

Free research paper on research in law enforcement

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



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A Police unit may be termed as a division of authority given the directive to put in force the laws of the land. Every rule or nation constantly relies on a police force to ensure peace and order within its borders. Most developed nations have numerous arms and agencies that have been created to be concerned with law enforcement. For instance, in the United States, these policing institutions are created and managed by several levels of the government, that is, federal, state and local level . Every police department operates under diverse jurisdiction and report to the respective management level. Federal law enforcement agencies are accountable to the federal government, similarly state police agencies report to the state government and so on (Maxfield & Babbie, 2010). Thus, a police unit is a vital unit to any government and society in ensuring peace and harmony. This paper examines research methods that could provide insights into police operation in the United States, specific jurisdiction levels, and occupation satisfaction and dangers.

Research Problem

Just as any other law enforcement unit, the United Police unit faces various occupational dangers that result in fatalities and psychological problems to police personnel .. This research would attempt to understand the underlying dangers of police work. The study would review causes of death among police officers and the reasons for some psychological break downs while on duty. Additionally, the research will investigate efforts taken by authorities to improve working conditions in the police department. Finally, such a research should suggest methods of improving occupational safety in the police department.

Research Methodology

This research will rely on qualitative research methods. One such qualitative research methodology that would be used is the exploratory research methodology, a constituent of qualitative research. This kind of research is one that is conducted to solve a problem that is not clearly defined. As the name suggests exploratory research methods attempt to explore condition and situations about undefined issues . This kind of research employs the use of both secondary and primary sources. Interviews and participant observation are some of the most appropriate primary sources employed in performing exploratory research. The most reliable source of primary data in such a case would be interviews. Understanding satisfaction and dangers that come along with policing activities can only be appreciated through interviewing active police officers in the field. Such interviews could either be structured or unstructured. For the purpose of understanding the police unit,

using unstructured interviews would be the most appropriate method to use. This is for the basic reason that each police officer is likely to have a differentiated response to the same questions and issues.

There are other advantages associated with interviews. One of the main advantages is that interviews allows real time recording of information. Interviewing police officers will give the research the opportunity of recoding information in real time . Asking questions such as “ what motivates you in doing your job” and “ what are the biggest dangers that you face in your occupation”, might be appropriate questions for the purposes of this research. Such open ended questions while performing the research will give the researcher a chance to record varied responses. Open communication provides the researcher with the opportunity to have a direct experience of the concerns held by police officers. Observation is also a good source of primary data with similar advantages as interviews.

There are other methodologies under qualitative research methods that would be employed for this particular research. In general quantitative data collection employs a variety of sampling and structured data collection methods . Each sampling and data collection method employed depends on the specific purpose of a research. There are other research methods referred to as quantitative techniques which are research methods employed in social sciences that seek to explore a specific aspect about a population. Quantitative techniques are general methods applied in large scale measurement of ideas . Such research methods allow the questions and data collection methods to be structured in such a manner that the results would be extrapolated to the entire population. Findings are generalized and rely

on structured questions with closed-ended response options. However for the purpose of this research, qualitative research would be the preferred method.

Qualitative techniques have several advantages of over quantitative techniques. Qualitative techniques provide a wealth of detailed data about a defined number of people or cases. Detailed data would be ideal for understanding the social and psychological state of the police unit. Open-ended responses provide an elaborate response structure that this research would find insightful. Qualitative research methods also allow a researcher to enter into the research field without contrived preconceptions .

Informed consent and confidentiality

In doing any research, it is very important to meet ethical consideration associated with research. It is vital that all research subjects provide informed consent of participating in the research. Informed consent requires that investigators educate potential subjects of research and inform them of the objectives of the research. Consenting to participate in the research goes beyond mere signature. In that such consent must be given freely without any coercion (Maxfield & Babbie, 2010). This is particularly important in doing a research dealing with police officers. A common police unit may be under massive social and security concerns. Ensuring that participants of the research are not coerced into providing information is important for the success of the research.

The second important research aspect that must be put into consideration is confidentiality. It is very important to appreciate the effort taken by

participants to provide information for a research. Taking such information and ensuring the confidentiality of the information is equally vital. There are several ways of ensuring that confidentiality of the information is achieved. One of the most commonly proffered methods is anonymization of data sources . This keeps the source of the data confidential and lessens the degree of victimization.

A second method of maintaining confidentiality of data is restricting access to the information. Here access to data strictly limited to bona fide research personnel. Stringent rules regarding the access to sensitive information have been applied in several cases. Such restrictive measures are likely to work better in this kind of particular. Police and any law enforcement unit may face several dangers if such sensitive information is exposed. It is upon the research team to ensure that information is misused.

Conclusion

Research has always played a major role in providing insights into several aspects. Scholars employ research as one of the empirical study methods to prove assertions and explore other unknown facets. Therefore, to understand issues facing the police department, research methodologies would best provide such insights. Using qualitative research methods instead of quantitative would be appropriate for this research as it provides deeper information. It is important that researchers work within the precepts of ethical research that implores the use of informed consent and confidentiality. Keeping within these directives would ensure a successful research into police units in the United States.

Aamodt, G. M. (2004). *Research in Law Enforcement Selection*. New Jersey: Universal-Publishers.

Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2010). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. New York: Cengage Learning.