



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Faculty of Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences (BMS)

Insight in the role of the OECPO

An evaluation of the Operational Expert Community Police Officer in the police region 'Oost-Nederland'.

Master Thesis – Public Abstract

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Preface

Due to the confidentiality the full access to my master thesis is currently denied. This public abstract is published instead. This is written as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the study program Public Administration. This document contains a summary of the public parts of my master thesis “Insight in the role of the OECPO”. However, because of the confidentiality sensitive parts are left out and therefore the abstract might feel incomplete. This research evaluates the role of the OECPO and the level of community policing and participatory management in the police region Oost-Nederland. This public abstract doesn’t match with the title of my thesis considering the fact that the evaluating parts are not visible.

I wish everyone much fun reading.

Okke Stam

Nijverdal, February 2018

Introduction

During the latest reorganization of the Dutch national police, a new type of community officer was introduced to assist the regular community officers in the field. These new officers, so-called 'operational-expert community police officers', or short 'OECPO's', are capable of dealing with larger problems that transcend the borders of the neighborhoods where the senior community officers are operating (Politie a., 2016). This fairly new profession of the OECPO has barely been the subject of an evaluation study.

Scientific literature will be used to clarify this concept of community policing and participatory management. This study is going to be quantitative and is going to make use of surveys. This public abstract will show the results of the following two sub-questions.

- *To what extent do community police officers succeed in acting according to the standards of Community Policing, according to themselves?* The standards of community policing (or GGP) in the Netherlands will be elaborated within the theoretical framework. These standards will be processed within the survey for the CPO's.
- *What level of participatory management do Operational Expert community officers offer to senior community police officers?* Scientific literature will be used to operationalize the level of participatory management.

Community policing

Many attempts have been made in the scientific literature to define community policing but the term community policing can be hard to define (Crowl, 2017; Terpstra, 2008; Terpstra et.al., 2016). Hancock (2016) agrees and says: "Community policing has received increasing attention in recent years but is still misunderstood" (p. 465). However, Terpstra concluded that there is consensus within the scientific literature on different five elements (2008, p. 24). Firstly, community policing is a tool that can be used to bring the police closer to the community and its citizens. The relation between the police and the citizens can be improved and the trust can be restored with community policing (Crowl, 2017; Weisheit et.al., 2016). As stated above this disconnection is one of the main reasons that the police shifted more towards community policing. Secondly, community policing has a problem-orientated approach (Crowl, 2017; Weisheit et.al., 2016). Issues such as disorder and the feeling of fear and crime can be reduced when the smaller problems in the neighborhood receive attention (Miltenburg, 2014; Weisburd & Eck, 2004). This idea of community policing is originating from the 'Broken Window' theory from Wilson and Kelling (1982). This metaphor became swiftly one of the most influential ideas in policing (Skogan, 2011). Wilson and Kelling (1982) argue that when a window in a building is broken and it's not fixed, all the other windows will be broken soon: "one broken window is a signal that no one cares and so breaking more windows costs nothing" (p.2). Therefore, nuisance and the degradation of the neighborhood are usually more important for community policing than more serious criminality because citizens are usually not confronted with these types of criminality (Terpstra, 2008). Thirdly, community policing has a more preventive approach and therefore more proactive procedures (Vito, Walsh, & Kunselman, 2005). This preventive approach is coherent with the problem-oriented approach. For police agencies, it is crucial to include disorder control as a strategic measure to prevent crimes (Xu, Fiedler, & Flaming, 2005). Xu et al. concluded this via the famous and previously specified 'broken window theory' of Wilson and Kelling (1982) and

argue that this occurs as a result of the fact that widespread disorder in a community leads to a breakdown of 'informal social controls and the mechanisms regulating the social interaction' (p.148). Fourthly, community policing has an aim to focus on cooperation with stakeholders, usually the stakeholders in the neighborhood (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017). Finally, a necessity for community policing is actively involved citizens. This is necessary for the police to have enough information and to be able to set priorities that match with the needs of the neighborhoods (Terpstra, 2008; Vito et.al., 2005). Additionally, a characteristic of community policing that is often shown in scientific literature is a de-centralistic approach (Crowl, 2017). However, Terpstra contradicts this and argues that decentralization isn't a characteristic but more a necessity for community policing (2008 p.25). However, apart from these common characteristics, the exact execution of community policing can vary. Every time and location has its own version and interpretation of community policing (Terpstra et al., 2016), for example, the community policing in America varies strongly with the GGP in the Netherlands.

