A Survey of Police Patrol Officers' Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to add to the dated literature by evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. This study assessed the perceptions of police patrol officers, n=132, from various police departments in the United States. The quantitative design used a survey with responses measured on a four-point Likert scale. SPSS was used to perform a one-way ANOVA to test four hypotheses that predicted differences in individuals' perceptions of juvenile offenders due to their years of experience as a police patrol officer, education level, gender, and age (Ha1- Ha4). One-way ANOVA results provided statistical support for only Ha3, which predicted that there is a relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders. Female police officers ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.46$, $n = 22$) reported significantly more favorable perceptions of juvenile offenders on average than their male counterparts ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.39$, $n = 106$); [$F\ (1, 126) = 15.03$, $p < 0.001$; $d = 0.11$].

Keywords: Police patrol officers, juvenile offenders, perceptions, implications, SPSS, One-way ANOVA

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Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Field Training Officer (FTO)

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Interactions with the justice system often begin with law enforcement (Brunson & Pegram, 2018; Development Services Group, Inc., 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Richards et al., 2018). Police and juvenile interactions include any personal interaction between a juvenile and one or more police officers, including sworn officers from local law enforcement agencies or authorities, such as railway and campus police (Development Services Group, 2018). Law enforcement officers play a crucial role in molding juvenile perspectives, as they are typically the first contact for juvenile offenders in the justice system (Brunson & Pegram, 2018; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Richards et al., 2018). Although a large body of research exists on juveniles' impressions of law enforcement, far less is known about law enforcement perceptions of juvenile offenders.

This chapter gives context for the topics investigated in this study. The purpose of this quantitative study was to add to the dated literature by evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. Unfavorable interactions with police erode juveniles' trust in law enforcement and their view of the justice system's legitimacy. Therefore, evaluating substantial, measurable perceptions of interactions between police patrol officers and juvenile offenders may have important implications for policing policy and practice (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018).

Background

Understanding police perceptions in police and juvenile offender interactions is essential for understanding police and youth perceptions of each other (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). However, current research on police and juvenile offender

interactions from a police perspective is sparse (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Research from the 1960s suggested that investigations of law enforcement interactions with urban juveniles gave adequate data to investigate the application of law enforcement officer discretion and its antecedents, as officers often concluded these contacts without arresting the juveniles (Black & Reiss, 1970; Lundman et al., 1978; Piliavin & Briar, 1964). In the 1970s, academics shifted to other areas, reducing their studies on the contact between police officers and juveniles at the street level (Brunson & Pegram, 2018; Liederbach, 2007).

Evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders is critical as a juvenile having interactions with the police may have less trust in law enforcement and the criminal justice system and suffer mental health repercussions, school disengagement, educational attainment, and an increased chance of an adult arrest (Del Toro et al., 2022; Del Toro et al., 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Foster et al., 2022; Geller & Mark, 2022; Gottlieb & Wilson, 2019; Jackson et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2019; Jahn et al., 2020; McGlynn-Wright et al., 2020). Studies have indicated that juveniles stopped by police more frequently than their peers may experience marginalization and trauma, including post-traumatic stressors and higher depression symptoms among Black and White females (Jackson et al., 2019; Jahn et al., 2020). Also, juveniles experiencing police contact may suffer from school disengagement, educational achievement, school achievement, and absenteeism (Del Toro et al., 2019; Geller & Mark, 2022; Gottlieb & Wilson, 2019; Jackson et al., 2022). Studies have suggested that a young person's experiences in life impact their educational opportunities (Del Toro et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2022). Researchers have found that students subjected to police stops had lower intentions to pursue higher education. Additional research has suggested that distinguishing between

apprehensions and stops that do not lead to arrests, evaluating the ramifications of vicarious interactions with law enforcement, assessing the routes through an arrest, undergoing law enforcement stops without apprehension, and indirectly facing law enforcement contacts are all linked to decreases in educational attainment (Gottlieb & Wilson, 2019).

Researchers have also found links between student absenteeism metrics and law enforcement contact (Geller & Mark, 2022). Juvenile self-reported absenteeism due to illness and truancy was associated with law enforcement contact. Juveniles who reported law enforcement contact were absent approximately 2 days more than those who did not. A significant percentage-point rise in the likelihood that attendance concerns would prompt parent-teacher dialogue was also connected with police involvement. McGlynn-Wright et al. (2020) suggested that black study participants were more likely to be arrested as young adults if they had police interactions as youth than white study participants. Black individuals who interacted with law enforcement in middle school were significantly more likely to be arrested at age 20 than their White peers.

Most studies focus on variables that affect choices made after young people have been detained or young people's perceptions of the police (Development Services Group, 2018). Because juveniles may experience adverse outcomes resulting from police interactions, it is critical to examine police perceptions of juveniles and the ramifications that develop from them. Evaluating police and juvenile contact events is essential to assessing the factors that may influence these perceptions, but current findings on police and juvenile contact are limited (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Finally, the relationship between policing and juvenile brain development and programs to improve police and juvenile perceptions are examined.

Police Perceptions of Juveniles

Current findings on police and juvenile contact from a police perspective are limited, but they offer some insight (Development Services Group, Inc., 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Existing literature has suggested that police view juveniles as a problem to control and often encounter them on traffic stops and for public order offenses like disorderly conduct (Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Other findings suggested that police view juveniles as a problem to control and often encounter them on traffic stops and for public order offenses, such as disorderly conduct (Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Other findings have suggested that personal and organizational variables, such as the officers' race, sex, education, parental situations, and career attitudes, may influence police perceptions in urban and rural areas. Additional findings suggest that while officers have varying perspectives, they believe juveniles require intervention, which is troublesome because law enforcement intervention is a future indicator of criminal justice system involvement. Finally, an additional study has suggested that organizational features impacted police officer-supporting behaviors.

Police Culture

Police culture, a term recognized among police professionals, academics, and the public, is a critical component of police opinions of juveniles (Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017). Police culture is. Police culture emphasizes preconceptions, principles, and norms that police officers use to cope with the stresses they experience in their encounters with individuals and their managers (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Ingram et al., 2018; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021; Turner, 2022). The culture of law

enforcement includes elements such as other officers' views, the qualities of individual police, the work environment (including low- and high-crime locations), and perspectives by rank (Ballucci et al., 2017; Brough et al., 2016; Campeau, 2015; Farkas et al., 2020; Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021). Public opinion toward law enforcement also contributes to the formation of the police culture.

Police Training

How the police view the public partly depends on their training (Cunha & Gonçalves, 2017; Development Services Group, 2018). The prevalent viewpoints on attitudes presume that attitudes are constant over time once developed. Conversely, studies have suggested variables that can alter them. Evaluating the training police receive and how that training may impact their perceptions is essential for understanding how police perceive juveniles.

Police Procedural Justice and Juveniles

Researchers have suggested that police interactions alter juvenile attitudes and views of police officers. Most research has indicated that juveniles with higher police contact express more negative opinions about the police (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Dennison & Finkeldey, 2021; Development Services Group, 2018; Fine et al., 2020; Hofer et al., 2019; Novich & Hunt, 2017; Piccirillo et al., 2021; Pina-Sanchez & Brunton Smith, 2020; Saarikkomäki et al., 2020; Scrase, 2020). Evaluating police perceptions of juveniles is essential because juveniles experiencing procedural injustice may form negative attitudes toward police. Furthermore, youth of color typically report less trust in law enforcement, which may lead to further criminal justice system involvement. Although adverse police contacts influence feelings of procedural injustice, positive contact with law enforcement can improve feelings of procedural justice among juveniles (Fine et al., 2020).

Police Discretion

Police discretion is an inherent and essential component of policing (Nickels, 2007; Phillips, 2016; Schulenberg, 2015; Wortley, 2003). Officers can exercise discretion if the practical limitations of their authority permit them to choose between different action options or inactivity. Law enforcement officers are frequently required to use their right to make decisions, such as when they must stop a car, arrest a person, or use aggression. Organizational policy and situational variables or considerations that influence a police officer's decision-making determine when police officers employ discretion. Since perceptions may influence discretion, examining why police officers use discretion with youth is essential.

Police Discretion with Juveniles

How police officers use discretion with juveniles can impact the youth in the present and future, as they often serve as entry points to the criminal justice system (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Kratcoski et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Warren, 2009; Smyth, 2011). The three youth justice interaction points where law enforcement has the most impact are arrests, referrals to courts, and diversion from the formal process (Development Services Group, 2018). The law enforcement function includes the identification of delinquent behavior and the initiation of an official treatment protocol. Consequently, youth involvement in criminal activity and questionable conduct regularly brings police and juveniles into contact, often in combative and confrontational circumstances (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Smyth, 2011). Factors affecting police discretion with juveniles include the gravity of the crime, remorse, deference, compliance, prior record, nature of the accusation, complainant's intention to pursue, the youth's race, ethnicity, and age, as well as the nature of

the area and local ordinances (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Kratcoski et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Warren, 2009).

Juvenile Perceptions of the Police

Evaluating juvenile perspectives about law enforcement has been acknowledged in the literature, and examining juvenile-police encounters is essential to enhancing police-juvenile interactions (Development Services Group, 2018; Fix et al., 2022). Existing literature has suggested that they strongly influence a juvenile's willingness to interact with law enforcement officers. The literature has focused heavily on the factors influencing juvenile attitudes toward police officers (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). Understanding how police perceptions may influence those interactions is essential.

Juvenile Brain Development

Examining the interactions between juveniles and police officers requires understanding the juvenile brain. Developmental differences between adults and juveniles may impact officer-juvenile interactions (Andrews et al., 2021; Cavanagh, 2022; Ciranka & van den Bos, 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Mercurio et al., 2020; Timmer et al., 2020). Juveniles differ cognitively from adults in the following areas: they lack self-regulation compared to adults; they are more susceptible to outside social conditioning, such as societal pressure; and they are less capable of assessing long-term consequences (Andrews et al., 2021; Foulkes & Blakemore, 2018; Orendain et al., 2022; Sawyer et al., 2018; Vijayakumar et al., 2018; Wierenga et al., 2018). Examining juvenile growth stages is advantageous for police officers, as this information could influence their interactions with most juveniles.

Policing and Juvenile Brain Development

Due to the difficulty of their work, law enforcement personnel receive extensive training, but most receive little education on juvenile conduct (Fix et al., 2021). The physiological differences between juveniles and adults influence interactions between law enforcement officers and juveniles (Aalsma et al., 2018; Bateson et al., 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Jackson et al., 2019). In contrast to adults, adolescents lack emotional control, are more vulnerable to influences such as societal pressure, and are less able to predict future consequences accurately. Improving their ability to engage with juveniles requires education on the differences between adults and children.

Programs to Improve Police and Youth Perceptions

Studies that brought juveniles and the police together in non-enforcement settings were examined to determine how those experiences shaped and influenced their perceptions of law enforcement. Findings have suggested that programs involving police and juveniles working together are successful (Caldas et al., 2017; Fine et al., 2021; Freiburger, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Padilla et al., 2022; Phillips & Cromwell, 2020). However, two Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) studies produced mixed results. Therefore, evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juveniles in non-enforcement settings remains essential to determining how those interactions may improve perceptions.

Problem Statement

The current findings on police and juvenile contact from a police perspective are limited (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Existing publications on juvenile and police contact do not demonstrate evidence to make an impact. Life experiences shape perceptions (Carter & Murphy, 2015; Cunha & Goncalves, 2017). Individuals

who play significant roles in our lives impact our perceptions. Observing and imitating another's actions is critical for learning new behaviors. Sociocultural backgrounds, such as religious or family group affiliation, may also influence perceptions.

Alternatively, a single individual reflecting on their thoughts and philosophies may influence perceptions (Carter & Murphy, 2015; Cunha & Goncalves, 2017). In the psychological literature, perceptions refer to persistent patterns of cognition, emotions, and behavioral tendencies toward an event, target, group, or person (Shafiq et al., 2016; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2016). Perceptions underpin and affect various human behaviors. For example, some law enforcement officers have more extreme views, such as a custodial preference for juvenile offenders, which impacts how they approach those youth. Law enforcement officers with more punitive attitudes toward youth are less likely to consider diversion options. Law enforcement officers' perceptions of youth have significant implications, as police are often the first point of contact for youth in the criminal justice system.

