

Case Numbering, Crime Management and Effective Police Administration in Rivers State

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Abstract- This paper investigated case numbering, crime management and effective police administration in Rivers State. The need for this study emerged since there have been no proper documentation for case numbering and crime management which has been undermined effective police administration. Some of the constraints to this, were due to inadequate funds, lack of technological infrastructure, corrupt practices among some junior levels of rank-and-file officers who often takes bribe illegitimately. The study adopted descriptive research by exploring data from published journals, articles, textbooks on the subject matter. The paper used the system theory which assumed that a system cannot exist in isolation, but total dependence of the entire system, which can make it to function effectively. Administratively, the study showed that Nigeria Police Force (NPF) manages police administration in Rivers State through the centralized policing system constitutionally established and further detailed in the Police Act of 2020. The study revealed that some of the ways case numbering can be managed is by effective documentation into an electronic system, rather than total dependence in manual operations. To address modern day crime issue, getting the right information by real-time data, technology is one of the fastest ways. The Nigeria Police can also work collaboratively by getting the right information from community leaders, business establishments, schools, and religious organizations, which can help for effective management. These are approaches the developed nations like US, Japan, China and Korea used in combating crime. The study concluded that case numbering is a vital administrative aspect in managing and conducting crime and police administration effectively. The Nigeria Police Force, should establish an effective case numbering system for proper documentation of crime incidents across different parts of Rivers State, for effective decision making process in the nearest future. Federal Government should invest fund into the Nigeria Police Force for the adoption of modern technology, by the installation of technological masts, digital cables, CCTV cameras and ditches for

monitoring real time crime across local governments area can be detected across various parts of the states.

Key Words: Case Numbering, Crime Management, Effective Policing, Police Administration, System Theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, there has been an evolution in the level of complexity of crimes, which means that there is now a need for efficient policing and police administration in order to secure a nation and its criminal justice system. Modern policing goes beyond the simple aspects such as crime detection and arrests; modern policing includes other aspects such as intelligence collection, crime prevention, investigations, documentation, prosecution, and community engagement. One of the important administrative tools that are used in policing is case numbering, which involves the process of assigning a unique number to each criminal incident or investigation. The process of case numbering allows for systematic documentation, tracking, retrieval, and monitoring of criminal cases starting from when the case is reported up to the time when the case is decided on in court.

Around the world, developments in information and communications technology have changed police administration via the use of electronic case management systems, electronic criminal databases, and integrated records management systems. Many nations, including the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Japan, have adopted computerized case numbering systems that allow criminal cases to be recorded and tracked by the law enforcement agencies. They also facilitate trend analysis and sharing of data across jurisdictions. These systems

are coupled with biometric databases, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), forensic information systems, and artificial intelligence applications that help in intelligence-led policing and evidence-based policing. These technological developments have greatly enhanced the efficiency of investigation processes, minimized record duplication, improved accountability, and fostered public trust in the law enforcement institutions (Interpol, 2023; United Nations 2023; Ratcliffe, 2022).

The significance of the process of case numbering has further increased with the increasing use of intelligence-led policing to deal with organized crimes, cybercrimes, terrorism, transnational crimes, among others, by police departments. Research has indicated that an appropriate method of crime recording and standardized system of case numbering to assist police departments to be able to recognize crime patterns, recognize repeat offenders, strategically allocate resources and conduct evaluations of their efforts has been created in most developed countries compared to Africa and Nigeria. In the current trend of efficient police management, proper case management systems have become essential (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2022).

In most parts of Africa, the law enforcement agencies are facing a huge number of problems emanating from the rapid growth of urban cities, population explosion, acts of terrorisms, kidnappings, robberies, human trafficking, cybercrimes, community clashes, and politically motivated violence. This situation has prompted most African nations to come up with police reforms where by modernization of crime record management systems through digitalization has been done. Countries like South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and Botswana have adopted some forms of digitalization and modernization of the crime reporting and record management systems. This is also not an exception for the case of Nigeria. There have been new occurrences of cases that involve armed robbery, kidnapping and other social vices that are on the rise in Rivers State. Even though there is manual recording of such cases, digitalization of the crime records management and police administration systems has not yet been undertaken.

