Managing Repeat Offender Information in South Africa: The Need for a Motor Vehicle Crime Information Management Strategy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the significance of implementing a motor vehicle crime information management strategy to identify repeat offenders who commit motor vehicle crimes in South Africa. Repeat offending substantially contributes to South Africa's high motor vehicle crime rate because of the insufficient management of crime information. The results of this study revealed that a motor vehicle crime information management strategy does not exist in South Africa resulting that repeat offenders of motor vehicle crimes are not identified as repeat offenders upon re-arrest and released on bail after committing a similar consecutive offence providing offenders the opportunity to reoffend. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by recommending a motor vehicle crime information management strategy that would act as a crime information management tool to efficiently address repeat motor vehicle crime offending. The practical relevance of this crime information management strategy would empower first responders, investigating officers and prosecutors with sufficient criminal information identifying vehicle crime offenders as repeat offenders upon re-arrest to facilitate the successful opposing of bail denying these offenders the opportunity to reoffend.

Keywords: Crime information management, motor vehicle crime, repeat offender, South Africa.

1. Introduction

Motor vehicle crimes in South Africa (SA) are disturbingly high. A number of 18 162 motor vehicle robberies (carjacking) were reported in 2019/2020, as published in the South African Police Service (SAPS) Annual Crime Statistics for 2019/2020 (South Africa, 2020). A number of 50 663 (2017/18); 48 324 (2018/19) and 46 921 (2019/20) incidences of motor vehicle and motorcycle thefts were respectively reported during the same period. Previous studies confirmed that a large percentage of motor vehicle thefts are committed by repeat offenders (Anderson and Linden, 2002; Fleming, Brantingham, and Brantingham, 1994; Svensson, 2002) suggesting that a rather small number of offenders are responsible for the majority of motor vehicle thefts. However, a national television news broadcast revealed that many of SA's repeat offenders are not incarcerated (eNCA, 2015). This television broadcast further reported that the SAPS acknowledged the vacuum that exist regarding the management of repeat offenders' crime information and recommended that the SA security cluster "urgently needs to start compiling official data", on crimes committed by those offenders who

are released on bail or on parole, or those who have re-offended for a similar crime. However, six years after the eNCA (2015) broadcast, no official crime information on repeat offenders is being recorded and managed by the security cluster in order for these offenders to be timeously identified as repeat offenders, prior to or during the formal bail application, to subsequently oppose bail. Mitchley (2017) pointed out that this failure of managing crime information contradicts the former Minister of Police's call that repeat offenders needs to be profiled and their information captured in order for these offenders not to be released on bail. The former minister also lashed out at the courts and magistrates for granting bail to "recycled criminals".

The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 (CPA) (South Africa, 1977) compels an arrested individual to disclose that there are similar outstanding cases pending against such individual to the SAPS investigating officer or the representing attorney. However, despite this legal obligation suspects do not always disclosed this information at his/her bail application. The CPA, however, limits the rights of suspects stipulating that suspects who are arrested for committing a consecutive Schedule 1 offence, such as vehicle robbery or theft, while having been released on bail for such an offence must be denied bail by the court and remain in custody if it is in the interests of justice to do so. Similarly, international law permits the detention of repeat offenders without bail in order to, among other reasons, prevent the accused from repeat offending (Makasana, 2014). The non-existence of an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy that could enable first responders to immediately identify repeat motor vehicle crime offenders greatly contributes to the non-disclosure and non-identification of repeat offenders when applying for bail.

According to the Justice Project South Africa (JPSA) (2015), it is "not uncommon to see alleged offenders being released on bail more than once and often for new commissions of the same or similar crimes they were released on bail for in the first place." Accordingly, the JPSA recognises the need for an information management strategy in SA that could effortlessly be linked to the current Crime Administration System (CAS) of the SAPS. In addition, Smit (2012) confirms that no database exist in SA pertaining to record keeping and management of information on criminals involved in motor vehicle-related crimes and recommend that measures need to be put in place to address this need. Chaskalson and De Jong (2009) further reiterate that criminal records of an arrested individual, that are held by other departments, are not easily accessible nor readily available in order to determine an accused's criminal history. Van Graan and Zinn (2015) emphasise the importance of using all available sources of crime information and propose that a variety of sources, especially from different disciplines or environments, ensure that comprehensive crime information can be obtained. Elliot (2006) further states that information management is of the utmost importance, as it directly influences one's actions and therefore has direct results.

