

A Qualitative Study into the Success and Challenges in Embedding Evidence-Based Research Methods in Operational Policing Interventions

Authors : Ahmed Kadry, Gwyn Dodd

Abstract : There has been a growing call globally for police forces to embed evidence-based policing research methods into police interventions in order to better understand and evaluate their impact. This research study highlights the success and challenges that police forces may encounter when trying to embed evidence-based research methods within their organisation. 10 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with police officers and staff at Greater Manchester Police (GMP) who were tasked with integrating evidence-based research methods into their operational interventions. The findings of the study indicate that with adequate resources and individual expertise, evidence-based research methods can be applied to operational work, including the testing of initiatives with strict controls in order to fully evaluate the impact of an intervention. However, the findings also indicate that this may only be possible where an operational intervention is heavily resourced with police officers and staff who have a strong understanding of evidence-based policing research methods, attained for example through their own graduate studies. In addition, the findings reveal that ample planning time was needed to trial operational interventions that would require strict parameters for what would be tested and how it would be evaluated. In contrast, interviewees underscored that operational interventions with the need for a speedy implementation were less likely to have evidence-based research methods applied. The study contributes to the wider literature on evidence-based policing by providing considerations for police forces globally wishing to apply evidence-based research methods to more of their operational work in order to understand their impact. The study also provides considerations for academics who work closely with police forces in assisting them to embed evidence-based policing. This includes how academics can provide their expertise to police decision makers wanting to underpin their work through evidence-based research methods, such as providing guidance on how to evaluate the impact of their work with varying research methods that they may otherwise be unaware of.

Keywords : evidence based policing, evidence-based practice, operational policing, organisational change

Conference Title : ICPSSOM 2022 : International Conference on Police Studies, Systems, Organizations and Management

Conference Location : Sydney, Australia

Conference Dates : December 02-03, 2022