

EFFICACY OF EDUCATION ON POLICE MISCONDUCT

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and discover the efficacy of education on police misconduct for the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas through the services received from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department, and the trust in the relationship between the citizens and the police officers of Port Isabel, Texas. The theory guiding this study is Moral Development Theory initiated by Lawrence Kohlberg, which explains that children and adolescents progress through six stages of moral development organized in three levels (Carmichael et al., 2019). While this theory is directed at children and adolescents, the same theory can be used on police officers through the different stages of development and understanding based on exposure to moral judgements they must make throughout their careers. The methodology consisted of qualitative design, with a sample size of 12 anonymous citizens who resided in or were employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, between 2017-2022. The data collection consisted through an anonymous online survey to describe the attitudes of Port Isabel, Texas, citizens and determine if the current training provided to the police officers were sufficient and the effects on police misconduct. The results provided four recommendations for criminal justice executives, policy makers, and police officers: 1) police departments need to partner with higher-level educational institutions to synchronize and standardize procedures, 2) research should be applied to police departments that provide financial benefits to police officers with education, 3) research on higher education levels for police officers with different backgrounds and variables, including prior police experience, military experience, and the size of the police departments they are employed with, 4) determine the effects if police officers were sponsored recruits or self-sponsored at their respective police academies.

Keywords: Police Academy, Education, Misconduct, Professionalize, Standardization

Copyright Page

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Dedication

Psalms 91:2 (NIV) “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” This manuscript is dedicated to my wife, Melissa for your support and motivation through this scholarly process and professional backing that has had us move 13 times to four countries, and six states. Words can never explain what you mean to me and our family, you believed and proclaimed this would happen; thank you for your prayers and your actions! To my sons, Nate and RJ, both of you have had to sacrifice and adapt during these moves. It makes me proud each of you are continuing our God given, family purpose by serving our country and the citizens of the communities we live in. To my father, mother, father-in-law, mother in-law, siblings, and in-laws. Each one of you have had an impact in my life, some bigger than others, some of you may have no idea how much of an impact you have made in my life, but the Lord Jesus Christ placed you in my path and I give him the glory for this!

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I would like to acknowledge God for his love, strength, mercy, and grace throughout my life and for giving me the opportunity of salvation through my savior Jesus Christ. Without you, I am nothing, with you, I am fulfilled. Thank you for guiding me with the Holy Spirit through this process. My number one supporter, my shoulder to lean on, and my motivator when I wanted to procrastinate, my spouse Melissa. Thank you for the walks, the conversations, and simply listening as we went through the process, it could not have been done without you. To my dissertation chair, Dr. Lewis, for his patience, understanding, and guidance. I truly believe our father God, favored me through you and placed you in my life as a tool for His kingdom. I hope to continue our relationship as peers in the future, thank you so much!

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List of Abbreviations

Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Recent activities regarding police misconduct have caused leaders at the local government level to advocate for enhanced police training to boost the professionalism of police officers in their jurisdictions and across the nation. The media frenzy has spotlighted recent police officer-involved incidents and the increase of officer-involved shootings, resulting in community uprisings and riots across the nation in hopes of police reform. Recruiting top candidates always has been an issue in policing and despite their efforts, policing leaders across the United States have cited challenges in recruiting a diverse police force, along with exploring evidence-based solutions (Gibbs, 2019). The challenge has increased pressure on recruitment and the police academies to produce patrol officers with a high percentage rate of graduates, when some of these graduates may not always meet the minimal standards. There is no verifiable data at this point that illustrates whether these graduates are highly effective after graduation or if the police academies are lowering the standards to produce the number of personnel required to be staffed, yet education is considered a way to fill the gap in professionalism.

There is a high demand for professionalization in police officers across the United States in towns, cities, counties, and at the state level to protect and defend different areas of jurisdiction. Police departments are now providing diversity training and meetings to reduce biases and stereotypes as institutions are increasingly aware of the need for competent practice across various professions although police training settings often fails to focus on intercultural development of the officer (Moon et al., 2018). The professionalism, ethics, and morality of the purpose of police departments and the police officers have all come into question due to the high

visibility of police misconduct. Even when expertly led, achieving the ideal non-bias police department will not eliminate all ethical concerns and illegal actions in policing (McCall, 2019). Some of these incidents include excessive use of force, unauthorized use of deadly force, ethics and morality concerns both on and off duty. As a result, police agencies are under public scrutiny and the watchful eyes of politicians, city leaders, the media, and most importantly, the citizens they protect. Citizens are more likely to engage as witnesses and as partners in crime reduction if they believe in police legitimacy as equitable and impartial agents of the law, which research has shown that positive police-community relationships are crucial for safer communities, (Kerrison et al., 2019). Education is the topic that has been considered to help professionalize the police workforce for decades, although it is difficult for large and small departments to standardize procedures across counties and states. Small police departments cannot support training facilities and large police departments are inducted at irregular intervals where number of hours spent in training recruits vary from each of the departments (Brereton, 1961).

Policing has always required a unique combination of physical, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal skills, and the majority of an officer's time spent on duty involves non-threatening duties such as responding to traffic accidents, causing a necessity to prepare officers for the worse-case scenarios (Blumberg et al., 2019). With the police academies needing to meet several requirements or accomplishments in a short amount of time, the police academy and police officers may fail to train the candidates on the primary law enforcement fundamentals and requirements which in turn lead to the police officers being involved in casualties or unethically sound decisions which involve the community.

Certain studies consider the espoused ambition to professionalize policing via processes including the provision of professional learning in universities and how this might be deemed to contribute to legitimate and professional police force (Thomson & Payne, 2019). The assumption is that with a more enhanced qualification, police officers would have more at stake than a state certification and employment if terminated for ethical reasons. The fear of the inability to utilize their higher education earned degree will serve as a deterrence to prevent officers from acting unethically and would help officers be self-accountable to themselves, their families, departments, and communities.

A program which was developed in the 1970s and then dropped was a cop-led learning which involved patrol officers analyzing encounters and developing alternatives that are designed to avoid needless mistakes and improve outcome for policing and communities alike (Bayley, 2018). Educated police officers could be analyzing these encounters and may result in a more professionalized police force that could result in higher pay, fewer ethically concerning incidents, and fewer terminations and resignations. In return, police departments would retain educated and experienced police officers in the police departments. Although educating police officers does not directly translate into a sense of security for the communities they serve, they will be a critical trusted element in ensuring the community's public safety (Kochanczyk, 2020). At the same time, it is not guaranteed that an educated police officer will professionalize the force and decrease incidents involving ethics or illegal activities, although an educated police officer will not damage the current police departments' image or the communities.

Background

With one of the first cases involving ethical concerns in *Terry v. Ohio* (1968), the case presented serious questions concerning the role of the Fourth Amendment in the confrontation on

the street between the citizen and the policeman investigating suspicious circumstances. Police departments across the nation have continued to face challenges where police officers have been involved in questionable scenarios involving ethics, excessive force, and officer-involved shootings. These situations have caused community leaders, politicians, and citizens to call for the reformation of police departments, training requirements, and the request of police officers to be educated to professionalize the police departments and their police officers.

In *Texas v. Brown* (1983), the integrity and the experience of the police officer were taken into consideration and upheld finding no violation of the fourth amendment search and seizure. Some communities have even questioned police departments' legitimacy, have proposed decreasing funding of police departments, and some politicians and community leaders have been far-fetched in requesting to abolish police departments altogether. These developments in law enforcement have resulted in the need for early identification of individuals who may fail in the police field (Meier et al., 2018). In return, attrition due to police officers resigning or retiring and recruitment challenges have caused concerns across the nation, resulting in police departments lacking staffing, decreased experience, education and knowledge of local areas of responsibility or jurisdictions.

In *Canton v. Harris et al.* (1983), basic knowledge through training was needed by the officers who responded to a suspect who had fallen several times on her own, although no medical assistance was summoned to the suspect. In many instances, police officers may need to have senior or more experienced police officers guiding and mentoring young or junior police officers during incidents in small police departments vice Field Training Officers in large cities or departments. The effectiveness of minimal training standards for police officers trained at police academies is now being questioned. Some politicians and reformists recommend police

officers should be trained at the police academies only after they have obtained a baccalaureate degree in criminal justice or a near-related field from a university. They further suggested that the educational background of police officers will positively impact ethical decisions and professionalizing of the police departments. In conjunction with the University of California, Berkeley Police Chief August Vollmer created a baccalaureate degree-granting program for police officers in 1916 and established minimum standards in criminal justice to improve the quality of police training (Oliver, 2016).

Problem Statement

The problem examined by this study is the liability experienced by law enforcement personnel as a result of improper arrests, excessive use of force or other ethical concerns. The specific focus of the study is to explore the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to the concerns mentioned above. Service-learning opportunities have risen across the country to provide students with valuable professional experience beyond training and practical skills to include leadership, mentorship, behavior regulations, and the importance of community-policing relationships (Bonnan-White & Lanaras, 2019). Higher education in the criminal justice profession elevates to the required state certification provided by the police academies which improve the level of knowledge in criminal justice systems (Capps et al., 2018). Enhanced education increases awareness, training, educational understanding in performing their duties with sound ethical and moral decisions and creating a more professionalized workforce with less unrighteous decisions. Agencies such as the Minneapolis Police Department offer tuition assistance which allows the police agency to keep desirable candidates due to their education and attraction of qualified candidates who are motivated for a career in policing (Gibbs, 2019).

Educated police officers may make more ethically sound decisions due to a higher education degree but will not prevent all unethical incidents in which police officers may be involved. The potential merits of raising formal education requirements for police officers is a reoccurring topic of debate behind the belief that more extended and more academic police training will result in more legalistic attitudes among the recruits (Fekjaer & Petersson, 2019). In comparison, attorneys and physicians are required to have a certain amount of education and state certifications but have also been known to be involved in incidents where ethics and morals have come into question.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to misconduct. Transparency is one of the most popular accountability solutions for policing problems (Levine, 2019). Police academy training begins the critical first steps in preparing law enforcement officers for their roles and responsibilities in the community, which widen beyond order maintenance and peacekeeping (Nevers, 2019). Port Isabel, Texas Police Department is small with less than 50 police officers and do not have their own hosted police academy. The police academies in the location of the research are certified by the state of Texas, usually taught at local universities by active and retired police officers. Police academies are the start of a professional career involving community relations and if citizens are to get the government services they want, elected officials and bureaucratic leaders need to understand how workforces come to think and act (Oberfield, 2019). The motivation for the study is two-fold and involves the continual staffing gaps in police departments, along with the corruption which continues to exist in the police departments. In 2015, the city of Austin, Texas partnered with the White House sharing administrative data to help strengthen the ability of

police to identify factors that led to poor-policing interactions. Findings revealed that neither local crime, poverty, nor education attainment rates were sufficient to explain racial disparities in the Austin Police Department use of force data (Kerrison et al., 2019). There have been many towns which have been plagued with corruption and staffing concerns causing the leadership to have a high turnover ratio of police officers. There has been significant misuse of power, illegal detentions, violent behavior of the police to include inefficiency and corruption (Hussain et al., 2021). Often, police officers use these towns as a steppingstone to higher-paying police departments in large cities, and the citizens of these towns lose trust in the police departments and the police officers who may be employed for only two to six months. Research shows that positive police-community relationships are crucial for safer communities, as citizens are likely to engage as witnesses and as partners in crime reduction if they truly believe the legitimacy of the police officers (Kerrison et al., 2019). If trust between the citizens and the police departments continues to be a concern, the concern will evolve into problems currently occurring in large cities. Law enforcement and community members across the United States have resulted with unfortunate fatalities and an absolute absence of trust due to the ongoing tension and tragic altercations (Childs, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Education in many occupations have always been a needed requirement, to include the occupation of law enforcement which has been initiated from the likes of Sir Robert Peel referencing the requirement for a professionally trained police force. Over a century ago the implementation of August Vollmer who proposed that police officers have a college degree, and the Wickersham Commission which provided a recognition for the education standards for police officers in 1931 (Oliver, 2016). Adherence to standards is a fundamentally social act that

requires others to buy in and those same standards are repositories of collective meaning actors use to organize their lives, which are the culture (Campeau, 2018). Police officers operate under a public mandate and are given the authority to carry out policies and procedures in accordance with the local, state, and federal laws. In every instance, the authority is vested to police officers once they are sworn into their position and must be carried with high ethical standards and within the governing authority, which is taught through the training which is received. The lack of movement toward higher education standards is the absence of definitive research measuring the effect of higher education on policing outcomes (Hilal et al., 2013). The professionalization agenda now involves accredited learning at the university level, continuous professional development, and adherence to a code of ethic and the progression towards a significant role of higher education in criminal justice. Involvement of universities in the modern era has been part of a wider reform movement driven in part by past corruption scandals, performance failures, loss of public confidence and economic pressures (Brown & Silvestri, 2020).

Criminal justice professionals must take an approach of higher learning in order to assist them with their occupation and how to respond to the community. There is a difference in training and educating police officers with their policies, procedures, guidance, laws, and environment. The discrepancy between policy and practice is not a newly discovered phenomenon where discrepancies between the intentions, expectations, and outcomes of teaching and learning processes in law enforcement (Wieslander, 2019). The community and the law oppose to the way police officers handle certain situations causing courts to determine case laws in which education, training, and experience will factor into the outcome of these case laws. Some case laws which affect education, training, and experience include *Almeida-Sanchez V. United States (1973)*, *City of Canton, Ohio V. Harris et al. (1989)*, *Terry V. Ohio (1968)*, *Texas*

V. Brown (1983), United States V. Arvizu (2002). All of the case laws have contributed to current laws based on the education, training, and experience of the police officers who were involved. Critical thinking is needed as part of the educational institution learning outcomes will help with how police officers approach a situation with members of the community on the worst set of circumstances (Finkel, 2019). Police agencies need to keep desirable candidates, affording them the opportunities that will help attract minorities to the job who may have been raised in some of the previously mentioned social surroundings overcoming a long-standing issue in policing in the need to diversify personnel which is allowed through higher education (Gibbs, 2019). With the difficulties of surrounding a culture of the police which do not require an education, but merely to be trained in a police academy, the research will aim to characterize the perception and attitudes of the communities which are protected by the police officers.

Research Questions

1. Does the public think that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job?
2. Does the public feel that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification?
3. What types of training / education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel?

Nature of the Study

The research design is from a qualitative approach where the research is interpretative with the inquirer typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants (Creswell, 2008). The researcher will obtain substantive data and the results will be relayed and analyzed qualitatively based on records and observed or identified behavior. Using a qualitative

approach to study client reactions to a new technique, procedure, or requirement, you could interview clients and then review the interview protocols to extract themes that emerged via the interviews and cannot apply standard descriptive and inferential statistics to the data (Bordens & Abbott, 2008).

The intent is to identify and understand the perspective or knowledge from the citizens of the community and to identify the variables in which will help build trust in the community. The open-ended questions related to the participants opinion and attitude about the trust of police officers based on the education level they expect police officers who protect them. While it is easy to focus on the critical tasks within the law enforcement occupation, it is also important for citizens to understand the broader occupational context which can involve sedentary or low intensity activities (Drain et al., 2019). There is a perception amongst the communities with police departments which have internal police academies that governments should enact a police licensing requirement with a higher education to curb misconduct through uniform behavioral standards for all law enforcement officers, helping preventing misconduct through baseline qualifications for initial attainment of a license generally include education, health, age and criminal background prior to attendance of certification (Hanner, 2021).

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to ensure communities receive highly dedicated police officers and can maintain the trust of professional police officers who are employed to protect and serve the communities and not their selfish traits through corruption or unprofessionalism. When police officers are willing to stay employed and grow rapport with the citizens, the relationship between the community and the police officers can grow positively, where the relationship is entrusted with sympathy and admiration for one another. Just as the world is

increasingly interconnected, insecurity in one location can, directly and indirectly, affect people's security, and specific actions must be taken to mitigate the effects (Nyborg, 2019). Education will make the police officers more knowledgeable but will require higher pay, preventing police officers from jumping employment from one town to the next, and keeping the security of the people.

There is no consensus regarding the benefits of a minimum education level of a college degree for law enforcement officers and no state requires this entry into policing with Minnesota being the only state to require an associate degree (Hilal et al., 2013). While there may be benefits for the community, police departments and the police officers to obtaining a degree, there has been minimal research conducted on the overall results. In one study, officers with only a high school education were subjects of 75 percent of all disciplinary actions, while officers with bachelor's degrees or equivalent accounted for only 11 percent of such actions (Michelson, 2018). With the high risks city and municipality agencies take on a daily basis of having police officers conduct their duties, it is imperative for city and police executives to mitigate these risks with any options available. In another study, it was noted that police officers with undergraduate degrees performed on par with officers who had 10 years of additional experience of which nationally, roughly about 1 percent of police departments or approximately 64 city or municipal agencies require a bachelor's degree or equivalent (Michelson, 2018). The statistic of comparing a decade of experience with an undergraduate degree seems unreasonable in every case, although the circumstances police officers are facing on a daily seems unreasonable as well and the additional education would only benefit any situation involving police officers and citizens of the community. While education is an incentive for professionalizing the police departments, police officers have been discovered to have received

many benefits from their higher education degrees. In 2014, there was a research conducted from Michigan State University that found evidence that a college degree significantly reduces the likelihood that officers will use force as their first option to gain compliance and further discovered they demonstrated greater levels of creativity and problem solving skills to include being more proficient in technology, less likely to be involved in unethical behavior, less use of sick time with better work ethic and understanding the big picture or mission statement of the department (Michelson, 2018). These benefits could assist in fewer citizen complaints, promotion of higher aspirations which would create job longevity at local municipalities and should be contemplated as a long-term strategy for police departments across the nation.

Definitions

The following terms have been defined as they have been used in this research:

Patrol/Police Officer is the term used for a person elected, employed, or appointed as a peace officer under Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 51.212 or 51.214, Education Code, or other law (Texas Penal Code, 2022).

Field Training Officer is the term given to experienced certified police officers who provides training to newly employed law enforcement officers for the purposes of training and measuring entry-level officer performance (Law Insider, 2022).

State Certification is the term used for police officers who have completed the police academy and passed a state exam which commissions them as a police officer given by the authority of Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) being no less than 720 hours (TCOLE, 2022).

In-service Annual Training is the term used for the 40 hours required training received by police officers in 24 months and is completed at a police academy or at any individual police

department by the training division of the respective police department under the authority of the TCOLE (TCOLE, 2022).

Police Academy, the term is any teaching facility approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to administer the Basic Course requirements for Police Officers, which may be hosted by a college, university, or a city police department (TCOLE, 2022).

Rookie, the term rookie is used to describe a new police officer with less than one year of police experience (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Summary

Police officers are a requirement and needed in the communities across the United States and certain incidents which were illegal actions by the police officers which have caused citizens to be discontent with police officers. Problems have emerged in recent years with the professionalism of police officers in the United States which have resulted in police departments having manning shortfalls, placing the police officers in dangerous situations due to working extra hours, causing challenges at home and in their professional careers. Experts agree that rigorous enforcement of internal regulations within a police department promotes constitutional policing by deterring future misconduct and removing unfit officers from the streets (Rushin, 2019). The research intends to determine if educated police officers are less likely to resign or terminate their employment in South Texas police departments resulting with a more professionalized police department and satisfied citizens.

This proposed study is a much-needed study for individuals with law enforcement backgrounds, employment, along with supervisors and police executives which will help them understand the effects of education in the criminal justice system. The information will have direct input on the outcome of the proposed study in bridging the educational gap in determining

if training, education, or prior employment skills can keep the current police academy training curriculum where it is currently evaluated. Suppose more education is required for the police officer to properly conduct their duties at their initial duty assignment with ethical decision-making and keep them employed for years to follow. The outcome of the proposed study will be shared with the criminal justice system to help alleviate some of the problems which continue to occur involving ethical issues and concerns. Although this study will not be a confirmed outcome, follow-on proposed studies will need to be conducted of similar nature with the same variables to determine the effects of the police academy and education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to police misconduct. Data for this qualitative study will be collected from the population of Port Isabel, TX. Since this research is a qualitative study, the data collection will continue to the point of redundancy. Increased awareness of what the public feels would be the minimum levels of education and training needed for criminal justice personnel to be effective at their occupation. Benefits to society include data obtained will determine education increasing awareness, along with training and educational understanding in performing their duties with sound ethical and moral decisions, creating a more professionalized workforce. Educated police officers may make more ethically sound decisions due to a higher education and knowledge which will professionalize the occupation, making criminal justice personnel more effective in the communities they protect and serve. Recent activities regarding police misconduct have caused leaders at the local government level to advocate for enhanced police training to boost the professionalism of police officers in their jurisdictions and across the nation. The media frenzy has spotlighted recent police officer-involved incidents and the increase of officer-involved shootings, resulting in community uprisings and riots across the nation in hopes of police reform. In addition, service-learning opportunities have risen across the country to provide students with valuable professional experience beyond training and practical skills to include leadership, mentorship, behavior regulations, and the importance of community-policing relationships (Bonnar-White & Lanaras, 2019).

