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A Model for Public Issues Management in the Police Force Based on a Participatory Governance Approach: A Mixed-Methods Study

ABSTRACT

Citizens' expectations have highlighted the necessity of reconsidering traditional approaches to public issues management within the police force. The present study aimed to develop a model for public issues management in the police force based on participatory governance. Philosophically, the study was grounded in the pragmatist paradigm, and methodologically, it employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential exploratory design. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts and specialists in policing and public management, and thematic analysis was used to identify the dimensions, components, and indicators of the public issues management model. In the quantitative phase, the extracted model was tested using questionnaire data obtained from 250 respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed through structural equation modeling using SmartPLS, and the reliability, convergent validity, explanatory power, and model fit were assessed. The qualitative analysis resulted in the identification of seven main dimensions: enhancement of social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness; empowerment of women, children, and adolescents in public issues management; participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms; development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police; management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation; technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management; and lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments. The quantitative results also showed that the study constructs possessed satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. The coefficients of determination for the endogenous constructs ranged from 0.77 to 0.989, indicating high explanatory power. Moreover, the Goodness-of-Fit index was calculated as 0.884, demonstrating a very strong fit for the proposed model. The findings indicate that effective public issues management in the police force requires a transition from a traditional, reactive, and organization-centered approach toward a participatory, preventive, network-based, and technology-oriented approach. According to the proposed model, strengthening trust and social capital, empowering social groups, expanding family and citizen participation, promoting intersectoral collaboration, utilizing emerging technologies, and attending to digital media literacy can enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and social legitimacy of the police force. The model may serve as a context-specific framework for policymaking and planning in the field of participatory public issues management within the police force.

Keywords: public issues management, participatory governance, police force, social capital, citizen participation, smart systems, digital media literacy

Introduction

Public issues management has become an increasingly complex responsibility for contemporary public organizations, particularly for police institutions operating at the intersection of security, social order, citizen rights, technological change, and public expectations. Public issues are rarely confined to a single administrative domain; rather, they emerge from

interdependent social, economic, cultural, technological, and institutional conditions that require coordinated responses across organizational and sectoral boundaries. In this environment, public organizations can no longer rely solely on hierarchical authority, internal administrative procedures, or reactive interventions. Instead, they are increasingly expected to identify emerging issues, mobilize diverse actors, engage citizens, coordinate networks, and respond in ways that are transparent, legitimate, and socially responsive. Research on public administration in Iran has likewise emphasized that identifying and prioritizing public issues constitutes a central challenge for governance because the multiplicity and interdependence of these issues can limit the effectiveness of conventional administrative responses [1]. Similarly, local development research has shown that the systematic identification and selection of public issues is essential for improving managerial decision-making, particularly in contexts characterized by resource constraints, uneven development, and competing stakeholder demands [2].

Police organizations occupy a particularly important position within this landscape because they are among the most visible public institutions and interact directly with citizens in situations involving risk, conflict, crime, social vulnerability, public disorder, and emergency. Policing therefore extends beyond crime control and law enforcement and increasingly incorporates functions associated with public administration, problem-solving, social prevention, community engagement, interorganizational coordination, and public value creation. Recent scholarship has highlighted the need to understand policing not merely as a specialized security function but also as an important domain of public management, in which organizational design, leadership, accountability, governance, technology, human resources, and citizen relations are central to performance [3]. Studies at the intersection of public management and policing similarly suggest that policing provides a productive setting for examining broader public-sector questions such as discretion, legitimacy, coordination, performance, and the balance between administrative control and responsiveness [4, 5].

Traditional police management has often been characterized by centralized command structures, formal rules, reactive responses, and an institutional focus on enforcement outputs. Although these arrangements remain important for maintaining operational discipline and legal accountability, they may be insufficient for addressing complex and emerging public issues that are distributed across society and require preventive, collaborative, and adaptive responses. Problems such as cybercrime, domestic violence, substance abuse, youth vulnerability, online misinformation, social distrust, and family-related harms cannot be effectively managed by police action alone. They require cooperation among families, schools, health and social services, local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, media, digital platforms, and citizens themselves. The growing complexity of such issues has therefore intensified interest in collaborative and participatory forms of governance that distribute problem-solving capacity across multiple actors rather than concentrating it exclusively within a single institution.

Participatory governance provides an appropriate conceptual basis for this transition. It emphasizes the active involvement of citizens and stakeholders in identifying problems, generating knowledge, designing responses, implementing interventions, and evaluating outcomes. Unlike conventional governance models in which citizens primarily receive services or comply with administrative decisions, participatory governance treats citizens as potential contributors to public problem-solving. This approach is particularly relevant to policing because many public-safety issues depend heavily on information held by citizens, community trust, voluntary reporting, shared norms, and cooperation with frontline institutions. Collaborative governance literature suggests that innovation in the public sector can be strengthened when governance

arrangements facilitate the integration of knowledge, resources, and capacities across organizational and social boundaries [6]. However, collaboration is not inherently effective; real-world multi-agency arrangements often involve paradoxes related to competing goals, unequal power, institutional tensions, coordination costs, and differences in professional norms [7]. Consequently, participatory public issues management requires not only citizen involvement but also effective institutional mechanisms for managing the complexities of collaboration.

This issue becomes even more important during periods of crisis and rapid change. Public managers are frequently required to balance the expectations of political authorities, organizational stakeholders, citizens, professional groups, and partner institutions while operating under uncertainty. Effective public management in such conditions depends on the ability to build and maintain collaborative networks, communicate across institutional boundaries, manage competing interests, and preserve public legitimacy [8]. For police organizations, these demands are intensified because decisions may have immediate consequences for safety, rights, public trust, and perceptions of justice. Public issues management in policing must therefore combine operational capability with stakeholder management, ethical responsibility, social sensitivity, and network governance.

Trust and legitimacy are especially important in participatory policing. Citizens are more likely to report problems, cooperate with investigations, participate in prevention, and share information when they perceive the police as legitimate, fair, responsive, and accountable. Organizational legitimacy is also closely linked to broader patterns of governance excellence, particularly where ethical leadership and responsible institutional behavior reinforce confidence in public organizations [9]. In the policing context, legitimacy cannot be reduced to formal legal authority; it is continuously shaped through citizen encounters, procedural fairness, organizational transparency, professional conduct, and responsiveness to social concerns. Supervisory mechanisms are therefore essential because they can influence how police performance aligns with citizenship rights and legal expectations [10]. Similarly, effective internal accountability and audit mechanisms in the public sector contribute to good governance by strengthening transparency, responsibility, and institutional control [11]. These considerations suggest that the management of public issues within police institutions must be embedded in a governance framework that combines participation with accountability.

Social justice represents another important dimension of participatory public issues management. Public problems do not affect all social groups equally, and vulnerable populations may experience greater exposure to violence, exclusion, insecurity, or barriers to accessing public services. Accordingly, governance systems should not merely increase participation quantitatively but should also ensure that participation is inclusive and socially equitable. Research on public welfare governance has highlighted the importance of social justice in shaping effective governance arrangements and has emphasized the role of institutional mechanisms capable of addressing unequal access to public resources and services [12]. For police organizations, this requires attention to groups such as women, children, adolescents, vulnerable families, and victims of violence or social harm. Participatory policing therefore needs mechanisms that enable safe reporting, protect confidentiality, reduce barriers to access, and ensure that vulnerable citizens can meaningfully interact with law enforcement institutions.

