

A GUIDELINE FOR WHOLE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT OF POLICE WELFARE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore current welfare-related problems and propose a guideline for whole system management of police welfare. Qualitative research was employed by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 police officers and 68 participants were carried out by focus group discussion. It was found that police officers had encountered welfare-related issues in three phases of their time in the police service. When police initially joined the career, the problem could be such as a lack of accommodations, police personal protective equipment and assertion to the right of occupation despite being transferred to work at another place. The second phase was welfare-related issues during their time in the police service. Most police officers had faced the problems related to quality-of-life improvement and work efficiency enhancement. The last phase was involved in welfare benefits after deaths, injuries, or retirement. According to a guideline for whole system management of police welfare, the 'Tree of Welfare' model has stemmed from research findings and recommendations on the patterns of effective police welfare management.

Keywords: Welfare Management, Welfare System Development, Police Welfare, Police Benefit Quality-of-Life Improvement

INTRODUCTION

Police is an important organization to maintain security and peace, which is a supreme goal for people in society. Police is a high-risk career, that they may experience adverse impact such as physical and mental health, injury, disability, including death. Also, high risk career leads to stress in performing and duty. Therefore, appropriate welfare, compensation, benefits could be a factor that build morale for police officers to improve their work (Khuakoonrat & Ua-kit, 2010). Welfare and benefit depend on policy and social context in each nation. In United Kingdom, welfare and benefit covers police themselves such as personal protection equipment, training course, health and well-being (The United Kingdom Parliament, 2021). This welfare and benefit are also provided to their families such as health and well-being (The United Kingdom Parliament, 2021). Similarly, welfare and benefit for police in Australia provide medical care, improving safety and protection to police and their families (Western Australia Police, n.d.).

In Thailand, the initiative to perform police management development in a concrete way has been proposed since the former Prime Minister, General Suroyud Chulanont's administration in 2006. The Order of the Prime Minister No. 230/2549 issued on 13 November B.E. 2549 (2006) appointed a committee for police reform to conduct research and propose recommendations for police reform in order to enhance efficiency in criminal justice administration for the public. The direction framework for police reform consists of 10 components, such as power decentralisation, police internal audit and inspection system, public participation, salary improvement system,

compensation, and police welfare benefits. Nevertheless, research findings from the committee have not been implemented due to time constraints.

The Royal Thai Police has imposed an action plan for the fiscal year 2019 indicating the goal for unity and moral support in Item 6. It includes the improvement of police quality of life for happiness, the adjustment of work environment, and the provision of police equipment to ease the burden on police officers who spend their own money on supplies for police tasks. Furthermore, the action plan aims to improve police welfare to better the quality of life for police officers with honor and dignity, such as salary, compensation, lunch project fund, medical care, and accommodation. Nonetheless, police salary, welfare, and equipment are still insufficient compared to other professions in the criminal justice system. A lack of police welfare would have a negative impact on work motivation and productivity and could also result in corruption and professional misconduct. According to the abovementioned rationale, the researchers have conducted to explore welfare-related issues due to whole system management of police welfare and proposed a guideline for better welfare management and the allocation of resources for police work to respond to public needs and expectations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Definition of Welfare Provision

The Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Welfare Provision in the Government Sector B.E. 2547 (2004) which has been enacted until now defines the term ‘Welfare Provision’ as compensation in addition to salary which could be both monetary and nonmonetary for the promotion of moral support and well-being of employees. Welfare includes leave, medical services, child education fees, welfare benefits for operations in the special areas, insignia, and pensions. Furthermore, it also defines ‘Welfare Provision in the Government Sector’ as activities that the welfare committee provide to offer assistance or convenience to government officials for benefits in addition to regular welfare derived from the government. This term also covers benefits to support operations or benefits that the welfare committee additionally arranges for government agencies, such as loans, allowances, welfare restaurants, and cremation welfare.

The Department of Labour Protection & Welfare (2010) defines welfare provision as services or activities that the organisation establishes to offer convenience to its employees. Welfare provision should ensure job stability and life assurance or offer additional benefits in addition to regular payments. The provision of welfare focuses on moral support and motivation for employees to be enthusiastic to work to the best of their ability with the integration of their body, mind, and intelligence. Employees should not be worried or have difficulty in personal life, family, society, and relationship in work environment.

