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Identifying the Best Practices That Are Being Used to
Promote Higher Education in Both Civil Service and
Non-Civil Service Police Departments

Raymond Trigg

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy

Seton Hall University
2020

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Raymond Trigg has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ed.D. during this **Spring Semester 2020**.

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the best practices that are being used to promote higher education in both civil service and non-civil service police departments. This study also examined the higher educational incentives/policies that are currently established in municipal police departments to promote continued higher education. Factors such as tuition reimbursement, educational incentive pay, higher education standards for promotion and hiring, and rank and time of service were examined. Based on this examination, policy recommendations can be made to affect the level of education for municipal police officers positively. The organizational analysis provided a look at previously unseen aggregate data related to the levels of education in municipal police departments. This analysis also offered previously unseen educational data regarding civil service and non-civil service police departments and how they may differ. Data related to each officer's level of education was used to identify subgroups of officers who continued their education towards degree attainment after employment and those who did not. These subgroup levels were then compared to several independent variables which may influence continuing education choices of officers. The results of the binary logistic regression in this study showed that tuition reimbursement, accelerated career path, years of service, and rank at the middle management level had a statistically significant relationship with higher degree attainment by officers. The null hypothesis was retained in the case of all the other predictor variables. Recommendations were made regarding best practices related to creating an environment to facilitate continuing higher education.

Keywords: Continuing Education, Police, Incentives, Higher Education, Civil Service, Non-Civil Service, Motivation

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Finally, I would like to thank the municipal police departments of Middlesex County, New Jersey; New Brunswick Police Director Anthony Caputo, and Robert

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to four specific groups of people. First, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my parents, Eve Jenkins, James Jenkins, and Lorraine Trigg. It was my parents who never gave up on me and showed me that anything in life is possible with hard work and determination. They taught me that education is the key to being successful despite socioeconomic challenges.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Professionalism and higher education for law enforcement officers has been debated for decades, and this subject continues to be an important topic in the current era of policing. Sir Robert Peel was instrumental in getting the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 signed. The purpose of this act was to improve policing in London, and it also established the Metropolitan Police. Peel established nine principles to guide this newly formed police force. The second principle states that “the ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions” (Williams, 2003, p. 100). In Peel’s principles, these actions also include the amount of force that is used by police. Peel understood the importance of the public and obtaining their cooperation in order for the police to be effective, and many of his ideas are still relevant today. The effectiveness of the police is determined by the level of public cooperation (Sparrow, 1988). August Vollmer, who is considered the father of modern policing, believed that police officers should receive better training and have a formal education. In 1908 Vollmer created the Berkley Police School where his deputies were taught police methods during off-duty hours (Carte & Carte, 1975). This teaching was the first organized training for officers during this time and the beginnings of police professionalism.

Policing in America has evolved through three eras: the political era; the reform era, also called the professional era; and the community era. During the political era, which lasted from the 1840s to the 1930s, the focus was on enforcing laws and making arrests (Peak & Glensor, 2016). Also, during this era, the effectiveness of the police was

determined by response times (Sparrow, 1988). During the professional era, which lasted from the 1930s to the 1980s, the movement towards reform and professionalism in policing began due to the corrupt, brutal, and political status of the police (Peak & Glensor, 2016). In today's climate, the community era, which began in the 1980s and continues today, the police have to depend on the support of the public to function at a high level of satisfaction. During the past three decades, there have been incidents that have caused tension and hostility between the police and minority groups (Dempsey, Forst, & Carter, 2018). Over the past decade, the media have shown images of police misconduct and use of force incidents regularly (Miethe, Venger, & Lieberman, 2019), and these incidents have had a negative effect on the image of the police department (Weitzer, 2002). Most citizens have very little contact with the police, and these images often influence their perception in a negative way (Engel, 2005).

Police officers in today's climate have a very difficult job to do and face significant scrutiny from the media. New technology like cell phones, in-car cameras, body mics, and body cameras have made it possible for the public to see what the police are doing on a daily basis. Police officers have to act professional and be seen as professionals to gain the public's support. Higher education is a highly valued means to acquire skills and experience that are necessary to meet the wide variety of challenges that police officers will face (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Research shows that verbal force used towards citizens is less common among college-educated officers than non-educated officers, and college-educated officers were less likely to use physical force than officers with no higher education (Paoline & Terrill,

2007). Just one highly publicized use-of-force incident can tarnish the image of the police department and negatively affect the citizens' of confidence in the police (Weitzer, 2002).

The idea of professionally developing officers through higher education has been a goal of policing since Vollmer initiated this idea over 100 years ago. Vollmer's school focused on teaching officers the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their job professionally (Vollmer & Schneider, 1917). Research shows that officers with college degrees demonstrate greater levels of creativity and problem-solving skills (Gardiner, 2017). Additionally, college educated officers have better communication skills, are more empathetic, and make better decisions (Carter & Sapp, 1989). These characteristics are extremely important to police administrators who are consistently trying to improve the quality of service and promote the image of a professional police department to the community. Support for college-educated officers is based on research that demonstrates that they will be more prepared to handle the challenges in this ever-changing environment while also promoting professionalism (Dempsey et al., 2018).

Education has been one of the key factors contributing to officers being viewed as professionals, and progress is being made by raising the hiring standards; however, only 1.9% of municipal law enforcement agencies nationwide required a 4-year degree for employment in 2013 (Reaves, 2015). Nationwide, 30.2% of officers have a four-year college degree, 51.8% of officers have a 2-year degree, and 5.4% have a graduate degree (Gardiner, 2017). Municipal law enforcement agencies have been increasing their educational hiring requirements, but the move has been slow and sporadic. In 1993, 1.4% of agencies required 4-year degrees, and in 2003, 1.7% required college degrees (Reaves, 2015). The gradual increase can be attributed to several concerns that have been brought

up by police administrators who are against raising their educational requirements. One concern is that this requirement has failed to show job-relatedness (Carter, Sapp, & Stephens, 1988; Roberg & Bonn, 2004), meaning that police officers learn how to do their job with training on the streets and not in the classroom. Other concerns are that it will shrink the applicant pool and minority recruitment (Peak & Sousa, 2018), and agencies will struggle to support the salaries of college-educated applicants (Gardiner, 2017).

While the hiring of college-educated officers continues to be discussed and debated, agencies should recognize the importance of educational incentives which can yield officers who are better communicators, use less force, have better problem-solving skills, are more creative, and promote professionalism for the department. Incentive programs were identified based on the 2017 Gardiner study, and are as follows: tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentive, flexible shifts, use of department vehicle for school, permission to attend class during work hours, schedule preferences to accommodate college schedules, and accelerated career ladder for college-educated officers. According to Novak, Smith, Cordner, and Roberg (2018), incentives are one of the most important strategies to increase educational levels. Instead of raising the agency's hiring requirements, incentives can be the means of promoting college enrollment and higher educational advancement. Incentives that could be used to attract college-educated applicants are educational pay incentives and the accelerated career ladder for promotion. Educational incentives are more common in departments with officers who seek promotion, 3.2% requiring a college degree for sergeant, 13.5% for lieutenant, 22.9% for command staff (executive-level managers), and 35.9% for

chief/sheriff (Gardiner, 2017). At least one incentive (any program designed to encourage officers to continue education) to pursue higher education is provided by 55.8% of agencies.

This study focused on New Jersey and the choices that officers make to continue their education. New Jersey officers rank second in the country with 46.1% of them possessing a 4-year degree, behind Massachusetts's 49.0% (Gardiner, 2017). Agencies in the Northeast were most likely to provide educational incentives (68.9%) for officers to continue their education (Gardiner, 2017). Even though an abundance of research has indicated that college-educated officers are better compared to officers who are less educated (Peak & Sousa, 2018), many officers still do not have college degrees. Police officers will need to increase their level of education in the continuous effort to professionalize law enforcement.

There are two hiring processes for becoming a police officer, and the educational requirements for each method is different. The Pendleton Act in 1883 created the civil service system for federal employees. The civil service system was created to eliminate political influence, favoritism, and prejudiced behavior by regulating the hiring procedures (Dempsey et al., 2018). In civil service police departments in the United States, the hiring requirements are set by state and local government civil service systems. Hiring requirements for municipal police departments in New Jersey are set up by each agency. The two hiring processes for becoming a police officer are civil service and non-civil service, which is determined by each department. In New Jersey, there are 550 state and local police agencies, and 465 of those agencies are local municipal agencies (Reaves, 2015). The municipal agencies have the option to be regulated by the

New Jersey Civil Service Commission, which is an independent body in the New Jersey State Government that interprets, amends, and adopts rules regarding civil employment in New Jersey (New Jersey Civil Service Commission, 2019). Of the 465 municipal agencies, 171 have opted to be governed by the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The educational requirements for police officers based on the New Jersey Civil Service Commission are “graduation from high school or vocational high school or possession of an approved high school equivalent certificate” (New Jersey Civil Service Commission, 2019). Departments that are regulated by the CSC cannot raise their hiring requirements to recruit college-educated officers, and this is not even an option due to the criteria set by New Jersey statutory law, N.J.S.A. 11a (The Civil Service Act) and the associated New Jersey Administrative Code, N.J.A.C. Title 4A. A large number of agencies in the Gardiner (2017) study have not raised their minimum educational requirements due to the strict civil service standards. These departments have to rely on incentives, not hiring requirements, to promote higher education. Non-civil service departments can raise their hiring requirements; for example, the New Jersey State Police require a 4-year college degree. However, an acceptable alternative is 60 college credits with two years of full-time work experience or military service (New Jersey State Police, 2020). Most of the non-civil service departments in this study require 60 college credits but not a college degree.

The CSC is an unbiased, independent body that hears and rules on appeals filed by state, county, and municipal civil service employees; candidates for employment; and appointing authorities (State of New Jersey Civil Service Commission, 2019). The CSC

provides a forum for appeals to be heard, and fair and impartial decisions to be rendered. The CSC is also responsible for hiring municipal police officers and for the promotion of municipal officers into higher ranks as sergeant, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, and chief. Appointments and promotions in civil service municipalities are made according to merit by examination, which is competitive (State of New Jersey Civil Service Commission, 2019).

New Jersey is comprised of 21 counties which vary in territory, population, and per capita income. The least populated county is Salem, with a population of 62,792, and the most populated is Bergen, with a population of 905,116. Middlesex County, which is examined in this study, has a unique array of cultures; 25 different municipalities; and a mix of small towns, urban towns, and rural communities. Each department has its own unique characteristics and provided a data sample that represents this dense, diverse, and reasonably affluent county. Middlesex County is ranked second in population at 842,798 and has a population density of 2727.08 per square mile, which is third in New Jersey (2017 Census Estimate). As of 2016, Middlesex County had a per capita income of \$52,071, ranking eleventh in New Jersey (New Jersey Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, 2016). Middlesex County can be compared to Atlantic and Essex County because of the population and compared to Camden and Passaic County because of population density. Based on per capita income, Middlesex County compares with Sussex, Burlington, Hudson, and Cape May County (New Jersey Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, 2016).

Problem

The goal of this study was to examine educational policies and practices which influence higher education in municipal police departments. Each police department in this study operates independently and has different policies and practices that promote higher education. The rules regarding these educational policies and practices are usually governed by the collective bargaining agreements between the municipalities and the police departments. The population of interest in this study is the municipal law enforcement agencies of the County of Middlesex, New Jersey. Middlesex County has 25 municipal police departments that operate on a full-time basis. Ten of the municipal departments within this county are civil service jurisdictions, which are regulated by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. The other 15 municipal departments are not governed by the requirements of CSC. All 25 municipal police departments are the subject of this study.

Christine Gardiner (2017), in conjunction with California State University, completed a comprehensive study titled Policing around the Nation: Education, Philosophy, and Practice. The Gardiner study revealed a vast amount of information about educational practices for municipal and county police departments throughout the nation. The Gardiner study also provided aggregate data related to police officer education, but it did not examine any factors that may influence the level of education. This study focused on identifying distinct practices and policies that influence continuing education on a much smaller scale. The municipal police departments in Middlesex County provided useful information due to the diverse mix of departments that range from small to larger departments. Each department in this study has its own unique

organizational structure and different levels of specialization. The structure of the department is based on the mission of the department. In smaller departments, officers must act as generalists and perform a wide range of law enforcement activities without administrative review (Falcone, Wells, & Weisheit, 2002). In larger departments with specialization, officers also must be ready to handle the new complexities associated with policing in the community policing era. Community policing officers also act as generalists and handle an array of situations on their own (Dempsey et al., 2018).