The objective of this paper is to explore the implementation of an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy to enable first responders to positively identify repeat vehicle crime offenders upon arrest. In order to fulfil this objective, the following research questions were explored:

- What is the significance of a vehicle crime information management strategy to identify repeat offenders who commit vehicle crimes in order to empower first responders (arresting officers) to identify repeat vehicle crime offenders after arrest in order to manage such offenders accordingly, and to communicate this readily available information to first responders/arresting officers and investigating officers, and subsequently to prosecutors, in order to facilitate the successful opposing of bail?
- How could the development and implementation of an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy enable first responders to positively identify repeat vehicle crime offenders who committed vehicle crimes upon arrest?

This study indicates that although repeat motor vehicle crime offenders are continuously arrested, their criminal information is not readily available to first responders, investigating officers, or the court. Consequently, shortcomings exist in the criminal justice system, resulting from the insufficient management of crime information, which allow repeat motor vehicle crime offenders not to be identified as repeat offenders and thus are treated as first offenders resulting in re-arrested individuals being granted bail, allowing these offenders the opportunity to re-offend. Given the significant extent of vehicle crimes in SA, the serious implications of repeat offending, as well as the shortcoming that exists to efficiently manage motor vehicle crime information, the rationale of this study is to explore and emphasise the need of implementing a motor vehicle crime information management strategy to identify repeat offenders who commit motor vehicle crimes in SA prior to or during the formal bail application. The findings of this research bridge the gaps that exist by recommending a practical vehicle crime information management strategy and framework that could act as a management tool to address repeat vehicle crime offending. This study contributes to the existing body of literature addressing the management of crime information and repeat offending of vehicle crime offenders.

2. Background

Tracker Connect (Pty) Ltd (hereafter referred to as "Tracker"), was born after the LoJack Corporation (hereafter referred to as "LoJack") formally registered on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) as a listed company, and subsequent to its successful fight against vehicle-related crime issued an operating licence to South Africa to conduct business. LoJack is believed to have been the inventor of mainstream vehicle tracking technology. Subsequently, the invention of this vehicle tracking technology led to vehicle tracking being introduced worldwide in 1986. Due to the enormous success rate achieved in recovering stolen and robbed motor vehicles, as well as successful arrests, vehicle tracking technology has spread throughout the globe to some 38 countries.

Tracker (2017) has a subscriber base in excess of 1 000 000 subscribers. These subscribers entrust Tracker with one of their most valuable assets; their motor vehicles. Tracker was one of the first companies in SA to provide vehicle tracking technology to recover stolen and robbed motor vehicles, thus leading to numerous arrests of motor vehicle thieves and robbers. Due to the exceptional recovery of stolen and robbed vehicles, as well as the arrest rate of perpetrators, the SAPS and Tracker formally joined hands

in 1996 to combat vehicle-related crime. Tracker is mandated to recover stolen and robbed motor vehicles, as well as arrest the offenders responsible for such crimes. Therefore, Tracker specifically deals with criminal matters such as motor vehicle theft and robbery and the subsequent arrest of the offenders.

Since its inception in 1996, Tracker (2017) has been responsible for:

- in excess of 16 000 arrests related to motor vehicle theft or robbery;
- in excess of 82 000 recoveries of stolen or robbed motor vehicles; and
- the recovery of more than 650 firearms.

According to Senekal (2016), the Operational Response Services (ORS) Department of Tracker, established in 1997, is mandated by a formal memorandum of understanding to assist the SAPS in the tracking and recovery of stolen or robbed motor vehicles, as well as the arrest of the perpetrators responsible for motor vehicle thefts or robberies, by utilising Tracker's vehicle tracking technology. In 2018, 900 operational SAPS vehicles were fitted with Vehicle Tracking Units (VTUs) and utilised operationally in the fight against vehicle-related crime.

