

2031185 Rhys Evans – PC8006- Assignment

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Task 1

Outline the key issues and challenges of operational policing in the UK, and consider how these challenges can affect the investigation of volume and priority crime.

In the United Kingdom, operational policing has several obstacles that affect the police's ability to carry out their duties effectively. The police force is overworked and underfunded due to an increasing demand for services and budget cuts, resulting in difficulty prioritizing and investigating crimes efficiently (Baker, 2020; Home Office, 2020). When law enforcement investigates high-volume and high-priority crimes in the United Kingdom, they face unique challenges. The lack of resources and personnel often leads to volume crimes, such as theft and burglary, being under-investigated, which hinders the gathering of evidence. Meanwhile, priority crimes, such as violent crimes and terrorism, require a swift and specialized response, which can further strain the already limited police resources. This essay intends to examine the primary difficulties and challenges faced by operational policing and their impact on investigating high-volume and high-priority crimes. By comprehending these obstacles, we can gain a better understanding of operational policing's crucial role in ensuring public safety.

Financial cuts are a significant challenge for operational policing in the United Kingdom. According to the Home Office (2018), police funding decreased by 19% between 2010/11 and 2018/19, leading to a reduction in the number of police officers and a decrease in the police's ability to perform their duties effectively. Fewer police officers result in increased workloads for the remaining officers, which can lead to a decline in service quality (Davies et al., 2016). This decrease in service quality can then hinder the investigation of high-volume and high-priority crimes, as officers may not have the necessary time or resources to complete their investigations thoroughly.

The lack of resources and personnel has been identified as a major obstacle to effective policing in the UK. According to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) (2020), the number of police officers in England and Wales has decreased by 19,000 since 2010, while the demand for police services has increased. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of investigations that can be carried out, as well as an increase in the amount of time it takes to investigate a crime. Furthermore, the NAO (2020) report found that the police are struggling to keep up with the increasing demand for services, with the number of crimes reported to the police increasing by 8% between 2018 and 2019.

The lack of resources and personnel has had an impact on the investigation of high-volume and high-priority crimes. According to a report by the Home Office (2020), the police are struggling to keep up with the increasing demand for services, with the number of crimes reported to the police increasing by 8% between 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, the report found that the police are struggling to investigate high-volume and high-priority crimes, such as burglary and violent crime, due to a lack of resources and

personnel. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of investigations that can be carried out, as well as an increase in the amount of time it takes to investigate a crime.

The consequences of financial cuts extend beyond the reduction of police officers, affecting the resources available for investigations and infrastructure maintenance. Consequently, this could hinder the use of forensic technology and scientific analysis (Morgan and Levin, 2019). To secure the future of forensic science, Morgan and Levin (2019) suggest that in the UK the funding available for forensic technology and scientific analysis has been heavily affected by the restrictions placed on the police funding. Furthermore, the impact of financial cuts on operational policing can affect the acquisition of valuable intelligence to prevent crimes proactively, forcing a reactive approach to policing. Additionally, insufficient resources can lower police morale and job satisfaction, leading to reduced motivation and performance levels (Davies et al., 2016), ultimately decreasing public confidence in law enforcement, resulting in fewer reported crimes and less shared information (Hughes, 2001). Considering the information provided, it is clear to see the impact of financial cuts on operational policing can be significant, especially when it comes to investigating high-volume and high-priority crimes.

A decrease in police officers, funding, and resources can mean that there are limited resources available to investigate high-volume crimes like burglary and theft, making it challenging to gather enough evidence to solve these crimes (HMICFRS, 2019). Similarly, responding to priority crimes like violent crimes and terrorism requires a rapid and skilled response, which can further strain police resources that are already stretched thin (Reiner, 2010). That's why it's crucial to assess the effects of financial cuts on operational policing to gain a better understanding of the challenges involved and to find effective solutions.