Participatory management

Participatory management reflects the ability of employees to have influence on the decisions of the managers. Flamholtz and Randle (2012) achieved to form a model where the extent of democracy is elaborated on a scale, from directive to nondirective. The most directive form of leadership is 'autocratic', followed by 'benevolent autocratic', 'consultative', 'participative', 'team (consensus)' and 'laissez-faire'.

Wycoff and Skogan (1994) found that when the police department implemented participatory management, a significant increase over time in the belief that the organization practiced participatory management could be witnessed. This increase over time in the belief that the organization practiced participatory management was positively related to four factors. Firstly, it was positively related to the satisfaction of the police officers with their work activities, the police organization itself, their supervision and their job growth potential. Secondly, it was positively related to the perceived significance of the work that the police officers did. Third and fourthly, the task identity and the work autonomy of the officers. Furthermore, Hasenfeld (1983) argued that using group participation and a leadership style that is, among other things, democratic, can facilitate higher worker effectiveness. Spector (1986) did a meta-analysis to (perceived) participatory management and employee outcomes. Spector stated that "employees who perceive comparatively high levels of control at work are more satisfied, committed, involved and motivated. They perform better and hold greater expectancies."(p.1013). In this context, this implicates that CPO's perform better, and are therefore to a larger extent able to contribute to the standards of community policing. This is acknowledged by Black and Gregersen (1997) who found that employees with "above-average involvement" had significantly higher levels of satisfaction and performance. A higher level of participatory management has a significant impact on the performance according (Sukirno & Siengthai, 2011)

The overall conclusion is that a positive relationship can be seen between participatory management, job satisfaction, effectiveness, and team outcome. The increase in effectiveness and performance would imply that CPO's that are able to, or perceive that they can, influence decisions in their job, are to a higher extent able to perform according to the standards of community policing. CPO's who are able to influence policies considering their work are called

'participating CPO's. Naturally, CPO's that aren't able to influence policies considering their work are called 'non-participating CPO's'. Based on the previous conclusion two hypotheses are formulated regarding participatory management of the OECPO's:

H0: The level of participatory management is not a significant positive predictor for the level of community policing.

H1: The level of participatory management is a significant positive predictor for the level of community policing.

During this quantitative research, a response rate of 306 was achieved from the survey towards the CPO's which implies a response percentage of 63,09%. However, not all of the CPO's filled in the survey completely. Therefore, when the missing data are considered, the first questions have in total a higher response than the last questions. In total 255 of the senior CPO's have filled in the survey completely and therefore the response percentage of completed surveys is 52,57%. Nevertheless, the data of the CPO's who did not fill in the survey completely is used for the parts which are filled in. The survey aimed towards the OECPO's is sent to 113 different OECPO's and a response percentage of 66,4% (79 officers) was achieved.

Results

The first research question regards the extent that CPO's succeed in acting according to the standards of community policing, according to themselves. The first research question is: *To what extent do community police officers succeed in acting according to the standards of Community Policing, according to themselves?* From the theory are five different standards of community policing formulated. To measure the extent of acting according to these standards, twelve relevant survey questions are adopted in the survey for the CPO's. From the Likert-scale a score from one to five can be assigned. With this numerical score, a mean and a standard deviation, or SD, can be calculated. The means of the separate questions can be used to calculate an overall mean score of the extent to which the police officers act according to the standards of community policing. An overview of the tables regarding the standards of community policing can be found in the appendix, tables A1-A6. The following table (table 6) contains the calculation of the overall mean score for the extent of acting according to the standards of the community policing. Firstly, the means for each individual standard are calculated. Secondly, those five means per standard are used to calculate the overall mean score. None of the questions or standards have a higher value or has to be interpreted differently, therefore, the calculation of the means is relatively effortless. Each standard has two survey questions and is, therefore, after adding both up, divided by two. The only exception is the second standard¹ which has four different questions. With the 'mean per standard' the overall mean is calculated by adding up the different values and divide it by five.