During the primary author's previous operational experience, gained through tracking and arresting vehicle theft and robbery offenders since the year 2000 when deployed as an operational member of the SAPS K9 Unit, he became increasingly aware of the phenomenon that a number of vehicle theft and robbery offenders are re-arrested while having been granted bail for similar offences. The phenomenon was further investigated by the primary author and it was confirmed, by means of re-arresting a number of repeat offenders, that it is common for offenders of vehicle crime to commit similar crimes while out on bail and thus have similar pending criminal charges levelled against them. In addition, through testifying in court cases against arrested vehicle crime offenders, as well as subsequent discussions with prosecutors, it also became clear that criminals who had reoffended are silent when questioned in court to ascertain whether there are any outstanding criminal cases pending against them. The arrested individual does not inform either the SAPS investigating officer nor the representing attorney that there are similar outstanding cases pending against them, as required by the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 (South Africa, 1977), specifically pertaining to bail. Thus, the arrested individual is subsequently treated as a first offender by the SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and not as a repeat offender, which means that the individual therefore receives bail, allowing him/her the opportunity to reoffend. The non-existence of an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy in South Africa that could enable first responders to immediately identify repeat vehicle crime offenders greatly contributes to the non-disclosure of repeat offenders when applying for bail.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Repeat Offending with Specific Reference to Vehicle Crimes

Jules-Macquet (2014) confirms that SA does not have or keep record of official repeat offender data or statistics. The Draft White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (South Africa 2003) also acknowledged the fact that there is no data available in SA pertaining to repeat offending statistics. Jules-Macquet (2014) provides the following

reasons for this shortcoming related to the insufficient management of repeat offender information:

- Repeat offending includes all forms of criminal offences and there is no steadfast regulation in place specifying which government department (the SAPS, the Department of Correctional Services, or the Department of Justice) should manage this information.
- The use of different information systems does not allow for the integration of different government departments' systems.
- Although a central information system within the various departments was proposed, nothing has been put into place.

Research conducted in SA on repeat offenders in general estimates different repeat offender rates as follows:

- Between 85 percent and 94 percent (Muntingh, 2001);
- 24 percent (Open Society Foundation for South Africa, 2010);
- 55-95 percent (Schoeman, 2002).

According to Slifer (2014) a property crime offender (such as vehicle theft and robbery) is more likely than an offender of any other crime type to become a repeat offender. In addition, Linden and Chaturvedi (2005), Schoeman (2002), Ratcliff (2009), and Senekal (2016) are all in agreement that a large percentage of crime, such as motor vehicle theft and robbery, is usually committed by a small number of repeat offenders. In agreement with the above notion, Muntingh and Naude (2012) state the following: "It is generally accepted that a relatively small number of people are responsible for a disproportionately large number of crimes in society" (p. 7). Makai, Ratcliffe, Veraar, and Collins (2004) suggest repeat offending can commonly be measured using arrest data, conviction data and imprisonment. Schönteich and Louw (2001) further mention, as far back as 2001, that these measures are unfortunately not applied in SA. Forsyth and Copes (2014) further confirm that criminal activity involving motor vehicle theft or robbery is mostly associated with repeat offenders. Buckleton, Triggs, and Walsh (2005) indicate that there is a direct association between arrests and repeat offending. In their study, Buckleton et al. (2005) further observe that, as far back as 1995, 81 percent of thieves were repeat offenders. According to Siegel and Worrall (2017), repeat offenders committing vehicle-related crimes in the USA, such as theft or robbery, were "the most likely to be re-arrested while out on bail" (p. 56). Slapper and Kelly (2009) observe a study in 1988 by the United Kingdom Metropolitan Police already showed that 16 percent of offenders arrested were out on bail for similar cases, such as vehicle theft or robbery. This study also established that vehicle crime offenders offend on average once a month while they are out on bail. Repeat offending is thus an established international phenomenon.

3.2 Crime Information Management

A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (2015, p.8) notes that:

Information is the lifeblood of the police service. It leads to effective investigations, timely arrests and appropriate criminal justice outcomes. It also helps to prevent

further crimes being committed. Information is vital in the fight against crime
Elliot (2006) states that information management is of the utmost importance, as it directly influences one's actions and therefore has direct results. In agreement with Elliot, Rowlings (2010) states that information management consists of data, information, and knowledge. Rowlings (2010) defines these concepts as follows:

- Data: Objective facts that can be transformed to information.
- Information: Organised data that has meaning as well as context.
- Knowledge: a combination of information and data put together.

