Problems Encountered by Police Personnel in Managing Records

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Abstract - *This research entitled —Problems Encountered by Police Personnel in Managing Records‖ determined the problems encountered by police personnel in managing records. More specifically, this study aimed to identify the most common problems encountered by police personnel relating to records, to determine the factors precipitating the problems in managing records and to find the relationship between the problems encountered in managing police records and the factors precipitating the problems in managing police records. The questionnaire is the main instrument in this study which is self-made and adapted which was distributed among 17 police personnel from Provincial Personnel Human Resources and Development Branch (Records Section) of Batangas Police Provincial Office. Insufficient storage for files and the loss of time in finding the needed files are the most common problems encountered. The respondents perceived that the changes in administration precipitate the problem in managing records. In view of the above findings, the researchers recommend that additional storage maybe requested by the Chief of Records Section to maintain effective management of police records. Proper turn-over of records to a new custodian or personnel may be adapted to help him or her cope with the job.*

Keywords: *Police personnel, Police Records, Records Management*

INTRODUCTION

Records‖ are the information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. The International Council on Archives (ICA) Committee on Electronic Records defines a record as, ―recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity (Stresak, 2014).

The need for good record-keeping and information-sharing practices has taken on added significance in today's global environment. Not only do good records provide crucial internal information (i.e., business operations and case management support—not to mention the official memory of an agency's investigations), law enforcement agencies now need to communicate agency-to-agency and across continents in order to protect the Nation's citizens. Nothing is more important to accomplishing that mission than having accessibility to accurate and timely records. Calls for service records and investigative, arrest, criminal identification, detention, and even civil records hold information that by themselves mean little; however, when pieced together with information from other jurisdictions, the result can help with all levels of investigations and aid in safeguarding the nation (Gallagher, 2012).

The law enforcement community has an ever-increasing need for timely and accurate data for a variety of purposes such as planning, budget formulation, resource allocation, assessment of police performance, and the evaluation of experimental programs. The information in this section focuses on the use, method of computation, and limitations of basic crime indicators employed by the records management.

The researchers have chosen this topic because they believe that it is not an ordinary problem face by almost all police stations that should not be taken for granted. This kind of topic is being unnoticed as it does not focus with the problems that are often observe. They want to give their time in looking for problems confronted by records personnel so that they may able to provide recommendations based on the results of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the problems encountered by police personnel in managing records. More specifically, this aimed to identify the most common problems encountered by police personnel relating to records; to determine the factors precipitating the problems in managing records; and to find the relationship between the problems encountered in managing records and the factors precipitating the problems in managing records.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used the descriptive method of research to assess the problems encountered by police personnel in managing police records. The Descriptive Method deals with a situation that demands the technique of observation as the principle means of collecting the data. The population for the study was carefully chosen, clearly defined, and specifically delimited in order to set precise parameters for ensuring discreteness to the population.

Data in descriptive survey research are particularly susceptible to distortion through introduction of bias into the research design. That is why particular attention should be given to safeguard the data from the influence of bias. Used descriptive method as the design of their study. Descriptive design is a study that describes the nature of the phenomenon under investigation after a survey of current trends, practices and conditions that relate to that phenomenon (Calderon & Gonzales, 2011).

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the 17 police personnel from Provincial Personnel Human Resources and Development Branch (Records Section) of Batangas Police Provincial Office which is the total population from the section.

Instrument

The instrument of the study was a survey questionnaire that is self made and divided into 2 major parts. The questionnaire was validated by an expert to check its contents. The first part

deals with the problems encountered by the police personnel in managing records. The second part of the questionnaire pertains to the factors that precipitate the problems of the police personnel in managing police records. The responses of the respondents were scored utilizing the Likert Scale Values of 1 to 5, 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest.

Procedure

The researchers constructed a questionnaire intended to answer the questions posed in the objectives of the study. This was submitted to the research adviser for validation and suggestions. Validation of the questionnaire was done through the help of the adviser and panel members. Comments and suggestions have been considered in the final draft of questionnaire.