The preventive dimension of policing is also closely connected to participatory governance. Prevention is more sustainable when it draws on community knowledge, family engagement, education, local networks, and early identification of emerging risks. Police mechanisms for social prevention have been examined in relation to serious security threats, demonstrating the

importance of preventive interventions that extend beyond conventional enforcement and incorporate social and community-based mechanisms [13]. In contemporary public issues management, the same logic can be applied to a broader set of issues, including cyber threats, substance-related harms, domestic violence, youth risk, and neighborhood safety. Family and community participation can provide information, social support, and preventive capacity that may not be available through formal police structures alone.

At the same time, effective public issues management depends on sufficient organizational capacity. Participatory governance does not eliminate the need for adequate staffing, training, leadership, and internal resources. Research has shown that staffing levels can significantly influence police response times, demonstrating that operational capacity remains a fundamental determinant of service performance [14]. Human resource development is therefore a critical component of participatory transformation. Police officers working within collaborative and citizen-centered models require competencies that extend beyond traditional enforcement skills, including communication, social problem-solving, digital literacy, ethical judgment, conflict management, interagency collaboration, and community engagement. Recent work on human resource development policies in the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran has likewise emphasized the importance of strategically developing human resources in accordance with future organizational and societal requirements [15]. Without corresponding investments in human capacity, participatory reforms may remain largely symbolic.

Digital transformation has introduced an additional layer of complexity and opportunity. Police organizations increasingly use digital platforms, automated systems, artificial intelligence, data analytics, online reporting, digital communication channels, and smart technologies in both operational and citizen-facing functions. These technologies can improve access, speed, information processing, and predictive capacity, but they also change the way citizens experience public services. Research on frontline public services shows that users must adapt to digital transformation and that this adaptation process can influence how effectively digital policing services are accepted and used [16]. Accordingly, the introduction of technology into policing should not be approached purely as a technical modernization project; it also requires attention to user experience, accessibility, digital inequality, trust, and institutional legitimacy.

The use of artificial intelligence in government intensifies these concerns. Algorithmic systems may influence decisions affecting citizens, raising questions of explainability, fairness, accountability, and trustworthiness. Evidence suggests that the way algorithmic explanations are presented can shape citizens' perceptions of accuracy, fairness, and trust in government decision-making [17]. In policing, where algorithmic systems may be used for risk assessment, resource allocation, crime prediction, or decision support, these issues have direct implications for public legitimacy. Citizens' attitudes toward artificial intelligence in government are also shaped by institutional context, particularly in policing, where perceptions of organizational trust and authority can influence responses to AI-enabled decisions [18]. Therefore, technological innovation in police public issues management must be integrated with public values, transparency, rights protection, and citizen participation.

The relationship between policing, technology, and public values has consequently emerged as an important public administration research agenda. Technology may improve efficiency and operational capacity, but it can also produce tensions involving surveillance, privacy, equity, accountability, discretion, and public trust [19]. This means that the smartening of citizen participation should not be understood merely as the expansion of applications, reporting systems, or digital service portals. It must also involve responsible data governance, cyber security, privacy safeguards, inclusion, and

mechanisms through which citizens can understand and influence technology-enabled public services. A technologically sophisticated police organization that lacks public trust or ignores social inequalities may fail to achieve the legitimacy required for effective participatory governance.

Digital media literacy is another increasingly important component because citizens now encounter public issues through interactive digital environments in which information is filtered, ranked, circulated, and interpreted through platforms and algorithms. Public perceptions of crime, policing, social risk, and institutional behavior can be shaped by social media, online networks, platform design, and algorithmic exposure. Citizens are therefore not passive recipients of information; they actively interpret, reproduce, contest, and circulate meanings in digital spaces. For police institutions seeking participatory engagement, understanding how citizens process information, construct online identities, respond to algorithmic curation, and distinguish credible from misleading content is essential. This is particularly relevant when digital participation is expected to contribute to reporting, prevention, public communication, or crisis response.

The organizational challenge is further complicated by the need to identify positive opportunities within difficult operating environments. Public institutions often face crises, political scrutiny, resource constraints, and rapid technological change, yet these conditions may also create opportunities for learning and institutional adaptation. Recent public administration research has examined how organizations can identify “silver linings” in adverse conditions and transform challenging experiences into organizational learning and improved public management practices [20]. In policing, such an approach is particularly relevant because crises often expose weaknesses in coordination, communication, citizen trust, or service design while simultaneously creating momentum for reform.

A participatory governance perspective therefore requires a multidimensional understanding of public issues management in policing. It should encompass social capital and public trust, professional ethics and social justice, family participation, empowerment of vulnerable groups, participatory prevention of emerging crimes and social harms, supportive organizational policies, intersectoral networks, technological innovation, smart citizen participation, digital justice, and digital media literacy. These dimensions are mutually reinforcing. Trust facilitates participation; participation improves access to local knowledge; local knowledge enhances preventive capacity; technology can expand participation; ethical and legal safeguards sustain trust in technology; and organizational capacity determines whether collaborative mechanisms can operate effectively.

Existing research provides valuable insights into individual components of this framework, yet fragmentation remains a significant limitation. Studies have separately addressed policing and public administration [3], the public-management implications of policing [4, 5], collaborative governance [6, 7], police staffing [14], citizenship rights [10], social prevention [13], good governance [11], digital transformation [16], artificial intelligence [17, 18], public values and technology [19], and human resource development [15]. However, fewer studies have integrated these elements into a comprehensive model of how police institutions can manage public issues through participatory governance.

This gap is particularly important in contexts where policing institutions are simultaneously expected to maintain security, protect rights, respond to social vulnerability, modernize technologically, and improve citizen trust. A context-sensitive model can help explain how social, organizational, technological, and participatory mechanisms interact rather than treating them as isolated managerial concerns. Such a model can also provide a practical basis for designing policy, training, communication infrastructure, prevention programs, citizen-engagement mechanisms, digital services, and evaluation systems. From this perspective, participatory public issues management should be viewed not as a single program or intervention but as an

integrated governance architecture through which the police can connect institutional capacity with citizen knowledge, network collaboration, technological innovation, and public legitimacy.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to develop and validate a model of public issues management in the police force based on a participatory governance approach.

Methodology

The methodology of the present study is explained according to the layers of Saunders' research onion model. From the perspective of research philosophy, this study was conducted based on the pragmatist paradigm because, through the simultaneous use of qualitative and quantitative methods, it sought to develop an applied model for public issues management in the police force based on participatory governance. In this approach, the choice of research method depends on the nature of the problem and on obtaining appropriate answers to the research questions. In terms of research approach, the present study employed a mixed inductive-deductive approach. In the qualitative phase, the components and dimensions of the public issues management model were inductively extracted through analysis of interview data, whereas in the quantitative phase, the resulting model was deductively tested and validated through structural equation modeling. In terms of research strategy, this study employed a sequential exploratory strategy, such that the qualitative phase was first conducted to identify the components and develop the conceptual model, and subsequently, in the quantitative phase, the validity and fit of the proposed model were evaluated using questionnaire data. In terms of methodological choice, the study adopted a mixed-methods design. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were used to extract the model dimensions and components, while in the quantitative phase, data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modeling and SmartPLS software. In terms of time horizon, the present study was cross-sectional because data in both the qualitative and quantitative phases were collected within a specified period and the status of the variables was examined at that point in time. Finally, regarding research techniques and procedures, purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, and qualitative data analysis were used in the qualitative phase to extract key codes, integrative codes, and overarching components. In the quantitative phase, after developing the questionnaire based on the qualitative findings, the demographic characteristics of the sample were examined, and the reliability and validity of the instrument were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Subsequently, the measurement and structural models were tested using coefficients of determination (R^2) and the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index. The results confirmed the validity and satisfactory fit of the proposed model.

