



RESEARCH PAPER

The INL-Supported Curriculum Development Program of the Sindh Police: How Effectively Does It Meet the Needs of Police Officers?

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ABSTRACT

The current research evaluates the extent to which the texts of the curriculum fulfill the professional needs of law enforcement personnel in matters of criminal investigation, procedural knowledge, and application of case law. The Curriculum Development Program, funded by the INL and carried out by the Sindh Police, was initiated with the objective of developing the capacity for investigation through the use of six specialized textbooks in response to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's directive for the development of uniform handbooks for investigations. The qualitative survey was conducted with 100 randomly chosen police officers of Karachi Range, including Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Station House Officers, from 100 police stations of the city. A questionnaire and discussion with police officers measured the perception of police regarding the usability, comprehensibility, and applicability of the six curriculum books. However, they found it wanting in aspects pertaining to the integration of judicial precedents. The Handbook of Criminal Investigation was found to be legally correct but impractical for implementation in the field. Basic Investigation was found practical but wanting in aspects pertaining to case laws. Advance Investigation was found to bridge the theory and procedure gaps but was found to be crime-specific in nature. Forensic Investigation was found to provide insight but was lacking in aspects pertaining to admissibility of evidence. Criminal Law was found to be introductory in nature but lacking in-depth case laws. Police Station Working Module was found to be practical in nature but lacking in legal substance. Changes to the curriculum should include the analysis of case law at all procedural levels, merging legal theory with practical applications in the field. Future print versions should include precedents from judicial decisions without making the product less user-friendly, include guidelines for the admissibility of forensic evidence, and improve analytical strength to increase conviction rates.

KEYWORDS Criminal Investigation, Sindh Police, Case Laws, Police Officers, Curriculum

Introduction

The success of any police training course is subject to its relevance to operational realities and effectiveness in providing officers with theoretical expertise along with practical know-how. A number of books on police investigation have been compiled and integrated into the Sindh Police training curriculum through the INL-supported initiatives. These books together seek to enhance investigative capability and present systematic learning material. Nevertheless, whereas although these books provide basic guidelines and legal documentation, but they don't cover the day-to-day practicalities of police work or reconcile theory with judicial interpretation. These are mostly descriptive in nature and describe procedures in general without discussing the reasons behind the judicial decisions. This imbalance between case law and police procedure hinders officers' knowledge of how investigations are evaluated in court. This research examines six prominent books being taught currently in the Sindh Police curriculum—the

Handbook of Criminal Investigation in Pakistan (2021), Basic Investigation (2020), Advance Investigation (2019), Forensic Investigation (2021), Criminal Law (2020), and Police Station Working Module (2021)—examining their pertinence, range, and inadequacies in addressing the professional requirements of policemen.

Literature Review

The police training courses in developing countries do not address the gap between procedural training and legal requirements, which impacts the quality of investigation and conviction rates (Asian Development Bank, 2020). The police training course should not only about imparting legal knowledge but also about the relevant judgments with regard to police investigation that is applicable in a legal context (Bayley, 2006; Weisburd et al., 2021). In Pakistan, the criminal justice system faces a number of problems, including conviction rates of 5-10% in serious offenses. The acquittal of convicts at lower level is turned over by the appellate courts highlighting the faults at investigation stage (Research Society of International Law, 2021).

In fact, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in its guidelines issued in 2019 for the standardization of investigation handbooks, emphasized the importance of judicial precedents to deal with such issues. In police training programs, more importance is given to bureaucratic correctness rather than cognitive thinking, which makes police officials judicially unsound but procedurally sound (Hussain, 2007; Yasin, 2013). This can also be seen in the general trend in police training in post-colonial countries, where police training emphasizes drill and discipline over professional thinking (Deflem, 2022).