Research findings suggest that juveniles with considerable contact with police experience adverse outcomes, such as mental health repercussions, school disengagement, and an increased chance of an adult arrest (Del Toro et al., 2022; Del Toro et al., 2019; Foster et al., 2022; Geller & Mark, 2022; Gottlieb & Wilson, 2019; Jackson et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2019; McGlynn-Wright et al., 2020). Those experiences shape and influence juveniles' perceptions of law enforcement (Development Services Group, 2018; Fischer, 2021; Leroux & McShane, 2017; Wu et al., 2013). Evaluating police officers' perceptions of juveniles is crucial because unfavorable interactions with juveniles erode juveniles' trust in law enforcement, their view of the justice system's legitimacy, and negative outcomes for their future (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). Because the current findings are limited and multiple factors influence

police officers' perceptions, these reasons justify the need for updated research to understand how police patrol officers perceive juvenile offenders and what implications develop from those perceptions. Determining whether substantial, measurable perceptions exist between police officers and juvenile offenders may have important implications for policing policy and practice.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to add to the dated literature by evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. Although several studies have evaluated juveniles' perceptions of law enforcement, few have assessed law enforcement officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards et al., 2018). Unfavorable interactions with police erode juveniles' trust in law enforcement and their view of the justice system's legitimacy and may lead to negative future outcomes. Evaluating whether there is a substantial, measurable perception between police patrol officers and juvenile offenders is critical to policing policy and practice (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). Because the current findings are limited, and multiple factors influence police officers' perceptions, there is a need for updated research to understand how police patrol officers' perceptions affect their interactions with juveniles. Determining if a substantial, measurable perception exists between police officers and juvenile offenders may have important implications for policing policy and practice. This study used a quantitative design; participants were drawn from samples of police patrol officers and police patrol supervisors representing police agencies in the United States.

Significance of the Study

Studies evaluating police and juvenile interactions were prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, until researchers focused on other areas of policing (Brunson & Pegram, 2018;

Liederbach, 2007). The existing literature suggests the patrol officer is primarily responsible for a juvenile's introduction into the justice system (Brown et al., 2009; Brunson & Pegram, 2018; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007). Evaluating police patrol officers' opinions of juveniles is vital because negative experiences with juveniles decrease their confidence in police officers and their perception of the validity of the judicial system (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). This study adds to the literature by examining police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. The findings from this study inform police policy and practice, which benefits police patrol officers and juvenile offenders.

Research Questions

Evaluating the present literature on police and adolescent interactions from a police perspective shows few ineffective, out-of-date studies. Therefore, this research addressed the following questions:

RQ1: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

RQ2: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

RQ3: What is the relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?

RQ4: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

Definitions

The following terms are used in this dissertation.

1. *Police Patrol Officer*: The most typical police officer with extensive duties (Ratcliffe et al., 2019). The population can easily recognize them as police because of their uniforms. They also respond to emergency and non-emergency calls. Police patrol officers investigate people and activities to ensure peace and safety.

2. *Law Enforcement Officer*: Law enforcement officers investigate, arrest, and detain criminals. Some law enforcement agencies, notably sheriff's offices, maintain jails. In addition, law enforcement officers work for federal, state, local, and specialized agencies, such as railroads, mass transit, and airports (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).
3. *Juvenile*: A youth who has not reached the age of 18 (U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ], 2020).
4. *Juvenile Offender*: A person under 18 who breaks the law (DOJ, 2020).
5. *Youth*: the period from being a child to becoming an adult (Development Services Group, 2018)
6. *Perception*: How a person perceives something and their conception of what it must be (Qiong, 2017). Also, the way one perceives things with their eyes, ears, and sense of smell.
7. *Attitudes*: A person's positive or negative appraisal of something (Bechler et al., 2021).
8. *Diversion*: Programs designed to prevent further offending by providing youth with services rather than placement in the criminal justice system (Wylie et al., 2019).

Assumptions and Limitations

One assumption of the study was that police patrol officers were honest about their experiences with juvenile offenders. The research problem addressed in the study was a police officer's perspective of interactions with youth offenders. The nature of the problem required a quantitative analysis (Queiros et al., 2017; Rahman, 2016). Quantitative research emphasizes impartiality and is particularly applicable when collecting quantifiable measurements of variables and assumptions from a population sample is possible. Quantitative analysis uses

standardized methods and formal instruments to gather data, with information gathered objectively and consistently, and statistical programs, such as SPSS, are utilized to analyze numerical data. While quantitative research is best suited for the research problem, it also has limitations, such as avoiding a detailed explanation of individuals, emotions, significance, and acts.

Summary

Research examining police patrol officer and youth interactions is too outdated to be effective. Because the current findings are limited, and factors influence a police officer's perceptions, these reasons justify the need for updated research to understand how police patrol officers' perceptions affect interactions with juvenile offenders. Understanding how police patrol officers perceive juvenile offenders is essential because police serve as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system. Negative experiences with police patrol officers may lead to a lack of trust in the police and justice system and future adverse outcomes. This quantitative study adds to the empirical literature by developing an understanding of police perceptions of juveniles. Understanding police patrol officers' perceptions may inform policing policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The study aims to examine police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. The juvenile literature lacks enough material from the police perspective (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Researchers focused primarily on juvenile-police interactions from the perspective of juveniles. The few studies from the police perspective are outdated, and are limited (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Brown et al., 2019; Liederbach, 2007; Richards, 2019). They do not explore why officers perceive juvenile offenders as they do.

Police patrol officers and school resource officers are usually the first law enforcement personnel to contact youth (Development Services Group, 2018; Geller & Fagan, 2019; Lum & Nagin, 2017). In 2016, municipal police agencies employed more than 468,000 full-time sworn officers (Hyland & Davis, 2019). Almost 70% of a police agency's sworn officers work patrol, accounting for most police and public interactions. Law enforcement officers are the initial juvenile justice decision-makers who contact juveniles because they react to crimes in the community, at malls, schools, residences, and other venues (Development Services Group, 2018). Evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders requires examining why they perceive these youth the way they do.

Existing studies on police perceptions of juveniles have examined how police culture shapes patrol officer perceptions and the adequacy of police training. Also discussed was the impact of police legitimacy on juveniles' perceptions of the police, police discretion, police discretion with juveniles, and juveniles' perceptions of the police. Adolescent brain development and how juvenile perceptions of the police are affected by teenage development are assessed.

Finally, the literature review explores programs that may improve police and juvenile perceptions of one another.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Akers and Burgess's (2019) social learning theory framed the author's study. Social learning theory is among the most popular explanations for deviant conduct theory. They argued that criminal conduct is learned in a social setting while interacting with people (Garduno, 2019; Kabiri et al., 2020; Sanden & Wentz, 2017; Snipes et al., 2019). Advocates of social learning theory claim that learning is a mental process in a social environment, and watching and mimicking the actions of others drives learning. Akers held that differential association—patterns of interactions with individuals who define lawbreaking as good or bad—is the most basic form of social learning (Snipes et al., 2020). Humans collect information from these observations and decide whether to model the behavior (Akers & Jennings, 2019; Garduno, 2019; Kabiri et al., 2020; Sanden & Wentz, 2017; Snipes et al., 2019).

Social context reinforces behavior. Differential association, differential reinforcement, imitation, and definitions are the principal components of social learning in criminal justice. The concept of differential association acknowledges that the people/groups with which one engages provide the social context for social learning. A person interacts differentially with persons who expose them to standard definitions, ideals, and mindsets, positive or negative, to a particular action, as well as representations and social rewards/punishers. Individuals are more likely to perform criminal or deviant acts if they are differentially linked with criminals or pro-criminals. If people differentially connect more with compliant individuals, they are more likely to avoid crime/deviance.

Differential reinforcement relates to natural or expected behavior outcomes (Akers & Jennings, 2019; Kabiri et al., 2020; Krohn, 2019; Sanden & Wentz, 2017; Snipes et al., 2019). Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment all play a role in differential reinforcement. The more often and highly rewarded a behavior is, the more probable one is to participate in that behavior given the chance and situation. Even when presented with other options, the individual is inclined to pick the most regular and strongly reinforced actions.

Imitation involves both the watching of conduct modeled by others and the evaluation of the consequences for oneself (Krohn, 2019). Imitation occurs when an individual performs a behavior that they have either indirectly or directly witnessed another person do. For example, if a child observes their father abusing their mother and then proceeds to mistreat his sister similarly, the child emulates the behavior (the abuse) modeled by the parent (the father). In addition, the likelihood that a person will mimic a behavior might depend on other factors, including the model's traits, the observed behavior, and the repercussions of the model's conduct.

Definitions refer to a person's principles, views, or reasons for committing a crime (Snipes et al., 2019). Social learning theory's definitions refer to an individual's beliefs, orientations, and perspectives toward criminal/deviant or compliant conduct (Krohn, 2019). In theory, definitions relate to the spectrum of perceptions, attitudes, and principles individuals use to define or analyze specific actions. Those actions can be positive or negative, good or bad, preferable, unacceptable, justified, unjustified, acceptable, improper, excusable, or unforgivable.

Factors that influence criminal behavior and delinquency also influence police perceptions. Social learning theory is relevant to frame the researcher's study of police patrol

officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. The police department is a social organization in which shared values, meanings, and actions are reinforced (Garduno, 2019). Studies of police culture suggest that police officers' peers, police supervisors, the officers' principles, and the work environment collectively impact police perceptions (Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017). Peer pressure dominates law enforcement agencies, and most researchers and officers recognize a law enforcement subculture.

Subcultural attitudes, ideals, meanings, and manners of expression may encourage deviant behavior (Garduno, 2019). Social learning theory states that seeing and imitating others fosters learning. Akers argued that differential association—patterns of contact with people who view lawbreaking as good or bad—is the most basic form of social learning (Snipes et al., 2020). Law enforcement officers in organizations with deviant or unlawful practices feel forced to embrace the subculture (Garduno, 2019). The police subculture prompts officers to trust and count on their peers for help, safety, and solidarity. Police corruption subcultures include not reporting another officer, not revealing others if detected, not becoming part of another officer's problems, not entrusting recruits until they are vetted, and not disclosing information to anyone who does not need to know.

Related Literature

Police Perceptions of Juveniles

Current findings about contact between police and juveniles from a police perspective are sparse. Most existing literature on juvenile and police contact originated in the 1960s and 1970s and is too dated to have present relevance (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Existing literature suggests that police view juveniles as a problem to control (Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs &

Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Police often encounter juveniles during traffic stops and public order offenses, such as disorderly conduct. Personal and organizational variables, such as the officer's race, sex, education, parental situation, and career attitudes, influence police perceptions in urban and rural areas. Police relations with juveniles are often heated and complex because officers view them differently than adults and rely on their judgment to resolve most occurrences.

Richards et al. (2019) suggested that few studies have comprehensively documented and examined police perceptions of juvenile offenders. The authors began to address the need for more information on police perceptions of youth by sharing findings from qualitative interviews with 41 law enforcement officers from Queensland, Australia. Results suggest that while officers had various perspectives, they generally viewed juveniles as requiring intervention. The authors concluded that the participants' opinions of youth are troublesome, given that law enforcement intervention is a significant indicator of future juvenile involvement with the criminal justice system.

Liederbach (2007) used systematic social observations to evaluate police interactions with 13- to 17-year-olds in 20 non-urban Ohio police agencies. Three hundred and eighty-six police officers participated in the study. The study examined the issues non-urban officers faced when engaging with juveniles, the decisions they made to resolve those problems, and discretionary decisions during arrest scenarios. Findings have suggested that law enforcement-juvenile encounters for minor disruptions and petty thefts were infrequent and nonviolent. Regardless of area type, law enforcement routinely issue warnings to juveniles rather than enforcing the law. However, this finding varied because non-urban youths are likelier to be involved in traffic-related violations.

Lynn Skaggs and Sun (2017) used qualitative methods to assess rural law enforcement and juvenile interactions in Christian County, Kentucky. Their participants were 15 police officers who completed questionnaires designed to evaluate contextual, officer, institutional, and community influences on police assertive and supportive conduct with juveniles using data from a lightly populated area. Their results suggested that organizational features impact police officer-supporting behaviors. However, authority and deviance could not predict police behavior.