Findings and Results

In line with the main objective of the study, namely, developing a model for public issues management in the police force based on participatory governance, the findings were presented and analyzed in two qualitative and quantitative sections. In the first stage, using data obtained from semi-structured interviews and their systematic analysis, the components, dimensions, and indicators influencing public issues management were identified and organized within a conceptual model. In addition to explaining the various dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation, this stage provided the basis for designing the research model and developing the measurement instrument. Subsequently, in order to evaluate and validate the extracted model, the quantitative findings were presented. In this section, the demographic characteristics of the

respondents were first described, followed by an assessment of the reliability and validity indices of the measurement instrument. Finally, structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the relationships among the research constructs, the explanatory power of the model, and the fit indices in order to determine the extent to which the proposed model was consistent with the empirical data. In addition to confirming the validity of the proposed model, the results of these analyses demonstrated the effective role of the identified dimensions in explaining participatory-governance-based public issues management in the police force. This section begins with the qualitative findings and subsequently reports the quantitative analysis results in sequence to provide a comprehensive representation of the proposed research model and its empirical validity.

To identify the dimensions, components, and indicators influencing public issues management in the police force based on participatory governance, the qualitative phase of the study was conducted using an exploratory approach and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this phase was to achieve an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of experts and specialists in policing and public management regarding the requirements and mechanisms of participatory public issues management. Given the complex and multidimensional nature of public issues, the use of qualitative methods makes it possible to identify components that may not have been fully addressed within existing theoretical frameworks. At this stage, the data obtained from the interviews were examined using thematic analysis. The analytical process included extracting initial codes, categorizing and integrating similar codes, identifying organizing themes, and ultimately developing overarching themes. The results of this analysis provided the necessary foundation for developing the conceptual model and designing the measurement instrument for the quantitative phase. Accordingly, the qualitative findings are presented in terms of key codes, integrative components, and overarching dimensions, which formed the basis of the proposed model of public issues management in the police force based on participatory governance.

Table 1

Key, Integrative, and Overarching Codes

Overarching Codes	Integrative Codes	Key Codes
Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	Trust-building in police-citizen interactions	Respectful responsiveness to families; transparency in handling family-related cases; informing women about citizenship rights; protecting children in police procedures; providing citizens with feedback on police actions
Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	Professional ethics and social justice	Respecting the dignity of women in police interventions; adopting a supportive approach toward child victims; avoiding family stigmatization; training officers in gender sensitivity; monitoring police conduct in family-related cases
Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	Family participation in social prevention	Parents' role in timely reporting; educating families to prevent social harms; police cooperation with family-oriented associations; building trust among mothers in neighborhoods; supporting vulnerable families
Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	Police-social support for women	Establishing specialized women's police units; facilitating safe reporting for women; supporting female victims of violence; educating women about their legal rights; cooperating with women's counseling centers
Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	Protection and support of children and adolescents	Early intervention in child abuse; providing social safety education for children; police cooperation with schools; supporting children at risk of victimization; specialized interviewing and reporting procedures for children
Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	Family-centered prevention of social harms	Parenting skills education; strengthening parental supervision; preventing school dropout; reducing family conflicts; enhancing family resilience
Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	Prevention and control of cybercrime	Cyber-literacy education for families; protecting children in cyberspace; citizen participation in reporting online crimes; supporting victims of internet fraud; monitoring local cyber threats
Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	Social management of drug-related issues	Family participation in early identification; supporting women and children in affected families; cooperation with addiction treatment centers; neighborhood-based prevention of drug distribution; educating the public about the social consequences of drug use
Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	Combating domestic violence	Identifying hidden domestic violence; police support for female and child victims; cooperation with social emergency services; immediate intervention in domestic crises; education on safe reporting of violence
Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	Communication infrastructure with citizens	Secure family reporting systems; dedicated applications for women and adolescents; support hotlines; anonymous reporting options; case-status tracking
Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	Supportive and legal policymaking	Regulations supporting family-related victims; legal protection for reporters; confidentiality of women's and children's information; coordination with family protection laws; restorative justice in family-related issues
Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	Participatory performance evaluation and improvement	Measuring family satisfaction; evaluating the effects of social interventions; reviewing prevention policies; using participatory data; continuous program improvement

Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	Cultural and social challenges	Taboo surrounding reporting of domestic violence; women's fear of the consequences of filing complaints; family distrust; weak legal awareness; cultural and traditional pressures
Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	Organizational challenges within the police	Shortage of socially trained personnel; limited supportive resources; resistance to participatory approaches; weak intersectoral coordination; police officer burnout
Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	Network and institutional opportunities	Cooperation with the education system; participation of nongovernmental organizations; the role of media in awareness-raising; use of local council capacities; networking with supportive institutions
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Digital platforms and tools for citizen participation	Developing public reporting systems through applications, SMS, and websites; using social media for police-citizen interaction; designing secure communication channels for women and children; developing participatory e-policing services; facilitating families' access to smart policing services
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Data management, intelligent analytics, and prediction of public issues	Analyzing citizen-generated data to identify crime patterns; using artificial intelligence to predict urban crime; integrating formal and informal data, including citizen reports; intelligent monitoring of drug-related issues; analyzing data on domestic violence and family-related harms
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Cybersecurity and combating online crime	Citizen participation in reporting cybercrime; educating families about preventing online harms; women's role in raising children's cyber awareness; building public trust in cyber police; protecting citizens' privacy in smart systems
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Social innovation and community-based technological solutions	Engaging startups in solving security issues; local innovation centered on families and neighborhoods; using citizen ideas in crime prevention; the role of technology-oriented NGOs; designing context-specific solutions for region-specific problems
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Digital justice and technological inclusion	Ensuring equal access to policing technologies; addressing the digital divide affecting women and children; supporting disadvantaged families in using smart services; designing simple and comprehensible systems for the public; preventing social exclusion in digital processes
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	Information exposure and processing in digital environments	Cognitive strategies for absorbing and filtering content; the influence of user interface structure on consumption orientation; changing perceptions of source credibility based on platforms
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	Social interaction and identity representation in online environments	Managing multiple identities; monitoring feedback and continuously adjusting communicative behaviors; the importance of private social networks in validating meanings
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	Resistance and agency against algorithmic dominance	Attempts to escape filter bubbles; awareness of the commercialization mechanisms of personal data; content production as a means of resistance or legitimization
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	Digital literacy as social and cultural capital	Converting technical knowledge into a positional advantage in interactions; the digital divide in interpretation and meaning-making; instrumental use of media skills to achieve non-media-related goals

As shown in the table above, the key components of public issues management in the police force extracted from the interviews were as follows: enhancement of social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness; empowerment of women, children, and adolescents in public issues management; participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms; development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police; management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation; technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management; and the lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments.

