Encouraging and discouraging factors to crime reporting in South Africa: a survey of residents’ crime reporting behaviour in Mthatha South Africa police service precinct

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore issues concerning dispositions of crime-reporting behaviour of both witnesses and victims and comes against a backdrop of a rise in crime levels in South Africa. The study specifically examined the discouraging and encouraging factors for crime reporting in Mthatha area in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. A quantitative methodology was adopted, wherein a closed-ended questionnaire was used to gather data from 120 respondents. The result of the analysis revealed police absence of loyalty to citizens, lack of support for victims and lack of follow-up on reported cases as the major factors which discourage citizens from reporting crimes to the police. Further regression analysis confirmed gender, race, location of respondents and socio-economic status as significant predictors that influence discouragement. As regards the encouraging factors, overall, the citizens’ collective responsibility for safe communities was viewed as the major drive for reporting crimes to the police. From the findings, it can be concluded that poor police-public relations is the main driver for non-reporting of crime. The study recommends strengthening of police-public relations in order to encourage citizens to report crime.

Subjects: Class - Crime and Society; Crime Control - Criminology; Criminal Justice - Criminology

Keywords: crime; crime reporting; demographic factors; satisfaction; socio-economic factors

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
This paper explores the encouraging and discouraging factors of crime reporting in a nation that has been characterised by high crime levels. Given that effective crime control policies should be underpinned by accurate crime statistics, the paper therefore sheds more light on the factors which impede or promote the attainment of accurate crime statistics. Importantly, the paper shows how poor police-public relations, coupled by inefficiency, impact on citizens’ disposition to report crime.
1. Introduction
Crime and insecurity are major challenges in African countries, threatening both national development and individuals’ quality of life. One of the principal tasks of any government is the controlling of crime. For this to occur, crime needs to come to the attention of the criminal justice system. There has been a growing interest in rates of reporting to the police worldwide and it has been noted that the costs of unreported crime can have many repercussions on both the victims and society as a whole (Wambua, 2015). In this regard, a victim’s or witness’ decision to report victimisation to the police is very important. However, many offenders will never be found and prosecuted as long as some of the criminal victimisations are not reported. A well-known fact is that a large proportion of crime remains unrecorded (Harrendorf et al., 2010). Moreover, it is said that only half of all incidents of crime in many industrialised countries are reported to the police (Bouten et al., 2002), which may be worse in developing countries like South Africa, where criminal justice apparatus are less sophisticated. A study on unreported victimisations not reported to the police in the United States during the period 2006 to 2010 showed that the highest percentages of unreported crime were among household theft (67%), followed by rape and sexual assault at (65%) (Langton et al., 2012). In South Africa, though actual statistics on non-reported crime may not be available, previous researchers have also raised concern over non-reporting of crime to the police (Lancaster, 2013; National Home Security Month (NHSM), 2016). Given that any meaningful crime control strategy should be underpinned by accurate statistics, Goudriaan (2006) notes the emphasis that has been given by some governments to stimulate crime reporting.

This study evaluated citizens’ disposition towards reporting crime in South Africa’s Mthatha policing precinct. The study was guided by two research questions, namely: (1) what are the discouraging factors for crime reporting in Mthatha area?; and (2) what are the encouraging factors for crime reporting in Mthatha policing area? Thus, the study provides fundamental and relative explanations of citizens’ willingness to report crimes to the police. An appreciation of the underlying reasons for non-reporting of crimes to the police will help the police departments to improve their relationship with citizens, and ultimately promoting the reporting of crimes by the citizens. Moreover, the researchers believe that this study contributes to limited literature on citizens’ desire to report crime to the police. The study also comes against a backdrop of a rise in criminal activities in South Africa, in general, and in the Eastern Cape Province, in particular. For example, the data released by Statistics SA (2017/Stats, 2018) shows that a wave of violent crimes continues to sweep through the Eastern Cape. The statistics revealed a rise in the following crimes: murder (up 5.2%); attempted murders (up 5.8%); sexual assault (up 0.5%) robbery at residential premises (up 0.6%), robbery at non-residential (up 1.1%) and car hijackings (up 4.6%) (Stats, 2018). In these cases, Mthatha policing precinct is marked as one of the notorious areas in the provincial police command.