Over the last couple of years, a considerable number of police officers have retired, resulting in a shortfall of manning and experienced officers in departments. This shortfall has

increased pressure on recruitment and the police academies to produce patrol officers with a high percentage rate of graduates, when some of these graduates may not always meet the minimal standards. There is no verifiable data at this point that illustrates whether or not these graduates are highly effective after graduation or if the police academies are lowering the standards to produce the number of personnel required to be staffed, yet education is considered a way to fill the gap in professionalism.

With the understanding that training for any occupation is never perfect and can only strive to meet and exceed the minimum standards, police academies are similar to other occupations. The difference in work characteristics between police officers and other occupations is that being a police officer can conduct two actions which will never satisfy the customer. These two actions consist of having the ability to restrain somebody by placing them under arrest and taking away their right of movement. The second action consist of having the ability under law to use deadly force to cancel a threat or affect an arrest. These two actions must always be conducted flawlessly and without hesitation or error. If error does exist in these two actions, this action could then be determined unjustifiable, which could result with arrest of a police officer, and loss of their job, loss of state certification and a possible prison sentence.

The following research context involves police officers, the training received at the police academy which results with a state certification as a police officer and the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to police misconduct. The location will be in Port Isabel, Texas which is located in South Texas which will be explored to help uncover the problems police officers face due to the lack of training they receive and ensure they properly receive the training needed to properly conduct their duties with ethical decisions. The information in the chapter two of the proposed research study will involve the theoretical

framework containing sociologist Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory as the ability to distinguish right from wrong, to determine the ethically correct course of action in complex circumstances. The theory is that individuals pass through several stages in which they develop their ability to reason morally with the development of moral judgement as the standard to measure the level of moral development (Zhao et al., 2018). Also utilized will be the Transactional Leadership Theory which is founded on the idea that leader-follower relations are based on exchanges or implicit bargains between leaders and followers and leaders motivate and inspire their subordinates to realize their higher potential by fostering an environment that makes followers feel comfortable, and satisfied with their leadership (Barnett, 2018).

The rationality of utilizing Lawrence Kohlberg's theory is that many of these police officers are raised in the occupation with a bubble of a lifestyle and do not develop all of the stages which are required of them due to the lack of training in order for them to become a productive member of the occupation and society and instead become halted in developing the stages Kohlberg is mentioning. The reasoning of utilization for the Transactional Leadership Theory is due to the relationship between the leader and the follower could have an impact on police officers, their careers and the decisions they formulate.

Theoretical Framework

Moral Development Theory

Moral Development Theory was initiated by Lawrence Kohlberg while working on the topic as a psychology student at the University of Chicago in 1958 and is an adaptation of a theory conceived by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is referred to in introductory psychology, developmental psychology which explains that children and adolescents progress through six stages of moral development organized in three levels

(Carmichael et al., 2019). While this theory is directed at children and adolescents, the same theory can be used on police officers through the different stages of development and understanding based on exposure to moral judgements they must make throughout their careers.

From a Christian worldview perspective, there is the understanding that there is good and evil in the world in which there is spiritual warfare between the two. Understanding the difference of why this occurs can bring the perspective of why people and police officers conduct themselves in unethical manners. God says the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Genesis 3:22). For centuries, scholars and lay people alike have grappled with fundamental questions about human nature including whether pure evil or pure good exist and only recently have researchers examined people's perceptions about the existence of good and evil (Webster, 2021). The six stages of moral development consist of the following: stage one is obedience and punishment driven, stage two is self-interest driven, stage three is good intentions as determined by social consensus, stage four is authority and social order obedience driven, stage five is social contract driven, and stage six is universal ethical principles driven (Rest et al., 1999).

Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional Leadership Theory was first introduced by Max Weber in 1947 and was later expanded by MacGregor Burns and Bernard Bass through different theory explanations. The foundation of the theory is described with a leader-follower relationship which attributes to rewards when certain achievements are received and punishment when there is failure. This type of theory would function appropriately in the criminal justice system if the leaders in the respective department were of ethical and moral nature. Leaders who talk about ethics and invite followers to do the same contextualizes their activities in a moral framework and they create

performance expectations by not only setting high ethical standards but also sanctioning follower conduct positively or negatively regarding how they meet those standards (Wade, 2019).

Transactional leaders work on the operational side to get daily, or immediate objectives completed in perfectly and expect his or her subordinates to do the same; transactional leadership is based on transactions which have a give and take perspective. As transactional leadership can be influential and positive, it is seen that this type of leadership can be negatively impactful as it may not only be negative attitudes and are up against people's general mental representation of consent (Sommers, 2020). If transactional leaders are not aware of what is right and wrong, good or evil, they may be influencing their subordinates negatively with their unethical and immoral values, which they were not aware that they were wrong.

Moral Development Theory Advancing Literature

As stated earlier in the introduction of chapter two, Kohlberg's theory has added to qualitative research study in many instances and will continue to contribute by adding context for this specific study. People who are not considered a social deviance usually started having their minds developed by their parents, guardians or other adults in their life of which decisions are correct and are not ethically moral to conduct. With this theory in mind, the author has the question of social deviance such as police officers who were raised with two loving parents in a stable environment; why they commit criminal acts, intentionally or unintentionally, and are making unethical decisions which they know would compromise their careers and even possible jail time. The author is aware that each police officer received the same minimal training required in their respective police academies, although why do certain police officers decide to be involved in criminal activity or make unethical decisions. Research indicates that a small proportion of police officers are disproportionately involved in use of force incident, naming

them violence prone officers; these violence prone officers are often placed around certain settings or near triggering factors that are usually provocative settings (Noppe, 2018). Could this be the case for several of the recent ethical decision-making incidents involving police officers which we have seen on the media? Since majority of police officers are a few years out of high school and range in the ages of 21-25 years and can even state that most of them gain their insight of what is considered to be right and wrong from a six-month police academy. The same age group has never lived away from home without their parents, let alone they are placed in a uniform of authority with semi-automatic and automatic weapons to protect citizens from the communities in which they are employed. The idea of universality can be coupled with the developmental processes stemming from social experiences on the assumption that many of the same direct experiences occur in most cultures to include harming, helping, sharing, or failing to share, treating people equally or unequally (Turiel 2018). Police officers learn their occupational morals from other personnel to include leaders or senior personnel in the police department. Due to the high attrition rate in recent years, many of these personnel are senior in rank, some which have less law enforcement experience for the positions they hold, and at times never realize they are not conducting unethical decisions, which the rest of the personnel in the police department consider to be ethically unmoral.

Kohlberg further theorized that not everyone makes it through all the stages of moral development and in particular, some people's moral development provides strong evidence of aggressive behavior or offending rates (Zaplolski et al., 2018). The particular proposed research would emphasize an educational goal which could help with the equilibration to the next stage from where the police officers may be halted or prevented from advancing to the next stage which could decrease their mindset in involving themselves with criminal activity and unethical

decision making. Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning development identifies three distinct levels of moral reasoning; personnel who progress from the pre-conventional level in which the avoidance of punishment and seeking crude fairness dominate, followed by the conventional level which action is towards gaining approval from others and abiding by the law and requirements, and to the post-conventional level characterized by the pursuance of impartial interests for members in society as well as the establishing of self-chosen moral principles (Van den Enden et al., 2019).

Transactional Leadership Theory Advancing Literature

Transactional leadership theory which at times is also known as management leadership theory is influential in the criminal justice field due to the leadership style being based on a reward/praise and fail/punish type of system. Transactional leadership adopts how learning takes place given between an exchange-based of teacher and learner relationship, which the style represents a leader who provides the instruction for the learner to navigate (Boone, 2019).

Transactional leadership is commonly known and seen in the criminal justice system, especially in the field of law enforcement where many officers are extremely loyal to their supervisors and vice versa. Loyalty is a need in law enforcement where officers must depend on each other to ensure they protect each other while in the line of duty and make it home alive after each shift. With this type of camaraderie, between shift personal, in small units build on high morale and get to know each other well to include the supervisors, which end up in friendly and positive relationship with each other and each other's families. This type of relationship depends on the way the personnel communicate with one another and how truthful they are with one another which gains the trust from each other. The value of being able to self-disclose mental contents is not in play for corporate persons, yet the duties of truth-telling apply because institutions are

composed of individuals and often these individuals as their audience (Greene, 2019). This type of leadership ability has been known to be less stressful especially in the criminal justice system where stress is already at a high mark. The fact that police officers often confront violence, death, various shocking incidents in their daily work, they can easily fall into neuroses, depression or different forms of addictions as it is one of the most dangerous and stressful jobs in the world (Pieczywok, 2018).

The transactional leadership can bring many attributes to the criminal justice system to include healthy and comfortable relationships and work centers which in return can provide positive professional results for the criminal justice system and the community the professional serve. The philosophy behind the transactional leadership theory is the high attributes of understanding between both the leader and the employee. When analyzed from the aspect of team performance, the relationship between transactional leadership and organization innovativeness, decreases potential among team members as they are not expected to go beyond their team leaders' expectations (Jelaca et al., 2020). The leadership brings the most structured of leadership styles but may not utilized by organizations that operate in a routine type of environment. As stated before, criminal justice supervisors cannot be at every location where a decision must be made. With this type of leadership style, the relationships between the leader and employees are well knitted and the leader's habits usually provide an important mechanism for bringing their conduct to light, regardless of if the mention of conduct is good or bad as the relationship is considered fundamental to securing public confidence and trust in the police (Torrible, 2018). The knowledge behind this type of leadership theory has been researched over the years and has been given positive feedback in corporate and small type businesses. Leaders with this type of leadership deliver rewards and recognition contingent upon followers

successfully carrying out their roles and assignments which is also similar to authoritative parents who monitor their children's activities and respond to their children's desired and undesired behaviors differentially (Jiang et al., 2019).

The transactional leadership can bring several goal attainments to the criminal justice field, although the purpose for this type of leadership is beneficial to the criminal justice system by having a set guidance from the leader to the employee. With the understanding of the guidance, transactional leadership offers items such as certain rewards the employee wants in exchange for items the leader requires which would be an effort by his or her subordinates (Teoman & Ulengin, 2018). The criminal justice organization is strictly adhered to the guidance which the leader sets out to be the best vision possible for the organization and the effort from the employees to ensure that vision along with goals and overall mission is met for the organization.

The limitations for this type of leadership theory are more likely to occur when individuals are not able to put forth the effort to meet this type of leadership, where the leader might be opinionated by his or her employees to be a mean or unfair individual. The reasoning behind this problem is that when problems, errors or mistakes are encountered by the leader, along with this trial and error by the employees will follow with punishment and reprimand, which individuals might not be accustomed too. It is a process by which leaders rewards or punishes a follower depending on the performance of the follower, the leaders will use the transaction process according to the situation (Sivarat et al., 2021). This type of leadership can also have the limitation where corrective action is taken and the relationship between the leader and employee is strained due to misunderstanding, causing low morale unlike the opposite leadership style of transformational leadership.

As mentioned before, close knit relationships can benefit the comfort level of the organization and the workplace environment. With every work environment is a place of activities or roles that are explained as possible actions and on completion of tasks followers are rewarded with rewards and benefits (Saeed & Mughal, 2019). As a leader, the most beneficial reward is when employees are putting forth the effort and completing tasks and responsibilities correctly, which in retrospect the organization is meeting all organizational goals. To continue this type of effort by the employees, the leader must reward the employees with what the leader believes is appropriate and can include, time off, special awards, salary increase, title promotions to name a few.

People prefer to work within their comfort zone rather than having a complete overview of the situation and when personnel are not in their comfort level, team performance drops significantly (Polic, 2019). In public organizations such as in the criminal justice system, political views and guidelines are shifted when different individuals or different political parties are voted into public office. The transactional leadership style eases the change and having to explain the changes to the employees. Changes for employees in the criminal justice system is a hard role to adapt too, especially when individuals have been so accustomed to following certain guidelines and procedures for years and even decades. One of the benefits of this type of leadership is even though the organization might change certain policies and procedures, the leader does not change, and the employees have the understanding of following their roles as employees in order to ensure rewards are provided by their leader. An employee's mindset in a certain criminal field is that they are surrounded by fellow employees of similar characteristics which evolves into a culture, that place a high value on dedication and loyalty (Kark et al., 2018).

The suggestions for transactional leadership style to the criminal justice system is the ability to complete certain goals and missions with one individual who has power and the employees who follow the leader and give him that power. Leadership plays a central role in public administration which leaders in the public sector have the special responsibility to exercise power on behalf of the general public, and those leaders have the potential to either create or destroy public value (Kindarto et al., 2020). For employees to feel the love, care and passion towards an organization means that the transactional leadership style has a positive effect on both the individual employees and the organization as a whole. Many criminal justice organizations are not able to offer this type of environment, where experiences are cherished for the sole reflection that when an individual is completing the job correctly, a reward will eventually be offered in whatever type it may be.

Much understanding for the criminal justice system and professionals is that transactional dimension of employees which were nested with organizations, standard errors were clustered at the higher or organizational level involving audits and their effectiveness which is key reflection of the leader and of his or her performance (Nielsen et al., 2019). The research has proven consecutively how transactional leadership method of reward/praise and fail/punish type of system can be considered a success or failure especially in the criminal justice organizations.

Overall, leadership styles can arguably be affected by the employees that the leader leads in overall performance and that the employees' performance can be affected by the leader's leadership style. Transactional leadership style refers to the leader's power to reinforce subordinates for their successful completion of the bargain to include that leaders rely on employees to take responsibility for their actions and only intervene when problems become intense or challenging (Crews et al., 2019). While there is no definite one style type of

leadership which is correct, many can be implemented and have been noticed to be effective and able to complete mission and help groups obtain goals. Criminal justice professionals must be able to adapt to changes, situations that arise on a daily and meet the overall end goal, which is to protect and serve the community, no matter what type of role in the criminal justice system, a person is filling. Being able to lead must also come to the conclusion that an individual who leads must first learn to follow, which is the foundation of any leadership style.

With the author's description of these theories and how they intertwined with police officers who have recently graduated their respective police academies. The author feels new police officers are not fully developed of all learning stages due to the lack of learning from a mere six-month police academy and learning many of their traits from other individuals who they themselves lack the training and education required to be instructors. As stated before, this specific research has not been conducted before and has little background information provided from what the author has researched, although the author feels these two theories can provide a foundation for this research.

On empirical and theoretical grounds, it is argued that different patterns of leadership style on employee work provides outcomes and may have different effects on employee behavior (Bian et al., 2019). The author is trying to understand where police officers would align themselves with this type of theory, where they are valued not only with their basic entry level training and with the additional educational training or higher education degree and their current developmental stages of the theory when exiting. With the assistance of a phenomenological study involving police officers, the outcome with the experiences of the police officers will help validate the understanding of where police officers are depicted in this specific study. The assumption of leadership literature is that the more leaders enact behaviors characterizing a

specific positive leadership style, the better would be the followers' outcomes, which can affect them in a positive and negative perspective (Katz et al. 2020).

The two theories mentioned are relatable to the proposed research topic in several aspects to include leadership influence, which may be positive or negative. A solid education and training foundation can also influence police officers in the way they act towards the public. Both influential variables of leadership, training and education can impact police officers in helping them to determine if they stay employed with a police department or resign and continue their career with a different police department. With the understanding that there may be outside influences besides leadership, training and education, that can influence the decision-making process for a police officer. The effective means to address ethics in education by either incorporating a standalone ethics course followed by ethical cases integrated across various disciplines and a final course that combines ethics and professionalism (West & Buckby, 2020).

The topic of overcoming unethical decision making in South Texas police departments due to education variable can advance the moral development theory. The reasoning behind the advancement is that Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory was intended for children and adolescents, although can be converted for adults in the law enforcement occupation. It is suggested that historically minded educators should undertake moral reasoning and, where possible, learn from moral philosophers (Re, 2018). As mentioned before, the foundation of training and moral development for police officers is from their instructors at the police academy, and other leaders to follow including their Field Training Officer, Shift Commanders and Shift Sergeants. Although the training is provided to the police officers, many will not functionally understand all training scenarios until they are required to handle certain situations on their own causing them to morally develop. If bad habits are procured or bad leadership

instills bad traits, police officers may not morally develop and treat the citizens of their community appropriately, regardless of if they are suspects, witnesses, or victims. Everyday interactions are rich in social and contextual cues that guide interaction and enable and constrain moral behavior such as non-verbal cues to include facial expressions, speaking pace, tone of a voice (McCurrie et al., 2018). Learning from these cues could be bad habits that are instilled or the understanding by rookie police officers that once these are provided, a certain action or behavior should be enacted, thus stagnating their moral development in law enforcement.

Related Literature

The two main themes that will be utilized and introduced in the proposed study will be leadership influence and training/educational effort, which have some affiliation and a major influence on how the police officers may have a hard time in properly conducting their jobs and duties in an ethical manner, which result with resignations and high attrition rates.

Leadership Influence

As stated before, many police officers are surrounded by influential leaders who might be a part of the unethical issues which might be occurring off and on duty as well as the lack of training in ethics that police officers are receiving once they arrive at their initial duty station. Public perception is that police leadership has failed due to their lack of professionalism, although some police officers believe that major failure of police leadership is its disconnect from the junior ranks (Ahsan, 2019). Many police departments have been decreasing numbers of personnel from their organizations and are able to increase more of a workload with the less numbers of personnel. In an era of declining labor power, police unions stand as a success story for worker organizing as they exert political clout and negotiate favorable terms for their members, although despite support for unionization, police unions have become public enemy

number one for commentators concerned about race and police violence (Levin, 2020). This theme goes in direct representation of how police officers can be influenced by their leaders who lack the same training from the operator's perspective to the training and education the leaders require in order to manage individuals especially with the decrease of personnel, and the requirement of producing better decisions and having the mindset of doing more with less.

Leadership can influence police officers and the police departments they lead in return these actions will have an affect on how police officers respond to the community and handle their duties and responsibilities. The role, position, and involvement of strategic police leaders in contemporary police reform may be regarded as essential, particularly in view of effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of the process and its outcomes specifically the role and influence of positioned police leaders during the transition process of change (Moggre et al., 2018). Police leadership must be able to forecast into the future of changes which are required as police departments adapt to the communities and their request for change, along with being able to handle the proper fundamentals of day-to-day operations and the political climate of city or town leaders. If the police officers are sensing negative leadership styles, they too will be affected even though the leadership styles are not directly affecting the police officer.

Leaders must be able to handle these difficult situations mentioned above, along with any out of the ordinary criminal cases which could bring forth extra stressors on their professional careers and personal lives. Since the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, despite the fact that data on felonious officer deaths do not support this narrative, other researchers have found that police administrators commonly believe in the existence of a "war on cops" and that officers now face unprecedented danger on patrol (Sierra-Arevalo, 2019). If the pressures are felt by police department executives and certain leadership administrators are making comments

in front of their police officers, this is where they must be educated that their words, statements and comments are filed in the minds of their police officers. As leaders, even first line supervisors in any organizations are humans and are eligible for error; they too must understand that any negative comments will manipulate the way their employees intentionally or unintentionally think.

Personnel in leadership must have the understanding that similar to police officers, they are on a constant parade ground in front of the community in which the citizens are awaiting the opportunity to locate a flaw in the system or in their actions. It is understood that being in a law enforcement capacity, the complexity has increased from 30 years ago to even only five years ago. British policing has partnered with the College of Policing by implementing a Police Education Qualification Framework through a professionalization agenda which aims to standardize entry to the police and allow serving police officers to gain accreditation for their previous training and experience, which involves the process of a national police curriculum for higher education institutions to deliver to new recruits (Williams et al., 2019). This professionalization agenda affects new recruits and leadership personnel which provide a standardization for all police departments across the nation and is a program which can be instituted in the United States. The purpose is to make our police departments increase in professionalization and knowledge that can building blocks and implemented upon entrance into the occupation and continue to be built upon throughout their careers.

Training and Educational Effort

Since these social surroundings are not a social norm for many of the new accession police officers, education is probably one of the main reasons many of the individuals joined the police departments. Either due to not wanting to pursue higher education, and pleasing their

parents with having a career instead, or maybe not having the finances to pursue a higher education and instead decide to enter the law enforcement community to have the finances at a later time in their life and or career. This is not to say that these personnel are against education, but their mindset might not be ready to set their goals for their future or they simply do not see a reason for continuing education beyond high school as higher education at the moment, is not a requirement to be a police officer in the state of Texas and therefore is not one of the major items that are recommended.

Young adults may have the sudden shock of becoming responsible adults overnight causing them to handle personal responsibility over their life for the first time in their lives. College students typically find themselves at a crossroads experiencing independence for the first time, analyze human concerns, likely meeting many new friends who may validate or challenge their worldviews (Vanlaningham et al., 2019). With this new experience, many of these young adults decide to take a chance with a profession and are accepted into the law enforcement profession causing more new experiences in their young lives. New accession police officers who are at the minimum age of 21 are experiencing the realities of life for the first time and must now be trained in handling the problems of the citizens in their communities. While perspective is not to deter young police officers from the profession, nor is it to have a negative perspective on young police officers, this is the outlook on the risks police department executives are taking when hiring inexperienced in life police officers.