Fourati (2016) describes the objective of information management as a combination of both the effective and efficient use of available information. Firestone and McElroy (2011) supply a more hands-on operational definition of information management, calling it a "handling, directing, governing, controlling, coordinating, planning, organising" process (p. 69). Hinton (2005) further highlights the fact that all relevant information collected and retained must be used for a specific purpose. Chaskalson and De Jong (2009) are of the opinion that the court attending to the bail application of an arrested and detained person should have the following minimum information at its disposal when dealing with a bail application:

- The correct identity of the arrested individual.
- Whether the arrested individual has a criminal record.
- Whether there are any other pending criminal matters faced by the arrested individual.
- Whether the arrested person is out on bail for another offence.

However, Cowling (2001, p.95) explains that although the court attending to the bail application requires an arrested individual to disclose his/her personal information at a bail hearing, "practical experience" has shown that this disclosure of information by an individual that was arrested does not always take place at his/her bail application. Cox (2015) is of the opinion that information management is an ongoing process (creating, storing, and utilising information) and organisations need to adapt to changes and challenges. In accordance with Fourati (2016), Eslake (2006) and HMICFRS (2015) explain that the objectives of information management are to ensure that:

- information is shared and understood by all members of the organisation or team;
- all relevant information is efficiently and effectively documented, and stored for later use; and
- the stored information is easily accessible, consistent, reliable and accurate to support effectiveness within the operation or department.
- Plecas, McCormick, Levine, Neal, and Cohen (2011), and Bainbridge (2004) as well as Dempsey and Frost (2015) clearly state that sharing information between the relevant role players within the criminal justice framework is of the utmost importance. Bainbridge (2004, p.421) also emphasises that when "organizations store data in electronic systems, sharing information through networks becomes more important and more feasible". Bainbridge (2004) furthermore describes the importance of information within the criminal justice sphere as follows:
- Information is used to prove evidence in court.
- Information is placed together to understand events.

- Information is used to identify suspects.
- Precise information leads to the accused being convicted in court.
- People may suffer harm if their information is not handled competently within the confines of the law.
- Information allows crime trends to be analysed.
- Sharing crime information between law enforcement agencies is important.

Dempsey and Frost (2015) also acknowledge the importance of crime information sharing within the criminal justice sector, stating, "The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) understands the importance that partners within the criminal justice community should share crime information with each other". In agreement with Dempsey and Frost (2015) and Bainbridge (2004), Hess, Orthmann, and Cho (2016) further highlight that the first responder is the first line of defence and that it is of the utmost importance that these first responders should have accurate information at their disposal.

Based on the above review of the literature, the authors hypothesise, firstly, that repeat offending substantially contributes to South Africa's high motor vehicle crime rate because of the insufficient management of crime information. Secondly, a vehicle crime information management strategy has the potential of a practical solution to the repeat offender phenomenon of vehicle crimes in South Africa. The lack of crime information management of repeat motor vehicle crime offenders in SA thus validate the exploration of a vehicle crime information management strategy, which has the potential to supply accurate, timeous, and reliable information relating to the status of repeat motor vehicle crime offenders who are re-arrested by first responders while re-offending having been released on bail. This, in turn, illustrates the significance of exploring a motor vehicle crime information management strategy to identify repeat offenders who commit motor vehicle crimes, for which the following research questions arise: What is the significance of a motor vehicle crime information management strategy in SA?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Approach and Design

This study followed a qualitative research approach complemented with a single case study research design. Tracker was included as the single case in this research. Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005) describe the term 'case study' as an in-depth study that utilises a limited number of units of analysis, as described in paragraph 4.2 below. Therefore, the researcher conducted a single case study with Tracker Operational Response Services (ORS) members who are employed as Law Enforcement Liaison Officers (LELOs) and act as first responders when stolen or robbed motor vehicles fitted with VTUs within Gauteng have been located. These ORS members are responsible for arresting suspects that have stolen or robbed motor vehicles belonging to Tracker clients that pay a monthly subscription for the services rendered by Tracker. Tracker is mandated by a formal memorandum of understanding to assist the SAPS in the tracking and recovery of stolen and robbed motor vehicles.

