

ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARD
FEMALES IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Masters of Behavioral and Health Sciences
in Criminal Justice Administration

Middle Tennessee State University

August 2014

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In dedication to my beloved grandparents.
Thank you for all your support throughout my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A degree in criminal justice has always been appealing and criminology seemed to be an exciting field of study. However, it was not until 2011 that law enforcement sparked an interest, as I had the opportunity to be a Reserve Officer for the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. During this time, Captain Steve Spence and Sergeant Jon Frazier fully accepted and reinsured my confidence in completing the program. They continue to inspire and believe in my ability to pursue an occupation in law enforcement.

Dr. Lee Wade, committee chair, has offered guidance, time, knowledge, and expertise throughout this entire thesis. His willingness to assist me in this long journey is much appreciated. I would like to extend gratitude to committee members, Dr. Dennis Powell and Dr. Michael Montgomery, for helping make this thesis come together. Also, Dr. Joshua Harms provided assistance in the analysis portion.

My grandparents, James and Kim Johnson, have made this degree possible with their continuous support and faith. Their unconditional love and encouragement motivates me to set higher goals.

I owe each of you a debt of gratitude for the time, support, and guidance that was provided throughout this process.

ABSTRACT

Data submitted by the FBI in 2011 reported females accounted for 12 percent of approximately 700,000 police officers in the United States (Johnson, 2013). The purpose of this study was to assess attitudes and perceptions of police and detention officers concerning physical and emotional capabilities of females in law enforcement based on an attitudinal questionnaire with a five point Likert scale or interview. The researcher interviewed twelve female detention officers, self-administered surveys to fifty-two male patrol officers, and one female patrol officer that participated in both the interview and survey. Data was obtained from a sample of officers employed by Rutherford County Sheriff's Office located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

The findings refute some of the widespread beliefs that female officers are not accepted into law enforcement by male colleagues. The results revealed the majority of males felt better equipped at handling violent situations, but law enforcement should not be a male dominated occupation as females can handle the job. Overall, the results show male officers are not prejudice towards working with females due to their physical and emotional capabilities. The paper concludes by suggesting policies and procedures that may help increase female presence in law enforcement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although females are employed by law enforcement agencies and work together with male officers, acceptance of females in law enforcement remains an issue. The National Center for Women and Policing stated females accounted for 11.2% of all sworn law enforcement personnel in the United States in 2001 (“Equality Denied,” 2001). However, this number slowly increased to 12% by 2011 (Johnson, 2013). Although the number of female officers has slowly risen and evidence shows females perform as well as males, this trend has stalled.

Qualifications for becoming a police officer are dissimilar for females and males as different physical standards exist within some agencies, such as the state of Connecticut and New Hampshire do not require the same amount of push-ups or sit-ups (Kehas, 2014; “Physical Fitness Assessment,” 2012). In 1956, 85% of police agencies required applicants to be 5’8” inches tall (Lord & Peak, 2005). Prior to changes in the law during the 1970s many agencies had minimum height and weight requirements which can be considered biased because females generally have smaller body frames. Female officers are aware of being physically weaker than males and due to this bring different skills to the job, such as better interpersonal communication and less machismo which leads to a less likelihood of physical and emotional confrontation.

Literature indicates widespread bias in police hiring, selection practices and recruitment policies keep the number of females in law enforcement low (“Equality Denied,” 2001). As previously noted, physical differences between genders causes males to have a

negative attitude about the physical and emotional capabilities of females in law enforcement, thus discouraging females from pursuing this occupation. Gender discrimination prevents promotions and female officers are often placed into traditional roles, such as report writing, working with children, or domestic violence which prevents females from gaining knowledge and experience required for promotions and special assignments (Lord & Peak, 2005). In addition, the National Center for Women and Policing found pregnant females are not given light duty while men injured off duty are given lighter assignments (Wells & Alt, 2005). The history of policing, cultural barriers, and social beliefs cause police work to be viewed unsuitable for females as “they cannot cope with danger, do not command authority, and should not be exposed to degradation” (Wormer & Bartollas, 2000, p. 161).

Since law enforcement is a male dominated occupation, it is “feared that its image of masculinity can be tarnished by the presence of females wearing uniforms and carrying guns” (Wormer & Bartollas, 2000, p. 175). Male officers do not want to depend on females for backup and support and society views female officers are attempting to prove the ability to perform the skills of policing as well as males. To support this literature indicates during the 1970’s male officers preferred not to work with female officers as “they were ineffective, incompetent, and too passive to physically handle the job” (Lord & Peak, 2005, p. 67). Yet, females want to be viewed as equal to males and have the same privileges, rights, responsibilities and are just as enthusiastic and committed to being police officers.

Statement of the Research Problem

According to Title VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964, employers are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of gender, yet it still remains an issue in police agencies. The low

percentage of female officers has remained constant over the years and career advancement and equal opportunities remain a struggle in this male dominated occupation (Martin & Jurik, 1996).

In the 1960s, the duties and responsibilities of females in law enforcement began to slowly expand due to legal mandates which created more opportunity for entry and advancement. However, even with these mandates females continue to work harder and longer in entry level positions (Martin & Jurik, 1996). Yet they still have multiple obstacles to overcome with the most common being the negative attitude of male officers who view them as inferior.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if male officers are prejudiced towards working with female officers due to a perceived lack of physical and emotional capabilities by females.

Significance of the Study

This study will examine the improper balance of female officers compared to male officers in law enforcement by attempting to identify some barriers female officers face. Additionally, attitudes and perceptions of female officers will be analyzed to determine if the negativity of males are based on females lacking physical and emotional capabilities. Overall, perhaps the results can be helpful for females by informing them of the perceptions of male colleagues and the law enforcement environment due to the police subculture. Administrators of police agencies will gain knowledge of the different assets females can offer and visualize how both genders working together can better provide assistance to the

community. Furthermore, an increased presence of female officers may lead to more respect from male colleagues by showing females have the physical and emotional capabilities required for policing.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of male officers toward females working in law enforcement?

Plan of Presentation

Chapter two presents a literature review with a historical overview of females in law enforcement, police subculture, and various barriers which impede females from entering law enforcement. Despite struggles to gain acceptance females want to work in law enforcement to make a positive impact on the community.

Chapter three presents the methodology including variables, data collection, research design, analysis, and details about the attitudinal questionnaire and interview questions.

Chapter four presents results derived from the methodology which were compared as a whole and individually based on age, marital status, highest degree of education, and experience on patrol to determine any statistical significance.

Chapter five contains conclusions drawn from the research which suggest policy implications, and provides recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Overview of Females in Policing

The idea of females entering law enforcement was pushed by women's groups who were concerned about the well being incarcerated females. Females first entered law enforcement in 1845, as prison matrons with duties of caring for females involved in prostitution, alcohol abuse, and deterrence of sexual attacks against incarcerated women by male correctional officers and inmates (Lord & Peak, 2005). Unlike male officers, females had moral obligations within their duties. During this time period, females were prohibited from becoming sworn police officers. Gradually, responsibilities of females increased beyond custodial work, but still remained within traditional female roles (Martin & Jurik, 1996).

Alice Stebbins Wells was a social worker with an educational background in theology, who believed professionals working with females and children would be more effective if the individual had authority, and was appointed the first female police officer in the United States for Los Angeles Police Department in September 1910 (Lord & Peak, 2005). In 1915, she served as president of the International Association of Policewomen, whose objectives were "to fix standards for the service of policewomen, to secure the appointment of qualified policewomen, to encourage the establishment of Women's Bureaus in Police Department and to promote such service internationally" (Lord & Peak, 2005, p. 24). By the 1920's, entry of females into law enforcement was increasing and importance of special training for female police officers was becoming clear. In 1918, University of

California offered a course organized by Wells entitled *Women Police and their Work* (Lord & Peak 2005). However, female officers were restricted in number, paid less, selected by different criteria, and assigned to work primarily with females and children until the 1970s (Wells & Alt, 2005).