During this timeframe, the individuals who eventually become police officers and do not obtain their education have less to lose and less to care about making ethical decisions. For example, a police officers who does have an education, which has spent years attending a higher education institution and an average of \$30,000 on his degree would more than likely ensure that

they make wise and ethical decisions for several reasons to include better pay, higher rank, and not able to maintain themselves without the job they care about, along with being educated in their profession in order to move up in that specific education major. Be mindful that some of these new accession police officers that are just entering the occupation will eventually be leaders, mid-level supervisors in as little as five years and can be a Chief of Police in as little as 10 years. This aspect of leader behavior points to the need for leaders to be trusted and to be seen as educated people of integrity.

National organizations such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy Association, Fraternal Order of Police, the many other back the blue groups and national police leaders must take advantage of the current situation in which citizens across the nation are requesting to have police reform. Managing one's learning processes is a major intellectual challenge students face when entering college and beyond as it requires an understanding of yourself as a thinker (Cundiff & Flinchbaugh, 2018). National police leaders can coordinate and adapt certain requirements they themselves intended to include in police reformation, which could assist police departments across the nation. If citizens require police reformation, the understanding that these changes will require better training, education, equipment, yearly budget requirements which would result in increased taxes across the nation, better police academies, and well-suited police force. The reformation can include city leaders, police chiefs, union leaders and other city organizations which can compromise and meet with the objectives of creating a professionalized police force and not simply defunding police departments. State attorney generals have sought to fill the regulatory gap and claim standing under the common law doctrines to seek equitable relief in federal court against police departments with their states

for violations of constitutional rights and eventually becoming a part of the police reform (Mazzone & Rushin, 2020).

Moral and Ethical Understanding

Moral and ethical understanding are topics which are covered in literature involving law enforcement and police officers of which the majority is based on a negative outlook. Involving the recent police officer ethical incidents which include excessive use of force, some media outlets have portrayed or grouped all police officers as having conflict with moral and ethical standards. It is argued that the George Floyd death involved Officer Chauvin was the product of a highly militarized police academy that molds recruits into human robots programmed to enforce laws that target predominantly African-Americans (Radebe, 2021). This statement in itself is somehow jumping to conclusion that police officers can be programmed or brainwashed to conduct evil, which is not the case. Citizens of towns and cities who volunteer to become police officers do not have the intention of being evil towards their fellow citizens and while some police officers do conduct evil actions, their initial intentions when joining a police force were simply to protect and serve the citizens. The theory of working personality as applied to those who enforce the law, holds that recruits are trained to view the world in terms of binary opposition such as blacks and whites, us and them, good and evil, law-abiding citizens and criminals (Radebe, 2021). While the theory may be true in certain groups, or cults, this mentality is not being driven at state authorized police academies.

In certain situations, police officers are involved with ethical and immoral concerns when conducting their duties, society must come to terms that these police officers are a split image from society, and it would be impossible for them to be flawless every day on or off duty. Often times, society assumes that citizens understand the social norms and that everyone should abide

by those same norms on a daily. The same can be said of police officers who assume that citizens should know the different between right and wrong, therefore when a law is broken by a citizen, it would be easy to assume that the citizen who broke the law did so on purpose.

Learning through scenario training and live simulation in vocational education is generally regarded as an effective tool for developing professional knowledge (Sjoberg et al., 2019). What one person has experienced may not be the same experiences for other personnel or police officers to include life or death situations which police officers may be involved in.

With the explanation of different experiences, police officers tend to gain experience through different scenarios, training, mentorship, fellowship, and education. The same problem or challenge continues to arise involving minorities and the affects that police officers have on their lives through officer response, arrests and investigations are automatically called racist police officers. In policing, communities of color experience over-policing where police officers show certain aggression towards minor crimes, at the same time as they experience under-policing which is the continual failure to address violent crime (Swan, 2020). One resolution for communities in ensuring police officers conduct under-policing patrols which would still satisfy the communities is for citizens of communities, towns, and cities to stop breaking the law and to stop sinning with crime against each other and against police officers. These actions of repentance would assist police officers from responding to calls and would decrease the probability of error while conducting their duties and responsibilities of protecting and serving the communities who employs them. Most often, the quick and flashy solutions are not the ones that will lead to long-term sustainable change in the field, rather than worrying about solving the problem, communities and organizations should focus on the long-term solutions (Anico et al., 2019).

Morals and ethics must be a constant training evolution from the time police officers are at the police academy, along with follow-on training on a quarterly, yearly basis, which will develop them into understanding that the communities they protect have different variables and experiences than what the police officers may have had growing up. High-profile incidents of police misconduct have led to widespread calls for law enforcement reform, although procedural changes can quickly and dramatically alter officer behavior, suggesting a reform strategy sometimes forestalled by psychological and personality-driven accounts of police reform (Mummolo, 2018). This challenge of police reformation may involve immediate intervention from executive leaders and mid-level supervisor becoming involved with intrusive leadership to ensure police officers are made aware that they are being watched closely. The opinion and perspective of leadership will have an influence on police officers and while leadership may be offering their personal opinion, the communication may be relayed inappropriately or received incorrectly causing concerns with ethical or moral interpretation. The law of crime concentration and the variability of crime within communities provide an important foundation for place-based policing and prevention, but such an approach could cause concern of over-policing, especially when the area consists of minorities, which may be considered to be targeted (Weisburd, 2018). The solution would be to strategically have a plan in place ensuring morals, ethics, and any other concerns are taken into consideration to ensure that any type of bias is erased from the police officers and the citizen's viewpoint. There is no easy solution and there is no way to weed out every problematic police officer, except to train and ensure the culture is of excellence.

Attrition

Attrition challenges in police work has been known to exist especially in South Texas where low pay and corruption in law enforcement resides next to attrition. While attrition is the

main problem in most South Texas police departments, there are other variables which cause the attrition rate to increase. One author of time-and-task police studies concluded that it is unfortunate for the country that the police are imbued with this totally wrong perception of themselves as police officer perform more social work than they perform law enforcement (Quattlebaum & Tyler, 2020). Along with the challenge mentioned of conducting social work, there is low pay, corruption vulnerabilities due to the low pay, lack of training and education and a culture which is like no other occupation. A broader look beyond the national level offers new perspectives, which is not only true for the introduction of new kinds of sanctions and measures, but also for the structure and organization of criminal justice authorities (Aebi & Jehle, 2018). This new structure can bring a new perspective which can align the organization of criminal justice that will reflect into the 22nd century, satisfy the community, its citizens with a reformation that can also satisfy executive leaders in the profession and decrease attrition.

The thought and pressures of keeping employment in any occupation will cause stress on the employee, although when the occupation has the higher possibility of death or injury, one would expect for the pay of the occupation to be at a competitive level. Policymakers are increasingly focused on the need for the criminal justice reform while the United States incarceration rates are over 300% larger than the world average and rates of police employment are 35% less than the world average, meaning there is a lower emphasis on investment in policing compared to incarceration (Weisburst, 2019). If that many people are incarcerated in the United States, it may not be the fault of the police officers for enforcing the laws and rules of our nation and cities, but the policy makers who enact legislation of these laws which are being enforced by police officers.

The average annual pay for police officers across the nation is approximately \$35,991.00 which causes concerns and another stressor for police officers to not have the ability to make financial ends meet (Weisburst, 2019). This low form of pay helps criminal organizations and drug cartels take advantage of possible corruption opportunities in which the police officers can fall vulnerable to when attempting to make financial ends meet. Along with pay, leadership styles will affect the police officer's decision to stay with a police department or depart to another. There are a selective attrition effect where unethical leader behavior results in the retention of group members who are more comfortable with dishonesty and consequently more likely to engage in unethical behavior toward their group (Cialdini et al., 2021). This challenge will result in a snowball to avalanche effect, where the problem continues to become enabled and causes concerns for those employees who have their ethical compass intact.

The enablement of unsatisfactory actions and leadership will eventually result in forms of corruption, which can cause attrition to increase if a known problem is in existence. While internal law enforcement may not necessarily be effective in curbing corruption, a good institutional setting is the only necessary condition to reduce corruption (Capasso et al., 2019). The good institutional setting starts with proper leadership and ethical leadership behavior which will trickle down as the standard amongst the organization. To recruit and retain adequate police officers, police departments have implemented initiatives and offered incentives targeting specific types of recruits to include minority groups with relevant work experiences, such as prior military or law enforcement training as part of those efforts (Nevers, 2019). Being an executive leader for a police department is not only to ensure that police officers are protecting and serving the community, but to ensure that the best and brightest police officers are being recruited and retained to ensure that the city is not having concerns with attrition rates involving

the police department which would result with follow-on stressors for the citizens and the police officers.

Attrition rates can be affected through several variables, although another concern which causes police officers to resign is the illness known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Police officers are frequently exposed to potentially traumatic events (PTEs) throughout their career and the repeated exposure conveys a heightened risk for developing PTSD which causes stressors at home, poor work performance with little to no positive treatment (Smid et al., 2018). This challenge can be considered a chronic illness which is not overcome with medication yet can still be maintained through medications. In situations where police officers resign due to PTSD and other similar illnesses, education should not affect the determination if police officers will continue to stay employed or resign from their respective police department.

Christian Worldview Perspective

From a Christian world view perspective, police officers are certified through their respective states and once hired and placed in a position of authority with the intentions to protect and serve the citizens of their towns and cities. As Christians must understand that every person be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God, therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgement (*King James Bible, 1769/2017, Romans 13:1-2*). As citizens must understand the same requirement of them, regardless of how they may be treated, God has the ultimate authority who has placed these police officers into their positions.

Christians who are police officers should be made aware that they are peacemakers who are providing the services on behalf of our God by protecting those we serve and bringing the

wrath of God in order to keep the peace in challenging times. God is a God of justice, and he intends for his people to follow justice and that alone. The Rock, his work is perfect for all his ways are justice and a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Deuteronomy 32:4). God provides the respective nations with laws and has provided each of us with guidance in the Holy Bible to adhere to and follow. As in any occupation, evil will lurk and attempt to blind individuals from their true calling; police officers are intended to be present for the weak citizens and those in need. Give justice to the weak people and the fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute; rescue the weak and needy people and deliver them from the hand of the wicked (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Psalm 82: 3-4).

Synthesis of Research Findings

Overall, the need for this research is provided and the understanding of this research can help both the criminal justice system and individually help the police officers, their careers and the ability to ethically conduct their jobs correctly as a whole. Criminals will always exist, meaning police officers and their occupation will always exist. Just as crime has evolved over time since recorded in the 1800's, law enforcement and criminal justice system have had to evolve as well from the likes of the Al Capone prohibition era to the current trend we see with drug cartels ruining the minds of our youth. Law enforcement has directed their efforts in recent years toward terrorism, which is a much-needed solution, although as criminal justice professionals, we cannot turn our views from the problems we face on a daily, with the normal criminals in our current towns and cities. What is certain, is that police officers are requested to battle the threats to the cities' peace in an environment which is complex and the outcomes of efforts to find peace are uncertain (Otto & Velthuizen, 2019). The issue just mentioned is one of

the challenges the police officers and police departments around the world face on a daily, since many of the communities require police officers to protect them, while many of these individuals lack the training and education needed to protect the communities and the leaders require in order to lead these individuals. The first approach to fix is the top-down approach and that would be for executive leaders to become educated not only in their specialty, but scholarly as well, in order to help balance out their experience and education levels. Secondly, the executive leadership must conduct qualitative research in the defense of their subordinates and themselves, so an assessment can be conducted on the results of the outcome of their research. Scholar-practitioners learn of different research designs throughout their academic careers, it is imperative for them to be knowledgeable and articulate in their particular field of work. The most used research designs are qualitative and quantitative, both of which are essential for particular research. Depending on the particular subject of study, either quantitative or qualitative can ascribe the specifics the researcher is attempting to present. This type of research can be advantageous for the researcher trying to determine behavior or ascertain characteristics of a culture or group such as the culture of police officers. By attacking the problem, in circumstances and research that is beginning a new foundation and being well documented, although it has never been attempted before which can attribute the solution that with education and training the personnel in this occupation can evolve the police departments across the nations and can now evolve this particular group of personnel who have never been afforded that opportunity. It is easily defined that the weakness behind this research is this specific topic of research is the initial research in trying to conform police officers in becoming better trained and educated resulting with a decreased unethical decision-making. There is a foundation in this specific research which has been conducted on the efficacy of training provided by the police

academies and if education would better assist police officers. The purpose with adding to this foundation can easily contribute to more scholarly researchers adding to the theory that education can assist police officers in properly conducting their jobs correctly and redirecting them in ensuring they make ethical decisions. Increasing education and training for police officers, can lower criminal wrongdoings, assist local government officials in elevating community lifestyles, and in the long run will assist both local, state, and federal government agencies in better selection process if the police officers decide to depart their local police departments and join these criminal justice agencies since these self-sustaining police officers will require less training and education. Another major problem while conducting this study is the research inconsistencies involving the different locations which are reported by local executive leaders who have no affiliation with the respective police departments. Many city or town leaders focus on the problem that their local police departments are facing and conduct a study or publish an article directed to help other police departments in that geographical location only. Amongst the completion of the research review, this specific research topic can enable a complete study on the problem correction strategy for police officers.

Critique of Previous Research

Minimal research is available involving this specific proposed research, although there has been the ability to lay a foundation into future study being developed regarding how proper training and education can assist police officers from entering criminal paths through unethical decisions. The Moral Development and Transactional Leadership Theories have been able to assist the proposed research in retrospect of their consistency with other criminally involved research. The final outcome to this research is how the criminal justice system can begin to involve itself with properly training individuals, ensuring ethical decision-making, help in other

variables such as identify attrition challenges, which is a requirement for executive leadership in the occupation to ensure police officers are properly conducting their duties and responsibilities. What is the end goal once police officers are trained, educated, and attrition goals are held to a minimum? With the proposed research mentioned the criminal justice system can finally come to a conclusion of what training can be expected for all of the police officers in order to prevent criminal activity, unethical decisions and help reduce attrition. Based on being the initial research involving training, education for police officers, how else will the criminal justice profession become advanced in determining what different options will be utilized for the future in defeating or decreasing attrition? Continuing and completing this research can form a foundation and be the bedrock for future criminal justice research involving police officers' ethics and attrition. There has never been research conducted on the validity or reasons of police officer attrition rates in South Texas. Plenty of research has been conducted on police corruption, minimal standards of law enforcement training and can now synthesize the three and go into detail to tackle the problem with this specific population and culture.

Summary

It is known that police officers are able to obtain the minimum standards through their initial training of the police academy which awards them a state certification upon successful completion. It is also known that police officers are able to obtain follow-on training known as on the job training through their initial employments time via a Field Training Officer while on a probationary status. The last known item of this proposed research is that police officers who obtain a baccalaureate degree either before their law enforcement training at the police academy or after they are employed with a police department will be required to take approximately 120 credit hours of education, which may take three to four years prior to being awarded a

baccalaureate degree in the field of their choice. What is not known in this proposed research study is if education and training decrease unethical decision-making or if education and training professionalizes the police force. As mentioned before, the less professional of a police department causes a higher attrition rate of employment in police officers in South Texas which causes manpower gaps, high stress environment, corruption in police officers and few police officers who are educated with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree. Also unknown is if educated police officers have the ability to be more stable which would keep them employed in one police department and retainment of police officers would increase, causing attrition to decrease.

This proposed research and theories will help refine and extend the law enforcement community as a whole for the scholarly practitioners in the criminal justice field to include shortening gaps for the topic which is being held at a standstill due to limited research studies on the efficacy of education and training on police officer's conduct and professionalism. Initial and continual training is key in ensuring police officers properly conduct their duties and responsibilities with ethical and moral standards and eluding individuals from starting an illicit path into the abnormal life as an honorable police officer in society. With this training and education, the key can now be discovered in ensuring police officers can return to the social norms of conducting their jobs without the tarnished reputation they currently hold. With time, research, and theories, this research can lay the foundation for the study and elucidate of why police officers and other criminal justice professionals follow the wrong criminal path of why they are hired in the first place. The context in this chapter will provide a background and understanding for the different proposed methods of data collection and analysis which will be depicted in chapter three.

Based on the information provided there were many issues and external variables besides the efficacy of education and training on police officer's conduct and professionalism. Some of the key variables which have influenced attrition in a negative aspect includes the training provided at police academies may meet the minimal standards for the state of Texas, although may not emphasize the importance of morals and ethical values which are required in police departments. Another variable is the follow-on training provided post police academy from Field Training Officers and other leaders in the chain of command. Lastly, the lack of education in South Texas police departments to include Port Isabel, Texas has also been a concern causing many employees to depart smaller police departments for one in larger cities with better pay causing a loss on the return of investment for police departments to train and educate these police officers. These conclusions led to the proposed study in determining if the efficacy of education and training can increase police officer's conduct and professionalism with less ethical and moral complaints from the community and its citizens. The problem of ethical decision-making by police officers has both theoretical and practical value which can advance the theories which will be utilized and help police departments by taking care of the challenges they face in pinpointing the practical applications of overcoming complaints from the community.

CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED METHODS

Overview

The purpose of the research is to determine the efficacy of education and training on police misconduct at Port Isabel, Texas Police Department. The applied study will assist other police departments starting in South Texas and determine if educated police officers will help decrease police misconduct. The results could assist in determining other variables which plague police departments to include attrition, resulting in a more professionalized police force. Recent activities regarding police misconduct have caused leaders at the local government level to advocate for enhanced police training to boost the professionalism of police officers in their jurisdictions and across the nation. The media frenzy has spotlighted recent police officer-involved incidents and the increase of officer-involved shootings, resulting in community uprisings and riots across the nation in hopes of police reform. In addition, service-learning opportunities have risen across the country to provide students with valuable professional experience beyond training and practical skills to include leadership, mentorship, behavior regulations, and the importance of community-policing relationships (Bonnan-White & Lanaras, 2019).

Over the last couple of years, many police officers have retired, resulting in a shortfall of manning and experienced officers in police departments. The shortfall has increased pressure on recruitment and the police academies to produce patrol officers with a high percentage rate of graduates, when some of these graduates may not always meet the minimal standards. There is no verifiable data that illustrates whether these graduates are highly effective after graduation or if the police academies are lowering the standards to produce the number of personnel required to be staffed, yet education is considered a way to fill the gap in professionalism. Education

supports the idea that police officers are willing to meet and exceed minimum state certification and requirements.

Understanding that training for any occupation is never perfect and can only strive to meet and exceed the minimum standards, police academies are similar to other occupations. The difference in work characteristics between police officers and other occupations is that a police officer can conduct two actions that will never satisfy the customer. These two actions consist of having the ability to restrain somebody by placing them under arrest and taking away their right of movement. The second action consists of using deadly force to cancel a threat or affect an arrest. These two actions must always be conducted flawlessly and without hesitation or error. If an error exists in these two actions could then be determined as unjustifiable actions, resulting in the arrest of a police officer, loss of their job and state certification, and a possible prison sentence.

Design

The intent is to utilize a specific research design of general qualitative inquiry, although will lean on the phenomenological design to understand the experience the citizens of Port Isabel towards the police officers at their current employment and their ability to properly conduct their duties and responsibilities based on the training received at the police academy. The research will utilize the general inquiry and phenomenological research designs approach in order to determine if a police officer employed at a South Texas police department can conduct their duties with the training, they have received at the state-certified police academy. Phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2008). The author is trying to determine if the experience of the police officers which occurred while they

obtained their training/job skills and the hardships they endured upon arriving at their place of employment, which would best be explained by utilizing phenomenological research design. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy and a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 2008). The author further plans to integrate Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory. Briefly stating Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory states that people can distinguish right from wrong, determine the ethically correct course of action in complex circumstances, and theorize individuals as individuals pass through several stages to develop their ability to reason morally (Mertens, 2010). The reasoning behind the use of this theory is due to several ethical issues occurring in South Texas police departments in both junior and senior experienced police officers. This theory has an impact on why police officers involve themselves with unethical issues and problems.

Research Questions

Central Question: Does the public think that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job?

Sub-question 1: Does the public feel that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification?

Sub-question 2: What types of training / education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel?

Setting

The setting of the anonymous questionnaire will take place via an online website known as surveymonkey.com. The questionnaire will target citizens of Port Isabel, Texas or people

who are employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas during the years of 2017-2022. The anonymous questionnaire can be completed conveniently from anywhere their technology devices can obtain the world wide web. The researcher's location will be on board the largest overseas naval installation known as Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, approximately 45 minutes from Tokyo, Japan.

Participants

Target Population

The target population that has been studied are 12 anonymous citizens of Port Isabel, Texas or people who were employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, although could not have been employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department. The anonymous participants were also above the age of 18 and met the criteria during the years of 2017 through 2022.

Sampling Method

The sampling method utilized was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling means the study participants were chosen because they were readily available (Mertens, 2010). The reasoning behind utilizing the convenience sampling method is that the author advertised with the target audience via the Port Isabel-South Padre Island Press/Parade newspaper, which is available online and hard copy. The research will have determined if education and training can have an effect on decreasing police misconduct. The location of the South Texas police department will be in Port Isabel, Texas, and the participants of the questionnaire will be citizens of Port Isabel, Texas or people who are employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas during the years of 2017-2022. All participants in the proposed study will be allowed to participate on a volunteer and anonymous basis only.

