An Empirical Study of Analyzing Young Adults' Opinion about Police Encounter in Chennai

S. T. Pharthiban[1], Priyadharshini Jayabalan[2]

[1]Department of Criminology and Forensic Science, Dr. M. GR. University of Research and Educational Institution, Chennai - 600095.
Email: *pharthiyamini[at]gmail.com*

[2]Assistant Professor, Centre of Excellence in Digital Forensics, Perungudi, Chennai – 600089.
Corresponding Author Email: *prijayabalan1512[at]gmail.com*

Abstract: *The study investigates young adults' opinions about police encounters, employing a mixed - methods approach that combines qualitative analysis. The findings reveal significant differences in perspectives influenced by various factors. A portion of respondents hold opposing views, understanding police encounters as methods to silence witnesses or as actions lacking accountability. Others express positive opinions, associating police encounters with attributes such as transparency, fairness, and proactive community engagement. Furthermore, the study identifies moderate levels of awareness among young adults about the legal frameworks governing police encounters and highlights diverse attitudes toward the death penalty. These varying opinions underscore the complexities of public opinion in matters of law enforcement and justice. The study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for developing trust between law enforcement agencies and the public. It also highlights the importance of improving legal education within the context of criminal justice to address errors and promote informed discussions. These findings contribute to the development of policies aimed at strengthening police - public relationships and enhancing public confidence in the justice system.*

Keywords: Police encounters, public opinion, young adults, public knowledge

1. Introduction

The term "Encounter Killing" refers to alleged extra - judicial killings executed by police or armed forces, ostensibly in self - defence during encounters with suspected gangsters or terrorists. The Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure do not provide an exact definition for the word "police encounter. "

Operational Definition:
In my opinion, police encounters will be made for the reason of self - defense; sometimes, they are also done due to the pressure of political officers and to prevent the crime rate of the criminal

Types of Police Encounters:
- **Planned Encounter:** This means law enforcement officers often plan and set a trap for the suspect. The police made a fake situation so they could easily justify using brutal force, claiming the suspect tried to attack or escape.
- **Spontaneous Encounter:** It happens during routine patrols, arrests, or raids without any planning. They occur when suspects resist arrest or try to escape and officers use deadly force.

Needs of Police Encounters:
- **High crime and public pressure:** High rates of crime cases create pressure on police to act quickly, sometimes leading to police encounters to show they are being tough on crime.
- **Weak legal systems:** In some places with slow or corrupt legal systems, sometimes police feel that police encounters will be the quicker way to deal with criminals who are escaping from justice.
- **Corruption and political pressure:** Corruption or political pressure among the police force can lead to police encounters to eliminate rivals or protect certain interests.

- **Self - defense claims:** Some encounters will be genuinely done by the police officers for self - defense, so those cases have an excuse to justify extrajudicial killings.
- **Silencing evidence:** Sometimes, encounters will be done for silencing the witness due to the reason of avoiding exposing illegal activities or saving the real criminal from the case.
- **Political rewards:** sometimes, police get a reward or promotion for encounters unofficially, especially while supporting political leaders' tough situations.
- **Lack of training:** Poorly trained officers don't know how to handle critical situations without using violence, which leads to excessive force and death.
- **Public support for tough policing:** In some areas, the people may feel the justice system is failing, which means the public would support aggressive police tactics like police encounters.

Impacts of Police Encounters:
Police encounter impacts are classified into different types based on the situation:
- **Psychological Impact:** Police encounters cause stress, anxiety, and trauma, particularly if the interaction becomes negative.
- **Community Relations:** High - profile police encounters cause a breakage of bonding between law enforcement agencies and the public. It also causes distrust between the police and the public.
- **Legal Consequences:** If the individual becomes involved in police encounters as a witness, they face long - term legal issues for their career and life.
- **Social Implications:** Negative experiences with the police can easily influence public opinions of fairness and justice, possibly weakening social bonds.
- **Behavioral Changes:** People's behaviour and daily routines may change due to past police encounters, such

as avoiding certain areas or being more cautious in interactions with police.

