

A SURVEY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS: TRAINING AND
ROLES

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Patrick Webb, Committee Chair

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study is based on the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina and the roles and training that they need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. The quantitative design used a survey that consisted of different measurement scales, including ordinal, nominal, and fill-in-the-blank. The findings of this study were analyzed using Qualtrics XM that lets you statistically analyze your response data and allows researchers to identify trends and produce predictive models. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the survey data.

Keywords: roles, school resource officer, training

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, the most gracious and merciful. He provides true motivation and wisdom in life. He is my joy in sorrow, my rock, and my everything.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my husband Derikk, my two beautiful daughters, Ava and Rubie, and my father, Mike. You all are the reason I finished this dissertation when so many times I questioned myself if I wanted to continue.

Derikk: You have been my rock throughout this whole process. You have been my most significant source of encouragement and inspiration. I am officially done!!! I will be forever grateful for your love and support. I love you so very much!

Ava and Rubie: I want to thank you so much for understanding when mommy was too busy to play. You both have always been by my side since the very beginning. Thank you, Rubie, for always bringing a smile to my face with your incredible sense of humor and your kind heart. I hope that never changes. Thank you, Ava, for always being so sweet and kind. I hope I have been a positive role model for you both. I wish you both a lifetime of learning, crazy adventures, good health, and most of all, happiness. I love you with all my heart. Remember, mommy loves you the most!

Dad: I miss you more than you will ever know. You were a man who had a smile to brighten anyone's day. You were always patient and kind, and even though you have passed away, you will never be forgotten. I love you Dad! We will take care of mom from here.

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List of Abbreviations

National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO)

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

School Resource Officer (SRO)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Over the past few years, the media has exposed numerous incidents of School Resource Officers using considerable force to control students' misconduct in schools. On October 26, 2015, a video emerged on social media of a School Resource Officer (SRO) in Richland County, South Carolina, physically restraining a student in the classroom. The female student was seated at her desk when the SRO engaged in an altercation after refusing to surrender her cellphone (Ford, Bothelo, & Conlon, 2015). During the altercation, another student recorded the incident on video and then posted it to social media. On August 27, 2019, in Farmington, New Mexico, a video emerged of a veteran law enforcement officer shoving and tackling an unnamed 11-year-old girl to the ground. The officer claimed she was disruptive in class (Thebault, 2019). On December 14, 2019, a North Carolina deputy was recorded in an altercation with a middle school student using excessive force (Li, 2019).

These incidents are a few of many questionable law enforcement actions that have surfaced over the past several years dealing with the use of force by SROs in schools. Many parents, along with advocacy groups, have questioned whether the presence of SROs in schools is more of a threat than a form of protection (Goldstein, 2020). After the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, national opinion over law enforcement violence spread to the schools, with school districts severing their ties with local law enforcement agencies such as Denver, C.O., Oakland Schools Police Department, and West Contra Unified School District (Goldstein, 2020; Balingit, Strauss, & Bellware, 2020; Sawchuk, 2020).

Many federal officials and youth rights activists argue that SROs do not have the proper training that is needed to effectively interact with students, especially those who are

predominantly black, Hispanic, or disabled students (Keierleber, 2015). While research has examined the roles of SROs (Robinson, 2006; Rippetoe, 2009; Cervantes & Vazquez, 2018) and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Lynch, 2017; Fitzgerald, Hunt, & Kerr, 2019), there is lesser-known research that has been conducted on the training that SROs receive (Gonzalez, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study will be based on the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina and the roles and training that they need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. Chapter 1 will introduce the study and provide background information on the importance of SRO training. Chapter 2 will review relevant literature on the history and the roles of SROs, followed by the exploration of current literature on the training of SROs. Chapter 3 will review the methods of the study, including research design, research questions, and participant selection. It will also review the process of data collection and analysis of data. Chapter 4 will review the findings using the participant's information from the surveys. Finally, Chapter 5 will include the results of the study, the limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Background

The School Resource Officer program is a strategy that helps schools and communities to address violence within the schools by using prevention and intervention techniques (Robinson, 2006). The program also aims to bridge the gap between school systems and law enforcement, realizing that threats that are made to a school are manifestations of issues that occur in the community and are not just a school issue (Weiler & Cray, 2011). Having SROs on school campuses could prevent acts of violence and assist with building positive relationships with students and staff on campus. The SRO program places sworn law enforcement officers in

schools to help create and maintain a safe, secure, and orderly educational setting (Robinson, 2006). If acts of violence do occur on school grounds, SROs can quickly respond (James & McCallion, 2013).

What is an SRO?

There are different ways to define what an SRO is. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines a School Resource Officer as a sworn career law enforcement officer employed by a law enforcement agency to work in collaboration with one or more schools (Canady, 2019). According to May and Higgins (2011), an SRO is an armed, uniformed police officer generally employed by a law enforcement agency and assigned to protect one or more schools within their local school district. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction defines an SRO as a certified law enforcement officer that continually provides coverage to a school or a set of schools (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020). For this study, the research-derived definition of an SRO from NASRO will be used.

Along with the various descriptions of an SRO, there are also various roles of an SRO. According to the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) (2017), an SRO has four roles. These roles include law enforcers to promote safety in and around the school; educator to teach law-related topics; informal counselor to promote positive relationships and positive behaviors; and emergency manager when it comes to developing and implementing safety plans with school administrators (COPS, 2017). The NASRO stated that SROs have three roles. These roles consist of a law enforcer, counselor or mentor, and teacher (May & Higgins, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013). While the National Association of School Resource Officers advocates for the SRO triad, the roles of an SRO and

their duties depend on the school administration's desires and the school's needs (Finn & McDevitt, 2005).

The Importance of Training

Many SROs, school administrators, and SRO supervisors generally do not perform well for several months and even years once assigned to a school due to many law enforcement agencies that station SROs into a school setting without any formal training (Finn, Townsend, Shively, & Rich, 2005). According to Finn et al. (2005), quite a few SROs reported that they either did things unacceptably or avoided doing things altogether until they were trained for fear of making serious mistakes that could ruin the officer's reputation, the law enforcement agency, and the school. SROs have a good reason to be anxious going into a school without any training. The mistakes made, such as being involved in disciplinary issues or using arrests and court referrals as a method of disciplining students, can ruin relationships with students, school administration, and parents.

Despite the importance of training, there are a few programs that train SROs adequately before they become an SRO, while others provide no training for as long as a year or more (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). For example, Finn and McDevitt (2005) examined nineteen SRO programs that train SROs. Based on Finn et al. study, there were a limited number of programs that educate and train SROs before they begin their position as an SRO. The reason was not because of the cost of the training itself. It was due to the training not being offered before the SRO was selected for the SRO position and their first day on the job.

Insufficient Training

SRO training varies from state to state. Currently, there is no national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO, and there are only a few states that have inaugurated certain requirements for certification or training requirements for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts, and Shelnut (2018), the need for a systematic approach to training for SROs is a significant component in increasing SRO effectiveness as a solution to school safety issues.

In 2011, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conducted a survey on training and found that three-quarters of the participating states did not mandate training pertaining to juvenile justice for law enforcement officers other than the basic law enforcement training they received during the law enforcement academy (IACP, 2011). Based on the Strategies for Youth Survey (2013), state law enforcement academies reported that less than 1% of training is spent on juvenile justice issues such as child development, how to communicate with children, and behavior management. The lack of training that SROs receive is problematic, especially when interacting with students that may have disabilities such as emotional and behavioral disorders (Ryan et al., 2018).

An essential role of an SRO is based on crime prevention. Preventing or stopping violence within a school relies significantly on the training that SROs receive. There is no national standard for SRO training. Therefore, there is only a small amount of stability in how SROs are prepared to work within a school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). While SROs undergo regular law enforcement training, the training that does exist for SROs focuses on the security of a school or legal updates. SROs need training in de-escalation techniques, teaching and mentoring students, restorative justice, mental health, and child development. SROs also

need training on implicit bias (The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2017). Specifically, what implicit bias is, how implicit bias is created, and how it affects interactions within the school. One factor that is fueling the debate over SROs in schools is the lack of training. The U.S. Department of Education recommends that SROs not be involved in issues such as school discipline because SROs that are poorly trained may unintentionally accelerate the problem and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline (Englander, 2018).

Training Topics

School leaders state that comprehensive training can alleviate many of the concerns that civil rights activists have (Balingit et al., 2020). Teaching is a primary component of being an SRO. However, unless an SRO has taught the Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T.), Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E.), or has been a certified law enforcement instructor, the SRO cannot simply walk into a class and be a competent instructor (Finn, Townsend, Shively, & Rich, 2003).

Mentoring or counseling is also an essential role of an SRO. Again, if SROs have not had the proper training for mentoring or counseling students, they will not be effective. When SROs do not have the proper training, very few SROs realize how important the role of a mentor is until later in their career. As a result of not having proper training, SROs are inadequately prepared to help students that need assistance. It is also essential that SROs know how to work collaboratively with their school administration (Lopez, 2019). Before an SRO begins their duty, they need to know how to deal with two administrators, one being the school administrator(s) and the other as the law enforcement agency.

There are other topics that SROs need to have training in, such as child development and psychology (Shaver & Decker, 2017). It is essential to know the psychological and physiological

changes that youth go through. SROs also need to be trained in understanding how children think. For example, the unacceptable behavior of a student may be due to immaturity and not criminal behavior. It is also vital for SROs to know how to create emergency plans for their school. When it comes to making effective crisis plans, the school administration depends on the SRO to make the school campus a safe and secure environment (Finn et al., 2003).

SRO Controversy

Over the past few years, the media has exposed numerous incidents of SROs using unnecessary force to control the misconduct of students within an adolescent learning environment. According to Clark et al. (2017), there are concerns about bringing the mistrust of law enforcement officers from the streets they patrol into the schools they serve. Many parents, along with advocacy groups, have questioned whether the presence of SROs in schools is more of a threat than a form of protection (Goldstein, 2020). Goldstein also stated that national opinion over law enforcement violence spread into the school systems, with many districts ending their contracts with law enforcement after the death of George Floyd in Minnesota.

Proponents of SROs see them as essential in keeping students safe by addressing crime or the fear of crime, building relationships, and developing and implementing safety plans by collaborating with first responders and school administrators (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020). Critics of SROs state that the presence of SROs in schools disproportionately affects minority youth (Gottfredson et al., 2020), fueling the school-to-prison pipeline debate. Prior research that was conducted on SROs state that the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices, such as suspensions and expulsions, disproportionately affects minority youth and youth with disabilities (Hirschfield, 2008; Skiba, Arredondo, Gray, & Rauch, 2018, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014; Welch & Payne, 2018; Gottfredson et al., 2020). Policymakers and

educators believe that it would be wiser to hire school psychologists to provide counseling to students and school nurses to advise students on drugs and alcohol instead of training law enforcement officers to do such tasks (Balingit, Strauss, & Bellware, 2020).

Problem Statement

School safety is a significant concern for many educators and school administrators. Most existing research on SROs does not advise if the hoped-for benefits of placing SROs in schools are achieved. Existing research on SROs characterizes the daily activities of an SRO, their typical traits, and the perceptions of individuals that are involved with the SRO program (Raymond, 2013). Research also addresses the satisfaction of the SRO program (Raymond, 2013). While research has examined the roles of SROs (Robinson, 2006; Rippetoe, 2009; Cervantes & Vazquez, 2018) and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Lynch, 2017; Fitzgerald, Hunt, & Kerr, 2019), there is a limited amount of research that has been conducted on the training that SROs receive (Gonzalez, 2018).

Given recent events involving the use of force of SROs, there is much debate that continues around the pros and cons of having SROs in schools (Superville, 2020). Studies have shown that SROs act as educators within the schools they serve (Bernard, Canady, & Nease, 2012). SROs can also use their knowledge in the school in a variety of ways to help students, staff, and school administrators to stay safe. SROs can also educate students on drug and alcohol awareness, crime prevention, and laws such as constitutional rights.

SROs also serve as an informal counselor in schools (Rosiak, 2011). As an informal counselor, SROs provide information on legal issues to the staff members at the school as they relate to the school community. Teske (2011) states that it is imperative to have SROs on school campuses to protect the students and staff from threats of violence. Teske also states that having

an SRO on campus can decrease the response time if there was an emergency on campus.

Despite the many benefits of having an SRO on campus, opponents of SROs state that they have caused the 'school-to-prison pipeline.' Opponents also state that SROs use too much force by using the same tactics to handle students on campus as they do with handling criminals during an arrest.

Due to the limited amount of research conducted on the training and roles of SROs, it is essential to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. The perceptions of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they need should be examined in order to be effective within the school(s) they serve. This study is best understood through the intended audience, including school leaders, SROs, those responsible for training SROs, and policymakers who design and supervise other similar programs.

Perception is a powerful phenomenon as individuals usually act based on their perceptions (Saha, 2008). Perception will eventually transform into reality. The perceptions of SROs can shape the working environment's climate and effectiveness (Otara, 2011). When SROs and school administrators have differing perceptions about their roles and training, it can become challenging to accomplish meaningful objectives (Saha, 2008) and be effective within the schools they serve. When SROs do not have defined roles or have an unclear perception of their roles and responsibilities, it can lead to underperformance by the SRO or low morale (Otara, 2011). Therefore, it is essential that SROs within a school district have clearly defined roles and the training they need to succeed within the schools they serve.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the

perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. To be effective, SROs must fulfill the stated program goals of the National Association of School Resource Officers. A quantitative design will be used for this study, with participants drawn from a total population sample in North Carolina. The participants in this research include sworn law enforcement officers that serve as an SRO full-time in North Carolina.

