



Availability of Information as Factor Influencing Effective Security Services by Police Area Commands in Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Insecurity has been the subject of discussion by individuals, businessmen, professionals, administrators and even the government as a result of unsatisfactory performance of police officers to curb the high rate of crime being faced in the country. It is in the light of this that the present study is designed to investigate availability of information as factor influencing effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the ex-post facto type was adopted for the study. Simple Random Technique was used to cover a study population of five hundred (500) police officers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The result of the study shows that information is available to the police officers to meet security challenges in the State. The result also shows that information influences the effectiveness of police officers; such as information has helped them to prevent crimes that would have been committed, to arrest criminals and they prefer information to weapon. The study discusses ways by which effective security services could be provided by the police officers in the State. It is therefore recommended that timely information should be made available to police officers.

Keywords: Nigeria, Information, Police Officers, Security, Services, Oyo State, Nigeria

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of police institutions cannot be overemphasized as governments heavily rely on the police establishment in the preservation of lives and property of her citizenry. The works of the legislative, executive and judicial aspects of government would be very difficult without an efficient and effective security services by police officers or other suitable arrangement. By acting in agreement with the judiciary, the police officers constitute the first line of defence against any threats to the internal security of the state or community (Yecho, 2004). Human quest for effective security services is recurrent. Over the ages, emerging forms of human, social and political organisation have stimulated a necessity for the protection and safety of the individual, family, community and the nation. As threats continue to transform and multiply, insecurity emerged as the most dominant fear of human beings. The fear of insecurity which manifests at the individual or group level can also be projected to institutions and corporate entities, countries and regional blocs. The need for human security therefore pervades the entire fabrics of human nature and existence, and is at the cornerstone of human development (Forbes-Mewett, 2011). Availability of information for police area command could be one of the factors that may influence effective security services in Oyo State, Nigeria. There are four (4) police area commands in Oyo State, Nigeria which are saddled with the responsibility of providing security services. They are Agodi Area Command Ibadan; Iyaganku Area Command Ibadan; Oyo Area Command Oyo and Owode Area Command Ogbomoso.

Afolabi (2003) argued that availability of information is, indispensably, an ingredient for social, economic, industrial, political and technological advancement as it is apparent in every facet of human endeavours that no meaningful and enduring development can be achieved without it. He maintained that information is a stimulus and responding to it prompts us to act the ways we do. It was further stressed that information is not only an instrument for change, growth and development but also data meant for answering or meeting users' queries and needs. Igbeka and Atinmo (2002) were of the opinion that information is an important tool and a valuable resource required for the realization of any objective or goal set by individuals. Therefore, availability of information is important for individuals to perform his or her responsibilities which by extension includes the Nigerian Police. Sources of information could provide police officers with tools to capture, analyze, and present this information in a meaningful format to form the basis for their decision making. In addition, Information Technology (IT) automates many of the time-consuming tasks associated with police work and free police resources to be used on other effective programs. Some police departments have been quick to adopt technology to help their officers in the field (Frank, 2005).

However, the police officers are finding it difficult to meet security challenges in the country. Crimes being faced in the country seem to have grown beyond their reach in their service at national or local level. In the last two decades, organised crime has grown more complex, posing evolving challenges for United State (U.S.) federal law enforcement. This is largely because the criminals have transformed their operations in ways that broaden their reach and make it harder for law enforcement to define and combat the threat they pose. Globalisation and technological innovations have not only impacted legitimate commerce, but they have simultaneously revolutionised crime. In response to these forces, organised criminals have adopted more-networked structural models, internationalised their operations, and grown more technology savvy. The criminals have become more elusive. They see international borders as opportunities while law enforcement views them as obstacles. Criminals have expanded their range of tools and targets as well. Meanwhile, law enforcement "plays by yesterday's rules and increasingly risks dealing only with the weakest criminals and the easiest problems," may not be able to match the criminals who have gone into a new level of operation (Jerome and Kristin, 2012).



Few research works were found to be partly carried out on one or two of these parameters (i.e.) security, challenge, police officers, and organised crime in various states or countries and, especially, in Ogun and Oyo States and in Nigeria as a whole with an emphasis on evolving challenges for law enforcement, implication for business activities and developmental sustainability. None however, has focused or concentrated attention exclusively on availability of information as factor influencing effective security services by police officers in Oyo State. It is in the light of this that the present study is designed to investigate availability of information as factor influencing effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State, Nigeria.

