

# Factors Influencing Citizen Trust towards Armed Police Force, Nepal: A Study on Border Crossing Points

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## Abstract

*Citizen trust of border governing agencies is considered as a crucial task for good border governance. This research paper examines the relationship between the determinant factors of citizen trust towards Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal at Border crossing points. The research follows quantitative approach with correlation design. The primary sources of data are taken from the respondents at two major Border crossing points. Secondary sources of data are taken from online sources, journal, publication, reports and recorded data from APF Border Security Department. The finding shows clear relationship between the determinant factors of citizen trust toward the APF, Nepal. The correlation analysis shows highly significant of citizen trust with determinant factors which are integrity, competency, benevolence, honesty and service delivery. The regression model is highly significant and the model fits the data. The acceptance of the alternative hypotheses for both categories of variables indicates that determinant factors play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and trust towards APF, Nepal at Border crossing point and help in building public confidents.*

## Introduction

Trust is a multidimensional concept which focuses on public institutional assessment measured by citizen confidence in delivery of services (Askvik & Dahal, 2010). Barnes & Gill (2000) viewed trust in government as the confidence that citizens feel towards the right task. The public expects the government entities to be upright, provide them with justice, and safeguard their fundamental rights of food, health, shelter. Citizen trust enhance positive interpersonal relation in various situations because it reflects how we interact with others for enhancing effectiveness and legitimacy (Harrison, 1993; Armstrong, 2005). It refers to the willingness to depend on in others, to make effective decisions and to take interests into account by enhancing confidence (Gill, 2000; Houston & Harding, 2013).

Citizens trust is compared as a blood in Armed forces, as it is based on performance of institution (Kenosi, 2018). Trust may not be permanent and could be critical for military matter and military operations (Hetherington, 2005). Citizen trust surveys of the national army and armed forces are crucial for assessing public confidence, which directly correlates with the stability of society and the effectiveness of the military in its duties (Kim, 2010). High levels of trust often indicate a well-functioning military that operates with transparency and accountability, whereas declining trust may signal issues such as corruption or inefficiency that require attention (Cook & Gronke, 2005). These surveys are vital for maintaining healthy civic military relations, as they reflect the military's legitimacy in the eyes of the public and its accountability to civilian governance (Finer, 2002; Ghimire, 2018).

Trust is also a significant factor in national security, as public support for military policies during crises is essential for effective defense measures. The level of public trust can influence government decisions on resource allocation and military funding, with higher trust often leading to greater support for defense spending (Levi & Stoker, 2000).

The border crossing points of any country are considered as challenging due high movement of people. Governments have established different functional agencies to protect citizens, secure borders, and improve service level for mitigating risk and controlling costs (Shrestha, 2003; Upreti, 2021; Pulami, 2023). Due to strategic importance of borders, it is necessary to build citizen confidence by border governing agencies in order to achieve a state mandated task of protecting the national territory, regulating the cross border movements of people at border crossing points (Fukuyama, 2013; Ejotubu, 2021).

Armed police force [APF], Nepal have been deployed in borders of Nepal in order to promote the life and wellbeing of border citizens (Armed Police Force Border Security Department [APFBSD], 2022). The engagement of APF, Nepal with local citizens and

travelers at the border crossings are the symbols of good border governance. The deployment of APF, Nepal in major border crossing points indicates a requirement of security to promote cross border governance. These border crossing points, consists of several border governing agencies like custom office, quarantine office, integrated check points and local police. The trust among citizens and border governing agencies build a harmonic relation with civil and government (Upreti, 2023). This research paper is focused to examine trust between APF, Nepal and citizens using border crossing points.