Significance of the Study

Federal officials, along with youth rights activists, state that SROs lack the appropriate training that is needed to interrelate with youth effectively (Keierleber, 2015). Especially students that are Hispanic, black, or disabled. Previous research has been conducted on the roles of SROs (Muench, 2019), the perceptions of SROs on school violence (Cook, 2019), the perceptions of SROs on visitor management systems (Olhausen-Kaylor, 2019), and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Lynch, 2017; Fitzgerald, Hunt, & Kerr, 2019). There has only been a small amount of research that has been conducted on the training of SROs (Gonzalez, 2018).

Most existing research on SROs does not advise if the hoped-for benefits of placing SROs in schools are achieved. Research on SROs tends to be descriptive in nature. According to Raymond (2013), existing research on SROs characterizes what SROs do regularly, their typical traits, and the perceptions of individuals involved with the SRO program. Research also addresses the satisfaction of the SRO program. Raymond also states that many school administrators and parents of students within the school's express satisfaction with the SRO program.

Throughout the years, there has been a dramatic increase in SROs to make schools a safer place and provide safety for the students and staff (Theriot & Orme, 2014). Due to the limited amount of research on SRO training, there is a need for continued research on the roles of SROs and the training they receive. There needs to be a clear understanding between school administrators and SROs based on the roles that they serve in order to provide a safe and secure school setting. In the United States, school systems have multiple roles. Schools are expected to be safe and secure not only for students but for staff also. Schools must also provide an environment that is conducive to learning (Robinson, 2006). In order to make sure these roles are accomplished, there must be a partnership between law enforcement agencies and school systems (Atkinson, 2002).

This study will shed light on the similarities and differences in how SROs in North Carolina interpret their roles. This study will also provide those responsible for the training of SROs with essential information for more effective training of SROs. This study will benefit many stakeholders responsible for school safety and the training of SROs, such as law enforcement agencies, school officials, students, teachers, community members, and those responsible for training SROs. School safety will always remain a genuine concern for all. It is critical to develop a better understanding of the roles of SROs and the training they need to be successful (Robinson, 2006).

Research Questions

After examining current literature on SROs, there is a limited amount of research conducted on the training of SROs and their roles. This study will answer the following research questions:

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for

effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

For all school districts and law enforcement agencies, it is crucial to have precise training requirements for SROs and a clear understanding of the role of SROs so they may be successful within the school(s) they serve

Definitions

The terms below are used throughout the study. The purpose of having definitions for this study is to ensure that the reader understands the researcher's understanding of the terms.

1. *School Resource Officer (SRO)*: The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines an SRO as a sworn career law enforcement officer employed by a law enforcement agency to work in collaboration with one or more schools (Canady, 2019).
2. *Law Enforcement Officer*: any officer, agent, or employee of a State, unit of local

government, or an Indian tribe authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, or investigation of any violation of criminal law, or authorized by law to supervise sentenced criminal offenders (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020). This includes full, part-time, and auxiliary personnel, whether paid or volunteer.

3. *Mentoring*: is a relationship between two individuals with a goal of personal development. The mentor is an experienced guide or counselor who shares knowledge, experience, and advice with those with less experience.
4. *Law-Related Educator*: to promote responsible citizenship and give students a better understanding of how the legal system works. Law-related educators also deliver lectures on other related topics that support the school curriculum.
5. *Perception*: a person's individual interpretation of his or her current reality (Davidson & Kelehear, 2005).

Summary

The re-examination of law enforcement in the United States following the death of George Floyd has moved into the school system, with several school districts ending their contracts with local law enforcement agencies (Goldstein, 2020). School leaders state that with proper training for SROs, they can alleviate much apprehension that civil rights activists have (Balingit et al., 2020). Research on SROs has examined the roles of SROs (Robinson, 2006; Rippetoe, 2009; Cervantes & Vazquez, 2018), the effects of SROs on school crime (Gottfredson et al., 2020), and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Lynch, 2017; Fitzgerald, Hunt, & Kerr, 2019). There is a small amount of research that has been conducted on the training of SROs (Gonzalez, 2018). The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop an understanding

of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. Most existing research on SROs does not advise if the hoped-for benefits of placing SROs in schools are achieved (Raymond, 2010). Existing research on SROs characterizes what SROs do regularly, their typical traits, the programs' satisfaction, and the perceptions of individuals that are involved with the SRO program (Raymond, 2013). While research has examined the roles of SROs (Robinson, 2006; Rippetoe, 2009; Cervantes & Vazquez, 2018; Muench, 2019), the perceptions of SROs on school violence (Cook, 2019), and their contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline (Lynch, 2017; Fitzgerald, Hunt, & Kerr, 2019), there is a small amount of research that has been conducted on the training that SROs receive.

In order to understand what the SRO program is and its role, it is essential to understand the history of the SRO program. This literature review addresses six bodies of literature that frame this study. First, the theoretical framework used in this study is explained. Second, the literature review discusses what is known about the SRO program, along with its history, what an SRO is, and the roles of an SRO. Third, the literature review discusses what is known about the training of an SRO, such as the importance of training, Basic SRO training, insufficient training, and training topics. Fourth, this review presents a brief discussion of the United States' educational system, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Fifth, the benefits and controversy of SROs are discussed. Finally, studies that have been conducted on SROs in North Carolina are discussed.

Theoretical Framework

Historically, Abraham Maslow, a well-known American psychologist, contributed considerably to the field of human psychology. Abraham Maslow proposed the theory of human needs, which is widely known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, individuals are motivated by five levels of needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). Once our physiological needs are met, such as food, water, and rest, our safety needs are next.

Safety needs or security needs have to do with the protection and survival from disorderly situations, social disturbances, and physical danger within a human environment. An example of disorderly situations, social disturbances, and physical danger includes acts of terrorism, civil disturbances, and kidnapping. Indeed, social disturbances and disorderly situations are characterized by many uncertainties that threaten the peaceful co-existence of individuals in various communities in society (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). When individuals are frightened by social or physical disturbances, they are less likely to concentrate on anything other than their own personal safety (Hope & Timmel, 1995).

Maslow's theory is relevant to the safety needs of the school community. When threats are made to a school, whether real or imagined, the emotional safety within a school is often destroyed (Surface, 2011). If individuals do not feel as if they are safe and secure, it can be difficult for them to focus on any given task (Pillar, 2016). A school campus is no different. If there is no order or safety within a school, all other activities will suffer (Marzano, 2013). It is difficult for students and staff to do substantive work if they do not have a safe and orderly working environment. The security of a school is vital to learning. It is important that students not have to worry about their physical safety on school campuses (Fritz & Radka, 2010). The

need for a safe and secure school campus remains crucial to promoting valuable teaching and learning within the schools (Pillar, 2016).

Security measures within a school and staff development in emergency operation procedures are specifically designed to ensure the safety of students and staff, thus meeting the safety need of the hierarchy. Dangerous events, such as school shootings, is what SROs and school administrators seek to prevent through well-developed security plans. Preventing or stopping violence within a school relies significantly on the training that SROs receive. There is no national standard for SRO training. Therefore, there is only a small amount of stability in how SROs are prepared to work within a school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Related Literature

The School Resource Officer Program

The School Resource Officer program is a strategy that helps schools and communities to address violence within the schools by using prevention and intervention techniques (Robinson, 2006). Having SROs on school campuses could prevent acts of violence and assist with building positive relationships with students and staff on campus. The SRO program places sworn law enforcement officers in schools to help create and maintain a safe, secure, and orderly educational setting (Robinson, 2006). If acts of violence do occur on school grounds, SROs can quickly respond to the incident (James & McCallion, 2013).

History of the SRO Program

The first school to have a sworn law enforcement officer assigned to it was in Liverpool, England, in 1951 (Farnsworth, 2015). In the United States, during the late 1950s, the concept of an SRO was first initiated in Flint, Michigan (Garrett, 2001). The comprehensive goal of the SRO program was to improve the relationship between the law enforcement agency in Flint,

Michigan, and the youth within the schools. Law enforcement officers were placed in schools at the time where they served as teachers and law-related counselors. Due to the tremendous success of the SRO program in Flint, it became a model for SRO programs across the United States.

In 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals made recommendations for all law enforcement agencies. One recommendation was for every agency to provide one presentation annually on the role of law enforcement officers within society (Robinson, 2006). Another recommendation was for every law enforcement agency that had over 400 employees, to place a full-time law enforcement officer within each middle and high school. The law enforcement officers at the schools had certain duties. Not only were they supposed to enforce the law but also counsel students and teach classes. They also had to be a resource for the staff of the school and administrators. Based on this declaration, the SRO program received their first national recognition. During the late 1990s, several high-profile school violence cases led to schools and communities investigating interventions and strategies to increase students' and staff's school safety. To address the issue, many schools placed School Resource Officers in schools permanently (Brock, Kriger, & Miro, 2018).

According to Thompson and Alvarez (2013), through grants and funding from the federal government, hiring law enforcement officers for schools became possible. President Clinton authorized a \$60 million grant to hire, and place sworn law enforcement officers in schools after the tragic shooting at Columbine High School (Addington, 2009). The Safe Schools Act of 1994 also distributed funds for security measures, which included hiring SROs in schools (Brady, Balmer, & Phenix, 2007). Providing funds for security measures has continued throughout the years, with President Obama requesting funds for hiring SROs, training school personnel on

security measures, and helping to establish a positive relationship between law enforcement agencies and the school system (Crews et al., 2013; James & McCallion, 2013). Due to the increased number of SROs within the schools over the past two decades, SROs have become an important point of discussion.

What is an SRO?

There are different ways to define what an SRO is. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines an SRO as a sworn career law enforcement officer that is employed by a law enforcement agency to work in collaboration with one or more schools (Canady, 2019). According to May and Higgins (2011), an SRO is an armed, uniformed police officer that is usually employed by a local law enforcement agency and assigned to protect one or more schools within the school district. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020), an SRO is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school or a set of schools.

Roles of an SRO

“To limit SROs to the role of law enforcement, it is not only a waste of available expertise and dwindling resources; the evidence suggests it may be detrimental to students and the basic objectives of schooling” (Thompson & Alvarez, 2-13, p. 135). Along with the various descriptions of what an SRO is, there are also various roles of an SRO. According to the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) (2017), there are four roles of an SRO. These roles include law enforcers to promote safety in and around the school, educator to teach law-related topics, informal counselor to promote positive relationships and positive behaviors, and emergency manager when it comes to developing and implementing safety plans with school administrators (COPS, 2017).

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) stated that SRO's have three roles. These roles consist of a teacher, an informal counselor, and a law enforcement officer (May & Higgins, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013; NASRO, 2020). While the National Association of School Resource Officers advocates for the SRO triad, the roles of an SRO and their duties depend on the school administration's desires and the needs of the school (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). For this study, NASRO's role of an SRO will be used given that the organization is the governing body for SROs across the United States.

According to Canady (2012), the goal of the SRO program and NASRO is to provide a safe learning environment within the schools across the country and provide valuable resources to staff within the schools. Other goals include fostering positive relationships with youth and developing strategies to resolve problems that affect the youth with the objective of protecting every child so they can reach their fullest potential. NASRO identifies the roles of an SRO as a triad concept of school-based policing. The triad divides the responsibilities of an SRO into three categories: teacher, informal counselor, and law enforcement officer.

The first component of the NASRO triad is a teacher. According to NASRO, the duties of an SRO should include teaching law-related topics to students. SROs can teach on topics that are dictated by the school curriculum and current events. The SRO also has specialized knowledge that he or she can pass to students. In turn, the student's perceptions of law enforcement officers may improve (Canady, 2012). Based on recent polls, the majority of United States citizens do not feel that law enforcement officers are held accountable for their actions and treating racial groups equally or using the right amount of force (Page, 2014). Due to this lack of trust, it diminishes the authority of police officers and creates a society that is disproportionate in which some

parents and students feel at ease with police officers while others feel skeptical of them (Friedman, 2014).

The second component of the NASRO triad is the role of a counselor. Canady states that it is crucial that students know that someone cares for them and their safety. Through the role of a counselor, SROs can learn to understand the concerns of students. They can also gain knowledge of potential threats to students and staff. SROs can offer advice as it pertains to the law to school administrators and school staff (Canady, 2012).

The final component of the NASRO triad is the role of a law enforcement officer. As an SRO, the officer is responsible for serving as a law enforcement officer in investigations that occurs on school property. The SRO may also be involved in incidents that pertain to bullying, disorderly conduct, illegal activity, weapon offenses, and drug activity. According to Gibson (2001), there are times that SROs may get involved in incidents that may be vague between the school and the student's home, such as reports of abuse. The role of an SRO is much like a community law enforcement officer. The SRO spends their time within the school community, getting to know students and being involved in their daily lives. According to Canady (2012), the presence of a positive adult role model in students' lives has a positive impact on their development. It also reduces their involvement in destructive decisions.

It is difficult to adequately describe the roles of an SRO because there is no universal standard that outlines an SRO's roles and responsibilities. However, school systems can have an SRO on campus that serves as a law enforcement officer only or an SRO that serves as a law enforcer, mentor or counselor, and teacher (Brown, 2006). As a law enforcer, an SRO supports or actively encourages safety on school grounds by addressing crime and the fear of crime. SROs serve as the liaison between the school and outside agencies. An SROs primary responsibility is

the role of a law enforcement officer. However, the key to their role within a school is that it is important to employ non-punitive techniques when it comes to interacting with students whenever possible (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020).

As a counselor or mentor, SROs serve as a helpful resource for students. Students can go to their SRO for guidance, and in turn, the SRO may be able to determine students that may be at-risk who may need some type of intervention. By interacting with students in the hallways of a school or having counseling sessions with students, SROs can serve the role of a mentor (Travis & Coon, 2005). Based on the SRO triad, SROs also serve the role of a teacher. SROs spend time within the classroom teaching topics such as drug and violence prevention, conflict resolution, and law-related topics (Thomas et al., 2013).