¹ Solve problems in the neighborhood

Standard of CP	Means	Mean per standard
Bring the police closer to the citizens by closing the gap	4,20-4,15	4,18
Solve problems in the neighborhood	3,47-2,87-3,32-3,24	3,22
Acting preventive	3,70-3,16	3,43
Cooperation with stakeholders in the neighborhood	4,05-4,18	4,12
Actively involved citizens	3,61-3,67	3,64
Overall Mean	3,72	

Calculation of the overall mean score for acting according to the standards of community policing

As can be seen in the table above, the overall mean score of the standards of community policing in the region 'Oost-Nederland' is 3,717. The scores can vary between one and five and therefore the middle value is three. The score 3,717 is 0,7 higher than the middle score which is positive for the community policing in 'Oost-Nederland'. This implicates that the CPO's experience a positive feeling from the citizens and stakeholders and that they find enough time to strengthen the relations in the neighborhood. However, it is likely that both constructs are related, it is highly imaginable that when the police are closer to the citizens, the citizens and other stakeholders are more likely to cooperate with the police.

The standards which lower the overall mean score are firstly, 'solve problems in the neighborhood'. Within this category lowering the criminality and the feeling of unsafety in the neighborhood are the lowest scoring items. Secondly, acting preventive is also lowering the overall mean. It is noteworthy that the two lowest scoring standards are also likely to be related to the reason that acting preventive can be a good way to solve problems in the neighborhood. Problems can be solved by acting preventive and deal with smaller nuisances as can be learned from the famous 'Broken Window' theory (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The relatively low score for both constructs implicates that the CPO's think that it could be better.

With the data, it is possible to explore differences in the extent that CPO's act according to the standards of community policing on a smaller level. Firstly, the differences between the different BT's are displayed and secondly, the overall mean score for each of the five districts are shown to explore any differences in the smaller levels. The full overview of the results on BT- and district level are adopted in the appendix of this research. For each different BT's the overall mean score for the standards of community policing is calculated. With these mean scores the following chart could be constructed (figure 6). The bar chart helps to identify differences in the overall mean scores among BT's. A more detailed overview of the level of community policing with the scores can be found in appendix A (table A7).

1.1) Offered level of participatory management

A second research question is formulated to measure the level of participatory management that the OECPO's offers in the police region 'Oost-Nederland': "*What level of participatory management do Operational Expert community officers offer to senior community police officers?*". Firstly, to measure the level of participatory management the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012) is used, as stated in the operationalization. The scale is a direct way to discover the level of participatory management of the OECPO's and thus, discover the amount of influence

the CPO's have on the decisions of the OECPO. The rank on the scale will be complemented with the data of the second measurement instrument: the average mean score of the ELQ items regarding participatory management. The descriptive statistics of the questions deriving from the ELQ can be found in the appendix A. The mean scores can vary between one and five where 'one' ultimately autocratic and 'five' ultimately democratic is. However, the last question based on the item "Makes decisions that are based only on his/her own ideas" is, in comparison to the other items, a negative question. The question is recoded which implies that the positive answers became negative and vice versa. Therefore the mean score of 2,65 changed in 3,35, which is more in line with the rest of the scores. With the six different scores, an overall mean score can be calculated for the offered level of participatory management in the region of 'Oost-Nederland'. Another item that stands out is the standard deviation of the first item, 'the level of encouragement to express ideas and suggestions'. The standard deviation is, compared to the other items, higher (1,139)². This implies that the response is more diverse compared to the other five items.