1.1 Research Questions

1. Are there information available for effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State?
2. How often do the information available to police area commands help them to curb crime situation in Oyo State?
3. What are the sources of information available for effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State?
4. How does availability of information influences effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The availability of information to the police officers from citizen input or other sources of information such as client information, remote monitoring, criminal history of the client, digital video surveillance, crime scene mapping, mass media, text message, telephone calls, etc and his or her own observations, about crime conditions, particular offenses, and criminal suspects could help the police officers to curb crime situations in the country. The officer can use neighborhood-based information for follow up investigations within the local community, including the arrest of perpetrators found that their. Information also can be passed on to detectives investigating crimes over a broader geographical area. Furthermore, the exchange of information and the solution for many crimes and the arrest of criminals increasingly can be accomplished by officers working in neighborhoods. Centralized detective activities can then focused more on problem solving, identifying the nature of criminal activity in the community and designing crime reduction strategies that will affect different types of crimes (Edwin, 1993).

2.1 The Essence of Information for Effective Security Services

To improve the quality of life for millions of people, information in many instances is being used as a tool to actually save lives. Availability of information is used to improve the safety of individuals every day, although many do not realize its importance. Fifteen years ago, efforts to stop crime and terrorism relied on traditional mechanisms: strict physical security at vulnerable facilities, intelligence gathering by government agents, vigilance on the part of all citizens, and a sense of community in which all citizens played a role in protecting each other. These techniques have not been replaced, but nations today have information as an additional powerful, new tool to ensure public safety. Much of public safety relies on getting the right information to the right people (Erik, 2008). David (2008) reported that governments use Information Technology (IT) to secure their borders against external threats, aid law enforcement in fighting crime, and help communities prepare for, and recover from, disasters. Law enforcement agencies such as police officers in the police area commands use information technology to communicate and share information, monitor and detect crime, and respond to disasters.



IT is at the forefront of the science used by researchers to better understand the complex weather systems that constantly threaten our societies. The IT revolution has given governments the tools, infrastructure, and capabilities to make public safety easier, less expensive, and more effective (David, 2008).

Eric (2006) reported that to effectively secure a nation, a government requires accurate information about the individuals and materials entering and leaving the country. IT plays a critical role in securing national borders and managing the flow of people and goods through a country's points of entry. Furthermore, as nations face new threats of terrorism, governments have turned to IT for an array of new tools to detect threats to national security and thwart possible attacks. According to Folorunso (2004), information is all published and unpublished knowledge from a source to meet human needs for decision making and for meaningful existence, while information needs are the desire or want of information to be transferred for use and these needs greatly influence the type of information that information seekers and users look for.

Igbeka and Atinmo (2002) while listing the factors that initiate the search for information mentioned the individual's task or place of work as important factors. Enidiok and Bassey (2004) citing previous authors like Elaigwu (1997) and Weisburd, Telap and Braga (2010) established that the information needs of persons for instance, the medical experts and other health providers cherish and seek for medical information so also a legal practitioner will go for legal information while security personnel including members of the Nigeria Police will seek for security information.

Most of the research studies focus on evolving security challenge, state of security in Nigeria, law enforcement agents, and organised crime in various states or countries and, especially, in Ogun State and Oyo State and even in Nigeria with emphasis on evolving challenges for law enforcement, implication for business activities and developmental sustainability. No studies seem to have been carried out on availability of information for effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State. Therefore, this study could fill the gap.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, due to the nature of the study as an evaluative study. The total population of the study is 7147 which comprises Police officers from the four (4) Area Commands in Oyo State, Nigeria. The Area Commands are Iyaganku, Agodi, Oyo (Dubar) and Owode (Ogbomoso). 500 sample size was selected from the total population of 7147 using Cochran(1970) in his work on criteria for good sample size, using level of precision ranges from percentage points (e.g., ± 5 , ± 7 , ± 10 percent).

Therefore $\pm 7\%$ level of precision was used to select 500 from the population. 500 questionnaire was distributed to respondents in the four area commands for a period of one month. 427 questionnaire was returned and valid for analyses. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Tables, mean and standard deviation was used to test the research questions postulated for this research. Frequencies and percentages were also employed in presenting the result for this study.



4. RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Research Questions

Research Question One: Are information available for effective security services to police area commands in Oyo State?

Table 1 Shows the Availability of Information for Effective Security Services by Police Area Commands in Oyo State

| Are information available for effective security services in the State? | Response s | Frequenc y |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Yes | 424 | 99.3 |
| No | 3 | 0.7 |
| Total | 427 | 100 |

Table 1 above shows the availability of information in the police area commands. It is clear from the table that the majority of respondents, 424 (99.3%) responded positively to the availability of information in Oyo State for effective security services.