2. Theoretical conception and brief literature review

2.1. Crime reporting and the rational choice theory
General crime reporting disposition lies with the assumption derived from the rational choice theory by Becker (1976), which states that individuals use their self-interests to make choices that will provide them with the greatest benefit. In this vein, the decision to report criminal incidents is a complex process involving a consideration of both costs and benefits (Bowles et al., 2009; Kaukinen, 2002; Skogan, 1984). According to the rational choice theory, victims who find the benefit of reporting to be greater than the associated cost will be willing to call the police (Bowles et al., 2009). On the other hand, victims who consider reporting crime to be costlier than beneficial will be discouraged from making the event known to the police (Kaukinen, 2002). According to Kaukinen (2002), crime victims decide to contact the police based on their rational assessment of the event. For instance, victims who believe that the incident was minor will never call the police (Kaukinen, 2002). The costs associated with reporting crime to the police can be enormous and may include the possibility of retaliation from the perpetrator, especially when the
incident involves domestic violence; shame and embarrassment; stigmatization of the victim; and a challenging trial process (F.D. Boateng, 2016; Lancaster, 2013; Papp et al., 2019). There are several benefits victims may enjoy from reporting a crime to the police. According to victimology experts, the benefits may include receiving protection from authorities; receiving treatment from appropriate agencies and departments; and preventing future victimisation by helping to get the offender arrested and punished (Bowles et al., 2009; F. D. Boateng, 2015).

2.2. Police-community relations and crime reporting
One important aspect that has a bearing on crime reportage is the nature of the relationship between the police and the citizens (F.D. Boateng, 2016; Nivette & Akoens, 2019; Yukel & Tepe, 2013). Such relationship is based on attitude and plays a significant role in determining one’s behaviour, including the willingness to report crime to the police (F.D. Boateng, 2016). Attitudes, on the other hand, are behavioural tendencies that have an inclination to instigate people to act in certain ways (Cotton, 2004; Morris & Maisto, 2007). As a construct, attitude is defined as a behavioural tendency to act in certain ways towards social control mechanisms, and in this case, towards reporting crime to the police. The main assumption, however, is that negative or positive attitudes towards the police are formed based on four basic elements that describe the domain of attitudes, namely: trust in the police; satisfaction with the police; fear of the police due to negative personal experiences with the police; and confidence in the police (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fazio, 1990; Morris & Maisto, 2007). Research has shown that perceived negative experiences with the police may be harmful for victims’ willingness to share information with the police (Goudriaan et al., 2006; Koster et al., 2020). Conversely, studies have also reported that people with more favourable perceptions of the police are more likely to report crimes (F. Boateng, 2018; Bolger et al., 2020; Watkins, 2005). Thus, when citizens have better perceptions of the police, they are more likely to cooperate with the police in creating a safer environment within communities. Moreover, citizen satisfaction has been found to promote community buy-in and combined efforts between the police and the public in addressing both criminal and non-criminal matters (Merenda et al., 2020).

Research has also shown that attitude towards the police is shaped by a number of factors. One important factor is the contact between police officers and both the victims of crimes and ordinary citizens (Koster et al., 2020; Merenda et al., 2020). Studies have revealed that residents with informal police contacts have more positive perceptions towards the police than residents with formal contacts (Ashcroft et al., 2003; Bolger et al., 2020). A study by Dai and Jiang (2016) established that the citizen’s dissatisfaction in a direct police encounter is one of the strongest predictors of satisfaction with the police. Other studies have identified fair treatment to both the victims and the citizens as the most important factor related to perceptions of the police (F. D. Boateng, 2015; F.D. Boateng, 2016; Wells, 2007). In other studies, police effectiveness, that it, how well the police perform their general and specific duties, was considered as instrumental (Bradford et al., 2014; Diepu & Obioha, 2020; T. Tyler, 2006; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). Procedural justice and lawfulness of police actions were also considered as important factors in other studies (Koster et al., 2020; Nivette & Akoens, 2019). As regards procedural justice, there are four elements that characterize a procedurally just treatment: voice, neutrality, respect and trustworthiness (Koster et al., 2020; T.R. Tyler, 1997).

2.3. Demographic characteristics and crime reporting
Demographic factors have been shown to have an impact on citizens’ attitude towards the police in general, and on crime reporting, in particular (Ashbaugh & Cornell, 2008; Bolger et al., 2020; Greensburg & Ruback, 1992). Amongst the demographic factors’ influence on attitude towards the police and crime reporting, gender has been one of the most researched variables. Gender has been found in several studies to be a statistically significant predictor of satisfaction with the police and crime reporting disposition (Bolger et al., 2020; Frank et al., 2005; Greensburg & Ruback, 1992; Schafer et al., 2003). In this context, research shows that males are less likely to report crime to the police compared to females (Ashbaugh & Cornell, 2008; Bickman, 1976; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Skogan, 1984). Age has also been regarded as a significant predictor of attitudes
towards the police and crime reporting (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005; Cheng, 2015). Empirical evidence shows that young people are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward the police (Bickman, 1976; Goudriaan, 2006); hence, they are less likely to report crimes to the police than older people (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).