Policing in today's society has changed, and officers must be proficient in different styles of policing. Raising the standards for hiring has been gradual, and many police departments have officers who do not have college degrees. Even though the cited research has shown how beneficial college-educated officers can be to the department and the community, the numbers of college-educated officers remain low. Police professionalism has been studied, but there is not much research on the education of police officers in general, let alone the factors affecting educational choices of officers in civil service and non-civil service agencies. Sean O'Connor (2019) conducted a study entitled Identifying Factors That Influence the Continuing Education Choices of Municipal Police Officers that was similar to this study. O'Connor attempted to identify factors that influence the continuing education choices of police officers in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. His study focused on 13 small non-civil service police departments.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices that are being used to promote continued higher education in police departments in both civil service and non-civil service municipalities. This study examined factors that influence current police

officers to pursue higher education by obtaining a college degree and the educational incentives/policies that are established in municipal police departments in Middlesex County to promote continued higher education. The study examined education incentives such as tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentive, flexible shifts, use of department vehicle for school, permission to attend class during work hours, schedule preferences to accommodate college schedules, and accelerated career paths for college-educated officers. This study examined whether these incentives exist and whether officers are using them. This study further investigated how the educational incentives/policies that are established in civil service municipalities to promote continued higher education differ from those in non-civil service municipalities. This study focused on the educational incentives currently being offered within Middlesex County. As previously mentioned, 55.8% of agencies nationwide offer at least one educational incentive, while 68.9% of agencies in the Northeast were more likely to offer such incentives (Gardiner, 2017). This study examined the relationship between the level of police officer education and the incentives that promote continued higher education. The agency-provided educational incentives used for this study were taken from the 2017 Gardiner study and are: tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentive, flexible shifts, use of department vehicle for school, permission to attend class during work hours, schedule preferences to accommodate college schedules, and accelerated career ladder for college-educated officers (p. 25). Each department has its own unique set of variables establishing the type and conditions of each incentive that is offered. Some departments may offer incentive pay for certain classes. Other departments may offer flexible shifts, and some departments may not offer any incentives at all. The investigation of these

variables provided a previously unavailable snapshot of best practices that have been established to promote continued higher education within Middlesex County. These data showed the different levels of education for each department and the number of officers who possess a high school diploma, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or a doctoral degree. The study also looked at the different levels of rank in each department and level of education in these departments to see if promotion/career advancement is a determining factor towards career advancement. For the purpose of this study, the ranks analyzed were categorized as police officer, front line supervisor, middle manager, and executive. As a result of this study, I intend to identify reasons why some departments have better-educated officers than others and establish best practices to be used as a guideline for other police departments who wish to encourage officers to pursue continued higher education.

Significance of Study

The importance of requiring officers to have college education has been debated for decades (Novak et al., 2017). Numerous studies have been conducted about the benefits of requiring officers to have college degrees, but many departments have not raised their hiring requirements during this same time (Peak & Sousa, 2018). Many police administrators are concerned about raising the hiring requirements and the effects it will have on the pool of applicants applying to be officers (Decker & Huckabee, 2002; Gardiner, 2017). The recruitment process for becoming a police officer is very different than the recruiting process for most jobs, and the individuals applying have to be thoroughly screened to determine if they have the necessary skills for this challenging

career. Departments want to have adequate applicant pools to select from, and changing the hiring requirements could make this task even more difficult.

The primary function of an organization is professionalism. That professionalism is based on fundamental elements that define how they manage their work (Lipsky, 1971; Stinchcombe, 1959). Education, recruitment, training, and the selection process are some of the elements that have been used to describe professional police departments (Smith, 2004; White & Escobar, 2008; Willits & Nowacki, 2014). Higher education has an adverse effect on recruitment, training, and the selection process, but it also brings added value to police performance (Paterson, 2011). While the debate over hiring requirements and the level of education continues, the focus should shift to promoting higher education through incentives to officers who are currently employed. Police departments invest a lot of resources in finding individuals who will serve the police department and the community. Incentives that further the education of the officers will benefit the police department, the officers, and the community. One of the recommendations listed by the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) states that "the Federal Government, as well as state and local agencies, should encourage and incentivize higher education for law enforcement officers" (p. 59).

The data gathered from this study were analyzed in two parts. Part one of this analysis was organizational and showed previously unseen aggregate data related to education and incentives in each police department. The second part of this analysis was based on individual officers. This part was designed to show the relationships among several independent variables, and whether or not they influence police officers' choices to continue their education. This research provided data which show how different

agencies promote continued higher education. Based upon these policies, and the level of education in the agencies which offer them, an assessment was conducted to determine if the existing incentives are working. Other factors, such as educational standards for hiring, educational standards for promotion, time of service, and rank, were also studied to gain a broader perspective on factors which influence the level of education within police departments.

Research Questions

- What are the different levels of education in Middlesex County police departments?
- What educational incentives are offered in Middlesex County police departments?
- How do education incentives offered by police agencies in Middlesex County influence the level of education of police departments?
- How do educational standards for hiring and promotion influence the level of education within a police department in Middlesex County, NJ?
- Do educational incentives offered by municipal police agencies, educational standards for promotion, rank of officer and time of service affect the continuing education choices of police officers in Middlesex County?
- How do all these factors differ between civil service municipalities and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County?

Research Hypothesis

Police departments that have educational hiring requirements and educational incentives will have officers who continue their education at rates higher than officers in

departments that do not have hiring requirements and educational incentives. In addition, departments that are non-civil service departments will have officers who continue their education at rates higher than officers in civil service departments.

Definition of Terms

Best practice: The most effective means to achieve a desired result.

Chief Executive: (chief, director) This officer is in charge of the department and has the final say in all decision making.

Civil Service Police Department: A police department that is governed by the rules and regulations of the New Jersey Civil Service Commission.

Command Staff: Ranks that are above the rank of captain.

Executive Level Commander: (deputy chief, deputy director) Officers at this level are responsible for shaping the mission and values of the department. They also responsible for writing policy and making necessary changes to existing policy.

Front Line Supervisor: (sergeant) An officer who may conduct general police duties; however, this officer is also tasked with supervising and evaluating subordinates.

Middle Manager: (lieutenant, captain) This officer is generally tasked with administrative responsibilities and acts as a second-level supervisor while taking direction from command staff.

Non-Civil Service Police Department: A police department in a municipality that has not chosen to apply and be adopted as a Civil Service town that is governed by the rules and regulations of the New Jersey Civil Service Commission.

Patrol Officer: An officer who conducts general police duties without the responsibility of supervising other officers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of motivation to pursue higher education in police officers requires an understanding of why police officers can benefit from higher education. It is also necessary to understand what the public expect from the police, and how the public perceive the police. Policing is an occupation that is based on working with the community. Policing is built on the idea of the public trust and requires public support to function. Policing has gone through different eras and changes to become more productive. These changes have been attempts to improve the quality of service offered to the community, such as community-oriented policing. Understanding how police agencies have used these changes to elicit confidence and trust is also helpful to gain an understanding of how police agencies have attempted to become more professional. Understanding the general benefits of higher education also help to provide a broader perspective of why it is beneficial not only to individual police officers but also to their agency, to public perception of the police, and to the perceived legitimacy of the police. This review of literature will also explore the culture of the police and how that culture can affect not only the department but the community as well. Understanding the culture will also give better insight on incentives and how they work in a police organizational structure. This study utilized Christine Gardiner's (2017) "Policing around the Nation: Education, Philosophy, and Practice" to gain a better understanding of the current state of police officer education nationwide.

The review of related literature which follows is divided into seven sections. The first section addresses public perception and support of policing. The second section

deals with police professionalism. The third section explores the benefits of higher education. Section four discusses police officers and the issues regarding requiring higher education. Section five explores incentives, not only for education but a broader perspective of their use in other areas. Section six reviews how police agencies are structured and provides background on law enforcement career advancement. Section seven examines the characteristics of the culture of policing.

Public Perception and Support of Policing

Policing is a government function that has been established for the protection of the people. In early societies, policing was a private matter, as local citizens maintained order and dealt with lawbreakers (Dempsey et al., 2018). Due to urbanization and industrialization, a more modern and effective form of policing had to be developed to keep order and prevent crime (Peak & Sousa, 2018). Robert Peel was appointed in 1822 in England to address the problems with the inconsistent and inadequate communal form of policing. Peel's Metropolitan Police was modeled after the military and the members wore recognizable uniforms; carried a baton; and wore a visible, identifiable number on their collars for the public to see. Many of the first American police departments were modeled and based on Peel's philosophies. Peel believed that the police are the public and the public are the police, which followed his belief about the preventative role of the police and the positive relationships which lead to more cooperation from the community (Dempsey et al., 2018). Policing has changed from a private matter to a public matter, and the police have become a government agency that needs the support and cooperation of the community. Police departments are funded heavily by tax dollars, and the taxpayers expect a high level of service just as any other consumer. Police departments

are public sector organizations that have to gain community support and promote a positive image while attempting to achieve their goals in order to be effective (Decker, 1981; Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2003). Without support from the community, the services will diminish, and the overall effectiveness of the department will suffer (Decker, 1981). Perception and support are two elements that have become necessary in policing. Under our democratic system, the government is based on consent, freedom, participation, and equality (Novak et al., 2017). These elements increase public support, which is crucial for the police and the criminal justice system to run effectively (Jackson & Bradford, 2009).

David Easton (1975) was a political scientist who developed a theory to explain public support. Easton described support as “an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively” (p. 436). A person may express support through attitudes or behavior. Easton (1965) expressed that there are two types of support when looking at the relationships between citizens and governmental behavior: specific support and diffuse support. Specific support is based on attitudes, public response and satisfaction that members feel they obtain based on their demands compared to the outputs and performance of a government agency (Caldeira & Gibson, 1992; Easton, 1975). Diffuse support is described by Easton (1965) as support that consists of a “reservoir of favorable attitudes or goodwill that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or effects of which they see as damaging to their wants” (p. 273). Specific support can be influenced by unfavorable police action that is covered by the media. Diffuse support, in contrast, is not affected as easily by the same media events (Caldeira & Gibson, 1992). Studies have shown that

citizen encounters with the police affect their levels of satisfaction (Dowler & Sparks, 2008; Smith, 2005). Policing is based on contacts with the public, and these contacts are opportunities to develop that specific support for the police.

Sunshine and Tyler (2003) studied the influence of legitimacy and how it relates to public support. Legitimacy is defined as a “property of an authority or institution that leads people to feel that that authority or institution is entitled to be referred to and obeyed” (Sunshine & Tyler 2003, p. 514). In this study they looked at three aspects of public support: public compliance with the law, public cooperation with the police, and public willingness to support the police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Most of the people in society are law-abiding citizens (Tyler, 2015). They view compliance with the law as being proper because of their beliefs and will do so voluntarily (Tyler, 1990). Other people will obey the law because they believe the authorities have the right to command proper behavior (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). These two types of behavior are described as normative commitment, which can involve morality or legitimacy. Tyler (1990) illustrated this point further:

Normative factors are widely held to have an important role in facilitating compliance with the law. Legitimacy is a particularly important normative factor, for it is believed to be the key to the success of legal authorities. If authorities have legitimacy they can function effectively; if they lack it, it is difficult and perhaps impossible for them to regulate public behavior. (p. 57)

According to Hinds and Murphy (2007), police legitimacy can be instrumental and normative. Hinds and Murphy further explain that “the instrumental perspective of legitimacy suggests that police develop and maintain legitimacy through their

effectiveness in controlling crime and disorder in the community” (p. 28). Based on the instrumental aspect, police legitimacy is examined in the public eye by looking at police performance, risk, and the distribution of justice. Support from the public can be increased when the police can effectively keep crime at a minimum, have an effective omnipresence to deter crime, have fair sanctions for violators, and have a fair and equal distribution of police services for all people and all neighborhoods (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). The normative aspect of legitimacy is multifaceted, with procedural justice being the most important. Procedural justice suggests that citizens perceive procedural fairness involving decisions, treatment, and actions that have to be made by the police (Murphy et al., 2008; Hinds & Murphy, 2007). This fairness makes people feel that they have control over what happens to them and the decisions that they make. When people feel that they have control, then they believe that the system is good, but when people feel that they have no control, at that moment they doubt the system (Tyler, 1990). This doubt leads to questions regarding legitimacy, which, in turn, leads to individuals separating themselves from the police, leading to a lack of support and cooperation (Murphy & Cherney, 2012).

Legitimacy can also be examined through the use of discretion. The criminal justice system exercises a lot of discretion. The judge, the prosecutor, the parole board, and the police officer make decisions daily that involve the use of discretion. The judge can set bail or release a person, the prosecutor can reduce or drop charges, and the parole board can release a person early or have them serve the remainder of their sentence. The most crucial decisions involving discretion take place on the streets with the police officer (Dempsey et al., 2018). Some of the significant actions taken by officers that involve discretion include making an arrest; stopping, questioning, or frisking a person;

using physical force; using deadly force; writing a traffic summons; taking a police report; and investigating a crime. Police officers also use discretion when determining their workload. Most of an officer's patrol time is spent as uncommitted time or downtime (Famega, Frank, & Mazerolle, 2005). This uncommitted time allows the police to create positive contacts with the public, and increase public cooperation, and build trust. Sunshine and Taylor (2003) stated that this trust leads to empowerment, which allows the police to perform their job without hesitation or limits to police discretion.

