

The Strategic Role of IT Capability in Police Organizational Transformation: Toward Smart Policing

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Abstract

Digital transformation not only provides convenience but also increases security risks, requiring the Indonesian National Police (Polri) to strengthen its capabilities in delivering effective and efficient protection, including in digital spaces. This study aims to explore the strategic role of information technology (IT) capabilities in supporting police organizational transformation through Smart Policing at the sectoral level. Using a qualitative design, this study collected data from 12 informants across City police department, police sector units (Polsek) through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and relationships. Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded that the technological and information capabilities of police officers at the sectoral level play a significant role in realizing the concept of smart policing. The Indonesian National Police (Polri) already has a sophisticated technological infrastructure within the digitalization concept. However, at the sectoral level, revitalization and procurement of equipment that can support the performance and duties of officers, such as the procurement of profiling tools, are still needed. Furthermore, targeted and sustainable training, such as digital forensics, is needed. These findings provide empirical evidence that strengthening IT capabilities is critical for advancing Smart Policing and improving organizational responsiveness in digital-era policing.

Keywords

IT Capabilities; Smart Policing; Information Systems

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is the process of change and capability enhancement within organizations, businesses, and industries through the implementation and utilization of digital technologies to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity (Gama & Magistretti, 2025), as well as to enhance interaction with the public and facilitate access to information and services (Irawati et al., 2021). Digital transformation involves the use of technologies such as data processing and analysis (Xu, 2024), mobile applications, the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, and blockchain technology (Blais et al., 2022; Kruis et al., 2022; Haberman et al., 2025). This transformation focuses on using digital technology to change how people work, interact, and manage processes in an effort to achieve greater efficiency,



productivity, and progress. The goal of digital transformation is to provide faster, more convenient, and more personalized services. This includes the development of mobile applications, responsive websites, and technology-based solutions. Furthermore, technology serves as a tool to create better and more relevant solutions. The ease of communication and global access enables the exchange of ideas, information, and cross-border collaboration (Bielejewski, 2023). While digital transformation offers significant benefits to society, it also has implications for declining security levels. Crime is no longer solely physical but also spreads through the digital realm as cybercrimes (Cascavilla et al., 2021).

For this reason, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is required to undergo a transformation by strengthening its resources to meet public demands for effective and efficient security and protection, including security and protection in the digital space, carried out with precision, effectiveness, and efficiency (Rustandi et al., 2022). The importance of strengthening the role of Polri through digital transformation today presents many new challenges for the world of security and policing (Damaiyanti et al., 2022). A study explains that IoT, both currently and in the future, impacts safety and security through police initiatives in remote rural areas (Banerjee et al., 2021) this is why a Smart Policing strategy, which relies on IoT, is being implemented (Sun et al., 2025). It is also emphasized that IoT impacts crime typology and the prevalence of cyber/online crime (Xu, 2024).

The Indonesian National Police (Polri) has undergone significant changes over the past decade, and various policing models have been tested and implemented. Security has always been a multifaceted topic (Arif, 2021). Academics and policing practitioners have engaged in extensive discussions regarding how modern policing should respond to crime. In the operations of police agencies and practices, AI has played an increasingly important role, such as in the use of risk assessment algorithms, facial recognition technology, and predictive analytics systems (Gkougkoudis et al., 2022). Data-driven approaches to crime-solving have also become a trend, with machines' ability to identify patterns and uncover relationships that might take humans longer to discover (Dubord & Griffiths, 2021).

The development of increasingly sophisticated technology capable of collecting ever more complex big data must be accompanied by the understanding that behind this data and technology are real people living their lives; therefore, individual capabilities must also be a central focus in organizational transformation aligned with digital transformation (Springs, 2024). The role and capabilities of information technology in acquiring core competencies provide a competitive advantage for organizations. In other words, the development of police personnel's capabilities must be directly proportional to advancements in technology and information systems (Millie et al., 2024). One such capability is the information technology proficiency of police personnel at the sectoral level, who serve as the vanguard of domestic security.