4.2 Target Population and Sampling

The ideal population for this study would have been all the operational members within the South African vehicle tracking industry who are responsible for effecting arrests when stolen or robbed motor vehicles are recovered using vehicle tracking technology. However, it was not practical to engage with this large population and therefore utilised a target population. The target population with regard to this study included LELOs, supervisors, and managers employed by Tracker who are responsible for effecting arrests and overseeing daily operational duties within Tracker ORS. The target population for this study included first responders, supervisors, and managers employed by Tracker who are responsible for effecting arrests and overseeing daily operational duties within Tracker ORS.

Non-probability sampling was used to purposively select a total of 15 Tracker ORS members employed as LELOs and acting as first responders of stolen or robbed motor vehicles, and an additional five participants from the Tracker ORS Department which included supervisors, middle managers, and senior managers who oversee the arrests of offenders and recovery of stolen or robbed vehicles within Gauteng. Using vehicle tracking and recovery technology is an extremely dynamic discipline and these first responders have to be highly skilled and trained to make arrests. Formal training in effecting arrests after tracking and recovering stolen or robbed motor vehicles is limited to a small number of operational staff members working within the Tracker ORS Department. Data saturation was reached during the data collection process.

4.3 Data Collection

In-depth interviews were conducted with the sampled Tracker ORS LELOs. The views, thoughts, and opinions gathered from participants during the interviews conducted for this study were recorded electronically, in order to enable transcription to facilitate the data analysis process. Data was collected until saturation point was reached. Prior informed consent were obtained from participants. Participants were under no obligation or duress to participate in this research and did so out of their own free will, and could have withdrawn from the study at any time without any risk of prejudice for non-participation or withdrawal. The identity of participants were kept strictly confidential and their responses were anonymised ensuring that their identity are not detectable from the research results. Approval for the research was granted by the College of Law Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of South Africa.

4.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis spiral method was used to thematically analyse and compare the data that was obtained from the interviews. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) describe the use of the data analysis spiral as applicable to a wide variety of qualitative studies. The data was analysed and categorised by means of specific themes and sub-themes. These identified themes and sub-themes were utilised to interpret the captured data and then arrive at logical and structured conclusions. An independent co-coder compared and validated the resultant thematic analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Re-arresting of Vehicle Crime Offenders

The continued re-arrest of repeat offenders who have been released on bail for similar offences is a clear indication that the criminal justice system in SA is lacking an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy to timeously identify arrested suspects as repeat offenders. Should a database containing the crime information of offenders exist, first responders would immediately be informed that they have arrested a repeat offender. Based on the timeous identification of the re-offending status of an offender, a bail application could be opposed. However, the non-existence of an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy largely contributes to the fact that vehicle crime offenders are not timeously identified as repeat offenders after arrest. As a result, these offenders are granted bail, which enables them to continue re-offending. Although effective crime information management is practiced internationally, the failure of the SA criminal justice system to conform to international best practices in relation to crime information management constitutes a critical vacuum in the identification of repeat offenders. As a result, repeat offenders are re-arrested on a regular basis, which in turn results in resource constraints within the entire criminal justice system.

The literature confirms that national legislation contained within the CPA 51 of 1977 (South Africa, 1977) highlights the fact that repeat offenders should not be granted bail should they be arrested for a second time. Matshoba (2012) further corroborates that the South African Government passed amendments to the CPA 51 of 1977 (South Africa, 1977) to ensure that repeat offenders will not be released on bail by the court and that these changes and/or amendments were specifically aimed at repeat offenders. In addition, the Constitution (South Africa, 1996), which is the custodian of the South African legal system, emphasises the fact that an offender may be kept in custody should it be in the interests of justice. George (2016) rightfully noted that repeat offenders responsible for vehicle-related crimes are commonly re-arrested by first responders while released on bail for similar offences. Makasana (2014) further confirms that international laws permit the detention of repeat offenders without bail in order to prevent the accused from repeat offending. Slapper and Kelly (2009) comment that on average a vehicle crime offender commits a crime monthly while released on bail. Buckleton et al. (2005) indicate that there is a correlation between arrests and repeat offending and in their study they note that as far back as 1995, 81% of thieves were repeat offenders. According to Siegel and Worrall (2017, p.388), repeat offenders in the USA committing vehicle-related crimes, such as theft or robbery, were "the most likely to be re-arrested while released on bail"