Sample Size

The sample size for the proposed generic qualitative inquiry is 12 anonymous citizens of Port Isabel, Texas or people who are employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, although cannot be employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department. The anonymous participants must also be above the age of 18 and have met the criteria during the years of 2017 through 2022. The researcher needs to plan carefully to ensure that he maximizes the time and money available to him to do the best study within the constraints of the context (Mertens, 2010). The reasoning behind the sample size is to ensure the completion of the study with enough data. The rule of thumb for qualitative study research is a minimum of six participants, and the author wishes to double the size in case of volunteers not being able to complete the study after the convening dates due to operational or personal commitment, or any other problems that might arise. If all twelve anonymous participants can complete the questionnaire, the author will utilize all the data collected from all twelve participants. Ethics is not something that happens at the sampling stage; it needs to guide the entire planning process, conducting, and using research (Mertens, 2010). During the display of the research results, the author will never obtain names or any personal information of participants in his research to protect the anonymous participants.

Sampling Procedures/Recruitment

The recruitment process will involve the utilization of chain sampling, also known as snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is used to help the researcher find out who has the critical information for the study (Mertens, 2010). The need for this specific process is needed to determine the flyer which will be advertised on the Port Isabel-South Padre Press/Parade newspaper. Participants for the questionnaire will be recruited via an announcement/recruitment flyer placed in the online and printed versions of the Port Isabel-South Padre Press/Parade, the

only local media outlet in Port Isabel, Texas. The print versions are distributed on Wednesdays of each week, averaging a weekly sell of 1,000 newspapers a week; the online version is updated on Fridays with an average monthly visit on the website of 3,000. The participants will need to meet the criteria of being 18 years of age or older, must have resided or been employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022 and must not have been employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department between 2017-2022. Recruitment flyer will have survey link in order to remain anonymous, although the researcher's email will be provided for participants who may have questions. The requirement to answer screening questions after the consent page for those participants who are interested in completing the survey will be provided. The first questions will be screening questions and if the individuals do not meet the screening criteria, they will be forwarded to a letter informing them that they do not qualify for the study, thanking them for their interest. Those individuals that do not qualify will not be allowed to take the survey. Maximum number of participants will be 12 participants for the qualitative study. There is no way to predict or forecast the number of surveys which will be conducted. Since the research will be a qualitative study, the data collection will continue to the point of redundancy with maximum number of 12 participants.

The Researcher's Role

The proposed study would not involve the researcher in any affiliation to the police officers in the proposed study. One major limitation will be to have access to the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas since the researcher is in the military and will be stationed in Yokosuka, Japan. All research will need to be conducted online via a questionnaire since returning to Port Isabel, Texas would take time away from work and would not be easy access for the researcher due to travel, costs, and leave requirements due to military commitments.

Expected Findings

The expected findings on the research will be that those police officers will need further training at their initial place of employment to further decrease the concerns of ethical decision making. It is also expected that advanced education and training will assist the police officers in ensuring they make sound decisions involving ethical concerns. Additionally, the expected findings will assist police departments with analytical data in educating executive leadership in topics such as retaining police officers and decreasing attrition rates while professionalizing the force. The research will utilize the single control group design which will be adequate to rule out alternative explanations of results (Bordens, 2008). Overall, the research will provide insight to the understanding how much time, resources, and funding must be contributed to the research for it to be considered successful. Research information has not been provided on this specific topic, contributing to the topic's past research comparison. The research will have a narrow geographic location of Port Isabel, Texas which would be a good foundation for future research planning on this specific topic at other geographical locations across the United States.

Procedures

According to federal regulations, "Confidentiality pertains to the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (Mertens, 2010). All steps to be utilized in the research is to cover all ethical concerns, including confidentiality, present the research plan to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) seeking permission and approval to confirm the participants are not considered a vulnerable population and be granted permission to initiate the study. In the United States, any college, university, or research institution will have an internal review board

that scrutinizes all proposals for conducting human research under the institution's auspices (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The author highly opinionates that continual communication is the key to preventing any misunderstanding throughout the proposed study. Part of the communication the author is mentioning is that he will also advise participants and the authorizing agencies of the purpose behind the research and how this will help individuals in similar circumstances in the future of their places of employment. As long as the researcher follows what was reported by the Belmont Report, which identified three fundamental ethical principles that researchers must observe as they design and execute their studies as follows:

1. respect for persons
2. beneficence
3. justice

Some of the other ethical concerns raised in the reading this context of Liberty University's IRB process which the author would prevent is to advise all involved parties that once the research is completed, the author will keep all analyzed data for three years and will cancel all data appropriately to prevent unauthorized usage. The researcher will never collect names or any personal information of participants in his proposed study, which all participants will remain anonymous.

Potential participants will answer screening questions after the consent page for those participants who are interested in completing the survey. The first questions will be screening questions and if the individuals do not meet the screening criteria, they will be forwarded to a letter informing them that they do not qualify for the study, thanking them for their interest. Those individuals that do not qualify will not be allowed to take the survey. All procedural materials to include IRB permission, school permission, consent forms, and any other pertinent

information will be completed before initiating the proposed questionnaire.

Data Collection and Analysis

Surveys

The survey and the foundation for the research will involve a study exploring if the public thinks that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job. Citizens of the community will be able to provide information on the trust of the police department and police officers who are currently employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department. The survey will bring increased awareness of what the public feels would be the minimum levels of education and training needed for criminal justice personnel to be effective at their occupation. Benefits to society include data obtained will help determine education increasing awareness, along with training and educational understanding in performing their duties with sound ethical and moral decisions, creating a more professionalized workforce. Educated police officers may make more ethically sound decisions due to a higher education and knowledge which will professionalize the occupation, making criminal justice personnel more effective in the communities they protect and serve. The approach will be to conduct a survey of the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022, people who are employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022 and who were not employees of the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department between 2017-2022. The research is needed to determine if citizens believe a police officer at the same police department in South Texas who has a higher education level could decrease the number of complaints they receive from the community that they currently protect. Crime surveys and official data on crime and criminal justice are essential both for criminology and criminal policy, and the number of offenses, prosecutions, convictions, complaints received is statistics and the

trends shown by these indicators provide valuable information for policymakers to assess and improve the existing criminal justice system (Aebi & Jehle, 2018). The survey will help solidify the research's goal and support the study's importance by obtaining data that will further expand the current problem of other variables to include attrition in South Texas police departments.

As data analysis in a qualitative study is an ongoing process, even upon completion of a research study, the author will be on a continual mission to analyze the data gathered upon completing this proposed study. Analysis in qualitative studies designed within the general inquiry or phenomenological traditions are recursive; findings are generated and systematically built as successive pieces of data are gathered (Mertens, 2010). The author will utilize a six-step approach in order to complete this section of the research. Presentation for this section in a series of steps so that a reader can see how one step leads to another involving the data analysis procedures (Creswell, 2008).

Step one will be to organize and prepare the data for analysis (Creswell, 2008). This step will assist the researcher in organizing field notes, scanning specific material utilized in the data collection to help the proposed study be organized from the beginning to end. Step two will be to read through all the data (Creswell, 2008). This step will assist in reading over all the data collected and gathering an overall understanding of what has been collected. Step three involves the beginning of detailed analysis with a coding process; coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Creswell, 2008). Breaking the data into sections will help the researcher determine what has been collected and what areas he/she may want to further research to have an overall complete study. Step four involves using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people and categories or themes for analysis (Creswell, 2008). This step will assist the proposed study in

helping determine some significant findings in the proposed study through the data collection. Upon completion of step four, the researcher would identify a chronological setting or themes to help determine the meaning of the findings. Step five will advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative (Creswell, 2008). Finally, step six is the final step involving interpreting or meaning the data (Creswell, 2008). This step helps the researcher determine the purpose behind conducting this specific type of research on this topic and how the proposed study helped gap the information needed in this topic. The first sub-question for this research explores if the public feel that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification, which would include if educated police officers will have fewer community complaints. The approach will be a structured anonymous survey with citizens and people who are employed in Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022 to determine if educated police officers bring a professionalized structure in police departments that reduce unethical decisions and receive fewer complaints from the community. The research will also explore what types of training / education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel to determine what may result with less ethical concerns and challenges.

Ethical Considerations

The positive for the research and the proposed questionnaire is that the anonymous involvement of citizens of Port Isabel, Texas or people who are employed within the city limits of Port Isabel, Texas is not considered a vulnerable population. Below are future proactive procedures the author would conduct to prevent any civil liability or civil lawsuits against the researcher and possible incidents which might cause harm to the proposed study and the participants with the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

The most significant concern for the research would be the privacy and confidentiality issues, which is not an ethical concern for the researcher due to the anonymous questionnaire. However, plenty of disturbing incidents have occurred in the past to include the theft of computers and other hardware, which certain companies might have been using to meet the criteria of the privacy act of 1973, yet due to malicious acts, specific privacy, and confidentiality issues were raised. Most people do not believe that problems like this can occur to them, although even as we try not to be a target, we are all vulnerable to theft and identity problems, which are likely not to occur upon the completion of the research. Research teams are ethically bound to protect the confidentiality of participants' responses; and can be done with appropriate hardware and software by keeping data stored on portable storage devices or memory sticks that are encrypted and password protected (Bordens, 2008). The researcher can prevent these acts by following specific ethical guidelines and covering themselves of civil liability by implementing an informed consent form, which will be on the first page of the questionnaire. One common practice and one required for certain kinds of research at most research institutions) is to present an informed consent form that describes the nature of the research project and the nature of one's participation in it (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

The author has covered many topics which raise concerns involving ethical issues in the research. The following are three simple rules which all researchers should follow:

1. Communicate your confidentiality standards to all those who will have access to the data in any of its forms
2. Keep an audit trail of those who access the records, including names, dates and times of access, and purpose (if others have access to the data);

3. Limit your collection of personal identifiers to those that are germane to the study; for example, if a race is not pertinent to your study, do not ask the participants to disclose their race; reporting such data could indirectly identify participants (Bordens & Abbott, 2008).

As the researcher, we should treat our human subjects as the key priority to our proposed study; without them, no proposed study would be conducted.

Summary

The proposed study is a much-needed study for individuals with law enforcement backgrounds to understand how this will assist the criminal justice system. The data from the interviews of 12 anonymous Port Isabel citizens or people employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas will bring several different perspectives of information to the topic. The information will have direct input on the outcome of the proposed study in bridging the educational gap to determine if training, education, or prior employment skills can keep the current police academy training curriculum where it is currently evaluated. The research will propose if more education is required for the police officer to properly conduct their duties at their initial duty assignment with ethical decision-making and keep them employed for years to follow. The research is exactly one month to determine how much of a factor education and training programs can reduce the ethical issues arising among police officers and determine if education will assist Port Isabel, Texas Police Department, along with assisting in other variables in follow-on research to include decreasing attrition rates. The outcome of the research will be shared with the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department executive leadership and other criminal justice system personnel to help alleviate some of the problems which continue to occur involving police misconduct, specific to ethical issues and attrition concerns. This research will not be a confirmed outcome on its own and follow-on proposed studies will need to be conducted of the

exact nature with the same variables to determine the effects of the police academy and education.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to misconduct. This qualitative research aimed to explore the views and attitudes of citizens protected by police officers and the effects of education and training on organizational liability related to misconduct. Port Isabel, Texas Police Department is a small department in a town with a population of 5,094 citizens with less than 50 police officers; it did not have its own hosted police academy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The police academies in the research location have been certified by the state of Texas and were taught at local universities by active and retired police officers.

The motivation for the study was two-fold and involved the continual staffing gaps in police departments, along with the corruption which continued to exist in the police departments across South Texas. Research showed that positive police-community relationships are crucial for safer communities, as citizens are likely to engage as witnesses and as partners in crime reduction if they genuinely believed in the legitimacy of the police officers (Kerrison et al., 2019). The research was directed toward citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, or people employed in the city of Port Isabel during 2017-2022. Police officers were excluded from the research to prevent any personal bias from being included in the data provided from the research.

Results

The online survey received a total of 16 visits. The results will be presented in a systematic order by organizing the research questions and allowing the structure of analysis to parallel the previous chapters. Some of the common themes identified were interactions with police officers, negative interactions with police officers, satisfied services provided by the

police officers, and any negative interactions discovered through other means besides self-interactions with police officers. Based on the responses to questions in Part 1 of the survey, 3 participants were disqualified from continuing the research study: one individual was not 18 years of age, two individuals did not reside, nor were they employed in Port Isabel, Texas, between 2017-2022, and one other participant did not complete part three of the survey and was excluded. The research used all the remaining data collected from the other 12 participants. The number of completed responses involving all three parts, included questions 10-20, which was Part III of the online survey, have been provided in Table 1. The sample size for this study was 12 anonymous participants, all through 12 online surveys, which met the maximum number of participants authorized as per the Institutionalized Review Board.

Table 1. Number of Responses to Questions in Part III of the Survey	
Number of responses	
Question Number	Completed Responses
10	12
11	12
12	12
13	12
14	12
15	12
16	12
17	12
18	12
19	12

20	12
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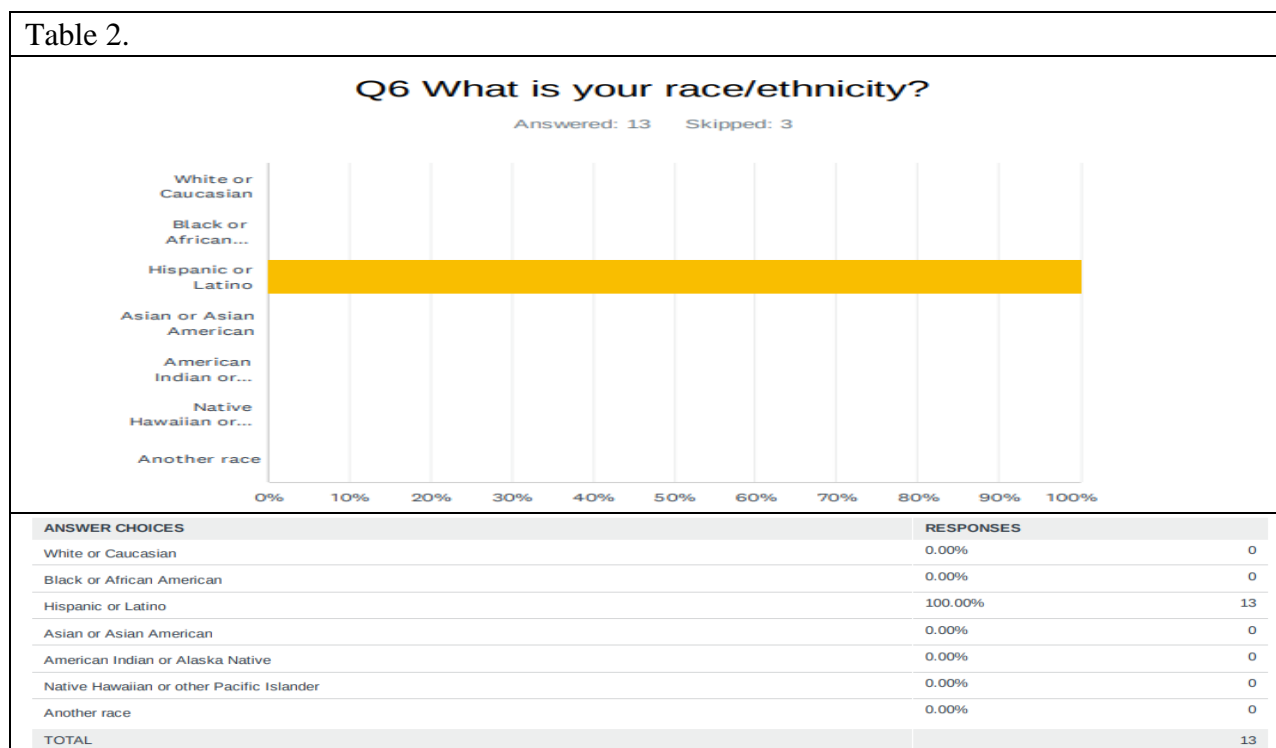
Demographics

Part II of the survey was intended to collect demographic information about each anonymous participant, including ethnicity, race, gender, education, and age. Such demographic questions were included to understand the data collected from the Hispanic majority population of Port Isabel, Texas, in this research.

Ethnicity and Race

All 13 participants for the anonymous survey were of Hispanic ethnicity, considered white in race. While Hispanics are considered minorities in the United States, they were much of the population in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, which is considered a border town located approximately 22 miles from the Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Nuevo Leon, Mexico border. Table 2 provides the race/ethnicity of each of the participants as per their responses.

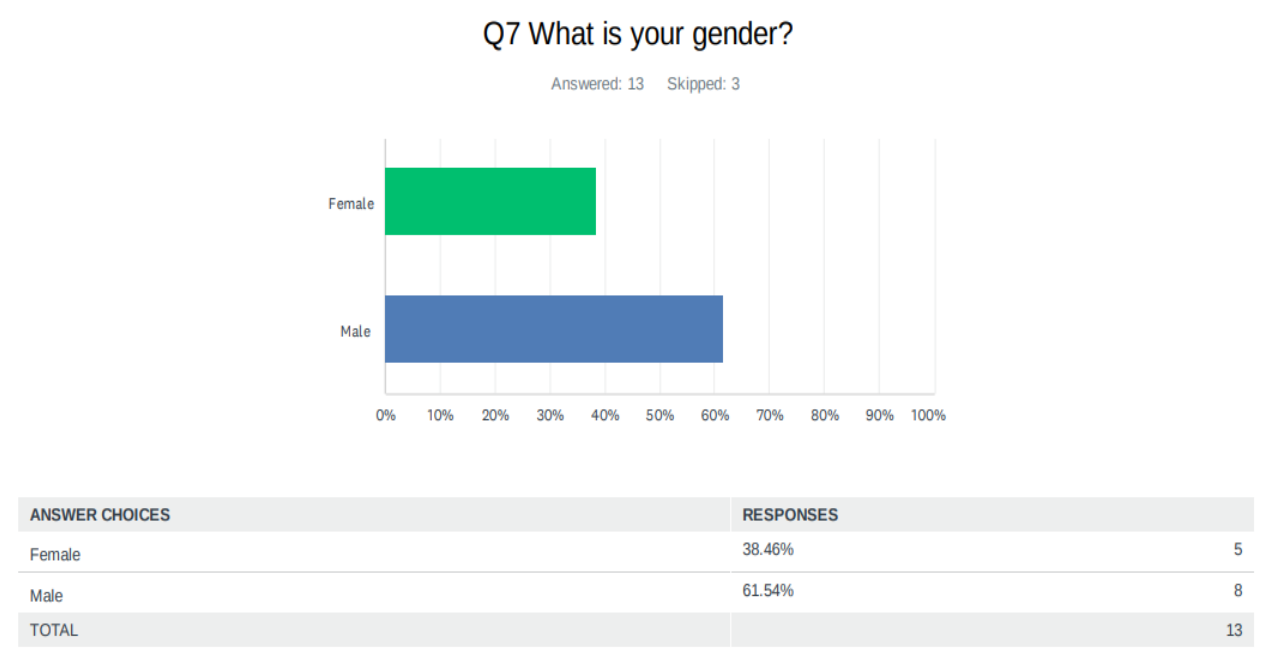
Table 2.



Gender

Table 3 represented the overall respondents by gender. Of the participants in the online survey, all 13 participants provided their gender. Eight participants are male, with five being female in gender, totaling 13 participants.

Table 3.



