

Policing Performance Improvement: A case study of Abu Dhabi Police

Introduction

To respond to evolving societal ideals and expectations current approaches to performance management need to be reviewed to keep the police service ready to tackle new challenges (Dubai police, 2014). Performance management is a systematic effort to improve performance through an ongoing process of establishing desired outcomes, setting performance standards, then collecting, analysing and reporting on streams of data to improve individual and collective performance (Whitaker *et al.*, 1982). Police forces such as those in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and in the UK have long been measured and ranked on a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) (Bright and Wilcox, 2001; Abu Dhabi Police, 2014). These include the number of crimes committed (reported), the number detected, complaints against police officers and the number of emergency calls responded to within the target time. In addition, awareness has increased within such Police Services that it would be mutually beneficial for all stakeholders if there was a concentration on improving the level of service performance (Home Office, 2011; Abu Dhabi Police, 2014).

As each police service represents a diverse geography and social demographic, it should also be acknowledged that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to police service is not feasible (Chiu, 2012). We examine performance management indicators currently being applied in the Abu Dhabi Police (ADP), UAE. Such indicators are worthy of study because police forces have to provide 'a service' that is comprehensive and wide-ranging and that embraces situations and scenarios which more classical service contexts could not have envisaged (Forker *et al.*, 1997).

Performance management

Performance management concerns the management of people related to procedural activity and human behaviour (Montebello, 2003). Unfortunately, performance management has come to mean employees' disciplinary action or that it is a euphemism for punishment (Mendenhall *et al.* 2006). However, it is generally presented as a positive framework for individuals and thus collective organisational development, to allow employees to reach and exceed their objectives (Hackman, 2002) by adopting an efficient means of performing a task or process in order to deliver high quality and consistent results (Mullins, 2010).

Important activities in performance management include: benchmarking expectations; an assessment of best practice in relation to the industry or service sector (Mendenhall *et al.* 2006); clear job role definitions, and explicitly agreed role expectations through regular performance appraisal to ensure the continuous monitoring of service provision and for the purposes of employee engagement (Armstrong, 2009). A particularly valuable tool for considering the improvement of police performance is that of intellectual capital.

Intellectual capital

Intellectual capital refers to the stock of knowledge of various forms which is accessible to an individual or organisation (Feiwei, 1975; Reed *et al.*, 2006). Three forms of intellectual capital are generally cited as being analytically useful. *Organizational capital*

is the stock of private information found within the organisational parameters that can be harnessed to enhance the value of the firm (Prescott and Visscher, 1980). The structure of the business or the organisational culture predominant within it are forms of organisational capital (Martín-de-Castro, *et al.* 2006). The knowledge repositories of police forces provide a foundation for potential knowledge generation because their databases, patents, and other forms of intellectual property have been proven to enable knowledge generation and innovation through decision support and learning curve effects. Furthermore, with increased technological sophistication, they leverage existing information to generate new knowledge, not least in performance management systems which enable data mining and analytics to generate new insights.

Human capital

Human capital provides for value being found in the work experience, training, education, expertise, skills and qualifications of individuals, commonly measured in terms of pay or job status (Becker, 1975; 1976). The direct link between human capital and organisational performance and development occurs because with training, education and work experience, individuals become better equipped to solve workplace problems. When selecting candidates for a job, managers estimate the potential productivity of that candidate (Spence, 1973) by using human capital as a signal of productivity with education as the conventional measure. Once an individual is employed at an organisation, more certain information about their productivity and performance is available because ‘on-the-job training results in learning and perfecting skills that, as work experience increases, make employees more productive’ (Becker, 1993:91).

Social capital

Social capital relates to ‘the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu, 2006:86). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) identified three elements of social capital: structural, relational and cognitive. The structural dimension of social capital refers to the tangible patterns of linkages between actors. The relational dimension comprises the trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations that govern exchanges and identity. Cognitive social capital refers to shared systems of meaning that are cultivated in close networks and which facilitates communication, social interaction and exchange. Human capital and social capital need not be competing as they work interdependently to drive knowledge generation.

International Performance indicators and focus on the Police

Indicators of performance are utilised by police forces around the world, notably in: UK (London Metropolitan, South Yorkshire and North Wales), Singapore, Belgium and Canada (Ottawa) (Walker, 2003). The frameworks of police performance developed by these constabularies are grounded in the notion that building strong links with the community (i.e. building social capital) is an excellent source of information, which is necessary for effective policing (Tange and Smeets, 2009; Devroe *et al.* 2006; Birchall and Fewkes, 2002).