Police Culture

Police culture shapes police perceptions of juveniles (Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017). Police culture is a widely accepted definition among police professionals, researchers, and the public that focuses on the commonly accepted perceptions, principles, and standards police officers use to deal with stress in their interactions with people and their supervisors (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Ingram et al., 2018; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Patterson & King, 2022; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021; Turner, 2022). Peers mold police culture, individual officers, work environments including low and high crime areas, and rank-based attitudes (Ballucci et al., 2017; Brough et al., 2016; Campeau, 2015; Farkas et al., 2020; Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021). Public attitudes toward police officers also shape police culture. Marier and Moule (2018) used quantitative methods to examine 12,376 sworn participants to evaluate the effect of public opinion on police officers. Officers who perceived more public dislike expressed higher degrees of social separation, workgroup cohesion, pessimism, and coercive views. Law enforcement ethnographers, police executives, and editorialists have argued that public attitudes impact police officers' duties, and findings suggest that public antagonism affects law enforcement culture.

Demirkol and Nalla (2019) used quantitative methods with 1,970 Turkish police officers to measure six elements of the police culture phenomenon: autonomy, authority, cynicism, loyalty, professional identity, and solidarity. Their findings suggested that police culture is more complicated and diverse than described in existing studies. Gutschmidt and Vera (2020) used quantitative methods to assess police culture. Participants in the study were 153 German law enforcement personnel who reported 20 law enforcement cultural traits like bravado, devotion, and camaraderie in their most recent workgroups on a questionnaire. Results indicate that conservatism, department pride, team identification, and attentiveness influence police culture.

Ingram et al. (2018) used quantitative methods and measured 1,022 law enforcement officers' cultural attitudes and behavior with a survey measuring use-of-force policies, law enforcement culture, organization, and background traits. Their results suggested that work team culture and behavior may be linked. However, the link may need to be clarified, and law enforcement culture and conduct should be examined multi-dimensionally. Silver et al. (2017) surveyed 781 US police officers using a quantitative approach to examine individual, institutional, and situational drivers of support for total police culture, legally just techniques, and use of force. Their results indicated that police officer qualities only support police culture for supervisory jobs and race. The study also found a link between police culture, use of force, procedural fairness, and how youth perceive the police.

Cordner (2017) examined quantitative survey findings from 13,000 sworn law enforcement officers and 89 U.S. police and sheriff's organizations to assess police officers' views of the public, police work, and police management and determine if their personalities and affiliations shape their beliefs. Results suggest that the perceptions of police officers are more favorable than anticipated and do not vary substantially by officer attributes. However, they

fluctuate significantly across police organizations, indicating that police culture is, to a considerable extent, an organizational situation, not merely a professional one. Porter et al. (2017) used quantitative methods to examine how police culture impacts perceptions of demeanor and the use of force against citizens. They evaluated survey data from 577 Australian law enforcement trainees and found that their positive responses reflected thorough hiring practices. However, elements of police culture, such as cynicism and police authority, and police officer traits and background characteristics vary. Some variables could support disrespect toward citizens, the use of force, and not reporting fellow officers who are disrespectful or unlawfully use force.

Police Training

Evaluating police training and how that training may impact police perceptions is essential for understanding how police perceive juveniles. Police training affects how police officers view the public (Antrobus et al., 2019; Development Services Group, 2018). Wolfe et al. (2019) used quantitative methods to investigate what works with police training. The participants were 113 officers from law enforcement agencies in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Tucson, Arizona. The findings of their study suggested that participants' desire to train and their perceptions of supervisory organizational fairness were positively associated with their perceptions of training.

Sloan and Paoline (2021b) used quantitative methods to evaluate police academy training to determine their training areas of focus using national-level police academy data from 591 police academies. Their results suggested that training is limited to six key areas: operational training, firearms/defensive tactics training, legal education, community-oriented policing training, self-improvement training, and specific topics. Significant differences in the total

contact hours needed to graduate from police academies and the distribution of those hours across topic areas varied. Some academies prioritized critical training topics, while others prioritized less. A key finding of the study is that police recruits do not need additional basic training hours.

Sloan and Paoline (2021a) used quantitative methods to evaluate the contrast between municipal and university police training. They evaluated national-level police academy instructors and curriculum data from 591 police academies. Basic law enforcement training content depended on the location of the academy. The findings suggested that academic institutions should reimagine basic law enforcement training programs to produce guardians and heal public-police relations. The study's limitations included 10-year-old data and the fact that the researchers needed to assess the instructors.

While fundamental police training is comparable, researchers recommend adding social, cognitive, emotional, and moral training to improve officer well-being and community engagement (Blumberg et al., 2019; McLean et al., 2019). Although most policing training focuses on arrests, defensive tactics, and weapons skills, Blumberg et al. (2019) recommended psychological skills training to promote officer well-being and community interactions. McLean et al. (2019) found that policing professionals propose switching from a warrior mindset, where officers see themselves as fighting evil, to a caretaker mindset to strengthen law enforcement-community relations. Lynch (2019) agreed that law enforcement training should be reevaluated. Lynch argued that law enforcement officers spend most of their training hours aspiring to fight the public, disregarding methods that could de-escalate or avert a potentially violent interaction. Relying on such techniques magnifies the hazards of policing, distorts police operations, and validates violent conflict resolution.

McLean et al. (2019) used quantitative methods with 484 police officers from two U.S. police agencies in the Southeast and Southwest to evaluate the warrior/guardian concept. Their findings suggested that the warrior/guardian concept yielded different results. On the other hand, the guardian mindsets prioritized contact with residents and less use of force. Their findings linked the warrior mindset to weaker communication, more substantial control priorities in citizen interactions, and a more favorable attitude toward using force.

Schulenberg and Warren (2009) suggested more research on specialized juvenile training, as patrol officers frequently interact with youth. Specialized training for youth issues is hard to judge because police officers do not discuss how it applies to their jobs. Juveniles are treated differently than adults because they do not have the same level of knowledge and may have unique needs. Training programs and law enforcement officers' confidence and effectiveness must be improved to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Police Procedural Justice and Juveniles

Police interactions have changed juvenile attitudes toward police officers (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Dennison & Finkeldey, 2021; Development Services Group, 2018; Fine, 2020; Hofer, 2019; McGlynn-Wright, 2020; Nagin, 2020; Novich & Hunt, 2017; Piccirillo, 2021; Pina-Sanchez & Brunton Smith, 2020; Saarikkomäki, 2020; Scrase, 2020; Vidal, 2016). Juveniles with more police encounters are subject to more negative outcomes, such as negative attitudes toward the police and future criminality. Cavanagh et al. (2020) used quantitative methods and examined 338 Hispanic adolescent-mother pairings to determine if legal cynicism causes youth to commit more crimes. Findings suggest that legal cynicism comes from teenagers' opinions of police action, not their moms, and youth who received fair treatment from the police were less

likely to commit crimes. The findings enhance knowledge of the causes of legal cynicism and can guide practices for law enforcement contacts with juveniles.

Fine et al. (2021) used quantitative methods to measure the street code, a subculture's habits, and beliefs that undermine law enforcement and increase lawlessness, affecting youth. The participants were 1,200 juvenile male offenders. Results suggest that unfriendly communities and negative interactions with people in positions of authority affected street code attitudes. The study showed that fair treatment by law enforcement negates the street code's influence on youth.

Geller and Fagan (2019) evaluated personal law enforcement encounters, law enforcement contacts among friends and acquaintances, and attitudes toward the law and law enforcement-community ties. They examined data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study (FFCWS), a longitudinal cohort survey of urban youth that includes urban family, social, and environmental data. The survey included interviews with almost 3000 children and 5,000 spouses with babies born between 1998–2000 in 20 U.S. cities. Their findings suggested that actual and indirect police contact increased legal skepticism, possibly affecting juveniles' perceptions of the law and legal system contact. Juveniles reporting negative interactions were more cynical.

In other studies, race and ethnicity affected law enforcement legitimacy (Fine et al., 2021; Schimmack & Carlson, 2020; Slocum & Wiley, 2018). Fine et al. (2021) evaluated how 1,216 Black, Latino, and White 13 to 22-year-olds viewed police legitimacy and bias. Findings from the Crossroads study suggested that law enforcement credibility fell during adolescence, before age 18, reached its lowest point at age 18, and recovered during early adulthood. Black and Latino youth had similar assessments of police enforcement legitimacy at age 13. At age 14,

Black adolescents had poor opinions of law enforcement credibility, which persisted throughout emerging adulthood.

Slocum and Wiley (2018) used quantitative methods to explore how law enforcement-initiated encounters affect legal outcomes, how prior contentment with police contact affects procedural fairness, reporting techniques, violence, and delinquency, and how Blacks, Whites, and Latinos interact. They analyzed data from the second National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training program's adolescent survey (GREAT), which included 3,820 sixth and seventh graders participating in 31 middle schools. Youth who had been jailed or charged, mainly Black and Latino, had worse outcomes. The findings suggested that procedural justice reduces disadvantages for youth.

Novich and Hunt (2017) examined police contact with gang members of color who distribute drugs in San Francisco, California, using qualitative interviews to gather data on gang members' credibility. Black and Hispanic men and women were most of the 253 interviews. Those who believed they were questioned for good reasons had positive perceptions of law enforcement. Conversely, participants who considered the stop unreasonable had negative perceptions of law enforcement.

International research has also shown that procedural justice enhanced youth perceptions of law enforcement (Akinlabi, 2017; Baz Cores & Fernández-Molina, 2020; De Boer et al., 2022; Liu & Liu, 2017; Trinkner et al., 2019; Van Petegem, 2021). Liu and Liu (2017) applied quantitative analysis to a 2012 dataset from Guangzhou, China, involving 711 participants from high schools to examine procedural justice. Their study showed that procedural fairness and shared values predict youth support for law enforcement and compliance. Distributive fairness influenced compliance independently, while law enforcement interrogation decreased

compliance. Akinlabi (2017) used quantitative methods and compared police legitimacy and juvenile attitudes in Nigeria with Western nations. The participants were 305 Nigerian secondary school students ages 13–18 polled to determine the power of procedural justice on police conduct. The findings suggested that procedural justice better predicts police legitimacy than police effectiveness.

Baz Cores and Fernández-Molina (2020) used quantitative methods to examine police legitimacy attitudes as a component of legal socialization, drawing from a subsample of 2,041 13–18-year-olds from the Third International Self-Report Delinquency Study in Spain. The findings suggested that law enforcement-accepting youth committed fewer crimes. Also, law enforcement legitimacy moderated parental supervision, educational attachment, procedural fairness, and juvenile misbehavior. Trinkner et al. (2019) used quantitative methods to analyze a juvenile population in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to assess law enforcement legitimacy, beliefs about crime, law enforcement, judicial cynicism, illegal activity, and procedural justice. The participants were 750 12-year-olds with histories of direct and indirect interactions with law enforcement. The results suggested that direct and indirect law enforcement interactions reduced procedural justice. Unlike judicial cynicism, law enforcement credibility was linked to procedural justice and criminality, and law enforcement legitimacy, but not judicial cynicism, reduced self-reported criminal activity.

Researchers have discovered negative opinions about police legitimacy among adolescents, juveniles of color, and drug-involved gang members, and determining how to improve juvenile perceptions of the police is essential. Fine et al. (2020) used quantitative methods to examine adolescents' perceptions of police credibility. The first survey evaluated 959 seven to 14-year-olds on law enforcement credibility. The second survey included 499 students

from Compton, California. Both studies found that race-graded views of police legitimacy decreased in pre-adolescence.

Vidal et al. (2016) used quantitative methods to examine 98 youths and determine how regular police contact and awareness of Miranda warnings and interrogation tactics affected judgments of police support, impartiality, and trustworthiness. Their findings suggested that cynicism about the law and a lower sense of duty to follow it were linked to more police contact. In addition, knowledge of Miranda rights and police interrogation methods reduced law enforcement legitimacy and legal obligation. Legal socialization programs that promote positive youth-law enforcement interactions may lessen unfavorable perceptions and improve law enforcement trust and equality with adolescent offenders.

Police Discretion

Examining how police officers use discretion is essential, as perceptions may influence discretion. Police officers rely on discretion to perform their duties (Nickels, 2007; Phillips, 2016; Schulenberg, 2015; Wortley, 2003). For example, they use discretion when stopping cars, making arrests, and using force. Therefore, organizational policy and situational conditions that affect police officers' use of police discretion must be examined.

