

“Policing on an Empty Stomach” Research Methodology:

There are many ways I could have gained information and data to better understand how police officers are being affected differently compared to other police staff and also other officers in different roles when it comes to the operational demand. I will look at how this affects their ability to take a break due to the demand they face and what type of foods the different teams bring to work as a result.

I have decided to use a questionnaire as this allows me to gather a great sample of data compared to trying to individually interview my target audience, it also allows me to capture data without personal data such as gender, body type and age. (Adam and Cox, 2008)

The definition of a questionnaire is “a list of questions that several people are asked so the information can be collected about something” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019) which is exactly what I’m planning to achieve.

The main advantage of using a questionnaire is its ability to reach a wider audience as I wish to capture the different perspectives of response officers compared to specialist teams while also gaining a perspective from police staff. Using a questionnaire is also very cost effective as I’m able to use Google forms and share the questionnaire via the Gwent Police internal server. It also allows my audience to remain anonymous as there could be fear of answering honestly due to the concern that management will frown upon the findings as force policy is not always being followed. (JAIN, 2023)

As I’m trying to capture responses from different teams using a questionnaire, this will allow me to keep the questions standardised through the teams which will highlight any clear differences they experience from the pressure of demand. (Lindemann)

I will also leave an open comment box which will allow the participant to share any additional feedback if they wish in relation to my questions as the questions may have encouraged them to think about their eating habits while on shift.

Of course, with any research there are also drawbacks and one main drawback of using a questionnaire is a lack of participation. Regardless of how many people are within Gwent Police the likely hood of people being exposed to my questionnaire is still very low. I also want to gain feedback without any personal emotion which limits me using the relationships I have built with different departments of the force. (Lal)

Another drawback to using a questionnaire is response bias which can occur with a few factors in play. One factor will be how a question is written which leads the participant to think and

answer in a way the author has intended. There can also be evidence with lack of questions that would explore someone's understanding or true opinions of the participants. (Frost)

In conclusion, a questionnaire allows me to reach a wider audience with no cost to myself and allows me to span across all the departments I would like to sample, it also allows anonymity to who is participating. Knowing the challenges that come with the questionnaire I paid extra effort to have follow up questions that I may not originally ask to allow a fair response instead of a bias response.

Word count: 540

Sample of questionnaire questions:

How long have you been in the force?

Which department are you working within?

What is your shift pattern?

Are you aware of your entitlement to break throughout your working day?

What is your normal break time?

Within the last month, how often have you been able to take your break?

Do you bring lunch with you?

What do you typically bring to work?

Do you buy food at work?

Where would you buy food?

What typically would you choose to buy?

Do you think the food you eat at work affects your performance?

Do you think having to miss your break due to operational demands has an effect on you?

References:

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