Researchers have also argued that race is a strong factor that shapes people’s attitudes towards the police. In fact, some previous studies have considered race to be among the main determinants of attitudes toward the police (Bolger et al., 2020; Cheng, 2015; Weitzer, 2000). The socio-economic status of the community members has also been shown to be a significant factor on crime reporting disposition (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Goudriaan, 2006), and economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods have been shown to display negative attitudes towards the police (Weitzer, 2000). Those in affluent locations have a higher propensity to report crimes to the police (Goudriaan, 2006; Skogan, 1976). There has also been a view that over-policing of economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods due to high crime rate will result in negative attitudes towards the police (Skogan, 1984; Weitzer, 2000). This negative attitude will in turn negatively affect the crime reporting behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Population of study, sample and sampling techniques

The study was conducted in Mthatha policing area. Mthatha is one of the most populated towns in the Eastern Cape Province, with a population of 210,783. Mthatha is the main town of King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSD), and the capital of OR Tambo District Municipality. The area is home to people of different races who include Africans, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The data for this study were collected from a sample of 120 respondents who voluntarily participated in the study and who were 18 years and above, and including all races. The object of selecting such a population size was to decrease the extent of the sampling error. Nevertheless, a tolerable sample size for Mthatha population would be 377 respondents using Raosoft sample size calculator for a total population 210,783, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. A large sample usually increases the chances that the sample will have similar characteristics as those of the population from which it is drawn, but the researchers chose to reduce the sample size to 120 respondents because of manageability and affordability in terms of costs. Additionally, it is the fact that not all sections of Mthatha were targeted. While the major limitation of this study lies in the seemingly low sample size, the target population was adequate according to Cohen et al. (2005) where a sample of approximately 384 is recommended for an area with a population of about one million or more.

A quantitative research design was used for this study. The researchers employed stratified random sampling, whereby Mthatha is stratified into six areas that comprise of 3 (middle class) suburbs and 3 (lower middle class) townships. The researchers then randomly selected a sample of 20 respondents in each stratum by identifying 4 streets in each stratum, then randomly selecting 5 respondents from 5 households in each street to make a total of 20 respondents in each of the strata. This process can be further explained by illustrating the steps:

(a) Selecting an area—Suburb: Southridge Park, Sdawdwa View and Southernwood; and Township: New Payne, Old Payne, & Nthlekseni Location.
(b) Selecting streets (20 streets from each of the above 6 areas)
(c) Selecting households (120 households)
(d) Selecting a household head or any adult that could respond to the research questions or selecting adults randomly from different streets. Random selection of adults from different streets (without actually invading households) was employed due to the anticipated absence of potential respondents from the household because of work-related issues or temporary relocations.
4. Instruments and data analysis

This study made use of a survey. A closed-ended questionnaire was used and was divided into three sections. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with demographic characteristics of respondents, whilst section B dealt with factors that discourage reporting of crimes. Section C dealt with factors that encourage crime reporting to the police. Independent variables were the demographic traits such as gender, race, location, socio-economic status, level of education, marital status and religion. It therefore follows the factors which discourage or encourage crime reporting constituted the dependent variables. The questionnaires were administered with the help of three research assistants and the respondents were given a period of 1 week to complete the questionnaires.

A reliability analysis that was carried out on factors influencing citizens and victims’ decision not to report crime (discouraging factors) comprised of 8 items. The test result in Table 1 showed an overall Cronbach Alpha of 0.825 and all items were found reliable at a range above the acceptable 0.5 threshold. Therefore, all the items were satisfactory.

A reliability analysis that was also carried out on factors influencing citizens’ and victims’ dispositions to report crime (encouraging factors) comprised of 9 items. The test results in Table 2 showed an overall Cronbach Alpha of 0.856 and all the items were found reliable at a range above the acceptable 0.5 threshold. Therefore, we can conclude that all the items were satisfactory.

Respondents were asked to indicate their responses on a 4-point Likert Scale. Responses were fed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis, with data being presented in tables to reveal descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. In addition to the descriptive statistics on the findings, the researchers also performed factor analysis and linear regression analysis to ascertain the prominent factors and the determinants of citizens’ disposition to report crime to the police or not to report.

5. Research findings

5.1. Discouraging factors of crime reporting

As depicted on Table 3, the fact that the police have no loyalty to citizens had the largest mean statistic of 3.71 ± 0.474, with almost all the respondents in agreement with the assertion. Thus, more respondents view the police as having no loyalty towards the citizens. This was closely followed by the opinion that the police are not very supportive to the victims of crime, with a mean statistic of 3.66 ± 0.494. The item “If I call the police to report a crime, I would prefer to remain anonymous?”