The adaptation of coordinated border management with different clusters to curb the border issues have been a milestone in promoting a governance of Nepal (Upreti, 2022). Since, APF, Nepal have been a first responder in border protection, citizen trust of APF, Nepal denotes a greater services delivery, vigorous security, exemplary infrastructure development and social-cultural gratification of citizens. Conducting citizen trust surveys at border crossing points assess the public perception of the APF, Nepal in maintaining security, managing border control and preventing illegal activities such as smuggling and trafficking. The plan of government of Nepal to strength border outpost depends upon the citizen confident and trust (APFBS, 2022). High levels of public trust are critical in these areas because they ensure cooperation between the public and the APF, Nepal which is necessary for effective law enforcement and national security (Bhattarai, 2013). Therefore, this survey can identify potential issues concerning at border points where APF, Nepal personnel interact with a diverse population, including vulnerable groups. Addressing these issues is vital for maintaining the integrity of border management and maintaining positive relations with neighboring countries, as it reflects the APF, Nepal professionalism and adherence to international standards of border security. Thus, this research is an attempt to understand the level of trust between APF, Nepal and citizen at border crossing point.

The government of Nepal have prioritize on enhancing border out post as an operational portion of border security. In recent year, there have been lot of progressive actions in building trust with border citizen and APF, Nepal. Hence, this research have been carried out to find the relationship of determinant factors of citizen trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing points.

## **Review of Literature**

Citizen trust, particularly in the context of government and public institutions, is an indispensable concept across various disciplines, including political science, sociology, psychology, and public administration (Askvik & Dahal, 2010). According to Putnam (2000) trust is both a cause and effect of social capital. High levels of trust among citizen and government promote cooperation and collective action as they believe in and public interest.

Rothstein & Stolle (2008) focused on institutional theory which argues on the perceived legitimacy, effectiveness, and fairness of institutions. A transparent government involves citizens in decision-making processes and holds officials accountable is more likely to earn public trust. Trust is a key to positive interpersonal relation in various settings because it is central to how we interact with others for enhancing effectiveness and legitimacy (Harrison, 1993; Armstrong, 2005).

According to Coleman (1990), trust is all about exchange of service performed by public entity with honesty for calculating the expectations of gain and loss of citizen. Trust is an important element of government performance that affects institutional performance, well-being, economic development, and the reduction of crime (Putnam 1995; Marozzi, 2014). Citizens' trust of border agencies are the degree to which citizens have confidence in duty holders for their dedication, fairness and professionalism actions under institutional norms as well as the extent to which they are fulfilled (Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014).

Trust in government is the confidence of citizens that the government operates under public interests and expectations. Institutions shape trust as they behave properly and honestly on behalf of the people (Barnes & Gill, 2000). Honesty, fairness, benevolence, and competence are four key qualities that a trusted government and public officials should possess (Coleman, 1990; Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014; Yao, 2014). Rose-Ackerman (2001) argued that honesty is an essential substantive value with a close connection to trust which includes both truth-telling and responsible actions aimed at obeying the rules.

Gupta (2021) highlights how trust is influenced by factors such as governance quality, transparency, and public service delivery. Upreti (2023) about border governing agencies level of trust at ten different border crossing points of Nepal, reveals that trust in these agencies is often undermined by issues like honesty, inefficiency, and a lack of transparency. Finally, we can generalize that honesty, fairness, benevolence, trustworthiness, commitment, and competence are important aspects of institutional trustworthiness which have a direct relationship with citizen trust (Wall, 1990; Kim, 2005; Yao, 2014). Mayer et al. (1995) derived an integrative model of trust which indicates that trust for trustee are a function of the trustee's perceived ability, benevolence and integrity and of the trustor's propensity to trust.

Citizen trust towards the government is the foremost element of good governance. A coordinational relationship between APF, Nepal and border citizen can enhance good border governance. It has been a vibrant instrument to measure the efficiency of government. The notable work of Gupta (2021) on the citizen trust in public and political institution in Nepal

have suggested on continues survey on the government institution for better delivery of governance.

The citizen trust conducted by Upreti (2023) have suggested on independent survey of border governing agencies deployed in border crossing points of Nepal. The study of the citizen trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing points is a virgin study in the field of institutional governance. As border crossing points hold trading and strategic location in the major cities of Nepal, the deployment of different cluster agencies at this crossing point need to have citizen trust and confidence in order to enhance good border governance. APF, Nepal has a huge responsibility of regulating borders and providing a robust security. The task can only be achieved by having amicable relations with the citizens, local government, stakeholders and counter parts. Hence, there exist a research gap on assessing a citizen trust of APF, Nepal at border crossing point. The researcher have reviewed different theoretical prospective as well as empirical perspective of the subject and from these study of citizen trust the following conceptual framework has been have been developed.

