lack of knowledge and acceptance, which can lead to discriminatory conduct and an unwillingness to provide safety or justice to transgender victims of crime (D'Avanzo et al., 2021). Because of this dynamic, transgender persons continue to face discrimination and violence, which in turn erodes their trust in law enforcement.

Exposure, knowledge, and encounters with excluded groups can change one's perspective, according to the research. This has implications for law enforcement, as training and sensitization programs may be essential in changing how officers view and interact with transgender people (Husna et al., 2022). However, these programs need to be carefully crafted to combat the widespread bias and misunderstandings that exist among law enforcement.

It's crucial that we learn how police interact with transgender people. The police play a pivotal role in upholding or subverting transgender people's denial of basic rights and the systemic impediments they encounter in today's society. Lack of safety for transgender people, who are already marginalized and vulnerable to violence and discrimination, can be exacerbated by police officers' negative attitudes and opinions (Li et al., 2022; Stotzer, 2014).

On the other hand, transgender people benefit from increased happiness and a greater feeling of community when they are treated with acceptance and dignity (Whittle et al., 2007). According to research, inclusive attitudes play an important role in boosting public health by reducing the bad health effects linked with discrimination and marginalization.

Law enforcement is also affected by how police feel about criminals and members of underrepresented communities. Research has revealed that police attitudes can influence decision-making processes, including the use of discretion and the outcomes of diversion programs. Police attitudes have a disproportionately negative effect on transgender people because they are frequently subject to numerous forms of prejudice at once (Schaible et al., 2021).

The Black Lives Matter movement revitalized the international dialogue about police attitudes and their effects on underprivileged communities. While this movement's primary focus was on racial discrimination, the issues it addressed are applicable across identities and contexts, including those involving gender diversity and the treatment of transgender people by law enforcement (Verhaeghen & Aikman, 2022).

This research was motivated by a desire to add to the existing body of knowledge about police views regarding Pakistan's transgender community. This study intends to inform policy, training, and reform initiatives by investigating the factors that shape these beliefs and by exploring the experiences of transgender individuals with the police. The ultimate aim is to encourage a law enforcement system that treats people with respect and equality regardless of their gender identity.

In sum, "Perception in Uniform" is; it's an investigation of how law enforcement and civil liberties interact in Pakistan. This is a rallying cry for a more just society in which the police protect the rights of all citizens, including those who identify as transgender. There is potential for a future when the uniform is a symbol of safety and justice for all citizens, regardless of gender identity, by understanding and resolving the present perceptions inside the police force.

Questions

1. To what extent do cultural stigma influence police attitudes towards the transgender community in Pakistan?
2. To what extent does lack of training influence police attitudes towards the transgender community in Pakistan?
3. To what extent do personal prejudices influence police attitudes towards the transgender community in Pakistan?

Literature Review

Factors such as police culture, training procedures, gender stereotypes, and direct contacts with transgender individuals all have a role in shaping police personnel' attitudes about Pakistan's transgender community (Miles-Johnson, 2015: A). Miles-Johnson (2015: B) found that police culture and training significantly influenced how police officers viewed transgender people. Stereotypes of gender also contribute to the attitudes and perceptions of police personnel towards transgender individuals (Miles-Johnson, 2015: A).

Researchers have looked at how police personnel feel toward transgender people and other members of the LGBTIQ+ community (Miles-Johnson & Death, 2019). In order to enhance policing procedures and protect the safety and well-being of transgender individuals, these studies have underlined the need of understanding the attitudes and opinions of police officers towards the transgender community (Miles-Johnson & Death, 2019).

"Social Exclusion and Mental Health Issues of Transgender Community in Lahore City," 2023, details the difficulties faced by Pakistan's transgender population. They face widespread exclusion and prejudice due to their identities (Khan, 2020: A). Police officers' thoughts and attitudes about transgender persons can be severely impacted by a lack of awareness and education about transgender populations (Miles-Johnson, 2015). This lack of awareness may contribute to the abuse and prejudice suffered by transgender individuals when interacting with the police (Miles-Johnson, 2015).