Theory Related Welfare

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can define benefits of welfare as that employee can utilize welfare benefits to respond to their hierarchy of needs. If the organization can provide welfare in response to the needs of employees at the highest level, employees will appropriately show their potential and benefit the organization. In other words, if employees receive responses for their needs consistently, they will achieve their full potential to materialize the ultimate goals of the organization (Maslow, 1980). The basic principles of Maslow’s theory consist of three dimensions as follows:

- 1) Humans are living creatures whose needs are influential or causal to their behavior. Only the needs with no response are causal to behavior while the needs that receive response will no longer be causal to behavior.
- 2) The hierarchy of human needs gradually develops from basic to complex needs.

- 3) When a lower level of needs has been satisfied, humans will make next step at another higher level of needs (Phutachote, 2016).

It is not only illustration by Maslow, but also western scholars agree that welfare is essential for citizen in society. Every society mainly comprises of 1) family, 2) educational institution, 3) religion, 4) politics, 5) economy and 6) social welfare (Federico, 1980). Social welfare is a promoting of basic standard living to basic people in society. It covers services to individuals and communities in a social development and empowering people when experience of economic and social problems (Turner, 1974). Social welfare policy be consistency with needs of society and be accepted by the people in society (Friedlander & Apte, 1980).

Welfare and Benefit of Police Officers

Welfare and benefit of police is from government, Royal Thai Police and other public sectors (Welfare Division, n.d.). Samples of welfare and benefits by the government, Royal Thai Police and public sectors can be defined as the following.

Government	Royal Thai Police	Public Sectors
· Rent for housing	· Government housing	· Saijaithai Foundation under the Royal Patronage
· Child education	· Holiday/vacation accommodation	· The War Veterans Organization of Thailand Under Royal Patronage of His majesty the King
· Medical care	· Police club	· Drug Prevention and Suppression Fund
· Allowance	· Police stadium	· Drug Prevention and Suppression Foundation
· Travel allowance	· Loan from Police Common Fund	· Boonyachinda Foundation for Police and Family
· Special payment for the position of investigator	· Police band	· Police Wives Association
· Special payment for explosive ordnance disposal	· Loan for housing	
· Allowance from arresting traffic offense	· Bank loan for housing	
· Allowance from crime investigation	· Saving Comparative Company Limited	
· Pension	· Special payment for injury and death	

Previous Studies Related Police Welfare

Although public sectors provide welfare and benefit for police, however, various problems were found. It found that police personal equipment such as gun, laptop, including other essential equipment for work were limited to police (Tiprapakool, 2021; Jareonsri, 2019; Klabnoi, 2010). As a result, police had to spend their money to purchase that equipment to work. This created burden that led police to face financial and budgeting problem in procurement of police personal equipment (Tiprapakool, 2021; Jareonsri, 2019; Klabnoi, 2010). Moreover, it was insufficient number of accommodation and housing for police. Due to lack of welfare and benefits for free accommodation and housing from the government, this made police to spend money for their rental fee

(Hirunkajorn, 2011; Klabnoi, 2010; Ngonhom, 2010). This also caused financial and budgeting problem in housing (Hirunkajorn, 2011). Because police have to purchase police personal equipment and spending own money for rental fee, this problem leads to debt issues (Royal Thai Police, 2012).

The previous studied also said that police have experience poor quality of life (Tiprapakool, 2021, Oonjai, 2020; Thaugsuban et al., 2018; Wutthasuput, 2007). This is can illustrate that police have high-risk career and face overload of work. Police are also officer in Thai justice system. When comparing salary to other officers in justice system such as public prosecutor and judge, police salary is very low. Therefore, when considering the said factors, police tend to be poor quality of life. In addition, due to debt issue, work load and poor quality of life, this leads to high level of stress for police (Chaisomritphon, 2019; Preecha & Thavichachart, 2012; Khuakoonrat & Ua-kit, 2010; Sangratsamee, 1998) and also face problem of well-being as well as problem on physical and mental health (Chaisomritphon, 2019; Phanpho et al., 2016).