Policing is a branch of the government that has a very high degree of citizen contact. Citizens are responsible for initiating police involvement in most criminal matters and providing information to assist the police (Decker, 1981). About 53.5 million people 17 years of age or older had some type of contact with the police in 2015 (Davis, Whyde & Langton, 2018). Some of these stops were involuntary or initiated by the police, and these stops have the propensity to be perceived as controversial. Traffic stops were the most frequent type of contact initiated by the police. Langton and Durose (2016) published a report that "examines involuntary contacts with police, specifically those that occurred when the person was the driver of a motor vehicle or when the person was stopped by the police in a public place not in a moving vehicle" (p. 1). This report outlines differences in perception of police behavior and legitimacy and race. Based on this report, race was an important factor in determining if the police behaved properly during traffic stops and street stops. Some of the highlights in this report were that more Blacks were pulled over during traffic stops than Whites and Hispanics. Blacks and Hispanics were ticketed and searched at a higher rate than White drivers. Blacks believed that the police did not behave properly during traffic stops and street stops at a higher rate

than Whites. Based on the findings in this report, traffic stops could hurt the legitimacy of the police and could lead to a lack of public support, doubt, and separation, which in turn can make it harder for the police to function effectively. Engel (2005) stated, “Police administrators must recognize that traffic stops in and of themselves, regardless of the official outcomes that citizens receive, can trigger citizens’ perceptions of distributive and procedural injustice” (p. 473).

Many police departments have engaged in community policing in an effort to improve perception, foster public cooperation, and control crime and disorder (Murphy et al., 2008). The federal Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (2019) defines community policing as “a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which 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.” Community policing creates a broader role for the police officer, who is given the ability to exercise more discretion and decision-making abilities (Peak & Sousa, 2018). Community policing has roots in early efforts like team policing, crime prevention, and foot patrol, but in the 1990s, community policing became the dominant movement (Cordner, 1997). The 1994 Crime Bill funded the hiring of 100,000 new officers, who had to be involved with community policing. This effort has been taken in neighborhoods where the relationship between the police and the community needs improvement.

Through community policing the citizens’ confidence is restored, and the citizens become participants and work together with the police in the fight against crime (Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005). In community policing, the police officer’s role has

changed from the basic activities they were trained to do, such as responding to calls, making arrests, and report writing. Community policing encourages the officer to be an active participant and use a wide range of resources in developing a solution to specific problems (Dempsey et al., 2018). Based on the study conducted by Sadd and Grinc (1996) of community policing, officers became more aware of the specific problems that affected residents by increasing the flow of information and knowledge (Crowl, 2017). This exchange allows the officers to get a better understanding of how this problem affects residents. Also, the residents became more aware of the police and their role within the community. The residents became more understanding and realistic about their expectations of the police and were receptive to change and ready to help with local problems. Community policing has changed the priorities of police work and the police culture from the traditional measures of aggressive crime-fighting (Ren et al., 2005) to problem-solving techniques like gathering facts and working with community groups to develop and implement tailor-made responses (Paoline, Myers, & Worden, 2000).

Professionalism

Freidson (1994) explained the definition of a profession and what professionalism entails:

Profession, professionalization, and professional are all extremely ambiguous words. Much of their stubborn imprecision hinges on their confusing and sometimes incompatible multiple connotations. There is, though, no other word in the English language which can be used to represent an occupation so well organized that its members can realistically envisage a career over most of their working years, a career during which they retain a particular occupational identity

and continue to practice the same skills no matter what institution they work. (p. 146)

A profession is organized and characterized by a body of specialized knowledge attained through extensive education and is defined by a set of internal standards and ethical guidelines that hold members of that profession responsible to one another and the entity they serve (Siegfried, 1989). Extensive training for police officers would also include education outside of traditional schools and colleges, such as the police academy. Bullock and Trombley (1999) stated that a profession is “the development of formal qualifications based upon education, apprenticeship, and examination, the emergence of regulatory bodies with powers to admit and discipline members, and some degree of monopoly rights” (p. 1). Cleveland (2011) stated that a profession is a group of individuals having distinct knowledge that is recognized by the public, skills based on an extensive foundation of knowledge and proficiencies with extended instruction and training. According to Flexner (2001), “the words profession or professional may be loosely or strictly used. In its broadest significance, it is simply the opposite of amateur” (p. 152). Flexner (2001) further explained the criteria needed to operate as a profession as follows: it involves intelligent operations with large specific responsibility, information is derived from science and learning, this information is worked up to a useful and certain end, it possesses an academically transmittable technique, it tends to be self-organized, and professions are progressively unselfish in motivation.

The concept of professionalism is very ambiguous and has been interpreted in many different ways. Freidson (1994) stated, “much of the debate about professionalism is clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages” (p. 169).

Fox (1992) agreed with this point, suggesting: “Professional means different things to different people. Without a language police, however, it is unlikely that the term professional(ism) will be used in only one concrete way” (p. 2). In sociology, professionalism as an occupational value has had an impact on organizing work and controlling workers which leads to benefits for workers and clients (Evetts, 2011). Professionalism is a concept that has continued to grow and change in society. The traditional sociological characteristics associated with a professional have been based on law and medicine. Lawyers and doctors were considered professionals who had high status and received high pay due to their professionalism (Demirkasimoglu, 2010). There has been a shift in power, and there are numerous occupations and careers that are now associated with the designation of profession and professionalism such as teachers, college lecturers, and educational leaders, as well as public sector professionals (Evans, 2008). Also, Noordegraaf (2016) mentioned other service-oriented occupational fields to be considered as professionals that deal with health care, welfare, education, and judicial services.

Professionalism in policing was not welcomed and was seen as an attack on policing in the 19th century. Policing was heavily influenced by politics during this time. The political parties controlled the police and benefited from their services (Dempsey et al., 2018). The police were disliked by the citizens, and a ritual of brutality developed as a result of this. There were several attempts to reform the police, but it was not until early in the 20th century when the term professionalism gained popularity in the police culture (Walker, 1977). Professionalism during this time was diverse and fragmented with two primary aspects, which were administrative efficiency and social reform (Walker, 1977).

Professional police departments functioning under social reform worked with society to make it better and not just focus on making arrests. A key part of administrative efficiency focused on officer development. Vollmer believed that true professionalism involved educated police officers. Vollmer saw knowledge as the key to improvement, and education was the key to this professional development (Oliver, 2017).

Professional development improves the profession, and it may also play a part in enhancing knowledge, skills, and strategies (Evans, 2008). Professional development must be an ongoing process to maintain professional status and remain current.

Professional development for police officers begins at the police academy, and this is the first step of their continuous training. On average, police officers spend about 760 hours in the academy receiving instruction on topics such as basic criminal law, traffic enforcement, firearms, self-defense, communication skills, and patrol procedures (Peak & Sousa, 2018). In the 21st century, the curriculum for police recruits has been expanded to include key topics such as community-oriented policing, terrorism, cultural diversity, and new technology (White & Escobar, 2008). The expanded curriculum is an example of the continuing efforts to professionalize policing. The foundation of a professional and effective police department is represented by key issues like recruitment, selection, and training (White & Escobar, 2008). In-service training is a form of professional development used regularly by police departments to update the skills and knowledge of officers. For officers to be effective in this changing society, training must occur at regular intervals for the remainder of their career (Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Vollmer, 1922). According to Dempsey et al. (2018), over the past four decades, police training has increased in quantity and quality.

Departments are also improving their curricula, training procedures, and training facilities. Traditional in-service training methods should be replaced with opportunities for shared knowledge based on real-life situations (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995); accordingly, most recruits were trained at academies that have incorporated reality-based training into their use-of-force training (Reaves, 2015). These training opportunities will assist educators in developing their knowledge and creating new departmental practices (Borko, 2004). The Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) states that "law enforcement agencies should implement ongoing, top-down training for all officers in cultural diversity and related topics that can build trust and legitimacy in diverse communities" (p. 58).

As society becomes more diverse, diversity in police departments has been a significant issue affecting the professionalism of the police. In the United States., the lack of diversity in police departments has been ongoing and has been emphasized by the public as a source of distrust in the police (Kringen, 2016). White males remain dominant in law enforcement, even though there have been improvements in diversification (Novak et al., 2017). Whites represent 72% of full-time sworn officers in local departments, while racial and ethnic minorities represent 27% (Reaves, 2015). Police departments that represent diversity through employment promote social justice, enhance the willingness of the community to cooperate, and improve perceptions of legitimacy (Kennedy, 2014; Kringen & Kringen, 2015; Raganella & White, 2004). Kennedy (2014) also asserted that representation is the key to legitimizing the power of the agency. The Patten Commission (an independent commission for police reform in Northern Ireland, 1999) observed in its

report that achieving legitimacy is related to how much the police department is a representation of the community it serves. Marenin (2004) further added

If police are taught that everyone in a democratic system deserves to be treated equitably and fairly when in contact with police---a standard human rights notion ---but when the police are themselves only representative of certain groups in society, officers are unlikely to take such teaching seriously. (p.117)

The Police Executive Research Forum is a police research and policy organization and a provider of management services, technical assistance, and executive-level education to support law enforcement agencies. One of the themes from the Police Executive Research Forum was to study how departments are creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community they patrol (Morison, 2017). Cultural sensitivity training for the entire police force should also be taught and reinforced during an officer's career. Many different proposals for reform in police-community relations involve a form of training related to cultural diversity, cultural sensitivity, or race relations (Barlow & Barlow, 1993).

The use of force has been used to measure police professionalism for decades. According to Chackerian (1974), the use of force is used to measure restraint and effectiveness, which are both valued by the community and can lead to an increase in public approval and a positive image. As previously stated, research shows that verbal force used towards citizens is lower for college-educated officers than non college-educated officers, and college-educated police officers were less likely to use physical force than officers with no college-education (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). According to Rydberg and Terrill's (2010) study, "officers with some college exposure or a 4-year

degree are significantly less likely to use force relative to non-college-educated officers” (p. 110).

Benefits of Higher Education

Higher education was recognized as an academic discipline at Clark University for the first time in 1893 when courses in higher education were formed (Ewing & Stickler, 1964). These courses were created by Granville Stanley Hall, who is known as the founder of higher education as a field of study in America (Bakwaph, 2017). Hall wanted to prepare and train individuals to become administrators and specialists in higher education, which is similar to the goals of August Vollmer, who wanted to develop and train officers professionally through higher education. These two individuals understood the benefits and values of education, and the research has supported their beliefs.

Research has shown that college education has a more significant impact on future outcomes for individuals who attend college than those who do not attend college. Some of these changes include an improvement in verbal and written communication, judgment, reasoning, and critical thinking (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995). Pascarella et al. (2016) posited that critical thinking can be improved by education and further stated, “exposure to and participation in college or its set of embedded experiences—has the potential to help students develop their critical thinking capacities” (p. 109). These benefits can also be achieved for individuals attending a two-year college initially and then transferring to a four-year college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995).

Several studies have found that some of these benefits have come from out-of-class activities and experiences that are not limited to the classroom (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Perna, 2005). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), some

of the positive benefits of informal out-of-class interactions with faculty are an increased awareness of growth, increased academic curiosity, improved independence, enhanced interpersonal skills and increased educational ambitions that lead to degree attainment. There is also a growing body of research that indicates the importance of extracurricular involvement and suggests extracurricular activities also aid in cognitive and intellectual development (Kuh, 1993). Extracurricular activities and involvement are important, but they are smaller parts of the entire college experience. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), the influence of any one of these experiences is less important than the overall benefits gained from attending college. Attending college will cause individuals to change, and this will occur in a network that reinforces change significantly and continues during the college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991, 2005). Pascarella (1999) proposed, “it is the student’s total engagement in the intellectual and social experience of college that positively influences the development of critical thinking ability” (p. 568).

The attitudes and values of college students also appear to change as they gain more college experience. According to Lundberg (2003) and Pike (2003), becoming more conscious and involved with the environment is a result of gaining college exposure. The college experience has increased involvement in the community through activities like voting, becoming more political, actively participating in community-based welfare groups, and community leadership (Pascarella et al., 2016). A study conducted by Doyle and Skinner (2017) found that civic behaviors like voting and volunteering increased with further higher education. There is also a link established between greater gains in moral development and the increased exposure to college (Pascarella et al., 2016). According to

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), more significant gains were made by individuals in college using principled reasoning than individuals who did not attend college. Swaner (2004) found that students continued to develop moral reasoning in college, and this was an additional advantage of higher education. This principled reasoning will lead to strategies that will guide individuals to make better choices and be more likely to engage in principled behavior.