Leaders for advancement of females realized the various threats posed to males; women's Bureaus were established to help with this progress. Females were not allowed to wear uniforms or carry guns, were required to have a college education, and were held to lower physical standards than male officers (Martin & Jurik, 1996). These differences created tension in the workplace resulting in females feeling un-welcomed within police departments.

During the 1930s, females had difficulties entering into law enforcement as hiring for police departments were at a standstill. Furthermore, the crime control model of police work was developed; this model implemented a military-style command and reinforced males and masculinity for policing (Martin & Jurik, 1996). Females had secretarial duties and worked with juveniles for the following forty years. In 1960, females comprised less than one percent of sworn personnel for the United States. Females remained discriminated against as salary, training, and promotion differed from male officers (Martin & Jurik, 1996).

Changes for females in policing began in the 1960s and 1970s, as females began to have different job assignments. In 1965, Felicia Schpritzer became New York City's first female sergeant (Martin & Jurik, 1996). In 1968, Indianapolis Police Department assigned Betty Blankenship and Elizabeth Coffal to patrol duty (Lord & Peak, 2005). In 1972, Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C. was the first agency to place several

females on patrol duty (Martin & Jurik, 1996). By the 1970s, deployment of female officers were more established as there were approximately six thousand female officers (Lord & Peak, 2005). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped advancement of females as discrimination was illegal in terms of employment.

Throughout history, female officers faced numerous barriers within police departments. In the beginning, administrators, male officers, and officer's wives questioned female abilities to maintain authority and strength that seemed necessary to perform tasks of policing (Rabe-Hemp, 2007). Female police officers were disrespected in forms of harassment and discrimination. Females were not allowed to wear uniforms; however, when female officers advanced to patrol they were forced to wear uniforms designed for males (Lord & Peak, 2005). Before the 1980s, uniforms designed specifically for females were not available. As a result, females wore street clothes, their own skirts, and male officer's uniform shirts. The lack of uniform showed females were not treated equal and were kept from being identified as police officers by the public (Wells & Alt, 2005).

Today, role of females in policing has slightly changed since the early the 1900s. Females are granted a variety of assignments, such as patrol duty, special assignments, and detective work. However, the numbers of female officers compared to male officers remain considerably low (Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). From 1990 to 1999, a 5.3% increase in the number of sworn female officers was seen. Furthermore, 5.6% of females hold top-ranking positions within police agencies (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). This male dominated environment causes difficulties for females to advance in supervisory positions. Policing has

been and still remains a profession that is resistant to accept females (Wormer & Bartollas, 2000).

Police Culture

Due to views of society, gender difference exist causing society to value masculinity over femininity; traits associated with success in policing are considered to be masculine. However, females are considered to be abnormal if they possess masculinity traits (Garcia, 2003). One female officer stated: “If you’re a woman, you have to make less mistakes... a woman must put greater effort into her work... because if you make a fool of yourself, you’re a damn fool woman instead of just a damn fool” (Garcia, 2003, p. 340).

There is a wide assumption on the nature and purpose of police subculture. Majority of policing subculture focuses on masculinity values. This culture values supporting fellow officers in dangerous situations (Garcia, 2003). In addition, subculture of policing purposely involves numerous amounts of stress, shift work, and danger in order to oppress female officers. Although females represent 46% of the nation’s workforce, no policy agency in the United States is equal to that amount. (Rabe-Hemp, 2007).

However, police agencies have an 80-20 secret not discussed. This undisclosed secret is 80% of police officers spend time doing social work type of jobs, such as domestic violence, disturbances of the peace, and traffic; the other 20% is spent fighting crime, such as homicides, kidnapping, and robbery (Garcia, 2003). Yet, police culture teaches recruits the exact opposite and continues to view crime fighting as majority of police work (Garcia, 2003).

Physical Agility Testing

Stereotypical thinking about nature of policing leads to belief that physical strength is the most important requirement for police officers. Therefore, physical agility testing places a heavy emphasis on upper body strength. Many departments require applicants to jump over a six foot wall and immediately engage in another activity; this entire process is timed (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). Due to being a timed task, this could be considered unfair as females are typically shorter than males and will require more time for climbing over the wall. Physical agility testing has little to do with the actual job of policing. This requirement contradicts written policies as many departments prohibit jumping over walls without knowing what is on the other side (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

Physical agility testing is only required for new police officers in many agencies. Current police officers are not held to the any physical standards as there is no routine standard of physical testing (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). In addition, some agencies have different physical requirements depending on gender. For example, the state of Connecticut requires females to complete 32 sit-ups, 23 modified push-ups, and a 1.5 mile run in 15.05 minutes whereas males have to complete 38 sit-ups, 29 regular push-ups, and a 1.5 mile run 12.29 minutes. However, females have a higher requirement than males in the sit and reach portion of the physical agility testing (“Physical Fitness Assessment,” 2012). These different requirements should question if physical abilities of police officers and successful job performances correlate as all officers will engage in the same physical activity. Evidence suggests police agencies should place less emphasis on physical abilities and focus more on

knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful implementation of community policing model (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

Masculinity Study

A 1997 study revealed how a hidden curriculum encouraged aspects of hegemonic masculinity among recruits exists in police academies. Recruits are taught masculinity is necessary to perform duties of a police officer. This research investigated a police academy in a rural county in southeastern USA through personal observation (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Research showed male students and instructors reinforced notions of male being superior to females in police academies, on police forces, and in society. The main focus was how masculinity, a characteristic of police forces is partly responsible for female's low representation in law enforcement, is not developed on the job. However, masculinity is taught in police academies as an implication of professional socialization (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Training academy appears to be the first line of defense to stop females entering policing. Police employment is designed to keep out individuals who do not represent macho traits, such as toughness, bravery, and aggressiveness (Rabe-Hemp, 2007).

Police academy training is recruits' first formal encounter with a police organization and first step in professional socialization. Recruits learn formal curriculum, such as procedures, policies, and practices, but are also taught about masculinity. Masculinity is defined as "socially generated consensus of what it means to be a man, to be "manly," or to display such behavior at any one time" (Prokos & Padavic, 2002, p. 442). Culture of law enforcement is defined around masculinity; therefore, male police officers have drawn on images of a "masculine cop" to enhance their sense of masculinity and to resist female's

growing presence (Prokos & Padavic, 2002, p. 442). These images represent action-filled, exciting, adventurous, and dangerous crime fighters and downplay femininely labeled aspects of the job, such as paperwork and social service (Prokos & Padavic, 2002).

Prokos, who did not identify herself as a researcher, realized as a female in law enforcement there is tension between being accepted by the group and proving capability of performing police work. Male students and instructors emphasized gender difference and acted on stereotypes of female's fragility; this can damage female's progress in policing (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Students and instructors perpetuated the idea females are not qualified for police jobs as males due to being different and inferior. Female recruits learned they would be treated differently from male recruits at police academies and were viewed as less capable and qualified. Males learned females are fundamentally different; therefore, being inadequate as police officers (Prokos & Padavic, 2002).