The key components of public issues management in the police force identified and extracted from the interviews are explained below.

Enhancing Social Capital and Public Trust With an Emphasis on Family-Centeredness

Social capital within the police force is the product of the quality of the relationship formed between the police institution and citizens and serves to ensure legitimacy, cooperation, and public acceptance. In this context, the family, as the most fundamental agent of socialization, is not only the primary setting in which citizens' attitudes toward the law and its enforcers are formed, but also acts as an intermediary and facilitator in police-community relations. The findings indicate that enhancing social capital and public trust depends on three factors. The first is "trust-building in police-citizen interactions," which includes respectful responsiveness to families, transparency in the handling of family-related cases, and accurate dissemination of information about citizenship rights, particularly to women and children. When citizens perceive that the police treat them without discrimination and with respect for human dignity, and that judicial and police procedures are transparent and traceable, the foundations of trust begin to emerge. Providing citizens with feedback on the outcomes of police actions further reinforces the perception that the police institution considers itself accountable to society. The second factor is "professional ethics and social justice," which distinguishes a family-centered police model from a purely security-oriented one. Respecting the dignity of women during police interventions, adopting a supportive approach toward child victims, avoiding family stigmatization, and training officers in gender sensitivity are among the measures that enhance public

perceptions of procedural justice. Continuous monitoring of police behavior in family-related cases and institutionalizing professional ethical principles at all organizational levels help ensure the sustainability of this approach. The third factor is “family participation in social prevention,” which transforms the police from an external observer into an internal participant in social life. Parents’ role in timely reporting, educating families to prevent social harms, cooperation with family-oriented associations, building trust among mothers in neighborhoods, and supporting vulnerable families represent underutilized capacities that can assist the police in the preventive management of public issues.

Empowering Women, Children, and Adolescents in Public Issues Management

Empowering vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, and adolescents, is not a peripheral or merely humanitarian intervention, but rather a fundamental strategy for addressing the root causes of crime and achieving sustainable public issues management. The findings indicate that this component rests on three factors. The first is “police-social support for women,” which includes establishing specialized women’s police units, facilitating safe reporting, supporting female victims of violence, educating women about their legal rights, and cooperating with counseling centers. These measures not only reduce structural and cultural barriers to women’s access to justice, but also transform the police into an accountable and accessible institution for half of society’s population. The second factor is “protection and support of children and adolescents,” including early intervention in cases of child abuse, social safety education, systematic cooperation with schools, support for children at risk of victimization, and specialized interviewing and reporting procedures tailored to children’s age and developmental conditions. This approach shifts the police from a purely enforcement-oriented role toward a preventive and supportive institution. The third factor is “family-centered prevention of social harms,” which focuses on parenting skills education, strengthening parental supervision, preventing school dropout, reducing family conflicts, and enhancing family resilience. Empowering these groups can reduce victimization and offending in the long term, increase police social capital among families, and provide the foundation for their sustained participation in public issues management.

Participatory Management of Emerging Crimes and Social Harms

Because of their multidimensional nature, emerging crimes and social harms exceed the problem-solving capacity of traditional and single-agency approaches, and their effective management requires redefining the role of the police from a sole implementer to a coordinator within a network of actors. The findings highlight three themes in this area. The first is “prevention and control of cybercrime,” which emphasizes cyber-literacy education for families, protection of children in cyberspace, citizen participation in reporting online crime, and support for victims of internet fraud, thereby elevating the police to a leadership role in collective cyber-defense. The second is “social management of the drug problem,” which includes family participation in early identification, support for women and children in affected families, cooperation with addiction treatment centers, and neighborhood-based prevention of drug distribution, emphasizing the need to move beyond a purely security-oriented view of the issue. The third is “combating domestic violence,” which includes identifying hidden family violence, providing police support to female and child victims, cooperating with social emergency services, intervening immediately in domestic crises, and educating citizens about safe reporting mechanisms.

Development of Participatory Mechanisms and Policies Within the Police

The development of participatory mechanisms and policies represents a turning point in the transition of the police from a closed, command-centered organization to an open and citizen-oriented institution. This component is manifested not in generalized slogans, but in the intelligent design of communication infrastructures, fundamental policy reform, and

institutionalization of participatory evaluation. It also emphasizes three factors. First, “communication infrastructure with citizens” includes secure family reporting systems, dedicated applications for women and adolescents, and supportive hotlines; these tools are designed not merely to facilitate service delivery, but also to promote empowerment and ensure that marginalized voices are heard. Second, “supportive and legal policymaking” concerns the development of regulations to support family-related victims, legal protection of reporters, confidentiality of women’s and children’s information, coordination with family protection legislation, and the development of restorative justice in family-related matters. This level of policymaking reflects the police commitment to moving beyond the role of judicial enforcement and entering the domain of social support. Third, “participatory performance evaluation and improvement” emphasizes continuous assessment of family satisfaction, evaluation of the impact of social interventions, periodic review of prevention policies, and utilization of participatory data for continuous program improvement. Clearly, participatory policies that are not linked to objective evaluation indicators risk becoming merely rhetorical.

Management of Social Challenges and Opportunities in Citizen Participation

Managing citizen participation without intelligently identifying existing challenges and systematically exploiting institutional opportunities is highly difficult. The findings showed that the “taboo surrounding the reporting of domestic violence” and “women’s fear of the consequences of filing complaints” continue to create barriers between victims and social justice. “Family distrust” toward formal institutions, “weak legal awareness” among citizens, and “cultural and traditional pressures,” especially in smaller communities, further reinforce these barriers. In terms of organizational challenges, the “shortage of socially trained personnel,” “limited supportive resources,” “resistance to participatory approaches” in some middle layers of the police organization, “weak intersectoral coordination,” and “occupational burnout among officers” repeatedly exposed to recurring social harms constitute serious obstacles to transformation. However, there are also underutilized opportunities to address these challenges, including “cooperation with the education system” to promote law-oriented socialization among younger generations, “participation of nongovernmental organizations” as a bridge between the police and vulnerable groups, “the role of media in awareness-raising,” “the capacity of local councils” for micro-level problem solving, and “networking with supportive institutions” to create a comprehensive ecosystem of social intervention. Overcoming these challenges requires a sustainable strategy and collective commitment at both micro and macro levels.

Technology, Innovation, and Smartening of Citizen Participation in Public Issues Management

This component does not merely refer to the electronification of services, but rather to a fundamental redefinition of the police-citizen relationship within a digital ecosystem. Its first dimension, “digital platforms and participation tools,” includes public reporting systems, intelligent use of social media for two-way interaction, secure communication channels specifically designed for women and children, and facilitation of access to smart services for disadvantaged families. The second dimension, “data management and intelligent analytics,” uses artificial intelligence to predict crime patterns, integrates formal and informal data, and enables real-time monitoring of emerging issues, thereby facilitating a transition from reactive to proactive management. The third dimension, “cybersecurity and combating online crime,” encompasses citizen participation in cybercrime reporting, family education for protection against virtual harms, and privacy protection. The fourth dimension, “social innovation and community-based technological solutions,” involves engaging startups, using citizen-generated ideas, and developing context-specific solutions for local issues, thereby transforming the police from a passive technology consumer into an innovative actor. The fifth dimension, “digital justice and technological inclusion,”

ensures equal access to policing technologies across social groups and prevents social exclusion in digital processes. This component depicts a vision of the future police force as an institution embedded not behind desks, but within intelligent networks that continuously interact with citizens.