In recent years, operational policing has faced increased public scrutiny, particularly considering recent events such as the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against police brutality. These events have brought to the forefront issues of police accountability and transparency, which can be challenging to achieve in a historically hierarchical and secretive institution (Frost, 2020). Poor public perception of the police can affect the investigation of volume and priority crime in several ways. This can lead to reduced public trust and cooperation with the police, which can make it more difficult to gather information and evidence (Bradford & Jackson, 2009). Without the support and cooperation of the public, the police may struggle to identify suspects or gather the information needed to build a case. In some cases, the public may be unwilling to report crimes or provide information because they do not believe that the police will take their concerns seriously.

Poor public perception of the police can lead to increased tensions between the police and the communities they serve. This can make it difficult for the police to establish positive relationships with community members, which in turn can impact their ability to gather information and intelligence about crime (Engel, Worden, & Dennis, 2003). If community members feel that the police are not acting in their best interests or are unfairly targeting certain groups, they may be less willing to cooperate with law enforcement.

Police recruitment is not often considered when discussing the poor public perception of law enforcement. However, this perception can also affect the recruitment and retention of police officers (Gau, Corsaro, & Kim, 2017). If the police are not viewed as a respected and trusted institution, it may be difficult to attract and retain high-quality officers. This, in turn, can impact the overall effectiveness of

the police force in investigating volume and priority crimes, as well as in maintaining public order and safety.

Police investigations face significant challenges due to changes in criminal behavior and technological advancements, as highlighted by Brennan et al. (2019). Criminals are increasingly exploiting technology to commit crimes, making it more challenging for the police to detect and investigate such incidents. For example, cybercrime is on the rise, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to track down criminals due to the anonymity and global reach of the internet (Brennan et al., 2019). Additionally, the use of social media and mobile devices has created new obstacles in collecting and analyzing digital evidence, further complicating the investigative process for the police, as suggested by Vincze (2016).

The emergence of new technologies has had a profound impact on criminal behavior, with online child exploitation and grooming being prime examples of this trend. Child sexual abuse is a growing problem in a digital age, with the internet providing perpetrators with new opportunities to commit and conceal their crimes (Ali et al. 2021). Such crimes require specialized forensic techniques and a high level of sensitivity and expertise, which law enforcement officials may not always possess, as noted by Brennan et al. (2019).

To address these challenges, police forces must invest in training and resources to adapt to technological advancements and changing criminal behavior. Brennan et al. (2019) suggest this in their research. In the UK, the College of Policing provides training and guidance to officers to keep them informed about new technological advancements and equip them with the skills required to investigate digital crimes, according to a report by the College of Policing (2018). However, some experts argue that additional funding and resources are necessary to combat these types of crimes more effectively (Policing Insight, 2021).

Despite the challenges, technology has also played a crucial role in enhancing police investigations. For instance, advancements in forensic science, including DNA profiling and fingerprint analysis, have led to the resolution of many previously unsolved crimes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). The use of artificial intelligence and machine learning also holds significant potential in transforming police investigations by analysing vast amounts of data and identifying patterns and trends (Brantingham & Brantingham, 2015). Advancements in technology have also enabled the police to develop new investigative techniques to tackle volume crimes. For example, the use of CCTV cameras and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems have proven effective in identifying suspects and solving volume crimes (College of Policing, 2018). However, the use of technology in volume crime investigations has its limitations. The reliance on CCTV cameras and ANPR systems to identify suspects can be hindered by technical malfunctions and data protection laws.

One way to address these challenges is by implementing crime reduction initiatives, such as neighbourhood policing teams. These teams build stronger relationships between the police and the local community, helping police to understand the priorities and concerns of the communities they serve. This approach can help identify crime hotspots and enable the police to respond to and prevent volume crimes more effectively (Smith, 2018).