Barriers

Numerous barriers females face when entering law enforcement can be overwhelming. Behavioral norms of police subculture make it difficult for females to become police officers. The list of barriers includes discrimination, sexual harassment, and attitudes of male officers. Discrimination and sexual harassment are common in law enforcement due to vast population of males compared to females. Negativity of male colleagues was the most significant problem reported by female officers (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

Discrimination

Since the 1960s, various court decisions and legislative enactments have expanded opportunities for females entering male dominated professions. Title VII of the Civil Rights

Act of 1964 “prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, sex, or national origin with regard to hiring, compensation, terms, conditions, and privileges of employment” (Martin & Jurik, 1996, p. 6). Additionally, an amendment of this act prohibits discrimination of pregnancy or related medical conditions; sexual harassment and sexual stereotyping are illegal sex discrimination (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). In 1968, Congress passed the Omnibus Crime Control and Streets Act, which created Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration made it easier for law enforcement to raise educational standards and allowed females an opportunity to obtain a college degree (Scarborough & Collins, 2001). Furthermore, the Omnibus Crime Control Act amended the Crime Control Act of 1973, which prohibited discrimination of females in agencies receiving LEAA funds (Scarborough & Collins, 2001).

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 allowed females the right to compete with males for jobs, promotions, and compensations (Lord & Peak, 2005). However, female officers experience gender discrimination as law enforcement is dominated by males. Female officers feel there is a double standard in performance evaluations forcing them to outperform their male colleagues. In order for females to receive same competent ratings as males, more arrests, recovery of more drugs, and more traffic offenses must be made (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

Although the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 established federal minimum leave requirements for private, state, and local government workers, various agencies have unlawfully discriminated against pregnant employees. Additionally, the Pregnancy

Discrimination Act of 1978 “prohibited discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions as any other temporary disability with regards to benefits” (Scarborough & Collins, 2001, p. 23). Pregnant officers are concerned as notification procedures, availability of light duty assignments, maternity uniforms, and leave benefits are not discussed (Wells & Alt, 2005). Pregnant females should be treated no different than individuals who are sick or injured in off duty accidents. Furthermore, the National Center for Women Policing stated

“Employers are prohibited from forcing a pregnant employee to take disability leave as long as the employee is still physically fit to work. employers may not alter a woman’s assignment against her will based on her pregnancy if that decision is based on stereotypes about what kind of work pregnant women should do or on concerns about how the public or other officers will react to a pregnant officer.” (Harrington, 2004, p. 112)

Study of Gender Discrimination

In 2001, a study examined 7,072 claims of employment discrimination by Ohio Civil Rights Commission during 1985 through 1999. Females accounted for 46% of labor force and filed 28% of discrimination claims. This study found 81% of claims had no probable cause (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). However, researchers believed this is because discrimination is extremely hard to prove. Employers are more cautious and do not discriminate openly since Title VII was passed (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001).

In 19% of claims, departmental policy was the foundation of discrimination. For example, a female officer was disciplined for turning in her time sheet late; this is violation of department policy, but male officers never received disciplinary for turning in late time sheets. Another example included a female officer who voluntarily left the department but wanted to return a year later. The female officer’s job application was denied as she missed

the deadline; however, males were accepted who turned in late applications (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001).

Claims filed by females were gender harassment besides two sexual harassment cases. Reasoning for low numbers of sexual harassment is because officers are hesitant to report these incidents. Females are embarrassed by sexual harassment; furthermore, allegations may come down to her word versus the harasser (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). Researchers concluded individuals who experience discrimination want two things: to be heard, meaning understood, and for it to stop. Most of the time these individuals do not want special treatment or to file a formal complaint; primarily, they want to do their job well (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001).

Older Officers vs. Younger Officers

In 1998, Gossett and Williams conducted research to explore discrimination in law enforcement. By using snowball sampling, 27 female officers in a southwestern metropolitan area were interviewed to determine if female officers had to deal with discrimination. In addition, demographics of individuals who discriminated were examined (Scarborough & Collins, 2001). Seventeen officers felt discriminated against compared to ten officers who felt no discrimination. Officers who felt discriminated against said it was by male co-workers, especially older, white officers. Many participants said older officers told females they should not be in law enforcement. In addition, females felt male officers did not want women in authority positions, were not taken seriously, and had inappropriate behavior directed toward them (Scarborough & Collins, 2001).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and can be broken down into two categories: hostile environment and quid pro quo sexual harassment (Wells & Alt, 2005). Behavior that interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating environment is a form of sexual harassment. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when "submission to or rejection of sexual conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual" (Lord & Peak, 2005, 85).

Captain George V. Robinson of Ocala, Florida, Police Department conducted a study of over 1,200 females in law enforcement; these results indicated 61% have been sexually harassed and 40% stated sexually oriented materials or sexually oriented jokes occurred on a daily basis (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). A 1985 study conducted by Police Foundation found 67% of female officers experienced sexual harassment. A similar study found in medium sized agencies 68% of female officers reported being sexually harassed by a colleague. However, only 4-6% of female officers reported harassments (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). Sexual harassment has become a large financial burden on police agencies. In 1991, a city in California had to pay \$3.1 million to two female officers who were sexually harassed by colleagues. In 1996, a female police sergeant was granted \$1.2 million for being harassed by male colleagues leading to her termination (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004).

In 2000 there were several allegations of sexual harassment among police agencies. Three experienced female officers sued Summit County Sheriff's Department due to being denied promotions. Their attorney claimed a "bullet-proof glass ceiling at the Sheriff's

Department” (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001, p. 291). In addition, three females alleged Pinellas Park Florida City Police Department of sexual harassment. The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department dealt with a sexual harassment case for ten years that cost nearly \$19 million dollars, because a female officer was passed over for promotions (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). Consequently, the department is implementing a no-tolerance policy of sexual harassment and has begun to hire and promote female officers. In National City, California two female officers filed sexual harassment charges as a death threat from a superior and sexist comments occurred (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001). In 1985, a study conducted by Police Foundation stated 67% of females were involved in sexual harassment. In addition, this study found in medium sized agency, 68% of females were sexual harassed while on the job (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001).

Police agencies should implement comprehensive sexual harassment policies and provide adequate training in order to enforce these policies. As sexual harassment is a major issue in law enforcement, this could allow more female officers an opportunity within the field (Slonaker, Wendt, & Kemper, 2001).

Males’ Attitudes and Perceptions

When females enter patrol, their performance is questioned as masculinity is associated with law enforcement. Although numerous studies confirmed females are capable as males in performing law enforcement duties, males continue to believe females cannot handle the job physically or emotionally (Scarborough & Collins, 2001). In 1974, Bloch and Anderson conducted the first study analyzing competency of females in policing. This study compared eighty-six female and eighty-six male officers in Washington, D.C. based on

performance of arrests, levels of patrol activity, and driving ability. This study concluded females and males performed jobs similar and competence were equal (Scarborough & Collins, 2001).

Physical difference is the main reason why males believe females are not equipped for law enforcement. When females are assigned to patrol, society thinks physical strength is irrelevant for policing. Furthermore, females are “mentally weaker,” cannot command public respect, and will expose male’s dishonest activities (Martin & Jurik, 1996, p. 68) Additionally, “integration of women into police patrol work as coworkers threatens to compromise the work, the way of life, the social status, and the self-image of the men” (Martin & Jurik, 1996, p. 68).

Female officers are perceived as a threat due to the public not respecting them. Throughout history, males have viewed females as objects to be dominated rather than authority figures to be feared or complied with. Therefore, male officers fear citizens will resist female officers and this challenge to authority will be generalized to police (Martin & Jurik, 1996). However, this contradicts results of a study that examined how society perceived females in policing. A 1997 study by Leger surveyed citizens of two Kentucky counties, and concluded citizens had a positive attitude and felt females could effectively handle violent situations. Respondents stated females could make competent decisions in emergency situations and are more respectful to citizens than males (Scarborough & Collins, 2001).