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is correlation between determinant factors of citizen trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing points.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative approach with correlational research design to examine the relationship between various determinant factors of citizen's trust towards APF, Nepal at the crossing point. The determinant factors include integrity, competency, benevolence, honesty, and service delivery. The research is a deductive in nature and engage the model of Muhl (2014) which was focused on measuring the organizational trust. Both primary and secondary sources of data are extracted in construction of research. The primary data are taken from the citizens of two major border crossing points using structured Likert scaling questions. The data were collected from the help of enumerators who are the members of APF, Nepal deployed at crossing points. The secondary sources are books, journals, reports, publication, bulletin, newspaper and website.

The research follows purposive sampling technique to ensure representation across different demographic categories from crossing point and ensuring that the respondents have direct interactions with the APF, Nepal. The respondents are local residents, traders and transporter who usually travel in border. The demographic description are shown in the findings sections. The selection of respondents are based on purposive sampling technique. The survey was conducted in two major crossing points of Nepal. The selected crossing points are the crucial point consisting of strategic location, trade route and huge movement of

people. These crossing point are expected to represent all the major crossing point of Nepal. As the border land of Nepal have a unique socio-political, historical, cultural and linguistic characteristics, the researcher had not intend to study this factors in this research.

In order to extract the level of citizen trust of APF, Nepal at border crossings, five point Likert scaling technique questionnaire which consist of fifteen statements of determinant factors of citizen trust were surveyed. Likert scale values 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are taken as 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'Neutral', 'Agree', and 'Strongly agree' respectively. The collected data are analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The entered data in the SPSS program is done through descriptive analysis and later with inferential analysis as per the stated hypothesis. The statistical techniques for analysis of the data are descriptive and inferential where mean analysis, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were conducted.

In order to maintain consistency in measuring the determinant factor, reliability test of Likert questionnaire is conducted by using Cronbach's Alpha which measure internal consistency. The value of Alpha more than 0.7 is considered to be reliable. The following table shows the internal consistency of determinant factors.

**Table 1**

*The Reliability of Determinant Variables*

Determinant Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Integrity	.913	3
Competency	.832	3
Benevolence	.827	3
Honesty	.736	3
Service Delivery	.784	3
Total	.814	15

Source: Statistical Package for Social Science (2023)

The Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for five determinant factors under three questions, with a total of 15 questions. It shows the reliability of the Likert-scale questionnaire. All five determinant factors value is more than 0.7 so the questionnaire is statistically reliable, and the responses can be assumed as trustworthy.

### **Model Specification**

The following model are used to assess the impact on the dependent variable i.e. citizen trust by using Multiple linear regression equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Where

$X_1$  = Integrity

$X_2$  = Competency

$X_3$  = Benevolence

$X_4$  = Honesty

$X_5$  = Service Delivery

$Y$  = Citizen Trust (Dependent Variable)

$\beta_0$  = Intercept of the Equation

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are the coefficients for the independent variables  $X_1, X_2, X_3$ , and  $X_4$

$e$  = Error terms (residuals)

## Findings and Discussion

The researcher have sequenced findings in two parts. At the first part, demographic variables are portrayed. In the second part the determinant factors of citizen trust are analyzed.

### Demographic Variables

Demographic variables are essential in analyzing citizen trust towards APF Nepal at Border crossing points as they provide a level of understanding of the diverse perspectives and experiences within a population. Factors such as age, gender and education, help us to figure out how individuals perceive APF Nepal in terms of border security and management and interact with institutions and policies, leading to varying levels of trust across different groups of citizens. Altogether, there were 220 respondents and their age, sex, and education are as described.