These challenges have triggered the need to investigate case numbering, effective policing, crime management and police administration in Rivers State.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Case Numbering

The importance of case numbering in Nigeria has gained a lot of prominence owing to the nation's ongoing security problems, which include terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, oil theft, cybercrime, farmer-herder clashes, and communal violence. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), which was created by Section 214 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended), is still the leading force tasked with crime prevention and detection, ensuring public peace, securing lives and properties, and enforcing criminal laws. The effective performance of such statutory duties depends greatly on the efficient documentation of crimes, case numbering, records management, and good police administration (Nigeria Police Force, 2024). According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (2023), case numbering involves the systematic issuance of a unique reference number to each criminal or civil incident reported by the police. It forms the permanent identification for a particular case as it is processed through its entire life cycle, from its initiation, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication to the storage of the relevant records. Case numbers are used to reference individual cases, enabling investigators, prosecutors, courts and other criminal justice partners to efficiently search, sort, and manage these case records without duplication or loss of information.

In a report presented by Bureau of Justice Assistance (2022) argued that the principal aim of case numbering is effective case file management and tracking. Each case number serves as a central identifier that links to any document, evidence, witness statement, investigation report, photograph, forensic evidence, or legal proceeding related to a case. Each activity in an investigation is recorded against this unique case number to ensure that at any given point, details of any particular incident and subsequent investigation steps can be easily located

and retrieved when necessary. In the globalized world, case numbering differs among nation's jurisdiction, but there have been inconsistent structures, across nations. Through a thorough investigation on crime, rising kidnapping issues, cult-related clashes, communal disputes for land grabbing, have undermining peace and security in Rivers State. For instance, when the criminologists are making investigative decisions for crime, case numbering can become instrumental for improving accountability and operational efficiency across every units in the police administration. The Federal Bureau of Investigation Report (2023) emphasized that case numbering is referenced when investigators prepare documentation, document interviews of eye-witnesses, record evidence-based and request for forensic analysis from laboratories, and file for court proceedings. More often what the police officers use for real-time crime data is the electronic record management system which provides unique case numbers, automatically generated unique identifiers, store case data in a central repository, provide access for criminal justice personnel, enable inter-agency data sharing and support criminal analysis for intelligence-led policing. (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2022).

Effective Policing

One of the greatest administrative tools which can bring about transformation in this current trend of insecurity challenges in Rivers State is the adoption of effective police system. Effective policing entails the ability of law enforcement institutions to be able to effectively prevent crime, maintain order in public places, protect life and property, administer justice impartially, and build public confidence through the efficient delivery of professional, accountable and community-based services. It implies a proactive approach to preventing crimes rather than merely reacting to them; respect for human rights, adherence to principles of fairness, application of intelligence in operations and partnership building with communities. As noted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023), effective policing is a matter of ensuring the rule of law whilst simultaneously safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals thereby securing the confidence and trust of the population.

The Nigeria Police Force have been up and doing in trying to combat crime by sending the junior officers, but the top ranking officers have not developed measures in monitoring the police over the affairs of members of the public. This is why some of the lower rank-and-file officers indulge in corrupt practices by taking bribes on the roads and other forms of gross misconduct in the course of working. One of the major responsibilities of the police is for the protection of lives and properties, but the reverse have been the case since the recent past. Recently, there have been cases where some fake police men, were obtaining monies from motorists illegally, across different parts of Rivers State, before they were now caught by the Rivers State Police Commissioner, haven carried out a major milestone, by going round the cities to monitor all forms of gross misconduct carried out by the so-called fake police officers who collects monies from the members of the public.

In June 2026 there was an incidents reported in Punch Newspaper (2026) about the viral videos where some fake police officers were allegedly extorting money from motorists in the state. In this same vein, ASP Agabe Kaborlo, the spokesperson for the Police Command, stated Tuesday that the Commissioner for Police, CP Olugbenga Adepoju stated that the command had taken observation of the viral video in the social media said that ASP Omomefe Akin Geoffrey together with other Police Officers were have been indulging themselves into collecting monies from the populace, while on the job. The whole matter started when social media activist, Comrade Phils, accused a group of officers from Old GRA Police Station, which is located around the Rivers State Government House and around the house of former President Goodluck Jonathan, of being selective in their arrest of motorists, especially those who had tinted windscreen. It was alleged that the officers, led by ASP Geoffrey, overlooked all permits of tinted glass, even those from the factory, and made the drivers pay money from ₦100,000 onwards.