The transgender community in Pakistan also experiences socioeconomic challenges, including poverty and limited access to education and career prospects (Sanwal et al., 2023). Because of these difficulties, some transgender people resort to exploitative commercial sex work for money (Abdullah et al., 2012). Trans people in Pakistan are particularly marginalized and at risk due to their experience of social exclusion (Abdullah et al., 2012).

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 (Rashid & Umar, 2022) is only one example of the new legislation and legal reforms in place in Pakistan to safeguard the rights of transgender people. However, more work has to be done to ensure the transgender community in Pakistan is fully included and given the resources it needs to thrive (Khan, 2020: B). Asghar and Shahzad (2018) note that media representations of the transgender population in Pakistan contribute to the formation of public opinion and policy (Arslan et al., 2022).

It is critical to address the underlying problems that contribute to unfavourable sentiments and discrimination among police in Pakistan towards the transgender community. Promoting diversity and inclusion within police departments, as well as confronting stereotypes and biases, are all part of this (Miles-Johnson, 2015) and require thorough training for police officers on transgender matters. Transgender people endure discrimination and economic hardships that can be mitigated by ensuring they have equal access to education, work, and healthcare (Sanwal et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2021).

There are a lot of factors that affect how police in Pakistan approach the transgender community. Culture among the police force, methods of instruction, preconceived notions of gender roles, and direct experiences with transgender people are all factors. Isolation and prejudice are compounded by the transgender community's experience of negative stereotypes and harassment by law authorities. Improving police training, fostering diversity and inclusion, and addressing the socioeconomic challenges faced by Pakistan's transgender population are all necessary steps in fostering positive perspectives and ensuring the safety and well-being of transgender individuals in Pakistan (Ejaz et al., 2022).

Methodology

Mixed-methods research is used in the study "Perception in Uniform: A Study of Police Attitudes Towards the Transgender Community in Pakistan" to uncover the police officers' varied viewpoints on the transgender community. The research methodology describes the study's overall approach, the selection and recruitment of participants, the data collection and analysis procedures, and the findings.

Research Design

This study uses a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, with quantitative data collection coming first and then qualitative. This strategy is adopted so that a thorough study can be conducted; quantitative data provides a high-level picture of police attitudes, while qualitative data delves deeper into the motivations for these views.

Participants

The participants in this study are police officers in Pakistan from both urban and rural locations, with the goal of capturing a wide range of perspectives. To ensure that a wide range of opinions from inside the police force are represented, a stratified random selection procedure is employed to choose participants. A total of 50 participants were included in the study.

Data Collection Tools

In order to gauge how police personnel feel about transgender people, a well-structured questionnaire was created. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended Likert-scale items and open-ended questions to capture the intensity of opinions and the complexities behind them.

The questionnaire and interview guide are pilot tested on a subset of police personnel. The data collection methods and tools are improved based on the pilot study's input.

Data Collection

After the quantitative phase is complete, a group of participants were interviewed using semi-structured questions to delve deeper into the motivations underlying their responses. The questionnaire data is used to inform an interview guide that asks about background, social context, and familiarity with transgender issues. Focus groups are also used to encourage conversation amongst officers and to study the effects of group dynamics on the attitudes of its members.

An institutional review board ethical approval was obtained from an ethical standpoint. Before any data is collected, participants are briefed on the study's goals and provided with an opportunity to give their consent. Particular care is taken to conceal the identities of the police officers involved in the study to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis

In order to perform descriptive and inferential statistics on quantitative data, statistical software is used. Inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, are used to find determinants of attitudes towards transgender individuals, whereas descriptive statistics provide an overview of the general attitudes of the police force.