When comparing to police welfare and benefit in Thailand to other nations, the outcome and satisfaction is totally difference. Most of the Asian countries give great significance to police welfare management system. For instance, the Republic of Korea provides extensive welfare for the promotion of police quality of life in many aspects, such as health insurance that allows police officers to receive free medical services at the National Police Hospital. Furthermore, academic scholarships are awarded to their children to pursue a study abroad (Ha, 2017). Similarly, police welfare management in Hong Kong includes interesting welfare benefits in many aspects. For example, welfare accommodation covers all kinds of accommodation as defined by the regulation of Hong Kong Police Force. In addition, there is welfare compensation for leave, such as sick leave. In terms of maternity leave, police officers who have worked longer than four consecutive work weeks would receive the right for maternity leave with full compensation for 10 weeks. In addition, police officers who are husband could grant paternity leave to look after their wife and child after childbirth (Hong Kong Police Force, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study, which consisted of primarily data and secondary data. The primarily data was gathered from textbooks, academic papers and research toward welfare management in Thailand and other countries were examined. The secondary data was conducted by in-depth interview and focus group. Four focus group discussions were held with a total of 68 participants, including police executives and experts from the private sector. The discussions were mainly involved in the promotion of quality of life and job stability for police officers to live with honor and dignity and efficiently serve the public. The focus group discussions were held four times as follows:

Name	Areas of Survey	Number of Samples
Focus Group 1	Provincial Police Region 5 and 6	12
Focus Group 2	Provincial Police Region 8 and 9	12
Focus Group 3	Provincial Police Region 3 and 4	12
Focus Group 4	Provincial Police Region 1 and Bangkok Metropolitan Police Bureau	32
Total		68

The researchers employed a purposive sampling method to recruit 25 police officers who were experienced and expert in police welfare management from each region throughout the

country to participate in in-depth interviews. The participants of in-depth interview were representatives from each region, including 1) Provincial Police Region 3 in the North-eastern Region, 2) Provincial Police Region 5 in the Northern Region, 3) Provincial Police Region 7 in the Central Region, 4) Provincial Police Region 9 in the Southern Region, 5) Bangkok Metropolitan Police Bureau, and 6) Welfare Division, Human Resources Bureau, Royal Thai Police. Therefore, there were a total of 93 key informants in this research.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Problem relates police welfare can be summarized as the following.

Problem Related to Initially Joined the Career

Since the admission of police service, police officers need to encounter difficulty in a lack of personal equipment for police work. The provision of equipment from the Royal Thai Police has been inadequate for new police officers to perform any tasks. Therefore, they need to spend their own money on individual equipment, such as personal pistol, laptop, and printer. This has placed a heavy burden on new police officers. Another issue is inadequate housing for police officers in each police station or any other division. Furthermore, welfare housing in many places has been relatively old and dilapidated. Some of them have never been renovated or maintained for almost 40 years. If police officers have the right to welfare housing, it is required to renovate or fix it on their own expenses. In addition, there is an important factor that leads to inadequate housing, which is an assertion to the right of occupation despite being transferred to work at another place. Consequently, police officers who lack welfare housing need to rent a room in the vicinity of their workplace, which inevitably places a heavy financial burden on them.

“When I firstly serviced as police officers, the government did not give me a gun for work. Then, I have to use my money to buy pistol” (Respondent 3)

“I still wait free accommodation, which is welfare for police. When I ask about moving to free accommodation, the officers still say that please wait because welfare accommodation is not enough” (Respondent 18)

Problems related to Quality-of-Life Improvement and Work Efficiency Enhancement

During their time in the police service, police officers encounter various welfare-related problems. The first issue is lower compensation compared to other professions in the criminal justice system. Police officer salary has been considered the lowest among all professionals in the criminal justice system whereas their tasks performed outside working hours receive no compensation. In addition, travelling or accommodation expenses for their work cannot be drawn from their units. Most of them need to spend their own money on work expenses to complete any assigned tasks. This leads to loan problems that police officers need to be in debt in order to survive each month. Furthermore, loan request process for police officers is also problematic because most of financial institutions consider police an unstable and risky job. This may be due to the fact that police officers have a duty to prevent and suppress crime, in which financial institutions could face the high risk of non-performing loans.

“Police officers works in the criminal justice system as well, but the salary is very low when I compare to public prosecutor or judge” (Respondent 7).

“When doing off-site work such as finding evidence in other cities, I have to pay for accommodation” (Respondent 35).

Being sued in both criminal and civil cases after performing operational duty is also a problem that has an adverse effect on police officers. Police is a career that always involves in being contact with people and other organizations for investigation, tracing, arrests, and interrogation. If there is a mistake or failure to strictly abide by criminal procedural laws, police officers could be at risk of litigation. Currently, the Royal Thai Police has not concretely established legal consulting services for police officers in case of being sued in both criminal and civil cases. Most of police officers who are sued need to request legal assistance from private lawyers or law firms in order to defend themselves in the court.