The value of the overall mean score for the level of participatory management that the OECPO's apply in their work can vary between one and five. A one would be an ultimately autocratic management style and a five would be ultimately democratic. The level of participatory management of the OECPO's in 'Oost-Nederland' received a score of 3,342 out of five. This score can be compared with the result of the mean score that derives of the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012). The frequency table can be found in the appendix (table A9). The frequencies table above shows a clear distinction of the offered level of participation in the police region 'Oost-Nederland' according to the CPO's. The first thing that draws attention is the biggest group (96, 36,9%) of CPO's that expressed that their OECPO discuss the problem together with them but in the end, the OECPO makes the final decision. This first group is followed by a second group with a management style that is one step more democratic (59, 22,7%), 'we come together and discuss till we all agree with the solution'. On the second hand, there are few CPO's that filled in that their OECPO maintains a very autocratic style of management. This conclusion can be made when looking at the number of CPO's who filled in a one (four CPO's) or a two (six CPO's).

To calculate the mean score of participatory management on the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012) the last option, 'none of the above', had to be filtered out. The seventh option 'none of the above', which is used by 44 community officers, would receive a score of seven and would therefore incorrectly enlarge the mean rating. The mean score can be interpreted on a scale from one to six with 'one' as the most autocratic and 'six' as the most democratic form of management.

The mean score for the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012) among the community officers in 'Oost-Nederland' is 4,18. This score corresponds most with the value of "we discuss the problems together but in the end, I decide" (score of 4). This value shows that the mean OECPO, according to him/herself, has the final right to decide and acts therefore as an additional layer of management. This is in contrast to the description of the function of OECPO, which states, as mentioned in the previous chapters, that the OECPO is not established as an extra layer of management but more as a supportive role for the CPO's. This

² The SD of the other five questions varies between 0,822 and 0,866)

score (4,18 on a scale of 6, 69,9%) is highly comparable with the mean score deriving from the six items from the ELQ (3,342 on a scale of 5, 66,84%). The similarity adds to the validity of the research. An overview of the frequencies of the question with the scale can be found in Appendix A (table A10)

Concluding, it can be stated that the Operational Expert community officers within ‘Oost-Nederland’, according to themselves, are in general ‘*The participative OECPO*’ and offer a level of participatory management that mostly corresponds with the step of “we discuss the problems together but in the end, I decide”. This is due to the score of 4.18 on the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012). However, differences occur when looking at a smaller level where for example two BT’s received a much higher score (with a score of 5 or higher).

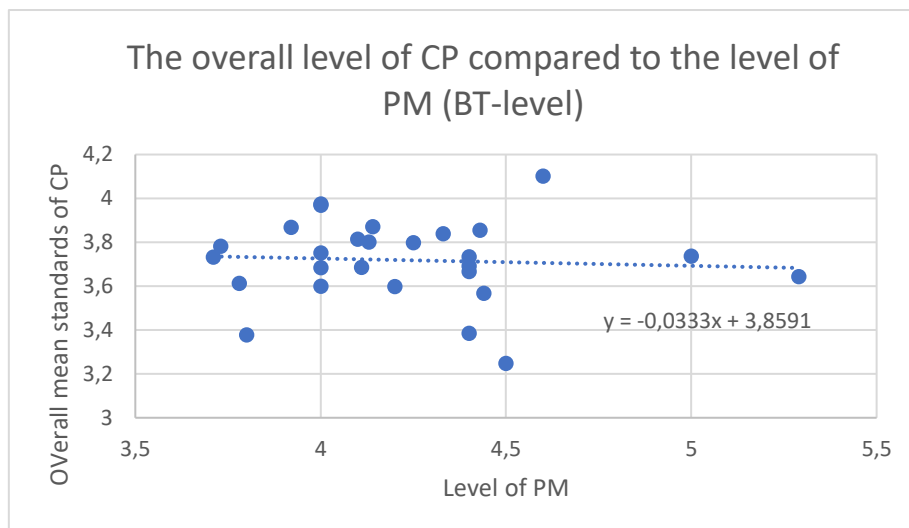
1.2) Relation community policing and participatory management