- **Policy and Reform**: High - profile police encounters can prompt calls for police reform and policy changes to improve accountability and public relations.

Laws Related to Police Encounter:

- **Article 6 (1):** Every individual has the basic right to life. This right will be protected by law; no one shall be unreasonably disadvantaged of his life.
- **Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution:** These article states that fake encounters are against the right to equality, the right to life, and the freedom of the individual.
- **Section 46 (2) Code of Criminal Procedure:** If any person tries to escape from arrest, the officer has the power to use all necessary force required for arresting the escaping person.
- **Section 300 (3) of IPC:** If any individual intentionally causes serious injury to another individual, but that injury leads the individual to death, then it is considered murder even if that individual does not have the intention to kill another individual.
- **Section 96 and 100 of IPC:** Section 96 says if someone attacks or tries to harm you and if you try to defend yourself, you cannot feel guilty because your actions are considered as reasonable and in self - defence. Section 100 explains that if any person tries to stab you with a knife and you protect yourself by hitting them, which leads to death, it is not considered murder because it is justified as you did it for self - defence.

2. Literature Review

The literature reviews given below will be particularly focused only on media coverage and racial discriminations, but my study focused on how the young adult's opinions are different about police encounters and law enforcement agencies.

Steven Chermak, Edmund M. C. Garrell and Jeff Grunewald [2006], on the topic "Media coverage of police misconduct and attitudes toward police". The motive of the study is to explain how media coverage of a celebrated police misconduct case affects public attitudes toward police. The data are collected by public opinion surveys conducted in three waves (pre - , during, and post - trial). The findings of the study will be 53.5% believed the officers were guilty pre - trial, dropping to 49.6% post - trial. Media coverage had little effect on general attitudes but increased perceptions of officer guilt. African Americans showed a greater decline in trust post - trial. The conclusion of the study will show that media coverage of police misconduct influences public opinion towards the police, often leading to distrust, especially in affected communities. However, balanced reporting that includes positive police actions can help to improve public trust.

Kenneth Dowler and Valerie Zawislak [2007], on this topic "Public Perceptions of Police Misconduct and Discrimination: Examining the Impact of Media Consumption". The motive of the study is to examine the relationship between media consumption and public attitudes toward police misconduct and unfair practices. Survey data will be collected from the 2000 Law and Media Survey, a nationally representative random telephone survey, and the sample size will be 1, 011 adults. The findings of the study will be that heavy consumers of network news were more likely to believe police misconduct was frequent. Minority respondents were more affected, observing police as biased toward White people, and the crime drama viewers were more likely to believe the wealthy received preferential police treatment. No significant media influence was observed regarding preferential treatment of Whites. The study concludes that Media consumption, especially network news, influences perceptions of police misconduct, particularly among minority viewers, and the study also highlights the importance of understanding the media's role in shaping attitudes toward the police.

Cassandra Chaney and Ray V. Robertson [2013], on this topic "Racism and police brutality in America". The study was conducted in the United States of America. The motive of the study is to analyze changes in police departments 21 years after the Rodney King beating and examine public opinion of law enforcement shaped by race and racism. The data are collected from the National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project and narratives from 36 contributors (2009 - 2010). The data are collected from the period of April 2009 - June 2010. The findings of the police misconduct statistics will be 5, 986 documented cases of police misconduct and 382 losses of life linked to police misconduct during this time. Resolutions and judgments from misconduct cases amounted to $347, 455, 000. A total of 33% of misconduct cases led to convictions, and 64% of those convicted received prison sentences, with an average prison term of 14 months for convicted officers. The conclusion of the study explains that police brutality and misconduct unequally affect black individuals, reinforcing negative public distrust in law enforcement among marginalized groups.