Huff (2021) used quantitative methods to examine how situational factors, the responding police, and community surroundings affect discretion with arrests. Results from 835 Phoenix, Arizona, police officers investigating 835,381 arrest situations in 388 precincts were evaluated. The findings of that study suggested that situational, police, and community factors influenced police discretion and arrest judgments. Event features, police personnel, and communities explain most of the differences in discretion used.

Schulenberg (2015) used field observations from 72 ride-a-longs with 62 officers in a mid-sized Canadian police force to analyze the factors identified in discretion studies as impacting police behavior on three variables: conversational requests and directives, laying a criminal charge, and police assistance. Their findings from applying Systematic Social Observation (SSO) and quantitative methods suggested that contempt and disobedience affect discretion differently. Situational factors, including disability, citizen attitude, and contempt for the police, predicted detention or prosecution more than non-dispositional outcomes. Also identified was what drove police action beyond the decision to arrest or file charges and law enforcement insights that drive retraining and evidence-based policies to improve citizen opinions of procedural fairness.

Worden and McLean (2018) investigated Albany, New York, police officer discretion in initiating LEAD diversions from April 1, 2016, when LEAD began, until March 31, 2017. LEAD is a pre-arrest diversion program for low-level offenders whose criminal behavior is motivated by substance abuse, mental health problems, homelessness, or poverty. The researchers collected qualifying instances and analyzed 237 semi-structured police interviews. The findings showed that police officers' perceptions of diversion and LEAD were conflicting, affecting their discretion.

Brunetto et al. (2017) used social exchange theory and survey-based self-reporting data from 193 Australian, 588 American, and 249 Maltese police personnel to examine how managerial support affects police officers' discretionary authority and work engagement in three countries. Results indicate that the three countries' management support frameworks and discretionary power views differed. Police in all three nations found organizational leadership

support unsatisfactory. Also, police officers in the United States have more authority to use discretion than foreign police officers.

Police Discretion with Juveniles

Police officers' discretion with youth affects youth, as police are often the entry point for youth into the criminal justice system (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Kratcoski et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Warren, 2009; Smyth, 2011). Arrests, court referrals, and diversion from the formal process highlight law enforcement's interactions with youth (Development Services Group, 2018). Because of youth involvement in criminal activities and deviant conduct, police and juveniles often come into contact, often in violent and confrontational situations (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Smyth, 2011). The gravity of the crime, remorse, deference, compliance, prior record, nature of the accusation, complainant's intention to pursue, youth's race, ethnicity, and age, as well as the area and local ordinances, all affect police discretion with juveniles (Brown et al., 2009; Development Services Group, 2018; Kratcoski et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Warren, 2009).

Brown et al. (2009) used quantitative methods to evaluate data from systematic social observation of Cincinnati Police Division patrol officers from April 1997 to April 1998 to compare police officer decision-making with juvenile and adult offenders. Their findings suggested that juveniles are more likely to be arrested than adults. The offender's age, location of the interaction, and police officer's race affected arrest decisions for juveniles more than adults. Parker and Sarre (2008) used quantitative methods and examined elements that affect police discretion with youth offenders. The participants were 223 New South Wales Police personnel, with ranks ranging from constables to inspectors, who answered written questions about how

they would manage minor charges. Findings suggest that police responses to similar activities, especially minor ones, may vary, and police officers do not treat juvenile offenders uniformly.

Peterson (2022) used qualitative semi-structured interviews with rural Texas police officers to study non-arrest decision-making and the informal policing of teens. The participants were 30 rural Texas law enforcement personnel interviewed about their experiences with delinquent youth. The study, which covered law enforcement interactions with youth under 18 suspected of status violations or juvenile acts, suggested that location, sociocultural background, and discretion all influence law enforcement decision-making in rural areas. Samuels-Wortley (2019) used quantitative methods to investigate first-time marijuana possession and petty theft offenders' gender, race, and areas they lived to determine if there were racial disparities between juveniles charged or diverted for marijuana possession and minor thefts. They also collected police data from a local law enforcement agency in Ontario, Canada, involving 6,479 incidents involving offenders 12–18 years old. The findings suggested that racial differences in youth charged or diverted for marijuana possession and petty theft. Black youth were more likely to be prosecuted than other ethnicities and less likely to be warned.

Juvenile Perceptions of the Police

Positive juvenile and police encounters are essential for developing police and juvenile relations (Development Services Group, 2018; Fix et al., 2022). Juvenile perceptions of police officers appear to influence their desire to interact with police. Numerous studies have demonstrated that minority youth perceive police officers poorly due to negative interactions (Development Services Group, 2018; Fine et al., 2020; Fix et al., 2022; Foster et al., 2022; Gleeson, 2018; Haller et al., 2018; Redner-Vera & Galeste, 2015; Richards et al., 2018; Testa et al., 2021; Walsh, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Fine et al. (2020) used a quantitative method to study

Monitoring the Future's cross-sectional cohorts of 12th graders from 1976 to 2016 to determine whether youths' views of law enforcement have changed, whether juveniles were frightened about crime, and whether negative law enforcement attitudes increased crime-related concerns. The findings suggested that White youths were less anxious about crime and viewed law enforcement officers more positively than Black and Latino youths.

Redner-Vera and Galeste (2015) evaluated minority youth attitudes toward law enforcement, focusing on American Indian youth. They examined 5,477 eighth graders from 11 U.S. cities using data from the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) national evaluation. Their results suggested that American Indian juveniles have unfavorable views of law enforcement, like their minority peers. Native youth with increased delinquency/victimization, delinquent peer groups, community confidence, and solid racial identification demonstrated negative law enforcement views. Conversely, self-esteem and perceived security were linked to positive law enforcement views.

Testa et al. (2021) assessed the association between juvenile-law enforcement contact and future criminal orientation using Pathways to Desistance data to monitor serious juvenile offenders from childhood through maturity. Phoenix and Philadelphia County juveniles convicted of serious crimes were eligible, and 1,354 14 to 17-year-olds were included in the study. Personal and vicarious law enforcement contacts inversely affected future orientation changes. Whether justified or not, law enforcement contacts harm future orientation.

Walsh et al. (2019) used quantitative methods and monitored 1,216 male adolescents for two years after their first official juvenile justice encounters to evaluate future outcomes. They showed positive law enforcement encounters after a juvenile's initial imprisonment and reduced self-reported criminality 2 years later. Only moderately delinquent youth were associated.

Callous-unemotional (C.U.) qualities were associated with worse ratings of law enforcement interactions and increased mistrust of the court system. However, they did not reduce the links between encounters, attitudes, illegal behavior, or peer criminality.

Wang et al. (2019) used quantitative methods to provide an international perspective on juvenile perceptions of law enforcement. They assessed 6,500 Chinese youths' opinions of law enforcement, examining the potential effects of culturally traditional traits. The researchers evaluated connections between traditional Chinese and Western popular cultures. Their findings showed that juveniles with a stronger affinity to traditional Chinese culture that respects parents/teachers are more likely to like police officers. Chinese Western pop culture adherents are more likely to dislike police officers.

Gleeson (2018) used qualitative methods to investigate how Irish juveniles viewed law enforcement. Participants in non-criminal law enforcement interactions were selected for the study, and 10 participants from two juvenile facilities were interviewed. The results revealed that emotions related to being stereotyped and harassed, having no say during encounters with police, and an inability to predict police behavior influenced juveniles' impressions of law enforcement. Haller et al. (2018) examined Nordic ethnic minority juvenile and police interactions by conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with 121 youth from Scandinavia. Most interviewees describe "minor harassments"—police contacts marked by small mutual intimidation tactics and discreet provocations, shown in distinct body language, dispositions, and expressions that convey contemptuous opinions (Haller, 2018, p. 4). The results suggested that "minor harassment" was a form of contentious communication encoded in frequent involuntary police-ethnic minority juvenile contacts that could produce worse outcomes for juveniles.

Juvenile Brain Development

Juvenile and adult developmental differences may affect police-youth encounters (Bonnie & Scott, 2013; Development Services Group, 2018). Juveniles differ from adults: they lack personal self-regulation, are more susceptible to peer pressure, and cannot effectively analyze long-term repercussions. Studies have established that juveniles outgrow delinquency and criminal activity by maturity. Understanding juvenile growth can help police communicate with most children in the community and schools.

Juvenile justice policies use adult procedures, despite scientific evidence that the juvenile brain analyzes, interprets, and reacts differently (Bostic et al., 2014; Pope et al., 2012). Police often respond to juvenile issues, but they rarely undergo youth communication and interaction training. Police and juvenile brain development must be examined together. Developmental differences between adults and juveniles may impact police-juvenile interactions (Andrews et al., 2021; Cavanagh, 2022; Ciranka & van den Bos, 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Mercurio et al., 2020; Timmer et al., 2020).

Juveniles lack self-regulation, are more susceptible to social pressure, and cannot predict long-term consequences (Andrews et al., 2021; Foulkes & Blakemore, 2018; Orendain et al., 2022; Sawyer et al., 2018; Vijayakumar et al., 2018; Wierenga et al., 2018). Most adolescent criminals do not continue their criminal behavior into adulthood, and police officers can better communicate with most adolescents by studying youth brain development. Cavanagh (2022) suggested that developmental distinctions between juveniles and adults require a unique response to juvenile criminality. Natural risk-taking increases during youth and may increase criminal activities: adolescent delinquency peaks and declines with psychosocial development. Unfortunately, juvenile justice strategies in the United States conflict with juvenile growth, and

current tactics may hinder juveniles' psychological health needed to leave crime and lead productive lives as adults.

Conversely, although studies support mitigating juvenile culpability because of brain development, others do not. Maroney (2009-2010) suggested that various approaches to treating young offenders were necessary because juvenile offenders had raised arguments for adolescent brain development as a defense. Maroney's findings indicated that individual differences in brain development are to blame for most failed attempts to use adolescent brain development as a defense because teenagers' structural and functional variations may not translate into predictable behavioral differences. Also, a lack of accountability is a moral and judicial issue, not a scientific issue. The brain can develop until the mid-20s, so there is no scientific basis for an age limit of 18 to define adulthood. Finally, because females mature earlier than males, there could be a problem with equal treatment and individuality.

Males (2009) argued that warnings from top scholars suggested that brain science cannot show that juvenile actions are internally motivated, that theories claiming adolescents' cognitive deficiencies support risk-taking, and that juveniles take unnecessary risks have been proven using biased methods without excluding other explanations. The latest demographic, criminal, and health data showed that juveniles do not take more risks than adults. Their conduct is linked to poverty and adult conduct rather than juvenile development. Males concluded that adolescent brain development, youth perspectives, and policies need more analysis from researchers.

Finally, Willoughby et al. (2014) suggested that taking risks peaks in middle puberty, when affective/approach and cognitive control mechanisms are most uncoordinated and are challenged by a critical examination of taking risks and rates of mortality throughout the lifespan. The highest rates of taking risks, such as drinking and using drugs, are found in

emerging populations, such as post-secondary students, emphasizing the importance of social context in taking risks. Additionally, risk-taking can be managed. Future risk studies for older individuals should consider risky financial issues, betting, and marital infidelity. A lifespan approach that considers various samples (such as divorced people) and concentrates on how situational and trait-level traits regulate neural system-behavior connections helps address critical gaps in the literature on teenage cognitive growth and risk-taking.

Policing and Juvenile Brain Development

Due to their difficult job, law enforcement receives considerable training, and most law enforcement officers need more training on juvenile behavior (Fix et al., 2021; Williams, 2020). Fix et al. (2021) used quantitative methods to survey 1,030 law enforcement personnel from 24 police agencies to assess their training involving juvenile interactions. They evaluated self-identified training demands, how law enforcement experience and position affected them, and how rank influenced law enforcement officers' views of juveniles and training requirements. Their findings suggested that school resource officers were more confident in working with juveniles than patrol officers. Their study also showed that beat and neighborhood patrol officers were far less likely than resource officers to feel prepared to work with traumatized youths than trainees and non-patrol officers. Meyer and Repucci (2007) used quantitative methods to survey 332 police officers on interrogation strategies and youth developmental problems. While the police acknowledged differences between adolescents and adults, how they regarded each was inconsistent. Their findings suggested that police officers in the study believed juveniles could be treated like adults.