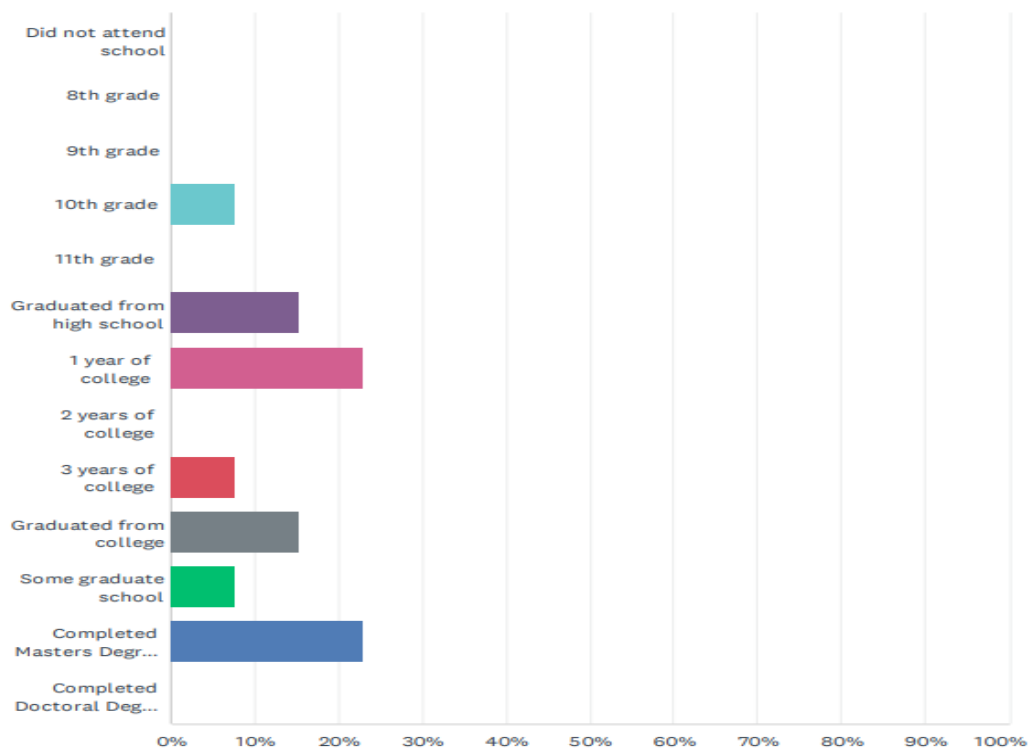
Education Level

Table 4 shows the overall number of participants by education. There was a mix of educational levels from the participants, and of the 13 participants, all provided information on their educational backgrounds. One participant had a 10th grade high school education level, and two had a high school diploma or equivalent. Two of the participants had an undergraduate degree, and four of the participants had some educational level of undergraduate education. Three participants had a master's degree or equivalent level of education, and one participant had some graduate level of graduate education.

Table 4.

Q8 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 3

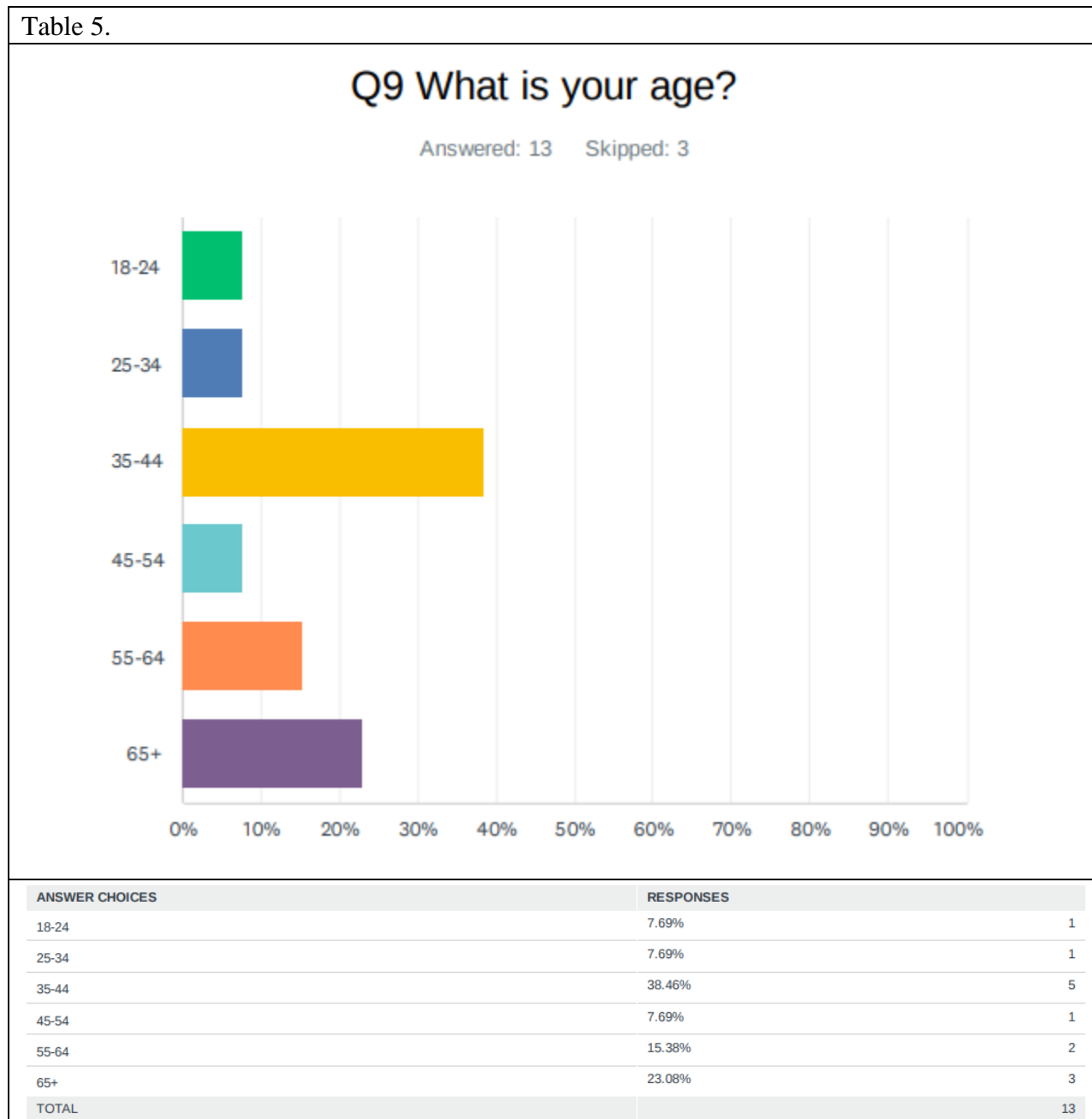


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Did not attend school	0.00% 0
8th grade	0.00% 0
9th grade	0.00% 0
10th grade	7.69% 1
11th grade	0.00% 0
Graduated from high school	15.38% 2
1 year of college	23.08% 3
2 years of college	0.00% 0
3 years of college	7.69% 1
Graduated from college	15.38% 2
Some graduate school	7.69% 1
Completed Masters Degree or equivalent	23.08% 3
Completed Doctoral Degree or equivalent	0.00% 0
TOTAL	13

Age

Per the research study limitations, participants were limited to individuals who were 18 years of age or older. Table 5 represented the information of those who responded to the online survey; all thirteen participants provided their ages which ranged in each of the six possible age categories. The largest category of participants was from 35-44 years of age.

Table 5.



Theme Development

The theme development was constructed as per the research questions which needed to be answered through a phenomenological approach. The understanding to explain and stimulate the thematic findings in a qualitative approach were through the use of Moustakas' thematic approach known as transcendental phenomenological research. Transcendental phenomenology works well for as the question develops as to what method is best suited to the research problem and to the researcher as this methodology provides logical, systemic, and coherent design elements that leads to an essential description of the experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). The ripple effect mentioned in the transcendental phenomenology research provides the similar effect to the Transactional Leadership Theory where the investment is not only made in their mentees, but also the multiplying investment their mentees will make in other people's lives close to a pyramid actions or effects.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 stated, "Does the public think that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job?" In the survey instrument, Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were designed to collect data concerning this research question:

10. Have you ever had any interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas, where you requested their service? Please explain your response.
11. Were you satisfied with the service during the interaction you had with the police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.
12. Based on your opinion, have you ever had any negative interactions with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.

13. Based on your opinion, was there any type of police misconduct involved during your negative interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.

14. Based on your opinion, have you ever heard of police misconduct from the Port Isabel Police Department in which you were not involved? Please explain your response.

The data collected from Question 10 represented in Table 6 was to determine if the participants had made contact or any official interactions with Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The first theme included eight participants who had interactions with Port Isabel, Texas police officers, one of whom had multiple interactions with police officers due to requests for service. In all the interactions with Port Isabel, Texas, police officers, the participants requested the assistance of the police officers to report a crime or for their own or their family's safety. The second theme stated they did not have interactions with the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers.

Table 6. Theme Identified: Survey Question 10 Have you ever had any interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas, where you requested their service? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	8
No	4

The data collected from Question 11 was to identify if the participants who interacted with the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers were satisfied with the services received from the police officers. The first theme identified as satisfied participants. A total of 50% of the participants were satisfied with the services received during the interaction. The second theme included three participants who were dissatisfied with the services received. The participant's responses included the services provided during the initial call for service and the follow-on

services required, including administrative and closure of police reports. The first theme for Question 11 involved the satisfied participants, all satisfied participants were pleased with the overall services and initial response of the services provided by the police officers.

In both groups, it was differentiated that all participants were 100% satisfied with the initial response provided by Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The second group of participants who were dissatisfied with the police officers were 100% dissatisfied with secondary or follow-on services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The follow-on services involved the police reports being completed incorrectly, placing the victims at risk, and biases of the police department and the police chief. Two different respondents of the second theme were displeased and believed that the investigations conducted were brief and could have been more thorough. The online survey determined that three of the 12 participants were not satisfied with the services provided during their request for assistance from the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers.

Table 7. Theme Identified: Survey Question 11 Were you satisfied with the service during the interaction you had with the police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	6
No	3
No Response	3

The next question was sought to identify if any negative interactions were noticed besides their dissatisfaction. Question 12 resulted with three themes of the participant's which had negative interactions with Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The first theme involved negative interactions with the Port Isabel, Texas police officers, which was resulted with three

participants. Two separate participants mentioned that the theme of negative interactions with the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers were from being overweight and not tactful with the community in their responses. The other participant from the dissatisfied theme referred to the hiring process and bias intentions from city officials. Participant 10 (response recorded, September 06, 2022) gave the example that the Port Isabel, Texas executives only hire rookie police officers straight from self-sponsored police academies in order for the police chief and city commissioners to control them for bias intentions. The second theme involved eight participants who had never had negative interactions with the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The last theme of one participant did not provide a response to Question 12.

Table 8. Theme Identified: Survey Question 12 Based on your opinion, have you ever had any negative interactions with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	3
No	8
No Response	1

Responses to Question 13 included 12 participants' responses, which involved three themes to identify if any police misconduct had been noticed. The first of several themes resulted with one person identifying that there was police misconduct during their request for service. The sole response in the police misconduct included a biased approach from the police officers on several occasions and for several reasons. Participant 10 (responses recorded, September 06, 2022) stated there was police misconduct based on police officers not following the law and being under the control of the chief of police or city council, which told them what to do. Participant 10 continued by stating that police officers harassed and arrested people without

warrants, stopped citizens during traffic stops and lied to them about the reason for the traffic stop, which the chief of police and city council members refused to do anything about it. Table 9. included the remaining responses as a theme with no police misconduct being identified from 10 participants during their interaction with Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The last theme was identified as one participant who did not provide a response to Question 13.

Table 9. Theme Identified: Survey Question 13 Based on your opinion, was there any type of police misconduct involved during your negative interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	1
No	10
No Response	1

The last survey question complimenting Research Question 1 involved if there had been any police misconduct stated through other means to the participants of the online survey. As mentioned in Table 10., all participants responded to Question 14. The first theme had an overwhelming response of 10 participants never hearing from other personnel of police misconduct involving the Port Isabel, Texas police officers. The second theme included two different respondents who stated they had heard of two police misconduct incidents from the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers.

In comparison, one participant did not specifically respond with a particular incident, only stating that they always heard of police misconduct from Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. Participant 11 (responses recorded, September 08, 2022) stated, “Yes, I have heard of police misconduct where there were articles in the Port Isabel Press of police officers involved with

sexual harassment and demotion to police leadership in recent years, approximately three years ago.”

Upon further research, the incident to which Participant 11 referred involved three sexual harassment incidents, falsifying documents, and failure to follow proper procedures involving a Port Isabel, Texas police sergeant, which resulted in a demotion in June 2018 as per the Port Isabel-South Padre Island Press/Parade. There was an additional similar incident in May 2018 of sexual harassment filed against the Port Isabel, Texas chief of police, by his assistant, which did not have a final adjudication as per the Port Isabel-South Padre Island Press/Parade. According to the responses provided by the participants, there was known documented incidents that concluded with police misconduct by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers during the years 2017-2022.

Table 10. Theme Identified: Survey Question 14 Based on your opinion, have you ever heard of police misconduct from the Port Isabel Police Department where you were not involved? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	2
No	10

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 stated, “Does the public feel that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification?” In the survey instrument, Questions 15, 16, and 17 were designed to collect data concerning this research question:

15. Based on your opinion, do you trust the police officers to keep Port Isabel, Texas safe? Please explain your response.

16. Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job? Please explain your response.

17. Based on your opinion, do you feel comfortable with the services provided by the Port Isabel Police Department with the experience, training, and education of the Port Isabel, Texas police officers? Please explain your response.

The first three questions identified if police officers from Port Isabel, Texas, are trusted community servants. Analysis of the responses resulted with three themes to Question 15 referred to in Table 11. With 12 responses, most participants overwhelmingly stated and agree on the theme that they trust the police officers while requesting assistance for service from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. Three participants further stated on the theme that while they trust the police officers, many required additional education and training, and their professionalism did not compare to more significant departments or cities with sponsoring police academies. Participant 1 (responses recorded, September 03, 2022) stated, "I do trust the police officers to keep Port Isabel, Texas safe. But I do believe they lack the training and strong leadership other cities have." Participant 11 (responses recorded, September 08, 2022) stated, "on day to day operations, I do trust them, although I do not believe they have the professional capacity of major city police officers." There was some concern from some citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, involving the capacity, education, training, and professionalism which is keen with the trust of the Port Isabel, Texas police officers.

Table 11. Theme Identified: Survey Question 15 Based on your opinion, do you trust the police officers to keep Port Isabel, Texas safe? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Port Isabel, Texas, police officers are trusted	8

Port Isabel, Texas, police officers are not trusted	1
Port Isabel, Texas, police officers are trusted but lack education or training	3

The second question for Research Question 2 identified resulted with two themes due to Question 16 of the survey instrument involving the opinion of the Port Isabel, Texas citizen's belief if Port Isabel, Texas police officers should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified as a peace officer in the state of Texas. Analysis of the responses to Question 16 revealed in the first theme that 10 participants stated that some higher education is needed before being certified as a peace officer in the state of Texas. Officers who have been on the force for a few years describe how their training was stories from more experienced police officers that were retold and never questioned; instead, they are considered and reproduced as the truth (Wieslander, 2019). Participant 7 (responses recorded, September 05, 2022) stated, "Yes, I believe that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some higher education prior to being certified to do the job." This response was echoed by nine other participants, which stated that police officers should be expected to be educated at a higher level, with the majority recommended an associate degree or an equivalent of two years of higher education.

Table 12. Theme Identified: Survey Question 16 Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	10

No	2
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The last survey question for Research Question 2 involved how comfortable the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas felt with the services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department based on the experience, training, and education of the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. Table 13. provides mixed responses from the participants resulting with four themes. The first theme included having only three participants which felt comfortable with the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers provide. The second theme had one participant that stated they were uncomfortable with the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers provided. Participants 1, 5, 11, 13, and 16 were combined in the third theme which stated that more training and education are needed by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers to make the citizens feel more comfortable with the services provided. The fourth theme involved three participants who were unsure what requirements were needed of the Port Isabel, Texas police officers involving training and education, or they did not know how they felt in responding to Question 17.

Table 13. Theme Identified: Survey Question 17 Based on your opinion, do you feel comfortable with the services provided by the Port Isabel Police Department with the experience, training, and education of the Port Isabel, Texas police officers? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Comfortable with the services provided	3
Not comfortable with the services provided	1
More training/education is needed	5
Not sure on the requirements or how I feel	3

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 stated, "What types of training/education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel?" In the survey instrument, Questions 18, 19, and 20 were designed to collect data concerning this research question:

18. Based on your opinion, do you believe criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification? Please explain your response.

19. Based on your opinion, does the public gain trust of criminal justice agencies and police officers who are required to have earned a degree and keep some type of accreditation for the agency? Please explain your response.

20. Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel who have some level of higher education will likely not be involved in police misconduct? Please explain your response.

The three online questions for Research Question 3 collected from the online instrument intended to answer the question of what type of training/education does the public view as the most important for police officers. The raw data collected from the question included if there was a need for a minimum amount of annual in-service training, which was needed to be completed by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. Table 14. provided two themes with the responses from all 12 participants lining up with the first theme. Referring to this theme, all participants stated there should be a requirement to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. Participant 8 (responses recorded, September 06, 2022) stated, "I believe this is fair; many professions require people to re-certify or keep up to date with their training; law enforcement and criminal justice personnel are no different." With the overwhelming response in complete concurrence of annual in-service

training for police officers, the state of Texas currently requires 40 hours of annual in-service training to be documented by each police officer and maintained by their respective police departments.

Table 14. Theme Identified: Survey Question 18 Based on your opinion, do you believe criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	12
No	0

The raw data collected for Question 19 was further refined into the theme of public trust based on higher education and public trust not based on higher education and instead gained through experiences and training of the police officers. The first theme involved public trust through higher education which resulted with 11 of the 12 participants which stated public trust is gained by higher education. The second theme involved one participant stating experiences and training is more relevant than education in gaining the public's trust. Participant 9 (responses recorded, September 06, 2022) stated, "Not necessarily, the public gains trust based on interactions; officer interactions are based on experiences and training."

Table 15. Theme Identified: Survey Question 19 Based on your opinion, does the public gain trust of criminal justice agencies and police officers who are required to have earned a degree and keep some type of accreditation for the agency? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Yes	11
No	1

The raw data collected for Question 20 was refined into two themes, police officers with higher education will decrease police misconduct, and police officers with some level of higher education will not affect police misconduct, as shown in Table 16. Participant 1 (responses recorded, September 03, 2022) stated, "this depends on each individual, and if someone is going to participate in police misconduct, they are going to do it no matter what; but I do believe that having some level of higher education does play a part in if they decide to participate in police misconduct or not. The first theme involved five participants stating they believe higher education will decrease police misconduct. The second theme involved seven participants who do not believe education will affect or decrease police misconduct. Understanding that education will not teach ethics and morals, although will assist and provide executives an understanding that part of the education and training at police academies should include lessons learned from previous police officers. The lessons learned should include when these police officers swayed away from the social norms of ethics and morals standardized according to police departments standard operating procedures and policies.

Table 16. Theme Identified: Survey Question 20 Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel who have some level of higher education will likely not be involved in police misconduct? Please explain your response.	
Online Surveys - 12	Number of Responses - 12
Police officers with some level of higher education will decrease police misconduct	5
Police officers with some level of higher education will not affect police misconduct	7

Research Question Responses

This qualitative phenomenological research aimed to explore public opinion on the effects of education and training on organizational liability related to misconduct. Transparency is one of the most popular accountability solutions for policing problems (Levine, 2019). Data was collected through an online survey of people over 18 years who resided in Port Isabel, Texas or were employed within the city limits of Port Isabel, Texas, between 2017-2022 and were not employed by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. The research findings were reviewed, and it was determined that the data responses provided within the collection instrument represented the public attitudes of Port Isabel, Texas citizens.

Police academy training begins the critical first steps in preparing law enforcement officers for their roles and responsibilities in the community, which widen beyond order maintenance and peacekeeping (Nevers, 2019). While the police academy is the baseline and foundation involving entry-level training for all police officers across the United States, many police officers receive little follow-on training every year. Port Isabel, Texas, police department is a small, with less than 50 police officers, and does not have its own hosted police academy. The police academies in the research location were certified by the state of Texas, usually taught at local universities by active and retired police officers. Police academies are the start of a professional career involving community relations, and if citizens are to get the government services they want, elected officials and bureaucratic leaders need to understand how workforces come to think and act (Oberfield, 2019). The motivation for the study was two-fold and involved the continual staffing gaps in police departments, along with the corruption which continued to exist in the police departments. In 2015, the city of Austin, Texas, partnered with the White

House sharing administrative data to help strengthened the ability of police to identify factors that led to poor-policing interactions.

President Obama established the Task Force on 21st Century Policing by executive order and tasked the force with identifying best practices to promote effective crime reduction while building public trust (Childs, 2019). Similar to crime evolving and criminals determining new ways to evade arrests from the laws of the land and police officers, criminal justice professionals must also evolve with similar Task Forces on procedures and policies. The reports from the Task Force on 21st Century Policing identified "Six Pillars of Change:" to include building trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, technology and social media, community policing and crime reduction, training and education, and officer wellness and safety (Childs, 2019). Training and education for police officers were one of the pillars identified by the task force, which helped build trust between the community and the police officers who protect the community's citizens. The comfort and trust the community had for the police officers of their city will assist the relationship between the two entities. The relationship benefited the community by having trust in their police officers, which also benefited the police officers by having citizens report crimes as needed. All states in the United States "certify" that officer candidates meet specific baseline standards and training requirements required to become a police officer (Hanner, 2021).

There have been many towns near and in Port Isabel, Texas, which have been plagued with corruption and staffing concerns causing the leadership to have a high turnover ratio of police officers due to significant misuse of power or violent behavior by police officers. Often, police officers used small towns like Port Isabel, Texas, and other surrounding towns as steppingstones to higher-paying police departments in large cities. The responses mentioned that in Port Isabel, Texas, citizens lost trust in the police departments and the police officers who may

only be employed for two to six months with the local police department. Sponsorship of recruit officers to attend police academy training represents a significant financial investment by the police department, and therefore, it makes sense to send and train those recruits who will most likely succeed in a police academy and in their subsequent careers (Korre et al., 2019). Police officers in Port Isabel, Texas, are usually self-sponsored at police academies and are only hired after they have been certified by the state of Texas. The hiring process resulted in police executives conducting a minimal hiring process as long as the applicants are certified through the state of Texas. In large cities such as San Antonio, Texas, or Houston, Texas, police officers are sponsored by the city-hosted police academies meaning the applicants are interviewed and determined to be the best applicants to succeed, which will help police departments as soon as the applicants become state certified.