| Table 1. Reliability on discouraging factors for crime reporting | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| The police would not believe me.                              | .766             |
| If my house was burglarized and report, the police would not take it seriously enough to investigate. | .775             |
| If I was a victim of crime, I would not expect the police to do a follow-up investigation. | .785             |
| I think the police are not very supportive of victims of crime. | .802             |
| I think the police are not approachable.                      | .779             |
| The police have no loyalty to citizens.                       | .809             |
| I would not report a crime to the police if the criminal had already seen me. | .827             |
| If I call the police to report a crime, I would prefer to remain anonymous. | .868             |
had a mean statistic of 3.48 ± 0.501. This shows that most of the citizens would not want their identity to be revealed when they report a crime to the police. With regard to the item “If I was a victim of a crime, the police would not do a follow-up investigation”, an overwhelming majority agreed and the assertion had a mean statistic of 3.23 ± 0.704. Thus, more respondents believe that the police would not do a follow-up investigation when they report a crime.

With regard the statement “If my house was burglarized and I reported the crime to the police, the police would not take it seriously enough to investigate”, majority of the respondents were inclined to agree and the assertion had a mean statistic of 2.99 ± 0.739. The assertion that police are not approachable had a mean statistic of 2.97 ± 0.733, while the statement, “If I were to report a crime to the police, they would not believe me” had a mean statistic of 2.75 ± 0.781. The assertion that “I would not report a crime to the police if the criminal had already seen me?” had the lowest mean statistic of 1.98 ± 0.850, with majority of the respondents in disagreement with the assertion.

### 5.2. Factor analysis on discouraging factors of crime reporting

Furthermore, factor analysis was performed to establish the relative importance of each factor. The results present the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy (KMO) which amounts to 0.834, exceeding the recommended value of 0.5. This is a satisfactory factor analysis; the results of the test results were chi-square = 440.036, df = 28 and the significance value of Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is (sig = 0.000).

Table 4 shows the combined results of total variance explained and factor loading for discouraging factors of crime reporting. Out of the eight components considered, only seven indicators meet the threshold of ≥0.3 acceptance level in the principal component analysis in explaining factors influencing citizens’ and victims’ dispositions of unlikelihood to report crimes to the police. The component with the biggest value is “If my house was burglarized and I report, the police would not take it seriously enough to investigate” with a value of 0.842, accounts for over 51% of variance in explaining discouraging factors. This context is followed by citizens’ experience that police will not believe the complainant and that the police would not do a follow-up investigation. We may thus conclude that many respondents believe that when their homes are burglarized, the police would not take it seriously enough to investigate. Consequently, many may not report such crimes. This can also apply in other forms of crime, including violent property offences; sexual offences; non-violent crimes against a person, etc. This means that if the police do not take reported crimes serious enough to investigate them, it is less likely for citizens to report them.

| Table 2. Reliability on encouraging factors for crime reporting |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Cronbach’s Alpha**                                        |
| Reporting crime to find justice                             | .858 |
| Reporting crime to recover lost property                    | .827 |
| Reporting crime to have a safer community                   | .847 |
| Reporting crime if the crime was serious                     | .859 |
| Reporting offence trusting the police will solve the case    | .826 |
| Reporting crime to stop it from recurring                   | .823 |
| Reporting offences for victim to have their dignity restored | .840 |
| Reporting crime to stop police corruption                   | .831 |
| Reporting crime because it is the right thing to do so       | .851 |

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https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2002542

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Table 3. Responses on discouraging factors of reporting crime to the police

| Discouraging factors of reporting crime to the police | SD | D | A | SA | Total | Mean | SD | V | Chi-Square | df | Sig |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|-------|------|----|---|-------------|----|-----|
| If I were to report a crime to the police, they would not believe me. | 2 (1.7) | 49 (40.8) | 46 (38.3) | 23 (19.2) | 120 (100) | 2.75 | .781 | 0.609 | 48.333 | 3 | 0.000 |
| If my house was burglarized and I reported the crime to the police, the police would not take it seriously enough to investigate. | 1 (0.8) | 30 (25.0) | 58 (48.3) | 31 (25.8) | 120 (100) | 2.99 | .739 | 0.546 | 54.200 | 3 | 0.000 |
| If I was a victim of a crime, the police would not do a follow-up investigation. | – | 19 (15.8) | 55 (45.8) | 46 (38.3) | 120 (100) | 3.23 | .704 | 0.495 | 17.550 | 2 | 0.000 |
| I think the police are not very supportive of victims of crime. | – | 1 (0.8) | 39 (32.5) | 80 (66.7) | 120 (100) | 3.66 | .494 | 0.244 | 78.050 | 2 | 0.000 |
| I think the police are not approachable. | 1 (0.8) | 31 (25.8) | 59 (49.2) | 29 (24.2) | 120 (100) | 2.97 | .733 | 0.537 | 56.133 | 3 | 0.000 |
| The police have no loyalty to citizens. | – | 1 (0.8) | 33 (27.5) | 86 (71.7) | 120 (100) | 3.71 | .474 | 0.225 | 92.150 | 2 | 0.000 |