Previous Research on the Roles of an SRO

There have only been a few studies conducted on School Resource Officers and a smaller amount that examines the roles of SROs. A minuscule number of studies has examined the time in which is devoted to each role approach and the factors that can predict the level and frequency of the roles that are served within a school setting (Finn et al., 2005; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Travis & Coon, 2005). Finn et al. (2005) studied a total of 19 schools that had SRO programs within them. Detailed information was collected by Finn and his colleagues on the time that SROs spent on their different roles. Based on Finn et al. study, there are various factors that are based on the time that is dedicated to each role of an SRO. These factors include the amount of crime that occurs on school property, the needs of the school administration, and the total amount of experience that the SRO had.

Another study conducted by Finn and McDevitt (2005) examined the time that is spent on the roles of SROs in schools that had already had an established SRO program with schools that

just started an SRO program. Based on the results of the study, whether the SRO program was a new program or one that had been established for some time, there is no consistency with the time that is spent on the different roles of an SRO. Based on the three different components of the NASRO SRO triad, each school varied in the amount of time that was spent on each component. Based on the study results, there are no set guidelines that schools must adhere to on the amount of time that each SRO dedicates to each of the three roles (Finn et al., 2005; Finn & McDevitt, 2005).

Travis and Coon (2005) also conducted a study that assessed the roles of an SRO by surveying school principals. Based on the study results, the role of a law enforcer was what SROs spent most of their time on. However, when the roles of an SRO are broken down into individual activities, evidence shows that a considerable number of schools have SROs that perform activities for other roles. For instance, every surveyed school had SROs that use at least one activity for the law enforcer role. In terms of teaching, several schools taught the D.A.R.E. curriculum, law-related classes, and conflict resolution. In terms of mentoring, SROs guided students, helped students that had court-related matters, and referred students to resources within the community. Activities such as these were just a few of many that were carried out by the SRO within the surveyed schools. Based on the study results, it is evident that there is a difference in the activities that SROs engage in.

Based on the literature, the roles of an SRO varies broadly based on different schools and the amount of time spent on each of the roles due to differing factors. SROs, like all other officers, are different from each other. Therefore, research can be found on SROs who have enforced student misconduct more than others have. Undoubtedly, there are SROs with personalities not well suited to work with children within a school environment. It is essential for

individuals not to solely focus on isolated events that have received national media attention. Focusing on isolated events is not a reasonable way to determine the actions of SROs throughout the United States (Johnson, 2016).

It is essential to keep in mind that every state and every jurisdiction has different rules and policies for their SRO program (Devlin, 2015). Some law enforcement agencies require their SROs to teach, such as the D.A.R.E. or G.R.E.A.T. program, while other agencies limit their SROs to law enforcement only duties. School districts also vary in the amount of control that school administrators have over their SROs, such as roles and responsibilities (Johnson, 2016). These differences have a significant impact on how SROs engage in their work.

Partnerships

Law enforcement agencies and school systems work collaboratively to implement SRO programs within their district effectively. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a written agreement between local law enforcement agencies and the school system that outlines the purpose of the partnership, the framework for the operation, and each organization's responsibilities (Atkinson, 2002). According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (1999), every school is different, so it is impossible to conceive a universal plan that works for every school. As a result, the MOU can change as the need arises. SROs and school administrators must work together with developing procedures and having continuous communication with each other (Atkinson, 2002).

Training for School Resource Officer's

According to the North Carolina Justice Academy (NCJA) (2019), a School Resource Officer is defined as

“Any law enforcement officer that is assigned to one or more public schools within a local school administrative unit, as defined in General Statute 115C-5(6), who works within a school at least 20 hours per week for more than 12 weeks per calendar year. The SRO assists with school safety, school security, emergency preparedness, emergency response, and any additional responsibilities related to the school’s safety or security assigned by the officer’s employer while the officer is acting as an SRO.”

In North Carolina, the definition of an SRO outlined by the NCJA must be included in the MOUs between school systems and law enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement officers assigned the position of an SRO must complete the Basic School Resource Officer training course. The Basic School Resource Officer training course must be completed within one year after being assigned as an SRO. When an SRO receives their SRO certificate, the certificate is indefinite, provided that the SRO completes one hour of NCJA authorized SRO training yearly. The NCJA Basic School Resource Officer training course provides law enforcement officers with the skills and knowledge to perform the functions of an SRO (NCJA, 2019).

The Importance of Training

Training for law enforcement officers has been vital were many officers dealt with questionable incidents poorly due to minimal or inadequate training, as seen in 2014 with Ferguson, Missouri (Muench, 2019). According to Rosenfeld (2015), Ferguson's substandard policing was partially to blame, where law enforcement officers were not prepared to handle the situation. The incident from Ferguson demonstrated a need for law enforcement training. As with SROs, many have never had the proper training or the training opportunity, which can lead to unsatisfactory work (Martinez-Prather, McKenna, & Bowman, 2016).

Many SROs generally do not perform well for several months and even years once assigned to a school due to many law enforcement agencies that place SROs into a school setting without any formal training (Finn, Townsend, Shively, & Rich, 2005). According to Finn et al. (2005), many SROs reported that they did things inadequately or avoided doing things altogether until they were formally trained for fear of making serious mistakes that could ruin the reputation of the SRO, the school, and the law enforcement agency. Despite the importance of training, a few programs train SROs adequately before they become an SRO, while others provide no training for a year or more. In addition to the expense of training an SRO, programs often fail to provide the training in a timely manner. The delay is usually due to the training not being available locally during the period between when the SRO is selected for the position and their first day within a school.

Basic School Resource Officer Training

In North Carolina, the only training needed to become an SRO is the Basic School Resource Officer training. The School Resource Officer training class offered by the North Carolina Justice Academy is a class for all certified law enforcement officers who are currently assigned or will be assigned as an SRO. SROs in North Carolina must have the Basic SRO class within one year as an SRO. The class is a 40-hour block of instruction that provides law enforcement officers with the history and philosophy of the SRO program, along with the essential skills that are necessary to serve as an SRO (NCJA, 2019). Attendees receive instruction on school-based laws, ways to handle special needs students, and present instruction within the classroom.

The SRO training class conducted through the NCJA defines what an SRO is and discusses the history and concepts associated with the SRO program. The course also identifies

and analyzes legal concepts that apply to the authority of the SRO as it pertains to investigating crimes. The course discusses different educational system aspects, including techniques to address students within a classroom correctly. Also, in the SRO training, the term gang is defined and ways to identify methods to reduce gang-related activity. When the course is completed, law enforcement officers will be able to recognize and compare disabilities covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and be able to identify risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges that are common amongst juveniles (NCJA, 2019). There are specific community colleges in North Carolina that also provide Basic SRO training. The North Carolina Justice Academy also conducts classes related to the role of SROs, such as SRO Ethics, Advance Searches for SROs, and Solo Active Shooter Response Conditioning for Law Enforcement Officers and SROs.

There are two national organizations that are devoted exclusively to the training and professional development of SROs. These organizations include the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and Corbin and Associates. The NASRO conducts a Basic School Resource Officer course that is also a 40-hour block of instruction. The course aims to provide law enforcement officers with information regarding the SRO concept and its skills for its successful implementation. The Basic SRO course is designed for law enforcement officers and school safety professionals working in an educational environment and school administrators (NASRO, 2019). The Basic SRO course provides law enforcement officers with the tools to build positive relationships with students and the school staff. According to NASRO, the course can also benefit educational professionals dedicated to providing a safe learning environment within their schools. The course provides attendees a more in-depth understanding of an SROs roles and functions.

The course conducted through the NASRO emphasizes three main instruction areas: the law enforcement function, mentoring students, and guest speaking. According to NASRO (2019), the law enforcement function focuses on the differences between investigations on a school campus and off-campus, understanding the teen brain, and de-escalation techniques. The mentoring students' function provides SROs with the tools to be positive role models for students, including informal counseling techniques. The final area of instruction is guest speaking. Participants are instructed on various instructional techniques that include classroom management tools to provide students with law-related education (NASRO, 2019).

There are only a few differences when comparing the Basic School Resource Officer class with the NCJA and the NASRO. The NASRO Basic SRO class is for law enforcement officers and educational professionals that are dedicated to providing a safe learning environment (NASRO, 2019). The NCJA is for all certified law enforcement officers currently assigned or assigned as an SRO (NCJA, 2019). Both classes are 40-hour blocks of instruction and focus on the SRO triad, such as the role of a law enforcer, counselor, and teacher. The NCJA training also focuses on a range of history, mental health, law enforcer role, counselor role, teacher role, and presenting a presentation designed for grade school students in a practical exercise.

Insufficient Training

SRO training can vary from state to state. There is no national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO. Only a few states have established specific training or certification requirements for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The need to provide a more systematic approach to training SROs is a significant factor in terms of increasing SRO effectiveness when it comes to school safety issues (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts, & Shelnut, 2018).

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (2011) conducted a national survey from 404 law enforcement agencies within 49 states and the District of Columbia. The survey results indicated that three-quarters of the respondent states do not require training that pertains to juvenile justice for law enforcement officers other than the basic training they received during law enforcement academy. Based on the Strategies for Youth Survey (2013), state law enforcement academies reported that less than 1% of their total training is spent on juvenile justice issues such as communication techniques, behavior management, and child development. The lack of training that SROs receive is problematic, especially when interacting with students with disabilities such as emotional and behavioral disorders (Ryan et al., 2018).

An essential role of an SRO is based on crime prevention. Stopping violence within the schools relies significantly on the training that SROs receive or do not receive (Englander, 2018). Since there is no national standard for SRO training, there is little consistency in how SROs are trained to work within their schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). While SROs undergo continuing education for their job, the training that exists for SROs tends to focus on legal updates and school security. SROs need training in child development, de-escalation techniques, restorative justice, teaching and mentoring students, and mental health. SROs also need training regarding unconscious bias, precisely what it is, how it is created, and how it affects school interactions (The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2017). The lack of training is one of the contributing factors that is fueling the debate over SROs in schools. The U.S. Department of Education recommends that SROs refrain from being involved in school discipline issues. SROs that are insufficiently trained may unintentionally escalate problems and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline (Englander, 2018).

Training Topics

School leaders state that comprehensive training for SROs can mitigate many of the concerns offered by civil rights activists (Balingit et al., 2020). A primary component of being an SRO is teaching. However, unless SROs have taught the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program or the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) program, or has been an instructor in law enforcement, the SRO cannot walk into a classroom and be a competent instructor (Finn, Townsend, Shively, & Rich, 2003).

An essential role of an SRO is mentoring or counseling. Again, if SROs have not had training with mentoring or counseling students, it will be more difficult for them to be effective. Without any training, a small number of SROs realize in advance the central role mentoring plays in being an SRO until later. As a result, the SROs are highly unlikely to be prepared to help students that may need assistance. It is crucial that SROs also know how to work collaboratively with school administrators (Lopez, 2019). Before an SRO begins their duty, they need to know how to deal with two administrators: the school and the other as the law enforcement agency.

There are other topics that SROs need to be trained in, such as child psychology and child development (Shaver & Decker, 2017). As an SRO, it is essential to know the psychological and physiological changes that children go through. It is also vital for SROs to know how to prepare safe school plans. According to Finn et al. (2003), school administrators need help from their SRO(s) to ensure that an effective crisis prevention and management system is in place for their school and that the campus is environmentally secure.

Theriot (2013) stated that additional training is needed to develop collaborative partnerships between SROs and teachers. For example, SROs, school administrators, and teachers should have a detailed plan in place on how to handle disruptive students effectively.

There should also be a clear articulation of school administrators and teacher's expectations from the SRO intervention. Arresting a student should be the least preferred outcome when handling a disruptive student. There should be an agreement with the school administration, the teacher, and the SRO in that scenario.

According to the U. S. Department of Education (2014), SROs should receive a list of training objectives that mirrors the school's written policies and covers how to distinguish between infractions and major threats before working in a school. The U. S. Department of Education also suggests that SROs receive training on crisis management, de-escalation techniques, conflict resolution, and developmentally appropriate responses. Other topics include cultural responsiveness and institutional bias, civil rights laws, child and adolescent development, disabilities, and special education issues. It is essential that SROs are given information on restorative justice practices and how to refer students to outside resources that have experienced trauma or violence.

United States Education System

The education system in the United States is unlike that of any other country. The U.S. Federal government contributes a small number of finances to the national education budget (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina, 2016). The majority of funding is the responsibility of the state and local government. Each state has its own education department that oversees laws regulating finances, the hiring of school personnel, student attendance, and the curriculum taught (Napitupulu & Shinoda, 2014). In most states, the education system is divided into local school districts managed by the school board. Schools within the United States have tended to reflect the communities' educational values and financial capabilities in which they are located (Bunker, n.d.). Since this study will be conducted by SROs in elementary, middle, and high schools, a

brief overview of the functions of each level of school will be discussed. A small amount of research has been conducted on the role of SROs, and fewer studies have focused on the difference in SRO roles between elementary, middle, and high schools.

Elementary School

The first years of mandatory schooling are known as elementary or primary school. Elementary school starts at the age of five. To qualify for kindergarten, a child must be the age of five on or before the cut-off date to attend a school that year. Elementary school is co-educational, meaning that males and females are in the same classes. Elementary school is usually attended from the ages of 5 or 6 until the students go on to middle school. In some school districts, students attend elementary school until they reach the age of where they will attend high school (Bunker, n.d.).

The elementary school curriculum varies with the organization and the educational aims of individual schools and their communities. To promote to the next grade level is based on a student's achievements of specified skills. There are exceptional circumstances where a child is required to repeat a year. Elementary schools provide instruction in reading, writing, history, mathematics, art, science, music, crafts, and physical education. Foreign languages are also being introduced in an elementary setting (Myles, 2017). Students in elementary school are usually given homework. However, the workload is much lighter than in middle and high school.