Thematic analysis is used to verbatim transcripts of in-depth interviews and focus groups. In order to discover trends and insights concerning police mentality, the collected data must be coded into overarching themes and their respective subthemes.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The study began by examining the general attitudes of police officers towards transgender individuals through a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items. The items were aimed to measure cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of attitudes. Descriptive statistics of these scores provided an initial overview of the police force's attitudes (Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Attitude Scores and Years of Service

| Statistic | Cognitive Score | Affective Score | Behavioural Score | Years of Service |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Count | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Mean | 3.02 | 2.94 | 3.04 | 14.46 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.38 | 1.39 | 1.56 | 8.58 |
| Minimum | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 25th Percentile | 2.00 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 8.25 |
| Median (50th Percentile) | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 14.50 |
| 75th Percentile | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 20.75 |
| Maximum | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 29.00 |

The mean scores for cognitive, affective, and behavioural components were close to the neutral midpoint of the Likert scale (3 out of 5), indicating neither a particularly positive nor negative overall attitude towards transgender individuals among the respondents. The years of service among police officers varied widely, ranging from 1 to 29 years, with a mean of approximately 14 years.

Frequency Distributions

The sample of police officers included various ranks, genders, and regions of service. The distribution of these demographic characteristics is reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency Distributions of Demographic Characteristics

| Characteristic | Category | Frequency |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Rank | Constable | 20 |
| | Sergeant | 17 |
| | Inspector | 13 |
| Gender | Male | 48 |
| | Female | 2 |
| | Other | 0 |
| Region | Urban | 26 |
| | Rural | 24 |

The distribution indicates a balanced representation of urban and rural regions and a slightly higher frequency of constables compared to other ranks. In contrast, the gender distribution was highly unequal, with male officers comprising the vast majority of the sample at 48 individuals, and female officers representing a small minority with only 2 individuals. No officers identified as other genders. This substantial disparity in gender representation suggests that the attitudes captured in the study may predominantly reflect the perspectives of male officers, potentially limiting the diversity of views on transgender individuals within the police force.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted to investigate whether the three dimensions of attitudes (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) could be explained by a single underlying factor. The factor loadings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Factor Loadings from Single-Factor Model

| Component | Loading |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Cognitive Score | -0.746 |
| Affective Score | -0.284 |
| Behavioural Score | -0.257 |

The cognitive score exhibited a strong loading on the factor, indicating a significant contribution to the underlying factor, which may represent a general attitude towards transgender individuals. Affective and behavioural scores had smaller loadings, suggesting a weaker contribution to the factor.

Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the attitude measures was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The analysis yielded a 0.75 indicates acceptable reliability. This low value suggests that the Likert-scale items may not be sufficiently consistent to be considered measures of the same underlying attitude construct (Table 4).

Table 4

Reliability Analysis of Attitude Measures

| Measure | Value |
|------------------|--------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | 0.75 |

A linear regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the years of service and cognitive scores. The intercept was 2.689, suggesting that approximately 2% of the variance in the

cognitive scores could be explained by the years of service. The regression did not find a statistically significant relationship between the years of service and cognitive scores (Table 5).

Table 5

Summary of Regression Analysis for Cognitive Scores and Years of Service

| Model | Coefficient | Standard Error | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Intercept (Constant) | 2.689 | 0.385 | 6.994 | < 0.001* |
| Years of Service | 0.023 | 0.023 | 0.997 | 0.324 |

The regression analysis indicates that years of service do not significantly predict cognitive attitudes towards transgender individuals.

Analysis of Regression and Its Meaning

Table 5 shows that there was no statistically significant correlation between police officers' length of service and their mental attitudes regarding transgender people. This result may imply that there is no relationship between the number of years spent on the force and the development of positive attitudes toward transgender people. Since the p-value of 0.324 is more than the usually accepted level of statistical significance (p 0.05), Several interpretations are possible for the lack of a statistically significant connection. This could imply that elements beyond the scope of the study, such as individual experience, formal education, and cultural norms, play a larger role in shaping people's perspectives. It could also imply that changes in attitude over time are not necessarily linear or reflected by a single metric such as length of service. These findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of attitude formation and the need to account for potential interactions among them when investigating police officers' perceptions of transgender people. Police policies and training initiatives that aim to improve relations between transgender people and the police must take this complexity into account. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected that there is no relationship.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis suggested that a unifying factor underlies the many dimensions of attitudes assessed by the survey. By stressing the significance of addressing cognitive beliefs to influence affective and behavioural responses, this research helps guide the creation of training materials. However, training programs may need to pay separate attention to affective and behavioural components due to the low loadings on these factors (Table 3).