In rural areas, sectoral policing patterns and strategies differ significantly from those of urban police units. In particular, a small number of police officers are required to cover large areas (Ezeji, 2024), which distinguishes them from traditional urban patrol models. Police officers in rural areas tend to be more “autonomous,” that is, they organize voluntary patrols within the village and are responsible for security within the village. In this model, the village head or village elders are typically responsible for coordinating with the police and assisting them in addressing crime (Cuiye & Junling, 2021). The benefits include saving on police labor costs and acting as a deterrent to criminals in the area. It should be noted that while both the autonomous model and community policing emphasize collaboration and interaction between law enforcement officers and community members, there are notable differences between the two (Egbert & Leese, 2021). Specifically, the self-policing model places greater emphasis on the presence and visibility of police within the community, whereas the community policing model prioritizes the formation of strong bonds and the development of mutual trust between police officers and community members. Additionally, the self-policing model highlights the personal prestige of individual police officers rather than trust in the police institution as a whole. This personal prestige is often gained through extensive experience in law enforcement and can change when officers are transferred to different positions. They work directly with the community to provide services, guidance, and protection in order to create a conducive public safety environment (Adi & Iksan, 2020).

Previous research has not extensively examined the capabilities of police human resources at the local level (police precincts) within the institutional dynamics of digital transformation. Some studies have focused more on the role of community police officers (Bhabin) in maintaining security through focus group discussions (FGDs) (Nababan, 2018; Prasetyo & Setyowati, 2021; Purwanto & Surbakti, 2019; Wibowo, 2020), Door to Door System (Shamsi & Davies, 2022; Springs, 2024), and conventional intelligence functions. Other evaluation models primarily involve the application of technology in citizen-government interactions, but these are limited to areas near the Capital City or Province (Maliphol & Hamilton, 2022; Ndubueze et al., 2022; Schafer et al., 2021; Xu, 2024). In street-level decision-making, public administration studies have approached digitalization in relation to task types, socio-political contexts, changes in discretion, and the relational dimensions of technology (Branch, 2025; Brayne, 2021; Egbert & Esposito, 2024); however, no research has focused on the strategic role of IT capabilities in the organizational transformation of police at the Precinct level. To date, individual capabilities within the Indonesian National Police’s operational areas have been primarily maximized in community policing practices. However, there has been no discussion regarding the strategic role of maximized capabilities in the utilization of information technology across the full scope of Bhabin officers’ duties, such as predictive policing, reactive policing, problem-oriented policing, evidence-based policing, and intelligence-led policing (Schafer et al., 2021). Research Questions: How do

information technology (IT) capabilities enable the development of dynamic capabilities in supporting Smart Policing transformation at the sectoral (Polsek) level?

The urgency of this study lies in the fact that not all Indonesian National Police personnel at the precinct level possess IT capabilities; consequently, their role as the primary detection unit cannot be fully realized in implementing Smart Policing as part of the Indonesian National Police’s organizational transformation in the digital era. In this context, this study aims to explore the strategic role of information technology capabilities in police organizational transformation as the implementation of Smart Policing at the sectoral level. By understanding this potential, effective approaches can be analyzed to formulate policies related to the future development of Polri human resources (particularly members at the sectoral level).

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how information technology (IT) capabilities support Smart Policing transformation at the sectoral level. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants who possess direct experience and involvement in cybercrime handling and digital policing initiatives (Shareia, 2016). The study involved 12 informants (Table 1), consisting of personnel from the Cybercrime Directorate of the East Java Regional Police and officers from several police precincts (Polsek) under the Surabaya Metropolitan Police. Participants were selected based on their roles, experience in IT utilization, and involvement in digital-based policing practices.

Table 1. Informant

Job	Total
Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department	1
Head of the Cyber Unit at the Metropolitan Police Department	1
Police Sector Units	5
Head of the Violence and Crime Unit Police Sector	5

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility to explore participants’ experiences while maintaining consistency across key themes (Long, 2014). The interview protocol covered topics such as IT infrastructure, inter-unit coordination, digital response mechanisms, and organizational adaptation. In addition to primary data, secondary data were obtained from official documents, reports, and relevant literature to support data triangulation. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns across the dataset (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). Initial open coding was conducted to capture key concepts,

followed by axial coding to establish relationships between themes, particularly linking IT capabilities with dynamic capabilities and organizational transformation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Modern police departments face a variety of threats to their operational continuity, ranging from cyberattacks to natural disasters and civil unrest. The strategic role of IT capabilities can build technological resilience, enabling police departments to maintain operations under adverse conditions. Cybersecurity is a critical concern. Police departments hold large amounts of sensitive data and rely on technological systems for critical operations. That is why the Indonesian National Police must implement a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy that protects against evolving threats while maintaining operational efficiency.