“The Commissioner of Police of the Rivers State Command, CP Olugbenga A. Adepoju, psc, mnips, therefore, has directed their arrest, detention, and

immediate investigation into the allegations,” it was stated. The statement further stated, “The Commissioner of Police reiterated that extortion, unauthorized collection of funds, and unprofessional behaviour from police officers will in no way be condoned under any circumstance. He emphasized that the Command is dedicated to ensuring that officers act in a manner that will promote public trust, accountability and respect for human rights. “CP Adepoju assured the general public that the investigation will be thorough, transparent and impartial. Officers found guilty will receive the required disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of the law and Nigeria Police Act.” Rivers State Police Command thanks members of the public for bringing such acts to its notice and encourages the public to keep reporting cases of misconduct, corruption and abuse of office through the available complaint mechanisms. “Rivers State Police Command is dedicated to professional policing, discipline, integrity and quality service delivery to all residents of Rivers State.” (Punch Newspaper; as reported by Saheed, 2026).

In like manner, there was a viral video of a Divisional Police Officer who was caught in Oyigbo Division in relation to allegations of collecting bribe amounting to #500, 000 and that is another form of abuse of office. On discovering the news, the Commissioner of Police, Olugbenga Adepoju took immediate actions by firing the DPO. This officer was immediately detained after such allegations had been made (The Guardian Newspaper, 2026).

Consequently, in order to control this problem, it becomes important for Nigeria Police Force to set up effective supervision structures in monitoring the activities of police officers, especially those posted to checkpoints, patrols and divisional stations. Supervision should be conducted on frequent basis by senior police officers through making unannounced visits to police formations and operational duty posts to avoid any cases of misconduct. Recent actions of the Commissioner of Police in Rivers State, CP Olugbenga Adepoju, who made investigations on allegations of extortions and disciplined such offenders show how important supervision is (Punch Newspaper, 2026).

In addition to that, each arrest, detention, investigation, bail application, exhibit and complaint must be assigned an electronic case number using a computerized system. Electronic case management system would minimize chances of record manipulation, illegal detention, loss of case files and extortion because each police activity will leave a trail. This will make the system more accountable and evidence-based policing possible.

Finally, Police patrols and police checkpoints must be equipped with body cameras and dash cameras installed in police cars. The technologies ensure objective documentation of the activities of police and citizens, deter corruption and protect both parties from accusations. Developed nations have experienced decrease in complaints against police officers after the introduction of body cameras.

Crime Management

Crime management has become a structured method used by police, government agencies, law enforcement and the justice systems, and members of the public, to predict, combat, apprehend and prosecute criminals, in an attempt to stop or decrease the occurrence of crime and the harm it causes. It includes a range of tactics designed to keep the peace, protect people and their property and property, ensure that individuals caught committing criminal offenses be brought to justice, and address the conditions in society that encourage crime. Crime management combines strategies designed to predict or prevent criminal behavior with tactics intended to catch perpetrators, prosecute and rehabilitate them (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023).

There are ways most developed countries used in addressing crime and insecurity challenges and when this approach is adopted in Nigeria, it will help in a meaningful to reduce the rising crime trend to a low level. But all hands must be put on deck to achieve, this laudable vision. According to FBI (2026) One of the crime control strategies employed by the US police force is intelligence-led policing. This is one of the most effective crime prevention strategies out of the many strategies used by law enforcement agencies in the USA. Rather than responding to

crimes after they occur, the police use information gathered through crime reports, surveillance techniques, informants, forensics and computerized databases in analyzing and interpreting information to make crime trends and predict future criminal activities. The information makes it easier for police commandants to deploy officers in risky areas, track criminals and prevent crime before they occur. By adopting this strategy in the Nigerian Police Force, it will greatly assist in minimizing crime in Rivers State and Nigeria at large.

The Nigeria Police Force should make sure that it works together with the local communities in all districts of Rivers State. By doing so, they will be able to offer information on the crime that will relieve the burden on the crime management department. In addition, they will be able to cooperate harmoniously through collaboration with the neighborhoods, business organizations, religious organizations, and educational institutions. This will enhance the ability of the Nigeria Police Force in tackling crimes. The same approach was used in the United States of America in dealing with crimes. For instance, U.S Department of Justice helps police departments in funding, training, and technical support to earn trust from the community (U.S. Department of Justice COPS Office, 2024).

Those were the days of old when crime prevention would take place using patrol teams' vehicles and inadequate crime fighting arms. Technology continues to evolve, and with the current era, Nigeria Police Force needs to embrace modern technology to fight crimes and security related problems in Nigeria. It is true that the cost of installation of technological infrastructure may be expensive, however, the technological infrastructure for database and the technological devices including masts and CCTV cameras are all cost-efficient requiring a large amount of income. That is why countries like Japan, China, and Korea have been able to use modern technology in dealing with crime in their respective countries. As stated by Ding (2023), Japan has installed millions of surveillance cameras in railway stations, airports, shopping malls, schools, highways and in residential areas. These cameras help the police monitor public spaces, identify suspects and

even help in reconstructing the criminal activities. China has one of the most technologically advanced policing systems in the world through the use of artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and surveillance infrastructure. China utilizes artificial intelligence surveillance systems that can detect suspicious behaviors, abandoned objects, crowd movement and other unusual activities.