In some high schools, when SROs are assigned to school campuses, there has been a reported increase in student behaviors. Due to the reported increase, school leaders in elementary schools are experimenting with SROs, hoping that socialization at an early age can prevent behavior problems in middle and high school (Chen, 2019). School leaders believe that teaching children at a young age the benefits of law enforcement officers will translate into positive

attitudes towards SROs during adolescence and adulthood. Many community leaders and school administrators believe that reaching out to elementary school children can foster a better relationship with law enforcement officers in the future. When showcasing the positive relationships between law enforcement and students, elementary schools hope to reduce the criminal tendencies that arise in adolescence.

Middle School

Middle School, also known as junior high school, is for children aged 11 to 14. Middle schools are also co-educational, like elementary schools. Middle school students must take certain core curriculum classes for a certain number of years deemed by the state. These core curriculum classes included science, English, health, physical education, mathematics, and social studies. In addition to mandatory subjects, students must take electives. Electives supplement a student's future and career plans.

High School

High school, also known as senior high school, is for students aged 14 to 18. High schools are often much more massive than middle school. Like middle school, students must take core curriculum classes along with electives. Students are offered a broad range of subjects in high school where students can choose a program leading to a college entrance or a career in business or industry. The courses that are offered can vary from school to school. They are also listed in school curriculum guides.

Students will receive counseling during their first year of high school as they begin to plan their careers and select practical subjects within their chosen fields (Bunker, n.d.). Student counseling continues throughout their high school years and even into college. Students who plan to go on to college can elect courses emphasizing social sciences, higher mathematics,

academic sciences, advanced English literature, composition, and foreign languages. When students complete the 12th grade with a satisfactory completion, they will graduate and receive their high school diploma.

Benefits of SROs

There are many benefits to having SROs in public schools. Having SROs in schools can improve the relationship between law enforcement officers and youth as well as improve the image of the law enforcement officer. According to Finn (2006), having SROs in schools will improve the law enforcement agency's reputation in the community and allow for more free time for patrol officers since they do not have to answer calls within the schools. According to Jones (2014), an SRO can be seen as a person that enhances the physical security of the school and an essential member of the school community who can create beneficial relationships with students and staff. When SROs establish these relationships and act as positive role models, the students that interact with the SRO are more likely to report issues and crime, and in turn, the SRO shares the information with school personnel (May et al., 2012).

Having SROs within the schools can have a positive impact on students. According to Herreras (2013), SROs often fill roles similar to a school staff member, such as a coach or a mentor. There is evidence that SROs can build great relationships with students. For example, a North Carolina SRO achieved positive student outcomes when the SRO went above the call of duty to coach a middle school basketball team when no one else was available (Mitchell, 2018). SRO programs allow law enforcement officers to act as instructors within the classroom by giving presentations on law-related material or gang education (Darst, 2010). Having law enforcement officers within a school may also help improve student behavior, which can also improve student safety, the performance of the student, and public education perception (Ramey,

2004). Having an SRO within the school may also deter student violence. Students may be less inclined to commit crimes at school if they know that a law enforcement officer is present on campus (Herreras, 2013). Regarding school safety, SROs can also be an essential preventive or mitigating asset (Daniels et al., 2010).

Building Relationships

The role of an SRO goes beyond the security of a school. Most of the day, SROs interact with students. This interaction can decrease a student's fear of law enforcement officers and build upon the SRO's ability to act as counselors or mentors. Students are more likely to report issues and seek guidance from an SRO if a positive rapport is built between the SRO and the students (Barnes, 2016).

Theriot (2016) conducted a study on the feelings of students based on their SROs. Theriot examined 1,956 students within one school district. The results of the study were problematic. The students who interacted with SROs showed evidence that their attitudes toward the SRO positively influenced their interactions, but those same students showed more minor school connectedness levels than students with less or no interactions. Theriot's study concluded that any number of SRO interactions contributed to a student's more positive feelings about SROs. This conclusion suggests that the more interactions a student has with the SRO, the more likely the student believes that the SRO is fair, helpful, and contributes to the school's safety.

Controversy of SROs

The existing research on SROs has revealed numerous inconsistencies. The SRO program has been scrutinized for discipline for minor infractions, excessive force, increased student arrests, and higher involvement with students (Pigott et al., 2018). According to McKenna et al. (2017), SRO role ambiguity may contribute to the contradicting expectations of school

administrators, teaching staff, and community members. Research has also been conducted on how SROs contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Many civil rights activists want to remove SROs from schools because they believe they contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. According to Cole (2019), the school-to-prison pipeline is when students are pushed out of the schools and into prison. Cole goes on to state that it is a process of criminalizing students carried out by disciplinary policies and practices within the schools in which students have contact with law enforcement officers. When students encounter SROs for disciplinary reasons, they are often pushed out of the educational environment and into the juvenile justice system.

Several different policies and practices have been created that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Zero-tolerance policies are one practice that mandates harsh punishments for both minor and major infractions (Cole, 2019). Zero-tolerance policies also mandate students' exclusion through suspensions and expulsions and having a law enforcement presence on campus (Feld, 2017). Two fundamental forces produced and maintained the school-to-prison pipeline. These two forces include SROs on school campuses along with zero-tolerance policies. These policies and practices became common in the 1990s after several deadly school shootings in the United States. Lawmakers and educators believed that zero-tolerance policies and SROs would help ensure students and staff's safety on school campuses. Having a zero-tolerance policy means that the school has zero-tolerance for misbehaving or when school rules are violated. It does not matter how minor the incident is, whether unintentional or subjectively defined (Cole, 2019).

In addition to zero-tolerance policies, it is common practice for schools to report students' misbehavior to the school SRO. When an SRO is present on a school campus, it will most likely mean that the students will have contact with law enforcement at an early age. The purpose of SROs is to protect the students within the school and ensure the safety of the school campus. However, SROs are called upon to handle disciplinary issues that may escalate minor, non-violence infractions into violent, criminal incidents that may have a negative impact on students (Cole, 2019). According to Owens (2016), by studying the distribution of federal funding for SROs and the rates of school-related arrests, the study concluded that the presence of an SRO on school campuses causes law enforcement agencies to learn of more crimes and increases the likelihood of arrest for those crimes among children under the age of 15.

Why are zero-tolerance policies and SROs associated with making students more likely to commit crimes and end up in prison? Labeling theory states that the official deviance label promotes the development of deviant self-meanings (Kroska, Lee, & Carr, 2017). By applying this theory to the school-to-prison pipeline, it suggests that being labeled as the “*bad*” child by school authorities or the SRO and being treated in a way that reflects that label, ultimately leads children to internalize the label and behave in ways that make it real through action (Cole, 2019).

The sociological concept of socialization also sheds light on why the pipeline exists (Mahoney-Davies, Robert-Collins, Russell, & Loades, 2017). When children are in school, it is the second most important socialization site for children and adolescents. School is where students can learn social norms for behavior and interaction and receive moral guidance from authority figures (Cole, 2019). When youth are removed from school due to discipline issues, it takes them out of an impressionable or developmental environment. Students are also removed from the safety and structure that the school provides. According to Lee (2006), when students

act out at school, they may be acting out due to conditions within the home. When students are removed from the school and returned to an unsupervised home, it can hurt the child instead of helping them. When a child is placed at home due to a suspension, the child is more likely to spend time with other students that may have been removed from the school for similar reasons. Rather than being socialized at school, they are now being socialized by peers in similar situations.

When students are excluded from school, they find themselves stigmatized by their teachers, parents, friends, and other community members (Mitchell, 2015). Students can experience anger, stress, depression, and confusion due to being excluded from school and treated unfairly. This exclusion makes it difficult to focus on school. These social forces can negatively label youth and push them into the criminal justice system.

Data collected in the United States that illustrates punishment and school-related arrests show a racial disparity in incarceration that begins with the school-to-prison pipeline (Cole, 2019). According to Welch and Payne (2010), research shows that schools that are underfunded and that have a large Black population are more likely to have zero-tolerance policies in place. Across the country, American Indian and Black students face higher suspension and expulsion rates than students that are Caucasian (U.S Department of Education, 2014). Losen (2014) stated that even though there exists no definitive evidence that American Indian and Black students misbehave more frequently or more severely than students that are Caucasian, research indicates that school staff punishes those students more, especially students that are Black. One study found that the disparity is most significant among non-serious offenses such as dress code violations and the use of cell phones (Losen, 2014).

Due to the connection between suspensions and the criminal justice system, it is no surprise that Black and Hispanic students comprise 70% of those who face referral to law enforcement and school-related arrests (Cole, 2019). Once Black and Hispanic students have made some type of contact with the criminal justice system, students are less likely to finish high school. The evidence embedded in the school-to-prison pipeline is a significant factor in producing the reality that Black and Hispanic students are far less likely than their white peers to complete high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

SROs operate outside of any central or federally imposed training standards, meaning that many have little to no training for dealing with youth (The Best Schools, 2020). Youth rights activists and federal officials argue that SROs lack the proper training needed to interact effectively with children, especially students who are black, Hispanic, or disabled (Keierleber, 2015). If SROs are adequately trained, it might prevent the effects of the school-to-prison pipeline.

Conflicting Roles

A suitable role of a law enforcement officer within a school setting appears to be inconsistent across the United States (Barnes, 2016; Coon & Travis, 2012; McKenna & White, 2017). Several conflicts are revealed in the existing research. The SRO program has been highly scrutinized for reasons such as excessive force, increased student arrests, students' discipline for minor infractions by SROs, and increased levels of involvement by SROs with students (Pigott, Stearns, & Khey, 2018). According to Theriot (2009), legal scholars and criminologists argue that SROs have substantially increased student arrests.

Role ambiguity of SROs may contribute to the contradicting expectations parents, administrators, teachers, and community members have for SROs (McKenna et al., 2017). The

expectations placed on SROs may also influence the SRO's response to situations involving students' misconduct. The expectations of the SRO from the law enforcement agency and the school may contribute to role conflict due to different philosophies (McKenna et al., 2017).

School Disciplinarian

Throughout the country, there is inconsistency with having a clear understanding of the roles of an SRO. According to Barnes (2016), enforcing school policies and procedures is not included in the role of an SRO, although some school personnel believes that SROs should intervene when students refuse to remove their hoodie or some other minor discipline issues. SROs must establish a rapport with students. These frequent interactions can assist the SRO with building relationships. In turn, students are more comfortable with reporting concerns. Barnes (2106) states that educating school personnel on the appropriate use of the SRO can contribute to the success of the SRO program. It is also vital to the success of the SRO program to select an SRO that can easily relate to the students at the school (Weiler & Cray, 2011).

Reporting Student Crime

When SROs are tasked with enforcing daily discipline within the school(s) they serve, there is an increase in criminalized traditional school disciplinary infractions (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts, & Shelnut, 2018). Since having officers within the school system, there has been an unintended effect with increased opportunity for negative interactions between SROs and students (Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Pigott et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2018). In 2013, Na et al. (2013) conducted a study that examined school administrators from 3,000 public schools. The study results concluded that the percentage of crime reported is higher in schools with at least one full-time SRO or law enforcement officer. The study also concluded that student consequences were much harsher when an SRO was present within the school for all reported

crimes.

Excessive Force

The critics of SRO programs argue that disciplinary actions that school administrators once handled are often resulting in the arrest of students and being introduced into the criminal justice system (Zalatoris, 2015). If minor disciplinary infractions are consistently referred to the SRO, the power is taken away from the school administrators and educators within the school (Na et al., 2013). When a student misbehaves within the classroom, the teacher decides whether to handle the issue themselves or call for a school administrator or an SRO. Critics argue that when you give a teacher the discretion to call the SRO in on a discipline issue, they make a mistake that can lead to a lifelong consequence for the student (Kentworthy, 2016). For example, when the SRO is involved in a discipline issue, it may lead to an arrest. An arrest is often an indication that students will likely drop out of school and become part of the criminal justice system (Kentworthy, 2016).

Lack of Counselors

Counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses are often the first person that a student seeks out when they are sick or have experienced trauma. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2017), the suicide rate for children between the ages of 10-17 has increased by 70% between 2006 and 2016. Critics of the SRO program argue that school systems are fund SROs in schools over counselors and mental health. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) (2018), three million students in the United States are in schools with SROs but no nurses. Also, ten million students are in schools with no social workers.

Student Rights

Critics of SRO programs argue that the rights of students and civil liberties are blurred.

When school administrators are initiating an investigation of an incident by a student, it is generally agreed upon that the school administration and educators can question, investigate, and perform limited searches of the student's property such as a locker or backpack with the student present and given reasonable cause (Pigott et al., 2018). When the SRO becomes involved in the investigation, the judicial system has ruled that if an SRO is a school employee, they do not have to give Miranda warning, but if they are a law enforcement officer, they must, which creates a lack of clarity. Some issues may arise when school districts consider SROs as school employees and other school districts do not. This can confuse students, parents, and school administrators (Pigott et al., 2018).

The Disproportionality of Minority Youth and Special Education Youth

Between 2013-2014, public schools in the United States saw a 17% growth rate in school-based referrals to SROs (Blad, 2019). According to ACLU (2018), schools with SROs report 3.5 times as many arrests as schools without law enforcement officers regularly. Black students are 2.3 times more likely to be arrested for a school-related crime than White students (Jordan, 2016). The Office of Civil Rights (2014) reported that although students that are black represent 15% of the student population, they make up 35% of the students that are suspended from school once, 44% that are suspended more than once, and 36% of students that are expelled. The Office of Civil Rights (2014) also reported that 50% of all student arrests are Hispanic or African American.

