Southeastern University
FireScholars

College of Education

Winter 2018

THE PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING FROM A LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION'S PERSPECTIVE

James Wyatt Roberts
Southeastern University - Lakeland

Follow this and additional works at: https://firescholars.seu.edu/coe

Part of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons, Education Commons, and the Law Commons

THE PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY POLICING FROM A LAW ENFORCEMENT

ORGANIZATION'S PERSPECTIVE

By

JAMES WYATT ROBERTS

A doctoral dissertation submitted to the
College of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Education
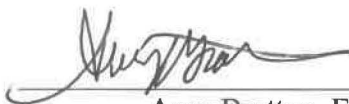in Organizational Leadership

Southeastern University
October, 2018

THE PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY POLICING FROM A LAW ENFORCEMENT

ORGANIZATION'S PERSPECTIVE
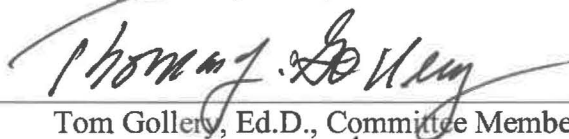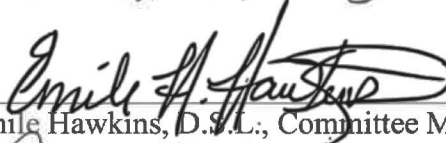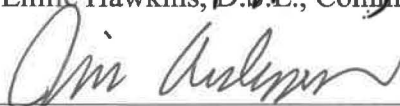
by

JAMES WYATT ROBERTS

Dissertation Approved:

_____

Amy Bratten, Ed.D., Dissertation Chair

_____

Tom Gollery, Ed.D., Committee Member

_____

Emile Hawkins, D.S.L., Committee Member

_____

Jim Anderson, Ph.D., Dean, College of Education

DEDICATION

To all of the men and women that pin on the badge, fasten the Velcro, secure a firearm in your holster, and leave your family each and every day, I sincerely thank you for your commitment and dedication to this profession. You (we) stand between good and evil and have taken an oath to protect the communities we serve. I pray each and every day that you make a difference in your community, are proud of what you are doing, and come home safely after each shift. Please know that our work does not go unnoticed. There is a small segment of the U.S. population that harbors anger towards law enforcement officers; however, the vast majority of the communities we serve respect and honor our profession.

To my daddy, James Wyatt Roberts Sr - you gave me the nickname "Chip" and told others it was because I was a "chip off the old block." I can only imagine the similarities we would have shared had you not left so soon; however, you went to be with the Lord when I was only 12 years old. I hope you are proud of my accomplishments. I wish you could have met my wife and your grandchildren.

To my mom, Mary Elizabeth Boyette - I miss our daily conversations, your sense of humor, and those six little words, "Do you want to come over?" I would give anything to see or talk to you one more time. I am confident you knew just how much you meant to me. You were my biggest cheerleader. I wish you could be here to share this moment with me.

To my children, Reed, Seth, and Bayleigh – thank you for your understanding, love, and support during my educational journey. Not only did this doctoral program interfere with many extracurricular activities, my responsibilities as a law enforcement officer did also. I hope you are proud of me because everything I have done is for each of you.

Finally, to my beautiful wife, Melanie – you are an absolute blessing from God. I do not have any doubt that you are proud of me because you constantly tell me. You are my best friend, biggest fan, and "buddy." You have provided me with so much love and support, not only during my education, but in life. The words, "have faith" will forever be engrained in my head.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I began this journey in the Fall 2015, I honestly did not know if I would complete this program. I was assigned to the Violent Crimes Unit as a Police Sergeant. This position was more than a 40-hour per week job – it required long hours, on call status, and callouts throughout the day and night, not to mention our personal lives were chaotic with weekend rodeos and other personal responsibilities. Now, fast forward three years and I am making plans to graduate in December 2018. This dissertation is the result of a challenging, yet rewarding journey that would not have been possible without the support of some very special people at Southeastern University.

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Amy Bratten, Dr. Tom Gollery, and Dr. Emile Hawkins. I could not have completed my dissertation without each of you. Dr. Amy Bratten – I cannot thank you enough for agreeing to be my Dissertation Chair. Your no-nonsense approach is exactly what I needed to complete this research. Your persistence, patience, and constructive feedback further advanced my writing skills and professional identity. You wore so many hats during this process – Dean of the College of Education, Associate Provost, educator, editor, mentor, and your extensive involvement with the Pathways School of Excellence at Southeastern University. To say you have been quite busy is an understatement, so thank you for agreeing to take on the task of serving as my chair for this research.

Dr. Tom Gollery – you are a blessing to Southeastern University. I sincerely appreciate the wisdom and knowledge you passed onto me during class and in this research. Words simply cannot express my appreciation for your guidance during this journey. Thank you for taking mud and helping me mold it into something I can be proud of. Officially, you were my professor

and methodologist; however, you have become more than that - you are a lifelong friend. I know you personally feel it is an honor and privilege to serve graduate students; however, I believe I can speak for every student who has had the pleasure of meeting you by saying you are a constant source of motivation, and it has been an honor and privilege to work with you during my coursework and this research.

Dr. Emile Hawkins – first, thank you for your service to the United States of America. You have dedicated your life to serving our country, your community, and your students. Your commitment and dedication to servant leadership is what every person should strive to achieve. Thank you for agreeing to serve as a committee member and providing meaningful feedback to this research.

I would like to thank the doctoral faculty at Southeastern University for your professionalism and wisdom during this journey. Each of you are dedicated to lifelong learning and the success of your students.

To my fellow doctoral colleagues in Cohort C, thank you for sharing this experience with me. I looked forward to spending part of the summers with each of you during our intensives. We laughed, cried, and shared so many personal stories with and about one another. Each of you are an extension of my family. Special thanks go to Dr. Aaron Judy and Dr. Dylan Barnes for being my closest friends throughout the program. Our phone calls and text messages served as a constant motivator to "finish the game." To Dennis Webber - thank you for the daily scripture and motivational text messages; they seemed to always come at the correct time in my life.

Finally, thank you to the men and women of the Lakeland Police Department who took part in this research. Many of you know how important this research was to me. Without you, this dissertation would not be possible.

ABSTRACT

Community-oriented policing surfaced in the 1980s as a new philosophy in policing. Despite the widespread community support for community policing, the perceptions of this philosophy from a law enforcement organization's perspective remain unclear. This quantitative, non-experimental research study utilized a survey method to address seven research questions. One large law enforcement organization (sworn and civilian members) in Central Florida was invited to complete a survey to assist in better understanding the role of community-oriented policing and its impact on bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. This study seeks to better understand a law enforcement organization's perception of the community it serves. The 114 participants (77 sworn officers and 36 civilian members) surveyed were found to be non-statistically significant regarding their perceptions of the efficacy of community-oriented policing. Additionally, the findings were manifested to be statistically significant regarding community-oriented policing to be the most effective means for law enforcement to bridge the gap with the community. "Attitude toward the public" was found to be the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing at a statistically significant level.

Keywords: civilian employee; community-oriented policing; community partners; community policing; law enforcement officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

I. INTRODUCTION

Community-oriented policing (COP) is a well-known philosophy with a wide array of policing labels, including broken windows, hot-spots, evidence-based, and intelligence-led policing (Scott, 2016) that identify a law enforcement organization's approach to policing. Due to the popularity of community-oriented policing, an increasing number of law enforcement organizations are implementing this style of policing. Community-oriented policing has "become the dominant strategy of policing for the 1990s" (Rosenberg, Sigler, & Lewis, 2008, p. 293); however, an obstacle these organizations are facing is defining community-oriented policing. The clear concept behind community-oriented policing is that it represents a crime-reducing strategy that focuses on building community partnerships and implementing problem-solving strategies (Rosenberg et al., 2008).

A successful community-oriented policing program must have support and buy-in from the members of a law enforcement organization. Studies have shown that officers' gender and education are significant factors related to their perception of the community (Moon & Zager, 2007). Moreover, a law enforcement officer's buy-in to the philosophy is strongly linked to perceptions of community-oriented policing. Additionally, studies have suggested that tenured officers and unit assignment were significantly related to citizen perception (Moon & Zager, 2007). The role of a law enforcement officer is more than that of a crime fighter; instead, their position requires a myriad of services that bridge the gap between the community and the police.

Rosenberg et al. (2008) emphasized these multiple roles stating,

> Officers are encouraged to redefine their roles from servers of the public to community stakeholders, department structures are flattened so that knowledge

may be diffused across rank allowing greater discretionary power and increased

participatory management among all officers, and police administrators work to

expand the role of officers from crime centered to problem-solving centered,

working *with* communities to solve problems, rather than working *for* them. (p.

291)

The implementation of a community-oriented policing program may look foreign to

members of the community; therefore, educating the public is a critical element in understanding

community-oriented policing. Current research confirms that public trust in local law

enforcement organizations is critical to the success of improving relationships between law

enforcement officers and the community (Khan, Shakoor, Aziz, & Baryal, 2015). In many

communities around the country, African American and Hispanic populations are more

dissatisfied with law enforcement services than the Caucasian population (Cheng, 2015).

The crime rate in a specific geographical location within a community can also have an

impact on the perception of law enforcement. The rising crime rate in the 1970s led to the

dissatisfaction of the standard model of policing (Braga, 2015). American law enforcement

practices had been "criticized as being out of touch with and unsupported by the communities"

(Gill, Weisband, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014, p. 401). The evaluation of law enforcement

officers is affected by their performance regarding the crime rate and the ability to keep

neighborhoods safe (Cheng, 2015). During observational studies, scholars discovered "much of

the police role did not involve crime fighting. Rather, police work involved order maintenance,

service provision, reduction of fear, and conflict resolution" (Gill et al., 2014, p. 401).

Background of the Study

Modern law enforcement operations were founded in England in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). Sir Robert Peel developed innovations such as foot patrol with the goal of preventing or reducing crimes in assigned geographical areas. Foot patrol allowed officers to become familiar with the neighborhood and residents to become familiar with the local law enforcement organization (Stewart-Fisher, 2007).

In the United States, the history of policing can be divided into three separate eras; Political Era, Reform Era, and Community-Oriented Policing Era. The Political Era (1840-1930) was plagued by corruption and political influence. Americans did not trust law enforcement officers based on community assumptions that the police were "in the pockets of big-city politicians" (Stewart-Fisher, 2007, p. 2). When law enforcement was needed, citizens had to pay money to receive these services (Pelfrey, 2004). This type of corruption trickled down from the administration to the patrol officers working closely with the community (Pelfrey, 2004).

The Reform Era (1930-1980), also known as the Progressive Era, saw a shift in the modernization of American law enforcement organizations as administrators introduced procedures and technology to create a distance between law enforcement officers and the citizens (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). During this period, the functions of law enforcement officers were to apprehend criminals utilizing criminal law and to deter offenders from criminal acts. Law enforcement officers were "impersonal and oriented toward crime solving rather than responsive to the emotional crisis of the victim" (Kelling & Moore, 1988, p. 1).

With the crime rate rising, law enforcement administrators realized they needed help from the community (Sozer & Merlo, 2013). Senior command staff realized the police could not address crime and disorder alone. Community support was critical to overcome specific

problems in neighborhoods and biases towards law enforcement officers. In response to this need, the Community-Oriented Policing Era began in the 1980s and is still present today (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). The implementation of community-oriented policing is typically the result of a failed traditional policing approach (Liou & Savage, 1996). Community-oriented policing programs were first implemented in a few large law enforcement organizations as pilot studies, and these pilot studies resulted in a reduced fear of crime and the improvement of police-community relationships (Sozer & Merlo, 2013). This era of policing "promoted a broader role orientation for officers by embracing order maintenance and community policing objectives (e.g. police-community partnerships)" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1250).

In the next few years, clarity was established that community-oriented policing had a positive impact on the reduction of crime and the improved relationships between the police and the community (Gill et al., 2014). As a result of this success, an increasing number of politicians began supporting this policing philosophy (Sozer & Merlo, 2013). By the end of fiscal year 2004, the "Community-Oriented Policing Office had funded more than 118,768 community policing officers and deputies, and the total investment of COPS reached $11.3 billion" (Sozer & Merlo, 2013, p. 507).

Problem Statement

The purpose of this research study is to investigate a law enforcement organization's perception and efficacy of community-oriented policing and whether the philosophy of community-oriented policing is effective in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. The perceptions of community-oriented policing captured in this study are from a single law enforcement organization in Central Florida. Law enforcement perceptions of community-oriented policing are essential to the success of a community-oriented policing

program and the relationship with the community (Moon & Zager, 2007). Likewise, citizen satisfaction and attitudes toward law enforcement are critical in terms of their willingness to become actively involved in issues such as crime in their neighborhood (Lockwood & Wyant, 2014). According to Khan et al. (2015), the "vast majority of police experts and policing literature reveals that the police are usually hostile towards significant portion of the population all over the world" (p. 89).

Significance

Law enforcement organizations are seeking ways to improve the relationship between the members of their organization and the community in which they serve (Moon & Zager, 2007). Comparing the relationship between one large law enforcement organization in Central Florida that currently practices community-oriented policing and other academia may better facilitate understanding of the role community-oriented policing plays in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. Additionally, by studying the perceptions of community-oriented policing in this Central Florida law enforcement organization, this policing philosophy may help improve crime rate, fear of crime, and relationships between law enforcement and the citizens of this community and in other organizations and their communities.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to address the stated research problem, the following research questions and hypotheses were posed:

1. To what degree do the perceptions of *sworn officers* differ from those of *civilian employees* regarding the importance and efficacy of community policing?

2. Does community-oriented policing represent the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates? Are there differences in perceptions concerning

community-oriented policing impact upon the reduction of crime rates between sworn officers and civilian employees?

3. Community-oriented policing is the most effective means of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. Are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon bridging the gap between the law enforcement officers and the community between sworn officers and civilian employees?