Lived Experience of Digital Media Literacy in Interactive Environments

This component refers to the deepest layer of transformation in public issues management, where the key issue is no longer technology itself, but how citizens perceive, interpret, and act within the digital environment. “How people encounter information in digital spaces” demonstrates how individuals selectively absorb or reject information within an overwhelming flow of data and how the design of websites and applications shapes their orientations. “Social interaction and self-representation in online environments” addresses how individuals present different identities, monitor others’ reactions, and adjust their behavior accordingly. Private social networks also play an important role in validating shared beliefs and interpretations. “Resistance to algorithmic dominance” reflects individuals’ efforts to escape information bubbles, become aware of the commercial exploitation of their data, and use content production either to resist or to legitimize dominant systems. “Digital literacy as social and cultural capital” demonstrates how technical knowledge can become an advantage in everyday interactions, how the digital divide extends beyond mere internet access to include the ability to interpret and make sense of information, and how people use media skills instrumentally to achieve non-media-related goals. Understanding this lived experience can help the police move beyond a superficial conception of “cyberspace” and recognize citizens’ digital worlds as a real arena for understanding public issues and designing genuine participatory engagement.

Following identification of the main research components in the qualitative phase and development of the conceptual model, structural equation modeling was employed in the quantitative phase to examine the relationships among constructs and validate the proposed model. Structural equation modeling is an advanced multivariate analytical technique that allows the simultaneous examination of the measurement and structural models and enables the researcher to evaluate both the quality of the measurement instrument and the relationships among latent variables. At this stage, the measurement model was first assessed to determine the degree of correspondence between observed indicators and theoretical constructs. For this purpose, criteria such as internal consistency reliability, composite reliability, and convergent validity through average variance extracted (AVE) were examined. Establishing the adequacy of the measurement model is a necessary prerequisite for proceeding to structural model analysis. Subsequently, the structural model was evaluated to examine relationships among the constructs and the extent to which the dependent variables were explained. In this section, indicators such as path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), and the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index were used to assess the overall structure of the model and its consistency with the empirical data. Accordingly, the present model analysis was conducted in two sections, namely the measurement model and the structural model, so that the conceptual framework could be empirically evaluated.

According to the results, of the 250 respondents, 203 (81.2%) were men and 47 (18.8%) were women. This distribution indicates that the study sample was predominantly male, which appears reasonable given the characteristics of the target population and the organizational structure of the police force. Nevertheless, the participation of nearly one-fifth female respondents also made it possible to reflect perspectives from both genders in the study analyses. Furthermore, the highest frequency was observed among married respondents, with 164 participants (65.6%) being married. In addition, 76 participants (30.4%) were single, while 10 participants (4.0%) fell into other marital-status categories. This distribution

indicates that the majority of respondents had relatively stable family circumstances, which may influence their experiences, attitudes, and approaches to public issues and interaction with the police. The largest age group consisted of respondents aged 30 to 40 years, with 108 participants (43.2%). This was followed by those aged 40 to 50 years, with 75 participants (30.0%), those younger than 30 years, with 37 participants (14.8%), and those older than 50 years, with 30 participants (12.0%). This distribution indicates that most participants were in middle adulthood and active professional stages of life, and therefore could be expected to possess relevant experience and understanding of the issues under investigation. Regarding education, the largest group consisted of respondents with a bachelor's degree, numbering 80 participants (32.0%). This was followed by respondents with an associate degree, numbering 66 (26.4%), a high school diploma, numbering 63 (25.2%), a master's degree, numbering 35 (14.0%), and a doctoral degree, numbering 6 (2.4%). This distribution indicates that a substantial proportion of the respondents possessed university-level education, which may positively influence the quality of responses and their understanding of issues related to public issues management and participatory governance. Regarding the duration of cooperation with the police, the highest frequency was among respondents with 1 to 3 years of experience, comprising 81 participants (32.4%). This was followed by respondents with 3 to 5 years of experience, numbering 75 (30.0%). The groups with less than 1 year and more than 5 years of experience each included 47 participants (18.8%), representing equal shares of the sample. This distribution indicates that most respondents had a relatively appropriate level of experience in working with the police and were sufficiently familiar with related processes. Finally, the most common type of interaction with the police was reporting, selected by 108 respondents (43.2%). This was followed by case follow-up, selected by 68 respondents (27.2%), consultation, selected by 56 respondents (22.4%), and other forms of interaction, selected by 18 respondents (7.2%). These results indicate that the most important form of citizen-police interaction was reporting and information transfer, reflecting respondents' active role in cooperating with the police and participating in processes related to public issues management. The substantial proportions related to consultation and case follow-up also indicate the diversity of citizen-police interaction patterns within the study population.

Table 2

Reliability and Convergent Validity Indices of the Research Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Professional ethics and social justice	0.82	0.87	0.76
Participatory performance evaluation and improvement	0.85	0.77	0.76
Trust-building in police-citizen interactions	0.73	0.90	0.88
Cybersecurity and online crime	0.77	0.78	0.70
Social interaction and identity representation in online environments	0.70	0.73	0.93
Protection and support of children and adolescents	0.79	0.72	0.92
Police-social support for women	0.84	0.80	0.72
Communication infrastructure	0.70	0.89	0.91
Digital literacy as social capital	0.84	0.97	0.71
Supportive and legal policymaking	0.90	0.76	0.85
Digital justice	0.77	0.98	0.89
Information exposure and processing	0.96	0.96	0.83
Network and institutional opportunities	0.84	0.95	0.72
Social management of drug-related issues	0.94	0.83	0.73
Data management and intelligent analytics	0.85	0.78	0.95
Family participation in social prevention	0.76	0.72	0.95
Combating domestic violence	0.92	0.98	0.94
Resistance to algorithmic dominance	0.93	0.82	0.85
Social innovation and technological solutions	0.77	0.98	0.78
Digital platforms and tools	0.83	0.91	0.80
Family-centered prevention	0.77	0.72	0.83
Prevention and control of cybercrime	0.79	0.93	0.87
Organizational challenges within the police	0.78	0.88	0.75
Cultural and social challenges	0.74	0.73	0.82

Two indices, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, were used to assess the reliability of the measurement instrument. Values above 0.70 are considered acceptable for both indices (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In addition, to establish convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The results of the reliability and convergent validity indices show that Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.70 to 0.96 and composite reliability values ranged from 0.72 to 0.98. All constructs exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and adequate reliability of the measurement instrument. Moreover, the AVE for all constructs exceeded 0.70, ranging from 0.70 to 0.95, which is substantially above the minimum criterion of 0.50 and confirms strong to excellent convergent validity. Although very high AVE values, such as 0.95 for the "data management and intelligent analytics" and "family participation" constructs, indicate substantial shared variance among the items, these values remain within acceptable limits given the theoretical foundations of the study and their failure to exceed the cautionary threshold of 0.96. Overall, the findings indicate satisfactory measurement model quality, high validity of the data collection instrument, and its suitability for testing the structural model of public issues management in the police force.