(Continued)
### Table 3. (Continued)

| Discouraging factors of reporting crime to the police | SD    | D      | A    | SA | Total | Mean | SD  | V    | Chi-Square | df | Sig     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|------|----|-------|------|-----|------|------------|----|---------|
| I would not report a crime to the police if the criminal had already seen me. | 38 (31.7) | 52 (43.3) | 24 (20.0) | 6 (5.0) | 120 (100) | 1.98 | .850 | 0.722 | 38.667 | 3  | 0.000   |
| If I call the police to report a crime, I would prefer to remain anonymous. | -- | -- | 63 (52.5) | 57 (47.5) | 120 (100) | 3.48 | .501 | 0.251 | 0.300 | 1  | 0.584   |
5.3. Determinants of discouraging factors of crime reporting

Table 5 presents the result of a regression analysis that was performed to estimate how selected social profiles (gender, age, race, location of respondents, socio-economic status, level of education, employment status, marital status and religion) influence the factors associated with those influencing citizens and victims not to report crime (discouraging factors). The model summary revealed the following $R = .523^2$, $R^2 = .273$, Adj $R^2 = .214$, $F = 4.591$ and $Sig = .000$. This shows a level of significance and fitness of purpose.

It is evident that out of nine factors, only four emerged as significant predictors of thought process betas. These predictors are gender (0.001), race (0.043), location of respondents (0.013) and socio-economic status (0.018). This means that Africans, males, and residents of upper middle class areas are more discouraged to report crime to the police than whites, females and residents of lower middle class areas. Quite different from area of residence, at individual class level with the case of socio-economic status, the lower the class is, the more unlikely crime will be reported because they are more discouraged and less empowered.
Table 5. Regression result of the impact of social profile on discouraging factors of crime reporting

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | Correlations |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|------|--------------|
|      |                             |                           |   |      |              |
|      | B                           | Std. Error                | Beta | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1    | (Constant)                  | 3.188                     | .244 | 13.062 | .000      |       |      |
|      | Gender                      | .274                      | .079 | .305   | 3.465    | .001  | .333 |
|      | Age                         | .054                      | .059 | .084   | .916     | .362  | -.037 |
|      | Race of the respondent      | -.110                     | .054 | -.193  | -2.052   | .043  | -.145 |
|      | Location of the respondent  | .073                      | .029 | .276   | 2.519    | .013  | .063 |
|      | Socio-economic status       | -.237                     | .099 | -.339  | -2.404   | .018  | -.285 |
|      | Level of education          | -.043                     | .066 | -.076  | -.648    | .518  | -.155 |
|      | Employment status           | -.047                     | .044 | -.111  | -1.075   | .285  | -.221 |
|      | Marital status              | .014                      | .028 | .049   | .481     | .632  | -.163 |
|      | Religion                    | -.018                     | .039 | -.041  | -.455    | .650  | -.109 |

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https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2002542
| Factors encouraging reporting of crime to the police | SD  | D   | A   | SA  | Total | Mean | SD  | V   | Chi-Square | Df  | Sig |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|
| I report crime to find justice.                   | 1   | 6   | 74  | 39  | 120   | 3.26 | .587| 0.344| 114.467    | 3   | 0.000|
| I report crime to recover lost property.          | 13  | 41  | 48  | 18  | 120   | 2.59 | .874| 0.765| 29.267     | 3   | 0.000|
| I report crime to have a safer community.         |    | 3   | 70  | 47  | 120   | 3.37 | .533| 0.285| 57.950     | 2   | 0.000|
| I report crime if the crime was serious.          |    | 1   | 49  | 70  | 120   | 3.57 | .513| 0.263| 62.550     | 2   | 0.000|
| I report offences trusting the police will solve the case. | 16  | 57  | 42  | 5   | 120   | 2.30 | .751| 0.565| 56.467     | 3   | 0.000|
| I report crime to stop it from recurring.         | 24  | 64  | 24  | 8   | 120   | 2.13 | .809| 0.654| 57.067     | 3   | 0.000|
| I report offences for victims to have their dignity restored. | 2   | 19  | 72  | 27  | 120   | 3.03 | .673| 0.453| 89.267     | 3   | 0.000|
| I report crime to stop police corruption.         | 28  | 63  | 20  | 9   | 120   | 2.08 | .836| 0.699| 54.467     | 3   | 0.000|
| It is the right thing to do so.                   |    |    | 46  | 74  | 120   | 3.62 | .488| 0.238| 6.533      | 1   | 0.011|