All of the policing frameworks focus on fighting crime and continuous improvement in their service provision for effective policing and each police force focuses on six main performance indicators: clear vision and strategy; technological investment; development of human resources; periodic statistical analysis; risk management for crime prevention

and adaptation of assessment tools such as the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) performance model. As shown in figure 1, below, identifying some of the best performance practices in international police services enables us to examine the specific nature of the six performance indicators through the intellectual capital (IC) lenses: organisational, human and social capital in our case study organisation, the Abu Dhabi police force:

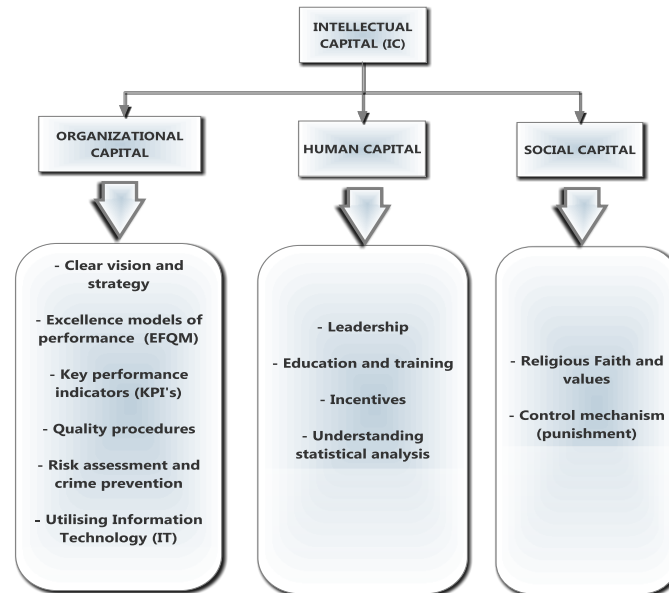


Figure 1: The conceptual framework: An intellectual capital framing of police force performance indicators

Research Methods

A case study of Abu Dhabi Police Force of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was used. Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, is a T-shaped island located on the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf with a population of 921,000 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Abu Dhabi police force has 33,893 employees and covers 67,440 square kilometres. Mixed research methods were used to enable the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data (Smith, 1975). Qualitative material comprised semi-structured interviews with 10 research participants and was analysed using theme coding. A questionnaire provided quantitative elements in the conceptual framework (Figure 1). Distribution was to more than 33,000 police officers in the ADP, regardless of rank, job description or geographical area. The mean age of the respondents was 33.6 years.

Findings

All research participants agreed that, to a greater or lesser degree, all the performance indicators are important and all affect performance, but each indicator has a different effect and importance, depending on variables such as: the participant's job role, rank and work environment. The survey analysis generated data relating to the three intellectual capitals of organisational, human and social capital as well as the twelve strategic performance management indicators. The responses were translated into a ranking from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). The highest and lowest mean values were 4.66 and 3.55 for incentive motivation and EFQM respectively. This implies that, among the strategic performance indicators, incentive as a motivation was considered to have most effect on performance at work and the EFQM had the least effect.

Table 2: The descriptive analysis

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Risk_Management	784	4.54	.788	-1.953	.087	3.571	.174
Statistical_analysis	784	4.48	.668	-1.363	.087	2.424	.174
Education_Training	784	4.59	.660	-2.049	.087	5.633	.174
EFQM	784	3.55	1.268	-.733	.087	-.322	.174
Automated_softwares	784	4.34	.662	-.705	.087	.506	.174
Leadership	784	4.19	1.074	-1.248	.087	.506	.174
Quality_assurance	784	4.03	1.259	-1.335	.087	.701	.174
Strategy	784	4.59	.578	-1.392	.087	2.848	.174
KPI	784	4.08	.986	-.977	.087	.465	.174
Punishment	784	3.85	1.133	-.753	.087	-.354	.174
Religious_values	784	4.34	1.114	-1.761	.087	2.062	.174
Incentives_motivation	784	4.66	.559	-1.795	.087	4.376	.174
Valid N (listwise)	784						

Organisational capital

ADP organisational capital comprised six strategic performance management indicators: *risk management*, *The EFQM*, *technology (automated software)*, *quality assurance*, *strategy* and *KPI's*. Having a clear strategy and vision was ranked second in its effect upon police officers performance and the adoption of the EFQM Excellence model of performance was ranked last. Other performance indicators under the organisational capital have a medium effect. In total, the effect of organisational capital on police officers performance was high and overall ranked second after human capital.