Table 3

Collinearity Indices of the Constructs in the Structural Model

Endogenous Construct	Predictor Construct	VIF
Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	Professional ethics and social justice	2.18
	Trust-building in police-citizen interactions	2.47
	Family participation in social prevention	2.06
Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	Participatory performance evaluation and improvement	2.25
	Communication infrastructure	2.38
	Supportive and legal policymaking	2.56
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	Social interaction and identity representation in online environments	2.34
	Digital literacy as social capital	2.21
	Resistance to algorithmic dominance	2.43
Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	Protection and support of children and adolescents	2.17
	Police-social support for women	2.62
	Family-centered prevention	2.31
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	Cybersecurity and online crime	2.74
	Digital justice	2.58
	Information exposure and processing	1.89
	Data management and intelligent analytics	2.67
	Social innovation and technological solutions	2.81
	Digital platforms and tools	2.52
Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	Social management of drug-related issues	2.46
	Combating domestic violence	2.59
	Prevention and control of cybercrime	2.37
Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	Network and institutional opportunities	2.29
	Organizational challenges within the police	2.48
	Cultural and social challenges	2.65
Public issues management model in the police force	Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	3.12
	Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	3.27
	Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	2.86
	Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	3.41
	Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	3.05
	Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	3.18

To examine the potential presence of multicollinearity among predictor constructs in the structural model, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was assessed. The simulated results presented in the table above show that the VIF values for the predictor constructs ranged from 1.89 to 3.41. Given that all values were below the critical threshold of 5, it can be concluded that the structural model did not exhibit a serious multicollinearity problem among the predictor constructs. Moreover, the VIF values below 5 indicate that the estimated path coefficients were not substantially affected by severe collinearity among

predictors. Therefore, from a collinearity perspective, the structural model met acceptable conditions for testing the proposed relationships.

Figure 1

Model With Standardized Coefficients

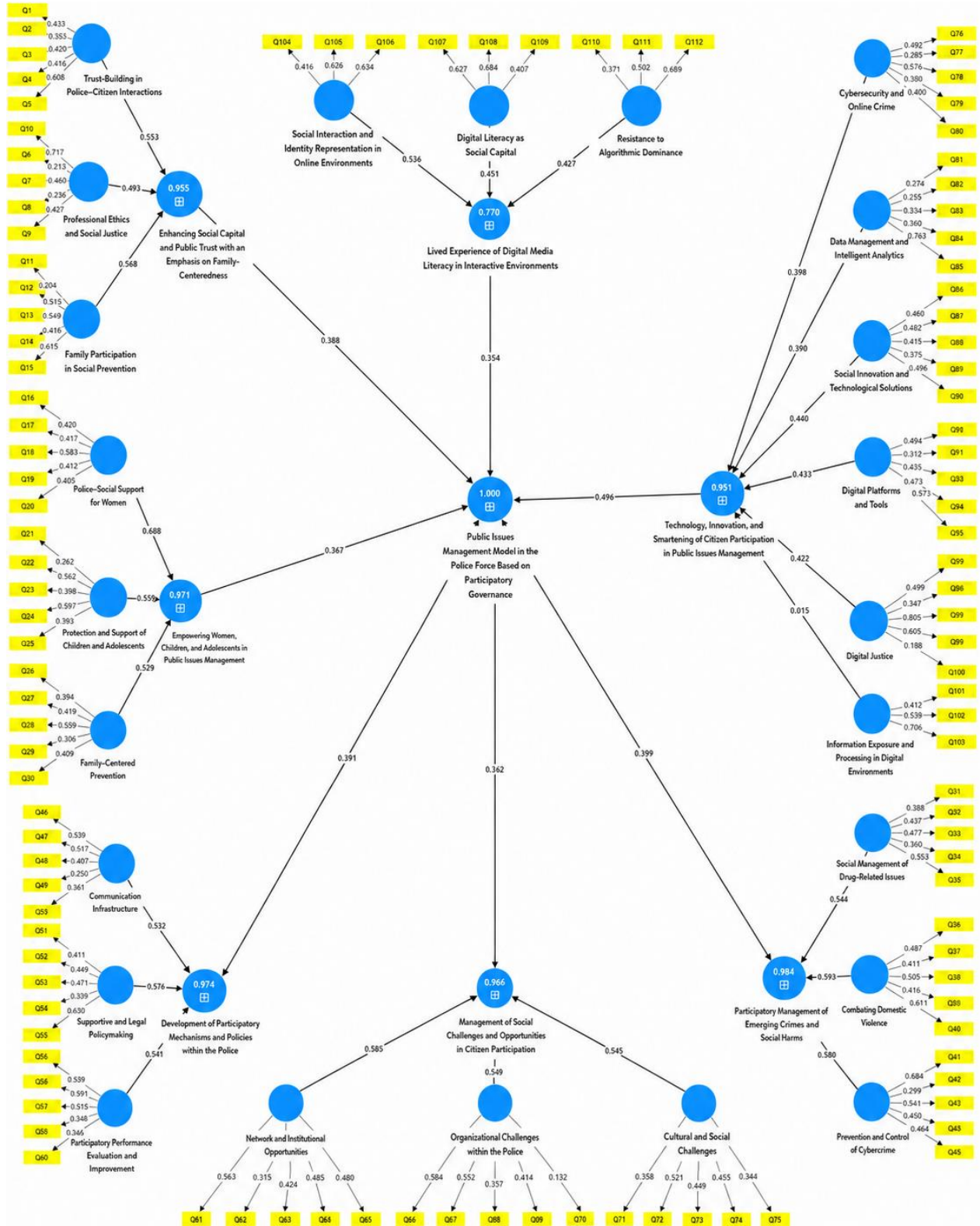


Table 4*Coefficients of Determination (R^2) and Adjusted R^2 for the Endogenous Components*

Constructs	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
Enhancing social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness	0.955	0.955
Public issues management model in the police force	0.989	0.998
Lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments	0.770	0.767
Empowering women, children, and adolescents in public issues management	0.971	0.971
Development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police	0.974	0.974
Technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management	0.951	0.950
Participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms	0.984	0.984
Management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation	0.966	0.965

The coefficients of determination for seven constructs exceeded 0.95, including values of 0.984 and 0.989 in two cases, while the value for the “lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments” construct was 0.77. This finding indicates that the structural model had very high predictive power, with the independent variables explaining between 77% and more than 98% of the variance in the dependent variables. Moreover, the very close proximity of the adjusted coefficients to the R^2 values, with differences of less than 0.003, indicates the absence of redundant variables or irrelevant predictors in the model.

For the overall fit and validation of the model, the Goodness-of-Fit index was used. The Goodness-of-Fit index ranges from zero to one, with values closer to one indicating better model quality. It should be noted that such indices reflect the model’s ability to predict dependent variables, and values above 0.33 have been introduced as indicating moderate fit.