5.2 The Implementation and Management of an Official Database of Vehicle Crime Offenders

The non-existence of a SAPS maintained and managed vehicle crime offender database makes it nearly impossible to address repeat offending within South Africa. A SAPS maintained database will ensure that when first responders arrest repeat offenders they are timeously identified as repeat offenders. Should a SAPS managed database containing the crime information of offenders exist, first responders would

immediately be in a position to ascertain that they have arrested a repeat offender.
The absence of a vehicle crime offender database within the SAPS to maintain and manage vehicle crime information leads to first responders not being aware of the fact that a repeat offender has been arrested. The SAPS is evidently not in a position to share repeat offender information with other relevant role players within the criminal justice cluster. This fact clearly leaves a huge gap in that repeat offenders can use the absence of a database to their advantage, knowing that they cannot be timeously identified as repeat offenders. As a result, repeat offenders are treated as first offenders and are granted bail based on inefficient or unavailable crime information that in turn leads to the opportunity to re-offend while having been granted bail. Although repeat offender crime information databases are utilised internationally, the failure of the SA criminal justice system to conform to international best practices in relation to the implementation of a vehicle crime offender database results in repeat offenders being treated as first offenders and not repeat offenders, which in turn means that these repeat offenders are granted bail and then have the opportunity to re-offend.
The implementation and management of an official vehicle crime offender database is key to ensuring that repeat vehicle crime offenders are identified upon arrest and thus not released on bail according to the provisions of legislation. A television broadcast by the eNCA (2015) furthermore confirmed that no statistics are recorded pertaining to repeat offenders who offend while released on bail. During this broadcast it further became evident that the SAPS is of the opinion the criminal justice cluster "urgently needs to start compiling official data" and manage the data on crimes committed by those offenders who are out on bail or on parole, including whether they have committed a similar type of offence as before. Mitchley (2017) reported that the former Minister of Police, Mr Mbalula, expressly stated that information about repeat offenders needs to be captured and stored in order for these offenders not to be released on bail.
In order to illustrate the impact of the non-existence of a vehicle crime offender database maintained by the SAPS, or any role player within the criminal justice fraternity, a number of academics and criminologists estimate repeat offender rates in SA as follows:

- 85% and 94% (Muntingh, 2001, in Jules-Macquet, 2014)
- 24% (Open Society Foundation for South Africa, 2010, in Jules-Macquet, 2014)
- 55-95% (Schoeman, 2002, in Jules-Macquet, 2014)

The vast difference in opinion of the estimated reoffending rates among these academics and criminologists makes these estimates untrustworthy, thus reaffirming the urgent need for the implementation of an official vehicle crime information management strategy. The Department of Correctional Services (South Africa, 2003) confirmed that there is no accurate or reliable statistics to measure repeat offending in SA, echoing the authors' scepticism regarding the mentioned reoffending rates.
The literature further points to the advantages of implementing and maintaining a database containing the crime information of repeat offenders. The significance of such a database is that crime information is readily available to first responders. This crime information will be trustworthy, since all the captured information is validated during an input and output process. The outputs would include information specifically

needed by the first responder, such as prior arrests and convictions, the type(s) of crime(s) previously committed, the area where the offence was committed, as well as the case number(s), in order to complete a document for court and investigation purposes to ensure that all role players become aware that an offender is a repeat offender. The implementation and maintenance of a database containing the crime information of repeat offenders will thus ensure that the statutory requirement, as contemplated by the CPA 51 of 1977 (South Africa, 1977) section 60 (4) (a-e), is met.

5.3 Suspects Disclosure of Outstanding Criminal Cases or Previous Convictions

The non-disclosure of crime information by repeat offenders leads to the granting of bail and the opportunity to re-offend while re-offenders are released on bail. However, an efficient vehicle crime information database, specifically dealing with repeat vehicle crime offenders, would ensure that first responders are alerted to the fact that a repeat offender has been arrested and therefore it would not be necessary to try and obtain any crime information from the arrested individual himself/herself. As a result, arrested individuals appearing in court would not be in a position to withhold information of previous offences in an attempt to be treated as first offenders. It is furthermore recommended that the court adjudicating the bail application should be informed of all outstanding and pending cases against an individual appearing in court.