The literature on the professionalization of police work has pointed to three key aspects of the effectiveness of police training: cognitive knowledge of legal systems, procedural knowledge of evidence recovery, and judicial knowledge—knowledge of how investigative activities are assessed in court (Bittner, 1970; Manning, 1977). More recent studies have underlined the need for these aspects to be combined in a non-sequential fashion, with special emphasis on the interpretive practices by which courts evaluate evidence (Brandl & Frank, 1994; Maguire & Norris, 2020). The situated learning approach also argues that professional learning needs to connect abstract knowledge with legitimate peripheral participation in judicial communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Although much investment has gone into the development of police curricula, the evaluation of police training effectiveness is still in its infancy. The four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework were considered as a guideline for this study; however, research in this area with the use of appropriate methodologies is scarce. There is little research that has attempted to evaluate the translation of police curriculum into performance in the courtroom setting (Alpert & Dunham, 2010). The current study attempts to bridge this research gap by examining police officers' perceptions with regard to police curriculum and its procedural utility and incorporation in the practical working of the Sindh Police.

Material and Methods

This study employed a qualitative survey design in exploring the opinions of officers regarding the Curriculum Development Program, which was funded by the INL. The population of the study consisted of police officers from the Karachi Range. The

officers were chosen to share their opinions regarding the range of operational activities in the province of Sindh.

Sample Selection: There were employed a random selection of 100 police officers from 100 different police stations in the Karachi Range. It was attempted to explore different opinions by including Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Station House Officers in the study. The random selection method was employed to avoid biases in the selection of the officers.

Data Collection: Semi-structured questionnaires and discussions were used as a means to collect data. This method enabled a systematic comparison to be made, but at the same time, it also enabled some exploratory research to be conducted. Some aspects were explored in detail through focused discussions, such as those that are commonly shared in relation to the curriculum.

Instruments: Data collection instruments assessed perceptions regarding the usability, comprehensibility, and applicability of the six principal curriculum books: Handbook of Criminal Investigation in Pakistan (2021), Basic Investigation (2020), Advance Investigation (2019), Forensic Investigation (2021), Criminal Law (2020), and Police Station Working Module (2021). Questions addressed three domains: investigative competence, procedural understanding, and familiarity with judicial standards.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed thematically to identify response patterns associated with curriculum effectiveness. Thematic analysis enabled systematic identification of recurring themes regarding curriculum strengths, deficiencies, and recommendations for improvement across the dataset.

Results and Discussion

The results reveal that the majority of officers welcome the effort to standardize police training but recognize key deficiencies in incorporating judicial precedents and case-based learning.