Predictive policing techniques, which use data analysis to identify potential crime hotspots, have also been successful in preventing and reducing volume crimes. A study conducted by the University of Cambridge found that predictive policing techniques were effective in reducing crime in the city of

London by 10% (Bowers et al., 2019). These studies demonstrate the effectiveness of predictive policing techniques in reducing crime. However, the use of predictive policing has been criticised for potentially perpetuating biased policing practices and exacerbating existing inequalities in the criminal justice system (Alpert G. P & Lum C 2016).

To sum up, operational policing in the UK faces multiple challenges that significantly impact the police's effectiveness. Reduced police funding and resources, coupled with increased demand for police services, make it challenging to efficiently investigate high-volume and high-priority crimes. Promptly responding to priority crimes, such as violent crimes and terrorism, requires specialized expertise and can further strain an already overburdened police force. Moreover, fewer police officers and resources can negatively affect officer morale and job satisfaction, ultimately decreasing public confidence in the police force and leading to reduced information sharing and underreporting of crimes.

Recent events such as the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against police brutality have heightened public scrutiny and brought police accountability and transparency to the forefront. Poor public perception of the police can affect the investigation of volume and priority crime in several ways, including reducing public trust and cooperation with the police, leading to increased tensions between the police and the communities they serve and affecting the recruitment and retention of high-quality officers.

Therefore, it is essential for operational policing in the United Kingdom to address these challenges to ensure public safety. This may involve increasing police funding and resources to provide adequate training and equipment to officers, enhancing communication and collaboration with communities to foster positive relationships and trust, and prioritising the investigation of high-volume and high-priority crimes to reduce crime rates and enhance public safety. By recognising and addressing these challenges, operational policing can continue to play a crucial role in ensuring public safety and maintaining social order in the United Kingdom.

Word Count - 1928

Task 2

Evaluate the effectiveness of specific crime prevention initiatives, and consider how these have been informed by relevant policing models (e.g. problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing).

Crime is a serious issue that affects societies across the world which governments and law enforcement agencies have attempted to implement various crime prevention initiatives to minimize crime and criminal activities. These initiatives encompass a wide range of strategies, including situational crime prevention, community policing, and intelligence-led policing. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been a subject of intense debate, and their implementation has been informed by relevant policing models. The goal of this essay is to evaluate the effectiveness of specific crime prevention initiatives and consider how these have been informed by relevant policing models.

Situational crime prevention initiatives aim to change the physical and social environment where criminal activities occur, making them less likely to happen. This approach aims to limit opportunities for crime while also increasing the perceived risk of detection and punishment for offenders. However, the effectiveness of situational crime prevention measures is the subject of much debate among scholars. While some experts believe these tactics are effective in reducing crime rates, others argue that they have limited impact (Felson, 1994; Clarke, 1995). Therefore, further research is necessary to fully understand the extent to which situational crime prevention measures are effective in reducing crime. To this end, several studies have been conducted to assess the efficacy of situational crime prevention measures (Sherman et al. 1989; Tilley 2005). The results of these studies suggest that situational crime prevention measures can be effective in reducing crime, but the extent of their effectiveness varies depending on the context and the type of crime being addressed (Sherman et al., 1989; Tilley, 2005).

Situational crime prevention is a crime prevention initiative that has been implemented based on the problem-oriented policing model. One of the most prominent situational crime prevention initiatives implemented in the United Kingdom is the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance. CCTV systems have been widely deployed in public spaces such as shopping centres, train stations, and car parks, among others. The use of CCTV systems is aimed at increasing the perceived risk of detection and punishment for offenders and reducing opportunities for criminal activities. Studies have shown that CCTV systems can be effective in reducing crime in public spaces (Farrell, 2018; Gill et al., 2017). A study conducted in a car park in Leicester found that the installation of CCTV cameras resulted in a significant reduction in car theft and burglary rates. Similarly, a study conducted in Newcastle upon Tyne found that the installation of CCTV cameras in a busy shopping area led to a reduction in crime rates (Welsh & Farrington, 2009).