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https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2002542
Table 7. Variance explained and component matrix of encouraging factors of crime reporting

| Component                                                                 | Initial Eigenvalues | Factor loading |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                                                                           | Total               | % of Variance  | Cumulative % | Component Matrix |
| I report crime to stop it from recurring.                                 | 4.230               | 46.996         | 46.996       | .823             |
| I report offences trusting the police will solve the case.                | 1.135               | 12.609         | 59.604       | .807             |
| I report crime to recover lost property.                                 | .866                | 9.626          | 69.231       | .800             |
| I report crime to stop police corruption.                                | .709                | 7.879          | 77.110       | .772             |
| I report offences for victims to have their dignity restored.            | .610                | 6.774          | 83.884       | .702             |
| I report crime to have a safer community.                                | .543                | 6.030          | 89.914       | .630             |
| It is the right thing to do so.                                          | .398                | 4.418          | 94.332       | .585             |
| I report crime to find justice.                                          | .329                | 3.656          | 97.988       | .476             |
| I report crime if the crime was serious.                                 | .181                | 2.012          | 100.000      | .454             |

6. Factors encouraging crime reporting

Respondents were given some assertions on the major drives for reporting crimes to the police and the assertions are indicated on Table 6. The statement “I report crime because it is the right thing to do so” was viewed by the respondents as the major drive for reporting crime with all the respondents inclined to agree with the assertion. The assertion had a mean statistic of 3.62 ± 0.488, thus gravitating towards strongly agree. Thus, citizens generally feel that it is the right thing to report crimes to the police. This was followed by the assertion “I report crime if the crime was serious”, with a mean statistic of 3.57 ± 0.263, which also showed a gravitation towards strongly agree. Thus, citizens consider the seriousness of the crime before they make a decision to make a report to the police. The assertion “I report crime to have a safer community” had a mean statistic of 3.37 ± 0.533, showing that majority of the respondents agreed to the assertion. The assertion “I report crime to find justice” had a mean statistic of 3.26 ± 0.587.

The assertion “I report offences for victims to have their dignity restored” had a mean statistic of 3.03 ± 0.673. With regard to the assertion “I report crime to recover lost property”, the mean statistic was 2.59 ± 0.874. With the statement “I report offences trusting the police will solve the case”, the mean statistic was 2.30 ± 0.751, which shows gravitation towards disagree. Majority of the respondents also disagreed with the assertions “I report crime to stop it from recurring” and “I report crime to stop police corruption”, and the assertions had mean statistics of 2.13 ± 0.809 and 2.08 ± 0.836, respectively.

6.1. Factor analysis on encouraging factors of crime reporting

Furthermore, factor analysis was performed to establish the relative importance of each factor. The results present the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy (KMO) which
### Table 8. Regression on the encouraging factors of crime reporting

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Correlations |
|-------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|------|--------------|
|       | B                          | Std. Error                | Beta |     | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1     | (Constant)                 | 3.128                     | .259 | 12.056 | .000 |           |       |
|       | Gender                     | .016                      | .084 | .017 | .186 | .853 | -.086 | .018 | .015 |
|       | Age                        | -.093                     | .063 | -.138 | -1.483 | .141 | -.063 | -.140 | -.123 |
|       | Race of the respondent     | .077                      | .057 | .130 | 1.352 | .179 | -.007 | .128 | .112 |
|       | Location of the respondent | -.173                     | .031 | -.633 | -5.651 | .000 | -.397 | -.474 | -.470 |
|       | Socio-economic status      | .179                      | .105 | .246 | 1.705 | .091 | -.063 | .160 | .142 |
|       | Level of education         | .046                      | .070 | .079 | .654 | .514 | -.049 | .062 | .054 |
|       | Employment status          | -.041                     | .047 | -.092 | -0.876 | .383 | -.002 | -.083 | -.073 |
|       | Marital status             | -.002                     | .030 | -.009 | -0.082 | .935 | -.026 | -.008 | -.007 |
|       | Religion                   | .034                      | .041 | .075 | .013 | .418 | .027 | .077 | .068 |
amounts to 0.850, exceeding the recommended value of 0.5. This is a satisfactory factor analysis; the results of the test results were (chi-square = 433.859, df = 36 and the significance value of Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is (sig = 0.000) which means the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

Table 7 shows the combined results of variance explained and component matrix from factor loading output. The component “Reporting crime to stop it from recurring” has a total greater than 1 which is 4.230 and accounts for 49.996% variance of factors influencing citizens’ and victims’ dispositions to report crime. It also has the highest corresponding matrix of 0.823 in the factor loading, out of the nine factors considered. This means that to stop crime from reoccurring is the most important encouraging factor to crime reporting. This is followed by the component “Reporting offences trusting the police will solve the case”, which explained 12.609% of encouraging disposition to crime reporting.