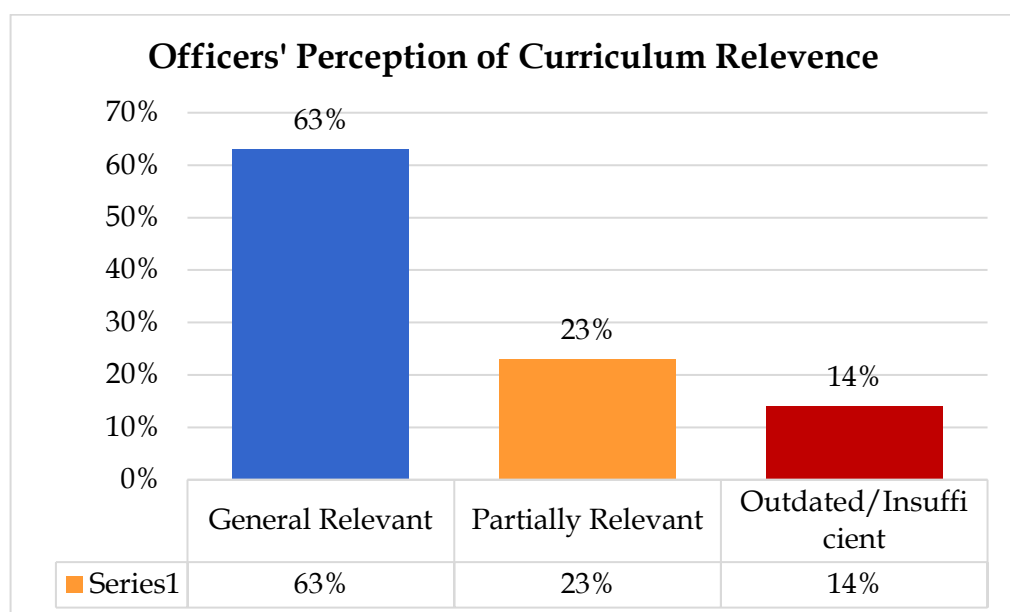


Figure 1: Officers' Perception of Curriculum Relevance

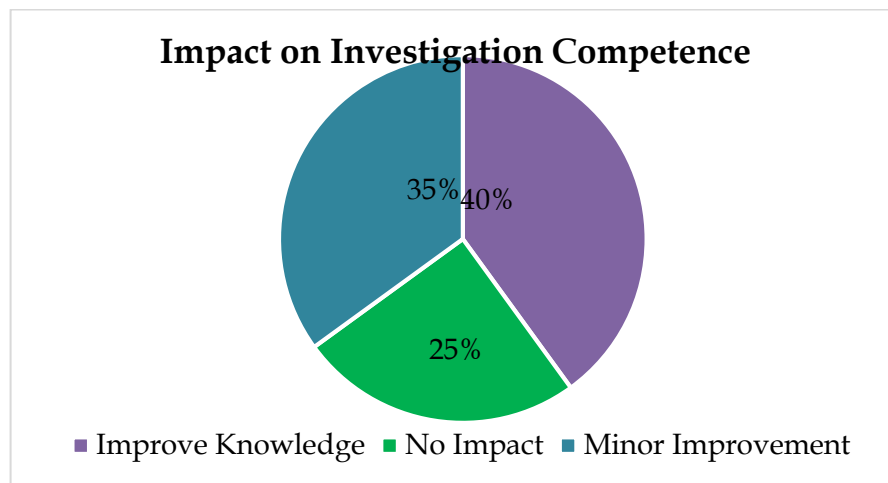


Figure 2: Impact on Investigative Competence

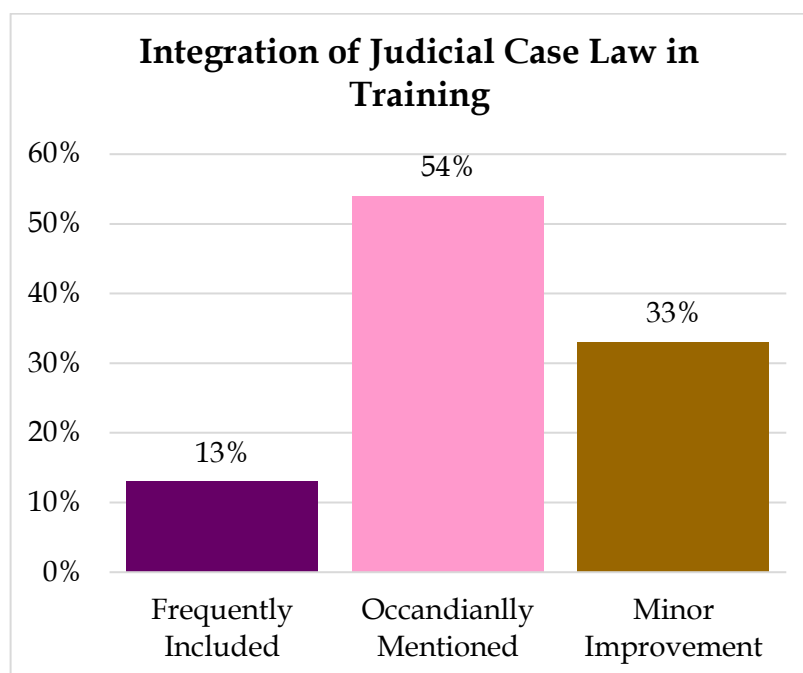


Figure 3: Integration of Judicial Case Law in Training

Discussion

The findings of the current study highlight the consistent and critical need for the INL-funded Curriculum Development Program, in terms of the underrepresentation of case laws in police training. Though police officers acknowledged and appreciated the program's success in terms of standardizing police training content and imposing procedural discipline in the police force, the curriculum materials were consistently unable to fill the gap between theoretical knowledge of the law and the law as applied in the courtrooms.