Since repeat offenders are not honest about their previous offences and convictions, a vehicle crime information management strategy would result in an arrested suspect's identity being known to law enforcement, thus denying him/her the opportunity to disclose incorrect information. International best practises indicate that a crime information management strategy addresses the identifying of repeat offenders, however there is a shortcoming in the SA context as repeat offenders are not identified as repeat offenders and ultimately released on bail, providing them with the opportunity to re-offend. Access to a vehicle crime information management database by relevant role players in the criminal justice system, in order that the re-offending status of an offender may be ascertained, would thus be beneficial.

Chaskalson and De Jong (2009) state that a criminal court presiding over an offender's formal bail hearing or application should have the following minimum information at its disposal: the accused's correct identity, criminal records of the accused and whether there are any pending matters against the accused. In addition, Chaskalson and De Jong (2009) point to Cowling (2001) who confirms that an accused must, as a requirement by the court, honestly and openly disclose this information at a bail hearing. However, "practical experience" has shown that this disclosure of information by an arrested individual appearing before the court at his/her bail application does not always take place. The literature further illustrates the importance of efficiently managing and providing readily available crime information. The National Crime Information Centre (FBI, 2008) utilises a crime information management model that allows first responders to enquire about and receive information at any given time.

5.4 The Status Quo of a Vehicle Crime Information Management Strategy in South Africa

South Africa currently does not have a vehicle crime information management

strategy in place to effectively manage the crime information of repeat offenders who commit vehicle-related crimes and to enable first responders to positively identify repeat vehicle crime offenders upon arrest. The existence of a vehicle crime information management strategy could lead to the identification of a repeat vehicle crime offender immediately after arrest. Currently, in SA, first responders are usually unaware that they have arrested a repeat vehicle crime offender due to the absence of a repeat offender information management strategy. This non-existence of a vehicle crime information management strategy to manage criminal information implies that repeat offenders are not identified as such upon re-arrest and therefore the re-offending status of re-offenders are not known to the first responders, investigators, or prosecutors. However, an efficient crime information management strategy would ensure that first responders, investigators, and prosecutors are aware of the re-offending status of the arrested individual and should the individual be identified as a repeat offender, bail could be successfully opposed.

The Justice Project South Africa (2015) reaffirms that the South African bail system is problematic since the bail system creates opportunities for reoffending. The Justice Project South Africa (2015) further confirms that the criminal justice cluster is aware of this phenomenon, but has chosen not to do anything to address this situation. Bainbridge (2004) as well as Dempsey and Frost (2015) furthermore highlight the importance of a crime information management strategy, since such a strategy has the potential to prove evidence in court, understand events, identify suspects, lead to convictions and analyse crime trends.

Consequently, the results of this study confirm the authors' hypothesis' firstly, that repeat offending substantially contributes to South Africa's high motor vehicle crime rate because of the insufficient management of crime information. Secondly, a vehicle crime information management strategy has the potential of a practical solution to the repeat offender phenomenon of vehicle crimes in South Africa. The significance of implementing a motor vehicle crime information management strategy to identify repeat offenders who commit motor vehicle crimes in South Africa has valuable economic, academic and policy implications. The South African economy loses billions of rand annually due to motor vehicle theft and robbery. Such a motor vehicle crime information management strategy could thus empower first responders, investigating officers and prosecutors with sufficient criminal information identifying vehicle crime offenders as repeat offenders upon re-arrest to facilitate the successful opposing of bail denying these offenders the opportunity to reoffend, which in turn could lead to a decrease in vehicle crime and save the South African economy a significant amount financially. The findings of this study could serve as a source of reference to academia or other researchers when conducting research of a similar nature, thus contributing to the current research gaps that exist regarding vehicle crime information management to address repeat motor vehicle crime offending. The insufficient management of vehicle crime information is in direct contrast with the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 stipulating that a suspect must be refused bail by the court and remain in custody when arrested for perpetrating a successive motor vehicle robbery or theft while having been released on bail. In addition, the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 also compels an arrested individual to disclose that there are

similar outstanding cases pending against such individual to the SAPS investigating officer or the representing attorney. Consequently, such an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy could contribute to positive policy implications.