Higher education costs have been examined and questioned, especially regarding the rate of return on the investment college provides to a person (Oxley, 2017). Families contemplate rising tuition fees, as well as other costs like books, supplies, housing, and transportation (Goldrick-Rab, 2016), wondering, is higher education worth the money? Bowen (1996) asserted that the answer to this question is yes, and further explained his conclusions:

First, the monetary returns from higher education alone are probably sufficient to offset all costs. Second, the nonmonetary returns are several times as valuable as the monetary returns. And third, the total returns from higher education in all its aspects exceed the cost by several times. In short, the cumulative evidence leaves no doubt that American higher education is well worth what it costs. (p. 448)

Today there are numerous studies that have supported the previous findings by Bowen and shown the economic and social benefits to individuals who obtain a college degree (Chan, 2016; Heckman et al., 2006; Spellings, 2006).

Investing in higher education will provide long-term benefits and provide positive outcomes not just related to occupation and earnings, but also psychosocial, moral and cognitive characteristics (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In a more recent study Ma et al.

(2016) examined the many benefits of higher education and found that individuals with higher education have better access to health care and retirement plans, are more likely to engage in healthy behavior, are more active and involved citizens, and provide more opportunities for their children. Children of educated parents are more likely to attend college and are also more likely to graduate compared to children of parents who did not go to college (Pascarella et al., 2016; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Degree attainment has also been associated with non-economic benefits, such as lower rates of smoking, lower rates of obesity, increased volunteering, and attending more plays and concerts (Ma et al., 2016; Perna, 2005).

Police Officers and Level of Education

There are varying opinions and debates on whether the attainment of post-secondary education for police officers is necessary. Over time and with new technology, the police role has become more complex, and with the move towards community policing this question has become more significant (Novak et al., 2017). The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding of the current state of police officer education. White and Escobar (2008) examined both sides of the debate over hiring college educated police recruits. Some major arguments against the college requirement were narrowing the applicant pool, minority recruitment will suffer, college does not improve skills related to on-the-job training, and the research on officer performance is varied. According to Woska (2006), in 2006, it was estimated that more than 80% of U.S. law enforcement agencies were unable to fill police officer positions, and another study, conducted by Wilson et al. (2010), found that the greatest challenge was finding qualified applicants. The recruitment of minorities has been a challenge for police departments and

remains a difficult task due to the image of police officers in minority communities.

Minority representation in police departments by African Americans is at 12% for all law enforcement officers (Reaves, 2015). African American officers are often perceived as going against their own community (Dempsey et al., 2018).

The advantages of a college education are many. Police education should keep pace with the population, and the promotion of college education among police officers helps to keep the officers' education level the same as that of the general population. The initial standards for becoming a police officer were based on a time when most of the population did not acquire a high school diploma (Novak et al., 2017). Thus, a high school diploma was considered an above average education. Police departments have not raised their educational entry requirements and have failed to keep pace with the society-at-large (Peak & Sousa, 2018). College makes students well-rounded and enhances respect for diversity. College education has also been shown to improve written, verbal, and critical thinking skills. According to Gardiner (2017), college-educated officers do receive higher salaries, but despite this, they still save the departments money. Based on research, college-educated police officers use less sick time, have fewer job-related injuries, are in fewer traffic accidents, and are less likely to be sued (Carter & Sapp, 1989).

Christine Gardiner (2017) conducted a comprehensive study of the role of higher education in law enforcement titled *Policing Around the Nation: Education, Philosophy and Practice*. The last national study of this type was done in 1988, which adds to the significance of this study. The study was not intended to support the benefits of higher education for police officers or oppose the disadvantages associated with this higher

education for police officers, but it does provide data to explain how higher education can be relevant to policing (Gardiner, 2017). The Gardiner study had two key goals. The first goal was to examine and understand factors that influence education policy in police departments, and the second goal was to learn about other policies and procedures which may correlate with higher education. It was found that the level of education of the chief/sheriff has an impact on how an agency operates. Agencies that were led by a CEO with a master's degree or above were more likely to require higher education for promotion, and agencies with collective bargaining were also more likely to be led by a CEO with a master's degree or above (Gardiner, 2017). More than half of agencies nationwide provide at least one educational incentive, but this factor varies from state to state with agencies headed by an educated chief executive most likely to offer incentives to pursue higher education (Gardiner 2017). The following factors related to this study were revealed in the Gardiner study:

- 81.5% of police agencies only require a high school diploma for hiring while only 1.3% require a four-year degree.
- 93.8% of law enforcement officers in the United States have easy access to a brick-and-mortar college which confers two-year degrees; 81% have access to 4-year institutions.
- Chief executives with graduate degrees employ significantly higher percentages of college graduates and are significantly more likely to require a college degree for promotion.
- Collective bargaining increases the chances of a chief executive with a graduate degree or better.

- Chief executives in the Northeast are most likely to have a master's degree or higher.
- 55.8% of agencies provide at least one incentive to pursue higher education.

The current state of education for police officers has to be improved to keep up with the educational level of society and the new demands of policing. This task must also be accomplished without jeopardizing the applicant pool. Incentives can provide the opportunity for departments to increase their level of education. Based on the research provided, police departments, the officers, and the community will benefit from officers who have college degrees.

Incentives

An incentive is defined as something that motivates or encourages an individual to perform an action. According to Armstrong and Stephens (2005), economic activities that guide individual decisions regarding cooperation and competition within an organization can be understood by examining incentives. Successful organizations understand the importance of motivation. Motivation will cause individuals to change their behavior in many different ways for specific reasons. Motivation is the force that guides the method, the intensity, and the length of an individual's behavior (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). According to More and Miller (2007), "motivation is a mental process that produces an attitude resulting in an action leading to a result" (p. 105). Fitch (2008) further describes work motivation:

In simplest terms, work motivation is the energetic force behind the form, intensity, and persistence of an employee's behavior. It is the force that helps explain why officers pursue certain goals, how they attempt to accomplish those

goals, how hard they will work to do so, and the degree of adversity they are willing to overcome. (p. 102)

Individuals are typically motivated by inner and outer forces to meet a specific need or goal (Hess & Orthmann, 2012). Forces that compel an individual that come from internal sources are intrinsic motivators, and forces that compel an individual that come from outside sources are extrinsic motivators. Individuals are typically motivated by a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Fitch, 2008; Mone & Kelly, 1994). Research has shown organizational efficiency, and results are related to the motivational engagement and satisfaction of individuals (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002). While motivation does improve performance, other factors such as ability must be taken into account (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Motivational theories can be generally categorized into two types, which are need theories and process theories. Need theory is based on a force that comes from within a person that creates a need that must be met (Bess & Dee, 2008). Maslow's (1943) theory is based on human needs that are organized into a hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs begins with basic necessities such as food clothing and shelter and ultimately advances to the realization of one's potential. According to Maslow's theory, the basic needs must be met or gratified before moving up and satisfying the next need in the hierarchy. The lower needs serve as steps or rungs in a ladder as individuals progress towards reaching their full potential (Maslow, 1943). Based on the individual's level of need, gratification, and feedback will be delayed until those lower level needs are satisfied (Maslow, 1943). The next need theory was developed by McClelland (1971), and it is based on the need for achievement. This theory suggests that a strong need will motivate a person to use

behavior that will satisfy that need (Pardee, 1990). Immediate feedback is a key component to maintaining individuals with high needs and keeping them motivated with immediate feedback conflicts Maslow's theory, where feedback could take much longer until the unsatisfied needs are met (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Process theories are the next type of theories, which identify that individual motivation is based on a thought process that involves the interaction of internal and external forces (Bess & Dee 2008). Expectancy theory is a process theory that examines the mental rationality behind motivational decisions that individuals make. In this theory, an individual will become motivated when there is a motivating factor, the job can be performed, and the need or goal will be satisfied (Hess & Orthmann, 2012). Highly motivated individuals will tie their job performance and effort with the performance opportunities matching the reward they value and hope to acquire (Hess & Orthmann, 2012; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Goal theory believes that goals and self-efficacy facilitate motivating behavior (Locke & Latham, 2006). The principal standard for self-satisfaction with job performance is set by established goals. According to Locke and Latham (2002), a goal is the purpose of an action to accomplish a job within a specific time period. Researchers found that individual behavior and performance were enhanced by just identifying specific targets (Locke, 1968, 1996; Steers & Porter, 1974). Lastly, equity theory represents motivation as a function of how individuals see themselves compared to others. The perception of fairness is significant in the workplace and in society (Adams, 1963). Individuals who feel they are being treated fairly by an organization in comparison to the treatment of others will be positively motivated, just as those who perceive they are mistreated will lack motivation (Bess & Dee, 2008; Ryan,

2016). Process theories function from an exterior perspective, and this focus can explain incentives and their effect on human behavior (De Vito et al., 2016).

Incentives have been used to motivate and encourage behaviors such as commitment, increased productivity, and improved work performance. Research has shown that incentives inspire results by encouraging tasks and priorities that are associated with goal completion (Knight et al., 2001; Locke & Latham, 1990). Generally, incentives fall into two types of categories, which are monetary and non-monetary. In business, incentives do not have to be monetary and can come in the form of praise or recognition. Some companies have formal recognition awards programs, such as employee of the month where trophies and plaques are distributed (Nelson, 1994). Other companies use social recognition, which consists of personal acknowledgment or appreciation conveyed verbally for quality work (Luthans & Stajkovic, 2000). In a study of 21 stores in a fast-food franchise corporation, Peterson and Luthans (2006) examined the effects of financial and non-financial incentives on profit, customer service, and employee turnover. The results showed that while financial incentives initially showed greater gains over time, both incentive types had an equally significant impact, except on employee turnover (Peterson & Luthans, 2006).

In certain fields, incentives play a fundamental role in organizations and in employee behavior. Incentive systems motivate employees toward productive behaviors that benefit the company (Larkin & Pierce, 2015). A salesperson's behavior will change to maximize their sales operating under a quota system with bonus-based incentives (Oyer, 1995). Successful incentives depend on individuals and the value they place on the reward, their image, and how much they enjoy the activity (Benabou & Tirole, 2006).

According to Cohen (1995), for sales incentives to work effectively, they should be challenging and realistic. Challenging goals can be more motivating because they provide a sense of accomplishment when achieved.

As previously mentioned, individuals are typically motivated by a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Several studies have shown that incentives can decrease intrinsic motivation and performance (Amabile & Fisher, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students have been rewarded with incentives in school for good grades, better attendance, and reading. According to Gneezy, Meir, and Rey-Biel (2011), using incentives to get a child to read might be successful for a short period of time, but once the incentive has been removed, there is no guarantee that the child will continue to read due to the lack of intrinsic motivation. Another study conducted by Deci and Ryan (2000) examined a group of college students who were asked to work on interesting puzzles. One group of students was paid for working on the puzzles, and the other group was not. The paid group worked harder on the puzzles and found them to be more interesting than did the unpaid group. The same rationale applies to social behavior that benefits the public good, as well as self-improvement and lifestyle habits. According to Gneezy et al. (2011), evidence suggests that the design of the incentives, the method in which they are given, the interaction with intrinsic motivators, and what happens once the incentive is gone will determine its effectiveness. According to experiments conducted by Deci (1972), intrinsic motivation decreased when money or financial incentives were used as motivators. Deci stated, “in short, money may work to “buy off” one’s intrinsic motivation for an activity” (p. 114). Rewards also inspire people to have a narrow focus, rush through tasks, and not take risks (Kohn, 1988). Kohn (1988) further stated that

rewards can backfire, which coincides with what psychologists and behaviorists also believe: that monetary rewards are also counter-productive (Baker et al., 1988).

Incentives that companies offer to employees can come in a wide range of forms. The rules governing these educational policies and practices are usually governed by the collective bargaining agreements between the company and the employees. The agency-provided educational incentives used for this study were taken from the 2017 Gardiner study and are: tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentive, flexible shifts, use of department vehicle for school, permission to attend class during work hours, schedule preferences to accommodate college schedules, and accelerated career ladder for college-educated officers. According to Gardiner (2017), tuition reimbursement and educational pay incentives, which is a form of merit pay, were the most popular incentives offered.

Profit sharing and gain sharing are incentive plans that focus on the performance of the group or organization and not just an individual. Profit sharing has been shown to be more effective than merit pay and bonuses in terms of increased productivity (Baker et al., 1988; Ugarkovic, 2007), and it also can improve individual effort and increase loyalty to the company (Blasi et al., 2010). Profit sharing can also lead to a classic problem of free-riding or freeloading, where individuals reduce effort and rely on the efforts of other workers (Baker et al., 1988; Larkin & Pierce, 2015). In sales, this could lead to recruitment problems, where good agents refuse to share profits with less productive workers. Despite these issues, profit sharing continues to be a prevailing tactic used by companies to motivate employees (Poblete, 2015).