Negativity of male colleagues was the most significant problem reported by female officers (Harrington & Lonsway, 2004). Reports show male officers refuse to share

knowledge or teach skills to new female officers. Furthermore, these officers would not assist in physical confrontation or were slow to provide back up (Moyer, 1992). However, some female officers were overprotected by male officers; this does not allow female officers opportunities to take initiatives which are necessary to be an effective patrol officer (Moyer, 1992).

Male officers believe females in law enforcement “cling to traditional sex role stereotypes, the belief in male status superiority based on physical domination, and the view that women cannot be feminine and adequate officers” (Moyer, 1992, p. 294). One male officer stated:

“This is a man’s job. The majority of women are not capable of handling physical encounters on the street... Women rely too heavily on their service revolver... A woman can’t be refined and be a police officer too. Women give up some of their femininity to work this job. How many women do you know that go to work prepared to kill? Women officials have met a negative response... It goes back to home training; how many mothers give orders to fathers?” (Moyer, 1992, p. 294).

Study of Male’s Attitudes and Perceptions

A 1975-1976 study of Atlantic Police Department reported on incorporation of female officers, and found male sub-culture of policing has not made a significant change as male’s behaviors and attitudes are negative towards females. Data was collected as the researcher appeared to be an officer and acted as a partner to male and female officers. The researcher rode five shifts a week for one year (Remington, 1983).

Findings of this study analyzed male officers’ attitudes and behaviors toward female officers. Male officers believed female officers were vulnerable; females could easily be cheated by victims and perpetrators and were less imposing and dominating within physical

presence (Remmington, 1983). Additionally, there were a significant amount of male officers who preferred working with a male partner instead of a female partner. Female officers are not accepted as equally capable as male officers. Thus, males lack confidence in females resulting in controlling behavior on the streets (Remmington, 1983). In this study, male officers stated there is no reason for females to call for back-up, as male officers will automatically show up to a potentially dangerous call. When male and females are partnered, female officer's role is reduced to secretary or assistant by male officers. Female officers would handle paper work; whereas, male officers would drive, dominate calls, and dictate various activities (Remmington, 1983). Females conformed to traditional female gender role in order to be allowed to work in a male environment.

Also, this study questioned female officers' preference for a partner. Ironically, majority of females stated they would prefer a male partner in order to "feel safe" (Remmington, 1983, p. 128). Some females felt certain situations arose where males were more suitable. Females stated they could get along better with male officers rather than female officers (Remmington, 1983). Females in this study had a lack of assurance about themselves of whether or not they could perform duties of police officers as well as males. Lack of self-confidence within female officers makes it difficult to be accepted by society and male officers within a male-dominated field.

Advantages of Female Officers

Reasons why females choose law enforcement are similar to males, such as family or friends in law enforcement or desire to help others. However, other factors exist; females

have been told entering a male dominated career was impossible due to their gender. Also, law enforcement is a more exciting career than most traditional female jobs (Schulz, 2004).

“Well, it’s been so long I think I’ve forgotten. There were lots of reasons. One reason was I was interested in it. Law enforcement offered a variety of challenges, and at that time it was almost unheard of for women to take part in law enforcement careers. I think it was maybe because someone told me I couldn’t.” (Scarborough & Collins, 2001, p. 140)

Despite persistence of discrimination, sexual harassment, and negative male attitudes, females have increased in numbers, gained acceptance, and expanded their opportunities for advancement in policing (Moyer, 1992). Over the years, law enforcement has developed a new strategy called “community policing, a philosophy of policing that is based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in creative ways can solve community problems that relate to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and neighborhood decay” (Wells & Alt, 2005, p. 103).

Diversifying a law enforcement agency by hiring females has helped reduce problems connected with excessive use of force. National Center for Women and Policing has stated hiring more females would result in fewer brutality complaints. This was based on the Christopher Commission report in 1991 of the Los Angeles Police Department during the Rodney King accident (Schulz, 2004). A study done by Harrington and Lonsway from 1987 to 2002 found female officers do use the same level of force as male officer to carry out duties, but females are “significantly less likely to be involved in employing both deadly force and excessive force” (Wells & Alt, 2005, p. 105). Additionally, a report by Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department indicated only 3.4% of 12.6% of female officers were involved with excessive force (Wells & Alt, 2005).

Many females utilize communication skills rather than physical force. Policing philosophy of males versus females are different as researcher Joseph Balkin stated “Policemen see police work as involving control through authority, while policewomen see it as a public service” (Wells & Alt, 2005, p. 105). Studies done in 2000 on the Los Angeles Police Department support the theory female officers are less prone to violence and are more equipped to avoid violent confrontations than male officers. These studies confirmed Harrington’s belief female officers can avoid violence by calmly talking to individuals:

“Women get the same kinds of calls that men get; it’s just that from the we’re young we learn how to de-escalate violence. We’re taught as young girls that when we’re around people who are getting angry, what we need to do is calm them down. Women don’t have their ego invested in winning a confrontation with someone. It’s OK for us to back down or not come out as the strong person.” (Wells & Alt, 2005, p. 106)

Female officers who choose to enter law enforcement are highly committed to the field. Backgrounds of female officers are similar as the majority comes from law enforcement or military families, highly independent, involved in sports, or were raised in a dysfunctional family (Lord & Peak, 2005). Female officers have a desire to make a change in society regardless of obstacles that must be overcome.

Current Status of Females in Policing

Although there are numerous barriers female must overcome in policing, the number of females has slightly increased. Urban community police departments have reported a dramatic increase in the number of female officers: Los Angeles 19%, Chicago 22%, Philadelphia 24%, and Detroit 25% (Rabe-Hemp, 2007). However, rural and small town police agencies have not maintained the same growth as urban agencies as females only

represent six percent of sworn personnel. Therefore, these females are at greater potential for isolation and discrimination. (Rabe-Hemp, 2007).

Rise of community policing has allowed females an opportunity to adopt different skills usually associated with policing. Communication, trust, relationship building, and traits causing females to be outsiders are now embraced by community policing (Rabe-Hemp, 2007). Community policing created new opportunities for females as representation in policing doubled. Increase amount of females impacts police subculture, allows mutual support, and define female's roles in policing (Rabe-Hemp, 2007).

Personal Experiences of Female Officers

In 2007, a study was conducted interviewing twenty-four female officers in order to explore struggles females occur in law enforcement. Participants were asked several questions regarding acceptance of coworkers. Females who felt acceptance discussed three mechanisms to gain status: through a violent show of force, through achieving a rank that demanded respect, or by being unique or different from male officers. All female officers reported incidents of sexual harassment, discrimination, or disrespect that affected their acceptance into policing. The following are direct responses from female officers:

“I got into a car with an FTO that told me, because of my, you're a woman you don't belong on the f-ing job. You won't make it through my f-ing FTO program. Go to work, I am not even here. That was my FTO program.” (Rabe-Hemp, 2007, p. 257)

“I would get called along to go on raids, if they knew there would be children there. Once, we are getting ready for a raid and I looked around and I was the only person there that did not have kids. What was I doing there?” (Rabe-Hemp, 2007, p. 259)

“You gotta play the game if you will, by the rules that are there to get into positions in order to change it. It's growing, is starting to be established, you know women helping women, but the good old boy network has been around for so much longer.” (Rabe-Hemp, 2007, p. 262)

Most female officers experienced an unwelcomed atmosphere as policing is for males. One way females deal with stress and resistance to police work is to accept typical gender roles such as working with children and paperwork.