Problems Related to Retirement, Death and Injury

Welfare-related issues when police officers cannot work for the police service may result from illness, disability or deaths in the line of duty, or retirement. A common problem is inappropriate compensation and rehabilitation for their service. Even if the Royal Thai Police has a support fund to help police officers with duty disability or death benefits in the line of duty. However, there is a limitation that the regulation indicates that an agency could set up only one welfare support fund in which only its interests can be allocated. Thus, assistance for compensation payments could be arduously performed due to the stringent regulation. As a consequence, police officers with disability or injury from their duty would often encounter long-term consequences in their lives. Another problem in this phase is that police officers have lost welfare benefits due to incomplete welfare information. Most of police officers have given information about their beneficiaries when they firstly join the police service. However, they have not updated such information when time passes by. For instance, they informed that the beneficiaries were their parents, but they failed to update the information to change the beneficiaries when their parents passed away. Thus, this could be particularly problematic when finding their lawful beneficiaries.

The last problem that needs immediate resolving is that a lack of accommodation after retirement. It has been found that many retired police officers do not own their own houses because they have lived in welfare housing for a long time. Besides, they never got prepared to purchase a real estate for their own property. Consequently, they lack accommodation to live after the retirement. This issue can link to a prior problem that new police officers lack welfare housing as retired police officers still hold an assertion to occupy welfare accommodation despite their retirement or being transferred to another workplace.

“Due to high-risk career and arresting criminals, police may face injury and death when performing duty. The compensation and allowance must be suitable for them” (Respondent 55).

Guideline of Management Police Welfare

According to approaches for effective police welfare management, it is vital to drive strategic solutions to solve problems throughout the three phases by the principles of ‘Tree of Welfare’ model as following:

- 1) Police Executives play a major role in policymaking and implementation of welfare policies in a tangible and sustainable way. Police executives should be equipped with leadership skills and knowledge for systematic management. Prior to policymaking process, police officers at the executive level should initially survey and understand the needs of their subordinates to determine welfare policies which truly respond to police demand.
- 2) Police Welfare Policies should be part and parcel of the development of the quality of life for police officers on the basis of a survey on their demand and necessity in all dimensions. The policymaking that effectively responds to the needs of police officers can be described by the metaphor of the tree that is nurtured properly.

- 3) Police Subordinates are metaphorically similar to a large tree that has various parts. Only if the tree is well-nourished with proper planting and feeding, it can grow branches and limbs which produce high-quality products.

Resolution Plan of Police Welfare

According to interview, the samples said that the Tree of Welfare Model as above mentioned may employ much time to establishment and implement. Therefore, immediate resolution can be done along with the Tree of Welfare Model as well. Police welfare provision should respond to police demand to improve their quality of life in all aspects to maintain professional career with honor, dignity, happiness. There are five levels of immediate resolution as follows:

Level 1: Resolution on Basic Needs

Human basic needs include food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. These are the fundamental things that police officers need at top priority, such as financial welfare, welfare housing, and healthcare services. This is comparable to the tree root which serves and anchors the plant to the substrate to maintain its stability. Therefore, policies on police welfare should support and promote human basic needs in all dimensions to better the quality of life for police officers or police subordinates whose lives are similar to the tree to live with honor and dignity.

Level 2: Resolution on Human Security and Stability

It is vital to ensure human security and stability for police officers, especially the provision of police safety equipment. Police personal protective equipment for accidents or harm in the line of duty is still inadequate, such as bulletproof vests and firearms. Police subordinates must be able to live their lives with security and stability. Therefore, it is essential to fully provide sufficient work equipment for police officers to accord with their risky operations for public safety.

Level 3: Resolution on Social Problems

Police officers usually encounter social problems, leading to chronic stress after their hard work. This could also result in insufficient time spent with their family members and colleagues. Thus, there should be recreational activities to strengthen relationship among police officers to mitigate work stress and pressure, which could lead to their better mental health.

Level 4: Promotion for Reputation

Police officers could lack moral support for work due to their hard work throughout 24 hours a day. Hence, there should be incentives and awards to boost their morale, especially plaque or trophy awards for front-line police officers who devoted themselves to police operations. This could make them encouraged to work hard and maintain their goodness and best performance for the entire life in police service.