4. Considering the elements of *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level*, and *emphasis upon low income neighborhoods*, which element was perceived to be of greatest importance in the concept and effective practice of community-oriented policing?

5. Considering participant gender, ethnicity, attitude toward the public, and years of experience, which represents the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing?

6. Considering participant perception of the role of the media, law-enforcement perception of community support, and role of education-level in matters of community policing, which represents the most robust predictor of overall perceived efficacy of community-oriented policing?

7. Did study participants perceive community-oriented policing as representing a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department? Were there differences in perceptions between sworn officers and civilian employees as to the degree to which community-oriented policing should be embraced throughout the law enforcement department?

Null Hypothesis 1

H_0^1: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the overall efficacy of community policing.

Null Hypothesis 2

H_a^2: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which law enforcement officials' lower crime rates.

H_0^{2a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perception of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in reducing crime rates.

Null Hypothesis 3

H_0^3: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which law enforcement officials bridge the gap with the community.

H_0^{3a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in bridging the gap with the community.

Null Hypothesis 4

H_0^4: Participants' perceived importance of the community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level as the most important amongst *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level*, and *emphasis upon low income neighborhoods*.

Null Hypothesis 5

H_0^5: Participant *Attitude toward the Public* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

Null Hypothesis 6

H_a6: Participant perception of *Community Support* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

Null Hypothesis 7

H_07: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

$H_0{7a}$: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

Methodology

The research design and methodology for this research study is broadly quantitative, non-experimental, and more specifically, survey research. The study's sample was non-probability in nature and convenient by definition. The sample of study participants was identified through access to a master list of employees of a large law enforcement organization in Central Florida. It was foreseen that the study's sample of prospective participants might be comprised of 239 sworn law enforcement officers and 117 civilian members of the law enforcement agency identified for study purposes.

This research instrument represents a refinement of a survey instrument utilized in the pilot study that fostered the current study. The piloted study's original 23-item format was reduced to 15 items through internal reliability and item analysis procedures. The internal consistency of response by participants in the pilot study was considered acceptable for a novel research endeavor, nearly reaching what is expected ($a = .70$) in researcher-constructed research instrumentation ($a = .66; p < .001$). The item narrowing and refining process from the pilot

8

study to the study's current research instrument is expected to yield internal consistency of participant responses at a much higher level ($a \geq .80$). The study's 15-item research instrument format was comprised of a five-point Likert scale in which 5 represents the strongest agreement with the item and 1 represents the strongest disagreement with the item. (See Appendix for the study's complete 15-item survey instrument).

Analysis

Data Analysis

Prior to addressing the research questions in this research study, preliminary analyses were conducted. Specifically, missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to survey items, essential demographic data, and dimension reduction of survey items were analyzed and reported.

Preliminary Analyses

Missing data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages comprised the primary statistical methods of analysis and interpretation. Little's MCAR test statistic was utilized to evaluate the randomness of subsequent missing data. An MCAR value of $p > .05$ is considered indicative of missing data that are sufficiently random in nature.

The internal consistency or reliability of participant to the survey items were addressed through the application of Cronbach's alpha *(a)* test statistic. The statistical significance of *a* was assessed through the *F*-Test. The value of $p < .05$ was considered statistically significant.

The study's essential demographic information was assessed using descriptive statistical techniques. The mean, standard deviation, frequency counts (n), and percentages (%) represented the primary methods of descriptive analysis.

Limitations

Although this study was intended to provide perceptions of community-oriented policing from a law enforcement organization's perspective, there were limitations to this study. First, the sample size was a convenient sample drawn from only one law enforcement organization in Central Florida. Therefore, the outcome of the research may not be representative of all law enforcement organizations in Central Florida or around the country. As such, a larger sample may have produced more evidence. Second, the outcome of the research may not represent the perceptions of law enforcement officers from the perspective of the community in which this research was conducted. This research only focused on the perceptions of community-oriented policing from a law enforcement organization's perspective. Third, this researcher solicited responses from an electronic survey of only Likert-scale items, which limits the types of responses evaluated. This researcher recognizes that a qualitative or mixed-methods research might have drawn additional information from each participant as they are designed to elicit participant's everyday perspectives. Finally, the survey instrument was made available to participants for a period of 10 days. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012), "the rule of thumb for your survey response rate, based on a good sample, is 50%" (p. 193). The return rate for this study was 32%. A more robust response rate may have occurred if the survey instrument were made available for a longer period of time.

Definition of Terms

Community Partnerships

The U.S. Department of Justice defined community partnerships as "collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police" (p. 2).

10

Community-Oriented Policing

The U.S. Department of Justice (2014) defined community-oriented policing as a

philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of

partnerships and problem-solving techniques between the police and the community.

These strategies proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public

safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (p. 2).

Sworn Officer

A sworn officer is an employee of a local law enforcement agency who is an officer

sworn to carry out law enforcement duties. Examples of this class are sheriffs, deputy sheriffs,

chiefs of police, city police officers, and sworn personnel of law enforcement subunits of port

and transit authorities. For national-level general data, this class includes campus police officers

employed by local city and community college districts (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Civilian Employee

Civilian police employees are non-sworn personnel who do not take an oath and are not

empowered to make arrests. Today, civilians perform a wide range of jobs previously done by

law enforcement officers, typically as a way to reduce costs or improve services (Forst, 2000).

Summary

Community-oriented policing is a policing philosophy that is designed to build bridges

between law enforcement officers and the community. Community-oriented policing has

become the primary policing function for many law enforcement organizations around the

country. A successful community-oriented policing program must have buy-in from the

members of the law enforcement organization. Law enforcement organizations must also

educate the public what community-oriented policing looks like. The public must trust their local law enforcement organization before this policing philosophy is successful.

The fear of crime and the crime rate have a direct impact on the perception of law enforcement. Public perceptions of law enforcement organizations are directly related to the crime rate in a specific geographical location within a community. Additionally, a law enforcement officer's attitude is attributed to the success of a community-oriented policing program. If members of the community do not trust their local law enforcement organization, they will be reluctant to become involved in matters that impact the crime rate. Citizens will also be reluctant to report criminal activity to the police.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Community-oriented policing (COP) is a non-traditional policing philosophy designed to change the methods in which law enforcement organizations approach the very nature of policing (Rosenberg et al., 2008). According to Uluturk, Guler, and Karakaya (2017), "COP is the only form of policing available for anyone who seeks to improve police operations, management, or relations with public" (p. 1947).

There are many obstacles law enforcement organizations face in their attempt to implement and operate a successful community-oriented policing program. Community-oriented policing has "become the dominant strategy of policing for the 1990s" (Rosenberg et al., 2008, p. 293). Tillyer (2018) stated that community-oriented policing is "arguably the most prolific and influential organizational philosophy within policing over the last forty years" (p. 526). Community-oriented policing is a philosophy that incorporates non-traditional policing practices that emphasize crime prevention strategies to decrease crime, reduce the fear of crime, and improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community (Gill et al., 2014). While community-oriented policing is not a specific program for fighting crime, it does bring a variety of resources to address specific community needs (Braga, 2015).

According to Reisig (2010), "community policing redefines the relationship between the public and the police" (p. 19). Law enforcement organizations that operate under a community-oriented policing philosophy tend to "embrace a larger vision of the police function" (Braga, 2015, p. 11). Instead of merely responding to calls for service, police officers work with citizens to improve neighborhood quality of life by identifying problems, maintaining surveillance, and

helping to prevent crime" (Reisig, 2010, p. 19). In an effort for community-oriented policing to

be successful, law enforcement officers should draw upon community stakeholders to address

crime reduction, fear of crime, and community satisfaction (Gill et al., 2014).

Community-Oriented Policing Defined

Community-oriented policing is constantly evolving; therefore, the definition may vary

from one organization to the next. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS

Office) defined community-oriented policing as a "philosophy that promotes organizational

strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to

proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime,

social disorder, and fear of crime" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, p. 1).

According to Ikuteyijo (2009), community-oriented policing is a "philosophy of full

service personalized policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a

permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to

identify and solve problems" (p. 299). The philosophy behind community-oriented policing is

centered on "organizational change, increased public accountability, decentralized command,

and empowerment of line officer" (Lumb & Breazeale, 2002, p. 92).

The philosophy of community-oriented policing is much different than reactive policing

– it is centered on a proactive strategy to fight crime by implementing a community approach to

information sharing and problem solving (Uluturk et al., 2017). "Community policing is

designed to minimize social distance between the police and the public" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p.

321). Additionally, community-oriented policing is a policing philosophy that "emphasizes the

development of partnerships between the police and the community to address a multitude of

outcomes including crime, fear of crime, police legitimacy, and citizen perceptions of disorder" (Tillyer, 2018, p. 526).

Community-oriented policing places a tremendous amount of emphasis on improving police-community relationships by engaging citizens and seeking to build partnerships that would enhance safe communities through proactive policing efforts (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). In a 1997 Police Foundation survey, all police departments in U.S. municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 who responded, reported that they had adopted COP, with 85% of the total sample claiming that they had adopted or planned to adopt it (Gill et al., 2014, p. 402). In summary, "community policing is designed to minimize social distance between the police and the public" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 321).

Historical Development of Policing

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel developed modern policing in England with the creation of the London Metropolitan Police District (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). Sir Robert Peel ensured law enforcement officers, called Bobbies, operated under a paramilitary style structure where officers walked beats and enforced laws (Allison & Wadman, 2004; Stewart-Fisher, 2007). Bobbies is a slang term for the London Metropolitan Police. They were also considered "Peelers" based on Sir Robert Peel's last name (Uchida, 1993). Policing in the United States was developed in a fashion similar to England, and most U.S. cities established municipal law enforcement organizations by the Civil War (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). Police officers were used to control certain segments of the population, such as slaves, and they provided other services such as "maintaining health and sanitation, regulating commerce, and controlling vices" (Stewart-Fisher, 2007, p. 2). Policing has been rooted in slave patrols by being tasked to catch and return slaves when they fled, which caused hatred and mistrust of the police (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

15

There is some concern that the hostility towards law enforcement today is deeply rooted in the history which dates back to slavery (Alexander & Gyamerah, 1997; Johnson & Secret, 1990). The following is a description of this history:

> The fact that the legal order not only countenanced but sustained slavery, segregation, and discrimination for most of our nation's history, and the fact the police were bound to uphold that order, set a pattern for police behavior and attitudes toward minority communities that has persisted until the present day. That pattern includes the idea that minorities have fewer civil rights, that the police have little responsibility for protecting them from crime within their communities. (Williams & Murphy, 1990, pp. 4-5)

Community perceptions of the police are generally negative among African-Americans "due to the history of poor treatment of minorities" (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016, p. 385).

Prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, policing spanned three eras: political, reform, and community (Oliver, 2006). The Political Era of policing (1830-1930) began with the implementation of the first law enforcement organization in the United States (Brooks et al., 2016; Oliver, 2006). By the 1882, all major cities in the United States had implemented a municipal law enforcement agency (Brooks et al., 2016). The Political Era was marked by corruption due to the decentralization of their assigned responsibilities and poor supervision (Stewart-Fisher, 2007; Oliver, 2006). According to Oliver (2006), policing in the Political Era was not popular and only served to benefit politicians rather than controlling crime, maintaining order, or delivering other services.

The Reform Era of policing (1930s-1970s) created a model that would control the police and allow them to be more entrenched in the law (Oliver, 2006). This era adopted the use of

technology such as police radios, vehicles, and telephones (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). The Reform Era created a detachment from the citizens police served, which generated new problems. Law enforcement personnel no longer walked beats and knew citizens by their first name (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). The law enforcement profession has witnessed a tremendous amount of dramatic changes during the last few decades. Many citizens would suggest that chief among these changes have been the overall lack of professionalism of law enforcement officers (Bumgarner, 2002).

Due to the civil unrest and rising crime rates during the Reform Era, law enforcement administrators realized a change was needed; administrators realized that their officers needed to become more involved with the community (Stewart-Fisher, 2007). It became obvious that the former methods of law enforcement operations were not successful and there was a need for a new approach – community-oriented policing (Lumb & Breazeale, 2002).

The need for a new approach led to the third era of policing – the Community Era. The Community Era of policing began in the 1970s and focused more on community support and crime control (Oliver, 2006). "Community policing programs became immensely popular in the United States (as well as in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and other countries) over the course of the 1990s" (Braga, 2015, p. 8). "By 1999, over 90% of police departments in large urban areas reported that they employed fully-trained community-oriented policing officers" (Braga, 2015, p. 8). The deployment of police officers went back to the Reform Era, and officers were assigned to foot patrol, bicycle patrol, and some agencies even had mounted patrols (Oliver, 2006).

Law enforcement administrators decentralized their police services and began operating out of shopping malls and public housing apartments (Oliver, 2006). As a result of these changes, the quality of life and citizen satisfaction improved (Oliver, 2006). Reisig (2014) suggested law enforcement organizations have adopted and implemented different approaches to community-oriented policing over two decades; however, the results vary because of different geographical locations and specific resources needed.

Crime Rate

Law enforcement organizations around the country have implemented community-oriented policing programs in an effort to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for their citizens (Reisig, 2010). Community-oriented policing is not a philosophy designed solely on improving police-community relationships, it also incorporates a problem-solving component that gives citizens the tools in identifying and understanding the issues of crime reduction and the fear of crime (Gill et al., 2014). Community-oriented policing also differs from traditional policing in that members of the community are encouraged to become involved in improving their own quality of life (Ikuteyijo, 2009).

One of the main goals behind the implementation of community-oriented policing is crime reduction. "Controlling disorder and fear is often as important as enforcing the law" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1247). However, there are a myriad of other roles of community policing to include: reducing fear, addressing social disorders in the community, and improving relationships with the residents (Gill et al., 2014). An abundance of evidence suggests that specialized programs, such as community-oriented policing, can have an impact on the reduction of crime, which would improve neighborhood conditions and residents' quality of life (Reisig, 2010). According to Reisig (2010), "bringing residents together in a forum that encourages

interaction and dialogue and the facilitation of collaborative efforts to improve the neighborhood conditions (e.g., reduce disorder) may enhance levels of collective efficacy and reduce crime in the long run" (p. 39).