Research Question Two: How often do the information available to police area commands help them to curb crime situation in Oyo State?

Table 2 Shows how often the information available to police area commands help them to curb crime situation in Oyo State

| How often do the information available to police area commands help to curb crime situation in Oyo State? | Responses | Frequency |
|---|------------|------------|
| Occasionally | 331 | 77.5 |
| Frequently | 96 | 22.5 |
| Not at all | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 427 | 100 |

Table 2 shows how often the information available to police area commands help them to curb crime situation in Oyo State for effective security services in the state. 331(77.5%) indicated that information is available occasionally to curb crime situation in Oyo State while 96(22.5%) respondents agreed that information is available frequently to curb crime situation in Oyo State.



Research Question Three: What are the sources of information available to the police area commands in Oyo State?

Table 3 Shows Sources of Information Available to Police Officers.

| S/N | Sources of Information Available | Response | *Frequency |
|-----|--|----------|------------|
| 1 | Remote monitoring | 167 | 39.1 |
| 2 | Data reports of briefings | 205 | 48.0 |
| 3 | Client information | 214 | 50.1 |
| 4 | DNA or Fingerprints | 83 | 19.4 |
| 5 | Anonymous | 124 | 29.0 |
| 6 | Criminal history of the client | 189 | 44.3 |
| 7 | Records | 133 | 31.1 |
| 8 | Digital Video Surveillance | 132 | 30.9 |
| 9 | Crime Scene Mapping | 211 | 49.4 |
| 10 | Mass Media | 266 | 62.3 |
| 11 | Friends | 290 | 67.9 |
| 12 | NPF (Nigerian Police Force) Headquarters | 303 | 71.0 |
| 13 | PPRO (Police Public Relation Office) | 325 | 76.1 |
| 14 | Telephone calls | 276 | 64.6 |
| 15 | Text Messages | 79 | 18.5 |
| 16 | Telex | 0 | 0.0 |
| 17 | OTHERS | 19 | 4.4 |

*Multiple response

Table 3 above indicated the sources of information available police area commands for effective security services in the state. The major sources of information available to the Police Officers are from the PPRO, 325(76.1%). Closely followed among the sources of information available to Police Officers in Oyo State are from NPF Headquarters 303(71.0%), Friend, 290(67.9%), Telephone call, 276(64.6%) and Mass media, 266(62.3%) respondents respectively.

Other sources of information to Police Officers in Oyo State include: Client information, 214(50.1%), Crime scene mapping, 211(49.4%), Data report from briefing, 205(48.0%), Criminal history of the client, 189(44.3%), Remote monitoring, 167(39.1%) respondents as indicated from the table.



Research Question Four: How does availability of information influences effective security services by police area commands in Oyo State?

Table 4: Influence of Availability of Information as factor on Effective Security Services

SA = Strongly Agree: A = Agree: D = Disagree: SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | MEAN | STD |
|-----|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------|-------|
| 1 | Availability of information has always helped me to prevent crimes that would have been committed in my area | 248 58.1% | 164 38.4% | 6 1.4% | 9 2.1% | 3.52 | 0.636 |
| 2 | I am always willing to receive information because it helps my productivities as a police officer | 249 58.3% | 157 36.8% | 8 1.9% | 13 3.0% | 3.50 | 0.686 |
| 3 | Availability of information has always been helping me to arrest criminals | 197 46.1% | 214 50.1% | 7 1.6% | 9 2.2% | 3.40 | 0.633 |
| 4 | Availability of information has made significant difference in crime prevention in our areas | 184 43.1% | 226 52.9% | 14 3.3% | 3 0.7% | 3.38 | 0.587 |
| 5 | Availability of information has helped me to be conscious about security challenges in my areas | 198 46.4% | 199 46.6% | 21 4.9% | 9 2.1% | 3.37 | 0.678 |
| 6 | Availability of information is essential to be able to cope with security challenges in my area | 199 46.6% | 202 47.3% | 8 1.9% | 18 4.2% | 3.36 | 0.723 |
| 7 | The effectiveness of discharge of duty as police officer depend on availability of information | 199 46.6% | 155 36.3% | 56 13.1% | 17 4.0% | 3.26 | 0.832 |
| 8 | I prefer to go out without information to meet security challenges in my area | 27 6.3% | 95 22.2% | 145 34.0% | 160 37.5% | 1.97 | 0.923 |
| 9 | I am comfortable with my weapon if I do not receive information | 8 1.9% | 30 7.0% | 125 29.3% | 264 61.8% | 1.49 | 0.710 |
| 10 | I do not bother about information because with my gun and other weapons, I am sufficient | 18 4.2% | 26 6.1% | 92 21.5% | 291 68.2% | 1.46 | 0.790 |
| 11 | Information does not make any meaning to me in my responsibility as police officer | 13 3.0% | 20 4.7% | 111 26.0% | 283 66.3% | 1.44 | 0.724 |