**Table 2**

*Age and Gender of Respondents*

Age	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
10-20	2	0	2
21-30	54	22	76
31-40	101	19	120
40 +	22	0	22
Total	179	41	220

Source: Field survey (2024)



The Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on age and gender. A total of 220 respondents participated in the study, with 179 males and 41 females. Breaking it down by age groups, the 10–20 age category comprises only 2 male respondents, with no female representation. The 21–30 age group includes 76 respondents, of whom 54 are male and 22 are female. The largest group, aged 31–40, consists of 120 respondents, including 101 males and 19 females. In the 40+ age group, all 22 respondents are male, with no females represented.

**Education of Respondents**

Education is another important demographic variable in analyzing the citizen trust. The researcher have assume education as most of the important determinant factor. The high level of educated respondent will add more valuable insights in the research findings. The frequency distribution of respondent’s education have been presented below:

**Table 3**

*Education of Respondents*

Education	Frequency	Percent
SEE	4	1.8
+2	33	15.0
Bachelors	46	20.9
Master	137	62.3
Total	220	100.0

*Source:* Field survey (2024)

Table 3 reveals the educational qualifications of a respondents of 220 individuals. The education levels of secondary level consists of 4 individuals which contribute in 1.8% of the total and +2 (Higher Secondary Level) consists of 33 individuals which is 15.0%. The Bachelors level respondent consists of 46 individuals with 20.9% and Masters level respondents are 137 individuals with 62.3% of all.

The data shows that the majority of the respondents i.e. 62.3 % hold a Master's degree which shows a highly educated sample. Whereas, very few individuals have only completed SEE The data shows 83.2 % having advanced degrees.

**Determinant Factors of Citizen Trust towards APF, Nepal**

The level of citizen are highly dependent upon institutional factors such as integrity, honesty, benevolence and so on. The study conducted by Mulh (2018) analyzed five determinant factors of citizen trust. These determinant factors are crucial in shaping public



perception of the APF, Nepal reliability, effectiveness, and ethical conduct. The definition of this variables are as follows.

### **Integrity**

Integrity is a core institutional value that refers to the consistency of actions, values, methods, and principles of the APF, Nepal. It implies that the APF personnel act with honesty and strong moral principles, avoiding corruption and unethical behavior. Citizens are more likely to trust an institution that demonstrates a high level of integrity because it ensures that the institution is acting in the public's best interest. At a critical border crossing points, integrity is vital as citizens expect fair and lawful treatment from law enforcement officers.

### **Competency**

Competency refers to the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the APF, Nepal to perform their duties effectively. It encompasses the APF, Nepal capacity to handle complex security challenges, border management, and law enforcement at the border crossing point. Competency ensures that the institution is capable of maintaining safety and order, which reassures the public that the APF, Nepal is competent in protecting national security and managing cross-border activities efficiently.

### **Benevolence**

Benevolence relates to the APF, Nepal intention to act in a manner that prioritizes the welfare of the citizens. It reflects the concern and care the APF, Nepal staff shows toward the public while carrying out their responsibilities. When citizens perceive the APF, Nepal as having their best interests at heart and acting with goodwill, they are more likely to place their trust in the institution. This sense of empathy and care fosters a positive relationship between the security personnel and the local population.

### **Honesty**

Honesty implies that the APF, Nepal operates transparently, providing truthful information and being open about their actions and policies. An honest institution gains trust because it assures the public that there is no hidden agenda or deceit in its operations. At border points, where the APF is responsible for enforcing laws and maintaining order, transparency and truthfulness in communication and actions are essential for gaining public trust.

### **Service Delivery**

This variable refers to the APF, Nepal ability to provide effective and efficient services. In the context of the border crossing point, service delivery include timely border control, effective law enforcement, ensuring the safety of travelers, and managing any cross-border

threats. Citizens expect that the APF will provide these services without unnecessary delays or complications.

In order to access and measure these institutional variables three questions were asked and the results of those question are shown below:

### Result of Response

The following are the result of response of the questions that were surveyed at two major border crossing point among 220 respondents.