Despite numerous struggles female officers occur, this study found females do achieve acceptance in their career. Several female officers that interviewed held high rank positions; in addition, females are slowly beginning to have masculine assignments. However, this information contradicts other research which shows no females hold top command or supervisory positions. This issue is a major disadvantage to younger female officers as top ranked female veterans are non-existent causing new officers to be excluded from informal networks. (Rabe-Hemp, 2007)

Study of Gender Differences in Work-Related Violence and Aggression

In the 1970s, research was conducted declaring police work to be “one of the most hazardous occupations and the most psychologically dangerous job in the world” (Santos et al., 2009, p. 137). Recent studies examined frequency of exposure to violence to support this claim. In 1993 to 2002, 636 police officers were murdered and 574,000 were assaulted. In 1996, it was concluded police officers experienced three types of violence: violence from the public, other officers, and officers witnessing violence inflicted by others (Santos et al., 2009). Work-related violence was defined as “any incident where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health” (Santos et al., 2009, p. 139).

Historically, law enforcement has been viewed as a “masculine” profession (Santos et al., 2009, p. 140). This assumption still exists as 80-90% of police officers are male. Females

are thought of as being disruptive “to the prevalent norms and group solidarity of policemen” (Santos et al., 2009, p. 140). Females who enter policing have to deal with sexual harassment and other forms of co-worker-initiated violence. Studies shown females must develop strategies in order to handle the subculture of this environment (Santos et al., 2009).

In 2009, a study examined impact of exposure to violence between female and male officers. This study contained 495 male and 86 female officers from a UK police department. The examiner believed females would experience less violence from the public due to females being less exposed to lower-risk situations, but experience high levels of violence from male officers (Santos et al., 2009). However, results of this study concluded no significant gender differences existed for public-initiated and co-worker-initiated violence. There were small numbers showing females are more likely to be exposed to co-worker-initiated aggression through bullying and sexual harassment; however, these results did not appear continuously throughout the different measurements (Santos et al., 2009).

These findings contradict results of other studies. In 1988, Shapland and Vagg proposed patrol duties are mostly routine. Furthermore, in 1996, Martin and Jurik stated front-line officers must demonstrate a range of skills from community service to public order roles, which are not gender specific (Santos et al., 2009). These results could have developed from police initiatives in British police departments that promote gender equality. Additionally, other research proves female officers use more productive coping than male officers (Santos, et al., 2009).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study attempted to determine if different prejudices existed regarding physical and emotional capabilities of female officers and whether this impacted female's decisions not to pursue a police occupation. The researcher self-administered an attitudinal survey on physical and emotional capabilities to fifty-two male and one female patrol officer by using a five point Likert scale. An interview was conducted of twelve female detention officers and the one female patrol officer in order to understand different obstacles females encounter in law enforcement. In this chapter, variables, research design, data collection procedures, and analysis are discussed.

Hypothesis

Due to policing being a male dominated occupation, the researcher expects to find the following:

Research hypothesis: Prejudices toward females exist more with older male officers versus younger officers.

Null-hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in prejudice of females between older and younger male officers.

Research Design

The researcher used mixed methods, quantitative by attitudinal surveys and qualitative by interviews. Quantitative research contains numerical data; it is “elementally an amount of something” (Berg, 2001, p. 2). Quantification allows observations to be more precise, easier to summarize data, and possibility of statistical analyses including comparing relationships between variables. This research method is often given more respect because it

is viewed as more precise (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011). Although qualitative research is non-numerical, these observations contain more detail allowing a significance of meaning.

Qualitative research refers to “meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things” (Berg, 2001, p. 3).

Triangulation, use of multiple research designs, allows researchers to obtain a better sense of reality; triangulation increases “depth of understanding” (Berg, 2001, p. 6). Every research method has a “different line of sight” directed towards the same objective (Berg, 2001, p. 4). Combining these lines of sight causes a clearer and more complete analysis. In addition, researchers Goetz and LeCompte described triangulation “as a means of refining, broadening, and strengthening conceptual linkages” (Berg, 2001, p. 5). Triangulation has been used to portray multiple data collection technologies designed to measure one theory. An important aspect of triangulation, besides combining research methods, is the attempt to offset threats of validity (Berg, 2001). Furthermore, some criminal justice topics require elements from both methods (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011).

Variables

The intention of this study was to assess if male officers are prejudice toward working with females in law enforcement because of differences in physical and emotional capabilities. In addition, an objective of this research project was to analyze independent variables that may affect how male officers feel about females in law enforcement.

Categorical variables (race, marital status, and highest degree of education) and interval variables (age and experience) were measured by using a survey. A Likert scale survey was used to create an ordinal scale (index) and responses to these questions were used for a

standardized scale. These Likert scales measured the dependent variable, prejudice toward female officers.

Data Collection

The survey and proposed interview questions were approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants were required to sign and adhere to a subject consent form. This was necessary to explain the study to participants and ensure confidentiality. A copy of this consent form is located in appendixes.

A Likert scale survey was designed using nominal and ordinal questions/statements. There were a total of 15 questions aimed at measuring patterns of response among participants; ten questions were designed to measure male attitudes toward female officers and five demographic questions were formatted to have a representation of the population.

Semi-structured interview questions were prepared for female detention officers to examine ideas about working in a male-dominated career; in addition, the reasoning behind not wanting to advance in their career was examined. There were a total of nine questions with three being demographic questions; however, questions developed throughout interviews depending on answers.

Male patrol participants received a consent form, survey, and two envelopes during assigned roll call meetings. A verbal explanation of the survey and instructions to turn it in were given. Participants were instructed to place the consent form and survey into separate sealed envelopes and were allowed to complete surveys privately and turn it in at a later date. Female detention participants were given information about the study and asked to

participate in a short interview. Participants selected a time to meet privately in roll call for a recorded interview session.

Analysis

This study aimed to represent Tennessee officers by choosing participants employed by the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office; however, the actual sample included fifty-two male patrol officers, one female patrol officer, and twelve female detention officers that participated. Each officer was treated as an individual respondent.

Central tendency was measured by mode (nominal data) and median (ordinal data). Central tendency explains univariate distribution which is all values for a given variable for an entire group. In addition, frequency distributions, "a description of the number of times the various attributes of a variable are observed in a sample" of each question were measured (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011, p. 449). This allows readers to know the exact number of occurrences for each question, including demographics.

To determine statistical significance, different analyses were completed to compare variables. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was used to compare variations between multiple groups. An ANOVA test, rather than independent sample t-test, was used as categorical variables had more than two groups and has the ability to test four relationships: nominal x scale, ordinal x scale, scale x nominal, and scale x ordinal. This test is beneficial by comparing every combination of various groups (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011).

In 1990, Pearson introduced an analysis test called chi-square to determine if there was a relationship between two categorical variables. Chi-Square has the ability to test three relationships: nominal x nominal, nominal x ordinal, and ordinal x nominal, based on null

hypothesis which is assuming no relationship between two variables in a population, compares empirical distributions with expected results, and the value is an overall discrepancy between observed distribution and expected distribution of two unrelated variables. However, discrepancy does not prove variables are related because normal sampling error exists. Chi-square has become a significant test widely used in criminal justice (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011)

To determine statistical significance, a standard set of chi-square must be used; therefore, this will require computation of degrees of freedom (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011). As degrees of freedom increases, chi-square increases; this increases probability of seeing statistically significant results. The equation for degrees of freedom is $DF=(row-1)(column-1)$. In addition, higher chi-square value means less probability of sampling error alone (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011).