Crime rates provide a standardized measure of reported criminal behavior in a community (Boivin, 2013). Crime is one of the most important factors in determining the quality of life in a particular community (Pyrooz, Decker, Wolfe, & Shjarback, 2016). It can be assumed that the population of a community has an impact on the number and types of crimes committed (Boivin, 2013).

According to Braga (2015), "even though it is difficult to specify their exact contributions, innovative policing strategies are commonly credited as plausibly being among the influential factors in the 1990s crime drop" (p. 9). According to the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data, the United States experienced a sharp decline in crime during the 1990s (Braga, 2015). The UCR report indicated violent crimes dropped 33% between 1991 and 2000, and property crimes were reduced by 29% during this same period (Braga, 2015). According to Braga (2015), "community policing and problem-solving approaches were recommended as potentially powerful enhancements to traditional police crime reduction strategies" (p. 7).

Evidence suggests that if law enforcement organizations changed their approach to crime control and prevention, the crime rate may decrease (Braga, 2015). "The police are the most prevalent, visible embodiment of formal control" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1247). Officers should spend less time in their vehicles and look for alternatives to patrol strategies (i.e., foot and bicycle patrol) (Reisig, 2010). Directed patrol activities to reduce the possibility of criminal activity have become a common practice within many law enforcement organizations (Barthe &

19

Stitt, 2011). For community-oriented policing programs to be successful, officers must be

proactive and seek out opportunities to have "face-to-face interactions with the general public"

(Reisig, 2010, p. 5). Increasing law enforcement presence in communities is considered to be a

viable crime reduction strategy due to the fear of criminal apprehension (Barthe & Stitt, 2011).

Braga (2015) stated,

> A review of the available evidence would lead most observers to conclude that the
>
> police can reduce crime if they take a focused approach to addressing recurring
>
> crime problems, engage the community and a diversity of partners, and
>
> implement tactics and strategies appropriately tailored to the conditions that give
>
> rise to crime problems. (p. 2)

 "Crime rates provide a well-known and easy-to-understand standardized measure of the

level of criminal activity in places" (Boivin, 2013, p. 263). In communities where crime rate is

high, victims and community members feel neglected by the police (Gau & Paoline, 2017).

Individuals who live in low-income communities are statistically more likely to become a victim

of a crime rather than an individual living in a more economically affluent community

(Barthelemy, Chaney, Maccio, & Church II, 2016).

In Flint, Michigan, Reisig (2010) found that the crime rate decreased in study areas,

except for robbery and burglary. However, Reisig (2010) noted that these serious crimes were

significantly higher in other parts of the city where foot patrols were absent. A subsequent study

in Newark, New Jersey found similar findings of foot patrols; whereas, the perceptions of crime,

public disorder, and police service were all positive (Reisig, 2010).

It can be assumed that the population and conditions of a community have an impact on the number and types of crimes committed (Boivin, 2013). For example, youth gun violence soared in the 1980s and 1990s due to the crack cocaine epidemic in poor, disadvantaged neighborhoods (Braga, 2015). Studies suggest that the more concentrated areas of disadvantaged population play a significant role in the negative perceptions of police officers (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

In order for the police to address crime in society, they must rely on the cooperation from the citizens. Law enforcement officers often respond to crime after it has occurred (reactive) (Nix, 2017). Long-term crime prevention requires communities to become involved in their own neighborhoods and develop strong procedures in which residents report crime to their local law enforcement organization (Gau & Paoline, 2017). Law enforcement officers are less effective in addressing crime rates if they do not have the confidence and support from the community (Nix, 2017; Perkins, 2016). Transient populations of renters versus homeowners reduces the likelihood that they (renters) are willing to get involved and assist the police in law enforcement matters (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

Police administrators do not have control over two key components: the time a crime is committed and the response time of an officer (Braga, 2015). Law enforcement organizations placed an emphasis on response times to calls in an effort to reduce crime by apprehending offenders. Unfortunately, studies reported that increased focus on response times had little effect on the clearance rates (Braga, 2015). Most law enforcement operations are considered reactive, in that, police officers respond to a complaint only after a crime has been committed (Braga, 2015).

Routine activity theory asserts that crimes are more likely to occur when there is a "willing offender and a suitable target" (Boivin, 2013, p. 266). Law violators typically commit crimes in communities in which they reside or are familiar (Barthelemy et al., 2016).

A study was conducted by Brand and Birzer (2003) following the implementation of a community-oriented policing program in Choteau, Oklahoma to determine the effectiveness of the program. The population size was 1,500 residents, and the researchers concluded that citizen perceptions, quality of police services, and crime improved significantly (Sozer & Merlo, 2013). Additionally, in Chicago, a two-year community-oriented policing field test was conducted, and the findings were encouraging. The findings included a decrease in the perceived crime problems; robbery and auto theft declined; residents had a more positive attitude towards law enforcement officers; and, leaders within the organization became more optimistic about the success of the program (Ikuteyijo, 2009).

Using panel data (1995-1999) from 6,100 cities, two community-oriented policing programs showed a significant decrease in violent and property crimes in cities with a population exceeding 10,000 residents (Reisig, 2010). Additionally, panel data (1990-2001) from 2,074 cities discovered that four types of crimes (motor vehicle theft, burglary, robbery, and aggravated assault) decreased in the years following the implementation of community-oriented policing (Reisig, 2010). "Scholars have suggested that community policing might have a general role in the last decade's crime drop" (Sozer & Merlo, 2013, p. 507).

Fear of Crime

According to Luo and Zhao (2017), the "fear of crime reflects the perceived danger or risk that people feel regarding their surroundings" (p. 3). A broader definition was provided by Ferraro

22

and LaGrange (1987), stating that the fear of crime is a phenomenon that "refers to the negative emotional reactions generated by crime or symbols associated with crime" (p. 73). Extensive research has shown that the fear of crime has a significant impact on behaviors and lifestyles (Liu & Polson, 2016).

The goal of fear-reduction in the United States has been a long-standing goal of the Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program since its creation (Drakulich, 2013). COPS is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice and is partly responsible for improving the practice of community policing with local, state, and tribal jurisdictions. Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested over $14 billion to enhance community-oriented policing across the country (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). The fear of crime is a concern for community members, which often prohibits them from enjoying outdoor activities (Barni, Vieno, & Russo, 2016). Citizens who are afraid of criminal activity tend to avoid the public and withdraw from social activities to avoid becoming a victim to criminal behavior (Luo & Zhao, 2017). "Residents may experience reduced quality of life arising from fear of crime, the presence of incivilities, isolation from the city at-large, and mistrust in police" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1248).

Although anyone can become a victim to a crime, there are some regions that are more prone to criminal activity than others. Specifically, "poor neighborhoods frequently have higher levels of unemployment, single parenthood, juvenile delinquency, and criminal activity" (Barthelemy et al., 2016, p. 414). Although some studies suggest that community policing strategies do not contribute to the decline in the crime rate, research does reflect these strategies have been effective in reducing fear of crime and increasing citizen satisfaction and support of law enforcement officers (Sozer & Merlo, 2013).

Barthelemy et al., (2016) suggested that increasing police presence does not reduce crime. However, increasing police presence will increase positive perceptions of law enforcement, reduce the fear of crime in certain communities, and increase their desire to cooperate and work with law enforcement. Police visibility has a positive impact on the safety of citizens (Cheng, 2015). Activities such as foot and bicycle patrol that increase the opportunities of police-citizen contact have been shown to reduce fear in crime (Gau & Paoline, 2017). Citizens tend to fear crime less when community support and social ties were strong (Luo & Zhao, 2017). Communities that have a sense of connection with their local law enforcement organization tend to fear crime less (Gau & Paoline, 2017). Likewise, "officers aligned with such approaches express more positive attitudes about serving the public" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1250).

Individuals residing near neighborhoods with higher crime rates reported to be afraid of violent crimes more than any other type of crime (Barton, Weil, Jackson, & Hickey, 2017). The fear of crime is not only predicated on personal victimization, but also the empathy for other crime victims contributes to this phenomenon as well (Bain, Robinson, & Cosner, 2014). It is argued that residents with financial resources will flee communities or withdraw from social activities if they fear being victimized from criminal activity (Drakulich, 2013).

The Broken Windows Theory argues that the fear of crime is more common in neighborhoods where there are signs of crime such as broken windows, fights, vandalism, and graffiti (Barton et al., 2017). Based on the condition and appearance of these neighborhoods, citizens are reluctant to invest in and spend time out of their homes engaging in community discussions (Barton et al., 2017). In two separate studies, researchers found that the fear of victimization was drastically higher in neighborhoods considered to have a higher crime rate

(Brunton-Smith & Sturgis, 2011; Kruger, Hutchinson, Monroe, Reischl, & Morrel-Samuels, 2007).

Typically, law enforcement services are allocated based on community needs. Areas considered to be high-crime neighborhoods receive the greatest attention of law enforcement presence, whereas, communities with a lower crime rate, typically do not (Bain et al., 2014). When communities appear to be disorganized and citizens appear to be disinterested in their neighborhoods, criminal activity will flourish, which encourages citizens to feel unsafe (Barton et al., 2017).

Liu and Polson (2016) suggested that African Americans experience social vulnerability due to their minority status. African Americans feel even more vulnerable because their communities are often exposed to increased criminal activity and police presence (Liu & Polson, 2016). Various assessments identify "women, racial and ethnic minorities, unmarried individuals, and those who had experienced victimization" (Barton et al., 2017, p. 1759) as more vulnerable to the fear of crime.

The subcultural diversity perspective identified two types of vulnerability: physical and social. For example, older men and women perceive themselves as weak; therefore, they feel more prone to physical attacks (Liu & Polson, 2016). Additionally, the declining physical health of many adults plays a key role in their vulnerability, while many women are fearful that any physical attack would escalate into sexual assault (Liu & Polson, 2016). Scholars have identified a subcultural diversity perspective that argues "individuals experience higher levels of fear when they live among people from different racial and ethnic groups than themselves" (Liu & Polson, 2016, p. 308).

Research suggested that non-victims of crime behavior express a lesser degree of fear than those individuals who have been victimized in the past (Luo & Zhao, 2017). There are certain factors that contribute to a higher fear of crime, which include "age, race, sex, socio-economic status, and whether the individual was previously victimized by crime" (p. 1758). According to a study, Barton et al. (2017) stated that "one-third of Americans were concerned about being victimized by a crime in an area within one mile of their neighborhood, although crime rates have declined dramatically since the early 1990s" (p. 1758). This fear of crime can also lead to neighborhood dissatisfaction, community isolation, and declining levels of trust (Liu & Polson, 2016).

Community Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Literature suggested that law enforcement organizations investigate potential police candidates on topics related to their suitability for duty, which include psychological and cognitive characteristics, communication skills, and personal fitness level (Birzer, 2008). However, one factor that is not taken into consideration is citizens' perceptions of the desired qualities of a good police officer (Birzer, 2008). According to Wu, Sun, and Triplett (2009), since the 1960s, extensive research has been conducted addressing the perceptions of the police. The evidence suggested that citizens' perceptions of law enforcement have been positive and supportive (Wu et al., 2009).

The paramilitary structure of law enforcement organizations has "created a growing social gap between the police and citizens, encouraging citizens to ignore police directives and disrespect the police" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 327). Many law enforcement organizations are implementing programs such as the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in an effort to be more visible to the community (Merritt & Dingwell, 2010). People's perceptions of an

effective community policing program can have a direct impact on their attitudes towards police (Lee & Gibbs, 2015).

The image of a law enforcement officer is essential to the overall effectiveness of a community-oriented policing program (Ikuteyijo, 2009). Each segment of the community is different, and each segment's problems may require different law enforcement approaches. Policing is not a "one-size-fits-all model" (Perkins, 2016, p. 114). Officers must transition from routine patrol techniques to community policing by taking the extra time to listen to residents' concerns and taking an interest in their community (Reisig, 2010).

Community members residing in areas where law enforcement officers conduct routine foot patrols expressed higher satisfaction with the police and felt safer (Reisig, 2010). In fact, citizens complain to their local law enforcement agency when they do not see officers patrolling on foot (Merritt & Dingwell, 2010). One of the key complaints is that "police officers patrolling in cars are less approachable and do not know their communities as well as officers patrolling on foot" (Merritt & Dingwell, 2010, p. 394).

Organizations currently practicing community-oriented policing or those interested in beginning "should cut across ethnic, religious, occupational, and age groups in order to make it all-encompassing and cater to the interest of every member of the community" (Ikuteyijo, 2009, p. 291). A community's involvement in efforts to help police solve crimes and improve their own quality of life might change the residents' feelings towards law enforcement (Cheng, 2015).

Community perceptions of law enforcement can differ significantly depending on the geographical area and social characteristics of a community (Perkins, 2016). Lee and Gibbs (2015) found that residents, especially African Americans view "police misconduct as less of a

problem when they also believed police were more attentive to community concerns and worked

with citizens to solve problems" (p. 321). The relatively low complaints of police misconduct

can have a tremendous impact on community perceptions of law enforcement. However,

following higher reports of police misconduct, the community loses confidence in their local law

enforcement organization, and police officers' ability to effectively bridge relationship issues and

lower crime will be significantly diminished (Perkins, 2016). This widespread impact could

have a negative effect on all law enforcement organizations across the country (Cheng, 2015).

Previous studies indicate that citizens' perceptions of police officers are generally positive.

However, scholars have identified certain factors that negatively impact citizens' perception such

as "race, age, gender, and education" (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016, p. 384).

