Modelling An Information Transfer Model For Police Reporting In Malaysia

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Abstract. Information nowadays has become an important factor either in learning or working systems. Therefore, information needs to be well managed to ensure the effectiveness of the communication between stakeholders. For example, when a complainant lodge a police report, the information will transfer between several roles in the police unit. The report contains important information and need to reach the investigator as soon as possible. The purpose of this study is to articulate information have been transferred within police organizations once a report has been lodged. There are five factors involved; role, content, time, medium and filing. The output of this study is a model of the five factors that can be implementing in the police reporting processes specifically on document or information transfer. The model will lead the police officers to use the time, tools and resources effectively from the moment complainant lodge a report until how the data will be stored and reach the other police officers to take further actions.

Keywords: Police report, information transfer, information modelling.

INTRODUCTION

Investigative police work is mostly about the recovery, analysis and interpretation of information about criminal offences (Osterburg and Ward, 2007). As Luen & Al-Hawamdeh (2001) state, timely and accurate information is critical to the success of policing. The activities and work carried out by police forces are increasingly in the areas of crime prevention as well as in incident management, investigation and community policing. Crime prevention implies activities such as surveillance, patrolling and guarding. These activities can be carried out through both reactive and proactive means. Reactive measures such as roadblocks, spot-check and showing police presence are routinely carried out by police officers as part as their investigative duties. Proactive measures include public education to help prevent crime.

At the same time, police forces are increasingly accountable to government at various levels and to the community at large for various aspects of their performances, and are expected to communicate with government and the public about what they are doing (Collier, Edwards, & Shaw, 2004). Luen and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) find that the vast knowledge that police officers need in order to perform their normal duties suggest the need for police officers to be proficient knowledge workers, being able to access, assimilate and use knowledge effectively to discharge their duties.
Despite an increased focus upon proactive policing in recent years, criminal investigation is still perhaps the most important task of any law enforcement agency. As a result, the skills required to carry out a successful investigation or to be an ‘effective detective’ have been subject to much attention and debate (Smith and Flanagan, 2000; Dean, 2000; Fahsing and Gottschalk, 2008, 652). As Stelfox (2008, 303) stated: “The service’s capacity to carry out investigations comprises almost entirely the expertise of investigators”. In this respect, Dean (2000) highlighted the need to profile criminal investigators in order to promote further understanding of the cognitive approaches they take to the process of criminal investigation.

In most states, criminal justice officials themselves are prohibited from giving out a perpetrator's criminal record even though this information is available on the public record. This is to avoid the formidable prejudice that could be created by the authority of the official's position. 911 calls and calls to police dispatch are both audio taped and summarized in written notes on a computer (the Computer-Aided Design (CAD) record). Both are preserved as official records. Both the 911 audio tape and CAD record rank high in evidentiary value. And both frequently come in handy when officers fail to write reports, since these officers generally claim they did not write the report because the victim was not reporting anything of a criminal nature. The 911 tapes or CAD records can easily prove the officer lied.

The police report is usually the single most critical document a victim will have in her efforts to stop the crime, for instance, violence. If the police report is done properly, it serves as a solid basis for prosecuting the perpetrator and for getting the perpetrator under control. A good police report can also frequently resolve problems the victim may encounter in many other arenas, such as in family court, or problems with landlords, school, employment, immigration, etc. On the other hand, a bad police report which is an incomplete or biased police report can be seriously undermine a victim's attempt to end the violence. A bad police report makes prosecution of the perpetrator very difficult or impossible. And a bad police report can easily be used by the perpetrator against the victim.

To be sure that the victim has been given a complete copy of the police report (which contains all witness statements and supplements), look at the bottom of the first page of the report before leaving the police department. There should be a written notation of how many pages there are in the complete report. Count the pages that have been given. If the number of pages received does not add up to the total indicated, go back to the records clerk and ask for the full copy of the report. If the records clerk won't give a full copy of the report, ask for the records supervisor, or go as high up the ranks. If officials still refuse to give the victim the complete report, they may have to go to a state official and have them call the chief to inform the chief of the intent of the law.

This paper is organized as follows. Section II presents the related work of the research. Section III includes the discussion based on the factor that involve in the effective police reporting. Section IV explains the factor of proposed model. Section V refers to conclusion.
Related Work

From the previous research, there have not so many researchers who are doing the study about the information transfer for police investigation. Currently, researchers focus on certain topic such as police investigation techniques, process and procedures.

Investigations are the police activity concern with the apprehension of criminals by the gathering of evidence leading to their arrest and the collection and presentation of evidence and testimony for the purpose of obtaining convictions (Thibault, Lynch, & McBride, 1998). Investigations is normally divided into two major areas of activity which are the preliminary investigation normally carried out by officers in the uniforms patrol division and the follow up investigation normally carried out by officers formally trained in investigate techniques, often part of a detective bureau.