Furthermore, the actual distribution of survey was done and the researchers went to the Provincial Personnel Human Resources and Development Branch (Records Section) of Batangas Police Provincial Office and sought permission to distribute questionnaires. The researchers explained the objectives of the study and gave ample time to the respondents to answer the questionnaire.

All questionnaires were retrieved after the respondents are finished answering. The data were tallied and submitted to the statistician for analysis. These were interpreted, analyzed and further explained in the results and discussion.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed the following statistical tools in analyzing the data gathered. Weighted Mean is a method which was used to interpret data from responses provided. This is used to determine the problems encountered and the factors precipitating the problems of police personnel in managing records in Provincial Personnel Human Resources and Development Branch (Records Section) of Batangas Police Provincial Office.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As seen from Table 1, the over-all rating of the respondents on the problems in managing police records was

seldom encountered with a composite mean of 2.15. Among the items cited, insufficient storage for files and records and the lack of time of finding the needed files got the highest weighted mean score of 2.59 and rated sometimes.

Table 1. Problems Encountered in Managing Police Records

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Misplacing of documents, files, records and mails of all kinds such as letters memoranda and faxes.	1.94	Seldom	7
2. Attaching of irrelevant documents and passing it to other police personnel.	1.82	Seldom	9.5
3. Unable to determine what kind of file and documents they are handling.	1.82	Seldom	9.5
4. Mishandling of the computers and other technology used for storing records.	1.88	Seldom	8
5. Insufficient storage for files and records.	2.59	Sometimes	1.5
6. Time of finding the needed files.	2.59	Sometimes	1.5
7. Presence of outdated and unnecessary files.	2.06	Seldom	6
8. Lost documents or unable to return the documents to the filing cabinet/storage.	2.18	Seldom	4
9. Duplication of files that makes the police personnel confused of the records kept.	2.12	Seldom	5
10. No record or uncoordinated transferring of a document from one personnel to another.	2.53	Sometimes	3
Composite Mean	**2.15**	**Seldom**	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; 3.50 – 4.49 = Often; 2.50 – 3.49 = Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 = Seldom; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

The lack of storage makes the records and files not properly stored and with this, it results to misplacement and loss of some essential documents. The waste of time in finding the needed files is also a result of having an insufficient storage for files and records.

In the individual office or workstation, storage is a process in which paper and other media are organized, retrieved, displayed, staged, shared, presented, stored, and discarded. Personal, active storage happens at the workstation's center of activity—the zone within reach of the seated worker. The activities people engage in with active storage include developing complex relationships between items, temporary labeling, and

frequent stowing and retrieving. They prefer to have these materials easily accessible, so much so that they may be indistinguishable from the work process. (Miller, 2009)

The researchers concluded that the reason why most of the respondents answered that insufficient storage for files and records and the waste of time in finding the needed files are the most common problems because records and files are increasing from time to time but the storage is not increasing which results to disorganized storage. Police personnel are having a hard time to find the needed files due to disorganized storage. It was followed by no record or uncoordinated transferring of a document from one personnel to another, verbally interpreted sometimes with mean value of 2.53.

Meanwhile, other items were rated seldom such as mishandling of the computers and other technology used for storing records, attaching of irrelevant documents and passing it to other police personnel and unable to determine what kind of file and documents they are handling obtained the lowest mean value of 1.88 and 1.82 respectively.

Attaching of irrelevant documents and passing it to other personnel and unable to determine what kind of file and documents they are handling, got the lowest mean value of 1.82 respectively. Mishandling of the computers and other technology used for storing records appeared to be the least problem in handling records. Nowadays, using high technology is part of managing records that is why many people are enhanced in using computers, to include police personnel. Computer subjects are already offered in almost all programs, that's why using computers for encoding of data is not a big problem in almost all offices.

