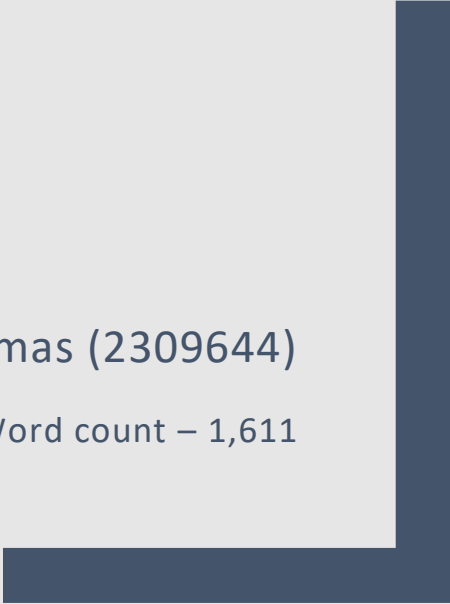




EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

Leah Thomas (2309644)

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This essay will include a comprehensive definition of evidence-based policing and its key principles, it will also compare and contrast how evidence-based policing differs from traditional policing methods.

According to Spooner *et al*, (2022), Evidence-based policing (EBP) is defined as research and data used to support decision-making. EBP is used to ensure that decisions and actions are made on solid evidence to guide behaviours and practices.

EBP is an approach used by police forces across the board, EBP accentuates the analysis of data, research, and evidence to advise and improve policies, policing practices, and decisions. Furthermore, the EBP is used to generate high quality, more responsive and efficient practices in policing, whilst minimizing unintended consequences (Bullock *et al*, 2020).

According to The Home office (2012), traditional policing is described as laws and policies that police agencies follow to protect and serve civilians. Police forces are expected to respond to calls, patrol randomized areas, make arrests and use force when necessary.

Some key principles of EBP include empirical research, data-driven decision making and community engagement. According to Kuen *et al* (2023), empirical research is the use of high-quality research which takes into account criminal patterns, behaviour and policing activities. This research gives law enforcement insight into causes of crime and looks at the effectiveness of interventions.

EBP reviews the research and uses models such as the SARA model consists of four elements; scan, analyse, response and assess. The scan element of the model is used to look for patterns in crime and behaviour and how frequently they occur.

The analyse sector is used to find root causes for these issues such as closures of youth clubs or boredom. Response is accountable for looking at solutions to minimize these crimes, such as CCTV, police patrolling, new youth clubs and loitering alarms. Lastly the assess element of the model is to gather all the data to see which method works best at fighting the specific crime and is then implemented permanently (Knuttsen and Thompson, 2017).

However, traditional policing does little research into why crimes occur and how they can be resolved. Officers are expected to respond to calls to take reports and deal with the incident accordingly, these officers do this repeatedly when on shift and are also expected to patrol areas at random with the hope of finding incidents (Metropolitan Police, 2023).

Although traditional policing methods lack research, patrolling areas with high crime and having police present can help to lower crime rates. College of policing (2021) state that property crime fell 31% in areas patrolled by marked police cars in comparison to the unmarked patrolling cars that showed no decrease, highlighting that police presence does deter criminal behaviour.

Data-driven decision-making is a cornerstone of effective policing, and EBP exemplifies this approach. EBP involves the collection and analysis of data on a range of factors such as crime types, arrests, and calls. By scrutinizing this information, law enforcement agencies can make informed decisions regarding deployment strategies and resource allocations. This strategic use of data aligns with the principles outlined by the Office of Justice Programs (2017), ensuring that policing efforts are grounded in evidence.

Coffey (2020) suggests that data-driven decision making is vital in EBP as it allows law enforcement to use facts and evidence on certain crimes such as times and areas where the crime rates are high. This can allow officers to patrol areas at specific times that correspond to the evidence to not only increase chances of catching the criminals but also to minimize wasteful resources.

Conversely, traditional policing is based on experience and personal judgement. We can assume that rather than looking at facts and evidence, traditional methods encourage police officers to make personal judgements based on experiences. The use of personal judgement and intuition can be very useful in highly intense situations where action is needed quickly, as traditional policing methods train police officers to make fast and effective decisions to prevent crime and save human life. We see that this is true as Northumbria police & crime commissioner (2023) stress that the use of fast decision making allowed a police officer to rescue a young boy drowning.