Research suggested that neighborhood status plays a significant role in determining job

satisfaction with law enforcement officers (Wu et al., 2009). Further research has found that

communities with various structural characteristics and low-income housing or communities

occupied by a large African-American population tend to be less favorable of police officers than

Caucasians (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). Literature suggested that ethnic minorities have

negative perceptions of law enforcement (Barthelemy et al., 2016; Peck, 2015; Wu et al., 2009).

Criminologists have observed a striking trend that low-income neighborhoods tend to display a

greater hostility towards the police when compared to other neighborhoods (Birzer, 2008).

Racial tension exists when members of the community resent or feel threatened by another social

class based on racial status (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

Birzer's (2008) phenomenological study found that African-Americans are generally

more suspicious of law enforcement and feel they are not treated the same as the white

population. Studies suggested that the "increased number of racial minority and majority

members do not trust the police" (Barthelemy et al., 2016, p. 416). Additional studies have shown that African Americans are more critical of law enforcement than Caucasians (Cheng, 2015). Furthermore, studies of the perceptions of the criminal justice system as a whole have consistently identified police-citizen encounters as the strongest predictors of negative attitudes toward law enforcement officers (Peirone, Maticka-Tyndale, Gbadebo, & Kerr, 2017).

African Americans made up less than 12 percent of the United States' population in 2004 but represented 37 percent of the total arrests for violent offenses (Wu et al., 2009). Additionally, African Americans represented nearly 40 percent of the prison population in both state and federal facilities (Wu et al., 2009).

According to Brooks et al. (2016), "the number of killings coupled with the un-investigated mishandlings has led to a heightened awareness of race and policing that has not uniformly upheld the connection between minorities and the police" (p. 349). African American citizens do not trust white officers because of their position of authority (Huggins, 2012). "African American citizens are more critical and less trusting of the police than other racial groups" (Huggins, 2012, p. 92).

"Citizen reports indicate that the white/black and black/white officer/citizen encounters are significantly less likely to result in a report of proper police behavior than the white/white officer/citizen pairing" (Huggins, 2012, p. 92). African-Americans and young people have less favorable opinions of law enforcement than "affluent and more educated Whites" (Barthelemy et al., 2016, p. 416). Similarly, white citizens are distrusting of African American police officers because white citizens believe they are treated "more harshly as a way to exact revenge on the majority group" (Huggins, 2012, p. 94). However, additional research has shown if African

Americans were to be removed from poor economic communities, their perceptions of law enforcement would be similar to Caucasians' (Cheng, 2015). When citizens believe they are being treated with dignity and respect from law enforcement officers, they feel they are on a similar social status as the police, which increases the social closeness between the two groups (Lee & Gibbs, 2015). When compared to Caucasians, African Americans do not consider law enforcement officers as guardians (Brooks et al., 2016). "Many African Americans believe that they are victims of both overpolicing and underpolicing" (Wu et al., 2009, p. 129). Additional research indicates that African-Americans and Hispanics view law enforcement officers more negatively than Caucasians (Peck, 2015). People of color who live in high-crime neighborhoods want more police protection even though they may harbor negative feelings towards them (Gau & Paoline, 2017).

It is important that the juvenile population is considered when discussing community perceptions because they comprise one of the largest groups that have contact with law enforcement (Wu, Lake, & Cao, 2015). How police officers interact with juveniles will determine the juveniles' perceptions of police officers now and in the future. According to Wu et al. (2015), "adolescence is a stage when attitudes are forming" (p.446). Over the past two decades, juveniles have had more contact with police officers during non-custodial settings such as various programs and school functions (Wu et al., 2015).

There are many factors that contribute to the community's increased negative perceptions of law enforcement, such as a law enforcement officer's use of excessive force, criminal behavior of the police, and an increased para-military operation of law enforcement organizations (Barthelemy et al., 2016). According to Barthelemy et al., (2016), an African American male is killed by a law enforcement officer twice each week. Additionally, police

officers are involved in as many as 400 deadly force encounters per year (Torres, Reling, & Hawdon, 2018). Factors including living in areas with a lower crime rate, low transient populations, fewer lethal force encounters in law enforcement, and a greater sense of safety lead to a neighborhood's citizens having a more favorable opinion of law enforcement officers (Cheng, 2015).

Law enforcement officers have become targets due to several judicial proceedings in which prosecutors have declined to prosecute cases perceived to involve excessive force against minorities (Lee & Gibbs, 2015). Due to the deaths of unarmed African Americans at the hands of police, the Black Lives Matter social movement has brought attention to allegations of racial profiling and discrimination across the country (Khan et al., 2015; Peirone et al., 2017). Civil unrest has led to the Black Lives Matter movement across the country and has sparked a division between minorities and police officers (Lee & Gibbs, 2015). The Black Lives Movement "directly aims to both unite and empower different factions of the Black community" (Kahn & Martin, 2016, p. 100). Studies have shown that the more concentrated areas of disadvantaged population play a significant role in the negative perceptions of police officers (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

Another factor that gives credit to the increased fear of crime is the media (Barton et al., 2017). "Over the past few decades, the media have been extremely instrumental in featuring reports on 'bad cops'" (Barthelemy et al., 2016, p. 416). Law enforcement officers' perceptions of the way the community feels towards them is based upon the negative publicity from the media (Torres et al., 2018). The popularity of crime-related media coverage also has an impact on community perception of law enforcement (Cheng, 2015). Studies have shown that watching news coverage increased community satisfaction among police officers because they would

usually exaggerate the incident and the police response in solving the problem (Cheng, 2015).

Law enforcement officers are under a constant microscope, and in order to build trust from the

community, they must conduct themselves professionally every day, especially when in direct

contact with the community (Reisig, 2010). Public trust in law enforcement surfaces as a result

of their expectation in the various services they provide (Khan et al., 2015).

Understanding socio-structural factors that affect public trust is a vital element in

building trust with various segments of the community (Khan et al., 2015). Therefore,

strengthening a law enforcement organization can enhance the public's trust in the police (Khan

et al., 2015). Professionalism and kindness of law enforcement officers towards members of the

community tend to produce a positive attitude towards the police (Cheng, 2015). In fact, when

community members are asked to describe their opinions of law enforcement, they usually base

their response on a specific incident where contact was made (Barthelemy et al., 2016).

According to Nix (2017), the best way for law enforcement officers to achieve

acceptance from the community is to interact with them in a "procedurally just manner" (p. 954).

Conversely, when citizens have negative contact with law enforcement officers, their attitude and

opinions of the police change negatively (Cheng, 2015). "The sense-of-justice model posits that

public attitudes toward criminal justice agencies are heavily influenced by the feeling of being

treated unjustly by the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system – police officers" (Wu et al.,

2009, p. 128).

Research indicates that demographic factors like "race and ethnicity, age, gender, and

other variables like criminal victimization, direct contact with police, indirect experience through

family and friends, and exposure to media coverage of police misconduct all affect citizen satisfaction with law enforcement officers" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 315).

Law enforcement officers should strive to improve the relationship between their organization and the citizens in which they serve. To implement these changes, police officers should understand and build upon key principles during their daily encounters with the community. These key principles include:

- Treat the community with respect and dignity.

- Be fair and consistent in their decision making.

- Convey motives that are in line with the highest of ethical values.

- Provide citizens with a voice during their interactions with law enforcement (Mazerolle & Terrill, 2018).

Law Enforcement Perceptions of Community-Oriented Policing

Community-oriented law enforcement officers are encouraged to change their approach to policing and become "servants of the public to community stakeholders" (Rosenberg et al., 2008, p. 291). Law enforcement tenure and duty assignment has a significant impact on an officer's perception of citizens (Moon & Zager, 2007). Officers working in a community-policing unit are more likely to trust citizens (Moon & Zager, 2007).

Uluturk et al. (2017) conducted research in the spring and summer of 2012 with managers from three different cities in Turkey: Bursa, Diyarbakir, and Erzurum. The data came from a survey administrered to sworn officers in these three different cities in Turkey. The survey questionnaire was distributed to members of different ranks (officer, sergeants, and middle managers) within each organization. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using 480

sworn officers, and 432 questionnaires were collected; the response rate was 84%. The majority of the officers provided positive feedback for the benefits of Community-Oriented Policing (COP). "Approximately one-third of the respondents believed that better police/community relations, greater resolution of neighborhood problems, and greater citizen cooperation were more likely to occur after the implementation of COP" (Uluturk et al., 2017, p. 1958). According to the findings of the research conducted by Uluturk et al. (2017), the majority of officers who participated in this study were supportive of community-oriented policing and its philosophy; believed in the effectiveness of it being a crime prevention model; and thought COP would improve the relationship with the community.

Law enforcement officers' attitudes towards the community they serve will have an impact on their level of interaction with residents (Barthelemy et al., 2016). "Officers who believe citizens view them favorably have higher job satisfaction, which may affect their job performance" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 315). Negative attitudes towards the police can also have an impact on law enforcement's perception of the community. Police officers can become cynical towards the public (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016).

Cynicism can be linked with negative behaviors, which can lead to law enforcement officers acting rude towards citizens, administering excessive force, or avoiding citizens all together (Gau & Paoline, 2017). Law enforcement officers who are assigned to disorganized and high-crime neighborhoods may develop negative attitudes toward citizens (Gau & Paoline, 2017). The dangers of law enforcement and hostility from citizens creates a barrier for the police and the community (Uluturk et al., 2017). "Burnout and cynicism are endemic problems in the police occupation" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1251). Negative perceptions from law enforcement officers support the philosophy of community-oriented policing.

Law enforcement officers believe there is no one they can trust except their own colleagues (Uluturk et al., 2017). Officers with some college were more likely to distrust citizens than those with only high school degree (Moon & Zager, 2007). According to the social distance theory, "those who hold high levels of power (i.e., the police) are more likely to stereotype, which is seen in racial profiling" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 327).

Law enforcement officers need to be more responsive to and understanding of the needs of the community (Gau & Paoline, 2017). These officers sometimes develop a sense of callousness towards victims, often believing they have brought on their own problems by living in high crime neighborhoods (Gau & Paoline, 2017).

Law enforcement officers are also becoming more hypervigilant due to their working conditions and constant fear of being attacked and killed in the line of duty. This hypervigilance creates a barrier between the police and the community (Uluturk et al., 2017). In the wake of the Michael Brown deadly force encounter in Ferguson, Missouri, law enforcement officers are more hesitant to use any type of force; have demonstrated an unwillingness to stop, detain, and question individuals; refrain from working with members of the community; and feel more and more citizens are cynical of them (Torres et al., 2018). The shooting of Michael Brown has launched the entire country into violent protests and heightened further race-related tensions between the African American population and law enforcement officers (Kahn & Martin, 2016). In addition, "the working hours of police officers, their unusual holidays, wearing a uniform, and the estrangement from their ex-friends aggravate the 'we vs. them' attitude toward citizenry" (Uluturk et al., 2017, p. 1949).

Policing involves more than making arrests – one of the main ingredients of police work is engaging the community and building partnerships to engage and solve community problems (Wolfe & Nix, 2016). Law enforcement officers are guided on how they perceive other social groups and how these social groups view them. When law enforcement officers have negative contact with the community, they are more likely to develop prejudice and certain stereotypes of the community in which they serve (Gordijn, Vacher, & Kuppens, 2017). The constant exposure to work stressors, coupled with extensive evidence of cynicism, causes law enforcement officers to interact with citizens differently (Gordijn et al., 2017).

Organizational Challenges to Community Policing

Implementing changes such as community-oriented policing programs in law enforcement organizations can prove difficult on many levels. Such changes require the modification of an existing policing philosophy, comfort levels from administrators, and behaviors from members with direct contact with the community (Rosenberg et al., 2008; Uluturk et al., 2017). Community-oriented policing must have department-wide buy-in; otherwise, the department may revert back to the reform and political eras of policing (Lumb & Breazeale, 2002). The success of this large-scale type of change must come from the top officials of any organization and requires the restructuring of the hierarchy to reduce a top-down approach to a more flattened approach (Tillyer, 2018).

Community-oriented policing places new demands on and approaches to policing; therefore, the selection and training of community-oriented police officers are important. Ethnographic research has identified methods through which law enforcement officers can improve neighborhood conditions. For example, officers can attend training focused on problem-solving and attend neighborhood watch meetings (Reisig, 2010). Training law enforcement

officers is one of the most important foundations for promoting positive police-community

relationship (Mazerolle & Terrill, 2018). The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

was established by the Department of Justice; and, grants were used to acquire technology, fund

programs, and develop Regional Community Policing Institutes (RCPI) for proper training

(Reisig, 2010). By mid-2009, RPCIs had provided training to more than 600,000 law

enforcement officers (Reisig, 2010).

Community-oriented police officers must have the "ability to solve problems, to be

flexible, to have good interpersonal and communication skills, and to be authoritative rather than

authoritarian are some of those demands" (Lumb & Breazeale, 2002, p. 96). Law enforcement

organizations should be open to change and consider the viewpoints of the community when

making decisions about how to best serve the residents with the given resources (Perkins, 2016).

In a national survey of law enforcement administrators, over half discovered obtaining needed

resources to implement or continue community-oriented policing extremely challenging, and

over 40% found there was not enough support from the officers working in the field (Gill et al.,

2014). According to Adams, Rohe, and Arcury (2002), two fundamental features affect officer

attitudes about community-oriented policing: training in the COP philosophy and a participatory

management style.

There must be buy-in from the entire organization, and senior administrators must be

willing to "transfer knowledge and decision-making power and provide patrol officers and

investigators greater autonomy leading to participator management" (Rosenberg et al., 2008, p.

292). One of the features of community-oriented policing is an increase in officer discretion.

Officers are asked to be creative in their approach to dealing with community problems without

resorting to arrest. Law enforcement officers need greater flexibility and freedom to perform

their jobs and handle problems they feel would be most beneficial to the community (Adams et al., 2002). As long as law enforcement organizations are open to change, implement training, and provide the tools for the patrol officer to be successful, the law enforcement organization as a whole will be more successful (Lumb & Breazeale, 2002).