Police patrol officers require training because police and juvenile interactions are affected by physiological differences between youth and adults (Aalsma et al., 2018; Bateson et al., 2019;

Development Services Group, 2018; Jackson et al., 2019). Juveniles lack emotional control, are more susceptible to social pressure, and can predict future consequences less accurately. Better communication with juveniles requires law enforcement officers to learn how juveniles differ from adults. Juvenile mental health training, enhancing enforcement confrontations with violent juveniles, and working with traumatized youth are recommended for law enforcement officers.

Aalsma et al. (2018) used quantitative methods to evaluate training on the teen brain. The participants were 232 law enforcement officers and juvenile justice officials. Policing the Teen Brain, a pre-arrest treatment for officers, was the training course's name. Results suggest that approximately 87% of respondents who completed pre- and post-test surveys demonstrated significant differences before and after the training. Individuals were also more likely to have favorable dispositions toward juveniles after receiving the training through training. Further, law enforcement agencies need specific training that focuses on the psychological problems of juveniles, community-based programs, and de-escalation techniques in response to requests for a response involving juveniles in mental crises (Booth et al., 2017; Brady & Childs, 2022; Childs et al., 2020).

Brady and Childs (2022) used quantitative methods to assess a law enforcement training program on adolescent mental health. The participants were 159 law enforcement officers who finished the training. Their results suggested that law enforcement officers were pleased with the instruction and that the training components were enhanced. However, the study had limitations, such as a small sample size and generalization to larger departments.

Using quantitative methods, Kubiak et al. (2019) also examined the feasibility, desirability, faithfulness, and effects of juvenile Crisis Intervention Team training for youth (CIT-Y). The participants were 127 officers who completed the pre/post assessment in 8-hour

pieces of training in two geographically different counties. Their findings showed that CIT-Y instruction was viable in those areas and appealing to officers. The pre/post-tests showed that 86% of law enforcement officers improved their perceptions and knowledge of juveniles with mental health issues, and interviews showed improved officer performance.

Mental illness is common in juvenile offenders (Gearhart et al., 2021; Gearhart et al., 2023; Janopaul-Naylor et al., 2019). Law enforcement confronts these juveniles first. However, many law enforcement officers cannot understand or manage their mental health difficulties. Community policing has boosted mental illness awareness and reduced juvenile arrests statewide but has not affected mental health care access. Janopaul-Naylor et al. (2019) used quantitative methods to assess whether law enforcement–mental health partnerships benefited adolescent mental illness treatment in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They combined 200 summoned/arrested or diverted youth healthcare and police records to examine healthcare use before and after police encounters. The results supported integrating police enforcement and community mental health practitioners to improve health accessibility, stigma, and safety.

Herz (2001) used qualitative methods to investigate the effectiveness of an experimental training course designed to enhance officers' knowledge of developmental variations among juveniles and to alter perceptions of their duty in interacting with belligerent or potentially hostile youths. The participants for the study were 38 law enforcement officers from three law enforcement agencies in Sarpy County, Nebraska. Herz compared a trained and a comparative law enforcement group. The findings showed that training influenced officer reactions immediately after training and throughout follow-up. The results also suggested that most trained law enforcement officers who confronted violent youths used and found helpful verbal techniques from their training.

Riccardi et al. (2021) used quantitative surveys that evaluated police officers' perceptions of juveniles before and after a 3-hour course on Recognizing and Responding to Traumatized Youth. Survey responses totaled 944 pre-training and 871 post-training survey responses from juvenile training for law enforcement officers. Law enforcement officers surveyed before the study had negative perceptions of juveniles but wanted to change their perceptions. Ricciardi et al.'s 2021 results suggested that with post-training, participants improved their self-skill assessments and identified behavior-related improvements.

Mehari et al. (2021) used mixed methods and evaluated the effectiveness of the workshop. The participants were 98 law enforcement officers and cadets surveyed in 3-hour monthly sessions. The workshop utilized a participatory action framework to increase juvenile development and trauma knowledge and promote de-escalation techniques with juveniles. After the instruction, the officers increased their self-confidence when collaborating with juveniles and reduced anxiety during these interactions. Participants' comments suggested the instruction was well-received, and the findings indicated that a quick session could improve law enforcement officers' juvenile knowledge, self-effectiveness, and ease of interaction.

De la Fontaine et al. (2022) used quantitative methods. They examined the effectiveness of Protecting and Serving a police training program based on more than 20 years of effective partnership between mental health and police to recognize and react to the feelings and emotions of juveniles exposed to violence. The study investigated 152 police officers' impressions, views, and comprehension of the training provided by six police departments. Knowledge, performance, and attitude were evaluated in pre- and post-training surveys to identify the procedure's status and the efficacy of the program delivery. The findings revealed high officer motivation and specific knowledge and skills deficiencies.

Programs to Improve Police and Youth Perceptions

Juvenile interactions are challenging for police officers (Development Services Group, 2018; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2018). For many youths, police officers are their first interaction with something justice-related in schools, their communities, or community service settings. The type of interaction, whether positive or negative, significantly influences juveniles. When interacting with youth, police officers can be influential and promote beneficial and productive results.

A police officer who creates a strong bond with juveniles can play a decisive, protective role for them (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2018). Police officers have various possibilities to interact with juveniles. Every year, over four million 16 and 17-year-olds encounter police officers. Conversely, while studies reveal that positive experiences with police indicate favorable attitudes regarding law enforcement, negative encounters indicate negative opinions.

Several findings suggested that programs involving police and youth working together were successful (Caldas et al., 2017; Fine et al., 2021; Fischer, 2021; Freiburger, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Padilla et al., 2022; Phillips & Cromwell, 2020). Positive Youth Development (PYD) included two studies measuring the benefits of a neighborhood program that encouraged adolescents to interact with police officers on specific projects (Fine et al., 2021). Both studies evaluated pupils in six California and New York City schools before and after the intervention. The findings suggest that law enforcement officers can work productively beyond enforcement operations.

Freiburger (2018) used quantitative methods to investigate the effectiveness of Students Talking it Over with Police (STOP), designed to enhance youths' attitudes toward police, their

desire to work with law enforcement, and their views of procedural justice. The study used an experimental method in 36 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, schools involving 119 youth. Freiburger conducted a pre- and post-test to evaluate the outcomes before and after the STOP program. The results suggested that STOP successfully improved juveniles' views of the police, their desire to collaborate with law enforcement, and their conceptions of procedural fairness. Further analysis indicated that STOP reversed some adverse effects of those interactions on juveniles' perceptions because those who had previous negative experiences with law enforcement experienced substantially larger rates of improvement in their attitudes toward procedural justice than those without negative interaction.

Lee et al. (2017) used a quasi-experimental quantitative pre-/post-survey study to evaluate the Side-by-Side Program. The Side-by-Side program was designed to improve police and youth relations by working together in a non-enforcement setting. The assessment examined whether and how program participation affected the perspectives and attitudes of police and juveniles. The study also evaluated juveniles' and police officers' program approval. Participants were 357 juveniles and 110 law enforcement officers. Their findings suggested that the training improved law enforcement officers' perceptions of juveniles regardless of gender, race, or employment length. In addition, juvenile program graduates had more positive sentiments toward law enforcement officers.

Phillips and Cromwell (2020) employed a qualitative interpretive methodology to evaluate a 1-day Outward Bound Police Youth Challenge (PYC) in Baltimore City to foster trust between middle and high school students and police officers. They conducted in-depth conversations with four juvenile graduates, nine law enforcement graduates, and four essential informants. One focus group consisted of five juveniles and their instructor, and the other

consisted of four PYC program moderators. Their results revealed that participants' attitudes toward each other improved.

Padilla et al. (2022) used qualitative methods and assessed a five-week voluntary curriculum, Team Kids Challenge, to integrate juveniles and police officers in a non-enforcement setting. They conducted interviews with 18 police officers who participated. Their findings showed enhanced police pro-social engagement, juvenile interactions, and satisfaction among police officers and juveniles. The study demonstrates how positive juvenile interactions positively influenced police perceptions.

While programs suggest positive results for police and juvenile relationships, other programs offer mixed results (Development Services Group, 2018). The original DARE program was implemented in schools between 1983 and 2009 to educate juveniles on effective peer rejection and refusal skills to say no to drugs and to peers who wanted to use them. School systems and local police formed a collaboration with law enforcement officers to implement the program. DARE was designed to change pupils' views and perceptions of law enforcement by humanizing law enforcement interactions with juveniles in a supportive instead of an enforcing capacity. Studies investigated the effectiveness of the DARE program, but fewer evaluated changes in students' perceptions of law enforcement.

The DARE evaluation revealed a statistically significant influence on pupils' attitudes toward law enforcement (Development Services Group, 2018). In contrast, another analysis found that DARE significantly influenced juveniles' and adults' attitudes toward law enforcement as they progressed from youth to adulthood. Police Athletic Leagues (PALS) are another example of a program with mixed results. PALS combat juvenile delinquency and aggression by providing juveniles with social, athletic, leisure, and educational options, such as

basketball, boxing, and mentorship. A study of a police athletic league basketball initiative in an urban region revealed that while law enforcement officers' views on juveniles changed dramatically from pre to post-test, juveniles' views toward law enforcement did not change significantly.

Akca and Jewell (2022) used mixed methods to investigate a program in an Indigenous community to improve police and youth relations. The Northeast Adolescents Violence Reduction Partnership (NYVRP) was a 5-year government initiative (2015–2020) to serve as a deterrent among 84 at-risk juveniles. The NYVRP relied on law enforcement to foster non-aggressive relationships with youth. They showed the model's conformity with the initiative's targeted outcomes and effectiveness in preventing youth violence and building strong relationships between police departments, Indigenous communities, and youth. The juveniles also believed the NYVRP reduced abusive behavior, and their self-reports indicated fewer connections with gangs, improved cultural links, and fewer graffiti offenses.

Payne et al. (2020) used qualitative methods to examine an arts-based restorative treatment in Gloucestershire, England, that sought to improve connections and promote stronger relationships in response to perceived problems with procedural justice, credibility, and community engagement between police and youth in the area. An ethnographic examination of the forum's practices and procedures involved primarily juveniles aged 13-16, with eight sessions involving 10-12 participants and 10 law enforcement officers at each session. Findings suggest that community-based arts programs are a powerful and efficient instrument for challenging established attitudes and can improve future interactions between police and juveniles.

Summary

Few studies exist on police and juvenile interactions from the police perspective, and the existing literature is insufficient to have an effect (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). The absence of current studies on police and juveniles may be attributable to emerging trends in police research (Liederbach, 2007). In the 1960s, findings suggested that police officer interactions with juveniles were frequently resolved without prosecuting youth. In the 1970s, policing researchers shifted their attention to other policing topics. From the end of the 1970s to the 1980s, police and juvenile interactions appeared to lose scholarly interest (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997).

Consequently, it is uncertain how effectively studies conducted decades ago depict the intricacy of police and juvenile interactions presently (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997). Limited findings suggested that individual police officer variables, proactive attitudes, punitive views, and organizational characteristics may affect police officers' perceptions of juveniles (Development Services Group, 2018). Richards et al. (2018) found that police officers regard juveniles as deficient in values and self-respect. Because of a lack of empirical data, learning how police officers perceive juveniles is crucial and will have substantial implications for law enforcement policy and practice (Liederbach, 2007; Richards, 2019).

Evaluating police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders is essential because unfavorable interactions with juveniles erode juveniles' trust in law enforcement and their view of the justice system's legitimacy. The findings suggested that youth with extensive police encounters mistrust the police (Development Services Group, 2018; Fix et al., 2022). Therefore, analyzing police perceptions of juveniles and examining police and juvenile contact from many

sources to evaluate police patrol officer perspectives of juveniles and the implications of those perceptions are critical. Addressing the lack of existing studies required an examination of existing studies on police perceptions of juveniles, police culture, police training, police procedural justice and juveniles, police discretion, police discretion with juveniles, juveniles, perceptions of the police, policing, adolescent development, and initiatives to improve police and youth interactions.

