

ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of the Relationship between Information Technology and the Detection of Property Crimes

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This study examines the impact of the introduction of information technology on the detection of property crime by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS). It is an evaluative study for the comparative periods 1996 to 2000 and 2001 to 2005. During the former period a manual system was in place while, during the latter period, information technology was introduced into the TTPS. This study also examined the frequency with which information technology tools were utilized by police officers in the detection of property crime in the TTPS.

There is the prevailing belief in criminology circles that information technology may be more likely to have a significant effect on the detection of property crimes than previously tried methods. Therefore, identifying the relationship between information technology and the detection of property crimes can assist in determining the level of change in the TTPS from traditional policing to the intelligence-led policing approach.

A theoretical framework was developed by integrating Rational Choice, Routine Activity, Crime Pattern, Situation Crime Prevention and Technology Acceptance Model. These theories support the development of the intelligence-led policing model which depends on information technology for its operations.

The analysis is based on official statistics on property crimes from the TTPS as well as a survey instrument for police officers. A systematic sample of police officers from the Criminal Investigation Division (C.I.D.) in nine police divisions of the TTPS was used. Findings indicated that information technology did not have any significant impact on the detection of property crime in Trinidad and Tobago. Information technology tools provided to the police officers were neither utilized sufficiently, nor appreciated, resulting in a tedious transformation from the traditional policing model to the intelligence-led policing model. Training and awareness programmes must be enhanced to ensure that the TTPS can achieve maximum benefits from the utilization of information technology.

Keywords: Mc Donald Jacob; Information technology; Property crime; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.