As trust between the citizens and police departments continues to be a concern across the United States, the concern evolved into problems in large cities and small towns such as Port Isabel, Texas. The communication gap between the community of Port Isabel, Texas, and the Port Isabel, Texas, police department will be filled with research data from the research questions on the efficacy of education and training on police officer misconduct.

Research Question 1.

The data collected from the online survey is specific to what the public believed criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job. The issues were based on the anonymous participant's responses to Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of the online surveys. Each response to all the questions resulted in one theme for each question, with 12 completed responses for each, as per Figure 1. The raw data for responses to Question 10 was provided in Table 6.

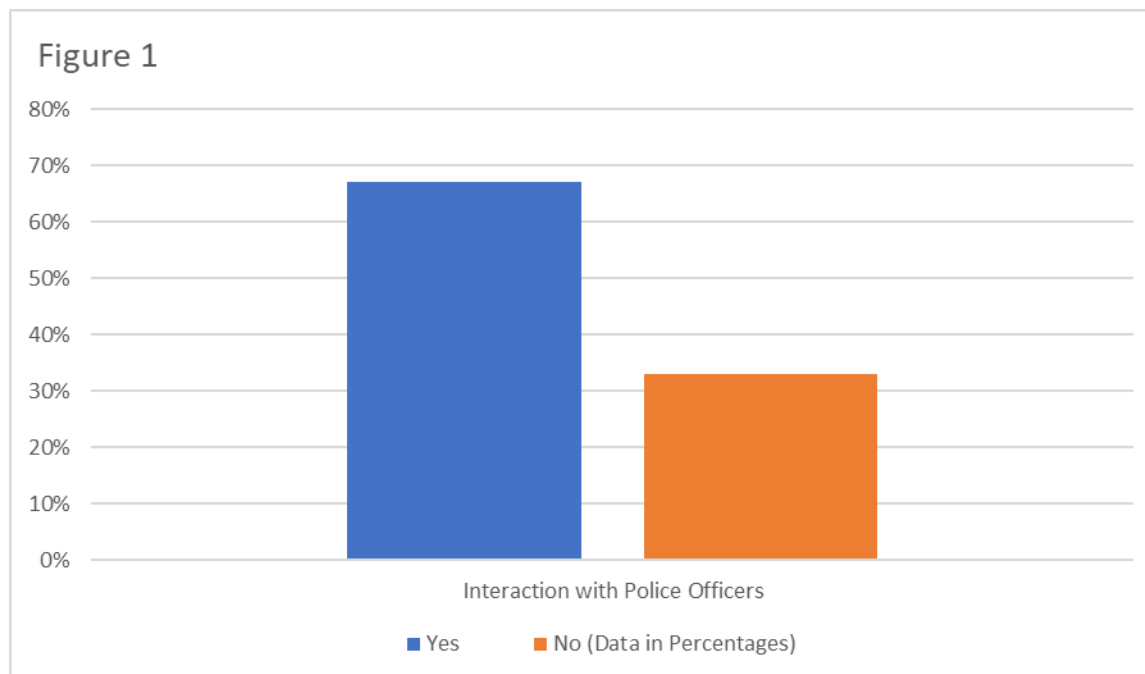
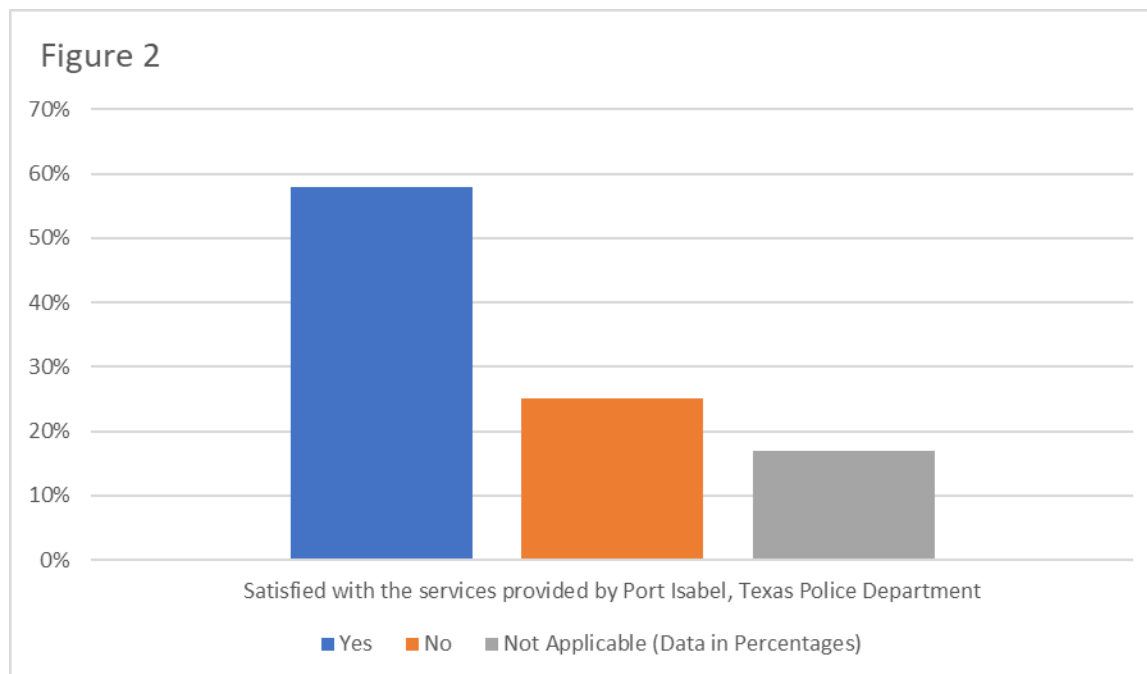
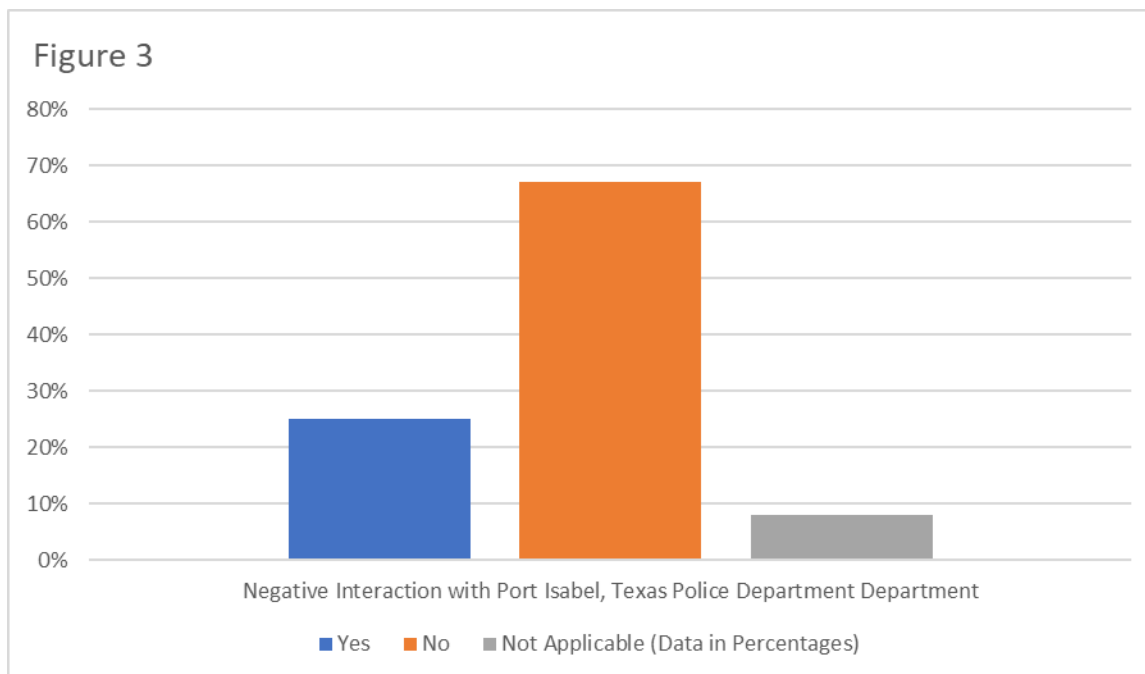


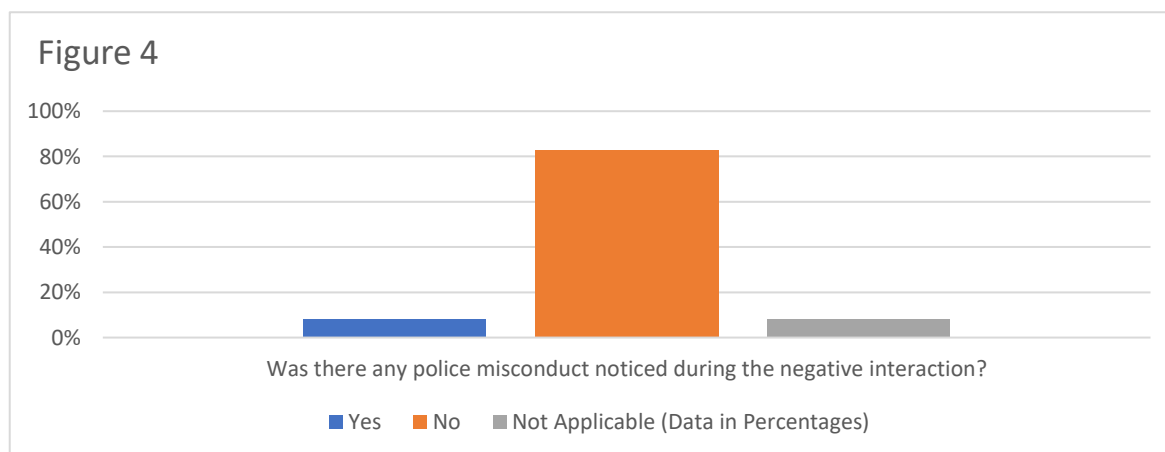
Figure 2. provided the raw data in percentage received from the participants stating the majority, 58%, were satisfied with the services provided by request for service from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. Participant 9 (response recorded, September 06, 2022) stated that the police officers were quick to respond and apprehended the individual canceling the threat immediately. A few of the participants stated that the initial response of the police officers was swift in responding and stopping the threat for which they were requested. Only 33% of the participants were dissatisfied with the overall service, although the majority of the 33% who were dissatisfied with the service mentioned they were unsatisfied with administrative matters that did not involve the initial response. The dissatisfaction involved police reports and investigation actions which were lacking post the initial response, which caused a lack of trust in the police officers. Officers need to be trusted and encouraged to use their learning in a way that develops their own personal sense of professionalism (Williams et al., 2019).



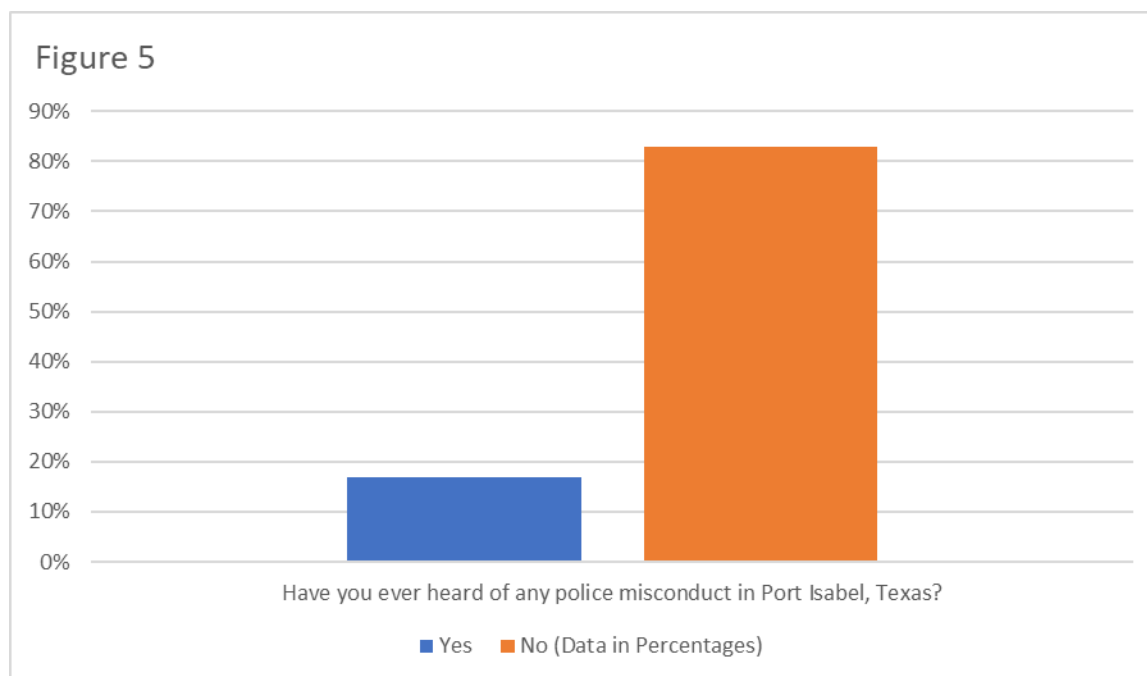
Even fewer negative interactions were mentioned, with some dissatisfaction of Port Isabel, Texas citizens, with their police officers. Figure 3. provided that 25% of the participants had negative interactions with police officers, with 8% not having any interaction with the Port Isabel police department. The accountability of individual police officers for their actions is one of the fundamental elements of police legitimacy in a democratic state, and the police complaints system is an important mechanism for bringing officer misconduct to light (Terrible, 2018). While the majority of participants were satisfied with the response and services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department, the percentage existed of only 58% of the citizens who responded to the online survey.



Police misconduct was identified by one of the 12 participants. The police misconduct consisted of police officers not following the law by harassing citizens, making unlawful arrests on citizens without warrants, and conducting illegal traffic stops as per Participant 10 (response recorded, September 06, 2022). In many instances, communities believed police academies recruits are trained to be warriors, to eschew weakness, privilege strength, and maintain the authority of the police and any person who dares challenge that authority must be confronted and dealt with by force if necessary (Radebe, 2021).

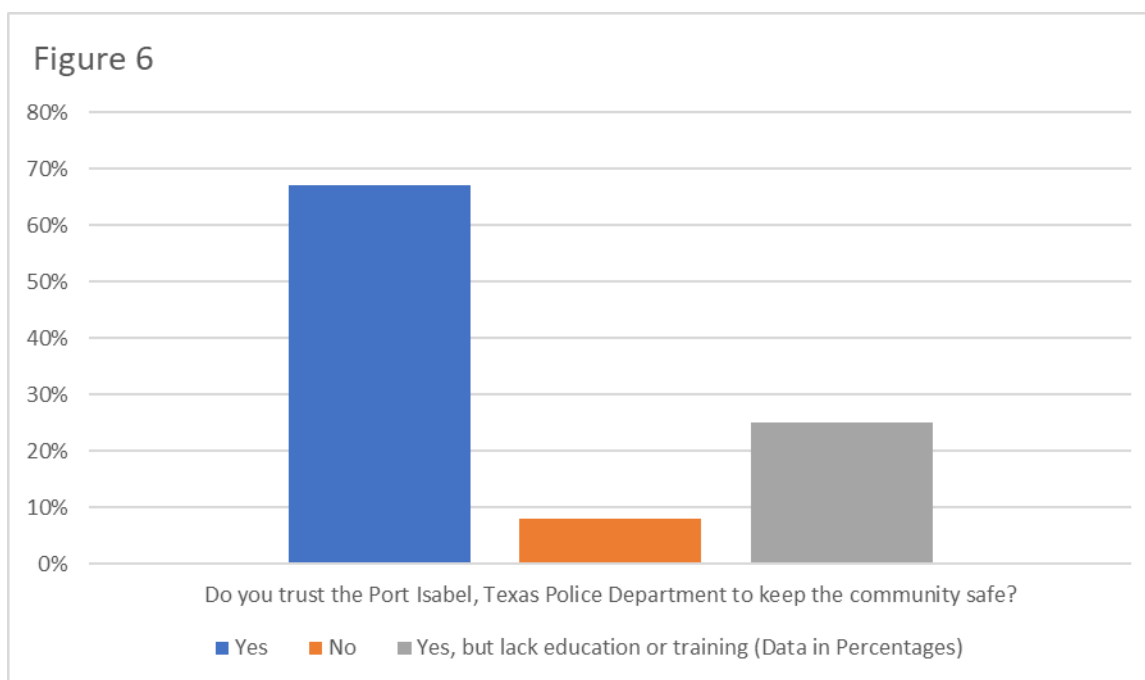


The last theme identified in the research involving Research Question 1 mentioned if the participants had heard of any police misconduct through other means. While the response to police misconduct was minimal, with only 17% stating they had heard of police misconduct, it was discovered to be factual. The police misconduct accusations involved the chief of police from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department and a sergeant from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department, with both incidents occurring only one month apart in 2018. Four of the four incidents involved sexual harassment claims against the two Port Isabel, Texas, leadership employees, with 75% of the incidents involved departmental sexual harassment claims and 25% involved a community citizen. Legal discussions about how to best manage the use of force by the police have focused on possible changes in the legal standards through which the police are held accountable for their actions through standards established in *Graham v. Connor* (Quattlebaum & Tyler, 2020).



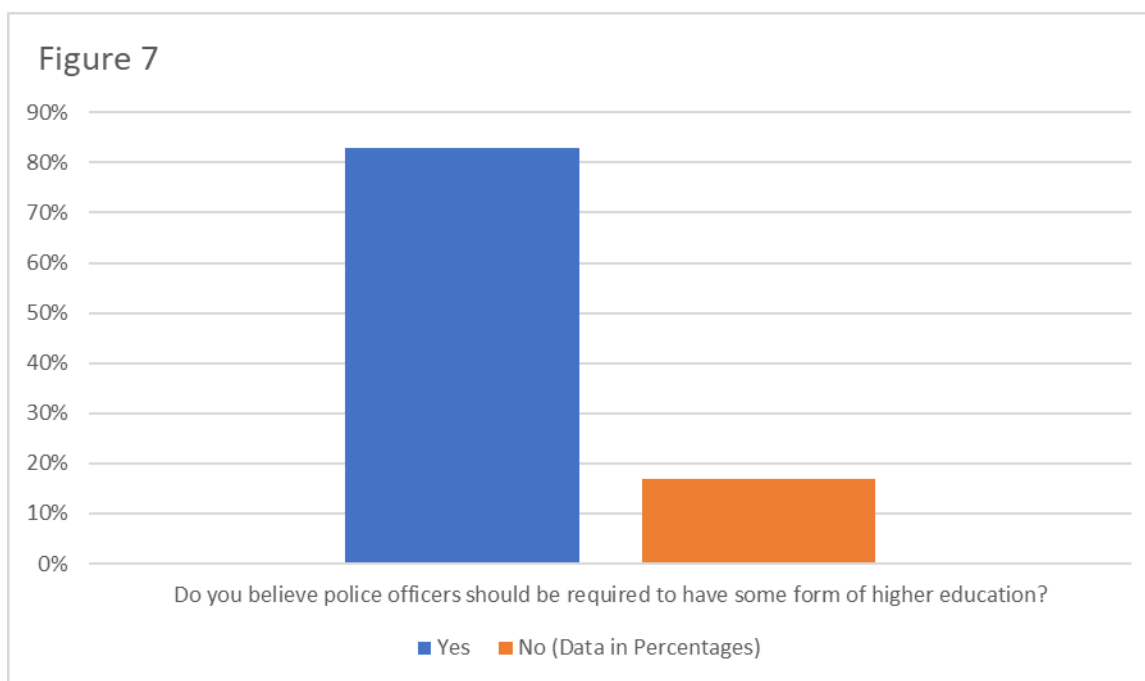
Research Question 2.

Reviewing the data collected from the online survey specific to Research Question 2 involved whether the public believed that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum of annual in-service training to maintain their certification, resulted in 12 responses. With the 12 responses, there were three themes based on the three questions from the online survey, including questions 15, 16, and 17. Question 15 involved the opinion of the community and their trust in the police officers. The majority of the participants, which included 92%, stated that they trusted the police officers, with 8% stating they did not trust the police officers in keeping the community safe. Of the raw data of the online survey, 25% stated they did trust the police officers. However, they lacked education or training compared to other police departments in large cities, as laid out in Figure 6.