Lorraine Mazerolle, Sarah Bennett, Emma Antrobus, and Elizabeth Eggins [2012], on the topic "Procedural Justice, Routine Encounters, and Citizen Perceptions of Police". The motive of the study is to improve citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy, influence attitudes toward drunk driving, and increase compliance and satisfaction with the police. The study is conducted in Queensland, Australia: participants will be drivers stopped at Random Breath Test (RBT) operations and the sample size will be nearly 20, 000 surveys distributed; 2, 762 valid responses. Finally, drivers in the experimental group were 1.24 times more likely to change their views on drunk - driving, and they were also 1.47 times more likely to report a change in how they thought about the police officers. The conclusion was implementing procedural justice principles in police and public encounters to improve perceptions of justification and satisfaction, even during brief routine interactions like RBTs. The findings highlight the importance of respectful, fair, and engaging communication for building trust in law enforcement agencies among the public.

Ayobami Lanyon [2021], on this topic "phantom pains: The effect of police killings of Black Americans on Black British Attitudes". The motive of the study is to investigate how high - profile police killings of Black Americans affect the

attitudes of Black citizens in other countries, focusing on Black Londoners' trust in their local police. The data was collected from the Metropolitan Police Public Attitudes Survey. The data analyzed covered survey responses before and after the killing of Eric Garner on July 17, 2014. The survey response from various groups with a focus on black, white, and South Asian Londoners. The value of the study results will be that Eric Garner's death negatively influenced the Black Londoners' attitudes toward the police, and the perception of police fairness declined by 2.44 units and community engagement by 3.16 units. The study concludes that police violence in the U. S. states can resonate intentionally, influencing attitudes of Black individuals in other nations. The study also highlights the importance of addressing racial disparities in policing both locally and globally.

Aim and Objectives:

The primary focus of this study is to develop our knowledge and understanding through analysing young adults' opinions about police encounters and law enforcement agencies.
1) To examine the public trust level about law enforcement agencies.
2) To identify factors contributing to positive and negative reactions about police due to police encounters.
3) To assess whether young adults encourage police encounters.
4) To propose recommendations for eliminating police encounters as a measure of justice.

3. Materials and Methods

The study focuses on analysing opinions of young adults' sampling and of young adults' responses in Chennai. The size of the data will be 156 samples collected from young adults. The sample represents the opinions of young adults about police encounters from different age groups and education levels about police encounters. It includes both male and female respondents, capturing their opinions equally.
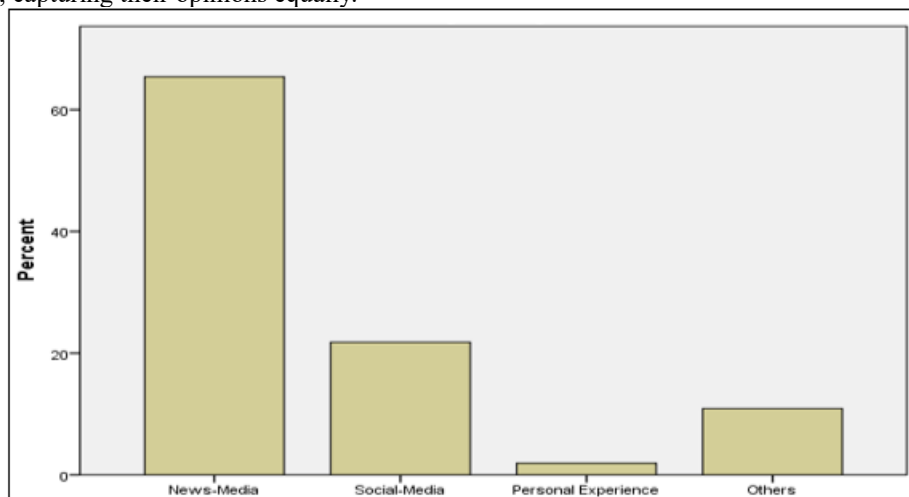
Sample Techniques:

Survey method. Structured questionnaires will be prepared, and data will be collected from young adults from the limited age group. Structured questions will be implemented in SPSS software used for statistic values of the collected data.