In criminal investigations, detectives apply different thinking styles, such as method style, challenge style, skill style and risk style. To be effective, detectives need to practice good empathic communication, open-minded curiosity, logical reasoning, creative thinking and dogged determination. It is good when implement it while the police officer take the police report from complainant.

There are many reasons to file a police report. Some of the most common reasons are to ease of finding and arresting a suspect in a crime, adding serial numbers to statewide databases to recover stolen property and tracking criminal activity in various areas to prevent future crimes. A police report should be filed in the city or jurisdiction where the crime occurred. They need to get the most accurate information possible to conduct a thorough investigation.

Digital technology continues to advance with devices such as smart phones, tablet devices and personal computers containing a growing number of features and applications that facilitate both interpersonal and mass communication. The internet has become an important part of global culture in the 21st century (Witkowski, 2002) and provides additional options for how messages are generated and received (Day, 2013). Police forces nowadays are using sophisticated technology in order to receive data about the particular cases that have been reported. In the meantime, it can ease them to finding and arresting the suspect when having and using the sophisticated device.

This paper have gathered and discussed the flow involved in lodging a police report that include the process, procedures and ethical issues in police reporting.

Police Reporting Process

The 195th Police Day brought lots of good news for the men-in-blue. In addition to the launching of PRS, 23,000 additional police personnel will be recruited within the next five years to beef up the strength, improve efficiency and upgrade professionalism of the force. The size of police districts will also be reduced to ensure more effective policing In conclusion, it supposed to be more effective and efficient of lodging a police report and the way of police officer do their job to arrest the perpetrator and counter the crimes in Malaysia.

Since the inception of the PRS, PDRM have stopped compiling crime statistics manually. The process of lodging a police report starts with the complainant walk in to the Police Station and at the Enquiry Office the police personnel received the report and
type it into the computer using the PRS. Then, the typed report is shown to the complainant for him/her to acknowledge it to be true and accurate. In case where he/she cannot read Bahasa Malaysia, the report is read to him/her and translated if possible. The complainant will then sign a copy of the report for acknowledgement. The PRS will then generate a police report number and the Officer-in-Charge of Police Station (OCS) classifies the complaint according to the nature of the report, whether it is of a civil or criminal category. The Officer Commanding Police District (OCPD) will subsequently re-check whether the report is appropriately classified.

The PRS is linked-up throughout the country and to the Contingent and Bukit Aman headquarters, Criminal Intelligence Units (URJ) at these HQ levels compile crime statistics periodically by daily, weekly, monthly, and so on (ACP Ramli Mohamed Yoosuf, 2012).

**Police Reporting Procedures**

In the normal course of things, investigation is usually started on receipt of a report at the police station about the commission of an offence. This report is known as the First Information Report, or in short FIR. It is also generally categorized as a Police Report since it is lodged at the police station. However not all police reports are FIR.

Generally there are two modes in which a person can lodge a police report, which of course includes an FIR. First is where the information is given orally by the informant (or complainant) to the police personnel at the enquiry office of a police station. The police personnel on duty at the counter, receives the information. After the report is recorded it will be read over to the complainant whom will subsequently be asked if the report is correct and given a chance to make correction as he may wish. He shall also append to such entry the date and hour at which such information is given, and whether given in writing or reduced in writing. Both the complainant and the police officer are required to sign the report.

Secondly, the complainant may write his own report, in which case he will usually be asked to write it on a form called Form Pol. 55 (Emergency Report Book), or where Form Pol. 55 is not available he will be asked to make it on Form Pol. 51A, or even a suitable blank piece of paper which the police personnel at the enquiry office will supply for the purpose. The police personnel receiving any such report will be required to counter sign the report besides getting the signature of the complainant on the report. The report will then be pasted into the Report Book (From Pol. 41). All reports, by whichever mode they are lodged, will be allocated a police report number for easy reference (DSP Goh Boon Keng, 2003).

**Ethical Issues in Police Reporting**

Crime statistics released by the PDRM are the actual figures of criminal cases reported to and investigated by the police department. These figures are auto-generated by the department’s computer system, i.e. Police Reporting System (PRS). In this way, no alteration or adjustment to the figures can be done, in order to portray a rosy picture of the crime situation as claimed by certain quarters.
The PRS is monitored daily at the District, Contingent and Bukit Aman HQ levels. Senior officers at these levels regularly check the accuracy of the classification via the system itself. As a matter of fact, this practice is very important that disciplinary actions will be taken against those officers who failed to classify cases accordingly and those who refused or failed to take down a report will be dealt with disciplinary procedure. In short, PDRM would like to assure and reassure the public that we do not resort to deceiving the public by playing tricks with crime figures. All crime data and statistics generated within the PDRM system have been audited and verified by Pricewaterhouse Coopers Malaysia (PwC). Therefore all figures presented by PDRM are valid and reliable in accordance with the standards of the professional auditors and not something of our own creation (ACP Ramli Mohamed Yoosuf, 2012).