Differences within BT’s have been demonstrated in the paragraphs above regarding the level of community policing and the level of participatory management. Hasenfeld (1983) argued that a democratic leadership style can facilitate higher worker effectiveness. This higher effectiveness translates in this research to a higher level of (the standards of) community policing in the police region ‘Oost-Nederland’. Therefore, it is expected that community police officers who experience a management style that is more democratic, achieve a higher level of standards of community policing. This led to the following two hypotheses:

H0: The level of participatory management is not a significant positive predictor for the level of community policing.

H1: The level of participatory management is a significant positive predictor for the level of community policing.

Each different BT in ‘Oost-Nederland’ has received a score for the level of the standards of community policing and the level of participatory management. With these two sets of scores, it is possible to perform a regression analysis if there is a relation visible between the two different constructs. Regression analysis is a much used statistical method to estimate the relationship between variables. Additionally, it is also possible to calculate a correlation score. The following graph shows a scatterplot between the variable ‘level of community policing’ and the ‘level of participatory’.



Scatterplot with a trendline of the variables level of community policing and level of participatory management

The first thing that stands out when visually looking at the data points is that there isn't a relation visible. This is confirmed by the SPSS output in the Appendix tables (A20 and A21). The variables correlate with a score of 0,065 which is in statistical terms a correlation that is 'very weak'. Additionally, with a high p-score (above 0,005) it is not possible to accept the H1 hypothesis and therefore can be stated that the level of participatory management is not a significant predictor of the level of community within the BT's in 'Oost-Nederland'.

In conclusion, the level of participatory management is not a significant predictor for the level of community policing. There is not a linear regression between both variables. It is highly likely that the level of community policing is dependent on various other variables. It is not excluded that the level of participatory management is one of them.

1.3) Differences in age groups

As shown above, the data is separated into smaller geographical levels. Another approach is to separate the data into different age categories. This way differences between the perceived level of participatory management and the level of community policing can be discovered under the different age groups of the CPO's. The CPO's had the ability in the survey to choose one out of five different age categories as can be seen in the overview in the table (table 13). Two interesting facts can be derived from the table: firstly, the level of participatory management rises in older age groups. This implicates that OECPO 'manages' older CPO's different than younger CPO's and that older CPO's experience a larger amount of freedom to influence the decisions of the OECPO. Secondly, the data shows little variation of the overall level of community policing among the different age groups. Older CPO's don't succeed better in acting according to the standards of community policing when compared to younger CPO's.

	Naam BT	Level of PM	Overall mean CP
1	<=25		
2	26-35	3,92	3,762
3	36-45	4,06	3,6495
4	46-55	4,15	3,705
5	>=56	4,37	3,769

Table 1 Overview of the five age groups including the level of participatory management and the overall mean for community policing³

Conclusion

The first sub-question was formulated to examine the level of community policing in the police region 'Oost-Nederland' and the differences in the BT's and districts: *'To what extent do community police officers succeed in acting according to the standards of Community Policing, according to themselves?'*. According to themselves, the CPO's succeed to a fair extent to the standards of community policing. The CPO's in Oost-Nederland are to a very respectable degree able contribute to community policing on two standards. Firstly, the CPO's are doing well in closing 'the gap' and improving the relationship between the police and the citizens. Secondly, the cooperation with stakeholders in the neighborhoods is also one of the strong suits of the CPO's. In contrast, the CPO's are struggling with two different standards of community policing. The CPO's have more problems with solving problems in the neighborhood and with acting preventive. Between BT's some differences are visible while on the district level the differences are negligible.