6.2. Determinants of encouraging factors of crime reporting

Results of regression analysis (Table 8) shows estimate on how selected social profiles (gender, age, race, location of respondents, socio-economic status, level of education, employment status, marital status and religion) influence encouraging factors to report crime to the police. The model summary revealed the following R = .491*, R Square = .241, Adj Sq = .179, F = 3.875 and Sig = .000, which shows a level of significance.

It is evident that out of nine factors, only one (Location of respondent) emerged as significant predictor with a negative beta that contributed the most in explaining the encouraging factors for citizens and victims to report crimes to the police. This means that people living in townships/locations are more encouraged to report crime than in other places, as this can be attributed to the fact that crime is high in those areas. Also, females, non-Africans, people of higher socio-economic status and more educated are more encouraged to report crime. The negative betas that are age, employment status and marital status denote that those that are younger, those with no employment and those that are not married tend to be more encouraged to report crime than those who are married and employed.

7. Discussion

From the findings, it can be seen that there are several factors which discourage citizens to report crime to the police. Chief among these factors is the view that the police have no loyalty to citizens. Importantly, loyalty to citizens is a significant indicator of positive police-public relations. While previous studies have shown the significance of police public relations in crime reporting disposition (F.D. Boateng, 2016; Nivette & Akoens, 2019; Yuksel & Tepe, 2013), it can thus be argued that there is a bad relationship between the police and the public, resulting in the public questioning the loyalty of the police to the citizens. As argued by Goudriaan et al. (2006) and Koster et al. (2020), perceived negative experiences with the police may be harmful for victims’ willingness to share information with the police. Another significant factor was the view that the police are not supportive of the victims of crime. This finding resonates with F. D. Boateng’s (2015); F.D. Boateng (2016) and Wells (2007) findings that identified fair treatment to both the victims and the citizens as the most important factor related to perceptions of the police. It therefore follows that, if the victims do not receive the necessary support from the police, they will not report future crimes to the police. Closely related to absence of victim support is the view that the police would not follow up on investigations. Lack of follow-up on investigations will impact negatively on the police effectiveness and this was also identified in previous studies, specifically on how the South African Police Services deal with domestic violence cases (Dlepu & Obioha, 2020) and elsewhere (Bradford et al., 2014; T. Tyler, 2006; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005) to be a significant factor on citizens’ decision to report crime.

A factor analysis of the discouraging factors for crime reporting additionally reveals the view that “If my house was burglarized and I reported the crime to the police, the police would not take
it seriously enough to investigate” as the important factor, followed by the view that “If I were to report a crime to the police, they would not believe me. These views could be based on lack of trust in the police, dissatisfaction with the police service and lack of confidence in the police service, all of which were considered by previous researchers (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fazio, 1990; Koster et al., 2020; Morris & Maisto, 2007) as key elements which shape negative attitudes towards the police. Ultimately, these negative attitudes will negatively impact on crime reporting disposition. Another important observation in this study is the majority of the respondents’ view that they would rather prefer to remain anonymous when they report a crime to the police. This can also be attributed to a lack of trust in the police service, as well as a general negative attitude towards the police. Ultimately, this will have a negative impact on the citizens’ decision to report crimes to the police. A look at the discouraging factors largely points to poor police-public relations as the main driver of citizens’ non-reporting of crime to the police. The challenge is compounded by the perceived ineffectiveness of the police, as evidenced by the view that they neither follow-up on investigations nor offer victim support.

A regression analysis on the impact of demographic factors on discouraging factors for crime reporting revealed four significant predictors, namely: gender, race, location of respondents and socio-economic status. From this study, males tend to be discouraged in reporting crime to the police. The dominance of gender as a discouraging factor confirms a long-standing empirical finding (for example: Bolger et al., 2020; Frank et al., 2005; Greensburg & Ruback, 1992; Schafer et al., 2003) that gender plays an important role when it comes to a decision on whether to report a crime or not. The finding on the significance of race on the reporting of crime corresponds with previous researchers’ (David & Henderson; Bolger et al., 2020; Cheng, 2015; Weitzer, 2000) view that race is one of the main determinants of attitudes towards the police. In the present research, Africans were found to be more discouraged to report crime than people of other races. The frustration that follows when Africans report crime to the police may not be disconnected with widespread riots and demonstrations against police in the country. It follows that, given the racially mixed-nature of the South African population, race also becomes a significant determinant in shaping the citizens’ attitude towards the police in general, and reporting of crimes to the police, in particular. As regards the finding on the location of respondents, previous researchers have shown that over-policing of economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods due to high crime rate will result in negative attitudes towards the police (Skogan, 1984; Weitzer, 2000), thus diminishing their propensity to report crimes to the police. It therefore follows that that high-income persons are slightly more likely to report crimes to the police compared to low-income persons. Even though this has been confirmed in the present study, the findings seem to paint a slightly different picture, as economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods were previously found to be having a higher propensity to report crimes to the police. With regard to the socio-economic status, Africans are seen as economic disadvantaged. This can be traced from the fact that Africans were once marginalised during the Apartheid era. Although economically disadvantaged neighbourhounds are more likely to form negative attitudes toward the police, they are however more prone to crime and becoming victims of crime, thus explaining their higher disposition to report crimes to the police. The location of respondents and socio-economic status were also confirmed as significant factors in previous empirical research (for example: Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Goudriaan, 2006). The emerging scenario of a mixed bag of disparity between the findings of the present study and what exists in the literature calls for further investigation.