However, the use of personal judgement and experience in traditional policing can lead to bias, racism, sexism and so forth. We can see these personal judgements can and do occur within policing, as Nickolls and Allen (2022) stress that 53 out of 1,000 black people were stopped and searched in England and Wales between 2021 and 2022, whereas only 7.5 out of 1,000 white people were searched.

Lastly community engagement is described as providing meaningful and effective engagement within the community, partners and importantly those that suffer the effects of persistent and harmful problems. Community engagement is essential for those involved in processes such as identification to help resolve these issues (Surrey police, 2016).

According to Community Relations Service (2016), Community engagement is essential in EBP, as EBP works on research and evidence members of the community are often invited to voice their opinions on law enforcement strategies, resource allocation and crime prevention tactics. The input of these values from community members and the evidence provided from research allows law enforcement to gather multiple perspectives not only encouraging good decision making but also creating better understanding of how the data and evidence is concluded, provide new opportunities, and allow members of the community to develop confidence in policing, (Berry *et al*, 2011)

Conversely, although traditional policing methods have models in place that promote community involvement, we see that they have less active community engagement input as it may not be implemented as consistently across all policing agencies.

Traditional methods often focus on law enforcement informing communities rather than seeking partnerships and collaborations, this often stems from the limited data and information that policing agencies share. Traditional methods conduct little research and therefore are often limited to statistics, safety advisories and campaigns leading to the inability to share information with communities and partners.

Traditional policing methods often lead to officers taking more reactive approaches to incidents as they occur with little emphasis on community centred problem solving, allowing these

incidents to repeat themselves. However, in 2005 policing agencies implemented a new programme known as National Reassurance Policing Programme (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2008). This programme involved employing 5,000 new recruits over England and Wales to help reduce and prevent criminal behaviour, increase feelings of security in the communities and help to improve conditions in neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood police officers aimed to do this using an approach that focuses on resilience in the community, problem solving and visibility (Thames Valley police, 2023).

We can assume that the presence of the neighbourhood police officer does deter and prevent crime as Bland (2021) found that police presence reduced serious crime by 44% and personal crime by 40%, this suggests that increasing volume of police officers for neighbourhood policing to make presence known may lower crime rates further.

However, joining both evidence-based policing and traditional policing could help to reduce crime and increase the trust in the community.

With the research and data gathered in EBP alongside experience and expertise of traditional police officer, their knowledge of community dynamics and crime patterns would increase significantly allowing them to make better decision making in the fight of preventing crime.

Traditional policing often involves strong communities developed over years of service provided, these relationships allow communication with community members and fosters trust. EBP can work with these communities and collaborate in problem solving and data collection.

EBP and traditional policing would benefit working together when looking at resource allocation, as traditional policing can offer insight into allocation in real time needs especially when dealing with unpredictable situations and EBP can use these experiences to collect data and research to promote effective resources.

By merging EBP and traditional policing, law enforcement agencies can become more efficient, adaptive, and responsive, this can enhance public safety, improve communities, and increase public trust using systems grounded by evidence all whilst appreciating experience and judgement.

To conclude, the comparison of evidence-based policing and traditional policing methods highlight how our law enforcement is evolving. EBP has surfaced as a modern and contemporary approach that relies on empirical research, data-driven decision-making, and community engagement.

EBP promotes transparency, accountability, and the continuous improvement in society. In comparison traditional policing methods, rooted in intuition, experiences and established practices which often lack data analysis and accountability offered in EBP.

Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) promotes key principles that foster transparency, accountability, and ongoing societal improvement. This stands in contrast to traditional policing methods, which rely on intuition, experiences, and established practices often without the rigorous data analysis and accountability that EBP provides.

In a society where crime and behaviour expectations are always changing, the merge of evidence-based policing and traditional policing methods is crucial in law enforcement agencies. The key is to harness of the complementing qualities of both approaches, use their strengths, and never stop looking for new and creative methods to protect our communities' safety and wellbeing. In order to effectively meet the demands of society, the search for efficient police techniques necessitates a careful merge of the evidence-based policing and traditional policing methods.

In a society where crime and behavioural changes are constantly evolving, the merge of evidence-based policing and traditional methods is essential for law enforcement agencies. It could be considered that the key is to harness the complementary strengths of both approaches, continually searching for innovative methods to safeguard the safety and well-being of our communities. Effectively responding to the ever-changing demands of society requires a thoughtful integration of evidence-based policing and traditional methods, creating a comprehensive and adaptable approach to law enforcement.

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