Cases have also been noted in Korea where many intelligent CCTVs equipped with AI analytics technology have been used to control highways, transport systems, educational institutions, commercial areas, and even residential zones. Many of these technologies have been noted to identify any form of violence and abandoned items on the road and alert the nearby police officers. Given the well-established digital economy in South Korea, there are some units of police who are responsible for addressing cases of hacking and cybercrime. It would really be necessary for the Federal Government of Nigeria to put in place policies and invest in technology that would assist in managing crime at the minimal level. It would also be very important for the Rivers State Commissioner of Police and Inspector General of Police Force, Nigeria to do all that he could in order to establish a management policy that would ensure training and retraining of Police Staff on the use of technology to manage crime.

Police Administration in Rivers State

The Nigerian Police Force are the public bodies whose primary function includes maintaining law and order, enforcing criminal laws, and providing different services. The Police Officers serve in the community to prevent and control any crimes. They cooperate with the prosecutors in the investigation of criminal cases in order to find all pieces of evidence. Nigeria Police Force (NPF) manages police administration in Rivers State through the centralized policing system constitutionally established and further detailed in the Police Act of 2020. The Commissioner of Police (CP), who leads the Rivers State Police Command, supervises the state's security by overseeing public safety, crime prevention and investigation, intelligence gathering and the protection of life and property. Its structures-area commands, divisional headquarters, police stations,

and specialized units-organize security across the state's twenty-three local government areas (Nigeria Police Force, 2020).

The organizational hierarchy of the Rivers State Police Command comprises a Commissioner of Police at the top, supported by Deputy Commissioners for Administration, Operations, Criminal Investigation and Finance and Administration. Below them are Assistant Commissioners, Area Commanders, and Divisional Police Officers, who manage policing activities on the operational level, ensuring coordinated efforts and accountability (Police Act, 2020).

The Rivers State Police Command recently implemented reforms to enhance its professionalism and accountability, which included the promotion of 119 officers in January 2025. The CP stressed the importance of discipline, professionalism and respect for human rights in the execution of duties and cautioned officers against corruption, abuse of office and unlawful arrests, among others (Channels Television, 2025).

Given Rivers State's significance as an oil-producing region in Nigeria, its police face challenges in managing prevalent crimes including kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering and politically motivated violence. Following an escalation in oil facility attacks and political tensions in 2025, the command increased its focus on intelligence-led policing, patrol operations and cross-agency collaboration to protect public order and critical infrastructure (Reuters, 2025). In 2025, the command reformed its tactical units, dissolving existing teams in favor of a central Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU) to improve efficiency, accountability and compliance with human rights, as well as coordinate better during violent incidents and emergency response (The Punch, 2025).

The police administration in Rivers State continues to face obstacles such as inadequate funding, personnel and logistics shortages, poor welfare, corruption and public mistrust related to alleged abuses. These challenges hinder effective policing and limit prompt responses to security concerns. As such, sustained

investments are needed in personnel, technology, intelligence, community policing and accountability mechanisms to strengthen public safety and administration of the police in the state (Channels Television, 2025).

Challenges Facing Case Numbering Effective Policing In Rivers State

An accurate, reliable, well-maintained, and accessible criminal record system can contribute to the effective operation of a police force. In police record-keeping, numbering of case forms the basis. It makes every criminal complaint and investigation individually identifiable, recorded, tracked and retrievable for future reference when needed. Today, the Nigeria Police Force still faces chronic problems of poor record keeping, inefficient documentation procedures, incomplete files, and disorganized files which adversely affect the efficiency of investigation and crime control (Alemka, 2022).

Several scholars have suggested that the inefficiency within the administration of police forces is one of the major stumbling blocks towards successful crime prevention in Nigeria. Nwankwo and Okeke (2024) posit that a number of police forces in Rivers State are currently facing administrative issues ranging from delayed recording of complaints, fragmented record-keeping, inadequate coordination of investigative units, incomplete investigation files, and ineffective information management systems. Some of these issues lead to failed investigations, inaccurate crime statistics, duplicating efforts during investigations, lengthy prosecution process, and a lack of public trust in police institutions. Where there are incomplete or mis-indexed criminal records, the investigative team wastes time trying to locate missing information.