North Carolina School Resource Officer's

In North Carolina, there have been several studies conducted on SROs. Fabrey (2002) conducted a study to investigate the experiences of SROs in middle schools in western North Carolina. Qualitative methods were used for gathering and analyzing data. In-depth interviews of

the SRO were recorded, transcribed, and utilized in data analysis. The study results showed that although differences exist at each middle school, SROs share similar experiences, hold similar expectations, and offer comparable feelings about working within a middle school in western North Carolina.

In 2006, Stumpf conducted a study to determine the established level of rapport between high school principals in North Carolina and SROs from the principal's perspective. The participants for the study included 112 high school principals who rated their perception of the SRO and the SRO program. Based on the study results, the coastal region's principals had the most favorable responses, followed by the mountain and piedmont regions. The amount of training that the principal received also affected the level of rapport, as did the school's size. Larger schools reported more favorably of SROs. The principals also displayed more positive ratings toward the SRO in their schools than the SRO program in general. The difference between the principal's SRO ratings in their school and the SRO program diminished the more extended the SRO was placed at the school. Overall, the principals were pleased with the SRO program and their SRO. The study results imply a greater need for principal training about the SRO and the SRO program. Also, SROs need to be assigned to schools for more extended periods.

Streater (2008) conducted a study in North Carolina to compare the differences between urban and rural high school principals' perceptions of SRO's and their effect on school climate. A total of 50 high school principals were sampled from 25 urban and 25 rural settings. The participants were queried in a survey regarding their perceptions of SRO's effect on school climate in traditional public high schools. Based on Streater's research, there were several implications pertaining to the effect that SROs are making on the climate of a school in

connection to the five related spheres of influence. Streater's study could help educational leaders and law enforcement officers select SRO's and their practical and appropriate utilization.

Another study conducted in North Carolina focuses on the administration of the SRO program. Barnes (2016) conducted a study of in-person interviews of a sample of SROs in North Carolina to ascertain their opinions and comments regarding the program's administration. The interviews that were conducted gave the researcher information on the program's daily operations and the program's inner workings that may contribute to its impact on the safety of the school. Barnes selected twenty-five public secondary schools randomly from the state directory of schools. Of the twenty-five SROs that were contacted, Barnes was able to secure twelve interviews.

Based on the study's findings, some SROs stated that their school personnel do not understand the role of an SRO in their school (Barnes, 2016). Some responding SROs believe that school employees utilized them improperly, especially when enforcing school policies and procedures. SROs concurred that a significant part of the school staff does not understand police authority. SROs also stated that they spent too much time and energy when it came to managing school infractions. Barnes (2016) stated that even though a law enforcer's role was the SRO's primary responsibility, the surveyed respondents agreed that school personnel expected them to handle school matters and that teachers had relinquished their disciplinary role. While SROs are not authorized to handle school discipline, the interviewed officers stated that a significant part of the work of an SRO included these issues.

The surveyed SROs stated that a significant part of their day consisted of building relationships with students and staff. Building positive relationships with youth in the schools provide the foundation for the SRO's counseling role. Overall, the surveyed SROs reported that

having a uniformed law enforcement officer stationed on campus created a safer environment necessary for learning and that their presence was a deterrent to disorder and criminal activity.

In 2018, McDonald conducted a study to examine the long-term and short-term suspension and expulsion rates for Black and White males and Black and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts in the southeastern United States. The researcher collected fourteen years of suspension and expulsion data from 2004 to 2017. The data were collected to examine trends in the rates. The data was then analyzed to determine any differences in the pattern of suspensions and expulsions before and after the full implementation of the SRO program in 2006. The study results indicated that both short-term and long-term suspension rates within the three districts decreased in 2004. However, there was no indication of a significant increase or decrease before or after SROs were placed in the school system. While all groups of student's suspension rates decreased, Black males had the highest short and long-term suspension rates across all years compared to all other groups. Black males were also expelled from school across all the years, but there was variability across the three school districts studied, with one reporting almost no expulsion data for students.

Summary

In order to understand what the SRO program is, it is essential to understand the history of the SRO program. The review of the literature discussed the theoretical framework which focuses on the correlation between the roles of an SRO and the safety of a school. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, humans are motivated by five levels of needs. These needs include physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1945). Once our physiological needs are met, our safety needs are next. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is relevant to the safety needs of the school community. When threats

are made to a school, the school's emotional safety is often destroyed (Surface, 2011). Security measures within a school and staff development in emergency operation procedures are specifically designed to ensure students' and staff's safety, thus meeting the hierarchy's safety needs.

The literature review also discussed what is known about the SRO program. To adequately understand the SRO program, it is essential to understand its history, what an SRO is, and their roles. Based on previous studies, there appears to be a lack of comprehension of the specific roles of an SRO and what an SRO is. It is difficult to adequately describe the roles of an SRO because there is no universal definition that outlines the roles and responsibilities of an SRO. A suitable role of an SRO within a school setting appears to be inconsistent throughout the United States (Barnes, 2016; Coon & Travis, 2012; McKenna & White, 2017). To effectively utilize SROs in North Carolina, it is essential to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina within a school environment.

This literature review also discussed what is known about the training of an SRO. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. The literature review discussed the importance of training, Basic SRO training, insufficient training, and training topics. Many SROs have never had the proper training or the training opportunity, which can lead to unsatisfactory work within the school (Martinez-Prather, McKenna, & Bowman, 2016). Few SRO programs train SROs adequately before becoming an SRO, while others provide no training for as long as a year or more. The training of SRO's can vary from state to state. There is no national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO. There are only a few states that have instituted specific training for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Ryan,

Katsiyannis, Counts, and Shelnut (2018), the need for a systematic approach to training for SROs is a significant component in increasing SRO effectiveness as a solution to school safety issues.

The literature review presented a brief discussion of the United States' educational system, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Since this study will be conducted by SROs in elementary, middle, and high schools, I felt the need to provide a brief overview of the functions of each level of school. The education system in the United States is unlike that of any other country. Schools within the United States have tended to reflect the communities' educational values along with the financial capabilities in which they are located (Bunker, n.d.). The benefits and controversy of SROs are also discussed in this literature review. There are many benefits to having SROs in school. Having SROs in schools can improve the relationship between law enforcement officers and youth. An SRO is not only seen as a person that enhances the school's physical security but also as a crucial member within a school who can create beneficial relationships with students and staff (Jones, 2014). When SROs establish a rapport with students and act as a positive role model, the students that interact with the SRO are more likely to report issues and crime, and in turn, the SRO shares the information with school personnel (May et al., 2012).

Along with the benefits of SROs, there are many controversies with the SRO program. Recent events dealing with the use of force by law enforcement officers has school districts severing its ties with local law enforcement agencies. Many parents, along with advocacy groups, have questioned whether the presence of SROs in schools is more of a threat than a form of protection (Goldstein, 2020). Many civil rights activists want to remove SROs from schools because they believe that they contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Based on the literature review, the existing research on SROs has revealed numerous inconsistencies. Studies that have

been conducted on SROs in North Carolina are discussed in the literature review. The studies conducted in North Carolina focus on the experiences of SROs, the level of rapport between the SRO and principal, and suspensions and expulsions of students in relation to the presence of SROs. Other studies include experiences of SROs in middle school, SROs regarding the administration of the program, and finally, SRO's and their effect on school climate.

The limited amount of research that does exist on the roles of SROs shows inconsistencies. Due to the limited amount of research that has been conducted in North Carolina and the small amount of research conducted on the training that SROs receive, this study will contribute to the gap in research focusing on what skills and abilities are needed for SROs to be effective in North Carolina. More specifically, this study will answer how SROs in North Carolina describe their role within the schools they serve. This study will also address the training SROs receive before being placed within a school and their training while being an SRO. The perceptions SROs will be addressed on the training that they need in order to be effective within the school(s) they serve. It is important that school districts and law enforcement agencies have precise training requirements for SROs and a clear understanding of an SRO's role.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. According to Saha (2008), perception is a powerful occurrence as individuals usually act based on their perceptions. In time, perception will convert into reality. The perceptions of SROs can shape the working environment's climate and effectiveness (Otara, 2011). When SROs and school leaders have differing perceptions about their roles and training, it can become challenging to accomplish meaningful objectives (Saha, 2008) and be effective within the schools they serve. The lack of distinctly defined roles of SROs and vague perception of their roles and responsibilities on school grounds may affect morale and may also lead to underperformance by the SRO (Otara, 2011). Therefore, SROs within a school district needs to have clearly defined roles and training to succeed within the schools they serve.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and procedures used for this study. A total of seven sections will be used to present the procedures that the researcher will use in conducting this study: (a) design; (b) research questions; (c) hypothesis; (d) participants and setting; (e) the instrumentation; (f) procedures; (g) and data analysis.

Design

For this quantitative study, a survey utilizing different measurement scales was employed. Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data in order to describe or explain a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2005; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). It also examines the relationship among variables in order to test a hypothesis (Creswell, 2014).

The goal of using quantitative research is to remain as objective as possible. Quantitative studies are generally specific and narrow. A common data collection method will be used for this study, known as survey methodology, from a voluntary sample design. Survey methodology inquires, measures population responses, and analyzes responses based on statistical patterns found in numerical data (Quick & Hall, 2015; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Survey methodology was chosen for this study to study a population, such as SROs, and gain responses from a sample of SROs.

A voluntary sample design is a sample of qualifying respondents who are willing to participate in the survey (Murairwa, 2015). Jupp (2011) defined voluntary sampling as:

“a form of case selection which is purposive rather than based on the principles of random or probability sampling. It usually involves individuals who agree to participate in research, sometimes for payment.”

The rationale for using volunteer sampling for this study is that the responding participants are willing to participate in the study, and they do not feel coerced in any way. The participating group of SROs will be administered a survey with a set of carefully designed questions so that the researcher can gather information about their perceptions of training and roles.

Research Questions

After examining current literature on SROs, there is a limited amount of research conducted on the training of SROs and their roles. This study will answer the following research questions:

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

For all school districts and law enforcement agencies, it is crucial to have precise training requirements for SROs and a clear understanding of the role of SROs so they may be successful within the school(s) they serve.

Hypotheses

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

H₁= The number of SROs that did not receive training prior to being placed in a school does exceed the number of SROS that did receive training prior to being placed in a school.

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

H₁= Responding SROs do believe that additional training is needed in order to be successful in the schools they serve.

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the mentor role.

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the educator role.

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the law enforcement officer role.

Researcher's Role

I began my law enforcement career in 2002. In 2007, I was assigned to the School Resource Officer division within my department. I was placed in a school with no training pertaining to juveniles, school campuses, or the role of an SRO. At that time, I thought I would serve as a law enforcement officer, not aware of the other roles pertaining to an SRO. After a

year of being an SRO, I was sent to my first formal training, the Basic School Resource Officer class. Having spent 14 years of my career as an SRO, I noticed that an SRO's role was undefined and that many SROs are assigned to schools with little or no training. This paved the way for this exploratory study.

As the researcher, I am aware of is the positive experiences I have had with the School Resource Officer program in North Carolina. To reduce this bias, I will make sure I am asking non-leading questions in my survey (Sullivan & Artino, 2017). The questions will be formatted so that the individuals who were being interviewed will have the ability to express different aspects, whether positive or negative, of the SRO training program

Participants and Setting

The participants for the study will be drawn from a total population sample in the state of North Carolina. The participants in this research will include sworn law enforcement officers that serve as an SRO full-time in North Carolina. According to Crossman (2020), a researcher chooses total population sampling to examine the entire population with one or more common characteristics. The total population sample technique is most often used to generate reviews of experiences. This type of sampling is common when studying groups within larger populations. The reason for using total population sample is that SROs in North Carolina have the exact attributes such as their occupation, and I can get a deeper insight into their training needs and roles.

As the researcher, I employed a voluntary response sample by choosing the participants and contacting the SRO association. The SRO association is a non-profit organization that helps provide SROs with support and education to protect every student so they can reach their fullest potential in a safe learning environment. To ensure the confidentiality of the association, a

pseudonym name was given. I emailed a recruitment letter to the SRO association seeking participants for the study (see Appendix C and G). After reviewing the documents, the president of the SRO association permitted me to email him the consent form along with the survey link (see Appendix B). I also emailed an information sheet describing the purpose of the research (see Appendix A and F). The president of the SRO association distributed the email to the regional representatives in North Carolina. The region representatives then emailed the consent form along with the survey link attached to all the SROs in North Carolina on their email list. Due to the region representatives distributing the survey, there is an unknown number of emails containing the sent study.

A total of 53 SROs responded to the online survey through Qualtrics XM. There were 45 males and eight females that responded to the study, with 45 participants being Caucasian, five were African American, one was Pacific Islander, one Hispanic, and one mixed race. There was a total of 31 SROs that worked in K-8 schools, while 14 worked in high school, and eight worked in all grade levels.

Instrumentation

This study's research instrumentation was a quantitative survey (Appendix E) that was administered to full-time SROs in North Carolina. The estimated time to complete the survey was approximately 10-15 minutes. There was a total of 15 questions that were self-administered via electronic format. All the survey responses were strictly confidential. The president of the SRO association reviewed the survey and permitted the researcher to conduct the study. The president of the SRO association sent an email to all the regional representatives in North Carolina to distribute to all the SROs in North Carolina that included an informed consent with the survey link attached.

The researcher created the instrument using training classes from the North Carolina Justice Academy and the National Association of School Resource Officers training. The NASRO triad model is represented in the survey, with mentor, educator, and law enforcement officer being included in the dimensions. The survey instrument was divided into two dimensions: training and roles. The survey also included demographic information such as gender, race, the number of years as an SRO, and years as a law enforcement officer.

Questions 1-8 focused on the training of SROs. SRO training can vary from state to state. There is no national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO. Only a few states have established specific training or certification requirements for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The need for a more systematic approach to training SROs is a significant factor in increasing their effectiveness as a solution to school safety issues (Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts, & Shelnut, 2018). Question 9-12 focused on the roles of SROs. While the NASRO advocates for the SRO triad, the roles of an SRO and their duties depend on the school administration's desires and the school's needs (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). Questions 13-15 included demographic information such as how long they were assigned to the SRO position and how long they had been an SRO.