Despite the presence of the discouraging factors to report crime, a look at the encouraging factors for reporting crime paints a positive picture on the overall crime reporting disposition. Given the finding from majority of the respondents that they report crimes because it is the right thing to do so, this shows the citizens’ collective responsibility for safe communities. This also resonates with the views that they report crime to have a safer community and to seek justice. Another factor which encourages crime reporting is the seriousness of the crime, which ranked second in terms of significance. This finding resonates with the rational choice theory, in which researchers (F.D. Boateng, 2016; Kaukinen, 2002; Papp et al., 2019) highlighted that citizens consider the costs
and benefits of reporting crime before making a report. It therefore follows that the more the seriousness, the greater the propensity to report the crime. Conversely, and as confirmed by Kaukinen (2002), the minor the crime is the less the likelihood of reporting to the police. Moreover, the revelation by Stats (2018) that there was a rise in violent crimes in the Eastern Cape Province possibly explains the finding on the significance of the seriousness of the offence. Ultimately, the findings on the encouraging factors resonate with the rational choice theory, as citizens find more benefits in reporting crime to the police. A factor analysis further reveals the component “Reporting crime to stop it from recurring” as the factor with the most importance in influencing the citizen's predisposition to report crime. Again, this resonates with the communities' collective responsibility for a safer community.

A regression analysis of the encouraging factors confirmed that location of respondent emerged as the significant predictor for citizens and victims to report crimes to the police. Whilst previous studies have shown that those in affluent locations have a higher propensity to report crimes to the police (for example: Goudriaan, 2006; Skogan, 1984), the negative beta on the present findings means that people living in townships/locations are more encouraged to report crime than in other places, as this can be attributed to the fact that crime is high in those areas. Moreover, the negative beta on age reveals that those that are younger have a higher propensity and encouragement to report crimes, thus disputing previous findings (for example: Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005a; Goudriaan, 2006) that older people have a higher propensity to report crimes than younger people. Similarly, the negative betas on employment status and marital status denote that those that are not employed or those that are not married tend to be more encouraged to report crime than those who are employed or married. These findings on their own point to the emerging reality that the unemployed also have a reasonable stake in the protection of life and property in the society by exhibiting an encouragement to report crime to the police.

8. Implications of the study and recommendations
The study reveals the reasons for non-reporting of crime in an environment that has been characterised by high crime levels. While several factors contribute to the citizens' decision not to report crime, results of this study show that all the factors boil down to poor police-public relations, coupled by ineffectiveness. Given that all crime control strategies should be underpinned by accurate crime statistics, measures should be taken to ensure that citizens report all crime incidents to the police. There is need to improve on police-public relations so that the police gain citizens' trust. While constant police-community engagement is critical in this regard, the police also need to improve on effectiveness through conducting thorough crime investigations and offering the necessary support to crime victims.

9. Conclusion
This study revealed the factors which either encourage or discourage the reporting of crime to the police. Absence of loyalty to citizens, lack of support for victims and lack of follow-up on reported cases were cited as the major factors which discourage citizens from reporting crime to the police. Importantly, these factors hinge around the nature of the relationship between the police and the public, which is brought about either indirectly or through direct engagement with the police. To this end, any police action that dents the citizens' trust in them will negatively impact the crime reporting patterns. A regression analysis for the discouraging factors for crime reporting revealed four significant predictors, namely: gender, race, location of respondents and socio-economic status, all of which were confirmed in previous studies. As regards the encouraging factors, overall, the citizens' collective responsibility for safe communities was viewed as the major drive for reporting crimes to the police. Seriousness of the crime was also considered as another significant factor that spurs citizens to report crimes to the police. A regression analysis of the encouraging factors reveals that location of respondent emerged as the significant predictor for citizens and victims to report crimes to the police.
Funding
The authors received no direct funding for this research.

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Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Citation information
Cite this article as: Encouraging and discouraging factors to crime reporting in South Africa: a survey of residents’ crime reporting behaviour in Mthatha South Africa police service precinct, Ithandile Mbewu, Emeka E Obioha & Ishmael Mugari, Cogent Social Sciences (2021), 7: 2002542.

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