According to a report by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2023), modern-day policing is characterized by the use of intelligence-led policing, information technology, and database integration in combating complex criminal operations. Countries with well-developed policing practices have invested in centralized electronic case management systems that allow officers from various departments and jurisdictions to exchange criminal intelligence in

real-time. The systems allow quick detection of criminals, analysis of criminal patterns, tracking of cases, and efficient allocation of police force. Nonetheless, there are cases where poor documentation and irregular case numbering make it difficult to share information, coordinate investigative teams, and avoid the escape of criminals.

As pointed out by Nwankwo and Okeke (2024), there have been many police units in the state of Rivers that have been faced with a number of administrative difficulties that include late documentation of complaints, disjointed record-keeping procedures, poor coordination between various departments of investigation, incomplete files, and poor information management systems. Such difficulties often lead to cases going uninvestigated, discrepancy in crime rates, repetition in investigations, and a longer prosecution process.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systems Theory

The system theory was introduced by Bertalanffy in 1945. The system theory considers an organization to be a collection of interacting components that work together to perform tasks that produce a desired outcome. From the system point of view, there is no organization that operates in isolation but as a whole. Bertalanffy (1968) explained that no part of the organization operates in isolation, but each piece of the puzzle must work together in order to provide optimal organizational outcomes. If one part of the system has weaknesses, it can have negative impacts on the other pieces of the puzzle and on the total organization.

The core premise of systems theory stated that organization receives input from the external environment, transforms it within the organization's processes, and returns the resulting output into the external environment where feedback determines the output's effectiveness. The theory assumes that inputs, processes and outputs apply to police organizations in the area of personnel, information, resources, technology, and funding. The process may involve investigation, intelligence operations,

documentation, supervision, and administration. The outputs therefore could be crime prevention, arrests, prosecution, and public order.

The feedback mechanism, which is essential to Systems Theory, provides for improvement of organizational outcomes through evaluation of input/output ratios. Effective case numbering is part of the feedback process. When a police administrator retrieve and audit data associated with a specific case, they can also determine if the investigations was completed appropriately.

The Systems Theory has implications in that effective policing must depend on an effective coordination of various units of the police organization. Effective crime control requires good communication, proper document control, well-directed investigations and a sound system of administrative control. Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of communication, feedback and proper document control. Systems theory is highly relevant to this study because it addresses how effective administration, and proper case numbering, is related to effective crime management and the operational capabilities of the Nigeria Police Force in Rivers State.

IV. CONCLUSION

Case numbering is a vital administrative aspect in managing and conducting crime and police administration effectively. Research revealed that proper case numbering supports documentation, classification and maintenance of records; systematic investigations and record keeping; tracking of investigations; and accountability, transparency, speedy accessibility to criminal records, crime intelligence gathering, evidential management, inter-agency cooperation, and reliability of criminal statistics. Given that Rivers State is besieged by crime and security problems such as armed robbery, political violence, kidnapping, cultism, oil bunkering/pipeline vandalism and organised crime in general, effective case numbering is therefore instrumental to beefing up police activity.

Yet, police administration in Rivers State is characterised by, among other things, poor record

keeping; poor classification of crime files; low skill base of some of the Nigeria Police Officers; dearth of technical and physical facility; information management gaps etc that have inimical effect on efficient crime control and investigation; prosecution success; and the effectiveness of the criminal justice administration in the state.

On the basis of the study conducted and Systems theory, case numbering is considered as one subsystem of Police administration that positively impact on the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police. When properly handled, effective case numbering is used to strengthen communication, co-ordination, supervisions, accountability and overall performance in any organisation whereas ineffectively administered case numbering will lead to absence of useful, missing case files, poor communication, and lack of information leading to poor management of crime, hence the need to improve case numbering and Police records keeping.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this paper, some recommendations were made;

- i) The Nigeria Police Force, should establish an effective case numbering system for proper documentation of crime incidents across different parts of Rivers State, for effective decision making process in the nearest future.
- ii) The use of patrol vans and teams cannot be really effective to fight modern day crime, but by the introduction of technology which most of the developed countries are using in their country. Therefore, if the Federal Government should invest fund into the Nigeria Police Force for the adoption of modern technology, by the installation of technological masts, digital cables, CCTV cameras and ditches for monitoring real time crime across local governments area can be detected across various parts of the states.
- iii) There are many police force that still lacks the use of modern technology, therefore, there is need to initiate plans for training and development to adhere to the modern use of

technology and its operations. By so doing it can help in reducing crime to the barest level.

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