**Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty,
Section: LAW**

ISSN: 2284 – 5968 (print), ISSN: 2284 – 5968
(electronic)

Covered in: CEEOL, Index Copernicus, Ideas
RePeC, EconPapers, Socionet

**POLICE OFFICERS AND THE RIGHTS OF
VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL ACTS**

Nikola DUJOVSKI
Goce DZUKLESKI
Snezana MOJSOSKA

Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty, Section:
LAW, 2014, Year III, Issue 1, pp: 21-30

Published by:
Lumen Publishing House
On behalf of:
Lumen Research Center in Social and Humanistic Sciences

Police Officers and the Rights of Victims of Criminal Acts

Nikola DUJOVSKI¹
Goce DZUKLESKI²
Snezana MOJSOSKA³

Abstract

Detection and effective prevention of criminal events implies the need for systematic monitoring and research related with the extent to which police officers provide support to the victims of crime. Researches are necessary for the continued promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights in the previous procedure.

In this regard, the authors of the paper make an attempt to define the care of the rights of victims of crimes by police officers in the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia. Doing so, we used the results of partial research conducted with the employees of the operational services of the Ministry of Interior.

This paper will discuss experience gained through the research conducted within the Ministry of Interior, which is related to the Police Officers attitudes and knowledge.

Keywords:

Detection, Prevention, Crime, Victims, Human rights.

¹ Dr. Sc. Nikola Dujovski, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Security, Skopje, Macedonia, ndujovski@gmail.com.

² Prof. Dr. Sc. Goce Dzukleski, Associate Profesor, National Co-ordination Centre for Border Management, Skopje, Macedonia, goce_dzukleski@moi.gov.mk.

³ Dr. Sc. Snezana Mojsoska, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Security, Skopje, Macedonia, smojsoska@gmail.com.

Introduction

Police officers are in a very sensitive position when acting with the victims of criminal acts. They must be well trained and be prepared to show their best professional behaviour while using police powers on victims of crime. To do so, Police managers should plan different types of training and further education for police officers having the most frequent contacts with victims of crime. Results of the specific survey shows that police officers are prepared to receive and would like to attend courses and seminars to increase their theoretical knowledge on how to deal, or the first respond to the victims of crime.

A numerous well known world or regional initiatives are dealing with the victims and the standards that must be guaranteed by the state officials during the pre-trial and trial procedure. Victim assistance providers include paid and unpaid individuals working in a variety of settings to respond to crime victims' mental, physical, financial, social, emotional, and spiritual needs. According to DeHart, D.D. (DeHart, 2003) police officers provide intervention, risk reduction and prevention services to both direct and indirect victims of crime. These crimes range from personal and property crime to acts of terrorism or war crimes.

In the sections that follow we will try to demonstrate the complexity of the pre-trial procedure, which involves police officers, public prosecutors, judges, and maybe the most important – victims of crime. We will try to identify the relation between police officers and victims of crime through the survey conducted with 200 official of the Ministry of Interior. We will also touch upon the competences, knowledge and attitudes of police officers. Providing adequate examples, we will try to identify the links between practical experience and theoretical knowledge of the Police officials.

Competences at relationship between police officers and victims in the pre-investigation procedure (methodology)

Competencies are becoming increasingly important in the lives of individuals, employees, career practitioners, supervisors, team leaders, managers, executives, stakeholders, and other leaders. Due to the growing importance in competency-based management, it is necessary to understand what competencies are and are not, and to have a vocabulary and framework for conceptualizing the application of competency-based methodology. Competencies are not skills per se or a knack in dexterity in the traditional sense of actions directly related to performing a task. Rather, competencies can be

thought of as tools individuals use to achieve successful or exemplary job performance (Metzler, 2008).