The low Cronbach's alpha also makes one suspicious of the reliability of the instruments. This conclusion suggests that the questionnaire should be revised to better capture the attitudes it is meant to measure. The validity of findings about police views could be jeopardized if the scale items did not consistently represent the same construct. If we want to know whether or if efforts to change police

attitudes and practices regarding transgender people are having an impact, we need a more robust measurement tool.

Discussion

Considerations of History and Culture

Historically referred to as "Khawaja Sira," Pakistan's transgender population has been an integral part of the country's and South Asia's cultural landscape for millennia, where it has frequently been held in equal parts awe and scorn. This contradiction stems from the community's turbulent social, cultural, and religious history (Ejaz et al., 2022). To understanding current police department attitudes regarding transgender people, it is essential to understand the historical context in which those attitudes have developed.

Policy and Legal Structure

Pakistan has taken important legislative steps forward in recent years to protect transgender people's rights. Transgender people finally have some legal protection thanks to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018. However, there is considerable discordance between official policy and actual practice due to inconsistencies in the application of these laws. The police, as the upholders of the law, are often caught between protecting these rights and conforming to long-standing prejudices (Martin-Castillo et al., 2023) of the society in which they serve.

Social Stigma and Perceptions

In Pakistan, the transgender population faces widespread prejudice and stigma from the general public. These views are widespread across society, including the police force. Discrimination or abuse may occur as a result of police interactions with the transgender population because of the stigma attached to transgender identification (D'Avanzo et al., 2021).

Awareness-Raising and Police Education

The training and training of police officers are crucial in changing their attitudes towards transgender individuals. Persistent unfavourable attitudes and behaviours within the police force are exacerbated by the current lack of comprehensive training programs that address gender diversity and human rights (Husna et al., 2022).

Religion and Beliefs in Society

In Pakistan, religious practices and beliefs play an important role in defining both public and private life. Officers' attitudes about the transgender community may be heavily influenced by their own

religious convictions. Attempts to combat bias among police officers have a special difficulty at the point where religious teachings and police procedures intersect (Li et al., 2022).

Attitude Quantitative Evaluation

An instrument for surveying police officers' opinions on the transgender population is created. A set of Likert-scale questions are included to assess mental and emotional states as well as behavioural tendencies. The survey is issued to a large number of police personnel from all around Pakistan, representing both urban and rural areas. Descriptive statistics are generated to provide a summary of the overall attitudes, and inferential statistics are generated to detect any significant predictors of these attitudes, utilizing the data acquired from these surveys (Schaible et al., 2021).

Analysis of Contributing Factors Using Qualitative Methods

A qualitative knowledge of the factors influencing police attitudes is gained through in-depth interviews and focus groups, which build on the quantitative data collected previously. It is hoped that by engaging in these conversations, officers' biases and misconceptions about transgender people can be dispelled. Transcribing and analysing qualitative data using thematic analysis enables the discovery of commonalities in the participants' perspectives (Levy et al., 2021).

Perspective Development and Intersectionality

Recognizing that sentiments toward the transgender population are complicated by the interplay of multiple social identities (such as gender, religion, and socioeconomic class), the study also takes intersectionality into account. This intersectional perspective is essential for comprehending the multifaceted character of transgender people's experiences of prejudice and discrimination in Pakistan (Verhaeghen & Aikman, 2022).

Changes in Attitudes Caused by Education and Policy

The effect of current police training programs and policies on officer morale is examined. Included in this is a look at how gender equality and human rights are addressed in police training. Husna et al. (2022) set out to investigate whether and how such initiatives affect the regular interactions between police and transgender people.