Merit pay is another incentive plan that rewards individuals for past work behavior and performance by adding money to their pay (Durham & Bartol, 2000). Merit

pay can refer to higher salaries being offered to employees based on their performance, or it can be based on an employee's educational level. Merit pay has been used as an attempt to motivate teachers through compensation. Merit pay programs in education have not been very successful in motivating teachers in the past due to costly and poor implementation (Leigh, 2013). Research further suggests that, besides being ineffective, merit pay programs also affect teacher professionalism negatively (Brewer et al., 2015). According to Murnane and Cohen (1986), in certain school districts, merit pay was used as a means of problem-solving which is an asset but differs from the intended goal of teacher motivation. Research suggests that it is not practical to compensate teachers based on performance evaluations due to the complex nature of teaching (Ballou, 2001). Also, teachers' unions have made it difficult for merit pay plans to survive in public schools and are resistant to the implementation of such programs. According to Goldhaber et al. (2008), merit pay systems will have greater success when there is additional performance information regarding teachers and when the union's influence has been weakened.

Merit pay has been widely used in the U.S. Federal Civil Service, and it is also the most widely used system by U.S. organizations (Bretz et al., 1992), yet there have been very few studies to evaluate its effectiveness (Milkovitch & Widgor, 1991). In the United Kingdom, a case study was conducted to measure the impact of performance-based pay systems. This study found that a majority of workers (57%) agreed with the idea of relating pay to performance. However, the results of the study found a small effect of this practice on general motivation (Marsden & Richardson, 1994). According to Marsden and Richardson (1994), the program was perceived to be biased in its operation and had

nothing to do with employee performance. In order for merit pay programs to be successful, they must be able to fairly and accurately measure employee performance. Merit pay programs can diminish the effect of the incentive if they appear as automatic and most of the employees receive the same standard performance payment (Marsden & Richardson, 1994). Effective and fair leadership is important and plays a role as a determinant in employee acceptance of merit pay programs (Choi & Whitford, 2017). An organization can have an exceptional employee evaluation system, but if the supervisors conducting the evaluations are not respected or are seen as poor leaders, then the program will not be viewed as legitimate (Gabris & Ihrke, 2000).

Tuition reimbursement is another type of incentive through which employers offer to pay back employees for educational expenses. Tuition reimbursement has several benefits, which include motivating current employees to continue their education and helping to attract potential employees. As employees take advantage of tuition reimbursement programs, the organization also benefits by raising the level of education of the organization. Employers that offer tuition reimbursement are also worried that employees who take advantage of the program will obtain a degree and then leave the company. Benson et al. (2004) conducted a study that used data from 9,439 employees from a technology manufacturing firm to show that turnover was reduced while the employees were in school. Once employees obtained advanced degrees, voluntary turnover increased dramatically, while organizational promotions had an opposite effect on the turnover problem. Some studies have shown the relationship between employee promotions and the reduction in employee turnover (Carson et al., 1994; Johnston et al., 1993). Tuition reimbursement allows an individual to enhance themselves through

education, which can have a positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Nordhaug, 1989). These differing ideas represent the ease of movement gained from obtaining a graduate degree as well as the job satisfaction an employee feels when their development is supported by the organization (Benson et al., 2004). Promotion thus becomes an important factor in retaining employees with advanced degrees while also showing employees that their efforts are appreciated and compatible with their long-term goals.

Police Culture

Understanding the police culture helps explain the reasons behind why police officers may or may not choose to pursue higher education in departments with incentives, as well as reasons why officers may or may not choose to pursue higher education in departments without incentives. Culture can be defined as the customs, values, norms, and behaviors of a group. Manning (1995) explained, “occupational cultures contain accepted practices, rules, and principles of conduct that are situationally applied, and generalized rationales and beliefs” (p. 472). Dempsey et al. (2018) defined the police culture as “a combination of shared norms, values, goals, career patterns, lifestyles, and occupational structures that is somewhat different from the combination held by the rest of society” (p. 162). The police culture is unique and can be hard to understand, and there are a variety of reasons this distinct culture exists.

Police officers enter a distinct subculture when they graduate from the academy and put on that new uniform for the very first time (Van Mannen, 1974). According to Dempsey et al. (2018), the police subculture is characterized by isolation from outsiders, secrecy, and being clannish. Police officers deal with situations from the public that produce hostility, as well as with an unpredictable bureaucracy which produces a

somewhat schizophrenic experience (Brown, 1988). Organizational characteristics such as constant change due to odd working hours, rotating shifts, working holidays, and the strict discipline imposed on officers by the quasi-military structure help to create this paranoia. Officers are trained to understand the inherent risks and dangers associated with the law enforcement profession. Skolnick (1994) stated, “the policeman’s role contains two principal variables, danger, and authority, which should be interpreted in the light of ‘constant’ pressure to be efficient” (p. 44). This presence of danger may bring officers closer together, but this may also distance them from the public (Kappeler, Sluder, & Albert, 1998). In a traditional model for police culture, Paoline (2003) demonstrated how the environment factors along with coping mechanisms lead to specific outcomes in the police culture. In the model, occupational issues, danger, and coercive authority, along with organizational issues, supervisor scrutiny, and role ambiguity, produce stress and anxiety. The stress and anxiety can cause the officer to be suspicious, stay sharp, lay low, and orient him or herself as a crime fighter. The outcomes of this behavior are social isolation and loyalty, which are two recurring characteristics that appear in the literature regarding police culture.

Loyalty is a key part of the police subculture, and police loyalty is very strong (Dempsey et al., 2018). In both the occupational and organizational environments, loyalty is a cultural requirement of police officers (Paoline, 2003). In the occupational environment, officers rely on each other for protection both physically and mentally due to the unpredictable nature of the job (Manning, 1995). Backup involves coming to the aid of fellow officers in emergent situations. Brown (1988) explained that backup is important due to the danger that officers face, and the strong bonds that are shaped

between officers “places the highest value upon the obligation to back up and support a fellow officer” (p. 92). Backing up officers is also a sign of loyalty that is expected of new officers before they receive acceptance from the group (Van Maanen, 1974). In the organizational environment, loyalty is expressed by officers supporting each other against issues with the administration or any procedures that make their job more problematic (Sparrow et al., 1990).

The police culture can have both a positive and negative effect on officer behavior. Loyalty is a characteristic of the police culture that officers need to survive, but when that loyalty protects officers engaged in wrongdoing, this becomes very problematic. Studies have shown that police officers are willing to protect each other from superiors and other officials who are investigating misconduct by other officers (Dempsey et al., 2018). This type of behavior creates a protective layer known as the blue wall of silence or the code of silence (Novak et al., 2017; Peak, & Sousa, 2018). Researchers have found the idea that police should not “rat” on each other, and the blue wall of silence is impenetrable in the police culture (Walker, 2001). These ideals vary according to individual departments and individual officers, based on how far the departments are willing to go to help fellow officers involved in improper conduct.

Wolfe and Piquero (2011) conducted a study involving 483 officers in the Philadelphia Police Department to examine perceptions of organizational justice and officer misconduct as well as the role of organizational justice in explaining loyalty to the code of silence and the use of noble-cause corruption. Noble-cause corruption is when officers abandon ethical and legal means to achieve the right result (Novak et al., 2017). In this study, they found several links between officer misconduct and organizational

justice. How officers perceive fairness and organizational justice within the agency was shown to decrease deviant behavior and misconduct. Furthermore, these same officers were less likely to abide by the code of silence and were less supportive of noble-cause corruption (Wolfe & Piquero, 2011). Organizational justice may be the solution to effect positive change in the habits of police officers (Myhill & Brandford, 2013). Police culture in the form of solidarity can help to alleviate the strains of daily police work and neutralize coercive behavior (Waddington, 1999). Also, studying police culture enriches understanding of how the police function daily, investigate officer misconduct, maintain police accountability, and provide officer training (Paoline, 2003). It is imperative to understand that police culture is not standardized. One can expect an additional change in the culture of policing from the difference which exists today. As police departments begin to adjust to the community policing philosophy and begin to diversify, it is anticipated that these factors will affect the police culture and produce more variation (Paoline, 2003).

Police Department Organization

Police agencies in the United States, regardless of size, have an organizational structure (Peak & Sousa, 2018). Police officers represent the civil authority of the government, which is different than the authority of the military. However, our police departments operate under a quasi-military command structure organized by authority and reporting relationships (Dempsey et al., 2018). The traditional organization of police agencies in the United States was heavily influenced by Sir Robert Peel and his efforts to reform policing. According to Auten (1981), Peel “developed the principles that guided the organization and operation of the new police” (p. 67). Peel also believed that the

police should be stable, efficient, and organized with the same structure as the military (Swanson et al., 2012). Traditionally the organization of police departments has been viewed in two ways. There is a horizontal element which divides the work into specialized units that perform certain tasks, while a hierarchical (vertical) element separates members by virtue of their authority or rank (Hess & Orthmann, 2012; King, 2003). Evan (1993) believed the vertical division for organizing resources are authority, skills, rewards, status, and seniority. Police organization can also be described in other terms besides vertical and horizontal structures. Hall's (1987) organizational breakdown used complexity, formalization, and centralization while Maguire and Wells (2001) separated the organization into vertical, functional, temporal, and spatial.

Policing is a public service job with complex responsibilities and limited resources that must be allocated to accomplish the organizational goals. The allocation of tasks and duties must be divided and distributed based on the division of labor. An organizational chart or blueprint should reflect the organization and a visual representation of reporting relationships (Dempsey et al., 2018). Both reformers and critics have focused most of their attention on rank structure and authority in police organizations (King, 2003). The rank structure, also called the chain of command, is composed of formal supervisory levels that designated authority and responsibilities from the top level to the bottom level (Dempsey et al., 2018; King, 2003; Peak & Sousa, 2018). A pyramid or triangle is the typical shape of a police hierarchy, with the chief at the very top of the structure and the police officers at the very bottom. The single authority comes from the top of the pyramid and flows down through several levels of command until the order reaches the patrol officers. The patrol officers receive the order

from the level above them and perform the police function that is necessary to the community. The patrol officer is considered a subordinate and has very limited power in the hierarchy, while sergeants, lieutenants, captains, and chiefs are command officers and supervisors.

The size of the rank structure is based on the number of officers and the degree of specialization. Larger departments have a need for more specialization, making their rank structure taller or more vertical than that of smaller departments (Peak & Sousa, 2018).

Tall rank structures have some positive characteristics and have also been problematic.

Tall rank structure can slow organizational response to change, hinder group performance (Sparrow, 1988), and hamper group development by hindering communication.

Communication in tall rank structures flows downward from the top of the organization much more freely than the information flows upward. Superior officers can speak to subordinates freely at will, but the subordinate does not have that same freedom due to the chain of command (Swanson et al., 2012). Wilson (1963) contended that tall structures increase a supervisor's ability to supervise and lead subordinates. Tall structures also have more opportunities for advancement and promotion, which leads to more rewards and an increase in morale (Mastrofski, 1998). Ultimately, police administrators should change or design their structure to facilitate spans of control to meet the needs of the mission (King 2003; Swanson et al., 2012). Langworthy (1992) asserted that departments which engage in traditional fundamental law enforcement interactions can benefit from a hierarchical structure, while agencies with missions which focus on more complex interactions such as community policing do not need to be as hierarchical.

At the top of the organizational structure is the chief or director, who is responsible for setting the vision and the tone for the department. However, this mission that has been established cannot be accomplished solely by this one person. For this reason, it is necessary to empower employees to be leaders. According to More and Miller (2007), empowerment is a decision by the administration to create an organization where officers take the initiative and take on a broader role within the community. In the best organizations, these leaders serve the best interest of the company without the need for micromanagement (O'Toole & Lawler, 2006). Organizational effectiveness and efficiency are the underlying goals of a paramilitary rank structure and chain of command systems; however, many critics, such as Rasor (1999), believe the chain of command should be reduced. He argued against the paramilitary bureaucracy and contends it is still possible to maintain order without numerous levels in the chain of command. Many argue that the chain of command or rank structure should be lengthened to increase control, management, and the potential for rewards to motivate officers (Lawton, 1996; King, 2003). As I previously stated, departments vary by size and have different rank structures that are based on different missions. This diversity makes it difficult to measure rank structure, thus producing mixed study results. King (2003) conducted a systematic review of the studies that focused on organizational structure and found three problems within the literature. According to King, finding articles that focus on the effects of organizational rank structure is difficult, the studies are very different in terms of quality and design, and the findings do not apply to police departments. The issue of removing layers and decentralizing is prevalent in the literature. However, a consensus has not been reached as to the best practice for police organizations.

Summary

This chapter has emphasized the history and importance of higher education and how it relates to law enforcement. It has provided a discussion of public perception and support of policing, professionalism, benefits of higher education, incentives, police culture, and police department organization. This review of literature has shown how police departments have worked for decades to improve police perception and gain community support. Higher education was shown to be beneficial not only to individual police officers but also to the agency and to the public perception of the legitimacy of the law enforcement profession. It was also important to examine existing literature on the police culture, the organization of police and incentives, as this study will examine the effects of incentives on officers' decisions to continue their education.