In ADP there is a consensus between specialists and professionals that adopting *risk management* tools is an important element for police agencies for crime prevention, forecasting crime patterns and, most importantly, employees' behaviour (e.g. Collier, 2009; Birchall and Fewkes, 2002). *Information technology and automated software* affects the ADP in a positive way with regard to performance. The ADP has invested massively in technological software and sophisticated systems which have benefited its crime prevention strategies and results (Abu Dhabi Police, 2014). A good example of this is the customised eye scan Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), where it played a major part in catching more than 360,000 criminals at UAE border points (ibid, 2014).

The quantifiable and qualitative benefits of *quality management* and process control have been well documented (Deming, 1986; Reilly, 1994; Babicz, 2000; Marin and Ruiz-Olalla, 2011), albeit not necessarily a guarantee or certification of better performance, although usually a good indicator (Millen et al., 1999). A police officer's performance requires a multi-faceted approach to ensure that service quality is consistent and that the drive for better performance becomes embedded within the organisation (Aguayo, 1991; Dale, 2003). Our findings show that the amount and scale of using quality management is of benefit and affects police officers' performance, even though respondents complained that it consumes time and requires constant follow up from employees.

Doing *strategic planning* and regular reviews as organisations grow cannot be a viral activity (Greiner, 1998; Hitt et al., 2011) and employees must understand their roles and responsibilities (Ng, 2011). Organisations having a clear vision and who interact well with their colleagues at lower levels in the organisation have been found to influence performance, particularly in areas which require creativity, adaptability and proactivity (Griffin et al. 2010). It is not sufficient for a leader just to have a clear vision and strategy, or even for this strategy to be widely communicated (Gill, 2011).

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has acknowledged the need to build stronger links with the community and introduce best practice measures of performance such as *key performance indicators* (KPIs) (EIP, 2012). KPIs provide managers with regular data in a format which is comparable over time, thus allowing them to track progress on issues which they have identified as taking priority (Speaker, 2009). KPIs are used to measure staff's current performance status at all levels in the ADP, such as the crime rate and customer satisfaction with online services. Some police officers in the ADP totally rely on KPIs, due to the perceived high level of benefits, such as managing internal employee performance to produce objective measures, such as levels of employee engagement or training return on investment (Marr, 2012). One disadvantage of KPIs is that they may result in locking an organisation into a particular world view (Packard, 2010). Statistically, it ranked as the second most important ADP strategic performance indicator.

Many police forces around the world use the *Excellence models of performance (EFQM)*, e.g. the Metropolitan Police. Doubts have been expressed about the suitability of the EFQM model for public sector organisations, such as law enforcement agencies, since results appear to be less effective than in the private sector (Gomez *et al.* 2011). Nevertheless, the positive effect of the model relies on its continuous improvement tools. The negative effect of the model is that it is time consuming, complex and requires a lot of training. Statistically, the ADP EFQM is ranked as the least important performance indicator amongst the twelve performance indicators therefore they find the model to be more a burden than a benefit.

Human capital

ADP respondents stated that *human capital* had the most important and effective performance indicators amongst the other two capitals in ADP, because its strategic performance management indicators of *incentives, education, statistical analysis and leadership* were ranked statistically first, second, fourth and six respectively.

Human capital incentives are a set of human knowledge, skills and experience which form methodologies for managing staff motivational incentives. Incentives raise individual performance by a high percentage and deliver targets and success (Smith, 2002) and it has long been realised that better rewards and incentives do not necessarily correlate with higher job satisfaction and that not even high job satisfaction necessarily correlates with better performance (Fisher, 1980). Incentives were viewed as the most important indicator in both human capital and intellectual capital category as a whole, not least because it affects both their productivity and development. The human capital of incentives as motivation also assists police officers to make better decisions and to develop their knowledge and skills.

Human capital education and training are seen as the set of human knowledge, skills and experience having an important influence and positively affecting staff performance. ADP top management presented education, training and development opportunities as a top priority for performance enhancement in order to equip police officers with the latest updates and knowledge in many sectors of policing and to positively affect their performance (De Grip and Sauerma, 2013; Saks and Haccoun, 2010). It was recognised that failure to develop ADP staff can lead to outdated skill sets and an inability to take advantage of new opportunities. Police forces can benefit greatly by training of

apprentices, students on placement or interns to allow fresh ideas to enter the organisation and provide a qualified pool of potential employees.