The majority of the survey questions consisted of different measurement scales, including ordinal, nominal, and fill-in-the-blank. Ordinal questions consisted of a five-point Likert scale that ranged from Definitely Yes to Definitely No and Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Nominal questions consisted of Yes and No answers, while other questions were fill in the blank. Efforts that demonstrate statistical significance will be included based upon the above-mentioned types of questions.

Survey methodology was chosen for this study to study a population, such as SROs, and

gain responses from a sample of SROs in North Carolina. Survey methodology is a systematic method for gathering information from participants to describe the attributes of the larger population of which the participants are members of (Enanoria, 2005). The attributes attempt to describe the experiences of a population. Survey research has been used as a research tool since the 19th century to understand or describe society. Survey methodology seeks to link the principles of design, collection, processing, and analysis of surveys to understand the error (University of Michigan, 2021). Survey methodology has been used in numerous studies (Massey, 2002; Burton, 2009; Jordan, 2013; Heintz, 2020).

Procedures

The first step in this quantitative study was to secure IRB approval. The IRB is a group that reviews and monitors biomedical research that involves protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects. Without the approval of IRB, this study could not be conducted. Once I received IRB approval (see Appendix D), I began the study. There was no pilot study conducted. I emailed a recruitment letter to the president of the SRO association (see Appendix C). The recruitment letter explained the purpose of the study, the criteria for volunteer participants, and the compensation for participating in the study. After reviewing the documents, the president of the SRO association gave me permission to email him the information sheet (Appendix A) describing the details of the study and the consent form along with the survey link (see Appendix B).

The president of the SRO association distributed the email to the regional representatives in North Carolina. The region representatives then emailed the consent form along with the survey link attached. Due to the region representatives distributing the survey, an unknown amount of survey emails was sent. Qualtrics XM is the data collection tool used for this study to

collect and analyze the data from the survey. Qualtrics XM is a data collection tool used to listen to stakeholders and then use that knowledge to improve experiences.

Data Analysis

For this study, I adopted a quantitative approach by using a survey administered to full-time SROs in North Carolina. The rationale for using a survey is that it allows me to conduct an analysis of the data. Survey research is used:

“To answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context.” (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p.136)

For this study, I am using statistical procedures that are consistent with my research questions, hypothesis, and the type of data collected. The findings of this study were analyzed using Qualtrics XM that lets you statistically analyze your response data and allows researchers to identify trends and produce predictive models. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the survey data.

This research helps develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. The research questions, along with the hypotheses, reflect the research topic. The research questions and hypotheses are presented below:

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

H₁= The number of SROs that did not receive training prior to being placed in a school does exceed the number of SROs that did receive training prior to being placed in a school.

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROs on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

H₁= Responding SROs do believe that additional training is needed in order to be successful in the schools they serve.

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the mentor role.

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the educator role.

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

H₁= More than half of the SROs that complete the survey will report the importance of the law enforcement officer role.

Summary

Chapter Three described the research design and the procedures used for the study. This quantitative study was completed using a survey instrument to gather information from a total population sample of SROs in North Carolina. Qualtrics XM is the data collection tool that was used to collect and analyze the data. In Chapter Four, the data analysis and descriptive statistics are presented.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop a better understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of this study. A total of four sections will be used to discuss the findings: (a) research questions; (b) null hypothesis; (c) descriptive statistics; (d) and results.

Research Questions

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

Null Hypotheses

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

H_0 = the number of SROs that did not receive training prior to being placed in a school does not exceed the number of SROS that did receive training prior to being placed in a school.

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

H_0 = Responding SROs do not believe that additional training is needed in order to be successful in the schools they serve.

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the mentor role.

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the educator role.

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the law enforcement officer role.

Descriptive Statistics

Survey Response Rate

The survey instrument contained questions that were intended to produce specific demographic data about SROs in North Carolina. These questions included questions about the length of time as an SRO and law enforcement officer, highest education level, and school assignment type. Tables 1 and 2 shows the results.

The president of the SRO association distributed the email that contained the consent form along with the survey link through Qualtrics XM to the regional representatives in North Carolina. The regional representatives then emailed the consent form and the survey link to all the SROs in North Carolina on their email list. Due to the regional representatives distributing the survey, an unknown amount of survey emails was sent. As a result, a total of 55 surveys were started through Qualtrics XM, with a total of 53 surveys completed. Therefore, a total of 53 SROs in North Carolina was included in the study data analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The population for this study consisted of 55 sworn law enforcement officers in the state of North Carolina that serves as an SRO full-time. Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 identified the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Both tables include both personal and professional information. The first question asked the participants their gender. As Table 1.1 shows, 85% ($n=45$) of the 53 SROs were male, while 15% ($n=8$) were female. Question 2 asks

the responding SROs what their age is. The age of the responding SROs varied from ages 21-71. According to the responding participants, 8% ($n=4$) of SROs were between the age of 21-31, 28% ($n=15$) between the ages of 32-41, 34% ($n=18$) between the ages of 42-51, 25% ($n=13$) between the ages of 52-61, and 6% ($n=3$) between the ages of 62-71.

Question 3 asked the respondents to identify what their race or ethnicity is. 9% ($n=5$) were African American SROs, 85% ($n=45$) were Caucasian SROs, 2% ($n=1$) were Pacific Islander SROs, 2% ($n=1$) were Hispanic SROs, and 2% ($n=1$) were of another race. Question 4 inquired about the level of higher education earned by the responding SROs in North Carolina. 51% ($n=27$) of responding SROs reported they did not have a higher education degree, while 49% ($n=26$) did. Question 5 inquired about the type of school that the responding SROs worked at. A total of 59% ($n=31$) of SROs worked in a school with grade levels between K-8. A total of 26% ($n=14$) worked in a high school, with 15% ($n=8$) working in all school levels or other.

Table 1.2 also summarizes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. For example, Question 6 of the demographic questions asked the SROs what type of law enforcement agency they are employed by. 55% ($n=29$) of deputies work with the sheriff's office, and 40% ($n=21$) of officer's work with the police department. There was a total of 6% ($n=3$) of officers that the school police department employed. Table 2 also included how the responding SROs were assigned to their school. A total of 80% ($n=41$) of responding SROs had requested the position of an SRO, while 20% ($n=10$) were assigned to the position.

Question 8 of the demographic questions inquired about the total number of hours a week spent on a school campus by the responding participants is illustrated. A total of 2% ($n=1$) of SROs stated that they spent between 1-19 hours per week on campus. Another 2% ($n=1$) of SROs stated that they spent 20-29 hours on a school campus. Thus, 96% ($n=51$) of SROs spent

more than 30 hours on campus or requested time on campus. Question 9 inquires whether the responding participants had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place at their school. There was a total of 94% ($n=50$) of SROs that stated that they do have an MOU in place at their school, while 4% ($n=2$) of SROs stated that they did not have an MOU in place, and 2% ($n=1$) of SROs was unsure if their school did or not.

Table 1.3 also summarizes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. For example, Question 10 asks responding SROs the total number of schools that each SRO is assigned to. A total of 55 SROs responded with 76% ($n=42$) of SROs at one school, 18% ($n=10$) of SROs at 2-3 schools, and 5% ($n=3$) at three or more schools. Question 11 inquires about the total amount of SROs at a school. 53 SROs responded, with 94% ($n=50$) of SROs stating that there is one SRO that is placed on their school campus. A total of 4% ($n=2$) of SROs stated that 2-3 SROs were placed on their school campus, while 2% ($n=1$) had four or more SROs.

Question 12 of the demographic survey asks the responding SROs the number of years that the responding participants have been in law enforcement. 55 SROs responded, with 11% ($n=6$) stating that they have been in law enforcement between 1-7 years, 22% ($n=12$) stated that they have been in law enforcement between 8-15 years, and 53% ($n=29$) of officers being in law enforcement between 16-28 years. A total of 14% ($n=8$) of responding SROs were in law enforcement for 29 or more years. The final question of the demographic questions inquires about the total number of years the responding participants have been assigned as an SRO. A total of 53% ($n=28$) has been an SRO between 1-7 years. A total of 28% ($n=15$) has been an SRO between 8-15 years, while 19% ($n=10$) have been an SRO for 16 or more years.

Table 1.1*Demographic Characteristics of Responding SROs*

Demographics	N	%
Gender		
Male	45	85%
Female	8	15%
Total	53	100%
Age		
21-31	4	8%
32-41	15	28%
42-51	18	34%
52-61	13	25%
62-71	3	6%
Total	53	100%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	5	9%
Caucasian	45	85%
Hispanic	1	2%
Pacific Islander	1	2%
Mixed	1	2%
Total	53	100%
Highest Education Level		
Non-degree	27	51%
Degree	26	49%
Total	53	100%
Type of School Assignment		
K-8	31	59%
High School	14	26%
All Grade Levels	8	15%
Total	53	100%

Table 1.2*Demographic Characteristics of Responding SROs*

Demographics	N	%
Law Enforcement Agency		
Sheriff's Department	29	55%
Police Department	21	40%
School Police Department	3	6%
Total	53	100%
How SRO was Assigned		
Requested	41	80%
Assigned	10	20%
Total	51	100%
Total Hours on School Campus		
1-19 hours	1	2%
20-29 hours	1	2%
30 or more hours/Requested	51	96%
Total	53	100%
Memorandum of Understanding in Place		
Yes	50	94%
No	2	4%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	53	100%
Number of Schools of Assigned SROs		
1 school	42	76%
2-3 schools	10	18%
All other	3	5%
Total	55	100%

Table 1.3*Demographic Characteristics of Responding SROs*

Demographics	N	%
Number of SROs Assigned to a School		
1 SRO	50	94%
2-3 SROs	2	4%
4 or more SROs	1	2%
Total	53	100%
Number of Years as an Officer		
1-7 years	6	11%
8-15 years	12	22%
16-28 years	29	53%
29 or more years	8	14%
Total	55	100%
Number of Years as an SRO		
1-7 years	28	53%
8-14 years	15	28%
15-28 years	10	19%
Total	53	100%

Results**Hypotheses**

Central Question: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: What training do School Resource Officers receive prior to being placed in a school?

H_0 = the number of SROs that did not receive training prior to being placed in a school does not exceed the number of SROS that did receive training prior to being placed in a

school.

Table 2.1

Training received before being placed as an SRO (Law Enforcement Activities or Topics)

Training	%	Yes	%	No	Total
Conducting law enforcement activities within the school	24%	13	76%	42	55
Becoming a more effective guest speaker	38%	21	62%	34	55
Responding to incidents in the classroom	25%	14	75%	41	55
Juvenile gangs	64%	35	36%	20	55
Social media or technology-related investigations	33%	18	67%	37	55
Communicating with school administrators	16%	9	84%	46	55
Student mental health/Understanding special needs students	42%	23	58%	32	55
De-escalation strategies and techniques	58%	32	42%	23	55
Search and seizure	87%	48	13%	7	55
Diversity and cultural awareness or bias	71%	39	29%	16	55
Legal updates/School law	76%	42	24%	13	55
Child or adolescent psychology and development	36%	20	64%	35	55
Active shooter training/Threat response	75%	41	25%	14	55
Sex trafficking of youth	31%	17	69%	38	55
Conducting mentoring activities, including advising staff, students, and/or families	16%	9	84%	46	55
Drug trends	53%	29	47%	26	55
Cultural sensitivity and /or cultural competency	67%	37	33%	18	55
Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)	54%	29	46%	25	54
Drug Abuse Resistance Education and Training (DARE)	28%	15	72%	39	54
Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)	11%	6	89%	48	54

Table 2.2*Training received before being placed as an SRO (Prevention and Planning Activities)*

Training	%	Yes	%	No	Total
Crisis preparedness planning	43%	23	57%	30	53
Security audits or assessments of school campuses	28%	15	72%	38	53
Truancy intervention and drop-out prevention	4%	2	96%	51	53
Bullying deterrence	23%	12	77%	41	53
Substance abuse recognition	53%	28	47%	25	53
Teaching students (Drugs, Conflict Resolution, etc.)	23%	12	77%	41	53
Special safety programs and presentations	26%	14	74%	39	53
Students with disabilities	32%	17	68%	36	53
Restorative justice	23%	12	77%	41	53
Crime prevention through environmental design	38%	20	62%	33	53

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 identify the survey responses on the training received before being placed as an SRO. In terms of law enforcement activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they did not receive training on topics such as conducting law enforcement activities within a school ($n=42$, 76%), becoming a more effective speaker ($n=34$, 62%), and responding to incidents in the classroom ($n=41$, 75%). Respondents also indicated that they did not receive training on topics such as social media or technology-related investigations ($n=37$, 67%), communicating with school administrators ($n=46$, 84%), and student mental health/special needs students ($n=32$, 58%). In terms of prevention and planning activities, all respondents indicated that they did not receive training in any of the listed prevention and planning activities except for substance abuse recognition ($n=28$, 53%).

RQ2: What is the perspective of the SROS on the training they need to be successful in the schools they serve?

H₀= Responding SROs do not believe that additional training is needed in order to be successful in the schools they serve.