Level 5: Promotion for Success in Desires

It is crucial to support and broaden opportunities for police officers to pursue their higher level of education or attend overseas institutional visits where modern police management has been

executed. This would allow them to learn new skills and experience, which could be extended to their work and the development of the Royal Thai Police.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Police welfare management system in Thailand has encountered financial and budgeting issues in terms of the provision of police welfare and the procurement of police personal equipment. This is consistent with previous study which found police lacked budget for welfare management and there was insufficient equipment for police tasks. Most of police officers needed to spend their own money on work equipment (Tiprapakool, 2021; Jareonsri, 2019; Klabnoi, 2010). In addition, the findings are also consistent with prior research which found that police officers encountered poor work-related quality of life due to insufficient and low-quality equipment (Tiprapakool, 2021, Oonjai, 2020; Thaugsuban et al., 2018; Wutthasuput, 2007). Police officers therefore incurred personal expenses for work equipment (Tiprapakool, 2021; Jareonsri, 2019; Klabnoi, 2010).

Most of police officers especially in Bangkok and provincial urban areas lack welfare housing. Besides, welfare housing in many places has been relatively old and dilapidated. It is required for police officers to renovate or fix it on their own expenses. In addition, accommodation expenses or rental fees cannot be drawn from their units. If the rental fees can be drawn, police officers rarely receive the full amount of actual payment. This is consistent with early study which found that most of police welfare houses were dilapidated and had room flooding problems as well as drainage system failure (Wutthasuput, 2007). Furthermore, research findings are consistent with previous study which indicated that police officers had a problem of accommodation rental fees which could not be drawn or fully drawn from the unit. This made them pay their own money on all the rental fees (Hirunkajorn, 2011; Klabnoi, 2010; Ngonghom, 2010).

Furthermore, it has been found that both commissioned and non-commissioned police officers have debt issues. This is consistent with research of the Fiscal Policy Research Institute Foundation (2012) which demonstrated that police officers had insufficient income for their household expenses. As police officers receive very low income, most of them need to be in debt to financial institutions. In addition, this is also consistent with previous study, which found that most police officers had insufficient income for their livings, that resulted in poor quality of life of their families (Tiprapakool, 2021; Oonjai, 2020; Thaugsuban et al., 2018; Wutthasuput, 2007) and a high level of stress (Chaisomritphon, 2019; Preecha & Thavichachart, 2012; Khuakoonrat & Ua-kit, 2010; Sangratsamee, 1998) as well as well-being and mental health problem (Chaisomritphon, 2019; Phanpho et al., 2016).

The findings in this study are also supported to evidence from Western scholars. Most scholar said that welfare and benefit is important for employee because human is considered as essential resource for organization. When welfare and benefit is adequate and sufficient, as a result, employee will have positive attitude, satisfaction and happiness, which provide good outcome to employee and organization (Wongwan, 2018; Federico, 1980; Friedlander & Apte, 1980; Maslow, 1980; Turner, 1974) such as increasing potential of employee, productivity and royalty of organization. An obvious example can be seen in South Korea and Hong Kong. Police welfare and benefit in South Korea cover many aspects such as accommodation, medical care, and support assistance to police' family (Ha, 2017; Hong Kong Police Force, 2015). With adequate and sufficient of welfare and benefit, police can work effectively (Ha, 2017).

To sum up, the objectives of this research were to search problem of police welfare and benefit as well as provide a guideline to manage police welfare system in Thailand. This is qualitative study, that carried out *via* in-depth and focus groups with 93 samples. It found that that police officers had encountered welfare-related issues in three phases of their time in the police service. It suggests that the Royal Thai Police should impose a policy related to police appointment on the basis of the 'Locality Concept' which enables police officers to work in their own

communities. This could not only reduce the problem of insufficient welfare housing, but also promote the gratitude to their homeland, which could enhance work efficiency and their devotion to police tasks. Also, the Royal Thai Police should impose a policy that supports fundamental police equipment for new police officers, such as personal pistols, laptops, and printers. This aims to reduce the burden on new police officers who currently spend their own money on work equipment. In addition, the Royal Thai Police should conduct a survey on police welfare at least once in every five-year period. This can help to up-date need and welfare of police, which lead too to improve the quality of life and be more effective work performance for police.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Received: 03-Nov-2021, Manuscript No. JLERI-21-8470; **Editor assigned:** 05-Nov-2021; PreQC No. JLERI-21-8470(PQ); **Reviewed:** 20-Nov-2021, QC No. JLERI-21-8470; **Revised:** 27-Nov-2021, Manuscript No. JLERI-21-8470(R); **Published:** 03-Dec-2021