6. Conclusion

Although this study identified that repeat vehicle crime offenders continuously pose a challenge to the criminal justice cluster, it became clear that neither Tracker nor the SAPS implements or maintains a vehicle crime information management strategy to actively identify repeat vehicle crime offenders upon arrest. It also became evident that first responders are deprived of crucial information upon the re-arrest of repeat vehicle crime offenders, since information on the status of repeat offenders is not readily available. This information is needed in order to ensure that the repeat offender is identified as a repeat offender and not granted bail, therefore remaining in custody. This information is key in order to inform all relevant role players that a repeat vehicle crime offender was arrested and not a first offender, in order to oppose bail as prescribed by legislation. However, neither the SAPS nor Tracker or any other SA vehicle tracking company currently has an efficient vehicle crime information management strategy in place in order to address repeat vehicle crime offenders.

Based on the result of the analysis, this study recommends the implementation of a vehicle crime information management strategy. This proposed strategy is based on a continuous flow of processes that are interlinked with one another, namely, input (capturing the details of the motor vehicle crime offender), process (storing crime details received from input), and output (first responders receive immediate outcome of search) of information. It is further recommended that the proposed flow process for a vehicle crime information management strategy should be augmented with a procedural framework for a vehicle crime information management strategy. After first responders have established that a repeat offender has been arrested, as per the proposed flow process for a vehicle crime information management strategy, the crime information should be captured on the proposed procedural framework in the form of a compulsory annexure that should accompany the SAPS case docket for perusal and acknowledgement of the repeat offending status by the investigating officer and the prosecutor. This annexure should contain the following information: personal information of the repeat offender; previous crime information details of offender, including policing area and police case number, crime type, date of arrest, whether offender is currently on bail or not; first responder's information; investigating officer's information; and the prosecutor's information.

Therefore all role players, such as the first responder, investigating officer, and the prosecutor, should be involved in the vehicle crime information management strategy. By employing a vehicle crime information management strategy, the phenomenon of repeat offending of vehicle crimes could be effectively addressed by denying repeat motor vehicle crime offenders bail and consequently ensuring successful convictions. It is proposed that Tracker, as well as the entire law enforcement and security environment, adopt, implement, and maintain the proposed procedural framework to efficiently address the identification of repeat vehicle crime offenders

and the subsequent denying of bail. After first responders have established that a repeat offender has been arrested, as per the proposed flow process for a vehicle crime information management strategy, the crime information should be captured on a compulsory annexure that should accompany the SAPS case docket for perusal and acknowledgement of the repeat offending status by the investigating officer and the prosecutor. The proposed flow process for a vehicle crime information management strategy and the proposed procedural framework for a vehicle crime information management strategy thus present a practical solution to the repeat offender phenomenon that the vehicle tracking industry and the SAPS are faced with. Knowledge concerning best practices in this discipline of crime prevention, particularly in developing countries, is an emerging subject field, therefore, further research is required, which could focus on the following aspects:

- Sharing of crime information among organizations who use vehicle tracking technology in the tracking and recovery of stolen and robbed motor vehicles.
- The underlying reasons why a motor vehicle crime information management strategy does not exist in South Africa.
- Financing models to develop a motor vehicle crime information management strategy.
- The sustainability of a motor vehicle crime information management strategy.

A limitation of this study is the exclusion of other national vehicle tracking and recovery companies in South Africa. However, these vehicle tracking and recovery companies were excluded from this study since Tracker, the primary author's employer, contractually obligates this author to regard all information and knowledge obtained in the course of his employment as strictly confidential. The primary author may not disclose any information or knowledge to any person not entitled to such information in the normal course of his duties, during or after his employment at Tracker. Any contravention of this provision would render the primary author liable to immediate dismissal and/or a claim for any resulting damages. Vehicle tracking companies are business entities that focus on the recovery of stolen or robbed vehicles. As a result, these companies rely on the collection, management, and processing of data (crime information), and how such information is turned into knowledge that allows these companies to provide proactive value to their partners and customers. Consequently, national vehicle tracking companies do not share crime information with each other. Nevertheless, by employing the case study research design, an in-depth study was conducted that "utilises a limited number of units of analysis" as prescribed by Welman et al. (2005) as illustrated in paragraph 4.1.

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