However, the effectiveness of CCTV systems in reducing crime rates is not uniform across all contexts. Some studies have found that CCTV systems have limited impact on crime reduction in certain contexts. For instance, a study conducted in London found that the installation of CCTV cameras in a high-crime area had no significant impact on crime rates (Gill & Spriggs, 2005). Another study conducted in Nottingham found that the installation of CCTV cameras in a public housing estate had no significant impact on crime rates (Brown, 1995).

Other situational crime prevention initiatives implemented in the United Kingdom include the use of target hardening measures such as locks, alarms, and security grills, among others. Target hardening measures are aimed at making it difficult for offenders to access and steal valuable items. The effectiveness of target hardening measures in reducing crime rates has been mixed. Some studies have found that target hardening measures are effective in reducing crime rates in specific contexts, while others have found limited impact on crime reduction. For example, a study conducted by the Home Office in the UK found that the installation of security grills in residential areas was associated with a reduction in burglary rates (Hirschfield et al. 2001). Similarly, a study conducted in the Netherlands found that the installation of locks on doors and windows was associated with a reduction in burglary rates (Van Dijk et al. 2007). On the other hand, a study conducted in the United States found that the installation of locks and alarms had no significant effect on burglary rates (Koper, 1995).

Community policing is another one of the crime prevention initiatives that have been implemented based on the problem-oriented policing model. Community policing is an approach to law enforcement that involves building relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. The aim of community policing is to improve public safety and enhance the quality of life in communities by addressing the root causes of criminal activities (Baker 2020). Community policing initiatives have been implemented in the United Kingdom to address issues such as anti-social behaviour, hate crime, and gang-related violence (Smith, 2019).

One of the most prominent community policing initiatives implemented in the United Kingdom is the Neighbourhood Policing Programme. The Neighbourhood Policing Programme was introduced in 2005 following the successful pilot of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (HMIC, 2008). In 2008 a thematic by Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary found that police forces throughout the UK had implemented neighbourhood policing as a core part of policing work (2008). The neighbourhood policing programme involves the deployment of police officers to specific neighbourhoods to address local issues and build relationships with the community. The programme is aimed at improving communication between law enforcement agencies and the community, reducing fear of crime, and improving public safety (HMIC, 2008).

According to a study conducted by Ekici et al. (2022), community policing is an effective strategy for reducing crime. The study analysed different approaches to community policing, such as problem-oriented policing, foot patrols, and community-oriented policing. It found that community policing reduces crime by increasing public trust in law enforcement, improving police-community relations, and increasing communication between police and the community. Furthermore, the study found that community policing can help reduce re-offending rates by providing community-based resources to offenders. The study concluded that community policing is an effective strategy for reducing crime and should be continued by law enforcement agencies to improve public safety.

Offender-focused policing is a crime prevention initiative that has been implemented based on the intelligence-led policing model. Offender-focused policing involves the use of intelligence to identify and target high-risk offenders, with the aim of preventing them from committing further crimes (Braga & Weisburd, 2011). Studies have shown that offender-focused policing can be effective in reducing crime rates, particularly in areas where crime is concentrated (Weisburd and Telep, 2014). However, the effectiveness of offender-focused policing may depend on the ability of the police to gather and analyze intelligence effectively (Braga & Weisburd, 2011).

Intelligence-led policing (ILP) is a policing model that involves the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence to prevent and detect crime. This approach involves the use of information and data analysis to identify patterns of criminal activities and inform policing strategies. Intelligence-led policing has been widely adopted in the United Kingdom to address a range of criminal activities, including terrorism, organized crime, and cybercrime, among others. ILP is a policing strategy that has become a vital part of policing in the U.K. According to Ratcliffe (2016), it is a system which “sets out to identify and respond to patterns and trends in offending both at the local and wider levels, thereby seeking to reduce and prevent crime”. This type of policing relies on the use of data and intelligence to identify and respond to crime, as well as to predict crime trends and inform future policing strategies. It is also a way of managing resources more effectively, by focusing on the areas of highest risk. The use of technology has enabled law enforcement agencies to collect and analyze vast amounts of data from various sources, including social media, CCTV footage, and other sources. This data is then used to identify patterns of criminal activities and inform policing strategies (Ratcliffe, 2016).