Table 3.1

Top activities/topics that SROs believe that is needed to be effective (Law Enforcement)

Law Enforcement Activities/Topics	N	%
School Law	1	1%
Communicating with School Admin	16	10%
Conducting Mentoring Activities	10	6%
Gangs	4	3%
Crisis Intervention Training	16	10%
Human Trafficking	2	1%
Student Mental Health/Special Needs	7	4%
De-escalation Training	24	15%
Legal Updates/School Law	13	8%
Search and Seizure	10	6%
Active Shooter Training	15	10%
Drug Trends	4	3%
Social Media	7	4%
Conducting Law Enforcement Activities	7	4%
Diversity and Cultural Awareness	7	4%
Teaching (D.A.R.E., G.R.E.A.T, etc.)	5	3%
Responding to Incidents in the Class	2	1%
Interacting with Youth	2	1%
Public Speaking/Effective Speaker	2	1%
Interacting with Staff and Parents	1	1%
Training on Juvenile Court Counselors	1	1%
Crime Prevention Tools	1	1%

Table 3.2*Top activities/topics that SROs believe that is needed to be effective (Prevention)*

Prevention/Planning Training	N	%
Crisis Planning/Active Shooter	36	23%
Teaching Students/Staff	18	12%
Truancy/Drop-Out Intervention	5	3%
Event Planning	3	2%
Substance Abuse Recognition	16	10%
Security Assessments	18	12%
Bullying Deterrence	17	11%
Student Mental Health/Disabilities	11	7%
C.R.A.S.E. Training	1	1%
Crime Prevention	16	10%
Special Safety Programs	3	2%
Restorative Justice	9	6%
C.E.P.T.E.D.	2	1%

Table 3.3*Training needed for SROs to be effective that is not mentioned in the survey*

Training	N	%
Student Interactions	1	2%
Firearms Training/Active Shooter	4	7%
Secondary Language	1	2%
Mentor Training	1	2%
Home Visits/Welfare Checks	1	2%
Communication	1	2%
First Call Training	1	2%
Ethics	1	2%
Dealing with Parents	1	2%
Cell Phone Searches	1	2%
Conflict Resolution	1	2%
Crisis Intervention Training Refresher	2	4%
Bias Training	1	2%
All Topics Covered/None	22	39%
Bullying	1	2%
Body Cameras in School	1	2%
Event Safety	1	2%
SRO & School Admin Relationship	3	5%
On-the-job Training	2	4%
De-escalation	1	2%
School Searches & Seizures	1	2%
Understanding MOUs	1	2%
Working with Social Services	1	2%
Social Media	2	4%
Juvenile Law	2	4%
Civil Liability	1	2%
Student Mental Health	2	4%

Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 identify the survey responses on the training SROs believe needed to be an effective SRO. In terms of law enforcement activities or topics (Table 3.1), most respondents indicated that they need training on de-escalation ($n=24$, 15%), Crisis Intervention training ($n=16$, 10%), and communicating with school administrators ($n=16$, 10%). Respondents also indicated that they need training on activities or topics such as active-shooter training ($n=15$, 10%), legal updates or school law ($n=13$, 8%), and search and seizure ($n=10$, 6%).

Table 3.2 also identifies the survey responses on the training SROs believe needed to be an effective SRO. In terms of prevention and planning activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they need training on crisis planning or responding to an active shooter ($n=36$, 23%), security assessments ($n=18$, 12%), and teaching students and staff ($n=18$, 12%). Respondents also indicated that they need training on activities or topics such as bullying deterrence ($n=17$, 11%) and crime prevention ($n=16$, 10%). Table 3.3 also identifies the survey responses on the training SROs believe needed to be an effective SRO. In terms of training that was not mentioned in the survey, most respondents believed that most activities or topics were listed in the survey ($n=22$, 39%).

Overall, the survey responses reveal that SROs receive little training before being placed in a school. The survey responses also indicate that the majority of respondents believe that additional training is needed for SROs to be effective, especially on topics such as de-escalation, Crisis Intervention training, Mentor/Teaching training, crisis planning, and security assessments. Other topics include communicating with school administration and legal updates.

Central Question: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

RQ1: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a mentor within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the mentor role.

Table 4

The Perspective of SROs: Does the Role of a Mentor Make an Effective SRO

Mentor	%	Yes	%	No	Total
Strongly Disagree	100%	9	0%	0	9
Disagree	0%	0	100%	1	1
Somewhat Disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0%	0	0%	0	0
Agree	93%	13	7%	1	14
Strongly Agree	81%	25	19%	6	31

Table 4 identifies the survey responses based on the perspective of the respondent. The majority of the respondents agree ($n=13$, 93%) or strongly agree ($n=25$, 81%) that the role of a mentor makes an effective SRO.

RQ2: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of an educator within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the educator role.

Table 5*The Perspective of SROs: Does the Role of an Educator Make an Effective SRO*

Educator	%	Yes	%	No	Total
Strongly Disagree	100%	8	0%	0	8
Disagree	50%	1	50%	1	2
Somewhat Disagree	67%	2	33%	1	3
Somewhat Agree	100%	8	0%	0	8
Agree	81%	13	195%	3	16
Strongly Agree	83%	15	17%	3	18

Table 5 also identifies the survey responses based on the perspective of the respondent. The majority of the respondents agree ($n=15$, 81%) or strongly agree ($n=15$, 83%) that the role of an educator makes an effective SRO.

RQ3: How do School Resource Officers in North Carolina evaluate their role of a law enforcement officer within the school(s) they serve?

H_0 = Less than half of the SROs who complete the survey will report the importance of the law enforcement officer role.

Table 6

The Perspective of SROs: Does the Role of a Law Enforcement Officer Make an Effective SRO

Law Enforcement Officer	%	Yes	%	No	Total
Strongly Disagree	100%	9	0%	0	9
Disagree	0%	0	100%	1	1
Somewhat Disagree	0%	0	0%	0	0
Somewhat Agree	100%	3	0%	0	3
Agree	93%	14	7%	1	15
Strongly Agree	78%	21	22%	6	27

Table 6 identifies the survey responses based on the perspective of the respondent. The majority of the respondents agree ($n=14$, 93%) or strongly agree ($n=21$, 78%) that the role of a law enforcement officer makes an effective SRO. Overall, the survey responses reveal that the responding respondents believe that the role of a mentor, educator, and law enforcement officer make an effective SRO.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This exploratory study aimed to contribute to the knowledge and literature related to School Resource Officers (SROs) in North Carolina. The researcher intended to understand the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. Chapter 5 contains the findings and implications of the study, the limitations of the study, and as the culmination of the study, the chapter will include recommendations for future research.

Discussion

To explore and understand the roles and training of SROs in North Carolina, this study answered the following central research questions:

Central Question 1: What training do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

The data analysis revealed that most responding SROs indicated that they did not receive training before being placed in a school on law enforcement activities such as responding to incidents within the classroom, becoming a more effective speaker, and conducting law enforcement activities in a school. The responding SROs also indicated that they did not receive training on topics such as social media or technology-related investigations, communicating with school administrators, and student mental health/special needs students. In terms of prevention and planning activities, all respondents indicated that they did not receive training in any of the listed prevention and planning activities except for substance abuse recognition.

The data analysis also revealed the training that SROs believe that is needed to be an

effective SRO. In terms of law enforcement activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they need training on de-escalation, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), and communicating with school administrators. Respondents also indicated that they need training on activities or topics such as active-shooter training, legal updates or school law, and search and seizure.

In terms of prevention and planning activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they need training on crisis planning or responding to an active shooter, security assessments, and teaching students and staff. SROs also indicated that they need training on activities or topics such as bullying deterrence and crime prevention. In terms of training that were not mentioned in the survey, most respondents believed that most activities or topics were listed in the survey. Overall, the survey responses reveal that SROs receive little training before being placed in a school. The survey responses also indicate that most respondents believe that additional training is needed for SROs to be effective, especially on topics such as de-escalation, Crisis Intervention training, Mentor/Teaching training, crisis planning, and security assessments. Other topics include communicating with school administration and legal updates.

Training for law enforcement officers has been vital where many officers dealt with questionable incidents poorly due to minimal or inadequate training, as seen in 2014 with Ferguson, Missouri (Muench, 2019). According to Rosenfeld (2015), Ferguson's substandard policing was partially to blame, where law enforcement officers were not prepared to handle the situation. The incident from Ferguson demonstrated a need for law enforcement training. As with SROs, many have never had the proper training or the training opportunity, which can lead to unsatisfactory work (Martinez-Prather, McKenna, & Bowman, 2016).

SRO training can vary from state to state. There is no national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO. A few states have established specific training or certification

requirements for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Ryan et al. (2018), there is a need for a more systematic approach to training SROs. This need is a significant factor in increasing the effectiveness of SROs in regarding school safety issues.

Many SROs generally do not perform well for several months and even years once assigned to a school due to many law enforcement agencies that place SROs into a school setting without any formal training (Finn, Townsend, Shively, & Rich, 2005). According to Finn et al. (2005), a number of SROs reported that they did things poorly or avoided doing them all together until they were trained for fear of making serious mistakes that could ruin the reputation of the SRO, the school, and the law enforcement agency. Despite the importance of training, a few programs train SROs adequately before they become an SRO, while others provide no training for as long as a year or more. In addition to the expense of training an SRO, programs often fail to provide the training in a timely manner. The delay is usually due to the training not being available locally during the period between when the SRO is selected for the position and their first day within a school.

Central Question 2: What roles do School Resource Officers perceive as necessary for effectiveness?

The data analysis revealed that most responding SROs agree or strongly agree that the role of a mentor, the role of an educator, and the role of a law enforcement officer makes an effective SRO. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) stated that SRO's have three roles. These roles consist of a teacher, an informal counselor, and a law enforcement officer (May & Higgins, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013; NASRO, 2020). While the National Association of School Resource Officers advocates for the SRO triad, the roles of an SRO and their duties depend on the school administration's desires and the needs of the

school (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). Based on previous studies, there appears to be a lack of comprehension of the specific roles of an SRO and what an SRO is. A suitable role of a law enforcement officer within a school setting appears to be inconsistent across the United States (Barnes, 2016; Coon & Travis, 2012; McKenna & White, 2017).

According to Canady (2012), the goal of the SRO program and NASRO is to provide a safe learning environment within the schools across the country and provide valuable resources to staff within the schools. Other goals include fostering positive relationships with youth and developing strategies to resolve problems that affect the youth with the objective of protecting every child so they can reach their fullest potential. NASRO identifies the roles of an SRO as a triad concept of school-based policing. The triad divides the responsibilities of an SRO into three categories: teacher, informal counselor, and law enforcement officer.

The first component of the NASRO triad is a teacher. According to NASRO, the duties of an SRO should include teaching law-related topics to students. SROs can teach topics that are dictated by the school curriculum and current events. The SRO also has specialized knowledge that he or she can pass to students. In turn, the student's perceptions of law enforcement officers may improve (Canady, 2012). Based on recent polls, the majority of United States citizens do not feel that law enforcement officers are held accountable for their actions and treating racial groups equally or using the right amount of force (Page, 2014). Due to this lack of trust, it diminishes police officers' authority and creates a disproportionate society in which some parents and students feel at ease with police officers while others feel skeptical of them (Friedman, 2014).

The second component of the NASRO triad is the role of a counselor. Canady states that it is crucial that students know that someone cares for them and their safety. Through the role of a counselor, SROs can learn to understand the concerns of students. They can also gain

knowledge of potential threats to students and staff. SROs can offer advice as it pertains to the law to school administrators and school staff (Canady, 2012).

The final component of the NASRO triad is the role of a law enforcement officer. As an SRO, the officer is responsible for serving as a law enforcement officer in investigations that occurs on school property. The SRO may also be involved in incidents that pertain to bullying, disorderly conduct, illegal activity, weapon offenses, and drug activity. According to Gibson (2001), there are times that SROs may get involved in incidents that may be vague between the school and the student's home, such as reports of abuse. The role of an SRO is much like a community law enforcement officer. The SRO spends their time within the school community, getting to know students and being involved in their daily lives. According to Canady (2012), the presence of a positive adult role model in students' lives has a positive impact on their development. It also reduces their involvement in destructive decisions.

As a counselor or mentor, SROs serve as a helpful resource for students. Students can go to their SRO for guidance, and in turn, the SRO may be able to determine students that may be at-risk who may need some type of intervention. By interacting with students in the hallways of a school or having counseling sessions with students, SROs can serve the role of a mentor (Travis & Coon, 2005). Based on the SRO triad, SROs also serve the role of a teacher. SROs spend time within the classroom teaching topics such as drug and violence prevention, conflict resolution, and law-related topics (Thomas et al., 2013).

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study developed an understanding of the roles of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. This study was designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North

Carolina regarding the roles and training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, individuals are motivated by five levels of needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). Once our physiological needs are met, such as food, water, and rest, our safety needs are next. Safety needs or security needs have to do with the protection and survival from disorderly situations, social disturbances, and physical danger within a human environment. When individuals are frightened by social or physical disturbances, they are less likely to concentrate on anything other than their own personal safety (Hope et al., 1995).

Maslow's theory is relevant to the safety needs of the school community. When threats are made to a school, whether real or imagined, the emotional safety within a school is often destroyed (Surface, 2011). If individuals do not feel as if they are safe and secure, it can be difficult for them to focus on any given task (Pillar, 2016). A school campus is no different. If there is no order or safety within a school, all other activities will suffer (Marzano, 2013). It is difficult for students and staff to do substantive work if they do not have a safe and orderly working environment. The security of a school is vital to learning. It is important that students not worry about their physical safety on school campuses (Fritz et al., 2010). The need for a safe and secure school campus remains crucial to promoting valuable teaching and learning within the schools (Pillar, 2016).

Security measures within a school and staff development in emergency operation procedures are specifically designed to ensure the safety of students and staff, thus meeting the safety need of the hierarchy. Dangerous events, such as school shootings, is what SROs and school administrators seek to prevent through well-developed security plans. Preventing or stopping violence within a school relies significantly on the training that SROs receive. There is

no national standard for SRO training. Therefore, there is only a small amount of stability in how SROs are prepared to work within a school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

This study's findings indicated that the majority of SROs did not receive training before being placed in a school on law enforcement activities such as responding to incidents within the classroom, becoming a more effective speaker, and conducting law enforcement activities in a school. In terms of law enforcement activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they need training on de-escalation, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), and communicating with school administrators. Respondents also indicated that they need training on activities or topics such as active-shooter training, legal updates or school law, and search and seizure. In terms of prevention and planning activities or topics, most respondents indicated that they need training on crisis planning or responding to an active shooter, security assessments, and teaching students and staff. In order to meet Maslow's hierarchy of safety needs, it is essential to develop a national standard for SRO training so that each and every SRO are trained the same.