Based on the review of relevant literature, there was not much research on the education of police officers in general, and there was even less on the factors affecting continuing educational decisions of municipal police officers in both civil service and non-civil service agencies. The 2017 Gardiner study, which provided collective data related to education in police officers around the nation, was relevant to this research, but unfortunately, that study did not recognize relationships between independent variables and officers' decisions to continue their education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices that are being used to promote continued higher education in police departments in both civil service and non-civil service municipalities. This study examined the higher educational incentives that are established in municipal police departments in Middlesex County to promote continued higher education. This study also showed the different levels of education attained by officers in police departments in Middlesex County. The study examined educational incentives such as tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentives, and accelerated career paths for college-educated officers. This study also examined the relationship between the level of police officer education and the incentives/policies that promote education. This study further investigated how the educational incentives/policies that are established in civil service municipalities differ from those in non-civil service municipalities to promote continued higher education. The focus of this study was on the current educational incentives/policies that are being offered by police departments within Middlesex County.

This chapter identifies the population of interest, the sources of data, data collection methods, data analysis, and hypotheses. This chapter also provides an overview of how the data were analyzed. Tables are used to display aggregate organizational data that reflects levels of education and factors which may influence the continuation of higher education. At the individual officer level, the method of research used to provide conclusions in this study is binary logistic regression.

Research Questions

Data related to the levels of education of police officers, and existing education incentive programs, as well as other factors, were used to determine the most effective way to influence continued higher education within Middlesex County police departments. Other factors analyzed included time of service, the rank of the officer, and educational standards for hiring.

- What are the different levels of education in Middlesex County police departments?
- What educational incentives are offered in Middlesex County police departments?
- How do education incentives offered by police agencies in Middlesex County influence the level of education of police departments?
- How do educational standards for hiring and promotion influence the level of education within police departments in Middlesex County, NJ?
- Do educational incentives offered by municipal police agencies, educational standards for promotion, rank of officer and time of service affect the continuing education choices of police officers in Middlesex County?
- How do all these factors differ between civil service municipalities and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County?

Population and Sample

The sample in this study is the municipal police officers and police departments of Middlesex County, New Jersey. Middlesex County is located in north-central New Jersey and has a population of 829,685 (2017 U.S. Census Estimate). The population is

59.5% white, 10% African American, 0.13% American Indian 0.0 % Alaska native, 24% Asian, 0.0 % Pacific Islander and 20% Hispanic/ Latino. Middlesex County is ranked second of 21 counties in New Jersey for population. Middlesex County also has a unique array of cultures and a mix of small towns, urban towns, and rural communities. Middlesex County also has 25 different municipal police departments. Each department in this study had its own unique characteristics and provided a data sample that represents this dense, diverse, and reasonably affluent county.

Twenty-four requests for data were made in total. Helmetta police department at the time of this study was permanently closed. An email request was sent to the chief or director of police in every police department in Middlesex County. All 24 police departments provided the requested organizational data, thus providing an accurate picture of the state of education and incentives offered within Middlesex County police departments.

Data Sources

The organizational data used in this study were collected from the records provided by each municipal police department in Middlesex County. The data needed for the organizational analysis provided a basic overview of each police department. The number of officers, educational standards for hiring and promotion, and educational incentives that are offered by each department were included in the first set of results. The individual officer data used in this study were collected from each officer within each department in Middlesex County. The data collected from these officers were anonymous in order to protect the identity of the officers. These data contained

information related to time of service, current level of education, level of education when hired, and current rank.

Data Collection

The organizational data needed to complete this study were provided by each department in Middlesex County and were up to date as of 2019. Each police department's chief or director was emailed a letter explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting their participation in the study by providing the requested information. The agency overview form was filled out by the police chief, police director, or his/her designee. The information needed for this study can be obtained through the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) by filling out an OPRA Request form or by written request. The OPRA process was unnecessary due to the cooperation of all of the departments in this study. A total of 24 responses were received, and they contained the following information: agency name, education standards for hiring (college degree or no), education standards for promotion (college degree or no), tuition reimbursement (yes/no), incentive pay (yes/no), flexible shifts (yes/no), use of department vehicle (yes/no), permission to attend class while working (yes/no), and accelerated career path for college-educated officers (yes/no).

The individual officer data needed to complete this study required responses from the individual officers in each of the 24 municipal police departments. The Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office creates a police roster every year that includes the names and email addresses of every police officer in the county. A copy of this 2019 roster was obtained from the prosecutor's office and used for this study. This police roster can be obtained through the OPRA by filling out an OPRA Request Form or by written request.

The OPRA process was unnecessary due to the cooperation of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office in this study.

In order to conduct part two of the study, the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Seton Hall University was obtained. Approval by the Seton Hall University IRB was granted on November 4, 2019.

Upon receiving IRB approval, 1,477 individual police officers were sent an email explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting their participation in the study by providing the requested information. The individual officer data survey was web-based through a URL that was sent in the original email. Study participants were asked to click on the link that took them to the Qualtrics Survey. First, the study participants were taken to a consent form. After agreeing to participate, the officers were then taken to the next part of the survey, where they were asked six anonymous questions. Officers were sent the original email and two follow-up reminder emails over a time span of three weeks. A total of 772 responses were received from officers in 21 of the 24 departments in this study. The three departments that did not have a single response submitted by any officer were Jamesburg Police Department, which has a total of 15 officers; Plainsboro Police Department, which has a total of 36 officers; and Spotswood Police Department, which has a total of 23 officers. Each response that was submitted by officers contained the following data: the department they currently work for, time of service (with department), time of service (in law enforcement), level of education (currently), level of education (when hired), and job classification/rank.

Research Design

This study was conducted in two parts. The organizational analysis displayed previously unseen aggregate data related to education and incentives in each police department. The second part of this analysis (individual) was designed to show a relationship among several independent variables, and whether they influence police officers' choices to continue their higher education.

Part One – Organizational Analysis

The first part of this analysis was organizational, and the focus of this analysis was on the individual municipalities. The departmental sample size consists of 21 departments, and the results showed collected data related to education and other variables. Methodically displaying summarized data leads to a better understanding of the results (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Based on this reason, the cumulative data are represented visually using a table.

Research Question 1: What are the different levels of education in Middlesex County police departments?

Previously unseen aggregate data were compiled to show the percentage of officers in each agency who have attained a bachelor's degree.

Research Question 2: What educational incentives are offered in Middlesex County police departments?

The responses received from each department provided data on the current incentives/policies that are offered in Middlesex County police departments.

Research Question 3: How do education incentives offered by police agencies in Middlesex County influence the level of education of police departments?

Data related to incentives/policies provided by each agency and the percentage of officers who continued their education were compared.

Research Question 4: How do educational standards for hiring and promotion influence the level of education within a police department in Middlesex County, NJ?

Data related to the hiring standards and promotional standards for each department were displayed and compared.

Part Two – Individual Officer Analysis

For individual officer data analysis, binary logistic regression was used to quantify the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable while controlling for other variables. The dependent variable (whether or not a higher degree was obtained) is dichotomous, and there are several independent predictor variables. The independent variables were tuition reimbursement, incentive pay, accelerated career path, college requirements for hiring, time of service, and job classification. In this study $N = 772$, which is an adequate sample for the six predictor variables. The independent variables used in this study were based on the results of the data obtained from the organizational analysis. For example, no departments have educational standards for promotion. Therefore, this variable was not used in the analysis.

The dependent variable is dichotomous, and the independent predictor variables are both continuous and categorical; therefore, logistic regression was deemed to be the most appropriate method of analysis.

IBM SPSS statistical analysis software was used to perform statistical tests for this study. Binary logistic regression was used to determine the influence of each

predictor variable on the dependent variable of whether education was continued to determine factors which influence continuing education.

Dependent (Outcome) Variable

Continued Education – For the purposes of this study, an individual's level of education ranges from high school graduate to doctoral degree. Education data were obtained for each officer in the county and was current as of December 2019. For the purposes of individual analysis, officers who obtained a higher degree after being hired were considered to have continued their education. The attainment of a higher degree for an individual officer was the dependent variable. This variable is dichotomous (whether or not education was continued) and showed an outcome which may be influenced by a variety of predictor variables.

Independent (Predictor) Variables

The independent predictor variables were used in the regression to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The availability of education incentives such as tuition reimbursement, college requirements for hiring, college degree required for promotion, time of service, and job classification are all independent predictor variables which may have influenced the dependent outcome variable.

Dichotomous coding was used for the following categorical variables:

- Attained a higher degree Yes or No (0,1)
- Education incentive available Yes or No (0,1)
- College requirements for hiring Yes or No (0,1)
- College degree required for promotion Yes or No (0,1)

Continuous predictor variables were coded as follows:

Job Classification was coded using a set of dummy variables to represent a multicategory nominal variable. Four category variables exist to reflect patrol officer, first line supervisor, middle manager, and executive level commander. The reference variable, in this case, was patrol officer and three dummy variables were first line supervisor, middle manager, and executive level commander.

Patrol Officer: An officer who conducts general police duties without the responsibility of supervising other officers.

Front Line Supervisor: **(Sergeant)** An officer who may conduct general police duties; however, this officer is also tasked with supervising and evaluating subordinates.

Middle Manager: **(Lieutenant, Captain)** This officer is generally tasked with administrative responsibilities and acts as a second level supervisor while taking direction from command staff.

Executive Level Commander: **(Chief, Director, Deputy Chief/Director)** This individual is in charge of the department and has the final say in all decision making.

Officers at this level are responsible for shaping the mission and values of the department and responsible for writing policy and making necessary changes to an existing policy.

Seniority (Time in service) was entered directly.

Individual Officer Analysis Questions

Research Question 5: Do educational incentives offered by municipal police agencies, educational standards for promotion, rank of officer and time of service affect the continuing education choices of police officers in Middlesex County?

Research Question 6: How do all these factors differ between civil service municipalities and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County?

For the individual officer data analysis, the officers were divided into two groups: those who received a higher degree while employed and those who did not receive a higher degree while employed. Binary logistic regression testing was used to determine the significance of the relationship between variables. Subgroups were created to separate individuals who have and have not continued their education. Binary logistic regression was used to compare the dichotomous dependent variable against each of the independent variables. As a result, the effect of each independent predictor variable was determined while controlling for the other variables.

Limitations of the Study

This study provided a cross-sectional analysis of publicly available data related to police officer education at the time of the study. It has been compared to education incentives currently being offered in the respective police agencies as well as other factors which may or may not influence continuing education choices of officers. The study did not explore the possibility that cultural factors may exist in a department absent any of the factors which were studied, which could influence the results. Also, this study did not account for differences in similar incentive programs, such as the amount of merit pay or tuition reimbursement. To encourage greater participation and due to time constraints, no demographic information was obtained. Therefore, the possible impact of race or sex did not play a role in the study. The study simply attempted to show a relationship between certain identified factors and higher levels of education.

Summary

This chapter explained the quantitative methods to analyze data concerning continuing education choices of police officers and explained how independent variables affected officers who either did or did not continue their education. The impact of independent variables such as incentives, educational standards for employment, time of service, and rank were studied in an attempt to identify factors which influence the postsecondary education choices of police officers in Middlesex County, New Jersey. The chapter explained how the data were obtained and organized and provided a means to see the aggregate data as it relates to each police department. Two levels of analysis were conducted. Part one (organizational) of the analysis provided a look at previously unseen aggregate data related to education in Middlesex County police departments. This analysis also provided unseen educational data regarding civil service and non-civil service police departments and how they may differ. In part two, the analysis of individual officers, binary logistic regression was used where the dependent variable (whether or not a higher degree was obtained) is dichotomous, and there are several independent predictor variables. The independent variables were tuition reimbursement, incentive pay, college requirements for hiring, time of service, and job classification. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices being used to promote continued higher education in police departments in both civil service and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County, New Jersey.

The organization analysis displayed descriptive statistics collected from police departments related to available educational incentives, educational standards for hiring, and the percentage of officers who have college degrees. Data were collected from 21 municipal police agencies and were displayed in aggregate to establish a picture of educational levels and incentives offered within Middlesex County municipal police departments. The civil service status of each department and the percentage of officers who continued their education and obtained a higher degree were also displayed.

The second part of analysis focused on individual officer data. A quantitative design was used to address the significance of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable. Quantitative analysis was conducted using binary logistic regression to analyze the relationship between a series of independent variables and the dependent variable of whether an officer obtained a higher degree while employed as a police officer.

Part One – Organizational Analysis

Data related to the level of education in each department were captured in Table 1.