**Table 4**

*Result of Survey (In Percentage)*

Institution Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>1. Integrity</b>					
Citizens are treated fairly, equally and without any discrimination by APF, Nepal	0.9	10.9	1.3	51.8	24.1
APF, Nepal employees are always well-intentioned to citizens.	7.7	1.4	20.5	47.3	23.2
When I encounter a problem, I am sure the APF, Nepal will protect me, act on my interest.	2.7	2.3	16.4	54.5	24.1
<b>2. Competency</b>					
APF, Nepal have all required facilities (personnel, infrastructure, etc.) to fulfil the demands of citizens	15.9	27.3	10.5	25.5	20.9
APF, Nepal employees have all the qualifications to fulfil citizens' needs and expectations.	0	26.4	29.1	11.8	32.7
Services provided by APF, Nepal are at the quality to meet the expectations of citizens.	0	0	45.9	28.2	25.9

<b>3. Benevolence</b>					
When I encounter a problem, I am sure APF, Nepal will protect me, act on my interest.	0	3.2	44.1	29.5	23.2
The APF, Nepal helps citizens to provide them a more comfortable standard of living.	7.7	25.5	7.3	35.5	24.1
APF, Nepal help citizens on issues they are involved in.	7.7	1.4	18.6	44.5	27.7
<b>4. Honesty</b>					
When APF will makes a mistake it accepts the responsibility	0	8.2	37.7	32.3	21.8
Disruptions caused by failure of APF, Nepal are not concealed, the necessary measure is taken carefully	1.8	10	46.4	11.4	30.5
When it comes to government jobs, APF, Nepal do not accept failure; the responsibility is loaded over citizens.	0.9	28.2	26.8	30.5	13.6
<b>5. Service Delivery</b>					
One does not need to question any statement of the APF, Nepal, because it keeps its promises.	0	24.5	13.6	27.3	34.5
Public institutions make the effort needed to gain the trust of citizens	0	0.9	30.9	55.5	12.7
I think that the government gives value to the citizens and act accordingly	0	10.5	30.5	20	39.1

*Source:* Field survey (2024)

Table 4 shows the responses of citizens perceptions of the APF, Nepal at border crossing point based on five institutional variables: Integrity, Competency, Benevolence, Honesty, and Service Delivery. Integrity reflects citizen belief in fair treatment and positive

intentions of APF employees. While most respondents agree that APF, Nepal treats citizens fairly, where 51.8% agreeing and 24.1% strongly agreeing, fewer respondents strongly agree that APF, Nepal employees are consistently well-intentioned where 47.3% agree, 23.2% strongly agree. There is also significant confidence that the APF, Nepal will act in citizen interests during problems, with 54.5% agreeing and 24.1% strongly agreeing. In overall, integrity is perceived positively, with 75.9% (agree + strongly agree) believing that citizens are treated fairly and 70.5% considering APF employees well-intentioned. Similarly, 78.6% feel protected by APF in case of problems.

Competency evaluates the APF, Nepal ability to meet citizens' demands. Responses indicate a mixed view of APF, Nepal resources and employee qualifications. A large proportion of respondents believe APF, Nepal lacks sufficient personnel or infrastructure where 27.3% disagree, 15.9% strongly disagree, but some see APF, Nepal employees as having the required qualifications where 32.7% strongly agree, 11.8% agree. Service quality also falls within a range where 45.9% remain neutral. In sum up, competency remains a concern, as only 46.4% believe APF has sufficient facilities, while 44.5% acknowledge employees' qualifications. However, 54.1% think the services meet expectations.

Benevolence shows citizens' perceptions of APF, Nepal willingness to help. Many respondents are neutral or slightly positive about the APF, Nepal ability to act in their interest where 44.1% neutral, 29.5% agree. Similarly, around a third believe APF enhances their living standards where 35.5% agreed and aids them in issues they are involved in where 44.5% agree and 27.7% strongly agree. Benevolence is moderately accepted, with 52.7% trusting APF to protect them, 59.6% acknowledging its role in improving citizens' living standards, and 72.2% recognizing its support in various issues

Honesty assesses transparency and accountability. Although 37.7% are neutral, 32.3% agree that APF accepts responsibility for mistakes, and 30.5% believe that APF takes necessary corrective measures when problems arise. However, there is a significant concern where 30.5% that responsibility for failures is shifted to citizens. Honesty sees mixed opinions, as 54.1% agree APF accepts responsibility for mistakes, and 42.1% believe failures are not concealed. However, 44.1% think responsibility is unfairly shifted to citizens.