Procedure:

The samples were collected from young adults aged 18 - 30 years. The researcher obtained consent from each sample. Data was collected using a questionnaire method. After collecting the samples, the data was analyzed and coded, and the SPSS software was used for data analysis and interpretation.

Method of Data Collection:

- **Primary data** through a survey interview questionnaire was collected.
- **Secondary data** through sources from journals, articles, books, and social media was collected.

Limitations of the Study:

- Some subjects were not interested in cooperating with this survey.
- Some subjects did not feel comfortable providing genuine answers due to fear.
- Studying is limited to the area of Chennai.

4. Result and Data Analysis

1) Peoples Knowledge about Police Encounters Through:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	News - Media	102	65.4	65.4	65.4
	Social - Media	34	21.8	21.8	87.2
	Personal Experience	3	1.9	1.9	89.1
	Others	17	10.9	10.9	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Chart 1: People's Knowledge about Police Encounters Through

Chart Explains

Bar chart 1 explains that among the people's responses, **65.4%** say they have some police knowledge encounter through news media. Then, **21.8%** of people responded to the survey that they know police encounter through social media.1**.9%** of people say that they have personal experience, so they have knowledge about police encounters, and the remaining **10.9%** of people choose other options for knowing about police encounters through documentaries, court cases, public forums, academic research, etc.

2) Age vs Media Influence
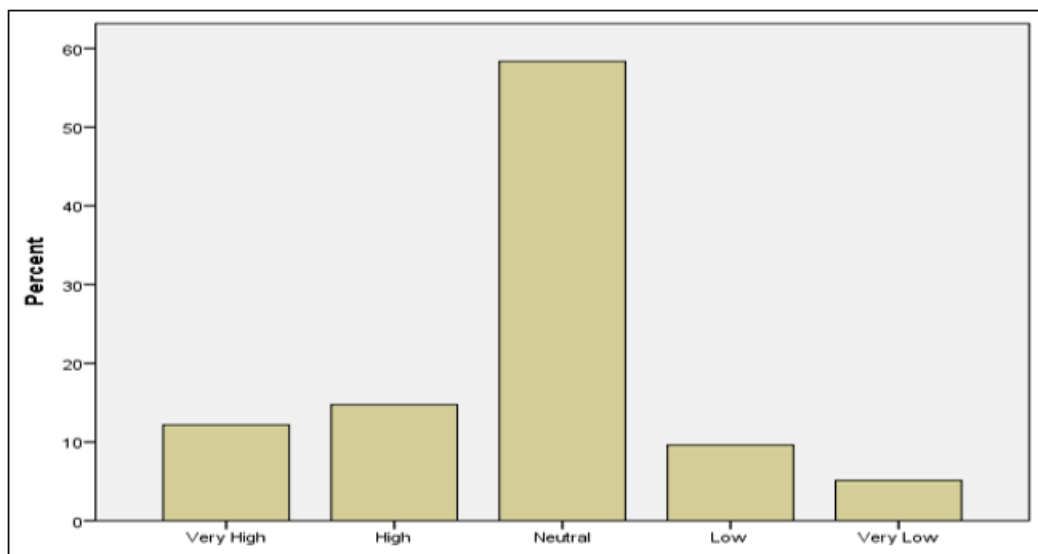
Table: AGE vs Media Influence Table Denotes