Existing quantitative and qualitative studies on police-youth interactions from the police perspective suggest that personal and organizational aspects, including the officer's sex, race, education level, status as a parent, and career outlook, influence police interactions (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards et al., 2018). Police officers frequently regarded the interactions as challenging and relied on their expertise to settle incidents (Richards, 2019). Other studies suggested that police consider youth a problem to control because of their amount of unobligated time (Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Also, police mainly contacted youth regarding minor crimes, traffic offenses, and public order issues in rural and urban areas with variations. The studies suggested that more research on police and youth interactions from a police perspective is essential.

The studies reviewed were all quantitative and uncovered mixed results about police culture. Some suggested that variables impact police culture (Gutschmidt & Vera, 2020; Ingram et al., 2018; Kurtz & Upton, 2017; Marnier & Moule, 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver et al., 2017; Silvestri, 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021). Other studies have suggested that police culture is a cumulative characteristic of patrol groups rather than individual characteristics (Ingram et al., 2018). Conversely, another study found that officer attributes are

irrelevant to police culture support, and institutional variables affect officers, not supervisors (Silver et al., 2017). Cordner (2017) suggested that the institution sets the tone for police culture, not individual officer characteristics, which is supported by a study suggesting that police culture influences the attitudes of police trainees toward citizens (Porter et al., 2017). Finally, Demirkol and Nalla (2019) suggested that police culture is more complicated and diverse than previously thought.

An overview of police training was provided. The studies reviewed were all quantitative. One study suggested that an individual's internal motivation impacts training, enthusiasm, and the officer's perception of their supervisor's fairness (Wolfe et al., 2019). Another study defined the six areas where police academies focus their training: operations, firearms, legal, community-oriented policing, self-improvement, and specific topics (Sloan & Paoline, 2021b).

Other studies suggest the type of training received depends on the academy's philosophy: traditional crime fighter or guardian (Blumberg et al., 2019; McLean et al., 2019). Sloan and Paoline (2021a & 2021b) found that training in municipalities emphasized the warrior approach, while higher education departments emphasized the guardian approach. Their results indicated that embracing the guardian approach can improve community relations. Finally, Schluenberg and Warren (2009) suggested that juveniles are treated differently from adults, since they lack competence and may have needs.

The research also suggests that police interactions with youth have a significant impact on their perceptions of procedural justice (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Development Services Group, 2018; Fine et al., 2020; Geller & Fagan, 2019; Hofer et al., 2019; Novich & Hunt, 2017; Piccirillo et al., 2021; Vidal et al., 2016). The studies reviewed were quantitative and suggested

that youth reporting more police contact viewed the police as less legitimate. Results from other international studies indicate that youth reporting equitable treatment were more likely to obey the law (Akinlabi, 2017; Baz Cores & Fernández-Molina, 2020; Liu & Liu, 2017; Novich & Hunt, 2017). However, Trinkner et al. (2019) showed mixed results. Other studies have suggested that race, ethnicity, and neighborhood determine whether youth regard the police as legitimate (Fine et al., 2021).

Consistent among studies was the finding that Black youth had the lowest levels of viewing the police as legitimate (Fine et al., 2021; Slocum & Wiley, 2018). The results concurred that equitable, just treatment supports police legitimacy. Vidal et al. (2016) examined how understanding Miranda rights and police questioning methods decreased perceived law enforcement legitimacy and legal obligation. The findings implied that legal socialization initiatives that encourage positive youth–law enforcement contacts may help reduce negative opinions and build law enforcement trust and equality in offending juveniles.

Researchers have also discussed how police perceptions may influence police discretion (Brunetto et al., 2017; Huff, 2021; Schulenberg, 2015; Worden & McLean, 2018). Factors affecting police discretion include beliefs and situational, community, and police variables. Some critical factors influencing discretion were citizens' attitudes and contempt. Arrest-producing events likely involved victims, and arrests typically occurred in Black and Hispanic communities.

Of the juvenile justice touch points established by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency (OJJDP), law enforcement has the most impact at three points: arrests, court referrals, and diversions (Development Service Group, 2018). Police may caution juveniles about the long-term implications of continued disruption and offending, and free them, divert them

juveniles from court system engagement and connect them with community-based resources, or arrest them and report them to the courts in response to a violation. A study comparing police discretion with juveniles and adults suggested that youths were more likely to be arrested than adults (Brown et al., 2009). Another study discovered that police do not uniformly apply discretion with juvenile contacts (Parker & Sarre, 2008). Other studies identified factors that affect the use of discretion with youth. Some factors include racial disparities, with Black and Hispanic youth more likely to be arrested than White youth (Peterson, 2022; Samuels-Wortley, 2019).

Researchers recognize that positive police and youth relationships benefit youth (Development Services Group, 2018; Fix et al., 2022). Fine, Donley et al. (2020) found that White youth perceived law enforcement more positively than Black and Hispanic youth and were less worried about crime. Also, a study suggests that Black and American Indian juveniles have more negative perceptions of the police than White youth (Redner-Vera & Galeste, 2015). Most studies indicate that whether legitimate or unjustified, youth contact with the police can lead to adverse outcomes, such as further delinquency (Beardslee et al., 2019; Cauffman et al., 2021; Del Toro et al., 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Padganokar, 2021; Testa et al., 2021; Turney et al., 2022). International findings also support results from studies in the United States about juvenile perceptions, particularly among minorities (Gleeson, 2018; Haller et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2019).

Studies have shown that the juvenile brain is different from the adult brain, suggesting that juveniles should be treated differently in the criminal justice system (Aalsma et al., 2018; Brady & Childs, 2022; Kubiak et al., 2019; Mehari et al., 2021; Riccardi et al., 2021). Conversely, other studies suggest scientific limitations with theories of adolescent brain

development as a legal defense because of individual differences, brain development into the mid-20s, girls maturing faster than boys, and risk-taking occurring during the college years with substance use and data supporting that adults take equal or more risks than youth (Males, 2009; Marone, 2013; Willoughby et al., 2014). Results from studies showed that police patrol officers do not receive adequate training on juvenile topics (Fix et al., 2021; Meyer & Reppucci, 2007). Police officers benefited from and showed improvement after receiving adolescent development training. Studies also suggested that police officers desired juvenile-specific training.

The literature review concluded with joint police and juvenile initiatives in non-enforcement settings. The studies examined were qualitative and quantitative. Some of the studies brought youth and the police together in non-enforcement settings. Various arts-based and community-based programs were examined, and their scope included international settings.

Most studies reported positive police and youth perceptions after interacting in programs (Caldas et al., 2017; Fine et al., 2021; Freiburger, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Padilla et al., 2022; Phillips & Cromwell, 2020). Studies of the DARE program reported mixed results. One study found no statistically significant influence on pupils' attitudes toward law enforcement, while another found that DARE significantly influenced adolescents' and young adults' views toward law enforcement (Development Services Group, 2018). Another found that while police had more positive perceptions of youth after interacting in a police activity league (PAL), youth perception did not change. The juvenile and police contact publications do not demonstrate enough up-to-date literature to make an impact (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). The results suggested that juveniles with considerable contact with police experience

adverse outcomes, such as mistrust of the police and future criminality (Cavanagh et al., 2020; Development Services Group, 2018; Fine et al., 2020; Hofer et al., 2019; Novich & Hunt, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This exploratory study examined police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. The literature on juveniles lacks enough data from the police perspective (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Researchers have focused primarily on juvenile-police interactions from the perspective of juveniles. The few outdated studies from the 1960s and 1970s from the police perspective are limited as they do not explore why officers perceive juvenile offenders how they do (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Brown et al., 2009; Liederbach, 2007; Richards, 2019).

The Role of the Researcher

I began my police career in 1989 and retired in 2009. During my career, I spent 10 years in the patrol division and 10 years in the major crimes division. I am currently employed as a juvenile intake officer. During my police career, I frequently interacted with juveniles while assigned to the patrol division. I have been serving as a juvenile intake officer since 2015. In my current role, I interact with juveniles and law enforcement officers daily. During my police career, fellow officers complained about interacting with juveniles, but they never explained why.

Serving as an intake officer, I frequently hear comments such as "I do not deal with kids," "I do my best to avoid juveniles," "I try to avoid this place," and other negative comments about interacting with juveniles without an explanation. My review of the literature showed that while there are several studies about juveniles' perceptions of the police, there are few about

police perceptions of juveniles, and the available research is dated. Those reasons opened the door for this exploratory study.

My rewarding and not-so-rewarding experiences as a police officer and intake officer could lead to researcher bias. There are methods that I will use to minimize the effects of researcher bias. I monitored my behavior throughout this study (Mayer, 2021). I will avoid asking leading questions that may elicit a specific answer. I prevented halo effect bias by not interpreting a response to a survey question as the participant's opinion. Finally, I will avoid confirmation bias by being aware of alternative explanations.

Methodology

Design

This quantitative study employs a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Initially, I planned to use a chi-square test of independence and a one-way ANOVA to measure the differences in means between police agencies. However, the survey responses ranged from one response to 89 responses from the agencies, and RQ1 and RQ4 had four measurement categories. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a suitable statistical method for conducting investigations involving three or more variables (Field, 2012). The independent variables in this study included police patrol officers' years of experience, education level, gender, and age. The dependent variable is perceptions of juvenile offenders. ANOVA is a statistical analysis technique that allows one to examine how independent variables react to one another and the subsequent impact of these interactions on the dependent variable.

Quantitative analysis involves manipulating and representing observations numerically to outline and clarify the phenomena that those observations intend to represent (Babbie, 2007). This study measured the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience,

education level, gender, age, and their perceptions of juvenile offenders. Other studies have used quantitative methods to measure police perceptions. Brunetto et al. (2017) measured police perceptions of employee engagement and discretionary power. O'Neal (2017) investigated police perceptions of a victim's credibility in sexual assault cases, and Mesquita et al. (2022) studied police perceptions of stalking.

The one-way ANOVA test has been used for policing studies. Mesquita et al. (2022) used an ANOVA to measure police officers' perceptions of stalking. Huang et al. (2021) used ANOVA to measure police officers' perceptions of risk to physical and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. Hunde and Aged (2015) used an ANOVA to evaluate traffic accidents in Eastern Ethiopia, and Violanti et al. (2013) assessed the effects of police officers' depressive symptoms on their hearts.

Research Questions

Evaluating the present literature on police and adolescent interactions from a police perspective shows few ineffective, out-of-date studies. Existing research on police-juvenile offender encounters from a police perspective is limited and dates from the 1960s and 1970s (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Therefore, the research questions addressed the following questions:

RQ1: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

RQ2: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

RQ3: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

RQ4: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

The research questions addressed the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers, education level, gender, age, and perceptions of juvenile offenders.

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis asserts no relationship between the two variables, while the alternative hypothesis asserts there is a relationship between them.

H_o1: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a1: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_o2: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a2: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_o3: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a3: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_o4: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a4: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

I assessed the *p*-value in the ANOVA table results to determine whether the null hypotheses should be rejected or accepted (Field, 2012). It is possible to reject the null hypotheses and conclude that not all group means are equal if the *p*-value is less than a certain amount of significance, such as 0.05, for this study.

This study explored the relationship between police patrol officers' perceptions and juvenile offenders. Multiple studies cite the need for existing research on police-juvenile offender encounters from a police perspective. Richards et al. (2019) suggested that while there

is substantial evidence of juvenile perceptions of the police, little has been documented about police perceptions of youth. Liederbach (2007) indicated that studies on police and youth interactions among small-town and urban delinquents declined in the 1970s, and more research is needed. Skaggs and Sun (2017) found that very few studies have been dedicated to police perceptions of youth, and even fewer to policing youth in rural communities.

Participants

Study participants, n =132, were drawn from the total population of sworn police patrol officers and police patrol supervisors assigned to the patrol function of nine police agencies in urban and suburban locations in the continental United States. Survey participation was voluntary and anonymous. The researcher used population sampling, a sampling strategy that involves studying a whole population with a defined set of traits, such as particular characteristics, expertise, knowledge, and abilities (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). Police patrol officers and supervisors were chosen as the sample because the researcher's study measured police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders.

Setting

The size of the police agencies ranged from small to large. The agencies are in urban and suburban areas. The agencies are in different geographic regions in the United States.