As stated previously, chapter four will discuss findings, demographics of participants and population, different statistical analysis test, and qualitative data from the interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter will discuss the findings and statistical significance of all data analyzed. Surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis. In addition, demographics of the population along with participants will be discussed. Based upon the nature of the categorical data, the researcher developed a scale of prejudice and compared it to age, race, marital status, education, and years of experience to examine if these variables were significant to determine an outcome. A majority of results were derived from male officers who are employed at the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. Demographics revealed a majority of male participants were white (94.2%), between ages of 26-35 (54.9%), married (80%), with a high-school education (37%), and had 0-10 years of experience on patrol (66.6%).

For comparison, the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office serves a population estimated at 274,454; 74.9% Caucasian, 13.1% African American, 7.0% Hispanic, 3.2% Asian, 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Furthermore, of the total population 50.7% are female (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). As of January 2014, the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office had 93 male patrol officers, 2 female patrol officers (1 with a supervisor position), 56 male detention officers, (12 with supervisor positions), and 17 female detention officers (1 with a supervisor position). The researcher received a 51% return response rate by male patrol officers and a 71% return response rate by female detention officers.

First Analysis-

A frequency distribution was constructed on ten survey questions to determine percentages of each response per each question. For question one: *I believe that law enforcement should be a male dominated field*, 71.2% disagreed, 19.2% were neutral, and 9.6% agreed. Question two: *I would rather have a male officer as a partner than a female officer*, 46.2% disagreed, 36.5% were neutral, and 17.3% agreed. Question three: *Males are better equipped physically to handle violent situations than females*, 25% disagreed, 21.2% were neutral, and 53.9% agreed. Question four: *I feel more comfortable working with a male officer rather than females*, 51.9% disagreed, 30.8% were neutral, and 17.3% agreed. Question five: *I believe that supervisors should be males rather than females*, 78.9% disagreed, 19.2% were neutral, and 1.9% agreed. Question six: *I think that females can handle the stress that is associated with law enforcement*, 1.9% disagreed, 7.7% were neutral, and 90.4% agreed. Question seven: *I consider my experiences with female officers to be positive*, 1.9% disagreed, 5.8% were neutral, and 92.3% agreed. Question eight: *I think that female officers have a less imposing and dominating physical presence than male officers*, 23.4% disagreed, 17% were neutral, and 59.6% agreed. Question nine: *I think that it is fair that some police agencies do not hold females to the same exact standard as males for the physical ability testing that is required for working patrol*, 66% disagreed, 19.1% were neutral, 14.9% agreed. Question ten: *I think that females who enter law enforcement should have to deal with the issues of sexual harassment since they chose to enter into a male dominating field*, 74.5% disagree, 21.3% were neutral, and 4.2% agreed.

Second Analysis-

A scale of prejudice was developed by using score values: strongly disagree received one, disagree received two, neutral received three, agree received four, strongly agree received five. This scale consisted of several questions that affected the score different as some questions increased the score indicating more prejudice whereas other questions decreased the score indicating less prejudice. The scale ranged from 0 to 40; 0 being less prejudice and 40 being most prejudice. After the score value was computed a score of two was added; this was to avoid a negative value in scoring. There were a total of 47 (n=47) surveys analyzed as 5 surveys were incomplete. Score values ranged from 6 to 21 with average score being 14.53. The mode for score was 15 and 16 with 14.9% (See Table 1).

Table 1
Scale of Prejudice (0-40)

N-Valid	47
N-Missing	5
Mean	14.53
Median	15.00
Mode	15
Standard Deviation	3.368
Variance	11.341
Minimum	6
Maximum	21

Four independent variables: age, marital status, education, and experience were measured by using an ANOVA test to determine if these factors influenced the scale of prejudice. Due to a high percentage (96.1%) of participants being white, the variable of race could not be analyzed. A nonparametric scale allowed the researcher to compute correlation between different independent variable's ranks. The only variable to have a significance level

(.032) was marital status (See Table 2). In addition, it is necessary to note that 80% of participants were married.

Table 2
ANOVA Test for Marital Status

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	76.667	2	38.333	3.722	.032
Within Groups	442.833	43	10.298		
Total	519.500	45			

Note: df=degree of freedom

Married and single individuals had an average prejudice score of 15 compared to divorced individuals with a score of 11.17; therefore, married and single individuals are more prejudice than divorced individuals. Standard deviation of single individuals had a less range of score values compared to married individuals (See Table 3).

Table 3
Prejudice Score for Marital Status

Marital Status	n	Mean	SD
Married	36	15.00	3.330
Divorce	6	11.17	2.483
Single	4	15.00	2.828
Total	46	14.50	3.398

Note: n=number of samples; SD=standard deviation

Third Analysis-

As marital status had a statistically significance level, the researcher performed a chi-square analysis test for each question. Two questions had statistical significance.

Question five: *I believe that supervisors should be males rather than females,*

$\chi^2(4,50)=10.01, p<.05$. Married individuals had four who answered strongly disagree,

twenty-six disagree, and ten neutral responses. Divorce individuals had three strongly disagree and three disagree. Single individuals had four disagree. Question ten: *I think that females who enter law enforcement should have to deal with the issues of sexual harassment since they choose to enter into a male dominating field*, $\chi^2(8,46)=16.16$, $p<.05$. Married individuals had eight strongly disagree, twenty disagree, seven neutral, and one strongly agree. Divorce individuals had three strongly disagree, two disagree, and one neutral. Single individuals had one disagree, two neutral, and one agree (See Table 4).

Table 4
Chi-Square Analysis for Martial Status

Prejudice Questions	Chi-Square Results
Question 1	.130
Question 2	.869
Question 3	.679
Question 4	.687
Question 5	.040*
Question 6	.481
Question 7	.933
Question 8	.625
Question 9	.600
Question 10	.040 *

* statistical significance at $< .05$

Female Patrol Officer

The female patrol officer that participated is single and white between the ages of 31-35 and has a high school education with approximately five months of experience as a patrol officer and five years of experience working in corrections. She desired a career in criminal justice “to help individuals who cannot help themselves,” experienced no prejudices by male colleagues, and stated the most difficult obstacle was the academy due to being nervousness. When asked about physical and emotional capabilities of policing, she believed females could perform these duties as well as male officers. She stated “policing duties come down to

training and skill, not physical make-up. Women handle the stress better because we are not afraid to ask for help if needed.”

Also, this female officer participated in the same questionnaire given to male patrol officers. Question eight: *I think that female officers have a less imposing and dominating physical presence than male officers* and question nine: *I think that it is fair that some police agencies do not hold females to the same exact standards as males for the physical ability testing that is required for working patrol* are the only answers that can be considered out of character for female officers (See Table 5).

Table 5
Questionnaire Results for Female Officer

Question	Answer
Question 1	Disagree
Question 2	Neutral
Question 3	Disagree
Question 4	Disagree
Question 5	Strongly Disagree
Question 6	Strongly Agree
Question 7	Agree
Question 8	Agree
Question 9	Disagree
Question 10	Strongly Disagree

Interview of Female Detention Officers

This study interviewed twelve female detention officers employed by the Rutherford County Sheriff’s Office. Purpose of these semi-structured interviews was to examine how females felt about working in a male dominated environment. Open-ended interviews and narrative analysis allowed a systematic look at patterns to determine if there were any similarities among participants. All correctional officers were asked demographic questions

to determine if these variables affected their responses. A table of demographics, including age, education, and experience as a correctional officer, is provided in Table 6. Furthermore, all participants in this study were white. A list of proposed interview questions is located in Appendix D. Responses to this study revealed many females had similar beliefs about working in law enforcement. Responses for each question are explained along with meaningful quotes. First three questions were demographic questions.