			Media Influence			Total
			Yes	No	Maybe	
Age	18–21	Count	18	4	26	48
		% within Age	37.50%	8.30%	54.20%	100.00%
		% within Media Influence	31.60%	21.10%	32.50%	30.80%
		% of Total	11.50%	2.60%	16.70%	30.80%
	22–25	Count	33	14	31	78
		% within Age	42.30%	17.90%	39.70%	100.00%
		% within Media Influence	57.90%	73.70%	38.80%	50.00%
		% of Total	21.20%	9.00%	19.90%	50.00%
	26–30	Count	6	1	23	30
		% within Age	20.00%	3.30%	76.70%	100.00%
		% within Media Influence	10.50%	5.30%	28.80%	19.20%
		% of Total	3.80%	0.60%	14.70%	19.20%
Total		Count	57	19	80	156
		% within Age	36.50%	12.20%	51.30%	100.00%
		% within Media Influence	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		% of Total	36.50%	12.20%	51.30%	100.00%

This cross - tabulation in Fig.1 shows that the age category of people's opinions is influenced by the media and which of the people's opinions are not influenced due to media and some people have neutral opinions. Firstly, the responses of people in the 18 - 21 age category will be collected, in total, **30.8%.** In that response, **11.5%** of young people say yes, their opinion is influenced by the media.2.**6%** of young people say no, their opinion will not be changed due to the media. The remaining **16.7%** say that it may be their opinion that they are influenced by the media that people only have neutral opinions about it. A total of **50%** of the responses will be collected from the age category of 22 - 25. In that response, **21.2%** of people say yes, their opinion will be influenced by the media.9.**0%** of young people say no, their opinion will not be changed due to the media. The remaining **19.9%** of them say that maybe their opinion will be influenced by the media and that people have a neutral opinion about it. A total of **19.2%** of responses will be collected from the age category of 26 - 30. In that response, **3.8%** of people say yes, their

opinion will be influenced by the media.0.**6%** of young people say no, their opinion will not be changed due to the media. The remaining **14.7%** of them say that maybe their opinion will be influenced by the media and that people have a neutral opinion about it.

3) Trust Level of People about Law Enforcement Agencies:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very High	19	12.2	12.2	12.2
	High	23	14.7	14.7	26.9
	Neutral	91	58.3	58.3	85.3
	Low	15	9.6	9.6	94.9
	Very Low	8	5.1	5.1	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Chart 2: Trust Level of People about Law Enforcement Agencies

Explains
Bar Chart 3 explains people's trust level of police officers.1**2.2%** of people's response trust level of police officers will be very high nearly a range of 100% complete

trust. Then, **14.7%** of people have a high level of trust in police officers, nearly a range of 80%. Then, **58.3% of** people have a neutral level of trust of police officers, ranging from 50%. Then **9.6%** of people have a low level of trust in police

officers, nearly a range of 30%, and the remaining **5.1% of** people have a very low level of trust in police officers, nearly a range of 0% of trust.
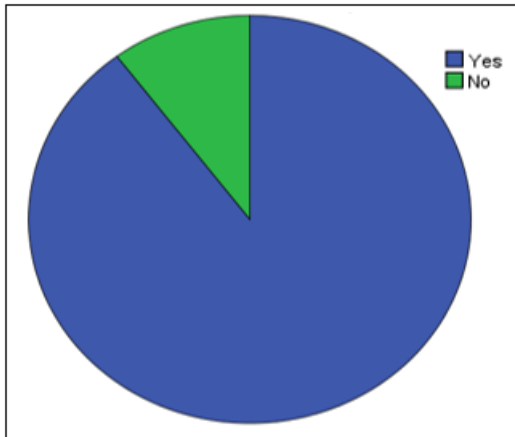
4) Peoples' Knowledge About Police Encounters:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	140	89.7	89.7	89.7
	No	16	10.3	10.3	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Chart 3: Peoples' Knowledge about Police Encounters

Chart Explains:
Chart 4 shows that, among 156 respondents, **89.7%** of the respondents say yes, they have proper knowledge about the police encounter, and the remaining **10.3%** of them say no, they have no proper knowledge about it