Table 1

Organizational Educational Data

Agency	Sample Size	Civil Service	Educational Standard for Hire	Tuition Reimbursement	Incentive Pay	Accelerated Career Path	Percentage of Bachelor's Degrees	Earned a Higher Degree
Carteret	19	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	36.8 (7)	0 (0)
Cranbury	19	No	60 Credits	Yes	No	No	73.7 (14)	11.1 (2)
Dunellen	12	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	25.0 (3)	25.0 (3)
East Brunswick	66	No	60 Credits	Yes	No	Yes	53.0 (35)	39.4 (26)
Edison	136	No	60 Credits	No	Yes	Yes	33.8 (46)	30.1 (41)
Highland Park	26	No	No	No	No	No	34.6 (9)	3.8 (1)
Metuchen	7	No	No	Yes	No	No	14.3 (1)	14.3 (1)
Middlesex	8	No	60 Credits	No	No	No	62.5 (5)	0
Milltown	16	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	31.3 (5)	6.3 (1)
Monroe	40	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	45.0 (18)	10.0 (4)
New Brunswick	134	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	32.8 (44)	9.0 (12)
North Brunswick	59	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	23.7 (14)	37.3 (22)
Old Bridge	39	No	60 Credits	No	Yes	No	38.5 (15)	7.7 (3)
Perth Amboy	21	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	28.6 (6)	0
Piscataway	13	No	60 Credits	Yes	No	Yes	23.1 (3)	23.1 (3)
Sayreville	32	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	37.5 (12)	6.25 (2)
South Amboy	9	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	55.6 (5)	22.2 (2)
South Brunswick	75	No	60 Credits	Yes	Yes	Yes	48.0 (36)	30.7 (23)
South Plainfield	7	Yes	No	No	No	No	57.1 (4)	0
South River	17	No	60 Credits	No	No	No	47.1 (8)	35.3 (6)
Woodbridge	17	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	52.9 (9)	35.3 (6)

Note. Data in Table 1 were provided by 21 agencies listed above.

Addressing Research Question 1 (What are the different levels of education in Middlesex County police departments?): Members of Middlesex County law enforcement have a variety of educational backgrounds ranging from high school education to doctoral degrees. Of all officers in the county, 39% have a bachelor's degree, 20% have a master's degree, and 0.39% have a doctoral degree. Of all officers in the county, 21% have attained a higher degree while employed as a police officer. The level of education of officers in individual agencies also varies significantly. In Cranbury Township, 73.7% of officers have bachelor's degrees, while 39% of the population in the study have bachelor's degrees. Cranbury Township is also the fourth smallest department in Middlesex County, with 19 police officers. In North Brunswick Township, 23.7% of officers have bachelor's degrees, which is below 39% of the population in the study. However, 40.7% of the North Brunswick officers have master's degrees, while 16% of the officers in the county have master's degrees.

Addressing Research Question 2 (What educational incentives are offered in Middlesex County police departments?): The agency provided educational incentives used for this study were taken from the 2017 Gardiner study, which identified a variety of incentives used by police agencies nationwide. Three of the incentives were present in the sample of the Middlesex County police agencies. Tuition reimbursement is available in 13 of the 21 police departments in this study. This accounts for 62% of the agencies. Educational pay incentive is available in nine of the 21 police departments in this study, accounting for 43% of the sample. Accelerated career path is available in five of the 21 departments in this study, accounting for 24% of the sample. Four departments in this study do not offer any incentives at all. This accounts for 19% of the agencies. Seven

departments offer two of the three incentives, accounting for 33% of the sample, and one agency offers all three incentives, accounting for 5% of the sample.

The incentives in this study are all communicated through each department's collective bargaining agreement and signed contract. All of the agencies in Middlesex County are unionized and participate in collective bargaining. Eleven of the 21 departments in this sample are non-civil service and are not regulated by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. Ten of the departments in this sample are civil service agencies and are governed by the rules and regulations of the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. The standard educational hiring requirement for civil service departments is a high school diploma. Career advancement is based solely on a test, and there are no educational requirements or incentives for promotion in civil service departments, but they can still provide incentives as a benefit.

Addressing Research Question 3 (How do education incentives offered by police agencies in Middlesex County influence the level of education of police departments?): There were 17 agencies that offered at least one educational incentive. Of the officers in the sample, 714 had access to incentives while 58 did not. The officers who had access to incentives continued their education at a rate of 21.1%. Officers who did not have access to incentives continued their education at a rate of 12.1%. Officers with access to tuition reimbursement continued their education at a rate of 21.2%, while officers without access to tuition reimbursement continued their education at a rate of 19.2%. Agencies offering tuition reimbursement had higher rates of continuing education when compared to agencies that did not provide any incentives.

Officers with access to incentive pay continued their education at a rate of 23.6%, while officers without access to incentive pay continued their education at a rate of 16.5%. Officers with access to accelerated career path continued their education at a rate of 31.8%, while officers without accelerated career path continued their education at a rate of 13.2%. All of the departments that offered accelerated career path incentives were non-civil service departments.

Addressing Research Question 4 (How do educational standards for hiring and promotion influence the level of education within a police department in Middlesex County?): There are eight departments that require 60 college credits as a requirement for initial employment, which accounts for 28% of the sample. These departments have a higher rate of officers with bachelor's degrees at 43.4%, while departments requiring a high school diploma have a rate of officers with bachelor's degrees at 34.3%. These eight departments with college requirements for hiring also had officers who continued their education at a rate of 28%, while departments requiring a high school diploma had officers who continued their education at a rate of 13.5%. It is not surprising that the agencies that require college credits for the initial hiring would have higher rates of officers with bachelor's degrees and higher rates of officers who continued their education. Ten of the agencies that require high school diplomas are civil service departments, and three of the agencies are non-civil service.

Career advancement in non-civil service departments is also based on a testing process, but departments with accelerated career path incentives award additional points to officers who have attained college degrees. Officers who have attained a master's degree or a doctoral degree hold an advantage over officers who just have the 60 college

credits that are required to be hired. There are five departments in this study that offer accelerated career path incentives to officers. Officers with access to accelerated career path continued their education at a rate of 31.8%, while officers without accelerated career path continued their education at a rate of 13.2%. Departments that offer accelerated career path incentives also have a higher rate of officers with master's degrees and doctoral degrees than departments that do not offer this incentive. As I previously mentioned, none of the civil service departments offers this incentive because of New Jersey Civil Service Commission regulations.

Summary of Results of Part One

The first part of this study focused on previously unseen data related to education and the incentives that are offered in each police department. The sample in this study provided an in-depth look at the educational diversity of the police departments in Middlesex County. This study also showed the different levels of incentives offered by each department and how they related to department educational levels. In the next part of the study, the analysis will focus on the individual offers in each department.

Part Two — Individual Officer Analysis

Research Question 5: Do education incentives offered by municipal police agencies, educational standards for hiring, time of service and rank of officer affect the continuing education choices of police officers in Middlesex County?

Research Question 6: How do all these factors differ between civil service municipalities and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County?

Null Hypothesis: Higher degree attainment is not influenced by incentives, educational standards for hiring, rank, or time of service.

Binary Logistic Regression

SPSS software was used for binary logistic regression in this study. The enter method was used to determine the impact of the following independent predictor variables on attainment of a higher degree: tuition reimbursement, incentive pay, accelerated career path, educational standards for hiring, years of service, and rank.

Table 2

Goodness of Fit Statistics

Model Summary			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	659.057 ^a	.148	.232

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

The Cox and Snell, and Nagelkerke pseudo r^2 mimics r^2 in OLS regression. The Cox and Snell R Square is .148 while the Nagelkerke R square is .232. The fitted model with predictor variables accounts for between 14% and 23% of the variance in the dependent variable according to pseudo r^2 results.

Table 3

Frequency Table

		Received Higher Degree		
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Did Not Earn Degree	614	79.5	79.5
	Earned Higher Degree	158	20.5	20.5
	Total	772	100.0	100.0

Table 4

*Step 1 Classification Table*Classification Table^a

			Predicted		
			Received Higher Degree		Percentage Correct
			Did Not Earn Degree	Earned Higher Degree	
Observed					
Step 1		Did Not Earn Degree	598	16	97.4
	Received Higher Degree	Earned Higher Degree	127	31	19.6
	Overall Percentage				81.5

a. The cut value is .500

The block 1 classification table accounts for predictor variables and how well it predicts the outcomes. The block 1 classification table was correct in 81.5% of cases. The block 1 classification table is an improvement of 2% over the null model. The block 1 classification table correctly predicted higher degree attainment in 31 officers, and correctly predicted that 598 officers did not attain higher degrees, but the share of successful prediction among those who continued their education is substantially lower.

Table 5

Logistic Regression

	Variables in the Equation	Mean	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Tuition Reimbursement	0.639	0.683	0.235	0.004	1.979
	Incentive Pay	0.589	0.371	0.219	0.091	1.449
	Accelerated Promotion	0.375	1.309	0.378	0.001	3.703
	Education Requirement	0.483	0.070	0.394	0.859	1.072
	Years of Service	15.197	0.051	0.015	0.001	1.052
	Front_Line_Supervisor	0.182	0.308	0.272	0.257	1.361
	Middle_Manager	0.136	1.519	0.290	0.000	4.567
	Executive_Level_Management	0.024	0.837	0.586	0.153	2.309
	Constant		-3.867	0.406	0.000	0.021

Note. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Tuition Reimbursement, Incentive Pay, Accelerated Promotion, Education Requirement, Years of Service, Front_Line_Supervisor, Middle_Manager, Executive_Level_Management.

Table 5 shows the results of the binary logistic regression for attainment of higher degree. Four types of predictor variables were statistically significant: tuition reimbursement, accelerated promotion, years of service, and rank at the middle manager level. The key to assessing impact of each predictor was the odds ratio or Exp(B). When one is subtracted from Exp(B) we determine the odds of how many more times likely an officer exposed to that predictor is to attain a higher degree.

The strongest predictor of higher degree attainment was rank at the middle manager level. Rank was statistically significant just at this level. At this rank the officers were 3.5 times more likely to attain a higher degree than the reference group of patrol officers.

Addressing Research Question 5 (Do education incentives offered by municipal police agencies, educational standards for hiring, time of service and rank of officer affect the continuing education choices of police officers in Middlesex County?): The

three incentives that were present in this sample were tuition reimbursement, educational pay incentive, and accelerated career path. Tuition reimbursement and accelerated career path were found to be statistically significant, while incentive pay was not found to be significant. The literature discussed the benefit of incentives and how they can encourage or motivate an individual to perform an action. Tuition reimbursement is designed to pay back employees for educational expenses for obtaining a degree. In this study, two departments offered full tuition reimbursement. The other departments offered various amounts towards the completion of a degree. Educational pay incentives or merit pay rewards employees by awarding money to their pay (Durham & Bartol, 2000). Departments in this study that offered educational pay incentives awarded officers a yearly monetary bonus from \$500 up to \$2,000 depending on the degree that the officer obtained. These bonuses were awarded on a yearly basis and were not a part of the officer's base pay. Accelerated career path awarded officers additional points on promotional exams, giving them an advantage over officers who do not have college degrees.

The literature also discussed how the effectiveness of incentives is based on the individuals and a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. In some cases, incentives can decrease intrinsic motivation and performance (Amabile & Fisher 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Incentive pay, in this case, did not show significance as a motivator for officers to pursue a higher degree.

Educational requirements for hiring were not found to have a statistically significant impact on higher degree attainment. In this case, two groups of officers were applying to be police officers. One group has to have a high school diploma and the other

group has already started taking college courses. It is not surprising that departments that do not have educational requirements had a lower rate of officers with bachelor's degrees and had a lower rate of officers who continued their education. The officers who are applying to the departments that require 60 credits are already at a minimum halfway towards a college degree.

Years of service was found to have a statistically significant relationship with higher education attainment. The number of years that an officer spends on the job has an influence on them attaining a higher degree. Until recently, police officers could retire from law enforcement after serving 25 years and receive 65% of their final salary. This was changed in 2010; now, officers have to serve 30 years before they can retire and receive 65% of their final salary (New Jersey Divisions of Pensions and Benefits, 2020). As officers approach retirement, many of them seek careers after retirement. Officers who gain higher education will make themselves more marketable in the job market. As previously mentioned, higher education attainment in some departments is also a way to improve an officer's chances of getting promoted and making rank. As officers spend more time on the job and gain more experience, their knowledge can be used to train younger officers in a supervisory position. Also, as officers get promoted, they receive additional benefits like additional power in the chain of command and increases in their income and their pension.

Rank was a statistically significant predictor in one of the three categories. Front line supervisor and executive level management was not found to have a significant impact on higher degree attainment. Officers at the middle management level were 2.5 times more likely to attain a higher degree than officers at the patrol level.

Addressing Research Question 6 (How do all these factors differ between civil service municipalities and non-civil service municipalities in Middlesex County?): In this study, ten agencies were civil service departments, with a total of 354 officers. Eleven departments were non-civil service departments, with a total of 418 officers. The non-civil service departments had a percentage of 41.9% of officers who had a bachelor's degree while civil service departments had a level of 35%, which is lower than the overall 39% of all the officers in the county. Non-civil service departments also had a higher percentage of officers with master's degrees and doctoral degrees at a rate of two to one. Officers working for non-civil service departments attained a higher degree at a rate of 26% while civil service officers attained a higher degree at a rate of 13.8%, which is lower than the 21% rate of all the officers in the county.