DISCUSSION

The police are vested with vast powers under the laws which closely affect the liberty and rights of the public. Thus in the course of performing their duties, police officers are inevitably exposed to criticism and complaints. In particular, police personnel serving on the front line of the force that are in direct contact with the public usually bear the brunt of public criticisms and complaints. They include personnel at the police enquiry office and the criminal investigation department. Police refusal to accept reports from the public and police inaction on certain criminal cases are some of the common brickbats lambasted at the force.

According to H. Chen et al. (2002), the problem is not necessarily that the information has not been captured - any officer who fills out up to seven forms per incident can attest to that. The problem is one of access. Typically, law-enforcement agencies have captured data only on paper or have fed it into a database or crime information system. If the agency involved has more than one database (that are possibly incompatible), information retrieval can be difficult or time consuming.

| TABLE (1). Criteria of factors that involved in effective police reporting. |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Factor   | Criteria                                      |
| Role     | To whom the report will be transferred.  |
| Content  | Details about report to be transferred.     |
| Time     | Time taken to transfer the data of police report |
| Medium   | System use to receive data from police station. |
| Filing   | Ways to store the data of report that have been reported / solved. |

Table I shows the five factors are played crucial role in order to have an effective police report to tackle all those crime occur in Malaysia. The first factor was played very important role in process to record the report from the complainant. The police officer who has been in charge at the front desk in the police station is responsible to take and record the report.

Police reporting emphasizes on the second factor that involved in the effective police report which is content. Content of the police report become the most important factor because it can help the police officer to take action for further action of the crime occur.
They need the detail and complete information of the incident so that police officer will not arrest the wrong perpetrator.

In the meanwhile, the time taken to transfer the information of the police report to the police officer also becomes the factor that involve in effective police reporting. Time will indicate how fast it can be done to transfer the data/information to the police officers. In order to receive all the data or information about the police report that have been lodged at the police station, it needs a medium such as a hardware or software tools to ensure that the police officers will receive and alert about the information transferred.

After the complainant has lodged their police report, all the details and information must be recorded and stored well for future use. So that, police organization must have at least databases to store all the records that will ease police workers to review it back if necessary and also for doing the analysis purpose.

**Proposed Model**

Today’s police officers are being asked to change their focus from a reactive posture consumed by answering emergency calls (999) to a more proactive one of community involvement. The nationwide emergence of Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP) in the 1990’s, was the impetus for this expanded, problem solving approach (Goldstein, 1990). Problem-oriented policing involves identifying problems, designing strategies to address them, implementing those strategies and then evaluating the effectiveness of their actions. Officers are trained to work with residents and to examine crime issues as part of the overall quality of life in a neighborhood. Figure 1 depicts the flow on how the data or information going through starting from the police officer jot down the report until on how the report have been stored when the case has settled.

![Figure 1. The Proposed Model for Information Transfer](image)

The proposed model above has shown the five factors that involved in effective police reporting. First, police officer that responsible to jot down the report from civilian are play the main role. He/she are responsible to sit at the front desk in the police station to take the police report and record it in the system which is known as Police Reporting System (PRS). PRS is a system that was developed using web bases technology with the function as investigation tools. (Datuk Zulkifli Abdullah, 2012)

Content of the police report was emphasize that it is become the most important factor involved in the process of police reporting. The content of the report contain all the data and details about the crime or incidents occur that have been lodge by victims. This
The second factor is very important because it will help the police detective to take the further action and do the investigation. It is must to have the correct and right information to avoid them from make a mistake to arrest the wrong perpetrator.

The third factor is about the time taken to transfer the data to the related officer. The amount of time to file a police report varies by state and by crime, though generally speaking, the best answer is, "as soon as possible." Timing taken to distributed or transfer the data about the report that have been lodged need to be consider because every crime or tragedy happen, we need to solve it immediately in order to make sure everything or everyone are safe.

In the meanwhile, medium to receive the report become the fourth factor that involved in the process of police reporting. It can be any kind of medium such as via email, phone applications, system, call and so on. The medium used to transfer the details about the report to any police officer to inform them about that case occur and need for further actions.

Last but not least, the fifth factor that involved in the police reporting is the way the records of the report will be stored. It can be by filing the document and put it in a locked room or store it in a database and it will ease the police officer to review it back. There have one organization with 190 member countries all over the world called INTERPOL that help police in different countries work together to solve crimes that cross borders. INTERPOL is one of example that using databases containing millions of records, allowing them to search the databases on various types of crimes or incidents that have been recorded (INTERPOL, 2015).

CONCLUSION

In the matter of lodging police reports, the questions of territorial jurisdiction of police stations do not arise. The most important factor is the correctness and effectiveness on the report that reached the certain roles of police officer. In this study, we model of the five factors (role, content, time, medium and filing) that can be implementing in the police reporting processes specifically on document or information transfer.

For future work, we are going to collect data from various police stations, analyze and finalized the model. The model will be implemented so that reporting a police report processes in Malaysia will be more effective and improve the way of police officer to do their job to arrest the perpetrator and counter the crimes in Malaysia.

REFERENCES