Service delivery captures trust in APF, Nepal promises and its effort to build citizen trust. Respondents have a mixed response to whether APF, Nepal keeps its promises, with 34.5% strongly agreeing but 24.5% disagreeing. There is a positive perception of public institutions' efforts to gain trust where 55.5% agree, though a smaller portion of citizens

feels the government values and acts accordingly toward them where 39.1% strongly agree. In overall, service delivery reflects cautious optimism, with 61.8% believing APF keeps its promises, 68.2% acknowledging public institutions' efforts to gain trust, and 59.1% agreeing the government values its citizens.

### **Relationship between Institutional Variables and Citizen Trust**

The research question of this study was to find out the relationship between Institutional variables and citizen trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing points. Five different variables along with fifteen questions were surveyed. The question for each variables were computed and average value was discovered. The following are the descriptive data recovered from the computed variables.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

The descriptive analysis in order to analyze the level of citizen trust of the APF, Nepal, on five key institutional variables are analyzed in terms of mean scores, Standard Deviation (SD) and Standard Errors (SE) for each variable based on a sample size of 220 respondents.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Analysis of Institutional Variables*

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error
Integrity	3.8636	.88369	.05958
Competency	3.4636	1.01395	.06836
Benevolence	3.6621	.94790	.06391
Honesty	3.5136	.69522	.04687
Service Delivery	3.7985	.77328	.05213
Citizen Trust	3.6603	.78669	.05304
N=220			

*Source:* Field survey (2024)

The variable Integrity has the highest mean score of 3.86, indicating that citizens generally have a positive perception of the fairness and ethical conduct of the APF, Nepal. The standard deviation .88 suggests moderate variability in responses. Competency has a lower mean 3.46, reflecting some uncertainty about the APF, Nepal ability to meet citizens' needs, with a relatively higher standard deviation 1.01 indicating greater

variability in opinions. Benevolence has a mean of 3.66, showing that citizens believe the APF has a moderately positive intent to act in their interest, though variability .94 remains notable. Honesty scores a mean of 3.51, implying a moderately positive perception of APF’s transparency and accountability, with the lowest standard deviation .69 showing more consistent responses. Service Delivery and Citizen Trust both show relatively high means of 3.79 and 3.66, respectively, indicating that citizens trust the APF’s services to a reasonable degree. Their standard deviations .77 and .78 show moderate variation in responses. Overall, citizens have a generally positive value of 3.66 with S.D. 0.78 in which percentage value in 73%, which is a satisfactory level of trust gained by APF, Nepal at border crossing point.

**Correlation Analysis**

After calculation of mean and standard deviation, the correlation coefficient is measured between different institutional variables to determine the strength of relationship with citizen trust. The following are the relationship between institutional variables and citizen trust.

**Table 6**

*Correlation Analysis*

		T	I	C	B	H	SD
I	Correlation	.915**	1				
C	Correlation	.876**	.645**	1			
B	Correlation	.966**	.880**	.873**	1		
H	Correlation	.865**	.807**	.657**	.754**	1	
SD	Correlation	.930**	.862**	.745**	.860**	.794**	1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

*Note:* T: Trust, B: Benevolence, I: Integrity, SD: Service Delivery, C: Competency, H: Honesty and Level of significance: \*\*\* at 0.001, \*\* at 0.01, and \* at 0.05

*Source:* Field survey (2024)

The Table 6 shows strong positive correlations between all variables. Trust has very high correlations with all other variables, especially with Benevolence where, coefficient value (r) is 0.96. Others variables like service Delivery have 0.93, Integrity 0.91, Competency 0.87, Honesty 0.865. These high correlations with the variables shows a strong relationship between citizens' trust in the APF, Nepal. The coefficient value ranges from 0.87 to 0.96 which means that the relationship strength ranges from 87 to 96 percentage.