The best approach is to enhance police officers' capabilities in technology and information. The right capabilities provide a unique perspective that bridges the gap between operational needs and technological solutions. Unlike traditional IT support roles focused on maintaining existing systems, the police must now act as strategic visionaries who understand how technology can reshape police operations in the digital age. Consider the transformations that may occur through the implementation of strategic technologies. Advanced analytics platforms can identify crime patterns that would take human analysts weeks to discover, enabling the proactive deployment of limited patrol resources. Automated report-writing systems can reduce the time officers spend on administrative tasks, freeing them up for community engagement and proactive policing. Integrated communication systems can seamlessly coordinate multi-agency responses, maximizing the effectiveness of every available resource.

In the digital age, cybercrime is on the rise, demanding that the Indonesian National Police (Polri) enhance its capacity to address it. Technological innovation is also evident in the establishment of the Cybercrime Directorate, which focuses on addressing crimes in the digital realm. The National Police have enhanced their capabilities in digital forensic analysis to handle cases such as online fraud, identity theft, and the dissemination of illegal content. Cooperation with internet service providers has also been strengthened to facilitate access to the information and data required for investigations.

As stated by the Police Sector Units (18-10-2025):

"Many traditional crimes have evolved into modern crimes, such as fraud and theft, because they are committed by exploiting technological advancements. That is why we need personnel dedicated to handling these online criminal cases."

One of the significant innovations introduced by the police is the development of an information system that enables more effective data management. The Indonesian National Police (Polri) has implemented the Police Management Information System (SIMK), which facilitates the monitoring and

analysis of criminal data. SIMK enables real-time data analysis, thereby helping officers make faster, data-driven decisions.

As stated by the Head of the Cyber Unit at the Metropolitan Police Department (26-10-2025):

“SIMK integrates various crime data from across Indonesia, making it easier for investigators to track perpetrators and analyze crime patterns. This system enables rapid information exchange between various police units and other agencies.”

To enhance interaction between the public and the police, the Indonesian National Police has developed various mobile apps. One of them is “Kepolisian Mobile” or KEPOLISIAN, which allows the public to report criminal incidents and access the latest information on police activities. The app features an online reporting system, report status tracking, and access to information about police services.

It was also emphasized by Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (12-10-2025):

“With the launch of the KEPOLISIAN app, the public is expected to participate more actively in maintaining the safety of their neighborhoods. Given the wide variety of crimes we face today. Then, using of analytical software helps gain valuable insights into crime patterns based on location, time, and type of crime. This enables the Indonesian National Police (Polri) to formulate more effective prevention strategies and improve their response to potential threats.”

Technological innovation would be meaningless without the support of competent personnel. The Indonesian National Police conducts ongoing training for its members in the use of new technologies. This training covers the use of data analysis software, cybercrime investigation techniques, and drone operations. By enhancing personnel capabilities, the Indonesian National Police can better respond to technological advancements and emerging challenges in society. The Indonesian National Police is also actively building collaborations with various local and international institutions and technology companies. This cooperation aims to gain access to the latest technologies and enhance the skills of police officers.

As stated by the Head of the Cyber Unit at the Metropolitan Police Department (21-10-2025):

“By partnering with universities for research and development, the Indonesian National Police can create innovative solutions tailored to on-the-ground needs. For example, collaborating with universities on the development of criminal data analysis software. In the future, this kind of technology and digital literacy education program will continue as a form of joint commitment to preparing a young generation that is digitally competent and has a strong character.”

In this study, the Community Policing Unit (Binkamtibmas) was the object of research, with subjects known as Bhabinkamtibmas (Community Police Officers) using a partnership strategy with the community, known as the Community Policing (Polmas) concept. As stipulated by the National Police Chief, Bhabinkamtibmas are police officers tasked with fostering public order and security in villages/sub-districts, increasing community participation, legal awareness, and public compliance with laws and regulations. However, many Bhabinkamtibmas officers still lack optimal capabilities in

technology and information developments.

As explained by Bripka X,

"So far, Bhabinkamtibmas have understood their role as the spearhead of the National Police in rural areas. However, when it comes to AI, Big Data, and other advanced technologies, many members, especially older ones, still don't understand. Many of our officers are unfamiliar with technological terms, and there is no ongoing training for them."

Brigadier Y further emphasized that

"There is training on digital forensics, data analysis, and law enforcement processes. However, this training is not applicable to all personnel. Sometimes, members who have participated in this training are not assigned to the cybercrime unit. Consequently, the training is less effective and efficient."