The competency movement was launched in 1973 when David C. McClelland, a Harvard psychologist, fails, did not predict successful job performance or success in life. As defined by McClelland, competencies are the “underlying characteristics of people that are causally related to superior performance in a job McClelland presented this approach and developed tests to predict competence, as opposed to intelligence, which exploded into achievement motivation research. Furthermore, McClelland alleged that competencies can be learned through training and development as they represent behaviors and personal attributes that are definable, observable and measurable (McClelland, 2008).

Police officers maintain high standards of competence recognizing their own particular capabilities, specializations, and limitations in expertise. They only provide services and use techniques for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience and understand that the competencies required for serving and educating groups of people vary with the distinctive characteristics of those groups (Neyroud, 2005). They understand the importance of personal wellness for delivery of services, and they promote self-care and mutual support in their relationships with colleagues and staff (Danis, 1999). Officers make appropriate use of professional, technical, administrative, and community resources (Nations, 2002).

Police officers will have to show their competences in the pre-investigation procedure, mostly because they are closely related with the effective and efficient implementation of its activities. Specifically, working with victims in pre-trial procedures should have adequate knowledge of the same activity, and show a special relationship with this vulnerable category of people. How successful in this work they are, it will be a reflection of the attitude of the victims of crime to the police officer and the institution in general (Krosho, 2009).

In order to understand how much police officers are giving support to the victims of crime in the pre-trial procedure, and how much they give some recommendations in this regard, it was conducted survey were 200 employees in the Ministry of the Interior were responders. Random selected police officers from different job positions answered on 19 closed questions.

This survey was divided in three groups of questions. The first group of questions was meter about competences of police officers in working with crime victim people. Respondents had five options to give with score from 1 to 5 (1-insufficient, partly-2, 3-sufficient, fully-4).

The second group of questions indicating the stance that have victims of crime for police and Interior Ministry officials, in terms of police officers.

The third part of questions in this survey was related to need of professional development of police officers in working with victims of the offenses before the investigation.

This survey was conducted to determine which competencies our subject matter police officer and victims rated as important to provide comprehensive information, improve, define, as well as and bridge the application of core competencies necessary in the commitment of inclusiveness.

Research and results

Analysed results from the survey shown us that the police officers are able to identify the victims of crime (figure 1). They possess the skill to identify the victims and so to let the procedure goes.

Fig. 1 – Police officer ability to identify victims of crime

Fig. 2 – Police officer skills to work with victims of crime

Figure 2 presents the acquired skills related to working with victims of crime. Police officers have the skills to work with victims of crime, but it is not

negligible number of those who describe themselves as having insufficient or partially acquired skills in this context

Police officers knowledge of the law regulations for dealing with victims of crime is shown on figure 3. Indicators suggest that police officers has partially legislation which is dealing with victims of crime. From the analysis can be seen that more than 50% of respondents have some gaps and they have need of trainings and seminars.

Fig. 3 – Knowledge of law regulation

Competence in terms of dealing with problems that arise during the process of working with victims of crime are on figure 4. According of the respondents, Ministry of interior's staff have difficulties that arise in the process of working with victims of crime. This is confirmed by the fact that half of them said they were assessing the extent of the part.

Fig. 4 – Competence

Figure 5 represents sharing experiences of police officers gained in working with their colleagues. The analysis of data from the figure 5, note that the most of police employees know how to share their experiences with colleagues.

Fig. 5 – Sharing experiences of police officers

The second group of statements indicating the attitude that victims of crime have to police officers and Ministry of interior.

Figure 6 represents the views and doubts among victims of crime. Disturbing data that is obtained from the survey, indicates that victims of crime have some fear from the police and Ministry of Interior. In a subsequent study, it remains to be investigated this attitude of the citizens.

Figure 7 shows their own safety and security of victims of crime. The results suggest that, although they have a fear and suspicion, still feel security and safety in front of the Interior Ministry.

Fig. 6 – Fear that victims of crime have of the police

Fig. 7 – Victims feels safe and secure

Figure 8 illustrates the position of victims of crime in which receiving adequate support from the authorities of the Ministry of Interior they are facing with bureaucratic procedures. Undoubtedly, the data shows that there is a large percentage bureaucratic approach to procedures in the country and recommendation is in direction to make some changes.