Law enforcement administrators must be willing to flatten the organizational hierarchy and give more decision-making authority to the officers and supervisors working in the community (Reisig, 2010). However, research reveals that middle managers are reluctant to give discretionary power to subordinates (Adams et al., 2002). In addition to the fundamental changes in the structure and design of law enforcement agencies, police officers will have to adjust to a new culture of policing, while being supportive and engaging (Uluturk et al., 2017). An officer's assigned patrol area, such as high-crime versus low-crime, and shift work, such as day versus night, have a direct correlation to the way he or she views the facets of their occupation (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1252).

One method to improve police-community relationships is to develop and maintain a department website that provides information on current trends and important information based on geographical areas within the community. Several law enforcement organizations around the country have been highlighted as having an effective website that supports community policing (Bain et al., 2014). The use of social media plays an important role in law enforcement organizations. According to Huang, Wu, Huang, and Bort (2017), approximataly 96.4% of law enforcement organizations surveyed in 2015 use social media. Examples of effective social media are Facebook and Twitter accounts. Facebook is a "social networking website where users can post comments, share photographs, and post links to news or other interesting content on the web" (Nations, 2018, p. 1). Twitter is an online news and social networking site where

people "tweet" using short messages (Gil, 2018). Twitter enables the user to provide information using 140 characters or less. "These short-burst messages enable instant information, which – if used purposefully – could generate information, leads and/or evidence of criminal conduct in a particular neighborhood (Bain et al., 2014, p. 273). Since the primary goal of community-oriented policing is to build partnerships and bridge community gaps, social media is an effective tool in problem-solving techniques (Huang et al., 2017).

Law enforcement organizations have recently become more racially diverse based on political pressure to be more in line with the demographics of the community (Gau & Paoline, 2017). In fact, law enforcement organizations with a representation of minorities serving as police officers are considered to be diversity legitimate (Wilson, Wilson, & Gwann, 2016). "In 2013, approximately 27% of sworn officers in municipal and county agencies were minorities, up from a mere 15% in 1987" (Gau & Paoline, 2017, p. 1252). There are numerous reasons law enforcement agencies have cited as being problematic to recruiting qualified African Americans. According to Wilson et al. (2016), there are three main indicators for recruitment of diversified candidates: residents' lower sense of trust for police officer's lack of transparency, disparity in the number of qualified African American candidates, and a perception of institutional racism (Wilson et al., 2016).

The manner in which police officers view their role and how they treat citizens will have a positive impact on bridging the gap between the community and law enforcement organization (Gau & Paoline, 2017). In order to reduce tension between the police and community, law enforcement officers must promote transparency within the organization and become familiar with the various cultures of the neighborhoods (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). Finally, more

internal investigations of police misconduct, cultural diversity, and sensitivity training should

strengthen the image of law enforcement as a whole (Cheng, 2015).

In order for law enforcement organizations to operate a successful community-oriented

policing program, there needs to be consistent evaluations of the program. Community-oriented

policing is constantly evolving, and law enforcement leaders must assess the success of changes

in the organizational culture and the role that law enforcement officers play in bridging the gap

between the police and community (Adams et al., 2002).

Summary

Community-oriented policing (COP) is a philosophy designed on the principle of

building trust and partnerships between law enforcement officers and the citizens they serve.

COP serves as a mechanism in which law enforcement officers work with members of the

community and other key stakeholders to address crime, fear of crime, and an improvement of

quality of life (Oliver, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). City and county administrators

must be willing to buy into community-oriented policing by approving and allocating financial

and human recourses to implement and continuously improve this policing philosophy.

Law enforcement organizations that have already implemented community policing have

observed the positive impact it has made by building relationships between the citizens and

police officers. There is a myriad of challenges to community policing:

- Public perception;

- Law enforcement perspectives;

- Fear of crime; and

- Crime itself (Reisig, 2010; Sadd & Grinc, 1994).

Chapter two of this research served as the backbone to the issues facing law enforcement organizations and the officers tasked with serving the community. In chapter three, the methodology for evaluating a law enforcement organization's perception to community policing is explained. Additionally, the sample, instrument, procedures, research questions, and hypotheses are reviewed.

III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used in this study to investigate a law enforcement organization's perception and efficacy of community-oriented policing and whether the philosophy of community-oriented policing is effective in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. The research design and methodology for the study was broadly non-experimental, quantitative and, more specifically, survey research. The research study was approved as exempt by the Southeastern University (SEU) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The following represents a description of the essential elements of the Methods portion of the study.

Participants

The study's sample was non-probability in nature and convenient by definition. The sample of study participants was identified through access to a master list of employees of a large law enforcement organization in Central Florida. The population sampled for participation in the study was an aggregate of 356 potential participants. The overall participation rate was established at 32% (n = 114). Of the participant sample, 68.1% (n = 77) were identified as *Sworn Officers*, with the remaining 31.9% (n= 36) identified as *Civilian Employees* of the study's law enforcement agency.

Instrumentation

This study's research instrument represents a refinement of a survey instrument utilized in the pilot study that fostered the current study. The piloted study's original 23-item format was reduced to 15 items through internal reliability analyses and item analysis procedures. The

internal consistency of response by participants in the pilot study was considered acceptable for a novel research endeavor, nearly reaching what is expected (a = .70) in researcher-constructed research instrumentation (a = .66; p < .001). The item narrowing and refining process from the pilot study to the study's current research instrument was expected to yield internal consistency of participant responses at a much higher level (a ≥ .80). Internal reliability rates for the study's research instrument were considerably above the Cronbach a value of .70 and closely approximated the intended a = .80 level.

The study's 15-item research instrument format was comprised of a five-point Likert scale in the following fashion:

5- Strongly Agree   4- Agree   3- Uncertain   2- Disagree   1- Strongly Disagree

(See Appendix for the study's complete 15-item survey instrument).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses were posed in order to address the stated research problem:

1. To what degree do the perceptions of *sworn officers* differ from those of *civilian employees* regarding the importance and efficacy of community policing?

$H_0{}^1$: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the overall efficacy of community policing.

2. Does community-oriented policing represent the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates? Are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon the reduction of crime rates between sworn officers and civilian employees?

H_a^2: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which law enforcement officials lower crime rates.

H_0^{2a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in reducing crime rates.

3. Community-oriented policing is the most effective means of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. Are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon bridging the gap between the law enforcement officers and the community between sworn officers and civilian employees?

H_0^3: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which law enforcement officials bridge the gap with the community.

H_0^{3a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in bridging the gap with the community.

4. Considering the elements of *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level*, and *emphasis upon low income neighborhoods*, which element was perceived to be of greatest importance in the concept and effective practice of community-oriented policing?

H_0^4: Participants will perceive importance of the community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level as the most important amongst *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level*, and *emphasis upon low income neighborhoods*.

5. Considering participant *gender*, *ethnicity*, *attitude toward the public*, and *years of experience*, which represents the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing?

H_0^5: Participant *attitude toward the public* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

6. Considering participant perception of the *role of the media*, *law-enforcement perception of community support*, and *role of education-level in matters of community policing*, which represents the most robust predictor of overall perceived efficacy of community-oriented policing?

H_a^6: Participant perception of *community support* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

7. Did study participants perceive community-oriented policing as representing a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department? Were there differences in perceptions between sworn officers and civilian employees as to the degree to which community-oriented policing should be embraced throughout the law enforcement department?

H_0^7: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

H_0^{7a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

Procedures

Participant responses were obtained through the online survey tool SoGoSurvey. The survey window was open for 10 days. The survey questions were delivered to the Police Chief for review, and permission was granted to conduct the research within this law enforcement organization. An initial email was sent to 356 members (sworn and civilian) that included the study overview, voluntary informed consent, and survey link. At the conclusion of 10 days, an automated response indicating "Not Accepting Responses" was delivered via SoGoSurvey and the survey results were stored in two password-protected locations. Finally, the data was imported into IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24 for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to addressing the stated research questions in this study, preliminary analyses were conducted. Specifically, missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to survey items, essential demographic data, and dimension reduction of survey items were analyzed and reported.

Missing data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages comprised the primary statistical methods of analysis and interpretation. Little's MCAR test statistic was utilized to evaluate the randomness of subsequent missing data. An MCAR value of $p > .05$ was considered indicative of missing data that are sufficiently random in nature.

The internal consistency, or reliability, of participant response to the survey items was addressed through the application of Cronbach's alpha (a) test statistic. The statistical

significance of Cronbach's alpha levels were assessed through the F-test. The value of $p < .05$ was considered to represent the threshold for statistical significance of finding.

The study's essential demographic information was assessed using descriptive statistical techniques. The mean, standard deviation, frequency counts (n), and percentages (%) represented the primary methods of descriptive analysis.

Analysis by Research Question

Research Question 1: Research Question 1 was addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability (standard deviations), and percentages represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques that were applied. The t-test of independent means represented the inferential statistical technique by which respective mean score comparisons were evaluated for statistical significance. The threshold value for statistical significance was established at $p < .05$. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Hedges' g in light of sample size inequality. Cohen's conventions represented the guideline for the interpretation of all effect size values yielded in the first three research questions of the study.

Research Question 2: Research Question 2 was addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability (standard deviations), and percentages represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques that were applied. In the first portion of the question, the single sample t-test was used to assess the statistical significance of finding. The threshold value for statistical significance was established at $p < .05$. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Cohen's d. The t-test of independent means represented the inferential statistical technique by which respective mean score comparisons in the second portion of the research question were evaluated for

47

statistical significance. The threshold value for statistical significance was established at $p < .05$.

The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Hedges' g in light of sample size

inequality in the comparison. Cohen's conventions represented the guideline for the

interpretation of all effect size values yielded in the second research question of the study.

    Research Question 3: Research Question 3 was addressed using both descriptive and

inferential statistical techniques. Measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability

(standard deviations), and percentages represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques

to be applied. In the first portion of the question, the single sample t-test was used to assess the

statistical significance of finding. The threshold value for statistical significance was established

at $p < .05$. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Cohen's d. The second

portion of the question was addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical

techniques. The mean score comparison inherent in the second portion of the question was

addressed for statistical significance using the t-test of independent means. The threshold value

for statistical significance was established at $p < .05$. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was

assessed using Hedges' g. Cohen's conventions represented the guideline for the interpretation

of all effect size values yielded in the third research question of the study.

    Research Questions 4 through 6: Research Questions 4 through 6 are associative and

predictive in nature. As such, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to

assess the mathematical relationships of respective variables inherent in the three research

questions. Mathematical relationships manifesting p-values of .05 or less were considered

statistically significant. Multiple linear regressions were utilized to assess the predictive aspect

of the three research questions. Predictive model fitness was assessed through ANOVA table F-

values. ANOVA values of $p < .05$ were indicative of predictive model fitness. Adjusted R^2

values represented the basis for the evaluation of predictive effect. The formula *Adjusted R² / 1 – Adjusted R²* was used to calculate the effect size of the predictive model. Values of .35 or greater were considered large predictive effect sizes. The statistical significance of predictive effect was interpreted through the respective slope (*t*) values of independent predictor variables.

Research Question 7: Research Question 7 was addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Measures of central tendency (mean scores), variability (standard deviations), and percentages represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques applied. In the first portion of the research question, the single sample *t*-test was used to assess the statistical significance of finding. The threshold value for statistical significance was established at *p* < .05. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Cohen's *d*. The second portion of the research question was addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The mean score comparison inherent in the second portion of the research question was addressed for statistical significance using the t-test of independent means. The threshold value for statistical significance was established at *p* < .05. The magnitude of effect (effect size) was assessed using Hedges' *g* in light of sample size inequality in the comparison. Cohen's conventions represented the guideline for the interpretation of all effect size values yielded in the final research question of the study.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

The purpose of the study was to investigate a law enforcement organization's perception and efficacy of community-oriented policing and whether the philosophy of community-oriented policing represents an effective means by which bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community might be accomplished. The study represents refinement of a pilot study designed to address the problem statement in the current investigation.

The research design and methodology for this study was broadly non-experimental, quantitative and, more specifically, survey research. Seven distinct research questions were posed to address the stated research problem of the study. The study's sample was non-probability in nature, and convenient by definition. The overall participation rate was established at 32% (n = 114). Of the participant sample, approximately two-thirds were identified as *Sworn Officers*, with the remaining nearly one-third identified as *Civilian Employees* of the study's law enforcement agency.

This study's research instrument represents a refinement of a survey instrument utilized in the pilot study that fostered the current study. Internal reliability rates for the study's research instrument were considerably above the Cronbach α value of .70 and closely approximated the intended $\alpha = .80$ level, representing a considerable improvement over the pilot study's internal reliability of $\alpha = .66$.

Prior to addressing the stated research questions in the study, preliminary analyses were conducted. Specifically, missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to survey items, and essential demographic data were analyzed and reported. Research questions were addressed using descriptive, inferential, and associative/predictive statistical techniques respectively.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate a law enforcement organization's perception of the efficacy of community-oriented policing. Law enforcement perceptions of community-oriented policing are essential to the success of a community-oriented policing program and its relationship with the community. Likewise, citizen satisfaction and attitudes toward law enforcement are critical in establishing the efficacy of community-oriented policing.

Preliminary Analyses and Findings

Analyses conducted prior to the formal address of the study's research questions included: missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to the study's research instrument (survey), and essential study participant demographic information. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized in the preliminary analyses.

Missing Data

Participant response to the 15 survey items reflected a minimal level of missing data (n = 12; .7%). The missing data are considered sufficiently random in nature (Little's MCAR $x^2_{(112)}$ = 102.01; p = .74). As a result, imputation of missing data points within the survey's item response set using expectancy maximization (EM) or multiple imputations (MI) was not considered necessary for subsequent analytical purposes.