In addition to inadequate human resources training, the Sectoral Police are also unable to fully handle cybercrime cases. Cybercrime handling at the Sector Police (Polsek) level begins with receiving a report at the SPKT (Sectoral Police Investigation Unit) and focuses on receiving the report, assisting the victim, and taking preventative measures (education). Meanwhile, initial investigations and securing digital evidence are carried out in coordination with the cyber units at the Police Resort/Regional Police (Polres) level. This process sometimes discourages the public from resolving the issue, as it is perceived as too complicated, time-consuming, and labor-intensive.

As explained by the Benowo Sector Police Community Development Unit,

"The main obstacle for Polsek in handling cybercrime cases lies in their equipment. Polsek lacks profiling to translate crime data into evidence. Such profiling is usually only available at the Regional Police."

These results do not come about through wishful thinking or mere belief alone. They require individuals who understand the full scope of police work in the digital age, can envision how new technologies can be applied to law enforcement challenges, and possess the strategic thinking skills to implement solutions that truly enhance operational effectiveness and lead to smart policing.

Discussion

Over the past few decades, police agencies have adopted various technological advancements to improve operational efficiency and outcomes, particularly amid limited resources and increasing public attention and scrutiny of law enforcement activities. However, much remains to be learned about the prevalence and utility of technology among law enforcement agencies in this country and the factors influencing its selection and implementation. To address these issues, a knowledge base needs to be established regarding why and how police select, implement, and integrate new technologies; how these technologies are used; and whether new technologies significantly improve police performance for both the agencies and the public (Egbert & Leese, 2021; Mayangsari & Pujiyanto, 2025).

Technology can yield a variety of positive outcomes related to improving police practices and

building trust and legitimacy with the public. It is important to recognize that technology is evolving at a rapid pace. As the adoption of technology accelerates, it becomes increasingly important for police agencies to consider how they select and implement technology, as well as the strategic objectives they aim to achieve through its use (Lee & Cho, 2021). The National Police must prioritize policing strategies in carrying out its duties and functions, specifically a proactive policing model aimed at achieving smart policing.

IT Capabilities in Support of Organizational Transformation Toward Smart Policing

The concept of smart policing is a key focus of innovation within the Indonesian National Police. By integrating various existing technologies, the Indonesian National Police is striving to create a more efficient and responsive security system. This approach involves leveraging technologies such as big data, AI, and machine learning to improve law enforcement methods. One example of smart policing is the use of algorithms to predict crime based on existing criminal data. This helps the National Police plan patrols and law enforcement operations more strategically.

Proactive law enforcement is a self-initiated strategic approach in which law enforcement officers act to prevent crime before it occurs, rather than merely responding to incidents. Techniques include patrolling high-risk areas, community engagement, and data-driven analysis to identify risks, with the aim of reducing crime and public fear. According to Weisburd et al. (2019) proactive policing is a policing method comprising strategies aimed at preventing and reducing crime and public disturbances, emphasizing prevention, resource mobilization based on police initiative, and targeting broader community engagement in areas prone to crime and public disturbances. In the implementation of proactive policing in the digital age, IT capabilities are an absolute necessity that must be considered (Chishti, 2025).

One of the key findings of this study is that IT capabilities act as enablers of dynamic capabilities. Dynamic capabilities refer to an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to respond to environmental changes (Cyfert et al., 2021). IT capabilities enhance this dynamic process by providing real-time data access, advanced analytical tools, and collaborative platforms that support strategic decision-making (Chong et al., 2018).

IT capabilities have been conceptualized as the organization and utilization of IT resources, combined with additional resources and capabilities, to achieve organizational goals and typically consist of technical IT skills, management skills, and IT practices (Haberman et al., 2025). Specifically, technical skills are required to develop and operate IT applications as well as leverage existing technologies to create products or deliver services. Building and using IT applications requires more than just technical expertise; managerial skills are the second set of capabilities needed to leverage IT resources. Furthermore, IT capabilities also involve developing practices within the workforce that help

identify future business demands, which is crucial for managing change within the organizational environment (Salvato & Vassolo, 2018).

Research findings also indicate that IT human resource capabilities are a key determinant of the success of innovation and organizational transformation. Skilled IT professionals contribute to innovation by developing new software applications, optimizing digital processes, and identifying opportunities for technological improvement. Their expertise enables organizations to implement advanced technologies and tailor them to specific organizational needs. Collaboration between IT specialists and other business units further enhances innovation by combining technical knowledge with insights into the external environment (Cheng et al., 2024; Steininger et al., 2022).