On the basis of the analysis of six core textbooks, a disjointed approach to professional training is noted. "Handbook of Criminal Investigation" in Pakistan, although very comprehensive from a legal standpoint and referencing the statutes, was not found to be very compelling from a procedural standpoint. "Basic Investigation" and "Police Station Working" were very procedural but lacked legal content, resulting in a lack of comprehension of the legal rationale of procedures. "Advance Investigation" filled the theory and practice divide but was still limited by crime type structuring. "Forensic Investigation" was perhaps the most disappointing in terms of scientific knowledge absent legal context of admissibility, which was a critical deficiency in the context of forensic evidence. "Criminal Law" was purely introductory and did not stimulate critical thinking necessary for effective legal proceeding.

This discrepancy in training and judicial integration ensures that investigators are proficient in their procedures but not in their handling of evidence. The officers have knowledge of what procedures to follow but not how the court will process their procedures in relation to legal standards. The lack of learning from cases ensures that there is no development of investigative point of view, which is the capacity to foresee challenges from the defense and plan the investigation in advance.

The Sindh Police case is paradigmatic of larger trends in post-colonial policing models in which training is based upon administrative control and not professional autonomy. However, the investment in curriculum development in the INL program represents a moment in which pedagogical transition occurs. Thus, professionalization must be understood not in terms of rejecting current pedagogy but in incorporating it; legal theory must be incorporated into field training, and precedent must clarify procedural mandates and not be absent or separable from it.

Conclusion

The development program in curriculum by INL is a significant step in the professionalization of police training in Sindh Police. Standardization in the curriculum and development in learning material have ensured that police officers have basic knowledge in the areas of criminal investigation, procedural discipline, and operational efficiency. However, in order to ensure that police investigations are evidence-based and sound from a legal perspective, it is important that in the next version of the curriculum, a significant gap in case law integration be filled. The absence of case law representation in all six textbooks makes it challenging for officers to understand the perspective of the court and how they analyze the investigation. This is a major weakness in the achievement of the final objective of the training program, which is to train investigators that will pass the test of the court and increase the rate of convictions. The incorporation of case law analysis at all procedural levels will help officers understand the demands of modern judicial standards, thus enhancing individual and institutional image.

The next step in the development of the curriculum is recommended as the focus should be placed on the analytical power by integrating the theoretical with the practical application of the law. Future versions of the curriculum should include precedents based on judicial decisions without compromising usability, include forensic training based on guidelines for admissibility, and cultivate the faculties of reasoning required for competent court procedure. With this integration, the Sindh Police could develop training into professionalized practice.

Recommendations

- **Integrate Case Law Analysis:** Future revisions of the curriculum should incorporate analysis of case law at all levels of procedure, which would assist officers in understanding the judicial perspective of their actions and evidence. **Combine Theory with Practice:** In future revisions of the curriculum, analysis of case law in all forms of legal procedure should be included to help officers appreciate the judicial perspective in what they do and what they collect.
- **Enhance Forensic Legal Framework:** It is suggested that the Forensic Investigation manual be reviewed in the light of the judicial guidelines on the admissibility of evidence, so that the use of forensic techniques is in line with the judicial point of view.
- **Preserve Practical Usability:** In incorporating judicial precedents, it is important to maintain the 'hands-on' approach of the training manuals as has been maintained Basic Investigation Handbook.
- **Develop Analytical Reasoning:** It is expected that the curriculum materials go beyond the presentation of procedural descriptions to promote the development of well-reasoned investigative judgment, especially in the study of Criminal Law and Advance Investigation.
- **Incorporate Case Studies:** It is expected that the curriculum materials include case studies as a means of bridging the gap between the theoretical aspects of the law and the actual practice of investigation.
- **Strengthen Legal Substance in Operational Modules:** The Police Station Working Module should be complemented by legal aspects that are incidental to records management and community policing.
- **Establish Continuous Review Mechanism:** A system should be developed to regularly update the curriculum contents in light of changing judicial decisions and principles of evidence.

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