Internal Consistency (Reliability)

Using the Cronbach's alpha *(a)* test statistic, the omnibus internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to the study's 15 survey items was manifested at a level expected for researcher-developed instruments ($a \geq .70$). Moreover, the omnibus internal reliability level was manifested at a statistically significant level ($p < .001$).

Table 1 contains a summary of finding for internal reliability in the omnibus analysis, as well as for the sworn officer and civilian employee study participant groups.

Table 1

Internal Reliability by Grouping/Composite

Group	a
Sworn Officer	.77***
Civilian Employee	.75***
Composite	.76***

***$p < .001$

Essential Demographic Information

Regarding gender of study participants, approximately seven in 10 (63.2%) were male, with the remaining 36.8% female. Nearly 75% (72.8%) of study participants were identified as Caucasian, with 10.5% African-American, and nearly 10% (8.8%) identified as Hispanic. The remaining 7.9% of participants were identified as Asian (1.8%) and "Other" (6.1%). Approximately two-thirds (68.1%) were identified as Sworn Officers, with the remaining 31.9% being Civilian Employees. Regarding *Years of service*, over 80% (83.5%) of participants reported as formally serving in the field of law enforcement six to 30 years. Only 5.1% of participants reported serving over 30 years in law enforcement, whereas 11.5% had served five years or less. The greatest single grouping for years of service was the category of six to 10 years (19.2%). Approximately seven in 10 (70.5%) of the study's sample of *Sworn Officers* were identified by rank as Police Officers, with the remaining 29.5% serving in the field of law enforcement in the rank of Sergeant or above.

Analyses and Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1: Do the perceptions of *Sworn Officers* differ from those of *Civilian*

Employees regarding the overall efficacy of community-oriented policing?

Using the *t*-test of independent means to assess the statistical significance of difference in

mean score perceptions between sworn officers and civilian employees on the matter of

community-oriented policing efficacy, the means score difference of 0.14 favoring the sworn

officer group was not found to be statistically significant ($p > .05$). Using Hedges' *g* to assess

the magnitude of difference (effect size) in mean scores in the comparison, the magnitude of

comparative effect between the two groups is considered small ($g < .20$). Hedges' *g* was utilized

to assess the magnitude of means score difference in light of the noteworthy imbalance in sample

sizes within the comparison.

Table 2 contains a summary of finding for the comparison of perceptions related to the

efficacy of the practice of community-oriented policing between sworn police officers and

civilian employees.

Table 2

Perceived Efficacy of Community-Oriented Policing: Sworn Officers and Civilian Employee
Comparison

Group	n	Mean	SD	*t*	*g*
Sworn Officers	75	4.00	0.87	0.78[a]	.16
Civilian Employees	36	3.86	0.87		

[a] $p = .43$ ($p > .05$)

$H_0{}^1$: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the overall efficacy of community-oriented policing.

In light of the non-statistically significant finding in Research Question 1, the Null Hypothesis ($H_0{}^1$) for Research Question 1 is retained.

Research Question 2: Does community-oriented policing represent the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates? And, are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon reduction of crime rates between sworn officers and civilian employees?

Using the single sample *t*-test to assess the statistical significance of participant perception of the practice of community-oriented policing's impact in lowering crime rates, the finding was manifested to a statistically significant degree ($t_{(111)} = 5.42$; $p < .001$). Moreover, the magnitude of effect (effect size) is considered moderate ($d = .51$).

Using the *t*-test of independent means to assess the statistical significance of the mean score difference inherent in the second portion of Research Question 2, the mean score difference favoring civilian employees (0.16) was not manifested at a statistically significant level ($p > .05$). Using Hedges' *g* to assess the magnitude of difference (effect size) in mean scores in the comparison, the magnitude of comparative effect between the two groups is considered small ($g < .20$). Hedges' *g* was utilized to assess the magnitude of means score difference in light of the noteworthy imbalance in sample sizes within the comparison.

Table 3 contains a summary of finding for the comparison of perceptions related to the efficacy of the practice of community-oriented policing in reducing crime rates between sworn police officers and civilian employees.

Table 3

Perceived Efficacy of Community-Oriented Policing in Reducing Crime Rates: Sworn Officers and Civilian Employee Comparison

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	g
Sworn Officers	77	3.44	0.99	0.81[a]	.17
Civilian Employees	35	3.60	0.88		

[a] $p = .42$ ($p > .05$)

H_0^2: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which law enforcement officials' lower crime rates.

In light of the statistically significant finding for Research Question 2, the Null Hypothesis (H_0^2) for Research Question 2 is rejected.

H_0^{2a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in reducing crime rates.

In light of the non-statistically significant finding in the comparison of mean scores in Research Question 2a, the Null Hypothesis (H_0^{2a}) for Research Question 2a is retained.

Research Question 3: Community-oriented policing is the most effective means of bridging the "gap" between law enforcement and the community. And, are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon bridging the gap with law enforcement officers and the community between sworn officers and civilian employees?

Using the single sample *t*-test to assess the statistical significance of participant perception of the practice of community-oriented policing's impact in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community, the finding was manifested to a statistically significant

degree ($t_{(113)} = 16.40$; $p < .001$). Moreover, the magnitude of effect (effect size) is considered

very large ($d = 1.53$).

Using the *t*-test of independent means to assess the statistical significance of the mean

score difference inherent in the second portion of Research Question 3, the mean score

difference favoring civilian employees (0.13) was not manifested at a statistically significant

level ($p > .05$). Using Hedges' *g* to assess the magnitude of difference (effect size) in mean

scores in the comparison, the magnitude of comparative effect between the two groups is

considered small ($g < .20$). Hedges' *g* was utilized to assess the magnitude of means score

difference in light of the noteworthy imbalance in sample sizes within the comparison.

Table 4 contains a summary of finding for the comparison of perceptions related to the

efficacy of the practice of community-oriented policing in bridging the gap with law

enforcement and the community between sworn police officers and civilian employees.

Table 4

Perceived Efficacy of Community Policing in Bridging the Gap Between Law Enforcement and the Community: Sworn Officers and Civilian Employee Comparison

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	g
Sworn Officers	77	4.14	0.74	0.86[a]	.18
Civilian Employees	36	4.28	0.85		

[a] $p = .39$ ($p > .05$)

H_0^3: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as the most effective means by which

law enforcement officials bridge the gap with the community.

In light of the statistically significant finding for Research Question 3, the Null

Hypothesis (H_0^3) for Research Question 3 is rejected.

56

H_0^{3a}: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing in bridging the gap with the community.

In light of the non-statistically significant finding in the comparison of mean scores in Research Question 3a, the Null Hypothesis (H_0^{3a}) for Research Question 3a is retained.

Research Question 4: Considering the elements of *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community-oriented policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level*, and *emphasis upon low-income neighborhoods*, which element was perceived to representing the most robust correlate and predictor of the concept and effective practice of community-oriented policing?

Using the multiple linear regression test statistic to assess the predictive abilities of identified independent variables with the dependent variable in the predictive model, two items were found to reflect statistically significant predictive ability: *Low-income neighborhoods, rather than "middle" or "high" income neighborhoods, should be a priority for community policy efforts;* and *discretionary policing* should represent an essential component in the overall practice of community-oriented policing. Of the two items, it appears that the *Low-income neighborhoods, rather than "middle" or "high" income neighborhoods should be a priority for community policy efforts* variable represents the most robust predictor of the dependent variable in Research Question 4, accounting for 6% of the explained variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .06$)

The predictive model in Research Question 4 was viable ($F_{(4, 105)} = 4.69$; $p = .002$), with the confluence of the four independent predictor variables accounting for 15.2% of the explained variance in the research question's dependent variable ($R^2 = .152$)

57

Table 5 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model utilized to address Research Question 4.

Table 5

Predicting Efficacy of the Practice of Community-Oriented Policing

Model	β	SE	Standardized β	R^2
Intercept	1.59	0.63		
Low Income Neighborhood Emphasis	0.19	0.07	.25***	.06
Discretionary Policing	0.22	0.11	.20*	.04
Assigned Zones	0.04	0.10	.04	.00
Community-oriented policing Emphasis at the Academy/Preparatory Level	0.19	0.10	.18	.03

*p = .04   ***p = .008

H_a4: Participants perceived importance of the *community-oriented policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level* as the most important amongst the four elements in Research Question 4.

In light of the finding favoring the item *Low-income neighborhoods, rather than middle or high income neighborhoods should be a priority for community policy efforts,* the Alternate Hypothesis (H_a4) for Research Question 4 is rejected.

Research Question 5: Considering participant gender, ethnicity, attitude toward the public, and years of experience, which represents the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing?

Using the multiple linear regression test statistic to assess the predictive abilities of identified independent variables with the dependent variable in the predictive model, one item in the predictive model was found to reflect statistically significant predictive ability: *Attitude toward the public,* accounting for 14% of the explained variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .14$)

The predictive model in Research Question 5 was viable ($F_{(4, 70)}= 3.35; p = .01$), with the confluence of the four independent predictor variables accounting for 16.1% of the explained variance in the research question's dependent variable ($R^2 = .161$).

Table 6 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model utilized to address Research Question 5.

Table 6

Predicting Efficacy of the Practice of Community-Oriented Policing

Model	β	SE	Standardized β	R^2
Intercept	1.04	0.88		
Attitude toward Public	0.62	0.19	.37***	.14
Gender	-0.11	0.27	-.05	.00
Ethnicity	0.09	0.08	.13	.02
Years of Experience	0.01	0.05	.02	.00

***$p = .001$

H_a5: Participant *Attitude toward the Public* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

In light of the statistically significant finding for the item *Attitude toward the Public,* the Alternate Hypothesis (H_a5) for Research Question 5 is retained.

Research Question 6: Considering participant perception of the role of the media, law-enforcement perception of community support, and role of education-level in matters of community-oriented policing, which represents the most robust predictor of overall perceived efficacy of community-oriented policing?

Using the multiple linear regression test statistic to assess the predictive abilities of identified independent variables with the dependent variable in the predictive model, none of the

three independent variables in the predictive model were found to reflect statistically significant predictive ability, reflecting a weak confluent relationship ($r = .15$) with the dependent variable.

The predictive model in Research Question 6 was not considered viable ($F_{(3, 106)} = 0.76$; $p = .52$), with the confluence of the three independent predictor variables accounting for only 2% of the explained variance in the research question's dependent variable ($R^2 = .02$).

Table 7 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model utilized to address Research Question 6.

Table 7

Predicting Efficacy of the Practice of Community-Oriented Policing

Model	β	SE	Standardized β	R^2
Intercept	3.99	0.42		
Role of Media	-0.10	0.08	-.13	.02
Perceived Community Support	0.10	0.09	.11	.01
Education Level	-0.01	0.07	-.02	.00

H_a6: Participant perception of *Community Support* will represent the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing.

In light of the non-statistically significant finding for the item *Community Support,* the Alternate Hypothesis (H_a6) for Research Question 6 is rejected.

Research Question 7: Did study participants perceive community-oriented policing as representing a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department? And, were there differences in perceptions between sworn officers and civilian employees as to the degree to which community-oriented policing should be embraced throughout the law enforcement department?

Using the single sample *t*-test to assess the statistical significance of participant perception of the practice of community-oriented policing being embraced throughout the law enforcement department, the mean score finding of 4.41 was manifested to a statistically significant degree ($t_{(114)} = 23.23$; $p < .001$). Moreover, the magnitude of effect (effect size) is considered very large ($d = 2.17$).

Using the *t*-test of independent means to assess the statistical significance of the mean score difference inherent in the second portion of Research Question 7, the mean score difference favoring civilian employees (0.12) was not manifested at a statistically significant level ($p > .05$). Using Hedges' *g* to assess the magnitude of difference (effect size) for mean scores in the comparison, the magnitude of comparative effect between the two groups is considered small ($g < .20$). Hedges' *g* was utilized to assess the magnitude of mean score difference in light of the noteworthy imbalance in sample sizes within the comparison.

Table 8 contains a summary of finding for the comparison of perceptions related to the efficacy of the practice of community-oriented policing representing a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department between sworn police officers and civilian employees.

Table 8

Perceived Efficacy of Community-Oriented Policing Representing a Philosophy and Practice that Should be Embraced Throughout the Local Law Enforcement Department: Sworn Officers and Civilian Employee Comparison

Group	n	Mean	SD	*t*	*g*
Sworn Officers	77	4.38	0.69	0.94[a]	.18
Civilian Employees	36	4.50	0.56		

[a] $p = .35$ ($p > .05$)

$H_0 7$: Community-oriented policing will not be perceived as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

In light of the statistically significant finding for Research Question 7, the Null Hypothesis ($H_0 7$) for Research Question 7 is rejected.

$H_0 {7a}$: There will be no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of sworn officers and civilian employees regarding the importance of community-oriented policing as a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

In light of the non-statistically significant finding in the comparison of mean scores in Research Question 7a, the Null Hypothesis ($H_0 {7a}$) for Research Question 7a is retained.

V. DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study examined the perceptions of community policing from a law enforcement organization's perspective. The purpose of this research study was to investigate a law enforcement organization's perception and efficacy of community-oriented policing (COP) and whether the philosophy of community-oriented policing is effective in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community.

Discussion of Preliminary Analysis

Analyses conducted prior to the formal address of the study's questions included missing data, internal consistency of participant response to the study's research instrument, and essential study participant demographic information. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized in the preliminary analyses. The missing data were minimal (<1%) and considered sufficiently random in nature. Regarding the internal reliability response, the level for sworn officers, civilian employees, and the overall reliability was .76. Moreover, the internal reliability of the participant response to the survey items was statistically significant.

Discussion by Research Question

Research Question 1: To what degree do the perceptions of *sworn officers* differ from those of *civilian employees* regarding the importance and efficacy of community policing?