Research findings also indicate that IT capabilities contribute to organizational learning and knowledge creation (Gama & Magistretti, 2025; Gregory et al., 2021; Leese, 2024). Digital platforms and collaboration tools enable employees to share information, learn from past experiences, and build collective expertise. This exchange of knowledge stimulates creativity and drives the development of innovative solutions to complex problems. Overall, this analysis indicates that IT capabilities enhance an organization's ability to innovate by providing the technological foundation, human resource expertise, and managerial coordination necessary for continuous improvement and technological advancement. Another important implication is that police organizations at the sectoral level must treat IT capabilities as a long-term strategic investment, not a short-term operational expense (Brayne & Christin, 2021; Hughes & Bowden, 2025; Razzak et al., 2022). Developing strong IT capabilities requires sustained investment as a strategy (look at Figure 1), namely:

a. Technology Infrastructure

Technology infrastructure refers to the hardware, software, network components (May et al., 2024), and basic facilities—such as servers, data storage, operating systems, and cloud services—required to develop, test, operate, and manage an organization's information technology environment. This infrastructure serves as the backbone for digital operations and services. To date, technology infrastructure at sector-level police stations has begun shifting from manual, paper-based systems to cloud-based digital platforms to address resource constraints and vast patrol areas. Although police at the precinct level often operate with fewer resources and more outdated equipment than their urban counterparts, the implementation of modern mobile technology, AI, and digital records has enhanced officers' situational awareness and improved public safety (Brayne & Christin, 2021; Sun et al., 2025).

Based on the research results, it is clear that the Indonesian National Police (Polri) already has a robust basic technological infrastructure at the regional police (Polda), district police (Polres), and sector police (Polsek) levels. AI, big data, and blockchain can be utilized to detect crime everywhere. However, efforts to address cybercrime at the police station level require adequate profiling equipment to prevent

cybercrimes experienced by rural communities from having to be processed at the regional police level.

Research findings indicate that technology, particularly video surveillance and communication platforms such as We Chat, has improved the responsiveness and overall capabilities of rural police (Xu, 2024). The global resonance of these findings underscores broader implications for policing practices in rural police stations (Polsek) worldwide, emphasizing the need for strategic technological interventions to address challenges and optimize the effectiveness of policing in rural areas so that the concept of smart policing can be realized across all police units.

b. Training personnel

Training personnel at rural police stations presents unique challenges due to limited resources, vast geographical areas, and smaller staff sizes compared to urban police departments. Training in this environment must be highly versatile, preparing officers to act as “jack-of-all-trades” who handle everything from initial incident response to complex investigations, forensic evidence collection, and community mediation (Brayne, 2021; Grimshaw & Jefferson, 2023; Schafer et al., 2021).

Many Bhabin members still don't receive training in AI, digital forensics, or anything related to digitalization. The training they receive focuses more on community outreach. However, with the advancement of technology and digitalization, such training is needed by all members at the sectoral level. Furthermore, training related to technological developments is often poorly targeted.

Therefore, policing efforts can be directed toward crime prevention and community-oriented policing. In rural policing, some police units may lack adequate resources to conduct criminal investigations and instead perform preliminary investigations and refer cases to specialized investigative units. Additionally, significant population movements are often associated with crime hotspots in rural areas.

Various studies in the field of police training have examined how to facilitate skill enhancement and improve specific components of police training. For example, realistic and immersive scenario-based training can enhance officers' skills (Ceccato, 2025; Paoli et al., 2021); such as situational awareness and decision-making. Similarly, efforts to integrate elements of anxiety and stress into training, so that it closely resembles what police officers will experience in high-risk operational situations, have proven to improve the use of force under stressful conditions (Ivković et al., 2022; Suramta, 2025).

c. Governance mechanisms

Governance mechanisms in rural police stations often rely on a hybrid model that combines formal state law enforcement with community-based participatory approaches to address resource constraints and build trust (Singh & Yadav, 2025). These mechanisms aim to bridge the gap between a centralized and distant police administration and the urgent security needs of rural residents. Community-based crime prevention efforts, such as neighborhood watch groups and local security forums, have shown

promising results in fostering collaboration and building trust (Lee & Cho, 2021). However, these initiatives are often hindered by a lack of institutional support, training, and integration into national policing strategies. Without a coherent and inclusive approach to security governance that meaningfully encompasses both state and non-state actors, rural communities remain vulnerable to crime, violence, and social instability. With the advent of digital advancements, IT governance mechanisms at sector-level police stations must incorporate service digitization to reduce opportunities for petty corruption, enhance accountability, and build public trust.