As seen from Table 2, the over-all rating of the respondents' on the factors precipitating the problems in managing police records was to a least extent with a composite mean of 1.82. Among the items cited changes in administration got the highest weighted mean score of 2.41 and rated to a least extent. It was followed by lack of English proficiency, communication barrier (dialect) and ethnicity and race, assessed to a least extent with mean value of 2.29.

Table 2. Factors Precipitating the Problems in Managing Police Records

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Insufficient knowledge of records' management	1.88	To a Least Extent	6.5
2. Lack of experience	1.88	To a Least Extent	6.5
3. Personal matters affecting concentration and efficiency	1.00	Not at All	9
4. Family issues	1.00	Not at All	9
5. Financial problems	1.00	Not at All	9
6. Performing multiple police functions such as patrolling, OPLAN-Bakal, OPLAN Sita and etc.	2.12	To a Least Extent	5
7. Lack of English Proficiency	2.29	To a Least Extent	3
8. Communication Barrier (dialects)	2.29	To a Least Extent	3
9. Ethnicity and race			
10. Changes in administration	2.29	To a Least Extent	3
Composite Mean	**2.41**	**To a Least Extent**	**1**

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = To a Very Great Extent; 3.50 – 4.49 = To a Great Extent; 2.50 – 3.49 = To a Moderate Extent; 1.50 – 2.49 = To a Least Extent; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at All

Meanwhile, other items were rated not at all and personal matters, family issues and financial problems obtained the lowest mean value of 1.00 respectively.

In our own perspective, changes in administration revealed as the most precipitating factor because having a different policy in every new administration or new sets of police personnel in the records section can make them confused.

Records management is an important function of an organization. The researchers believed that good and proper recordkeeping is an evidence of a well-governed organization and should be seen as an integral part of, rather than incidental to, any business. In terms of strengthening corporate governance and promoting good management practices, we see definite merits of sharing good records management practices and procedures with government-owned or funded statutory bodies.

By setting out the principles and good practices relating to records management, and providing checklist and guidelines, this document aims to help government-owned or funded statutory

bodies and their staff to assess the way in which they are managing their records and to pursue improvements if necessary.

Records management refers to the whole range of activities which an organization should perform to properly manage its records. The key activities include setting records management policy, assigning responsibilities, establishing and promulgating procedures and guidelines, as well as designing, implementing and administering recordkeeping systems.

In the Government, ―records management‖ includes the planning, directing, organizing, controlling, reviewing, training and other managerial activities involved with respect to the creation, classification and indexing, distribution, handling, use, tracking, storage, retrieval, protection and disposal of records to achieve adequate and proper documentation of government policies, decisions and transactions as well as efficient and cost-effective operation of government bureaus and departments (B/Ds).

Table 3. Relationship Between the Problems Encountered in Managing Police Records and the Factors Precipitating the Problems in Managing Police Records

	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Problems vs. Factors	-0.073	0.780	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Based from the result, the computed r-value of -0.073 indicates almost negligible negative correlation and the resulted p-value of 0.780 was greater than 0.05 alpha level, thus the researchers fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no relationship exists between the two variables. In addition, the results reveal that the problems encountered are not affected by the above mentioned factors.

It only shows that the there was no significant correlation between the two factors. The precipitating factors which are technical matters do not affect the problems encountered by police personnel in managing police records.

CONCLUSION

The most common problems encountered by police personnel in managing records are insufficient storage for files and records and waste of time in finding the needed files. The most common factor precipitating the problems in managing police records is the changes in administration. There is no significant relationship between the encountered problems and the cited precipitating factors pertaining to the management of records.

RECOMMENDATION

The Chief of Human Resources and Development Branch (Records Section) of Batangas Police Provincial Office may request additional storage for the increasing records and files in order to keep the records managed and well secured. Proper turn over of records may be adapted by the records personnel in case a new custodian was assigned in the records section to cope with the job. The police personnel may undergo training in the areas of records management that will help to make it easy for them to find the needed files. They may have a Records Management Planning. Future researchers may conduct similar study using other variables.

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