The results indicated that the mean score difference between the two groups (sworn officers versus civilian employees) was not found to be statistically significant regarding their overall efficacy of community-oriented policing. The effect size was considered small when assessing the magnitude of difference between the two groups. Although, there was a

noteworthy imbalance in the sample sizes, both sworn officers and civilian members were close in comparison regarding their perceptions of community-oriented policing. According to a study conducted by Lurigio and Skogan (1994), law enforcement officers' perceptions of community-oriented policing are ambivalent. In this study, police officers were reluctant to buy into the community-policing philosophy due to their pessimistic views on any changes taking place. Factors that impact this level of decisiveness are the design and implementation of the program within the organization.

The specialization of community-oriented policing is another hinderance to the success of the program. While community-oriented policing should be a department-wide philosophy, many law enforcement organizations treat this policing philosophy as a specialized unit in which a limited number of officers employ this practice. "De-specialization allows line officers to be generalists who can address a wide variety of problems in the community" (Hancock, 2016, p. 465). As such, department-wide implementation and training is the key to promoting efficacy in community-oriented policing.

Research Question 2: Does community-oriented policing represent the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates? Are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon the reduction of crime rates between sworn officers and civilian employees?

The results indicated that community policing is the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates. The effect size was considered moderate. The results from the second part of Research Question 2 revealed a small difference between the civilian members versus the sworn members of the organization. The effect size for the two groups was

considered to be small. Law enforcement organizations rely heavily on citizens to reduce the crime rate in a community. Law enforcement officers cannot be everywhere at once; therefore, community involvement is critical in apprehending offenders (Nix, 2017). According to Nix (2017), the process-based model of regulation suggests that citizens are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement officers in their attempts to apprehend criminals if citizens view officers as a legitimate authority. Based on the number of law enforcement officers attacked and killed in the line of duty, studies have shown that this could force police officers to de-police in certain communities, causing the crime rates to increase (Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, 2018). According to Sozer and Merlo (2013), "community policing without a clear focus on specific problems has not been found to be effective in preventing crime" (p. 507). However, research suggested that community policing is effective in reducing the fear of crime (Sozer & Merlo, 2013).

Research Question 3: Community-oriented policing is the most effective means of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. Are there differences in perceptions concerning community-oriented policing impact upon bridging the gap between the law enforcement officers and the community between sworn officers and civilian employees?

The results indicated that community policing is the most effective means of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community. The effect size was considered very large. The results from the second part of Research Question 3 revealed a small difference between the civilian members versus the sworn members of the organization. The effect size for the two groups was considered to be small despite the imbalance in sample sizes between the two groups. An important component of a law enforcement officer's job is to have direct contact with the community (Gordijn et al., 2017). Negative contact between the two groups has "implications for their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during everyday social contact" (Gordijn et al., 2017,

65

p. 255). Thus, the negative contact with the community leads to citizens' negative perceptions of law enforcement officers. According to Rhodes and Reese (2016), the President's Task Force on the 21st Century Policing (2015) "asserted that law enforcement culture 'should embrace a guardian-rather than a warrior-mindset to build trust and legitimacy both within agencies and with the public'" (p. 621). According to Brooks et al. (2016), African Americans continue to be a displaced group due to the long negative interactions with law enforcement officers. Based on the number of recent high profile incidents involving African American men, many individuals in the Black community feel they are "living in a state of hyper-arousal" (Brooks, et al., 2016, p. 350). Additionally, individuals residing in high crime neighborhoods generally have a less favorable opinion of law enforcement officers (Wu et al., 2009). Therefore, community-oriented policing can effectively bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community.

Research Question 4: Considering the elements of *discretionary policing*, *assigned zones*, *community policing emphasis at the academy/preparatory level* and *emphasis upon low income neighborhoods*, which element was perceived to be of greatest importance in the concept and effective practice of community-oriented policing?

The elements *low income neighborhoods* and *discretionary policing* should represent an essential component in the community policing philosophy. In a comparison between these two items, *low income neighborhoods* should be a priority for community policing efforts to be successful. One of the key components to a successful community-oriented policing program is providing law enforcement officers with the autonomy to be creative in their problem-solving efforts (Adams et al., 2002). In lieu of having rules and procedures that are considered "black and white", law enforcement officers need to have some flexibility to address community issues that are most effective (Adams et al., 2002).

Law enforcement officers have taken a more aggressive stance on crime fighting. As such, recent literature indicates more controversial incidents between police officers and African Americans are occurring (Gau & Paoline, 2017). Law enforcement officers should be fair and consistent in all matters when dealing with police services. When citizens believe they are treated fairly, police officers are viewed as a legitimate figure in the community (Nix, 2017). Finally, law enforcement organizations take a proactive approach to recruiting and hiring qualified police officers that represent the makeup of their community (Wilson et al., 2016). Police-citizen relationships will improve if police agencies are diversified. This diversification will bring different attitudes and predispositions to law enforcement organizations (Ozkan, Worrall, & Piquero, 2016).

Research Question 5: Considering participant *gender*, *ethnicity*, *attitude toward the public*, and *years of experience*, which represents the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community-oriented policing?

The results indicated that *attitude toward the public* is the most robust predictor of perceived importance and efficacy of community policing. According to Adams et al. (2002), "an analysis of community policing found that Blacks, women, officers with greater service, and the college educated tend to hold favorable attitudes toward COP relative to Whites, men, newer officers, and the less educated" (p. 404). Police work is arguably one of the most dangerous occupations in society. The practice of law enforcement is considered a service to the community and, as such, frequent contact is made with various segments of the population on a daily basis. Stress associated with being a police officer include the fear of physical violence, including death, disturbing crime scenes, injury or death to another officer, and other traumatic

events. This high exposure to work stress can have an impact on an law enforcement

organization and the work product of a police officer (Gordijn et al., 2017).

"Historically, the relationship between minorities and the criminal justice system has

been a tumultous one" (Ozkan et al., 2016, p. 403). Law enforcement officers have become

cynical and base their perceptions of communities on the level of police-citizen contact with the

individuals within those communities (Barthelemy et al., 2016). Factors such as a law

enforcement officer's use of force and the paramilitary style of policing have shown to have a

direct correlation to negative perceptions of the police by the community (Barthelemy et al.,

2016). Law enforcement officers have become hypervigilant when dealing with the community

because of the issues relating to citizens being aggressive and disrespectful. This negative

contact with the community is "likely to develop prejudice and negative stereotypes of citizens"

(Gordijn et al., 2017, p. 225). Therefore, law enforcement officers' attitude toward the

community is the most important factor in community policing.

Research Question 6: Considering participant perception of the *role of the media*, *law-enforcement perception of community support*, and *role of education-level in matters of community policing*, which represents the most robust predictor of overall perceived efficacy of community-oriented policing?

The variable *role of the media*, *law enforcement perception of community support*, and

education level did not represent viable predictors of the efficacy on the practice of community-

oriented policing. These results were surprising in light of the literature suggesting that the

media is partly responsible for citizen protests and the "war on cops" (Nix et al., 2018, p. 33), in

which law enforcement officers are being assaulted and killed at alarming numbers. Police

officers fear the media and negative attention from the public, which may lead to hesitation

during instances where use of force is necessary (Nix et al., 2018). Law enforcement officers'
actions are constantly scrutinized, which leads to "negative judgement and stereotypes" (Gordijn
et al., 2017, p. 256) from the media and the community.

Research on intergroup relationships have focused on perceptions of people of different
groups. When law enforcement officers interact with other groups of people, biases, stereotypes,
and prejudices are likely to influence their decisions (Gordijn et al., 2017). This finding was
interesting because law enforcement officers should be aware that community support is one of
the main ingredients in an effective community policing program (Mbuba, 2018).

Research Question 7: Did study participants perceive community-oriented policing as
representing a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law
enforcement department? Were there differences in perceptions between sworn officers and
civilian employees as to the degree to which community-oriented policing should be embraced
throughout the law enforcement department?

It was evident from this research study that the practice of community-oriented policing
should be embraced throughout the law enforcement organization. The findings of the second
part of Research Question 7 manifested a very large effect size. However, when comparing
Research Question 7 with the two groups, there was not a statistically significant difference. The
ability for law enforcement officers to perform an effective service to the community is often
predicated on a positive image. When law enforcement officers provide a positive service to the
community, positive perceptions will occur. When a negative service if performed, the
community will develop poor perceptions of law enforcement (Bain et al., 2014).

Study Limitations

This research is not without limitations. This researcher intended to garner a larger geographical sample and more of a probability sample. The sample size was 356 members of a large law enforcement organization in Central Florida; however, only 32% of those members completed the survey. Additionally, this researcher only made the survey available for 10 days. Participation levels might have improved if more time were allowed and follow-up communication with the sample size had been conducted. The study sample was non-probability in nature and convenient by definition, which limits the generalizability of the study.

Another limitation to this study is that data was collected from only one law enforcement organization, reflecting only one geographical location in the country and one type of agency. Had more geographically diverse organizations been surveyed, then this study would be more generalizable across the country. Therefore, had different types of law enforcement organizations been researched such as city, county, and state agencies, this study would have yielded more generalizability.

A limitation to this study was that data was collected using quantitative, Likert-scale items allowing only for numeric responses. Restricting responses to close-ended, quantitative responses does not allow for the researcher and participants to reciprocate ideas. Open-ended responses to the research questions would have potentially garnered additional factors not considered in the given variables from this study.

Implications for Professional Practice

The study provides insight in how one large law enforcement organization perceives community-oriented policing. Results from this research point to the positive impact community-oriented policing has on bridging the gap between law enforcement officers and the

70

citizens despite barriers. The data collected in this research have legitimate practical applications throughout the U.S. and abroad when identifying methods to improve the quality of life of citizens, reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime, and promote legitimacy in law enforcement organizations. Based on the results of this research, law enforcement organizations should make it a practice to hire qualified officers that reflect the demographics of the community. According to the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015), "procedurally just behavior is based on four central principles: 1) treating people with dignity and respect; 2) giving individuals 'voice' during encounters; 3) being neutral and transparent in decision making, and 4) conveying trustworthy motives" (p. 10).

Recommendations for Future Research

The research design and methodology for this study was broadly non-experimental, quantitative and, more specifically, survey research. The results of the study identified several recommendations for future research. First, additional studies of the remaining law enforcement organizations around Central Florida could obtain a pulse on their own perceptions of community policing. Care should be taken to respect the validity of specializations within law enforcement organizations; however, each respective unit should contain principles of community policing within its operations. By studying more police agencies in one county could garner a better image of police-community relationships in one of the largest counties in the state of Florida. Second, a qualitative or mixed-method study with Central Florida citizens could determine their perceptions of community-oriented policing and whether this philosophy does bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement. Law enforcement administrators would benefit greatly from research on conditions affecting citizens' attitudes toward police officers due to "widespread confidence in the police makes law enforcement officers' work

71

easier and more effective" (Lee & Gibbs, 2015, p. 315). Additional research would provide

valuable data for strengthening community policing programs across the country. Finally,

additional research needs to include empirical investigations on the manner in which the media

and the use of social media play a role in the community's perspective of law enforcement.

Conclusion

Extensive research supports the idea that people are more likely to cooperate with law

enforcement officers if they perceive the police to be a legitimate authority (President's Task

Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).   Research has shown that race has been a long-standing

predictor of attitudes and perceptions of law enforcement officers; therefore, building trust and

legitimacy should be a priority for all law enforcement organizations.

The effectiveness of law enforcement officers to lower the crime rate and reduce the fear

of crime depends largely on the willingness for citizens to get involved. Law enforcement

officers cannot police every community; therefore, police officers rely on citizens to be the

"eyes" in the community and work with law enforcement organizations to help lower the crime

rate. Law enforcement organizations should work closely with citizens to identify problems and

solutions for effective results that provide a quality of life for everyone involved.

The use of social media can improve the community member's perceptions on law

enforcement officers. Law enforcement organizations should implement strategies to increase

their social media presence to broaden the communication gap with the community. The use of

social media can serve multiple purposes:

- Improve organization transparency;

- Reduce the fear of crime; and

- Assist law enforcement with investigations.

The results of this study may lead to a better partnership between the law enforcement officers and the community. Additionally, this study's results should reinforce the negative perceptions of law enforcement officers from previous research and help to implement change within organizations around the country. The results of this study show that sworn officers and civilian employees of this large law enforcement organization have similar perceptions of the overall efficacy of community policing. Similarly, sworn officers and civilian members believe that community policing is effective in reducing the crime rates. Research affirms the results of this study in that community-oriented policing is the most effective means in bridging the gap between the police and the community.

REFERENCES

Adams, R. E., Rohe, W. M., & Arcury, T. A. (2002). Implementing community-oriented

policing: Organizational change and street officer attitudes. *Crime & Delinquency, 48*(3),

399-430.

Alexander, R., & Gyamerah, J. (1997). Differential punishing of African Americans and whites

who possess drugs: A just policy or a continuation of the past. *Journal of Black Studies,

28*, 97-111.

Allison, W., & Wadman, R. (2004). *To protect and serve: A history of police in America.* Upper

Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bain, A., Robinson, B. K., & Cosner, J. (2014). Perceptions of policing: Improving

communication in local communities. *International Journal of Police Science &

Management, 16*(14), 267-276.

Barni, D., Vieno, A. R., & Russo, S. (2016). Basic personal values, the country's crime rate and

the fear of crime. *Social Indicators Research, 129*, 1057-1074.

Barthe, E. P., & Stitt, G. (2011). Impact of increased police presence in a non-criminogenic area.

Police Practice and Research, 12(5), 383-396.

Barthelemy, J. J., Chaney, C., Maccio, E. M., & Church II, W. T. (2016). Law enforcement

perceptions of their relationships with community; law enforcement surveys and

community focus groups. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 26*(3-4), 413-429.

Barton, M. S., Weil, F., Jackson, M., & Hickey, D. A. (2017). An investigation of the influence of the spacial distribution of neighborhood violent crime on fear of crime. *Crime & Delinquency, 63*(13), 1757-1776.

Birzer, M. L. (2008). What makes a good police officer? Phenomenological reflections from the African-American community. *Police Practice and Research, 9*(3), 199-212.