Police patrol officers and school resource officers are usually the first law enforcement personnel to contact youth (Development Service Group, 2018; Geller & Fagan, 2019; Lum & Nagin, 2017). In 2016, municipal police agencies employed more than 468,000 full-time sworn officers (Hyland & Davis, 2019). Almost 70% of a police agency's sworn officers work patrol, accounting for most police and public interactions. Surveying police patrol officers on their perceptions of juvenile offenders provided valuable information, as most existing research dates

from the 1960s and 1970s (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018).

Instrumentation

The study's instrumentation was a survey. A survey is a form of collection in which a uniform instrument assesses units (Babbie, 2007; Maxfield & Babbie, 2015). Surveys are suited for descriptive, interpretive, and practical research and are particularly suited to investigations in which individuals are the measurable units. Surveys dominate criminology and criminal justice, and surveys are the best approach to studying crime, criminals, and society's response (Kleck et al., 2006). The author surveyed individual police patrol officers regarding their perceptions of juvenile offenders.

This study addressed 10 survey questions and four demographic questions on a Likert scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

1. I avoid interactions with juvenile offenders.
2. I enjoy interactions with juvenile offenders.
3. Juvenile court processes and decisions influence my perception of juvenile offenders.
4. Departmental policies and procedures influence my perception of juveniles.
5. My supervisors influence my perceptions of juvenile offenders.
6. My training officers influenced my perception of juvenile offenders.
7. My colleagues influence my perceptions of juvenile offenders.
8. I am familiar with adolescent brain development.
9. My department/training academy offers training on juvenile topics.
10. I would like more training on juvenile topics.

The following demographic questions were included in the survey.

1. Years of experience as a patrol officer:

    a. Less than 5

    b. 5-15

    c. 16-24

    d. 25 or more.

2. Age:

    a. 20-30

    b. 31-39

    c. 40-49

    d. 50 and above.

4. Gender:

    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Transgender/Transwoman

    d. Transgender/Transman

    e. non-binary

    f. Not-listed

    g. Prefer not to say.

4. Education level

    a. High school graduate or equivalent

    b. Some college credit but no degree

    c. Associate degree

    d. Bachelor's degree

e. Master's degree

f. Ph.D. or a professional degree

g. Prefer not to say.

Surveys have been used to measure police perceptions in previous research. Honess (2020) surveyed police satisfaction with training in England and Wales. Goetschel and Peha (2017) surveyed police officers' perceptions of body-worn cameras, and Marier and Moule (2018) surveyed police perceptions of the public.

Rensis Likert designed the Likert scale to judge the intensity of things using predetermined response alternatives in surveys (Maxfield & Babbie, 2018; Taherdoost, 2019). In sociology, psychology, and other social sciences, scales of attitudes and ratings are standard measurement instruments. Typically, Likert scales with either five or seven points are provided. Xu and Leung (2018) reviewed the appropriate number of points. They found that boosting the number of possible responses improves validity and reliability, with the most remarkable improvement occurring between four and seven points.

This study employed a four-point Likert scale with the following response choices: (a) "Strongly disagree," (b) "Disagree," (c) "Agree," and (d) "Strongly agree." The Likert scale has been used in other studies to measure police perceptions. Smyser and Lubin (2017) used a five-point Likert scale to measure Pennsylvania police chiefs' perceptions of their officers intervening with naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose. Del Pozo et al. (2021) used a six-point Likert scale to explore the possibility of training initiatives improving officers' awareness of fentanyl exposure, and Darwinkel et al. (2013) used a 10-point Likert scale to investigate police officers' perceptions of sexual offending through intensive training.

Procedures

My first step was to obtain approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix A). IRBs serve two general objectives. Board members first decide if the dangers to individuals being studied are acceptable, considering the anticipated advantages of conducting the study. Second, they assess whether the methods provide sufficient safeguards for human participants' well-being, safety, and confidentiality.

Once I received IRB approval, I submitted a modification request (Appendix A) to the IRB to include additional departments. After receiving approval for the modification, I contacted other departments and began the study. I emailed an information letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the research, what participation entailed, its benefits, that the data would be kept anonymous, and that participation was voluntary. I also explained the procedure to withdraw from the study and specified the contact person for questions or concerns about the study. The department representatives then emailed the information form and the Survey Monkey QR code to police patrol officers and supervisors. The data collection tool used for this study was a survey.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses for the study were:

$H_0$1: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a1: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

$H_0$2: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a2: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_o3: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a3: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_o4: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a4: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

The instrument for this study was a four-point Likert scale with the following question response choices: (a) "strongly agree," b) "agree," c) "strongly disagree," and d) "disagree." Data was imported from Survey Monkey to SPSS for calculations.

Ethical Considerations

Research on humans involves ethical considerations (Creswell, 2009; Terrell, 2015). Ethical issues may occur with the research problem, purpose and questions, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation, and in writing and disseminating the research. The study addressed police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders, and the results identified perceptions and implications of their interactions with juvenile offenders. I provided potential participants with the study's information, and the research did not deviate from the study's purpose.

Issues with data collection are another concern (Creswell, 2009; Terrell, 2015). Those issues were avoided because I obtained IRB approval before data collection, participants were provided with study information, and anonymity was protected. I alleviated data analysis and interpretation issues by protecting the anonymity of the participants and the participating police agency. The research findings matched what the data indicated, and I will discard the data after three years to protect against misappropriation.

Threats to Validity

There are two forms of validity threats: external and internal validity. External threats occur when researchers incorrectly apply the sample results to other people, different environments, and previous or subsequent circumstances (Babbie, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Maxfield & Babbie, 2015). Internal threats occur when the capacity for experiments, treatments, or participant responses jeopardizes a researcher's ability to apply population information from the data collected. I faced two threats to external validity. First, the outcomes might have varied if another investigator had repeated the study in a different city, county, state, kind of department, or department size. Reactivity posed a threat to external validity. The events at the research sites might not have been typical of those in other geographical areas. There were no threats to internal validity.

Summary

With this quantitative study, I examined how police patrol officers' perceptions and juvenile offenders correlated. The third chapter describes the research methods, strategy, and reasoning to achieve the study's goal. The research question was reiterated, and the alternative and null hypotheses were listed. The data collection procedure was clarified, and the study's population included police patrol officers from various agencies in the United States. The survey findings informed the participating agencies and the law enforcement community.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the results of this survey study, conducted with 132 police patrol officers. First, the chapter will provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The descriptive statistics summarized how centrally located most scores were for each variable (i.e., measures of central tendency), how dispersed the scores were across each variable (i.e., measures of variability), and how well each variable formed a normal distribution (i.e., skewness and kurtosis variables). Next, the chapter will present scale reliability statistics that provide information on how strong the internal consistency was among the scale items. Lastly, the chapter will discuss the findings of the one-way ANOVA, which provided information on whether each hypothesis was statistically supported. The following research question(s) and hypotheses were tested:

RQ1: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

$H_0$1: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a1: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

RQ2: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

$H_0$2: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a2: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

RQ3: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

$H_0$3: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

H_a3: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

RQ4: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

$H_0 4$: *There is no relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

$H_a 4$: *There is a relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders.*

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of survey participants. The most represented age group was 31-39 years (n = 48; 36.4%), while the least represented age group was 50 and above (n =19; 14.4%). Most survey participants identified as male (n =106; 80.3%); the remaining participants identified as female (n = 22; 16.7%) or preferred not to identify their gender (n = 4; 3.0%).[1] Since most participants earned a bachelor's degree or higher (n = 91; 69.0%), subsequent analyses that included education as a variable included comparisons between individuals who had earned less than a bachelor's degree and those who earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Lastly, participants with 5-15 years of experience represented almost half of the study's sample (n = 63; 47.7%).

Table 2 provides the minimum and maximum scores, mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis scores for the perceptions of juvenile offenders' variables. The scale consisted of 10 items with scale endpoints ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). A composite score was created by averaging participants' scores across 10 items. As shown in Table 2, the minimum score was 1.60, and the maximum score was 3.50, which created

[1] Subsequent analyses that include gender as a variable will only include male-female comparisons.

a range of 1.90. The average perception score is 2.52 (*SD* = 0.42), which signals that police patrol officers have neutral perceptions of juvenile offenders.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics N = 132

		Frequency	Percent
Age	20-30	31	23.5
	31-39	48	36.4
	40-49	34	25.8
	50 and above	19	14.4
		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	106	80.3
	Female	22	16.7
	Prefer not to say	4	3.0
		Frequency	Percent
Education Level	High school graduate or equivalent	6	4.5
	Some college credit	19	14.4
	Associate degree	16	12.1
	Bachelors degree	71	53.8
	Master's degree	19	14.4
	Ph.D. or a professional degree	1	0.8
		Frequency	Percent
Years of Experience	Less than 5	22	16.7
	5-15	63	47.7
	16-24	37	28.0
	25 or more	10	7.6

Skewness indicates the symmetry of a variable's score distribution. Normal distributions have a skewness value of 0, which indicates perfect symmetry. Skewness scores between -1 and +1 are within the ideal range of normality. However, skewness values between the -2 and +2 range are acceptable for normality. As shown in Table 2, the perceptions of juvenile offenders' variable fell within acceptable normality ranges (*skewness* = 0.06). Kurtosis indicates the steepness of the distribution's curve. Normal distributions have a kurtosis value of 0. As shown

in Table 2, the kurtosis values for perceptions of juvenile offenders' variable fell between the normality range of -3 to +3 (*kurtosis* = -0.51). Given that the skewness and kurtosis values for all variables were within normality ranges, parametric statistical analyses (e.g., one-way ANOVA) are appropriate to use as the inferential statistical approach to test the hypotheses.

Table 2

Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders Descriptive Statistics N = 132

	Min	Max	Mean	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders	1.60	3.50	2.52	0.42	0.06	-0.51

Scale Reliabilities

Strong internal reliabilities have a Cronbach's α of 0.70 or higher. The Cronbach's α for the perceptions of juvenile offenders was 0.71, which indicated strong internal reliability.

Results

Hypotheses

A one-way ANOVA was used to test four hypotheses that predicted differences in individuals' perceptions of juvenile offenders due to their years of experience as a police patrol officer, education level, gender, and age (i.e., H_a1- H_a4). A Levene's F test was used for each hypothesis to test the homogeneity of variance assumption. All statistical tests used $\alpha = 0.05$ as the significance level, such that statistical support for the alternative hypotheses were *F* results with *p*-values that were less than $\alpha = 0.05$ (i.e., statistically significant results). Bonferroni post-hoc tests were used only for statistically significant comparisons that involved three or more groups. Table 3 presents mean comparisons in perceptions of juvenile offenders across years of

experience, education level, gender, and age; homogeneity of variance results; the one-way ANOVA results; and the effect size (as measured by Cohen's *d*).

Assumption Tests

A Levene's *F* test was used to test the homogeneity of variance assumption for all four one-way ANOVAs. The homogeneity of variance assumption was met if the *F* statistic yielded a *p*-value greater than 0.05. As shown in Table 3, the homogeneity of variance assumption was met for statistical tests comparing perceptions of juvenile offenders across years of experience [$F(3, 128) = 0.44, p = 0.73$], education levels [$F(1, 130) = 1.06, p = 0.31$], gender [$F(1, 126) = 0.35, p = 0.56$], and age [$F(3, 128) = 0.48, p = 0.70$].

Table 3

One-Way ANOVA Results: Tests of Hypotheses

					Levene's		ANOVA		
		N	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*	*F*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Years of Experience	Less than 5	22	2.55	0.44	0.44	0.73	1.46	0.23	0.03
	5-15	63	2.44	0.43					
	16-24	37	2.62	0.42					
	25 or more	10	2.59	0.33					
Education	No Bachelor's Degree	41	2.42	0.39	1.06	0.31	3.37	0.07	0.03
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	91	2.56	0.43					
Gender	Male	106	2.45	0.39	0.35	0.56	15.03	<.001	0.11
	Female	22	2.82	0.46					
Age	20-30	31	2.43	0.46	0.48	0.70	0.88	0.45	0.02
	31-39	48	2.52	0.43					
	40-49	34	2.60	0.42					
	50 and above	19	2.51	0.36					

Tests of Hypotheses

As shown in Table 3, the one-way ANOVA results provided statistical support for only H_a3, which predicted that there is a relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders. Specifically, female police officers ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.46$, $n = 22$) reported significantly more favorable perceptions of juvenile offenders on average than their male counterparts ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.39$, $n = 106$); [F (1, 126) = 15.03, $p < 0.001$; $d = 0.11$]. Thus, H_o3 is rejected. Hypotheses H_a1, H_a2, and H_a4, which predicted differences in perceptions of juvenile offenders due to years of experience ($p = 0.23$), education levels ($p = 0.07$), and age ($p = 0.45$), respectively, did not receive statistical support from the one-way ANOVA results. Thus, hypotheses H_o1, H_o2, and H_o4 are accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The study aimed to understand police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. The literature lacks enough material from the police perspective (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Researchers have focused primarily on juvenile-police interactions from the perspective of juveniles. The few studies from the police perspective are from the 1960s and 1970s (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Brown et al., 2019; Liederbach, 2007; Richards, 2019). Those studies do not explore why officers perceive juvenile offenders as they do. This study elicited the perceptions of police patrol officers and supervisors of juvenile offenders. Chapter five contains the study's findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of police patrol officers regarding juvenile offenders. This study addressed the following research questions to investigate and comprehend police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders.