Incentives that were offered by non-civil service and civil service departments were almost equal, with non-civil service departments offering 14 incentives and civil service departments offering 13 incentives. Six non-civil service departments offered tuition reimbursement, three offered incentive pay, and five offered accelerated career path. Seven civil service departments offered tuition reimbursement, six offered incentive pay, and none offered accelerated career path.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existent research regarding higher education has provided answers to the question of whether law enforcement agencies, police officers, and the community benefit from officers obtaining higher degrees. As stated earlier, in society higher education is a highly valued means to acquire skills and experience that are necessary to meet the wide range of challenges that the police will face (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). College-educated officers demonstrate greater creativity and problem-solving skills (Gardiner, 2017), have better communication skills, are more empathetic, and make better decisions (Kappeler, Sapp, & Carter, 1992). Verbal force and physical force used towards citizens is lower for college-educated officers than non-educated (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). Fewer use of force incidents can promote citizens' trust in the police and reduce civil liability for police departments. Only 1.9% of municipal police departments in the nation require a four-year degree (Reaves, 2015), and changing the hiring requirements has some anticipated challenges. Civil service police departments in New Jersey cannot raise their hiring requirements due to New Jersey Civil Service Commission regulations. Therefore, agencies must find other ways of promoting higher degree attainment.

Based on the review of literature, I was unable to find another study that focused on the continuing educational decisions of municipal police officers in both civil service and non-civil service police agencies. Incentive programs were identified based on the 2017 Gardiner study. The Gardiner study provided aggregate data related to police officer education on a national basis. This study builds upon the Gardiner study by identifying

distinct policies and practices that influence continuing education but on a much smaller scale. The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices being used to promote continued higher education in both civil service and non-civil service police departments. This study was intended to provide best practices to be used as a guideline for police departments that wish to encourage officers to pursue continued higher education.

In this chapter, I will describe the population and the sample, discuss the findings, make recommendations for the best practices to be used to promote higher degree attainment by officers, and present my conclusions. I will also conclude with recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Population and Sample

The sample in this study is the municipal police officers and police departments of Middlesex County, New Jersey. Middlesex County is located in north-central New Jersey and has a population of 829,685 (2017 US Census Estimate). The population is 59.5% White, 10% African American, 0.13% American Indian 0.0 % Alaska Native, 24% Asian, 0.0 % Pacific Islander, and 20% Hispanic/Latino. Middlesex County is ranked second of 21 counties in New Jersey for population. Middlesex County also has a unique array of cultures and a mix of small towns, urban towns, and rural communities. Middlesex County has 25 different municipal police departments. Twenty-one departments participated in this study: 10 agencies were civil service departments, with a total of 354 officers, and 11 departments were non-civil service departments, with a total of 418 officers. All 21 departments participated in collective bargaining, and their incentives are governed by contractual agreement.

Findings

The aggregate data presented in the organizational analysis showed information related to the education and incentives that are available in police departments in Middlesex County. The organizational analysis revealed that 39% of the officers in the county have a bachelor's degree, and 21% of officers in the county have attained a higher degree while employed as a police officer. In the O'Connor (2019) study, 53% of the officers in Hunterdon County have a bachelor's degrees or higher and 17% of the officers in this county have attained a higher degree while employed as a police officer. After reviewing the data, it was clear to see that departments that had educational hiring requirements also had more officers who had bachelor's degrees and even a higher rate of officers who obtained a higher degree. The data also revealed that non-civil service departments had a higher percentage of officers who had bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees than civil service departments. Non-civil service departments also had a higher rate of officers who attained a higher degree than civil service departments. Even though non-civil service and civil service departments offered almost the same number of incentives, the rates of officers with bachelor's degrees or higher and the rate of officer attainment were significantly different. Civil service departments are hiring individuals who are at a disadvantage when compared to non-civil service departments that require college credits for employment. As mentioned previously, the non-civil service officers who are applying are already at a minimum halfway towards a college degree.

During this first part of the analysis, it was not clear whether the incentives offered, educational requirements, years of service, or rank could be considered as indicators. Binary logistic regression was used to test the influence of different

independent predictor variables on the dependent variable of higher degree attainment.

The following independent predictor variables were tested, and the null hypotheses were either rejected or retained.

Tuition Reimbursement	Rejected
Incentive Pay	Failed to reject
Accelerated Promotion	Rejected
Education Requirements	Failed to reject
Years of Service	Rejected
Rank	
Front Line Supervisor	Failed to reject
Middle Manager	Rejected
Executive Level Management	Failed to reject

The research questions in this study were based on the influence of the predictors on higher degree attainment. Only four predictors were found to be statistically significant while controlling for other variables. Rank at the level of middle manager was the strongest predictor of higher degree attainment. Tuition reimbursement, accelerated promotion, and years of service were also found to be statistically significant predictors.

Incentive pay, educational requirements, and rank at the level of frontline supervisor and executive level management were not statistically significant predictors ($p^{\text{incentives pay}} = .091$, $p^{\text{education requirement}} = .859$, $p^{\text{front line supervisor}} = .259$ and $p^{\text{executive level management}} = .153$). The null hypothesis was rejected for tuition reimbursement, accelerated career path, years of service and rank at the level of middle manager. The rank of lieutenant and captain were significant when compared to the constant of patrol officer

where $p < .05$. In the O'Connor (2019) study, binary logistic regression was used to test the effect of similar predictor variables on higher degree attainment. In the O'Connor study, CEO education level and rank were found to be statistically significant while tuition reimbursement, incentive pay, college hiring standards, and time of service were not statistically significant on higher degree attainment.

The rejection of the null hypothesis for tuition reimbursement, accelerated career path, years of service, and rank at the level of middle manager shows that these predictors have an influence on officers' choices to continue their education. It is not surprising that tuition reimbursement and accelerated career path were significant predictors of higher degree attainment based on the idea of having agencies pay for college and reward degree attainment with points toward promotional tests. It is surprising that incentive pay was not statistically significant, and the two other incentives were significant. The O'Connor (2019) study's finding that none of the incentives that was offered was statistically significant was surprising, since all of these incentives are designed to encourage and pay back officers for earning a higher degree. It is also not surprising that educational requirements were not statistically significant because the aggregate data showed that departments that required college credits had more officers with degrees and even more officers who attained a higher degree. It is also unexpected that rank at the level of middle manager was the only statistically significant rank and front-line supervisor and executive level management was not significant. This result is the most astonishing because promotions are based on a progression from patrol officer up to the executive level, and each promotional step also comes with a higher salary. In the O'Connor study,

rank was statistically significant at all levels of rank from front line supervisor to executive level commander.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice

The results of the binary logistic regression in this study show that tuition reimbursement, accelerated career path, years of service, and rank at the middle management level had a statistically significant relationship with higher degree attainment by officers. The null hypothesis was retained in the case of all the other predictor variables.

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be made for application in the field. Agencies that want to increase the percentage of officers who have college degrees should focus on providing a variety of incentives. In this study, two of the three incentives were significant. Incentive pay was not found to be statistically significant in this study, thus being ineffective to motivate officers to attain a higher degree. Nine departments offered incentive pay. These nine departments offered additional money ranging from \$500 up to \$2,000 a year based on the degree that the officer possessed. For example, if an officer possessed a bachelor's degree, this officer would receive \$1,000 in addition to their salary. Departments that offer incentive pay may want to raise the amount of money that is offered and combine this incentive with tuition reimbursement as a way to offset the high costs of obtaining a college degree.

Of the 21 departments in this study, only one department offered all three incentives. The department that offered all three incentives had the highest level of degree attainment when compared to the other departments that offered only one or two incentives. Departments have to find and offer the incentives that will encourage officers

to pursue higher education. This task will have to involve the collective bargaining unit of the police department and the municipalities that are responsible for covering the costs.

In civil service departments there should be a greater influence on certain incentives than on others. For example, in a civil service police department, accelerated career path will not have the same effect as in a non-civil service town. Civil service towns are not allowed to award extra points toward promotional tests due to New Jersey Civil Service Commission regulations. These towns also cannot raise their hiring requirements above a high school diploma. If civil service municipalities want to reap the benefits of having educated officers, then the types of incentives and the number of incentives offered must be agreed upon and made available to officers.

The civil service system was created to eliminate political influence, favoritism, and prejudicial behavior by regulating hiring procedures (Dempsey et al., 2018). These rules and regulations are now also limiting what civil service agencies can do to promote higher education for officers. In New Jersey there are 465 municipal agencies, of which 171 are civil service departments. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that civil service police departments weigh their options of being governed by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission against the benefits of having a higher percentage of educated officers. If the benefits of education outweigh the benefits of rules and regulations of the New Jersey Civil Service system, then the departments should opt out. Unfortunately, in civil service municipalities, the entire town and other city employment are also covered by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. If the police department wanted to opt out of the civil service system, the entire town would have to opt out entirely.

In this study, only rank at the middle manager level was determined to be a factor influencing an officer's decision to obtain a higher degree. Departments need to find out what is motivating these officers at the level of lieutenant and captain. The motivation at this level could be based on these officers attempting to make themselves more marketable as they plan to retire and pursue a second career. Departments should also attempt to keep some of the lieutenants and captains who have attained higher degrees and promote them to executive level management. According to O'Connor (2019) this was the strongest predictor of higher degree attainment. As previously stated, municipalities, both civil service and non-civil service, need to find ways to motivate patrol officers and first line supervisors in order to benefit from the effects of educated officers.

Recommendations for Future Research

I recommend that a qualitative study be conducted to measure factors that influence the continuing education choices of municipal police officers, examining the motivational reasons behind officers wanting to continue their higher education. This quantitative study did not account for the possibility that personal cultural background factors, as well as the organizational culture that may exist in a department, could influence the predictor variables.

Future studies should take demographic information of officers into account and test the effect of the predictor variables against a variety of demographic factors. Agency diversity should be explored in addition to population diversity.

This study did not address the specific details of each incentive that was offered by departments. This study also did not account for changes to contractual agreements

that may have altered incentives and or eliminated them. I recommend that a qualitative study be conducted to assess if officers have used incentives and how these incentives are communicated to the officers. This study should also examine the towns where no officers went on to pursue higher degree attainment, as well as the towns that had a high percentage of officers who attained a higher degree. This assessment should examine if the communication of the incentives is just listed in the collective bargaining agreement, or if a person explains and encourages officers to take advantage of the incentives. If it is determined that the high rate of degree attainment is related to a person promoting the incentives, then the other departments with lower degree attainment rates should follow these same actions.

Research shows that officers with higher education were less likely to use physical force than officers with no higher education (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). I recommend that a quantitative study of high-profile use of force cases be conducted to see if these officers in these cases had higher education.

Summary

The benefits of higher education and, more specifically, the benefits of police officers having college education have been presented at length in Chapter II of this dissertation. There are numerous benefits related to higher education in policing, which is important, but it is also just as important to recognize why these officers choose to continue their education.

The Gardiner (2017) study revealed a vast amount of information about educational practices for municipal and county police departments throughout the nation. The Gardiner study also provided aggregate data related to police officer education, but it

did not examine any factors that may influence the level of education of officers. This study focused on identifying distinct predictor variables and their impact on higher degree attainment. Police departments should still attempt to hire college graduates even though there are concerns that this process will shrink the applicant pool and minority recruitment (Peak & Sousa, 2018), and agencies will struggle to support the salaries of college-educated applicants (Gardiner, 2017). Civil service departments should rely heavily on incentives since they cannot raise their hiring requirements. Incentives are one of the most important strategies to increase educational levels. Instead of raising the agency's hiring requirements, incentives can be the means of promoting college enrollment and higher educational advancement (Novak et al., 2017).

Police departments in this study had some officers who chose to continue their education, and some officers who did not. This study was designed to identify the factors that influence officers' decision to obtain higher degrees. The results of this study are significant and can be used to encourage officers to pursue higher education.

Another goal of this study was to highlight how municipalities can influence the level of education and increase professionalism based on the choices that they make. Statistical analysis revealed that departments that offered more incentives had a higher percentage of officers who continued their education. The number of incentives and the types of incentives that are offered usually depends on the municipalities. Based on this study, municipalities and the collective bargaining units of each police department have the necessary information to make choices that will improve the quality and professionalism of the police in their neighborhoods.

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Appendix

IRB Approval



November 4, 2019

Raymond Trigg
[REDACTED]

Re: IRB Study #2020-016

Dear Mr. Trigg:

At its October 30, 2019 meeting, the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your research proposal entitled, "Identifying the best practices that are being used to promote higher education in both Civil Service and Non-Civil Service Police Departments" as submitted. This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned study's approval.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol, informed consent form or study team must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to your expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research form to close the study. In all future correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, please reference the ID# listed above.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Institutional Review Board

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