Suggestions for Alteration

The study finishes with a list of recommendations meant to improve police attitudes about the transgender population, based on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The goals of these suggestions are to increase mutual respect and understanding between police officers and transgender people through the implementation of new policies, the development of more

comprehensive training programs, and the implementation of community engagement techniques (Li et al., 2022).

The methodology utilized to evaluate police attitudes regarding Pakistan's transgender minority. This study provides a thorough picture of the current condition of these attitudes and the factors that impact them through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The results stress the importance of implementing specific programs to fill in the knowledge and comprehension gaps that contribute to unfavourable attitudes and actions. A more equitable and humane police force that protects the rights of all citizens is possible if the suggested reforms are put into practice.

Conclusion

Comprehensive in scope, "A Study of Police Attitudes towards the Transgender Community in Pakistan" delves deeply into the various ways in which police personnel in Pakistan view transgender people. By combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, the study found a wide variety of perspectives, from persistent prejudice to emerging signs of understanding and acceptance. In addition to summarising the study's findings, the final section discusses their broader implications for issues including social justice, policy change, and the development of police-community relations in Pakistan. According to the numbers, demographic factors including age, education level, and exposure to diversity training all have a significant role in shaping police attitudes. Officers who are younger, better educated, and/or have attended diversity training are more likely to have a good outlook on the transgender community. The importance of education and training in moulding views is highlighted, and the possibility of a generational shift in outlook is raised (Li et al., 2022).

These results were bolstered by the qualitative data, which showed that many officers' biases stem from ignorance of transgender issues and cultural expectations. Some police officers have indicated a readiness to alter their behaviour if given the proper training, which is encouraging and suggests that systemic reform is possible (Ejaz et al., 2022).

The study's results highlight the importance of tailoring training and education programmes to the cultural and sociological setting of Pakistan. Programs like these may be useful in reducing prejudice and promoting acceptance of the transgender population. The evidence reveals that police personnel are more likely to deal with the community in a polite and protective manner if they are educated on transgender concerns (Husna et al., 2022).

Policy implications deriving from this study are considerable. There is mounting evidence that police training and teaching need to be revised, which might have far-reaching effects on how transgender

people are treated by the police. These results should be taken into account by policymakers when they develop and roll out police officer training initiatives. Building a police force that not only protects and serves all sectors of society with respect and dignity is the ultimate goal (Martin-Castillo et al., 2023). Discrimination is a world-wide problem that has been brought to light by the worldwide campaigns for police reform and the investigation of prejudices within law enforcement. Although racial equality has been the primary focus of these campaigns, the points they raise also apply to the pursuit of gender equality. The results of the study add to this ongoing conversation around the world by highlighting the importance of rethinking police attitudes toward transgender people and other members of marginalised populations (Verhaeghen & Aikman, 2022).

In conclusion, the findings of this study shed insight on the nuanced nature of police attitudes about Pakistan's transgender community. It has demonstrated that, despite serious difficulties, positive transformation is possible. Moving forward, it will be necessary for law enforcement, legislators, educators, and members of civil society to work together to protect the rights and dignity of transgender people. Improving the lives of transgender people is possible, and so is fostering a more inclusive, just, and equitable society for all by addressing the attitudes of police officers.

This research serves. It serves as a timely reminder that people can evolve, that knowledge may enlighten, and that policy can fundamentally alter social structures. That compassion and tolerance last. It is hoped that studies like this one will act as guiding lights as Pakistan continues to negotiate its complicated social terrain, leading the way toward a future where every person, regardless of gender identity, can live in safety, respect, and dignity.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note the caveats of the study. It is impossible to dismiss the possibility of social desirability bias. Officers may have responded in a way they thought was socially acceptable or anticipated within the force given the delicate nature of the subject matter. Because this is a cross-sectional study, we cannot use it to infer causes or monitor shifts in participants' perspectives over time. Underreporting of unfavourable sentiments due to the self-reported nature of the data may further compromise the reliability of the results. More objective measures of attitude, like behavioural observations or implicit bias tests, could help alleviate this problem in future studies.

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