5) Justified As Alternative Method for Punishing Criminals

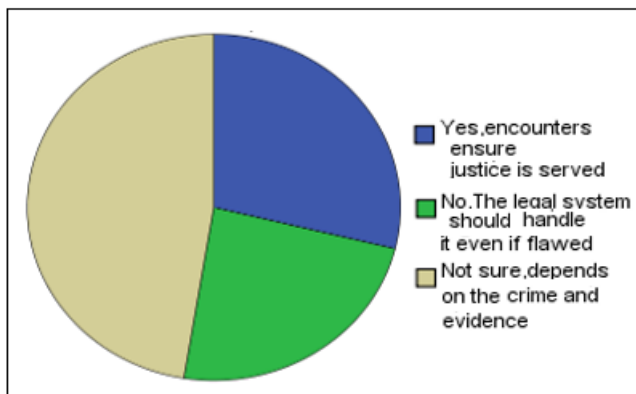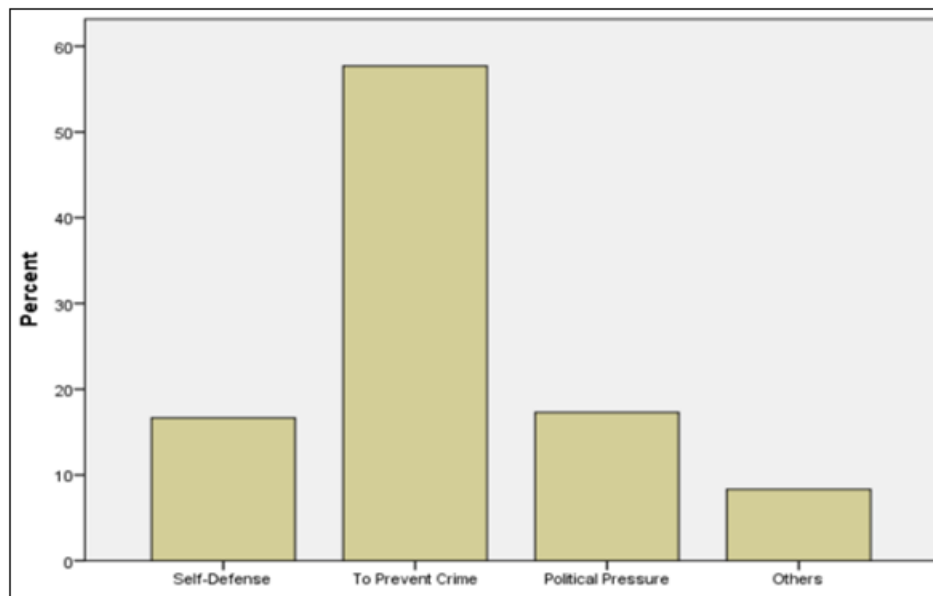|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, encounters ensure justice is served	45	28.8	28.8	28.8
	No, the legal system should handle it, even if flawed	37	23.7	23.7	52.6
	Not sure. It depends on the crime and evidence	74	47.4	47.4	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Chart 4: Justified As Alternative Method For Punishing Criminals

Explains:
Chart 4 shows that people's response if the criminal has escaped due to loopholes from justice means police encounter will be a justified alternative method to ensure justice. Some young adults say the legal system is important to handle if it is flawed. The remaining people have neutral opinions.2**8.8%** of people's responses say yes, police encounters ensure justice if the criminal escaped due to loopholes.2**3.7%** of people say no police encounter is an alternative tool, so they say the legal system should handle them even if flawed. The remaining **47.4%** of people say they are not sure whether the teaching police encounter is an alternative tool or not because they say it will depend on the crime of the criminals and the evidence whether it's done for self - defence or other reasons.

6) Reason for Police Encounter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Self - Defence	26	16.7	16.7	16.7
	To Prevent Crime	90	57.7	57.7	74.4
	Political Pressure	27	17.3	17.3	91.7
	Others	13	8.3	8.3	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Bar Chart 5: Reason for Encounter

Chart Explains:
Bar Chart 5 explains the reasons for police encounters.5**7.7%** of people's responses say the police encounter will be done for preventing crimes. Then, **17.3%** of people say the police encounter will be done due to political pressure. Also, **16.7%** of people who responded to the survey said police encounters will be done for self - defence, and the remaining **8.3%** of people chose other options like power misuse, corruption, etc.