Table 6
Demographics of Female Detention Officers

Age	Education	Experience
35	High school	9 years
40	Some college	6 years
40	Associates degree	8 years
61	High school	23 years
60	High school	3 years
60	Some college	9.5 years
45	Bachelor degree	5 years
32	Associate degree	5.5 years
31	High school	9 years
24	Bachelor degree	6 months
30	Some college	6 months
28	High school	8 months

Question 4: Why did you enter into law enforcement?

Four officers mentioned law enforcement was an interest due to the field being exciting and challenging, two officers stated they wanted to make a difference in the community and help others, and job security was mentioned by two officers as crimes will always exist. One response that was particularly different than others was family.

“My father was a law enforcement officer with MPD when I was growing up. I have always looked up to him and he was my hero. I decided to become a law enforcement officer because of him. My father was killed in the line of duty in October 1999 and because he put his life on the line to protect and serve, I decided to do the same.”

Question 5: Do you believe law enforcement to be a male dominated career?

All officers, besides one, answered “yes” to this question. One officer explained in detail:

“If you were to ask what the word sheriff means, the general public would most likely answer with a description of a male in uniform carrying a holstered gun. People do not think of females as a dominant presence in law enforcement.”

The one officer who did not agree with others stated that “law enforcement has been made into a male dominated career. Women can do just as good a job as men.”

Question 6: What are the advantages and disadvantages of having females in a male dominated environment?

Four officers mentioned communication to be a major advantage of females working in a male dominated field as good verbal skills can lead to less physical confrontations. Another advantage mentioned were characteristics and traits of females: patience, supportive, nurturing, and encouraging and other advantages consisted of proving to be equal to male officers.

There were a wide range of disadvantages stated among female officers. However, five officers did have a similar response stating females were viewed as more emotionally and weaker causing issues of acceptance. Other responses consisted of harassment, constantly having to prove themselves, and longer to receive promotions.

Question 7: Do you ever consider working in a different department in the Sheriff's Office, such as patrol?

Four officers responded "yes," two officers responded, "yes, but not to patrol," one officer was undecided, and five officers responded "no." One officer stated:

"Yes, I do want to move up and move out to patrol whether it be at this department or another one. I do my job and I do it well. I would make a good patrol officer. I am honest and straight to the point. I do not sugar coat or bs which is respected my most."

Three of five officers who responded "no" were because of age and physical issues and the two officers who wanted to move to other departments besides patrol mentioned not being able to pass the physical agility testing. In addition, the other two female officers who said "no" were because of not wanting to start over in the department and patrol being more dangerous.

Question 8: As a female officer do you believe that you would be accepted by males if you were a patrol officer?

All female officers, besides two believed they would be accepted by male patrol officers. However, this came with stipulations such as having to prove themselves of being able to perform duties before being accepted. "Some people think a gun and a badge makes the officer, but that is not always the case. Experience and wisdom make better officers no

matter the gender.” Furthermore, one officer stated acceptance would be easier by younger officers than older officers.

Question 9: What is the most difficult obstacle you face by choosing a career in law enforcement?

There were a wide variety of responses to this question but half of officers mentioned acceptance by male officers, respect by public, or promotions. “Being chosen for promotions as there is the ‘good ole boys’ depending on your field of expertise. This has always been considered a man’s field. We are there to fill a quota.” Other obstacles discussed were emotionally and family issues.

Question 10: How do you feel about the physical ability testing that is required for patrol officers as females do not have to meet the same standards as males in some police departments? Does this make males view female officers different as fewer qualifications are required?

Eight of twelve female officers thought physical agility testing should be the same regardless of gender because differences cause male officers to think females are not capable or qualified to be a patrol officer. Other officers thought males should be able to realize females do not have the same physical strengths as male. “I feel the importance of what is probably more important traits in an officer are the ability to remain calm, focused, creative, and quick thinking in extreme duress”.

By comparing qualitative analysis to the results of quantitative analysis, the researcher was able to examine if female officers beliefs were parallel to male officers. Overall, male officers accepted females in law enforcement; likewise, females believed they would be accepted by male officers. Furthermore, females supported equal physical agility

testing because a difference would lead to males thinking females could not physically handle duties of law enforcement. Physical ability was five out of the twelve female officers reasoning for deciding not to work on patrol. In addition, the qualitative analysis allowed an in-depth understanding of a female's view point.

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings, limitations of the statistical analyses, and provide policies and procedures that may help to increase female presence in law enforcement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The intent of this study was to explore perceptions of female officers to determine if prejudices exist within law enforcement. Research was completed by patrol officers at the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office through an attitudinal survey that examined beliefs about physical and emotional capabilities of female officers. In addition, female detention officers were interviewed to explore their thoughts about working in a male dominated career. Barriers were identified in an attempt to correlate these obstacles to the low percentage of females in law enforcement.

Limitations

This study is aimed to be a representation of Tennessee police officers; however, conclusions should not be generalized to other agencies or populations based on the level of statistics and sampling method. Non-probability sampling was used as it was not possible to determine the probability of an individual being selected from the sample frame (Womer & Bartollas, 2011). Furthermore, this study did not contain random selection of participants as all patrol officers and all female detention officers were asked to participate due to the small number of officers employed by the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. Purposive sampling occurred as patrol officers were chosen as participants because the intent was to examine if prejudices exist toward female patrol officers due to physical and emotional capabilities.

Results of this study are limited as tests of statistical significance are constricted. Chi-Square analysis has three major disadvantages: sensitive to sample size as a small sample decreases significance level, sensitive to small expected frequencies, and results do not explain in detail strength of the relationship. ANOVA testing has a basic assumption of

normally distributed data and homogeneity of variance, indicates a difference between groups but does not explain differences, and the possibility of error increases as standard deviations increase between groups (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011).

Findings

Over half (53.9%) of male officers felt they can physically handle violent situations better than female officers and 59.6% felt females have a less dominating physical presence than male officers. Although prior researchers found females are physically capable of performing duties of an officer males continue to be in disbelief. However, reasoning behind these beliefs could be due to the up-bringing of males as society clings to traditional views and has taught females are weaker.

Beliefs of physical agility testing were similar between males and females in this study as the majority of participants stated a different test between genders was unfair. If different physical standards exist between genders this could explain why males think females cannot physically handle law enforcement. However, as stated by Harrington and Lonsway (2004) no standard routine of physical testing exists and this should question how much law enforcement is associated with physical abilities. Although males tend to be unsure about the physical capabilities of females, a majority of participants (92.3%) stated to have a positive experience while working with females. As this study was an attitudinal survey with close-ended questions, the reasoning behind this is unknown.

After completing a frequency distribution, the researcher conducted further statistical analyses to determine if any independent variables affected prejudice of female officers. Based on results, the researcher concluded marital status was the only variable that could have affected the scale of prejudice. This scale was developed by given a numerical rating to

answers from the attitudinal survey taken by patrol officers. Married and single individuals were found to be more prejudice towards females than divorced individuals. Furthermore, married individuals had a higher standard deviation as scores for scale of prejudice had a larger range of values. Therefore, the researcher rejects the research hypothesis as age of male officers did not affect the scale of prejudice.