### Regression Analysis

The five predictors of institutional variables will engage in understand its impact on citizen trust. The multiple regression analysis helps in identifying the strength of associations among the dependent variable i.e. citizen trust and institutional variables. The following table shows the degree of association among the variables.

**Table 7**

#### *Regression Analysis*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	.324	.036	8.931	.000
Integrity	.449	.022	20.630	.000
Competency	.308	.018	16.666	.000
Benevolence	.146	.032	4.575	.000
Honesty	.309	.038	10.202	.002
Service Delivery	.668	.034	19.482	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Trust $R^2 = 0.990$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.979$ F. Stat = 18.56 F. Sig = 0.000				

*Source:* Field survey (2024)

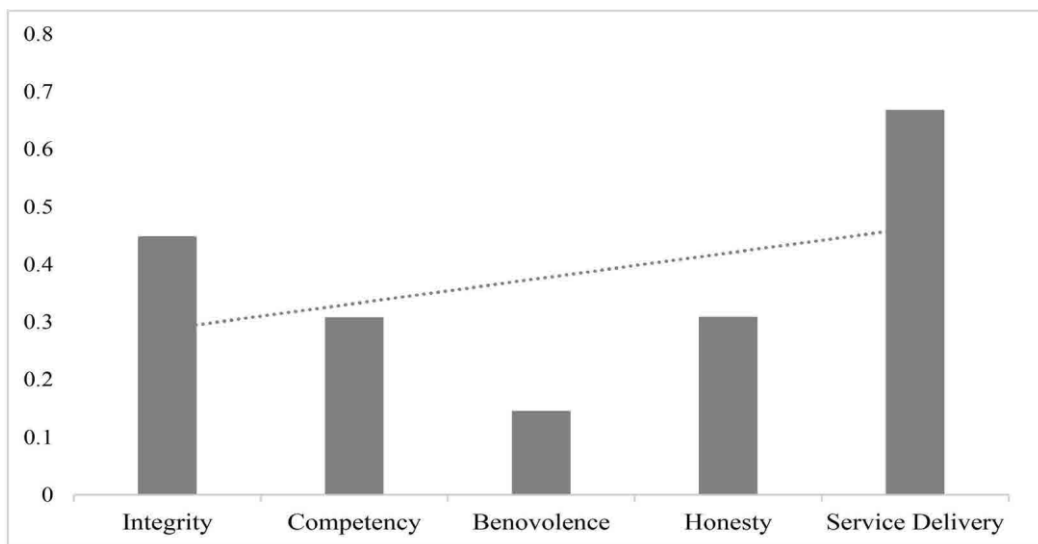
Table 7 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between various independent variables and the dependent variable. The model explains 99% of the variance in trust, as indicated by the  $R^2$  value of 0.990 and an Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.979, meaning the independent variables account for nearly all the variance in trust towards the APF, Nepal. The overall model is highly significant (F-stat = 18.56,  $p < 0.001$ ),



indicating that the model fits the data well. Integrity has the highest significant beta coefficient (B) 0.449, indicating it has a strong positive influence on trust. Service Delivery is also a strong variable with beta coefficient of 0.668, which shows the importance of delivering on promises and maintaining good service to build trust. Competency beta coefficient value is 0.308 and Honesty beta coefficient is 0.309, which are significant positive predictors, showing that citizens' trust increases when the APF, Nepal is seen as competent and honest. Whereas, Benevolence Beta coefficient is 0.146 has the smallest but still significant positive impact, suggesting that while citizens value benevolence, it is not as strong a factor as integrity or service delivery in building trust. In conclusion, the model shows that service delivery and integrity have the most substantial effects on trust, followed by competency, honesty, and benevolence. All predictors are statistically significant which shows their importance in shaping citizens' trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing points.

**Figure 1**

*Bar Diagram Regression Coefficients for the Independent Variables Predicting Trust.*



Source: Field survey (2024)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e \dots \dots \dots$$

Where, Trust = 0.324 + 0.449 Integrity + 0.308 Competency + 0.146 Benevolence + 0.309 Honesty + 0.668 Service Delivery. The dotted blue line indicate the linear trend which is in increasing way which imply a positive relationship between determinant factors of citizen trust towards APF, Nepal. The increasing linear line also suggests that competency, benevolence, and honesty also tends to improve.