7) Current Status of Respondents

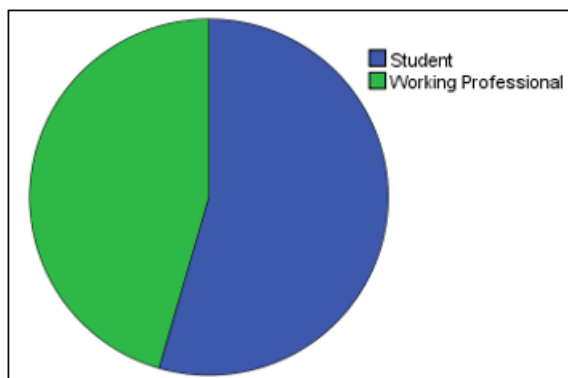|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	85	54.5	54.5	54.5
	Working Professional	71	45.5	45.5	100
	Total	156	100	100	

Chart 6: Current Status of Respondents Chart Denote

Chart 6 shows that, among 156 respondents, **54.5%** of the responses will be collected from the students, and the remaining **45.5%** of the responses will be collected from the working professionals.

Table 2: Correlations Trust Level vs Knowledge

		Knowledge	Trust Level
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	0.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	156	156
Trust Level	Pearson Correlation	0.247**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	156	156

Explains:
Table fig.2 explains the value of the correlation between the Trust level vs Knowledge value, which will be.247**, which is having stronger significance at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)

Table 3: Correlations Reason vs Trust Level

		Trust level	Reason
Trust Level	Pearson Correlation	1	0.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	156	156
Reason	Pearson Correlation	0.263**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	156	156

Explains
Table fig 3 will explain the value of the correlation between the Trust level vs Reason value, which will be.263**, which is a stronger significance at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed). The young adults trust that police encounters will be done for reasons of self - defence, political pressure, etc., so it has strong significance.

Table 4: Correlations Support vs Necessary Tool

		Necessary Tool	Support
Necessary Tool	Pearson Correlation	1	0.205*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.010
	N	156	156
Support	Pearson Correlation	0.205*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	
	N	156	156

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Table fig 4: Correlations Support vs Necessary Tool Explains:

Table fig 4 explains the value of correlation between the Support vs Necessary tool value will be.205* which is having stronger significance at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed). The young adults will support that police encounters will be a necessary tool to control crime.

Table 5: Correlations Age vs Justification

		Age	Justification
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	0.188*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.019
	N	156	156
Justification	Pearson Correlation	0.188*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019	
	N	156	156

Table 5: Correlations Age vs Justification Explains:

Table fig 5 explains the value of correlation between the Age vs Justification value will be.188* which is having stronger significance at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed). Thus, different age category of people has different opinions that police have various justifications for police encounters, so that it has stronger significance.

Table 6: Correlations Necessary Tool vs Without Approval

		Necessary Tool	Without Approval
Necessary Tool	Pearson Correlation	1	0.217*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.007
	N	156	156
Without Approval	Pearson Correlation	0.217*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	
	N	156	156

Table 6: Correlations Necessary Tool vs Without Approval

Table fig.6 explains the value of the correlation between the Necessary tool vs without approval value will be.217**, which is having stronger significance at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed). The young adults say that police encounter is a necessary tool to control crime even without approval from the judicial system during critical situations so that it has stronger significance.