However, according to Gundhus et al. (2017) Intelligence-led policing has faced criticism due to concerns that it may result in violations of civil and human rights, as well as worsen existing social inequalities. For instance, the use of predictive policing algorithms may result in certain groups being unfairly targeted, as these algorithms are often built on biased data. Moreover, this policing approach can lack transparency and accountability, as officers may not fully comprehend the decision-making process involved in ILP operations. Therefore, it is crucial to address moral issues when implementing ILP, as the possibility of violating civil liberties and human rights should not be disregarded.

Problem-oriented policing (POP) is a policing model that involves identifying and addressing the root causes of criminal activities. Problem-oriented policing is an effective crime prevention strategy that has been widely adopted across all police forces (Braga, 2008). This approach involves the use of problem-solving techniques to identify specific problems and develop strategies to address them. Problem-oriented policing has been implemented in the United Kingdom to address a range of issues, including drug-related crimes, violent crimes, and theft, among others. One of the key components of problem-oriented policing is the use of data to identify specific problems. The police use data analysis to identify patterns of criminal activities and identify specific problems that require attention. Once a problem has been identified, problem-solving techniques are used to develop strategies to address the problem.

Studies have shown that problem-oriented policing initiatives can be effective in reducing crime rates. For instance, a study conducted in the United States found that problem-oriented policing initiatives led to a reduction in violent crimes (Weisburd et al., 2008). Similarly, a study conducted in the United Kingdom found that problem-oriented policing initiatives led to a reduction in theft and burglary rates (Braga et al., 2012).

However, there are also challenges associated with problem-oriented policing. One of the main challenges is the potential for unintended consequences. Problem-oriented policing initiatives may lead to displacement of criminal activities to other areas or the adoption of new criminal activities (Clarke and Eck, 2016). Another challenge is the potential for resource constraints, as problem-oriented policing initiatives require significant resources and may not be feasible in all contexts.

Studies evaluating the effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives have shown mixed results. For instance, a systematic review of crime prevention interventions in the United Kingdom found that the effectiveness of the initiatives varied depending on the type of intervention and the context in which it

was implemented (Welsh & Farrington, 2008). Similarly, a review of crime prevention initiatives in the United States found that some initiatives were effective, while others had no impact on crime rates (Travis et al., 1998).

The effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives can also be influenced by the underlying policing model. For instance, crime prevention initiatives informed by problem-oriented policing may be more effective in addressing the root causes of criminal activities, while initiatives informed by intelligence-led policing may be more effective in preventing and detecting specific types of crimes (Ratcliffe, 2016).

In conclusion, crime prevention initiatives have been implemented in the United Kingdom to reduce crime rates and improve public safety. These initiatives have been informed by various policing models, including intelligence-led policing and problem-oriented policing. Intelligence-led policing involves using data analysis to identify and prevent specific types of crimes, while problem-oriented policing involves identifying and addressing the root causes of criminal activities.

Studies evaluating the effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives have shown mixed results. The effectiveness of the initiatives can vary depending on the type of intervention, the context in which it is implemented, and the underlying policing model. Therefore, it is important to use relevant policing models to inform the design and implementation of crime prevention initiatives to ensure their effectiveness in reducing crime rates. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of crime prevention initiatives, various methods can be used, including randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs, and natural experiments. These methods involve comparing the outcomes of an intervention group with a control or comparison group to determine the effectiveness of the initiative.

Despite the challenges associated with implementing crime prevention initiatives, such as resource constraints and unintended consequences, these initiatives have the potential to reduce crime rates and improve public safety. Therefore, it is important for law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to continue to collaborate and develop innovative and effective crime prevention strategies informed by relevant policing models. By doing so, we can work towards creating safer and more secure communities for all.

Word Count - 2048

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