The findings highlight the significant role of determinant factors in determining citizen trust toward the APF, Nepal at border crossing point. The determinant factors integrity, competency, benevolence, honesty, and service delivery represent core values that influence the public perception of the APF, Nepal. The overall citizen trust of 73% with 0.78 S.D. shows a remarkable trust gained by APF, Nepal at crossing points. However, as mentioned by Hetherington, (2005) that trust is subjected to change by different circumstantial factors. Therefore, APF, Nepal leadership and local unit commander need to be proactive in retaining trust. As mentioned by Johnston & Shearing, (2003) and Hainmueller & Hopkins (2014) the inherent factors such as dedication, fairness and professionalism actions under institutional norms are to be fulfilled by APF, Nepal personnel deployed at border crossing point.

The findings of regression coefficients shows the relative influence on trust, out of which service delivery showing the highest coefficient, followed by integrity, honesty, competency, and benevolence. In view of this findings, we can corroborate with the literature of Wall (1990), Kim (2005) and Yao (2014). The higher coefficient of service delivery suggests that APF, Nepal need to enhance deliver services effectively and reliably. As mentioned by Gupta (2021), service delivery implies that timely response, efficiency actions, and problem solving capabilities need to be adopted by APF, Nepal in building public trust. As mentioned by Mayer et al. (1995) integrity also has a substantial impact in citizen trust. The findings also demanded to ensure good integrity and moral standards within the APF, Nepal. Integrity is a quality of possessing strong moral principles so it is urged to APF, Nepal leadership in employing rigorous selection criteria for deploying a highly integrated APF, personnel at border crossing points.

Similarly, the findings from Barnes and Gill (2000) focused on honesty and competency of service provider in trust gaining process also have positive regression coefficients in this research findings, although they are lower than service delivery and integrity. This shows that citizens value truthful communication and the professional ability of APF, Nepal personnel in their duties. However, benevolence, with the lowest coefficient, seems to be a less influential predictor of trust. This may indicate that citizens prioritize practical results and integrity over perceived benevolence or kindness from APF, Nepal personnel.

To improve public trust, the APF, Nepal should focus on enhancing service delivery standards. This could include setting clear service benchmarks, such as reduced response times and effective handling of incidents at Border points. Training programs that build

operational efficiency, combined with regular performance reviews could further improve trust. Also, maintaining high integrity within the APF, Nepal through ethical training and a zero tolerance policy for corruption could further strengthen public perception. To address the lower coefficient for benevolence, the APF, Nepal need to consider community outreach and relationship building activities that promote a more sympathetic image with local citizens. This general approach could enhance all predictors of trust which creates more positive and trustworthy image of the APF, Nepal.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this findings shows that the acceptance of the alternative hypotheses of determinant factor of citizen trust towards APF, Nepal at border crossing point indicates a good relationship between local citizen and APF, Nepal. The factors such as integrity, competency, benevolence, honesty, and service delivery are crucial for building trust in the APF, Nepal. Citizens trust in the APF, Nepal reflects the institutional ethical standards, competence in handling tasks, and willingness to act in the public interest. Promptly, the factor service delivery and integrity need to improve in order to regain the citizen trust. The finding of the study are significant to APF, leadership, local unit commanders and border governing agencies as it stresses on continuous improvement in institutional practices and behaviors to be impose of local citizens. The ability of APF, Nepal in demonstrating a high level of integrity enhance more faith in APF, Nepal and citizen relation. It provide justification to different civic actions program launched by APF, Nepal in fostering citizen relationship.

Finally, this research provides a valuable foundation for understanding public trust in the APF, Nepal at the border crossing point. Further research is required to fully understand the intricate relationships between others variables such as demographic, perceptual and institutional. The results highlight the importance of service delivery and integrity of APF, Nepal and urges to enhance “APF, Nepal with border citizen program” effectively by building strategies to enhance public confidence at critical border points. Further research is suggested in this subject.

## **Author Introduction**

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