5. Suggestions

1) Increase of installing body cameras in the uniform of police officers to avoid fake encounters, because it's not widespread equally. Some states and cities only adopted it on an experimental basis.
2) Improve training knowledge of police officers. Some officers directly engaged in police encounters without proper reasons for the encounters.
3) The justice system also investigates the encounter cases compulsorily, whether the encounter is done for self - defense or other reasons.
4) Conduct programs for police and public working together for better relationship and it helps to avoid negative outcomes of each other.
5) Conduct awareness programs for improving knowledge of young adults because some people do not have proper knowledge about police encounters and reasons for encounters.

6) Ensuring transparency and accountability among police will improve police and public bonding.
7) Police officers should treat people equally because this is also a reason people have a low level of trust.
8) The media also try to spread the real facts without exaggerations because it also makes people fear and influence public opinion about law enforcement officers.

6. Discussion

The results of this research point out wide ranging approaches young adults toward police contacts and varying levels of confidence in the police. While some people see police encounters as an essential means of crime control. Media influence is also important, according to most people, in forming their views on news and media. Some of the respondents feel police encounters are being done for reasons for preventing crime, political influence, self - defense claims, and misuse of power are becoming widespread. Even though a small percentage of people will entirely trust police or mistrust the police, some of the participants have neutral opinions about law enforcement officers. Research explains that some people believe police encounters ensure justice when legal rules fail, while other people think justice only goes through the legal system. These discoveries point to the necessity for more legal oversight, public awareness, and transparency about police interactions. Strengthening police accountability and improving public relations could close the trust gap and solve worries about the misuse of power. Long - term policy changes and legal forms changes should be investigated in future studies to assure law enforcement operations meet human rights and justice regulations. Previous studies will mainly focus on particular encounters done for racial discrimination, but my study focuses on improving both police and public relationship better through analysing young adults' opinion about police and the trust level of police. Limitations such that some of the respondents were not ready to cooperate with this survey and some respondents did not feel comfortable providing genuine answers due to fear.

7. Conclusion

The study title is "AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ANALYZING YOUNG ADULTS' OPINION ABOUT POLICE ENCOUNTER IN CHENNAI". This study aims to find the main reason for the factors influencing public opinion about law enforcement agencies due to police encounters. This indicates that most people's opinions are influenced by the media. Due to that media influences the peoples will be changed as negative. Some people also say they are not influenced by the media, and some have a neutral opinion. Even though the technologies are developed, the people do not have proper knowledge about the reason why the police encounter will happen. Some individuals also support police encounters due to the criminal's crime record, and few people share the opinion that the justice system is very important for avoiding fake encounters. This study explains that equal levels of people will trust law enforcement agencies, and some individuals will trust the law enforcement officers, so it is necessary to improve the police and public relationship program.

8. Future Scope

- This research can help to create more productive approaches for law enforcement to connect and communicate with young adults.
- The findings can be applied to establish awareness programs that educate both police officers and youth about each other's opinions.
- To improve the safety and respect of interactions, police procedures and policies may be adjusted according to the feedback collected.
- This study may encourage further research on the views of law enforcement among different age demographics, regions, or communities.
- To promote understanding, the results can be adopted into law, psychology, or social studies courses at academic institutions.

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Author Profile

S. T. Pharthiban*
Role: Author
Affiliation: Department of Criminology and Forensic Science, Dr. M. GR. University of Research and Educational Institution, Chennai - 600095.
Email: pharthiyamini[at]gmail.com
Research Interests: Digital Forensics, crime scene investigation techniques.

Priyadharshini Jayabalan**
Role: Corresponding Author
Affiliation: Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology and Forensic Science, Center of Excellence in Digital Forensics, Perungudi, Chennai - 600089.
Email: prijayabalan1512[at]gmail.com
Research Interests: Active research in Victimology, Gender Studies, and Ethnographic research.
Notable contributions: Received a fully funded scholarship for the Taiwan Experience Education Program at National Chung Cheng University in 2024 to work on projects for the treatment of domestic violence offenders and sexual offenders. Won gold medal for the best scientific research paper at the 14th Asian Criminological Conference in 2023.