Practical Implications

This study produced several practical implications for SROs, policymakers, and those who are responsible for the training of SROs. First, policymakers should address concerns regarding various descriptions of roles of an SRO. According to the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) (2017), there are four roles of an SRO. These roles include law enforcers to promote safety in and around the school, educator to teach law-related topics, informal counselor to promote positive relationships and positive behaviors, and emergency manager when it comes to developing and implementing safety plans with school administrators (COPS, 2017).

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) stated that SRO's have three roles. These roles consist of a teacher, an informal counselor, and a law enforcement officer (May & Higgins, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013; NASRO, 2020). While the National Association of School Resource Officers advocates for the SRO triad, the roles of an SRO and their duties depend on the school administration's desires and the needs of the school (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). It is important that policymakers have a universal definition of the roles of SROs throughout the country.

Second, those who are responsible for the training of SROs need to have a national standard that outlines the training requirements of an SRO. Currently, there is no national standard, and SRO training can vary from state to state. There are a few states that have established specific training or certification requirements for SROs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Ryan et al. (2018), there is a need for a more systematic approach to training SROs. This need is a significant factor in increasing the effectiveness of SROs regarding to school safety issues.

Limitations

Limitations regarding data collection exist within the study. Despite the effectiveness of surveys, further research should include qualitative data collection measures. By conducting individual and focus group interviews, the researcher can determine how questions are presented, explored topics, and whether confusion exists by the respondents (Webb & Savard, 2021). Another limitation was based on the size of the sample. The sample size was limited to only SROs in North Carolina. By including SROs in other states, more data would be obtained, and therefore more information will be gained on the roles and training of SROs throughout the country. Another limitation was based on the low number of survey responses ($n=53$). This study

serves as a foundational assessment of the opinions of SROs on roles and training. The conclusions that are derived from the study should be interpreted with caution. For future studies, researchers must focus on sample size to ensure adequate statistical power analyze their data (Price, Dake, Murnan, Dimmig, & Akpanudo, 2005).

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Replication of this study should include more School Resource Officers (SROs) in North Carolina in order to gain a broader understanding of the roles and training of SROs and explore further variables.
2. Replication of this study should include not only SROs in North Carolina, but SROs within the United States. This could lead to changes in the training programs and provide a universal set of standards on the roles of SROs.
3. A study should be conducted using qualitative data collection measures. By conducting individual and focus group interviews, the researcher can adapt questions to improve responses and incorporate the human experience.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

School Resource Officer's Survey

Information Sheet

Title of the Project: “A Survey of North Carolina School Resource Officer’s: Roles and Training”

Principal Investigator: Alesha P. Troutman, School of Government, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a sworn law enforcement officer that serves as a School Resource Officer (SRO) in North Carolina. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

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

School safety is a significant concern for many educators and school administrators. Given recent events involving the use of force of law enforcement officers, much debate continues around the pros and cons of having SROs in schools. The purpose of my research is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study is designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. A survey will be sent via email to SROs in North Carolina. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. You will have one week to return the survey to

██████████. All participants will be entered into a raffle to receive a \$20.00 gift card.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

This study will:

1. Provide information on how SROs perceive their roles and responsibilities.
2. Provide those responsible for the training of SROs with essential information for more effective training of SROs.
3. Benefit many stakeholders who are responsible for school safety and the training of SROs, such as law enforcement agencies, school officials, students, teachers, community members, and those responsible for training SROs.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

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

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

Participants will be entered into a raffle for a \$20.00 gift card. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes; however, they will be pulled and separated from your responses to maintain your anonymity.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a sworn law enforcement officer in North Carolina. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on their decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation and not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Alesha P. Troutman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at

██████████.

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

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

Appendix B

Survey

Consent Form

Title of the Project: “Survey of North Carolina School Resource Officer’s: Roles and Training”

Principal Investigator: Alesha P. Troutman, School of Government, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a sworn law enforcement officer that serves as a School Resource Officer (SRO) in North Carolina. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

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

School safety is a significant concern for many educators and school administrators. Given recent events involving the use of force of law enforcement officers, much debate continues around the pros and cons of having SROs in schools. The purpose of my research is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study is designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

- Complete an anonymous online survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The participants of this study should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study. This study may:

- Provide information on how SROs perceive their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide those responsible for the training of SROs with essential information for more effective training of SROs.
- Benefit many stakeholders who are responsible for school safety and the training of SROs, such as law enforcement agencies, school officials, students, teachers, community members, and those responsible for training SROs.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

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

- The data that is collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. Participant survey responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

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

All survey participants will be entered into a raffle for a \$20.00 gift card. Participants should email the researcher at [REDACTED] and attach the secret code that appears at the end of the survey.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Alesha P. Troutman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or her faculty sponsor, Dr. Patrick Webb, at [REDACTED].

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

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

Your Consent

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

Appendix C
Recruitment Letter
School Resource Officers

Dear _____:

As a graduate student in the School of Government at Liberty University, I am conducting research to understand better the roles and training of School Resource Officers (SROs) in North Carolina. The purpose of my research is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study is designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be sworn Law Enforcement Officers that serve as a School Resource Officer. If willing, participants will be asked to complete a 15-question survey based on their roles and training. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the online survey. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

In order to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it via email to [REDACTED]. A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You do not need to sign and return the consent document for the online survey. Participants will be entered into a raffle to receive a \$20.00 gift card.

Sincerely,

Alesha P. Troutman

[REDACTED]

Appendix D

IRB Approval

[External] IRB-FY20-21-565 - Initial: Initial - Exempt

Tue 4/20/2021 1:13 PM



April 20, 2021

Alesha Troutman Patrick Webb

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-565 A Survey of North Carolina School Resource Officer's: Roles and Training

Dear Alesha Troutman, Patrick Webb:

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

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording). The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

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

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

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

4/20/21, 1:43 PM

Appendix E

North Carolina School Resource Officer Survey

Which Basic School Resource Officer (SRO) Training have you completed?

- ☐ North Carolina Justice Academy: Basic SRO School
☐ National Association of School Resource Officer: Basic SRO Training
☐ None
☐ Other

Please indicate if you have received any training on the following law enforcement activities or topics. If so, please advise if you receive training annually and before you were placed as an SRO.

	Have you received training on this topic?		Do you receive training on this topic annually?		Did you receive any training on this topic before being placed as an SRO?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Conducting law enforcement activities within the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responding to calls for service on school campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responding to incidents in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Juvenile gangs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media or technology-related investigations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of deadly force or use of less-lethal force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De-escalation strategies and techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search and seizure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity and cultural awareness or bias	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child or adolescent psychology and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Active shooter training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Have you received training on this topic?		Do you receive training on this topic annually?		Did you receive any training on this topic before being placed as an SRO?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Conducting mentoring activities, including advising staff, students, and/or families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive school discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural sensitivity and /or cultural competency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate if you have received any training on the following law enforcement topics.

	Yes	No
North Carolina Justice Academy Advanced SRO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police Law Institute (PLI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug Abuse Resistance Education and Training (DARE)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced SRO Survival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Association of SRO Advanced Course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you attend the North Carolina SRO Conference or the National Association of SRO conference every year?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Sometimes
☐ No
☐ Alternating years

	Have you received any training on this topic?		Do you receive training on this topic annually?		Did you receive any training on this topic before being placed as an SRO?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Substance abuse recognition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching students (crime awareness, drugs, conflict resolution, legal issues, or safety)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special safety programs and presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restorative justice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following on SRO training:

	Definitely not	Probably not	Might or might not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
As an SRO, are you concerned that you may be held civilly liable for any action you take for which you were improperly trained or received no training?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that you were adequately prepared or trained to be a SRO?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What training do you believe that you need to be an effective SRO that has not been mentioned above in this survey?

Which of the following law enforcement activities, teaching activities, and mentoring activities did you perform on or around school grounds in the past month?

	Answer Yes or No
	Yes No
Patrolled school grounds	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

☐ Other

How many training hours are required of you by your agency yearly for a SRO position?

- ☐ 1-10 hours
☐ 11-20 hours
☐ 21-30 hours
☐ 31-40 hours
☐ 41-50 hours
☐ Other

How do you get the training hours throughout the year?

- ☐ My department staff conducts all the training.
☐ Organizations outside of my agency conduct all of our training classes.
☐ Our department does the majority of our training with some outside assistance.
☐ I have to find training on my own during the training year.
☐ Other

Please indicate if you have received any training on the following prevention and planning activities. If so, please advise if you receive training on an annual basis and before being placed as an SRO.

	Have you received any training on this topic?		Do you receive training on this topic annually?		Did you receive any training on this topic before being placed as an SRO?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Crisis preparedness planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security audits or assessments of school campuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuency intervention and dropout prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bullying deterrence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Answer Yes or No	
	Yes	No
Issued citations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responded to calls for service at the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responded to incidents in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crisis preparedness planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security audits of school campuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confiscated weapons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confiscated drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducted searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Made arrests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuency intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervised or coordinated non-athletic extracurricular activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chaperone field trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coached athletic program within their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advised school staff, students, or families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty or staff in-service presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special school-wide safety programs or presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taught students about drugs, legal issues, safety, crime awareness, or conflict resolution in a classroom setting (including the GREAT program or DARE program)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Approximately what percentage of your duty time was spent on the following school activities over the past month? If you do not perform an activity, enter "0". The total of all activities should be 100%.

	Percentage
Conducting law enforcement activities	<input type="text"/>
Conducting mentoring activities with students/staff/families	<input type="text"/>
Conducting teaching activities	<input type="text"/>
Administrative functions/paperwork to the above activities	<input type="text"/>

In incidents where you arrest a student, what roles does your school administration play in your arrest decisions?

- ☐ No impact. The arrest determination is made solely by myself or other sworn personnel.
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement specifies where the school can have influence over my arrest decisions.
- ☐ School administration reviews all arrest-eligible incidents and can provide input regarding my arrest decision.
- ☐ SROs do not have arrest powers in my assigned school.
- ☐ Other

Please answer the following demographic questions.

- ☐ What is your gender?
- ☐ What is your age?
- ☐ What is your race or ethnicity?
- ☐ What is your highest level of education that you have completed?
- ☐ What school level of students do you work with? (For example: Elementary, Middle, or High school)
- ☐ Which type of law enforcement agency do you work for? (For example: Police, Sheriff, or School System)
- ☐ How did you become an SRO? (For example: Requested to be assigned or were assigned to the role)
- ☐ What are the total number of hours spent as a SRO in a typical week? (For example: Less than 20 hours, 20-29 hours, 30-39 hours, 40 or more)
- ☐ Does your agency have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details the SRO and School Administrators responsibilities?

Please answer the following demographic questions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How many schools are you primarily assigned to as a SRO?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How many SROs are assigned to your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following demographic questions.

	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20-25 years	More than 25 years
How long have you been a sworn law enforcement officer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How long have you been a School Resource Officer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Appendix F

Information on the Study Email

3/24/21, 9:49 AM

Information on the Study



1 attachments (22 KB)

SROs Survey Information Sheet.docx;

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe!

Title of the Project: "A Survey of North Carolina School Resource Officer's: Roles and Training"

Principal Investigator: Alesha P. Troutman, School of Government, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a sworn law enforcement officer that serves as a School Resource Officer (SRO) in North Carolina. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

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

School safety is a significant concern for many educators and school administrators. Given recent events involving the use of force of law enforcement officers, much debate continues around the pros and cons of having SROs in schools. The purpose of my research is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study is designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

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1. A survey will be sent via email to SROs in North Carolina. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. You will have one week to return the survey to [REDACTED] participants will be entered into a raffle to receive a \$20.00 gift card.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

This study will:

1. Provide information on how SROs perceive their roles and responsibilities.
2. Provide those responsible for the training of SROs with essential information for more effective training of SROs.
3. Benefit many stakeholders who are responsible for school safety and the training of SROs, such as law enforcement agencies, school officials, students, teachers, community members, and those responsible for training SROs.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

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

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

Participants will be entered into a raffle for a \$20.00 gift card. Email addresses will be requested for compensation purposes; however, they will be pulled and separated from your

https://outlook.office365.com/mail/06A2A2ADUJMTQ127BLW_TYNDUJ/KD5Y2JLWZ7Y2UUNWMMYtgAGAh/Teg7Nm805ed8UuX%3D Page 2 of 4

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responses to maintain your anonymity.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a sworn law enforcement officer in North Carolina. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on their decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation and not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Alesha P. Troutman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [REDACTED]

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

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

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Appendix G

Recruitment Letter Email

3/24/21, 10:27 AM

Recruitment Letter



Deputy S. Drew:

As a graduate student in the School of Government at Liberty University, I am conducting research to understand better the roles and training of School Resource Officers (SROs) in North Carolina. The purpose of my research is to develop a better understanding of the role of SROs in North Carolina and the training that they receive. Additionally, this study is designed to elicit the perceptions of SROs in North Carolina regarding the training that SROs need to be effective within the school(s) they serve. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be sworn Law Enforcement Officers that serve as a School Resource Officer. If willing, participants will be asked to complete a 15-question survey based on their roles and training. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the online survey. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

In order to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it via email to [REDACTED]. A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You do not need to sign and return the consent document for the online survey. Participants will be entered into a raffle to receive a \$20.00 gift card.

Sincerely,

Alesha P. Troutman