Influence of information on effective security services in Police Area Commands in Oyo State are presented in the table above. Availability of information has always helped the police area commands to prevent crimes that would have been committed in their areas were ranked highest, 412(96.5%) respondents agreed that information has influence on effective security services by helping the police area commands to prevent crimes that would have been committed (mean = 3.52).



406(95.1%) respondents agreed that information influences their productivities as police officer (mean = 3.50). 411(96.2%) respondents remarked that availability of information has always been influencing the arrest of criminals (mean =3.40). 410(96.0%) respondents stressed that availability of information has made significant difference in influencing crime prevention in the State (mean=3.38). 397(93.0%) respondents affirmed that information has helped them to be conscious about security challenges in the State (mean = 3.37). 401(93.9%) respondents maintained that information is essential to be able to cope with security challenges in the State (mean = 3.36). 354(82.9%) respondents agreed that the effectiveness of discharge of duty as police officer depends on availability of information (mean = 3.26). 305 (71.5%) respondents agreed that they prefer to go with information to meet security challenges in the State (mean = 1.97). 389 (8.9%) respondents agreed that they are not comfortable with their weapon if they do not receive information (Mean = 1.49). 291(68%) respondents agreed that they bother about information because with their gun and other weapons, they are not sufficient to meet security challenges in the State (mean = 1.46). And, 394(92.3) respondents agreed that Information have meaning to them in their responsibility as Police Officer (mean = 1.44).

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The result of this study reveals that information is available to the police area commands to combat crimes in the State, this supports the earlier finding of Paul and Robin (2007) who find out that information is available to police officers. This finding reveals that police area commands receive information about security challenges in the state occasionally. This could hinder them in providing effective services, therefore, information should be made available to police officers frequently. Police officers should also create environment for the community to be able to make information available to them on regular basis.

The study also reveals that the major sources of information available to police area commands are from PPRO, NPF Headquarters, Friends, Telephone calls, Mass media and Client information. This result of finding negates the earlier finding of Folorunso (2007) who found out that the PPRO, which ought to be a major source of security information to the NPF, is not serving its purpose well as expected. There are other sources of information that could assist the Police Officers to have a first hand information on security challenges which are not being used maximally, it may be because they are not available in all the Police Commands/Divisions; these are Remote monitoring 167(39.1%), Digital Video Surveillance 132(30.9%), and Fingerprints 83(19.4%) as responded by the respondents.

The result of this finding also reveals that most of the information available to the police officers are occasional timely, this could be attributed to the reason why crime had been committed and the criminal gone free before instead of charging them to the competent court of law. It will be better if members of the public and other sources of information could provide credible and timely information to the Police Officers in order to render effective security services in the State

This finding reveals that information has influence on effective security services in the State. 412(96.5%) respondents agreed that information has influence on their effective security services by helping them to prevent crimes that would have been committed in the State. Information helps them to arrest criminals, prevent crimes from being committed as well as helping them to be productive and cope with security challenges. This also, support the finding of Kenneth and John (2013) who reported that information are among the most productive technologies applied to problem-solving for crime reduction.



6. CONCLUSION

The availability of information to the police area commands in Oyo State is very important to solve the challenges posed by the criminals and other social vices that are rampants in the State. While the police recognised that timely information and provision of equipment to use, especially transportation is a major asset to combating crimes in the State, the populace (i.e.) member of the community also needed to provide timely information and conducive environment for the police to operate, so that the crime rate will be reduced in the State.

7. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- Intelligent network and psychological build up of the State Security Service (SSS) personnel must be seriously looked into, to curb crime in Oyo State;
- A research focusing on the job evaluation of the police officers should be carried out, in order to guide government in recruitment exercise allocation of resources for effective service delivery and to be at par with their counterpart in line with global international best practices;
- Provision of adequate training and retraining of police officers with emerging technologies in security management in order to withstand the day-to-day challenges in their profession; and
- Government, should as a point of duty and responsibility, provide adequate funding for the police in Nigeria by increasing their annual budget as this will go a long way in boosting their morale.

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