Table 5*Overall Model Fit*

Index	Mean Value
Mean coefficients of determination (R^2)	0.945
Mean communalities	0.827

The GoF value was calculated as 0.884. According to the criteria proposed by Wetzels et al. (2009), GoF values below 0.10 indicate weak fit, values between 0.10 and 0.25 indicate moderate fit, values between 0.25 and 0.36 indicate strong fit, and values above 0.36 indicate very strong fit. Therefore, the obtained value of 0.884 indicates excellent and very strong overall model fit and demonstrates that the structural and measurement models possess appropriate predictive capacity and quality for explaining public issues management in the police force.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to develop and validate a model for public issues management in the police force based on a participatory governance approach. The findings yielded a multidimensional model comprising seven major dimensions: enhancement of social capital and public trust with an emphasis on family-centeredness; empowerment of women, children, and adolescents in public issues management; participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms; development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police; management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation; technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation in public issues management; and the lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments. The quantitative phase further demonstrated that the model had strong measurement properties and very high explanatory power. Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values were

acceptable across all constructs, AVE values supported convergent validity, VIF values indicated no serious multicollinearity, and the endogenous constructs showed R^2 values ranging from 0.77 to 0.989. Moreover, the overall GoF value of 0.884 indicated a very strong fit. Taken together, these findings suggest that public issues management in policing should be understood as a multidimensional governance process rather than as a narrowly operational or enforcement-oriented activity.

One of the principal findings was the central role of social capital and public trust, particularly when embedded in a family-centered approach. The qualitative findings showed that trust-building in police-citizen interactions, professional ethics and social justice, and family participation in social prevention formed the core of this dimension. This result is theoretically important because the effectiveness of policing depends not only on formal authority but also on perceived legitimacy and willingness of citizens to cooperate. The strong explanatory position of this dimension in the structural model indicates that public trust is not peripheral to public issues management; rather, it is one of its foundational mechanisms. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the role of organizational legitimacy in governance quality and showing that legitimacy is reinforced when institutions act ethically, transparently, and consistently with public expectations [9]. It is also consistent with studies showing that protection of citizenship rights and appropriate supervision over police conduct are crucial for maintaining legitimacy and public confidence [10].

The importance of trust can also be explained through the nature of citizen participation itself. Participation is unlikely to be sustained where citizens expect disrespect, indifference, retaliation, or procedural opacity. In such circumstances, even well-designed participatory mechanisms may remain underused. The finding that family participation in social prevention constitutes an important subdimension is therefore meaningful. Families often function as the first context in which social harms are detected, communicated, and interpreted. Their willingness to share information with the police depends heavily on perceptions of fairness and responsiveness. This interpretation is consistent with research on social prevention mechanisms in policing, where cooperation with citizens and social institutions is considered an essential complement to reactive enforcement [13]. It also resonates with social justice-oriented approaches to public welfare governance, which emphasize inclusion, equity, and responsiveness as conditions of legitimate public action [12].

A second major finding concerned the empowerment of women, children, and adolescents in public issues management. The qualitative phase identified police-social support for women, protection and support of children and adolescents, and family-centered prevention as its principal components. This finding highlights the importance of designing public issue management systems that are sensitive to differential vulnerability. Vulnerable groups may experience greater barriers in accessing formal institutions, reporting victimization, or making effective use of police services. Therefore, participatory governance in policing must be inclusive rather than generic. This means that participation channels should be adapted to the needs of different groups and accompanied by protection, confidentiality, specialized communication, and supportive intervention.

This result can be interpreted in light of the broader literature on public administration and citizenship rights. Public institutions are increasingly evaluated not only according to efficiency, but also according to whether services are accessible, fair, and responsive to diverse populations. The emphasis on the rights and protection of vulnerable groups is consistent with findings that supervisory mechanisms within law enforcement play an important role in protecting citizenship rights [10]. The result also reflects the broader social justice orientation identified in public welfare governance research, where equitable

access to public support and attention to structurally vulnerable groups are considered essential elements of good governance [12]. In this sense, the present model expands the logic of participatory governance by showing that participation is not merely about inviting citizens to engage, but also about ensuring that vulnerable populations are actually able to do so safely and meaningfully.

The third dimension, participatory management of emerging crimes and social harms, included social management of drug-related issues, combating domestic violence, and prevention and control of cybercrime. This finding is especially important because such problems are complex, cross-sectoral, and difficult to resolve through a single-agency approach. Their causes and consequences often span family systems, education, health, justice, social welfare, digital environments, and community networks. The emergence of this dimension supports the argument that policing increasingly requires interorganizational and collaborative forms of public management. This is consistent with the literature on collaborative governance, which shows that complex public problems are more effectively addressed when multiple agencies and social actors jointly contribute knowledge, resources, and implementation capacity [6]. At the same time, real-world collaborations are frequently marked by ambiguity, conflicting interests, fragmented authority, and coordination problems, which means that collaboration must be actively governed rather than simply assumed to work [7].

The significance of emerging crimes and social harms can also be linked to broader developments in public management and policing. Contemporary policing increasingly extends beyond traditional crime control into areas such as family violence, cyber threats, public vulnerability, and social crisis response. Scholarship at the intersection of public administration and policing has highlighted the growing complexity of police responsibilities and the need for stronger administrative and governance perspectives [3, 4]. The present findings reinforce this position by demonstrating empirically that management of emerging harms is an integral dimension of the broader public issues management model, rather than a separate operational domain.

A further major result concerned the development of participatory mechanisms and policies within the police. This dimension incorporated communication infrastructure, supportive and legal policymaking, and participatory performance evaluation and improvement. Its emergence suggests that participatory governance requires institutionalization. Participation cannot depend solely on individual officers' attitudes or informal community relationships. It must be embedded in formal systems, procedures, communication channels, legal protections, evaluation frameworks, and organizational routines. The quantitative results showing strong explanatory power for this dimension confirm that organizational design is essential to participatory public issue management.

This result aligns with findings from public-sector governance research emphasizing that accountability systems, internal controls, monitoring, and performance evaluation are critical to good governance [11]. It also corresponds with the literature on public issue identification and prioritization, which stresses that effective public management requires structured mechanisms for recognizing, selecting, and responding to issues rather than relying on ad hoc reactions [1, 2]. From this perspective, participatory mechanisms convert citizen engagement from an informal activity into an organizational capability. Secure reporting systems, feedback procedures, legal safeguards, and performance monitoring allow citizen input to be processed systematically and incorporated into decision-making.

The strong role of this dimension can also be explained through the relationship between participation and institutional credibility. If citizens are invited to participate but receive no feedback, cannot track cases, or perceive that information is

not acted upon, participation may become symbolic and trust may decline. Therefore, participatory governance depends on the capacity of organizations to close the feedback loop. This interpretation is consistent with studies of collaborative governance, which show that the quality of institutional arrangements shapes whether collaboration produces meaningful outcomes [7]. It also aligns with research emphasizing that public management in policing requires balancing responsiveness, accountability, and operational control [5].

The fifth dimension involved management of social challenges and opportunities in citizen participation. Cultural and social barriers, organizational constraints within the police, and network and institutional opportunities were all identified as important. This finding suggests that citizen participation is not simply a matter of willingness; it is conditioned by broader institutional and social environments. Cultural taboos, fear of reporting, weak legal awareness, mistrust, organizational resistance, limited resources, and insufficient interagency coordination can restrict participation even when formal mechanisms exist.