As confirmed in the research findings, the mechanism for handling cybercrime at the sectoral level only reaches the reporting and evidence-gathering stage. Meanwhile, investigations, inquiries, and resolution are coordinated with cyber units at the police precinct or regional police level. It's ironic that simply because there's no profiling at the police sector level, cybercrime cases must be resolved in the capital. Yet, technological advances allow all cases to be handled without the constraints of time and space. This governance system needs to be revised by the National Police leadership. Police sectors are the spearhead of domestic security. Therefore, sophisticated governance that leverages technological developments should begin at the sectoral level.

To make it easier to understand, here is an illustration of Strategic Investment in IT Capability Development:

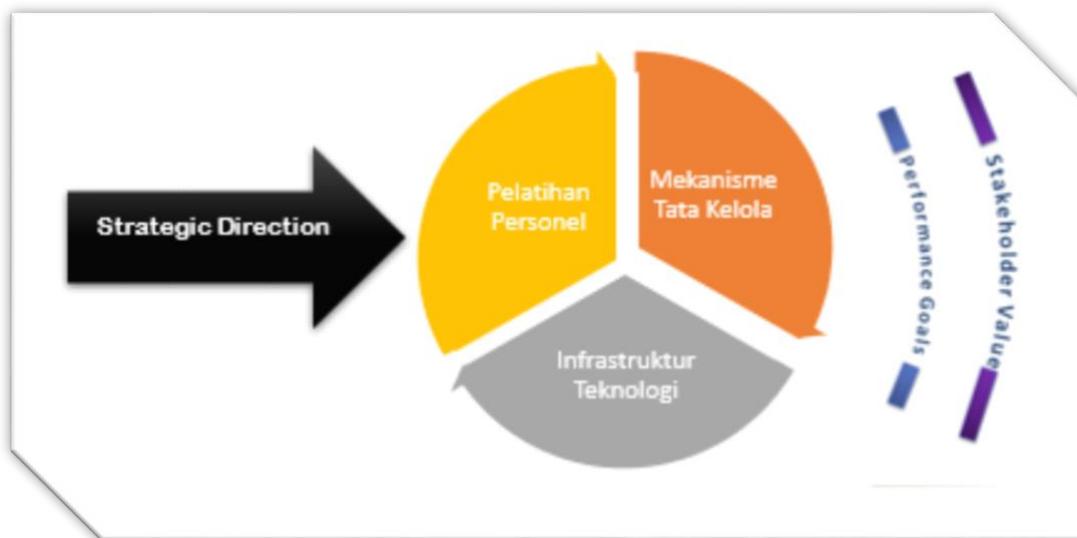


Figure 1.
Strategic Investment in IT Capability Development in Police

Organizations that prioritize such investments are more likely to achieve sustainable innovation and competitive advantage. This study also emphasizes the importance of organizational culture in maximizing the benefits of IT capabilities. An innovation-oriented work culture encourages experimentation, open communication, and knowledge sharing. When combined with strong IT

capabilities, such a work culture creates an environment where personnel feel empowered to develop and implement new ideas in carrying out their duties and functions as members of the police force.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded that the technological and information capabilities of police officers at the sectoral level play a significant role in realizing the concept of smart policing. The Indonesian National Police (Polri) already has a sophisticated technological infrastructure within the digitalization concept. However, at the sectoral level, revitalization and procurement of equipment that can support the performance and duties of officers, such as the procurement of profiling tools, are still needed. Furthermore, targeted and sustainable training, such as digital forensics, is needed. Organizations that invest in developing strong IT capabilities will be better prepared to integrate new technologies, support knowledge sharing, and facilitate collaborative innovation processes. These capabilities increase organizational agility and enable organizations to respond quickly to emerging opportunities and challenges, particularly in providing security services to rural communities.

These findings indicate that organizations seeking to strengthen their innovation performance must prioritize policies related to comprehensive IT capability development—that is, integrating technology infrastructure, skilled personnel, and effective governance structures. In this way, police organizations can create an environment that fosters creativity, experimentation, and continuous learning. In the future, the importance of IT capabilities is expected to increase as digital transformation continues to reshape industries and organizational models. Organizations that successfully leverage these capabilities will be better prepared to lead innovation efforts and achieve sustainable growth, while also being able to provide optimal security services in line with the needs and demands of the public.

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