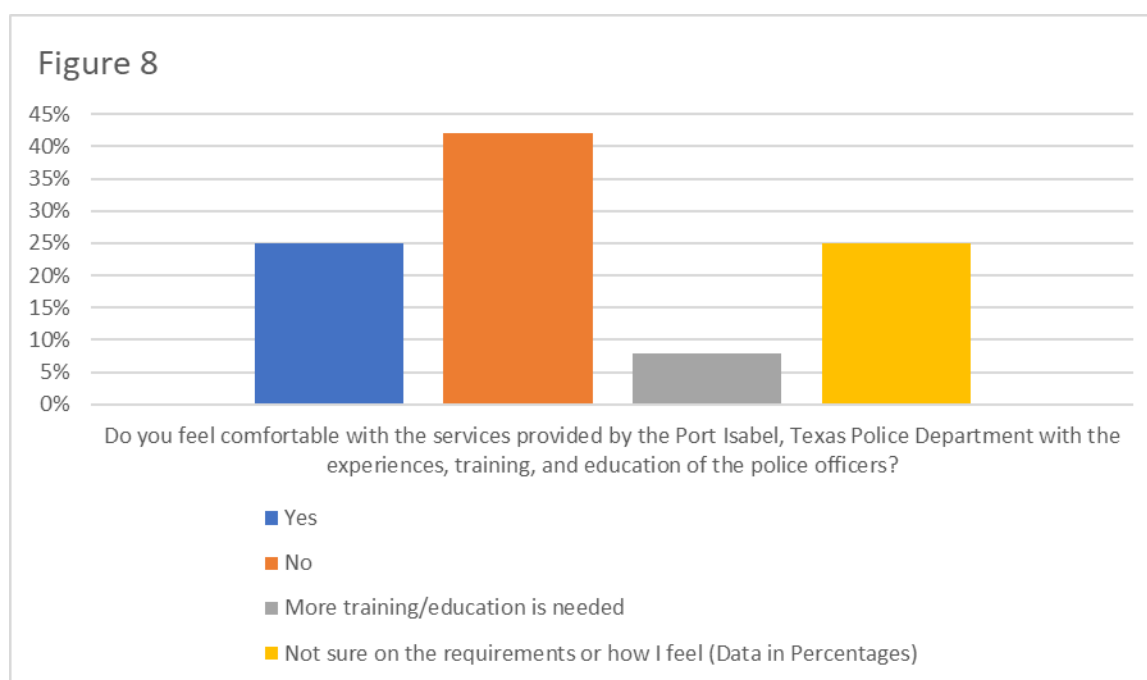
The second theme involved the public's perception of whether police officers should have higher education, as shown in Figure 7. Overwhelmingly, 83% of the participants mentioned that some form of higher education was needed from the police officers of Port Isabel, Texas.

Currently, Minnesota is the only state that specifies the associate degree for entry into the field, with Wisconsin only requiring some college credit and subsequent degree completion, yet the vast majority of states require only a high school education (Hilal et al., 2013). Participant 7 (response recorded, September 05, 2022) stated, "as a society, citizens expect to be protected at a higher level of safety, and the officers should be fully competent and knowledgeable of the laws and procedures; placing a badge on anyone and expecting a professional is absurd, on the job training is good, but mistakes are made when learning and being on the streets cannot always be learning curve."



The last theme for Research Question 2 involved the community's opinion about the comfort of services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department based on the experiences, training, and education of the police officers, as provided in Figure 8. In this question, there were several responses, with none being over 50% in matches. Most participants (42%) did not feel comfortable with the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police department provided. The concern with the comfortability of services provided required the chief of police

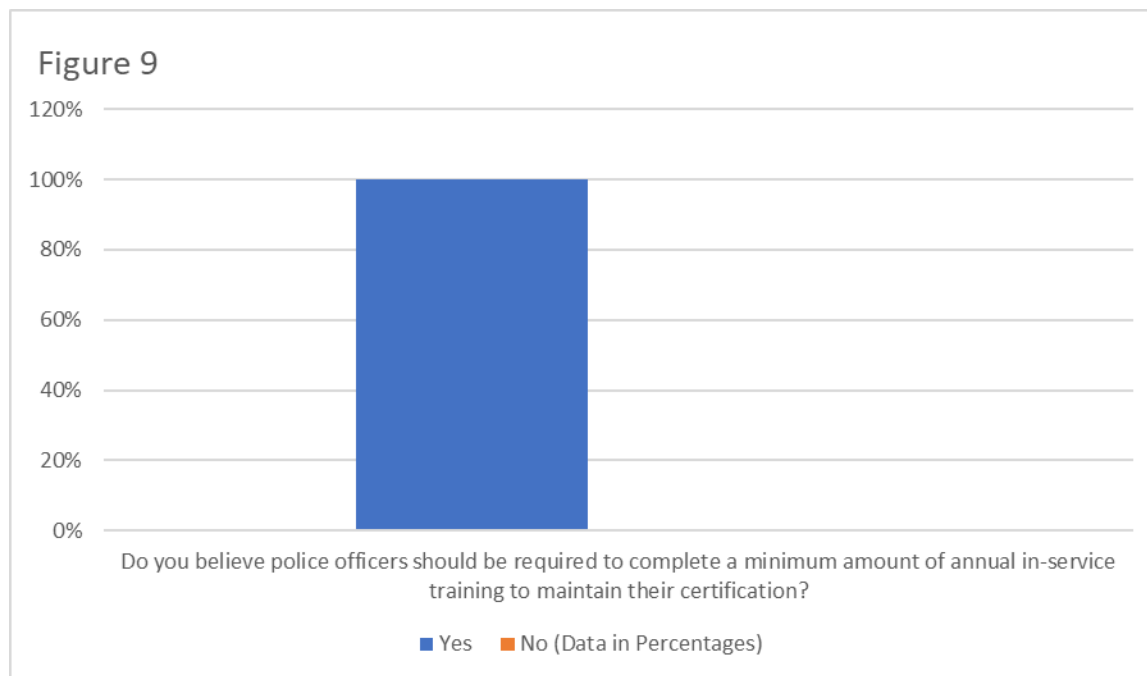
to understand new policing strategies for his police officers and department to have his constituents feel comfortable with the services provided by his police department. Imperfect information or communication gaps between residents and municipal police chief show that a chief's inability to prevent officer behavior that residents perceive as wrong; coupled with the residents' unwillingness to assist police in the aftermath of this behavior, creates an incentive for the chief to choose and learn about new policing strategies which rely on resident assistance (McCall, 2019).



Research Question 3.

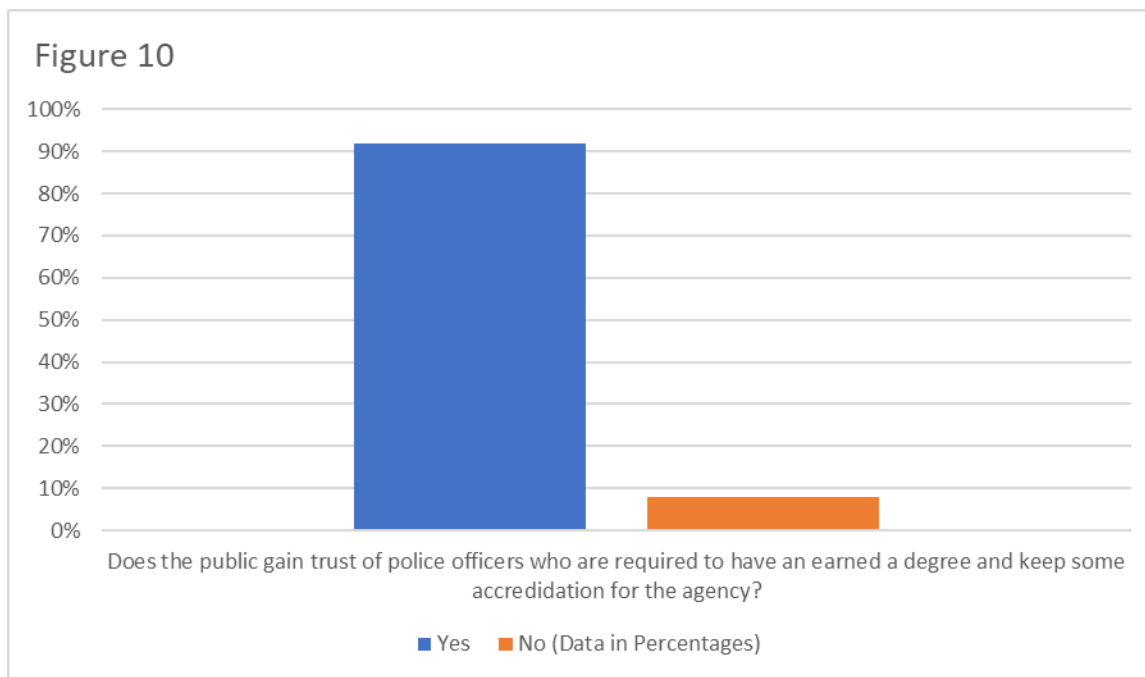
In reviewing the data collected from the online survey specific to Research Question 3, which involved what the public believed the types of training/education are the most important for criminal justice personnel, which resulted in 12 responses. With the 12 responses, there were three themes based on the three questions from the online survey, including questions 18, 19, and 20. Question 18 asked if police officers should be required to complete a minimum number of annual in-service training to maintain their state certification. Question 18 was the only theme of

the online survey, which had complete concurrence from each participant, with all 12 respondents stating they believed police officers should be required to complete a minimum of annual in-service training to maintain their state certification, which was provided in Figure 9. Participant 9 (response recorded, September 06, 2022) stated, "laws change all the time, and police officers must be trained on ever-changing threats to themselves and the public."



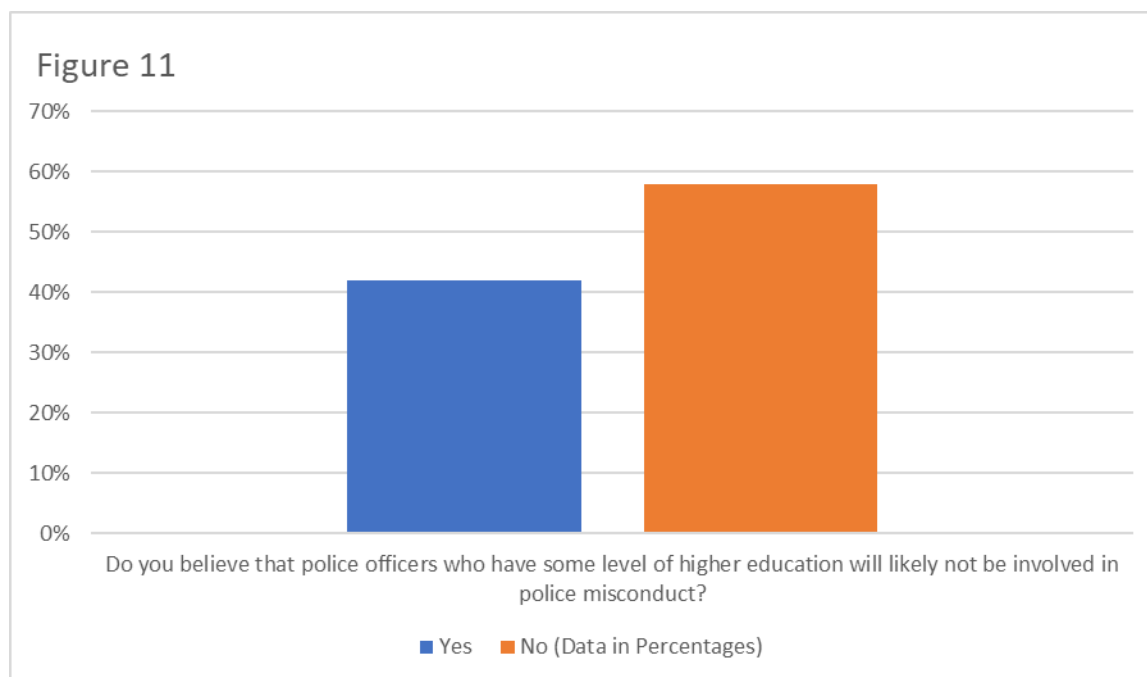
The second theme for Research Question 3 involved the online survey portion about citizens gaining the trust of police officers who are required to have earned a degree, with the results provided in Figure 10. Figure 9 and Figure 10 complemented each other, with 92% of participants stating they believed that annual in-service training for police officers and a higher education degree would help gain the trust of police officers by the citizens of the community they protect. While education has evolved in the criminal justice profession, it has only been on an individual voluntary basis and not a requirement. Two signs that criminal justice education has expanded dramatically more recently are evidenced by the growth in doctoral programs and the police academies themselves (Oliver, 2016). Educational agencies have acknowledged the

need for education to be expanded in the criminal justice profession, and communities across the United States are starting to take notice, as per Figure 9 and Figure 10.



The last theme for Research Question 3 involved the online survey portion about citizens' perspectives on police officers who have an education and will not be involved in police misconduct, as shown in Figure 11. The majority (58%) of the participants stated they do not believe police officers with some higher education will exclude themselves from being involved in police misconduct. Many participants stated that this is an ethical concern rather than an education lesson or requirement. Participant 13 (response recorded, September 10, 2022) mentioned, "misconduct could happen to those with any given level of education; however, I feel that having a higher level of education could help lower the percentage of those involved in police misconduct." Scholars and experts agree that rigorous enforcement of internal regulations within a police department promotes constitutional policing by deterring future misconduct and removing unfit officers from the streets; because of internal appeals procedures, police departments must often rehire or significantly reduce disciplinary sanctions against officers who

have engaged in severe misconduct (Rushin, 2019). As explained in previous chapters, the theory of Transactional leadership is commonly known and seen in the criminal justice system, especially in the field of law enforcement where many officers are extremely loyal to their supervisors and vice versa. If supervisors are abiding of internal regulations, their subordinates will agree and abide by the same internal regulations and sanctions of the police agency who employ them.



Summary

Chapter four detailed data collected from the anonymous online survey related to public opinion of police misconduct based on the efficacy of education and training provided to the police officers. The research methodology outlined in Chapter 3 of this research study influenced the data collected through the process. The purpose of the research was achieved in the public attitudes and opinions about police misconduct identified from previous experiences and interactions with Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The online survey was conducted to assist and advocate for participants to provide detailed and meticulous responses by using an

anonymous response with techniques from open-ended questions. The themes identified from the responses included the satisfaction of police responses from the community, any police misconduct identified to include experiences involved with police misconduct, and the trust of the police officers. The responses involved police officers in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, to include the training and education needed for state certification and if higher education would gain the trust and respect of the community.

Police training is a vital cog in ensuring that local law enforcement agencies have a steady supply of recruits who have not only weapons training, legal knowledge, and other traditional skills but also professional skills like critical thinking in an age when police behavior has come under focused scrutiny (Finkel, 2019). Even though there will always be complaints from the community based on dissatisfied services provided by police officers or misconduct from personnel, only a few large agencies have likened the idea of higher learning educated police officers. The data collected from this research supported the assertions made in previous research and showed the public's opinion on emphasizing education for police officers besides their initial training provided at police academies.

There have been task forces implemented by the federal government, former presidential administrations, and state governments, which have a growing concern with the civil dangers posed by police misconduct, yet minimal shifts in culture have been implemented towards education. Programs such as integrated offender management (IOM) which involved police working alongside personnel from other agencies to include probation officers, social workers, and correctional officers to police officers in other areas of the criminal justice system and away from the current cop culture, such as pragmatism which have been found to facilitate multi-agency working together (Cram, 2020). While IOM programs aim to help police officers know

the effects of criminal recidivism to have a different approach towards the community, in return, have a different approach towards community interaction, there have been minimal results from these programs.

While different programs are challenging to implement across all police departments in the United States, standardization can easily be implemented through education and higher learning in universities and colleges in the United States for police officers. Standardization within education, lessons learned, and a more professionalized police officer will decrease misconduct across the United States. Ever since the father of modern law enforcement, Chief August Vollmer, called for mandatory college education for police officers in the 1930s, professors, practitioners, policymakers, and even Presidential Commissions, have debated the merits of raising police formal educational requirements (Hilal et al., 2013). The data collected from the research study solidified the enforcement and requirements introduced approximately 100 years ago by Chief August Vollmer.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the effects of education, training on organizational liability as it is related to misconduct. This qualitative research aimed to explore the views and attitudes of citizens protected by police officers and the effects of education and training on organizational liability related to misconduct. Port Isabel, Texas Police Department is a small department in a town with a population of 5,094 citizens with less than 50 police officers; it did not have its own hosted police academy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The police academies in the research location have been certified by the state of Texas and were taught at local universities by active and retired police officers.

The motivation for the study was two-fold and involved the continual staffing gaps in police departments, along with the corruption which continued to exist in the police departments across South Texas. Research has indicated that positive police-community relationships are crucial for safer communities, as citizens are likely to engage as witnesses and as partners in crime reduction if they genuinely believed in the legitimacy of the police officers (Kerrison et al., 2019). The research was directed toward citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, or people employed in the city of Port Isabel during 2017-2022. Police officers were excluded from the research to prevent any personal bias from being included in the data provided from the research. The limitations on the research involved the perceptions of the police officers in Port Isabel, Texas, may not match the perceptions of police officers throughout the United States, which is out of the control of the researcher's sample size and is considered a limitation.

The chapter has been arranged into three different sections: implications of the research, delimitations/limitations, recommendations, and conclusions based on the research.

Implications

Police officers who are provided better fundamental training have the potential to reduce litigation and embarrassment to a department, which erodes public opinion and trust (Nancy, 2021). The research study was necessary for many facets, including and most importantly, in helping the communities serviced by police officers, policymakers, police executives, and the professionalization of police officers. Many court cases have forced agencies to develop new training courses and methods, including many court cases that have impacted how police function, including one of the most compelling cases changing police procedures and attitude involving *Miranda V. Arizona* (Finnimore, 2005). To better understand the Port Isabel, Texas citizens' trust of their police officers, the research involved an examination of attitudes related to police services provided to the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas and was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Does the public think that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job?
2. Does the public feel that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification?
3. What types of training / education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel?

The purpose of the research questions were identified based on previous research identified in the literature review and to pinpoint the geographical location of Port Isabel, Texas. The research questions were also intended to guide the research methodology. In the recent call for police reform during the last decade, now is the time with the highest recommendation for leaders in law enforcement across the United States to coordinate and stay ahead of required

changes in training policies and educational requirements for police officers before outside entities make proposals. Several studies have represented probable error associated with assumptions about the college experience; there are differences between college-educated and non-college-educated police officers, with the exact difference yet to be empirically determined (Gerding, 2007). The research questions presented diagnosed the concern for services from the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas.

Research Question 1.

Research question 1 was based on the concerns from the Wickersham Commission involving if the public believes that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job. Since 1931, the need for a better educated and more professionalized police force was needlingly obvious by the Wickersham Commission, and since 1980, law enforcement has been going through a metamorphosis concerning social demands and needs concerning its role within society (Powell, 1980). Several commissions, task forces, and other committees have influenced law enforcement over the last century and have assisted the law enforcement profession. Now is the time for a recommendation involving senior police executives to self-initiate a committee from a federal standpoint to have a trickle-down requirement to the state and local levels of how to train, educate our police officers and service the communities appropriately.

It appears that law enforcement officers hold a favorable perspective from the public of advanced education; however, how advanced education should apply to law enforcement officers varies amongst them (Carter, 2021). It is recommended that police officers educate themselves with higher learning for their benefit and to benefit the law enforcement community. Many of these entry-level police officers will one day become leaders in the law enforcement community

over the next decade to 15 years, which will only benefit them, and the police officers they lead and continue to elevate the standards. An increased professionalized police department led by educated police officers will continue to help decrease police misconduct, gain the community's trust, and provide services to the community, which will build the relationship between communities and police departments.

The survey questions linked to this research question were able to obtain if services had been received by the participants who were either citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, or were employed in Port Isabel, Texas. Participant interaction with police officers was at 67%, with one of the participants receiving services from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department more than once, creating an appropriate batch of citizens who had received services from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. Previous studies have noted that police officers with higher education and experience tend to provide better services to the public than police officers with less education and also tend to communicate less aggressively with the community (Nikolaevna et al., 2021).

Research Question 2.

Research question 2 was based on the concerns from the law enforcement and academic communities might both benefit through a better integration of higher education offerings with the training and service needs of public agencies such as law enforcement institutions (Terranova, 2010). The questions involved if the public feels that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification. A total of 67% of the participants trusted the police officers from Port Isabel, Texas understanding that they were providing the best possible services with training entrusted to the police officers. Up to 25% of the participants agreed to state that police officers could be

trusted, although they required more training and education. There has been a longstanding deliberation on the significance of higher education as a selection method and its influence on police performance, where researchers have concluded that the collected works on education and performance were mixed (Nevers, 2019).

In one of the themes for Research question 2, all 83% of the participants stated higher education is needed for police officers, while 17% stated training is more critical than education prior to being certified to do their job as police officers. The participants had mixed results with the comfort of the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police department provided, with only 25% stating they felt comfortable with the services provided. Surveys resulted in 42% of the participants who stated more education and training were needed to feel comfortable with the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police department provided. Determined by the survey results, the comfort of the services provided, and the trust provided to the police officers, the public feels that criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum of annual in-service training to maintain their certification. Maintaining the annual in-service certification will provide a minimal standard to continue with the relationship of trust between the Port Isabel, Texas, police department and its citizens.