Boivin, R. (2013). On the use of crime rates. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice, 55*(2), 263-277.

Braga, A. A. (2015). Crime and policing revisited. *New Perspectives in Policing*, 1-30.

Brand, M., & Birzer, M. (2003). The benefits of community policing in rural Oklahoma. *Community Policing in a Rural Setting*, 105-112.

Brooks, M., Ward, C., Euring, M., Townsend, C., White, N., & Hughes, K. L. (2016). Is there a problem officer? Exploring the lived experience of black men and their relationship with law enforcement. *Journal of African American Studies, 20*, 346-362.

Brunton-Smith, I., & Sturgis, P. (2011). Do neighborhoods generate fear of crime? An empirical test using the British crime survey. *Criminology, 49*, 331-369.

Bumgarner, J. (2002). An assessment of the perceptions of policing as a profession among two-year and four-year criminal justice and law enforcement students. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 13*(2), 313-334.

Cheng, H. (2015). Factors influencing public satisfaction with the local police: A study in

    Saskatoon, Canada. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies &*

    Management, 38(4), 690-704.

Drakulich, K. M. (2013). Perceptions of the local danger posed by crime: Race, disorder,

    informal control, and the police. *Social Science Research, 42*, 611-632.

Ferraro, K., & LaGrange, R. (1987). The measurement of fear of crime. *Social Inquiries, 57*, 70-

    101.

Forst, B. (2000). The privatization and civilianization of policing. *Boundary Changes in*

    Criminal Justice Organizations, 2, 19-79.

Gau, J. M., & Paoline, E. A. (2017). Officer race, role, orientations, and cynicism towards

    citizens. *Justice Quarterly Review, 34*(7), 1246-1271.

Gay, L., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2012). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis*

    and Applications. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Gil, P. (2018, February 5). *Lifewire*. Retrieved from Dotdash Publishing Family:

    https://www.lifewire.com/what-exactly-is-twitter-2483331

Gill, C., Weisband, D., Telep, C. W., Vitter, Z., & Bennett, T. (2014). Community-oriented

    policing to reduce crime, disorder and fear and increase satisfaction and legitimacy

    among citizens: A systematic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 10*, 399-428.

Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., Vitter, Z., & Bennett, T. (2014). Community-oriented

    policing to reduce crime, disorder and fear and increase satisfaction and legitimacy

    among citizens; A systematic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 10*, 399-428.

Gordijn, E. H., Vacher, L., & Kuppens, T. (2017). "To serve and protect" when expecting to be

    seen negatively: The relation between police officers' contact with citizens, meta-

    stereotyping, and work-related well-being. *Journal of Community and Applied Social*

    Psychology, 27, 253-268.

Hancock, K. (2016). Community policing within campus law enforcement agencies. *Police*

    Practice and Research, 17(5), 463-476.

Huang, Y., Wu, Q., Huang, X., & Bort, J. (2017). A multiplatform investigation of law

    enforcement agencies on social media. *Information Polity, 22*, 179-196.

Huggins, C. M. (2012). Traffic stop encounters: Officer and citizen race and perceptions of

    police propriety. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 37*, 92-110.

Ikuteyijo, L. O. (2009). The challenges of community policing in Nigeria. *International Journal*

    of Police Science & Management, 11(3), 285-293.

Kahn, K. B., & Martin, K. D. (2016). Policing and race: Disparate treatment, perceptions, and

    policy responses. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 10*(1), 82-121.

Kelling, G. L., & Moore, M. H. (1988). The evolving strategy of policing. *Perspectives on*

    Policing, 4, 1-16.

Khan, A. M., Shakoor, A., Aziz, L., & Baryal, A. (2015). Factors affecting public trust in police: A study of twin cities (Rawalpindi & Islamabad). *Pakistan Journal of Criminology, 7*(4), 89-102.

Kruger, D., Hutchinson, P., Monroe, M., Reischl, T., & Morrel-Samuels, S. (2007). Assault injury rates, social capital, and fear of neighborhood crime. *Journal of Community Psychology, 35*, 483-498.

Lee, J., & Gibbs, J. (2015). Race and attitudes toward police: The mediating effect of social distance. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 38*(2), 314-332.

Liou, K. T., & Savage, E. G. (1996). Citizen perception of community policing impact. *Public Administration Quarterly, 20*(2), 163-179.

Liu, E., & Polson, E. (2016). The colors of fear: A multilevel analysis of fear of crime across Houston area neighborhoods. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 14*(4), 307-326.

Lockwood, B., & Wyant, B. R. (2014). Who cares who protects us? The relationship between type of police coverage and citizen satisfaction with the police. *Police Practice and Research, 15*(6), 461-475.

Lumb, R. C., & Breazeale, R. (2002). Police officer attitudes and community policing implementation: Developing strategies for durable organizational change. *Policing and Society, 13*(1), 91-106.

Luo, F., & Zhao, J. S. (2017). Acculturation and fear of crime among Hispanics. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 15*(1), 1-20.

Lurigio, A. J., & Skogan, W. G. (1994). Winning the hearts and minds of police officers: An

    assessment of staff perceptions of community policing in Chicago. *Crime &*

    Delinquency, 40(3), 315-330.

Mazerolle, L., & Terrill, W. (2018). Making every police-citizen interaction count. *Criminology*

    & Public Policy, 17(1), 89-96.

Mbuba, J. M. (2018). Attitudes toward the police: The significance of race and other factors

    among college students. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 8*, 201-215.

McNeeley, S., & Grothoff, G. (2016). A multilevel examination of the relationship between

    racial tension and attitudes toward the police. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 41*,

    383-401.

Merritt, J., & Dingwell, G. (2010). Does plural suit rural? Reflections on quasi-policing in the

    countryside. *International Journal of Police Science & Management, 12*(3), 388-400.

Moon, B. &. (2007). Police officers' attitudes toward citizen support: Focus on individual,

    organizational and neighborhood characteristic factors. *Policing: An International*

    Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 30(3), 484-497.

Moon, B., & Zager, L. J. (2007). Police officers' attitudes toward citizen support. *Policing: An*

    International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 30(3), 484-497.

Nations, D. (2018, August 12). *Lifewire*. Retrieved from Dotdash Publishing Family:

    https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-facebook-3486391

Nix, J. (2017). Do the police believe that legitimacy promotes cooperation from the public. *Crime & Delinquency, 63*(8), 951-975.

Nix, J., Wolfe, S. E., & Campbell, B. A. (2018). Command-level police officers' perceptions of the "war on cops"and de-policing. *Justice Quarterly, 35*(1), 33-54. doi:10.1080/07418825.2017.1338743

Oliver, W. M. (2006). The fourth era of policing: Homeland security. *International Review of Law Computers & Technology, 20*(1&2), 49-62.

Ozkan, T., Worrall, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). Does minority representation in police agencies reduce assaults on the police? *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 41*, 402-423. doi:10.1007/s12103-016-9338-6

Peck, J. H. (2015). Minority perceptions of the police: A state-of-the-art review. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 38*(1), 173-203.

Peirone, A., Maticka-Tyndale, E., Gbadebo, K., & Kerr, J. (2017). The social environment of daily life and perceptions of police and/or court discrimination among African, Caribbean, and Black youth. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 346-372.

Pelfrey, W. V. (2004). The inchoate nature of community policing: Examining the differences between community and traditional police officers. *Justice Quarterly, 21*(3), 579-601.

Perkins, M. (2016). Modeling public confidence of the police: How perceptions of the police differ between neighborhoods in a city. *Police Practice and Research, 17*(2), 113-125.

President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. (2015). *The president's task force on 21st century policing.* Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Pyrooz, D., Decker, S. H., Wolfe, S. E., & Shjarback, J. A. (2016). Was there a Ferguson effect on crime rates in large U.S. cities? *Journal of Criminal Justice, 46*, 1-8.

Reisig, M. D. (2010). Community and problem-oriented policing. *Crime and Justice, 39*(1), 1-53.

Rhodes, J. R., & Reese, T. (2016). In search of the beloved community. *Mercer Law Review, 67*(3), 617-624.

Rosenberg, H., Sigler, R. T., & Lewis, S. (2008). Police officer attitudes toward community policing: A case study of the Racine Wisconsin Police Department. *Police Practice and Research, 9*(4), 291-305. doi:10.1080/15614260802354569

Scott, M. S. (2016). Pioneers in policing: Herman Goldstein. *Police Practice and Research, 17*(6), 582-595.

Sozer, M. A., & Merlo, A. V. (2013). The impact of community policing on crime rates: Does the effect of community policing differ in large and small enforcement agencies? *Police Practice and Research, 14*(6), 506-521.

Sozer, M. A., & Merlo, A. V. (2013). The impact of community policing on crime rates: Does the effect of community policing differ in large and small law enforcement agencies? *Police Practice and Research, 14*(6), 506-521.

Stewart-Fisher, G. (2007). *Community policing explained: A guide for local governments.*

    Washington: International City/County Management Association.

Tillyer, R. (2018). Assessing the impact of community-oriented policing on arrest. *Justice*

    Quarterly, 35(3), 526-555.

Torres, J., Reling, T., & Hawdon, J. (2018). Role conflict and the psychological impacts of the

    post-Ferguson period on law enforcement motivation, cynicism, and apprehensiveness.

    Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 1-17.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2014). *Community Oriented Policing Services*. Retrieved from

    https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/vets-to-cops/e030917193-CP-Defined.pdf

Uchida, C. (1993). *The development of American police: Historical overview.* Prospect Heights,

    Illinois: Waveland Press.

Uluturk, B., Guler, A., & Karakaya, M. (2017). Police officers' attitudes toward the

    implementation of community-oriented policing in Turkey. *Crime & Delinquency,*

    63(14), 1946-1967.

Williams, H., & Murphy, P. V. (1990). The evolving strategy of police: A minority view.

    Perspectives on Policing, 13, 1-17.

Wilson, C. P., Wilson, S. A., & Gwann, M. (2016). Identifying barriers to diversity in law

    enforcement agencies. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 14*(4), 231-253.

Wolfe, S. E., & Nix, J. (2016). The Alleged "Ferguson effect" and police willingness to engage

    in community partnerships. *Law and Human Behavior, 40*(1), 1-10.

Wu, Y., Lake, R., & Cao, L. (2015). Race, social bonds, and juvenile attitudes toward the police. *Justice Quarterly, 32*(3), 445-470.

Wu, Y., Sun, I. Y., & Triplett, R. A. (2009). Race, class or neighborhood context: Which matters more in measuring satisfaction with police? *Justice Quarterly, 26*(1), 125-156.

APPENDIX

Appendix

Voluntary Consent for Online Survey

Greetings. Would you consider giving a few minutes of your time to respond to a survey regarding your perception of community policing? The survey is designed to gather information for a research project conducted by James "Chip" Roberts as part of his doctoral dissertation.

The principal investigator at Southeastern University is Dr. Amy Bratten, Associate Provost. Dr. Thomas Gollery, the methodologist, is also an investigator in this project.

The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of community policing from a law enforcement organization's perspective. This study will include both sworn officers and civilian members of the organization and make a comparison between the two groups.

This survey should only take about 5-7 minutes of your time and will serve to further understand the perceptions of community policing and possibly enhance the organization's own community policing program. Please respond truthfully to all of the items. The results of individual responses will remain confidential and will be used only for reporting grouped results in the dissertation. There are no risks associated with participating in this survey.

By taking this survey, you certify that you are 18 years of age or older and that you consent to participate.

If you have any questions related to this survey, please feel free to contact James "Chip" Roberts at 863-698-4109 or james.roberts@lakelandgov.net. and/or Dr. Amy Bratten at 863-667-5238 or anbratten@seu.edu. If you would like a copy of the results of the study when it is completed, please email James "Chip" Roberts to request the results.

Thank you so very much for your assistance in this important research project! Your prompt response to the survey is very much appreciated. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

Thank you!

James "Chip" Roberts, MPA, ABD
james.roberts@lakelandgov.net
1000 Longfellow Blvd.
Lakeland, Florida 33801

Community Policing Survey

Directions: Please respond to the following survey items using the following choice of response:

5- Strongly Agree   4-Agree   3- Uncertain   2- Disagree   1- Strongly Disagree

1. Community policing is the most effective means of bridging the "gap" between law enforcement and the community.

   5   4   3   2   1

2. Low-income neighborhoods, rather than "middle" or "high" income neighborhoods should be a priority for community policy efforts.

   5   4   3   2   1

3. Higher levels of education within the ranks of law enforcement is essential towards improving community policing efforts.

   5   4   3   2   1

4. Emphasis should be placed upon the philosophy and practice of community policing at law enforcement academies and law enforcement preparatory programs.

   5   4   3   2   1

5. My department's mission and vision statements support the practice of community policing.

   5   4   3   2   1

6. Assigned "zones" or "beats" are an essential component of effective community policing.

   5   4   3   2   1

7. Law enforcement officer "attitude" toward the public represents an important factor in effective community policing.

   5   4   3   2   1

8. Community policing represents a philosophy and practice that should be embraced throughout the local law enforcement department.

   5   4   3   2   1

9. Community policing represents the most effective law enforcement practice in lowering crime rates.

   5   4   3   2   1

10. Community policing practices should be "quality of life" driven rather than a product of predictive statistical analysis.

    5   4   3   2   1

11. The local "media" plays a significant role in determining the effectiveness of community policing practices.

    5   4   3   2   1

12. "Discretionary policing" should represent an essential component in the overall practice of community policing.

    5   4   3   2   1

13. Community policing is an effective practice for improving community-law enforcement relations regardless of community culture and ethnic composition.

5　　4　　3　　2　　1

14. A law enforcement officer's perception of community support is the most important predictor of his/her effectiveness in the practice of community policing.

5　　4　　3　　2　　1

15. Overall, community policing efforts in my community are effective and have produced a healthy rapport between law enforcement and the community.

5　　4　　3　　2　　1