The second sub-question researched the level of participatory management among OECPO's in the different geographical levels in the police region 'Oost-Nederland': *'What level of participatory management do Operational Expert community officers offer to senior community police officers?'*. The 'mean role' of the OECPO is the 'participative OECPO'. This role corresponds with the third level⁴ on the scale of Flamholz and Randle (2012) which explains that OECPO's made decisions by 'discussing issues together although the OECPO keeps the right to make the final decision'. Comparable with the first sub-question, differences are shown within different BT's. With the data from both community policing and participatory management within the BT's, a linear regression analysis could be conducted to confirm or deny the H1-hypothesis. None of the regression analyses proven any significant relation between both constructs which led to the denial of the H1-hypothesis.

Discussion

One of the most relevant major findings of this research is the lack of relation between participatory management and community policing. Multiple regression analysis revealed that any relation visible between both constructs was not significant, which led to the denial of the H1-hypothesis. This finding was somewhat unexpected considering the theory of Hasenfeld (1983) and Somech (1994). Both authors argued that participatory management was positively associated with effectiveness. Moreover, Somech mentioned a positive relation with 'team outcome'. Numerous studies showed a positive relationship with participatory

³ No data is recorded in this question from CPO's that 25 or under

⁴ When looking from most democratic to most autocratic

management and satisfaction (Kim, 2002; KitapÇi & Sezen, 2007; Sagie, Zaidman, Amichai-Hamburger, Te'eni, & Schwartz, 2002; Xia et al, 2017). However, in the literature, the relations with satisfaction and effectiveness/outcome is widely discussed. On the one hand, articles state that employee satisfaction correlates with job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001), and service quality (Yee, Yeung, & Cheng, 2008). On the other hand, there are authors who claim that the correlation between job satisfaction and performance is relatively low (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985) or in need of further research (Koys, 2001). In conclusion, this research doesn't prove a significant relationship between both effectiveness, (level of community policing) and participatory management. This study shows new insights into the connection between both constructs and contributes with a view from the public sector. However, it can't erase all the uncertainty of the relationship between both constructs.

1.4) Research implications

This research delivers a contribution to two different aspects, the implications for the scientific field and the organization, the Dutch national police. Both types of implications will be elaborated in this paragraph. Firstly, the findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of the relation between the level of participatory management and the level of community policing. Hereby, considering the level of community policing as an output of effectiveness of CPO's and thus, it can, therefore, be assumed that a lack of relation between participatory management and effectiveness is present. In the paragraph above, containing the main findings of this study, the relation between both constructs is deeper elaborated.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may help us understand the role of hybrid professionals better when looking at the level of participatory management. Hybrid professionals, which can be elaborated as 'professionals who have both management and executive tasks. Meurs and Kreulen (2017) categorized the role of the OECPO as a hybrid professional. A note of caution is due here since the diversion between management and executive might vary among different OECPO's. The idea of hybrid professionals is a relatively unknown topic within the scientific literature. The relation to participatory management is not yet been explored.

Lastly, a significant positive relationship between participatory management and community policing could not be proven. However, between the age groups of the CPO's, the level of influence in decisions of the OECPO was higher in older CPO's. This might sound plausible considering the fact that older CPO's possess usually more experience, which could be the reason that the OECPO offers a higher level of participatory management to older CPO's. However, the level of community policing hardly varies between the different age groups.

In addition to the implications for the scientific field, this research contributes to the organization, the Dutch police. The level of community policing according to the CPO's in the police region 'Oost-Nederland' is the first implication for the Dutch police. The results give an overview of not only the mean score of the entire region but also on smaller geographical levels, the district and BT level. Differences between districts and BT's can be determined from the results which can be an incentive for other researchers to explore why these differences occur.

1.5) Limitations

According to the data, the level of participatory management is not a direct predictor for the level of community policing. Due to the demarcation and the timeframe of this study, other management relations like coaching and support between both types of CPO are not taken into consideration in this research. Community policing is a highly complex construct and all the different variables could not be taken into account. In this research, the level of community policing is determined as the level of effectiveness and ‘the output’ community officers. However, the construct of community policing is operationalized via literature of community policing and not via literature of effectiveness or (team) outcome. The findings of the relationship between community policing and participatory management have therefore to be carefully interpreted for further use.

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