In response to the position of victims in terms of how much they are aware what is support means during the preliminary investigation. According to the data, the victims are not informed enough about what support means (figure 9).

Fig. 8 – Victims facing with bureaucratic procedures

Fig. 9 – Victims knowledge of support

The third group of statements, respondents comments about their need for professional development in working with victims of crime in the pretrial investigation.

In this research survey was analyzed the need of training related to working with victims of crime by the police officers. From the answers was noted that the majority of respondents need training in that direction.

The analysis of the data presented in graphs 10 and 11 can be concluded that police officers need training to develop assertiveness, and trainings in verbal and nonverbal communication.

Fig. 10 – Need of training for assertiveness

Fig. 11 – Need of training for communication skills

Analysis

From the results in the research and comparative analyze in the first part of questions about developed skills for dealing with victims in the pre-trial investigation and working experience on the other hand, we can conclude that the development of competence of police officers in relation to identifying and working with victims of crime, as well as knowledge of the legislation and dealing with problems that arise in the process, largely dependent on the gained working experience.

Comparative analysis of the second part of questions where the main position of victims of crime to police and Ministry of Interior officials on one hand and age and sex of respondents, on the other hand, indicates that there was no significant statistical difference in response.

In terms of comparative analysis, statements related to the group of the third section of the questionnaire, where respondents answered the need for

professional development, it was found that no significant difference in the responses to the statements regarding the age and experience of the respondents.

Competency Standards for Police Officers describes what should be accomplished by the individual, yet allows discretion on how to achieve that competency. They may achieve competency through personal experience, on-the-job performance, training and formal education, or in other ways.

Discussion

Victim assistance as a field of practice and study is directed toward broadening knowledge of criminal victimization and applying this knowledge to improve the condition of both individuals and society. Police officers strive to help the public develop informed choices concerning victim-related issues, services and policies.

Police officers dealing with victims of crime will have:

- To provide social, informational, and practical support to crime victims.
- To promote justice for victims.
- To attempt to ensure a voice for victims.
- To promote access for victims to a seamless web of multidisciplinary services.
- To advocate for individual victims as well as for social, institutional, and legal change.

Police officers promote integrity in practice, policy development, and community education. They are acting honest, fair and respectful of others. They maintain professional standards of conduct, satisfy their own professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different populations. Remaining dedicated to the police work, officers are aware of their professional, legal, and social responsibility to the victims that they work. Police officers contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. They are committed to compassion for individuals, and they use empathy and other practical techniques to sincerely understand and address victims' concerns. Officers take a holistic view of the person in context, and they draw on needed resources and collaboration to fully address victim, family, and community needs. In their professional actions, police officers weigh the welfare and rights of those served, staff, and other affected individuals. When conflicts occur with professional obligations or concerns, police officers attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm.

REFERENCES

- Danis, F. (1999). <http://www.utexas.edu/>. Retrieved from <http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/survey/journal/articles/050203.pdf>.
- DeHart, D. (2003). *National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium: Standards for Victim Assistance*. Columbia: Center for Child and Family Studies, University of South Carolina.
- Krosho, R. (2009). *Human rights in theory and practice of police work*. Human rights center, University of Essex, UK. UK: Human rights center, University of Essex.
- McClelland, D. C. (2008, 04 28). <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Retrieved 09 15, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_McClelland: [www.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)
- Metzler, C. J. (2008). *Defining Key Emerging Competencies of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), Historical, Analytical, and Situational Perspectives of a Promising Leadership Role and its Organizational Significance*. Cornell University.
- Nations, U. (2002). Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime. Annex to Resolution 2002/13, Action to Promote Effective Crime Prevention. UN.
- Neyroud, P. (2005). *Policing and Ethics*. Portland: Tim Newburn.