Human capital statistical analysis measures activity and informs conclusions about performance, return on investment and the allocation of resources to various parts of the organisation (Baird, 2007). It is used in both operational and strategic levels in the ADP to assist police officers to make better decisions and to develop their knowledge and skills. Although ADP rely on statistical analysis, there is a belief that too much emphasis on statistics may produce the illusion of better performance, but actual performance may be much less positive than it appears (Hood, 2006; Patrick, 2009). For example, in the policing sector, it has had a profound influence on the roles of middle managers such as sergeants, since it has fallen to them to provide the massively increased amount of data to feed into the monitoring systems used to demonstrate value for money in the force (Butterfield *et al.* 2005).

Human capital leadership relates to the role, skills, style and empowerment of leadership. It is an important strategic performance indicator affecting police officers' performance in the ADP, either positively or negatively, depending on their priorities and the direction of their thinking. Managing performance requires strong and visionary leadership which is communicated effectively throughout an organisation (Guillaume and Telle, 2011). Exceptional leaders in the organisation's performance are needed because they empower and motivate the other employees to follow their example (Senge, 2006). The pursuit of better performance is a continuously moving target; it is necessary to have equally flexible and adaptive leadership whereby those at the head of the organisation are committed to the pursuit of excellence and lead by example (Graetz and Smith, 2010; Scroggins, 2006). In ADP, because leaders of any type are the main decision makers, they were seen as the key causal driver of knowledge generation.

Social capital

Social capital comprises a set of social relations, trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations that govern exchanges, identity and networks which form organizational practices enacted in organisations. Social capital of ADP included two strategic performance indicators of control mechanism (punishment) and religious values. The punishment indicator was ranked ninth (before last), which implies its negative effect. Religious values had a medium effect (ranked fifth).

Social capital: Relational aspects of control mechanism (punishment): Police officers in the ADP reported feeling more motivated when they achieve excellent results but they tried to avoid being punished as they believe it has a negative effect on their reputation. Imposing punishment for misconduct may be necessary, but providing appropriate incentives at the same time when employees achieve excellent results at work is also important (Winn, 2014). Psychological studies have shown that having a positive self-concept predicts better job performance; it follows that any regime which undermines staff self-confidence (as over-intrusive monitoring does, for example) risks causing negative effects on staff performance (Grant, 2010). Punishing staff without motivating them is not a factor that managers totally depend on to boost performance because "organization leaders look to senior officers to guide them in establishing 'carrot and stick' strategies to motivate right behaviour in the workplace" (ibid, 2014:9). The punishment indicator was ranked last amongst all of the strategic performance indicators with regard to its effect upon police officers performance in the ADP.

Social capital: Religious faith and values. Religious faith has an important effect upon people's lives around the world (Alnamlah, 2011). Islam is the dominant religious faith in the UAE. 100 % of ADP's police officers are Muslims and they practise their prayers five times a day (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). In all public sector organisations in Abu Dhabi city there is an official time break (ibid, 2013). Because of the scale of adherence by police officers to prayer time, it was not unexpected to find a connection between Islamic rituals at work and performance management. Organisations such as ADP, which are built on a single strong ideology such as a religious faith, can rely heavily on voluntary and above-minimum performance from their paid staff, as well as exploiting shared values to enhance the community beliefs of their workforce (ibid, 2009). Fernando and Jackson have particularly highlighted how religion also plays a critical role in many aspects of motivation, emotion and judgment and employees' religious faith plays an immense role in "shaping some leaders' desire to make 'right decisions'" (2006:24). Religious faith (monotheistic faiths) can therefore be a motivating factor for employees and can affect their performance positively (Sharkie, 2009).

Conclusion

In this paper the inter-relationship between the knowledge assets of intellectual capital (in the form of organizational capital, human capital and social capital) and strategic indicators of performance management was examined in order to gain insights into how police force organisations develop dynamic capabilities in relation to performance in a changing organizational context. Police officers in the ADP agreed that all the performance indicators mentioned in this research are important and affect performance, but that each indicator under each intellectual capital has a different effect and importance, depending on variables such as the participant's job role, rank and work environment.

An understanding of strategic performance indicators is crucial if employers are to understand exactly which indicators influence their employees' performance and then select the most appropriate mix of strategies to enhance the desired behaviours in each team or in individual workers. It is likely that no one strategic indicator will serve all purposes or suit all managers and employees in a particular police force and so elements from several of the strategic performance indicators discussed in this literature review could be integrated into systems and processes which are tailor-made for each organisation in its own particular local, national and international context.

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