This interpretation is strongly supported by the literature on collaborative public management. Van der Wal emphasizes that public managers in complex and crisis-like environments must simultaneously manage stakeholders, political expectations, and collaborative networks [8]. Similarly, collaborative governance research demonstrates that multi-actor arrangements can generate both opportunities and paradoxes, particularly when power, authority, incentives, and organizational cultures differ [7]. The present findings add an important policing perspective to this literature by showing that public participation itself must be managed as a complex governance process. It requires organizational readiness, cultural adaptation, intersectoral cooperation, and recognition of both structural barriers and institutional opportunities.

The sixth major dimension, technology, innovation, and smartening of citizen participation, was one of the most prominent elements of the model. It encompassed cybersecurity and online crime, data management and intelligent analytics, social innovation and technological solutions, digital platforms and tools, and digital justice. The high explanatory power of this dimension is consistent with the rapid digital transformation of public services and policing. Digital technologies increasingly shape how citizens report problems, interact with agencies, access services, and evaluate public institutions. At the same time, police organizations are using increasingly sophisticated tools for data integration, risk analysis, prediction, communication, and service delivery.

These findings are highly consistent with recent research on technology and public values in policing. Feeney and Mughan argue that technology adoption in policing raises not only technical questions but also issues of fairness, legitimacy, accountability, discretion, and public value [19]. Similarly, research on frontline digital transformation in policing shows that the effectiveness of technological change depends on how users adapt to and experience new digital systems [16]. This is especially relevant to citizen-facing systems because digital reporting and service platforms can only increase participation if they are understandable, accessible, trusted, and responsive.

The role of artificial intelligence and data-driven systems further reinforces the importance of the technological dimension. Research has shown that perceptions of algorithmic decisions are influenced by the way explanations are presented, particularly in relation to fairness, accuracy, and trustworthiness [17]. In policing, these concerns are particularly significant because algorithmic systems may influence decisions with direct implications for citizens. Schiff and colleagues similarly show that institutional factors shape public perceptions of AI in government, including in the policing context [18]. Therefore, the

present finding that digital justice forms part of the technology dimension is especially important. It suggests that smart policing must be accompanied by fairness, privacy protection, accessibility, and accountability.

The seventh dimension, the lived experience of digital media literacy in interactive environments, adds a particularly novel element to the model. It included information exposure and processing, social interaction and identity representation, resistance to algorithmic dominance, and digital literacy as social and cultural capital. This finding indicates that public issues management in contemporary societies cannot be limited to institutional uses of technology. It must also account for how citizens themselves experience digital environments. People increasingly encounter public information, construct social meaning, assess institutional credibility, and participate in collective discourse through digital platforms.

This dimension can be interpreted in relation to current research on public-sector transformation. Digital environments create both opportunities and vulnerabilities, and citizens differ in their ability to navigate them. Horton and colleagues' work on finding constructive possibilities within difficult public-sector conditions underscores the importance of organizational learning and adaptation in periods of disruption [20]. In policing, understanding citizens' digital media literacy can help agencies distinguish between technological access and meaningful digital participation. Citizens may technically have access to online reporting channels while lacking the interpretive, informational, or critical skills needed to use them effectively.

The very high R^2 values obtained for most endogenous constructs indicate that the model has strong explanatory power. Although such high values should always be interpreted cautiously, they suggest that the identified components are closely interconnected and collectively explain substantial variance in participatory public issues management. The absence of serious multicollinearity, as reflected in acceptable VIF values, further supports the structural viability of the model. The very strong GoF value also indicates that the proposed framework possesses high overall explanatory consistency. These quantitative findings reinforce the qualitative conclusion that public issues management in policing is best understood as an integrated system in which trust, social inclusion, institutional mechanisms, collaboration, technology, digital literacy, and organizational capacity reinforce one another.

The model also reflects the broader literature emphasizing that policing is an important domain of public management rather than a purely coercive state function. Research has increasingly called for closer integration between public administration and policing studies [3-5]. The present study contributes to this direction by showing that the management of public issues within the police force can be conceptualized through participatory governance principles. The findings further indicate that effective public issues management requires not only external citizen participation but also internal organizational capacity. Human resource development is therefore relevant, because officers must possess the knowledge, communication skills, ethical competencies, technological capabilities, and collaborative orientation required for this mode of governance. This interpretation is compatible with research on human resource development policies in Iran's law enforcement system, which emphasizes adaptation of workforce capabilities to evolving institutional requirements [15].

Operational capacity also remains important. Participatory governance does not eliminate conventional administrative constraints. Research showing that staffing levels strongly influence police response times illustrates that organizational capacity continues to shape service quality [14]. Therefore, digital participation, expanded reporting, and broader citizen engagement should be matched by sufficient personnel, technological capacity, and coordination mechanisms. Otherwise, increased participation may generate expectations that the organization cannot meet. The model's emphasis on organizational challenges and participatory performance improvement is therefore consistent with this operational reality.

Overall, the findings indicate that effective public issues management in the police force requires a transition from a reactive, hierarchical, and organization-centered orientation toward a preventive, collaborative, citizen-centered, network-based, and technologically enabled governance approach. This transition does not imply weakening formal police authority; rather, it involves embedding that authority within a broader system of legitimacy, accountability, social cooperation, digital capability, and institutional learning. The proposed model therefore integrates public administration, policing, collaborative governance, social justice, and digital transformation perspectives and offers a coherent framework for understanding how police organizations can manage increasingly complex public issues.

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the model was developed within a specific organizational and national context, and the institutional characteristics of the police force, administrative culture, legal arrangements, and citizen expectations may limit the direct generalizability of the findings to other countries or public organizations. Second, although the mixed-methods design strengthened the study, the qualitative phase relied on expert perceptions and the quantitative phase relied on self-reported questionnaire data, both of which may be affected by subjective judgment and response bias. Third, the cross-sectional design does not permit strong causal conclusions about the relationships among the constructs. Finally, the very high coefficients of determination and some strong relationships among model components suggest that further examination of construct distinctiveness and potential model overlap would be useful.

Future studies should test the proposed model in other provinces, different police organizations, and other public-sector agencies to assess its external validity and contextual stability. Longitudinal studies could examine how participatory public issues management develops over time and whether improvements in trust, digital participation, and collaborative capacity produce sustained institutional outcomes. Future research could also examine additional mediating or moderating variables such as organizational culture, ethical leadership, public trust, perceived procedural justice, digital readiness, officer burnout, interorganizational coordination, or citizen digital literacy. Comparative studies across jurisdictions would also be valuable for determining which dimensions of the model are universal and which are context-dependent. In addition, future research should use complementary indicators such as discriminant validity measures, predictive relevance, out-of-sample prediction, and longitudinal performance outcomes.

Police managers should institutionalize participatory governance by creating secure and accessible citizen communication channels, strengthening feedback mechanisms, and ensuring that reports and citizen input are visibly incorporated into decision-making. Specialized mechanisms should be developed for women, children, adolescents, and vulnerable families, with particular attention to confidentiality and ease of access. Interagency networks involving schools, social services, local councils, health organizations, and civil society groups should be formalized to address complex social harms. Police personnel should receive continuous training in communication, digital literacy, social sensitivity, ethical conduct, data use, and collaborative problem solving. Digital platforms and AI-based tools should be designed around transparency, accessibility, privacy, and fairness rather than efficiency alone. Finally, participatory performance indicators should be integrated into managerial evaluation systems so that citizen trust, responsiveness, network cooperation, service accessibility, and quality of engagement become measurable components of police performance.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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