Research Question 3.

Research question 3 was based on the concerns from the police practitioners revealing that they believe higher education enhances certain skills and therefore provides police officers with a stronger foundation for success and the importance of higher education increasing as police officer's rank increases (Middlebrooks, 2015). The research question involved what types of training / education does the public view as the most important for criminal justice personnel.

The concerns and challenges with police reform have made minimal movement encompassing higher education as a minimal requirement for initial employment as a police officer. The public believed police reform introductions by state legislatures have only recommended defunding the police departments across the nation which has little to no value on the professionalization or the effects of higher education on police officers. This research study examined citizens' opinions and beliefs about police officers with higher education and training. The benefits of higher education in law enforcement were described in meticulous detail by the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, and the trust they have in educated police officers rather than police officers with minimal required training.

It was determined that the police officers were trusted to conduct their job to the best of their ability, although 42% of the participants did not feel comfortable with the services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. The results indicated that the minimal training and lack of education obtained by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers have affected the attitude of the citizens and personnel who are frequent visitors to Port Isabel, Texas. The survey resulted with more education and training from the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers would be included as the top priority for the community.

In the survey, only 50% of the participants were completely satisfied with the services the Port Isabel, Texas, police department provided. The survey determined that all services provided by the Port Isabel, Texas, police department included police officers certified by the state of Texas. Some participants preemptively stated that education and training were lacking from the police officers and were imperative to providing satisfactory services to the city of Port Isabel, Texas. Research from the online surveys showed that higher education and training were more

likely believed by the public to provide a more professionalized police department and should be required prior to being certified to do the job.

This research revealed that a higher level of education and annual in-service training earned by police officers was found to be the most important in the public's view. The annual in-service training was met with 100% of the online survey participants, which considered it a requirement for police officers to maintain their certification. The survey resulted in 92% of participants stating that public trust in police officers is gained through higher education. The survey revealed that only 42% of the participants believed higher education would decrease police misconduct, while 58% did not believe higher education would affect police misconduct.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations implemented in the research study by the researcher were intended to ensure compliance in the research with the Institutional Review Board. The research study utilized anonymous participants who were residents of Port Isabel, Texas, or personnel employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas, between 2017-2022. The purpose of pinpointing the participants with this specific sample from Port Isabel, Texas, assisted that the sample was recent in recent years and the experiences were within the last five years. It would be unfair to include a sample size of citizens or personnel who interacted with the Port Isabel, Texas, police department approximately 20 years ago. The first limitation identified was the potential weakness of the study involving the geographical location of Port Isabel, Texas, which has a formal population of approximately 5,000 citizens, although it is considered a border town that can have several thousand illegal immigrants as current citizens. The anonymous participants were required to be 18 years of age and to provide consent before commencing the survey to prevent any professional bias; participants could not be employees of the Port Isabel, Texas, police

department. The survey involved the participant's perception of the efficacy of education on police misconduct, specifically to the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers. The potential limitations were minimal and had little to no known affect of the interpretation of the results due to the anonymity of the participants. The participants were reliable in the design by maintaining the degree of validity through anonymity and the timeline provided in the research and recording incidents and interactions with the police department since 2017.

The perceptions of the police officers in Port Isabel, Texas, may not match the perceptions of police officers throughout the United States, which is out of the control of the researcher's sample size and is considered a limitation. The qualitative design is not intended to maintain a specific degree of reliability, validity, and generalizability, although specific procedures can be taken to increase those variables better. This study did increase those variables through an anonymous study sample which differed in the participants' age, gender, and education. The anonymous sample ensured the participants' confidentiality and ensured there was no way to identify the participants through other means. Another identified limitation involved the race/ethnicity of the participants, in which all 12 participants consisted of Hispanic/Latino descent due to most of the population of Port Isabel, Texas, being known to be Hispanics. The survey was plausible in providing basic conclusions based on the participant's perceptions, yet the focus of the design was to determine if there were concerns or problems identified which would assist in conducting future research studies, which was accomplished.

The survey questions were open-ended, which did cause some limitations in the openly vast responses of the participants. To overcome the limitations of the survey questions, each question requested to explain the participant's response besides having a "yes" or "no" answer and gave the participants an unlimited opportunity to provide the concerns, problems, and

challenges when interacting with the Port Isabel, Texas police officers. The responses were vast and challenging to collect as some of the questions collected 12 different responses. However, the responses ensured the themes were diverse samples, which provided a collective representation of the Port Isabel, Texas community.

Recommendations

The qualitative research conducted for this study resulted in the identification of public attitudes within legal pattern related to the efficacy of education on police misconduct. Based on the findings of this research study and the literature review, additional research must be conducted concerning the efficacy of education on police misconduct. Research findings on police performance and police misconduct are necessary to study the criminal justice system. Discovering ways to decrease police misconduct and professionalize police departments will assist in the police reform requested throughout the United States. Accomplishing the way ahead on decreasing police misconduct and reorganizing police departments through police reform is a two-folded goal which will take years to effectuate. Further research on higher education levels for police officers requires more exploration in the realm of police officers with different backgrounds and variables, including police experience, military experience, and the size of the police departments the police officers have employed during their careers. The further emphasis should also include if police officers were sponsored recruits or self-sponsored at their respective police academies. Sponsored recruits' education levels should be explored with additional measures of performance and with considerations of the practical implication of those measures (Nevers, 2019). Based on the findings of the research study, the following recommendations have been made:

Coordination of Police and Educational Institutions

The following implications should be taken for practice from police executives and leaders to better understand and communication the expectations from the community. The research study provided a novel contribution to the field of law enforcement by taking a non-bias approach from the community's perspective in what is expected from police officers, how they were observed in providing services, negative interactions, and police misconduct. The community provided additional inputs to what they believe should occur with training, higher education, and how the community gains trust from the police officers. In the recent efforts and requests from the communities and politicians throughout the nation that police reform must occur, this research expanded on these efforts. It is highly recommended that police executives and higher education institutions interact with the policymakers and expand this type of research on a larger scale involving large cities.

It is also recommended to continue with the anonymous perspective to gain different ideas and responses in the reform of police departments, their police officers, and the education and training needed to serve the community. Law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to mandate higher education for police officers as prior studies do not indicate a strong relationship between higher education attainment and enhanced officer performance (Nancy, 2021). The research on the efficacy of education must continue to evolve in the profession of law enforcement as research studies have continued to provide new data from several different perspectives and views.

Further research should be applied to police departments that provide financial benefits to police officers with education, along with police departments that fund education in cross-comparison research involving the number of police misconduct complaints in those respective departments that provide the benefits and funding towards education. Lastly, it is recommended

for police departments to partner with higher-level educational institutions and universities to synchronize and standardize the knowledge police officers should be aware of so police misconduct can be attacked and decreased through educational scholars and subject matter experts.

Previous research studies have empirically shown that since the increase of online degrees offered by state-wide and national colleges and universities, police departments should play a more significant role in determining higher education curricula appropriate for their respective police departments (Terranova, 2010). These results corroborate earlier research findings where police officers, police executives, citizens, and scholars agree on how higher education should be recommended for police officers across the United States.

Annual In-Service Training

The research study extends the theory of the effects on education and training in law enforcement professionals through several new means. With citizens trusting police officers who have continual annual in-service training after being certified through their state minimal requirements and feeling more comfortable with the services of trained police officers will only elevate the professionalization of police departments in cities across the nation. The occupation of law enforcement professionals has only been around for a few centuries and has only begun to become standardized in the early 20th century compared to other older occupations, such as physicians, lawyers, and educators, which require professional graduate degrees with certification requirements.

Continuing to implement training and adding education will require police officers to receive higher education along with their state certification as a standard. The combination of education and training will require the instructors to have equal or higher education than their

students, thus professionalizing the police officers, the police departments, and the occupation even further. Through several opportunities in law enforcement, self-starters often obtain higher education for promotion, different positions in agencies, or the monthly financial benefits provided to police officers in respective police departments or agencies, usually located in larger cities.

While some federal and state agencies require undergraduate degrees for employment, adding to the training of their police academies, which professionalizes those agencies, the rural and even urban police departments only tend to stick with the training provided by their respective police academies. It is assumed that the law enforcement culture is averse to establishing higher education standards (Middlebrooks, 2015). No mandates of higher education for the respective police departments have been required by policymakers, police executives, and through different mentions of police reform. The delay in implementing education in police departments will only delay the elevation of professionalism throughout the occupation.

While it cannot be confirmed that higher education will make police misconduct obsolete or decrease in nature throughout the occupation, education plus the annual in-service training will not negatively affect police officers' professionalism. Training plus education will only help gain trust, build repertoire by the skills and knowledge gained, and make the community feel comfortable with the professionalism of the police officers and their respective departments.

Standardization

Unlike other occupations, police officers tend to be unsupervised once they complete their initial training at the police academy, supervisory training with their Field Training Officers, and in large departments after completing their one-year probationary period. Many scholars have shown an array of actions, such as rulemaking, budgeting, sanctions, and personnel

shortfalls, along with police officers work out of sight from supervisors, and their job often entails dealing with unanticipated events in an array of physical locations, which makes verifying noncompliance with directives a daunting task (Mummolo, 2018). This research study found that the community the police officers serve understands the importance of higher-level education and the effects the education can have on police officers through standardization of policies and department procedures. The research discovered that standardization amongst police officers will further earn the trust of the citizens they serve regardless if the training or education increases, as long as they meet one of the two requirements with a standard.

The research study was able to expand in the literature review and previous research studies where education cannot guarantee a decrease in police misconduct or professionalize the police force. In this research study, it has been confirmed by the community that education and training were required by the Port Isabel, Texas, police officers, and while the trust in the police officers to complete their duties and responsibilities to the best of their ability was present, they were lacking education and training compared to other police departments in large cities. In essence, they were lacking standardization of policies and standard operating procedures which are not instilled on a weekly or monthly basis. It was also confirmed through the research study that the community felt comfortable with the services provided by the police officers who had higher education. Police practitioners have revealed that they believe higher education enhances specific skills and therefore provides police officers with a more robust foundational success and believe the importance of higher education increases as a police officer's rank increases (Middlebrooks, 2015).

The research study extended previous theoretical results from other research studies by taking a different perspective and understanding how the community's citizens understood how

higher education impacted police officers versus the perspective of only the police officers or the police executives. While many previous research studies reflect only what police officers assume the effects of education would be on the community. This research provided a non-bias approach from the citizens of Port Isabel, Texas, and personnel employed within the city limits of Port Isabel, Texas, which may have received the services from the Port Isabel, Texas, police department. The research maintained confidentiality through anonymous responses from the community, which reflected vast responses from the open-ended questions, and may have been limited if the research was not maintained anonymously. The research study provides a novel contribution to the field of law enforcement. It links to increasing the communities' comfort from the police officer's services who have higher levels of education.

Conclusions

Obtaining education by a professional in any profession will always gain the trust of the people and customers served. "I believe in the power of education, so I believe higher education or some form of it can only benefit the individual, the police department, and the community they serve," Participant 1 (responses recorded, September 03, 2022). Education is not the overall remedy that deletes all police misconduct. However, education will professionalize the police officers, the police departments, and the police executives. They maintain education as one of the primary tools to decrease police misconduct and obtain the community's trust. Citizens and people who frequent Port Isabel, Texas, understand and recognize that education will assist in the relationship between the community and the police officers. With positive growth in the relationship and trust, the police officers will be able to provide adequate services to the community from a professional standpoint with more education and training, as mentioned during the online survey.

Police executives must ensure their employees have the training and education to serve the community better. Higher education degree should be standardized as a requirement and part of the qualification process to serve as a police officer, with some of the education credit awarded upon completing the police academy. The online survey provided during this research can be considered a foundational instrument, which will require future research studies to define the professionalization standard of police officers and commence the inquiry of small to medium police departments that have police officers that are educated, which can link if police misconduct will decrease some misconduct.

In several case laws over the past 50 years, police officers required additional training, and it was recommended that education should be part of police officer training. City of Canton, Ohio V. Harris et al. (1989) was one of the critical case laws in which "failure to train" was discovered that a municipality is liable for failure to train its police force and in not doing so, makes the municipality act recklessly, intentionally, or with gross negligence, and the lack of training deprives a person's constitutional rights. In what sense do municipalities, cities, and towns continue to take the risk by still lacking the education and training required for our police officers to prevent similar circumstances to City of Canton, Ohio V. Harris et al.. With an ever-evolving occupation in law enforcement to include continual updates in the law, guidance, policies, annual in-service training, and education must continue to be prioritized and rewarded by police executives.

In many instances, education through the value of training can meet the expectations to ensure municipalities are not taking risks with a "failure to train" vulnerability. Weekly or monthly training requirements via state-mandated curriculums can be as simple as going over laws and policies, which police officers frequently use daily or weekly to include probable cause,

searches, and seizures, among the many other actions of police officers. The training in the curriculum could prevent mistakes like those mentioned in *Almeida-Sanchez V. United States* (1973), which involved a warrantless search made without probable cause or consent, which uncovered illegal substances. While the *Almeida-Sanchez V. United States* case law was not malicious police misconduct, it was considered illegal, tended to lose the community's trust, and brought forth concerns from the citizens receiving the services from the police officers. Data obtained from this research study will continue to provide a foundation for future research involving the efficacy of higher education among police officers.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 15, 2022

Roel Rosalez
Carlton Lewis

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-1138 Efficacy of Education on Police Misconduct

Dear Roel Rosalez, Carlton Lewis,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration,

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

Efficacy of Education on Police Misconduct

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Have you resided in or been employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022?
- Were you employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department between 2017-2022?

If you answered **yes** to questions 1-2 and **no** to question 3, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of education and training on organizational liability as it is related to police misconduct. The city of Port Isabel, Texas will be a foundational footprint and the results will be an example that can be used at other police departments across the nation.

- Participants will be asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire which is estimated to be completed in 15 minutes.

If you would like to participate, click on the link here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FN3SZBT>

A consent document is provided as the first page of the questionnaire.

Roel Rosalez, a doctoral candidate in the School of Government at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Roel Rosalez at [REDACTED] for more information.

Title of the Project: Efficacy of Education on Police Misconduct

Principal Investigator: Roel Rosalez, Doctoral Student, Liberty University

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and have resided in or worked in the city of Port Isabel, Texas from 2017 through 2022. You **must not** have been employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department from 2017 through 2022. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of education and training on organizational liability as it relates to police misconduct. The city of Port Isabel, Texas will be a foundational footprint and the results will be an example that can be used at other police departments across the nation.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an anonymous, online questionnaire which will take approximately 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include more data obtained that could determine if enhanced education increases awareness, training, and educational understanding in law enforcement performing their duties with sound ethical and moral decisions, as well as creating a more professionalized workforce with less unrighteous decisions and better pay. Educated police officers may make more ethically sound decisions due to a higher education degree which may decrease unethical incidents in which police officers may be involved.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a biometric-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the questionnaire without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the questionnaire and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is **Roel Rosalez**. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Carlton Ray Lewis, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted for a dissertation at Liberty University in Port Isabel, Texas. The purpose of this study is to explore public attitudes related to the education level of police officers. It is focused on the individual attitudes that people have related to police officers and the effects of the level of education obtained law enforcement personnel. There is no deception in this study. We are interested in your opinions and reflections about interactions you have had with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas.

Please answer each question in your own words. If you elect not to answer a question, merely leave it blank and move to the next question. If you decide not to complete or submit the survey, merely click on the decline to participate tab and your responses will not be recorded.

APPENDIX D: Survey Instrument

Copy of Police Education - PhD Dissertation

1. Copy of page: Welcome to My Survey

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted for a dissertation at Liberty University in Port Isabel, Texas. The purpose of this study is to explore public attitudes related to the education level of police officers. It is focused on the individual attitudes that people have related to police officers and the effects of the level of education obtained law enforcement personnel. There is no deception in this study. We are interested in your opinions and reflections about interactions you have had with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas.

Please answer each question in your own words. If you elect not to answer a question, merely leave it blank and move to the next question. If you decide not to complete or submit the survey, merely click on the decline to participate tab and your responses will not be recorded.

or Copy and paste questions

NEXT

Powered by
See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).

0 of 20 answered

[NEW PAGE](#)

P2: Consent Page

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[Page Logic](#)

[More Actions](#)

LOGO

[EXIT](#)

Copy of Police Education - PhD Dissertation

2. Consent Page

Exploring Public Attitudes Related to Police Education

Purpose. You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted for a dissertation at Liberty University in Port Isabel, Texas. The purpose of this study is to explore public attitudes related to police education. It is focused on the individual attitudes that people have related to police education and the interactions with law enforcement personnel. There is no deception in this study. We are interested in your opinions and reflections about the effects of police education.

Participation requirements. You will be asked to complete an online survey composed of open-ended questions related to your opinions related to police pursuits. The questionnaire should be completed within 5 to 10 minutes.

Research Personnel. The following people are involved in this research project and may be contacted at any time:

Roel Rosalez,

Chair of Research

Potential Risk/ Discomfort. Although there are no known risks in this study, you

may withdraw at any time; and you may choose not to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable in answering.

Potential Benefit. There are no direct benefits to you of participating in this research. No incentives are offered. The results will have scientific interest that may eventually have an effect on the way education is provided to law enforcement personnel.

Anonymity/ Confidentiality-The data collected in this anonymous study are confidential to the extent allowed by law. No personal identification information, such as the participant's name or identification number, will be collected.

Right to Withdraw - You have the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. You may omit questions on the survey if you do not want to answer them. Once the survey is completed, you will have the opportunity to withdraw without any of your responses being recorded.

We would be happy to answer any question that may arise about the study. Please direct your questions or comments to

Roel Rosalez,

Chair of Research

I understand the conditions of my participation. I understand that clicking one of the following tabs will constitute an electronic signature on my part.

I accept the above conditions and understand this will not affect or benefit me in any way and I understand this will not affect or benefit me in any way.

or Copy and paste questions

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P3: Consent Page Approval



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3. Consent Page Approval

Consent

Title of the Project: Efficacy of Education on Police Misconduct

Principal Investigator: Roel Rosalez, Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and have resided in or worked in the city of Port Isabel, Texas from 2017 through 2022. You must not have been employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department from 2017 through 2022. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of education and training on organizational liability as it relates to police misconduct. The city of Port Isabel, Texas will be a foundational footprint and the results will be an example that can be used at other police departments across the nation.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an anonymous, online questionnaire which will take approximately 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include more data obtained that could determine if enhanced education increases awareness, training, and educational understanding in law enforcement performing their duties with sound ethical and moral decisions, as well as creating a more professionalized workforce with less unrighteous decisions and better pay. Educated police officers may make more ethically sound decisions due to a higher education degree which may decrease unethical incidents in which police officers may be involved.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a biometric-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the questionnaire without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the questionnaire and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Roel Rosalez. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at rrosalez2@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Carlton Ray Lewis, at crlewis4@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

Question Title

1. Do you consent to participating in this research study?

Yes

No

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P4: Part I - Control Information

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4. Part I - Control Information

Question Title

* 2. Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes

No

Question Title

3. Have you resided in the city of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022?

Yes

No

Question Title

4. Have you been employed in the city of Port Isabel, Texas between 2017-2022?

Yes

No

Question Title

5. Were you employed by the Port Isabel, Texas Police Department between 2017-2022?

Yes

No

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5. Police Education - PhD Dissertation

Part II: Demographic Information

Question Title

6. What is your race/ethnicity?

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Another race

Question Title

7. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Question Title

8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Question Title

9. What is your age? 0

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

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P6: Part III: Attitudes related to police education



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6. Part III: Attitudes related to police education

Question Title

10. Have you ever had any interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas where you requested their service? Please explain your response.

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Question Title

11. Were you satisfied with the service during the interaction you had with the police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.

Question Title

12. Based on your opinion, have you ever had any negative interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.

Question Title

13. Based on your opinion, was there any type of police misconduct involved during your negative interaction with police officers in Port Isabel, Texas? Please explain your response.

Question Title

14. Based on your opinion, have you ever heard of police misconduct from the Port Isabel Police Department where you were not involved? Please explain your response.

Question Title

15. Based on your opinion, do you trust the police officers to keep Port Isabel, Texas safe? Please explain your response.

Question Title

16. Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel should be required to have some level of higher education prior to being certified to do the job? Please explain your response.

Question Title

17. Based on your opinion, do you feel comfortable with the services provided by the Port Isabel Police Department with the experience, training, and education of the Port Isabel, Texas police officers? Please explain your response.

Question Title

18. Based on your opinion, do you believe criminal justice personnel should be required to complete a minimum amount of annual in-service training to maintain their certification? Please explain your response.

Question Title

19. Based on your opinion, does the public gain trust of criminal justice agencies and police officers who are required to have earned a degree and keep some type of accreditation for the agency? Please explain your response.

Question Title

20. Based on your opinion, do you believe that criminal justice personnel who have some level of higher education will likely not be involved in police misconduct? Please explain your response.

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7. Completion

Thank you for completing the survey!

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