Policy Implications

Findings of this study contributed to prior research in regards to physical aspects of female officers as 53.9% of patrol officers believed males are better at handling violent situations than females. In addition, interviews of female detention officers revealed a lack of confidence in being able to pass the physical agility testing. Therefore, since it is believed that females struggle with physical aspects of policing, agencies should strongly try to recruit females who are physically fit, such as athletics or come from a military background. A female recruiter would also be beneficial as this shows the agency is willing to hire female officers. Furthermore, to better prepare females of physical and violent situations, various self-defense and physical training classes should be offered by agencies.

Police agencies should continue to reinforce the concept of equality within departments and administrators need to be aware and conscious of the problems that are associated with female officers and law enforcement. Male officers should accept females in law enforcement and embrace different qualities females bring to law enforcement. However, complete acceptance by male officers will be difficult due to the subculture as policing developed from a military background that placed much emphasis on physical strength. Resistance to female's integration is related to the nature of the job and occupational culture.

The work culture is characterized by sexist attitudes of males, heavy drinking, crude jokes, and racism (Martin & Jurik, 2007). Thus, it is important that administration staff understands how the police culture affects females and having female police administrators can be beneficial to ensure equality between genders.

Most importantly, the image of policing needs to be altered; however, this has to start with changing traditional views of society. Increasing overall number of females will cause law enforcement to appear as a less male dominated occupation. Furthermore, hiring more females reduces problems of sexual harassment and discrimination within an agency (Tuomey, 2009). In return, this may cause the beliefs of policing to slowly change.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Within Rutherford County, several other police agencies exist. Therefore, it is possible to expand this study and compare agencies while maintaining the same population. Each agency can be examined to determine if certain characteristics influence the presence of female officers and if any differences exist between larger and smaller agencies.

Although it would significantly increase the length of time, a longitudinal study would be beneficial. The researcher could choose a group of female officers to study over a period of time in order to explore their struggles and progress within law enforcement. This would provide a detailed insight of obstacles encountered by females and level of acceptance by male officers could be examined at different intervals. In addition, a longitudinal study of male officers with an emphasis of marital status would be useful to determine if this variable affected how males felt about the physical and emotional capabilities of female officers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Male Officers



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jessica Green

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Male Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Females in Law Enforcement; Study of Gender Disparity*

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participating at any time during this study without affecting you in any way.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature. In addition, this study aims to analyze the male's attitudes and perceptions of females working on patrol as their professional career.

DURATION

Participation in this study will be in the form of a brief survey.

POSSIBLE RISKS

No risks are known to be associated with participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept in the strictest confidence. The consent form will be kept separate from the questionnaire in order to not be able to link your name to the responses. The principal investigator, Jessica Green, and her thesis committee will be the ONLY parties that will view your responses. The data in this study will be analyzed and reported in a group form.

I understand the terms of this consent form and that my participation will be used for research purposes and any professional presentations or publication that result from this study.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

APPENDIX B

Survey for Male Officers



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jessica Green

PARTICIPANTS: Male patrol officers employed by the Rutherford County's Sheriff's Office

Please circle the answer that best describes your opinion based on the statements provided as responses will be kept confidential. After you have completed the survey, place it in the envelope that is provided and turn it into the roll call box.

Age: 21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 61 & older

Race: American Indian or Alaska Native Asian
 Black or African American Hispanic or Latino
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White
 Other

Marital Status: Married Widowed Divorce Single

Highest Degree of Education: Diploma GED Associates Bachelors Masters
 Doctoral

Number of Years of Experience on Patrol: 0-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25
 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45
 46 and more

Circle your answers below.

1. I believe that law enforcement should be a male dominated field.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. I would rather have a male officer as a partner than a female officer.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. Males are better equipped physically to handle violent situations than females.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. I feel more comfortable working with a male officer rather than a female officer.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I believe that supervisors should be males rather than females.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. I think that females can handle the stress that is associated with law enforcement.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. I consider my experiences with female officers to be positive.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. I think that female officers have a less imposing and dominating physical presence than male officers.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. I think that it is fair that some police agencies do not hold females to the same exact standard as males for the physical ability testing that is required for working patrol.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. I think that females who enter law enforcement should have to deal with the issues of sexual harassment (jokes, comments, etc.) since they choose to enter into a male dominating field.
 Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C

Consent Form for Female Officers



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jessica Green

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Male Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Females in Law Enforcement; Study of Gender Disparity*

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participating at any time during this study without affecting you in any way.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature. In addition, this study aims to analyze the male's attitudes and perceptions of females working on patrol as their professional career.

DURATION

Participation in this study will be in the form of a brief interview that will be recorded using a digital voice recorder.

POSSIBLE RISKS

No risks are known to be associated with participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept in the strictest confidence. The consent form will be kept separate from your interview answers in order to not be able to link your name to the responses. The principal investigator, Jessica Green, and her thesis committee will be the ONLY parties that will view your responses. The data in this study will be analyzed and reported in a group form.

I understand the terms of this consent form and that my participation will be used for research purposes and any professional presentations or publication that result from this study.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Female Officers



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your age?
2. What is your highest degree of education?
3. How much experience do you have as a correctional officer?
4. Why did you choose to enter a male dominated career?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having females in a male dominated environment?
6. Do you ever consider working in a different department in the Sheriff's Office, such as patrol? Why or why not?
7. As a female do you believe that you would be accepted by males if you were a patrol officer?
8. What is the most difficult obstacle you face by choosing a career in law enforcement?
9. How do you feel about the physical ability testing that is required for patrol officers as females do not have to meet the same standards as males? Does this make males view female officers different as fewer qualifications are required?

APPENDIX E

IRB Letter of Approval

March 12, 2013

Jessica Green, Dr. Lee Wade
Department of Criminal Justice Administration
jgreen@mtsu.edu, lwade@mtsu.edu

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

Protocol Title: "Male Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Females in Law Enforcement: A Study of Gender Disparity"

Protocol Number: 13-241

Dear Investigator(s),

The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2). This is because the research being conducted involves the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview intakes or observation of public behavior.

You will need to submit an end-of-project report to the Compliance Office upon completion of your research. Complete research means that you have finished collecting data and you are ready to submit your thesis and/or publish your findings. Should you not finish your research within the three (3) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date. Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Your study expires on **March 12, 2016**.

Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to provide a certificate of training to the Office of Compliance. **If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers and their certificates of training to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project.** Once your research is completed, please send us a copy of the final report questionnaire to the Office of Compliance. This form can be located at www.mtsu.edu/irb on the forms page.

Also, all research materials must be retained by the PI or **faculty advisor (if the PI is a student)** for at least three (3) years after study completion. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jessica Green

Compliance Office
615-494-8918
compliance@mtsu.edu

APPENDIX F

Sheriff Robert Arnold's Letter of Approval



Dear Sheriff Arnold:

The purpose of this letter is to obtain permission to conduct research at the Sheriff's Office. I am a graduate student at Middle Tennessee State University and in order to meet the requirements for a Master Degree in Criminal Justice Administration a student must conduct a thesis. My thesis, "Males Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Female Officers; Study of Gender Disparity" entails for male patrol officers to voluntarily answer a survey that will be distributed and completed during roll call. In addition, all female correctional officers will be asked to participate in a short interview. The intent of this study is to evaluate the male and female perceptions of gender disparity in law enforcement. The data will be analyzed and reported in my thesis and participants will remain unidentified. I would like to conduct this study at the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office with your consent.

Thank you,

Jessica Green

I, Robert Arnold, do hereby grant permission for Jessica Green to conduct "Males Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Female Officers; Study of Gender Disparity" at Rutherford County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff
Title

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature

Robert Arnold
Printed Name

2-11-2013
Date