RQ1: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' years of experience as police patrol officers and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

Most respondents had between five to 15 years of service ($N = 63$, 47.73%), followed by 16-24 years of service ($N = 37$, 28.03%), less than 5 years of service ($N = 22$, 16.67%) and 25 or more years of service ($N = 10$, 7.58%). A positive relationship was hypothesized and not supported.

RQ2: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' education level and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

Most respondents to this question had a bachelor's degree ($N = 71$, 53.79%), followed by a master's degree or higher ($N = 20$, 15.15%), some college credit ($N = 19$, 14.39%), an associate's degree ($N = 16$, 12.12%), and a high school diploma or equivalent ($N = 6$, 4.55%). A positive relationship was hypothesized and not reported.

RQ3: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' gender and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

Most respondents to this question were male ($N = 106$, 80.30%), followed by female ($N = 22$, 16.67%), and ($N = 4$, 3.03%) preferred not to reveal their gender. A positive relationship was hypothesized and supported.

RQ4: *What is the relationship between police patrol officers' age and their perceptions of juvenile offenders?*

Most respondents to this question were 31-39 years of age ($N = 48$, 36.36%), followed by 40-49 years of age ($N = 34$, 25.76%), 20-30 years of age ($N = 31$, 23.48%) and 50 and above ($N = 19$, 14.39%). A positive relationship was hypothesized and not reported.

Most scholarly works concerning interactions between juveniles and law enforcement were published in the 1960s and 1970s, highlighting the need for recent studies (Development Services Group, Inc., 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Despite the findings from this study only supporting a relationship between gender and police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders, various personal and organizational factors—including the race, gender, educational background, parental status, and career attitudes of police officers—have been discovered to impact police perceptions of juveniles in other studies (Development Services Group, 2018; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017). Lynn Skaggs and Sun (2017) found that an officer's race, gender, and education level influence perceptions of juvenile offenders. Allen (2005) found that the age of a law enforcement officer

was among the most significant determinants of that law enforcement officer's decision-making. While not related to perceptions of juvenile offenders, El Sayed et al. (2020) learned that past research suggests that an officer's gender, race, ethnicity, length of service, and level of education may affect how they manage calls about domestic violence. Female police patrol officers were found to be sympathetic, suggesting a positive relationship between gender and perceptions, similar to this study's findings of a positive relationship between gender and perceptions of juvenile offenders.

Survey Question Responses

1. "I avoid interactions with juvenile offenders."

Most respondents ($N = 59$, 44.70%) disagreed, followed by those who agreed ($N = 35$, 26.52%), strongly agree ($N = 21$, 15.91%), and strongly disagree ($N = 17$, 12.88%). Most respondents ($N = 76$) disagreed that they avoid interactions with juvenile offenders, while some ($N = 56$) agreed that they avoid interactions with juvenile offenders. This evidence confirms that law enforcement perceives teens and young adults as difficult to manage (Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards, 2019; Richards et al., 2018). Police often encounter teens and young adults during stops for driving and public order crimes like disorderly conduct. In cities and rural areas, how people perceive police officers is affected by their race, gender, level of education, family situation, and job attitudes, among other individual and organizational factors. Officers have tense and complicated relationships with teens and young adults because they perceive them differently than adults and trust their judgment to manage most scenarios.

Richards et al. (2019) reported that few studies have fully investigated how police perceive juvenile offenders. The researchers addressed that gap by examining how police officers view young people by sharing their interviews with 41 police officers in Queensland, Australia. The

results showed that police officers had different views, but they thought juveniles needed help. The authors concluded that the opinions of respondents on youth are troubling because police interaction is a strong predictor of future youth engagement with the legal system. The findings on how police officers perceive juveniles were limited, and the findings from the survey questions were mixed.

2. "I enjoy interactions with juvenile offenders."

Most respondents strongly disagreed ($N = 61$, 46.21%), followed by those who disagreed ($N = 52$, 39.39%), agreed ($N = 15$, 11.36%), and strongly agreed ($N = 4$, 3.03%). Despite most respondents disagreeing that they enjoy interactions with juvenile offenders, training and programs that promote police officers and youth working together in non-enforcement settings have shown that police attitudes toward youth can improve. Lee et al. (2017) used a quasi-experimental quantitative, pre-/post-survey study to evaluate the Side-by-Side Program. The Side-by-Side program was designed to improve police and youth relations by working together in a non-enforcement setting.

The assessment examined whether and how program participation affected the perspectives and attitudes of police and juveniles. The study also evaluated juveniles' and police officers' program approval. Participants were 357 juveniles and 110 law enforcement officers. The findings suggested that the training improved law enforcement officers' perceptions of juveniles regardless of gender, race, or employment length. In addition, juvenile program graduates had more positive sentiments toward law enforcement officers.

Phillips and Cromwell (2020) employed a qualitative interpretive methodology to evaluate a 1-day Outward Bound Police Youth Challenge (PYC) in Baltimore City to foster trust between middle and high school students and police officers. They conducted in-depth

conversations with four juvenile graduates, nine law enforcement graduates, and four essential informants. One focus group consisted of five juveniles and their instructor, and the other of four PYC program moderators. Their results revealed that participants' attitudes toward each other improved. Juvenile court processes and decisions influence my perception of juvenile offenders. Most respondents ($N = 60$, 45.45%) strongly agreed, followed by those who agreed ($N = 44$, 33.33%), disagreed ($N = 24$, 18.18%, and strongly disagreed ($N = 4$, 3.03%). Most respondents (77.78%) reported that juvenile court processes and decisions affected their perceptions of juveniles. These findings were consistent with a report by Strategies for Youth: Connecting Cops & Kids (2021), which found that police officers may be deterred by juvenile court procedures that require them to devote extended periods supervising adolescents while juvenile justice or probation officials complete intake, or while looking for relatives or other people whom they may turn over juveniles taken into custody.

Officers commonly express annoyance and concerns about problematic adolescents, who represent little threat to public safety but produce multiple calls for help due to unresolved mental, family-related, or human service requirements (Strategies for Youth: Connecting Cops & Kids, 2021). Events that involve these adolescents take excessive time and can be particularly aggravating for police when social services, school, and juvenile court systems fail to link these adolescents (or, in certain instances, their caregivers and families) with required treatment for addiction, mental health, emergency housing, and other needed resources.

Officers regularly express dissatisfaction when adolescents are not penalized for their actions (Strategies for Youth: Connecting Cops & Kids, 2021). This perception emerges for the following reasons: concerns about court delays, leading to no court action for an extended time, and police officers being upset when detention fails to be imposed on the adolescents they arrest,

with officers believing that detention is the most beneficial or only meaningful reaction to delinquent behavior. Due to the absence of feedback, officers are unaware of the ramifications and actions provided to adolescents following police interactions.

3. "Policies influence my perceptions of juvenile offenders."

Most respondents ($N = 55$, 41.67%) disagreed, followed by those who agreed ($N = 36$, 27.27%), strongly agreed ($N = 29$, 21.97%), and strongly disagreed ($N = 12$, 9.09%). There was almost an equal divide among respondents (50.76%) who agreed that departmental policies and procedures influenced their perceptions of juvenile offenders, while (49.24%) disagreed. A report by the Internal Association of Chiefs of Police (2014) stated that department chiefs must make it apparent that establishing balanced, successful responses to adolescents is an essential objective for their departments, while conveying the notion that arresting your way out of the youth crime problem is unachievable. Department culture must also be addressed by establishing an understanding in officers at all levels that adolescents should be perceived and managed differently than adults.

Changing departmental culture is challenging. Proponents of social learning theory (SLT), the theory framing this study, argue that learning is a mental process that occurs in a social environment, and watching and emulating the activities of others drives learning (Snipes et al., 2020). The police department reinforces social ideals, meanings, and actions reinforced through SLT (Garduno, 2019). There is a common understanding among officers in law enforcement, researchers, and the public that police culture consists of the beliefs, rules, and expectations that law enforcement personnel use to deal with stress when working with people and their bosses (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Ingram et al., 2018; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Patterson & King, 2022; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021; Turner, 2022). Peers shape police

culture, the places where officers work, including areas with low and high crime, and how they feel about their rank (Ballucci et al., 2017; Brough et al., 2016; Campeau, 2015; Farkas et al., 2020; Ingram et al., 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021). Most researchers and personnel identify a law enforcement subculture dominated by peer pressure. If peers and supervisors do not buy into a change in culture, the change might not happen.

4. My supervisor influences my perception of juvenile offenders.

Most respondents disagreed ($N = 77$, 58.33%), followed by those who strongly disagreed ($N = 32$, 24.24%), agreed ($N = 18$, 13.64%), and strongly agreed ($N = 5$, 3.79%). The findings showed that 82.57% of respondents' perceptions of juvenile offenders are not influenced by their supervisors, while only (17.43%) report that their supervisors influence them. The responses to this question do not support SLT. Police officers, researchers, and the public all agree that police culture is made up of the beliefs, rules, and expectations that police officers use to deal with stress when they work with the public and police supervisors (Demirkol & Nalla, 2017; Ingram et al., 2018; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Patterson & King, 2022; Silver et al., 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021; Turner, 2022). This study did not find a law enforcement subculture dominated by peer pressure.

5. "My training officer(s) influenced my perception of juvenile offenders."

Most respondents disagreed ($N = 65$, 49.24%), followed by those who strongly disagreed ($N = 31$, 23.48%), agreed ($N = 29$, 21.97%), and strongly disagreed ($N = 31$, 23.48%). The findings from this question were surprising, as the limited peer-reviewed field training officer (FTO) and recruit studies suggest that the FTO influences their assigned recruits. Getty et al. (2014) reported that FTOs appear to exert a statistically significant influence on complaints of

misbehavior made against their trainees. On the one hand, to the extent that FTOs have a major effect on their trainees' charges of wrongdoing, the training provided by them appears to be responsible for the occurrence of officer-level allegations. FTOs who are ineffective or inadequately trained might negatively impact their trainees. Sun (2002) found that field training officers (FTOs) exhibited more critical evaluations of their direct superiors and district supervisors than individuals who were not FTOs. Both studies supported SLT, but the response to this question did not.

6. "My colleagues influence my perceptions of juvenile offenders."

Most respondents disagreed ($N = 62$, 46.97%), followed by those who agreed ($N = 35$, 26.52%), strongly disagreed ($N = 21$, 15.91%), and strongly agreed ($N = 14$, 10.61%). Most respondents to this question (62.88%) disagreed that their colleagues influence their perceptions of juvenile offenders. This finding is not surprising, as other findings in the literature concerning the effect of police culture on interactions with the public are mixed. Ingram et al. (2018) surveyed 1,022 law enforcement personnel on use-of-force policies, culture, organization, and background qualities to quantify their cultural beliefs and behavior. Their findings revealed a relationship between work team behavior and organizational culture. The connection may need clarification, and police culture and actions should be reviewed holistically.

Silver et al. (2017) quantitatively surveyed 781 US law enforcement personnel to determine individual, organizational, and situational drivers of law enforcement culture, legally just procedures, and force usage. Their findings showed that law enforcement officer characteristics only endorse police culture for supervisors and race. The study also linked the culture of law enforcement with the use of aggression, procedural equity, and adolescents' perceptions of police. Cordner (2017) investigated quantitative survey results from 13,000 law

enforcement employees and 89 American law enforcement and sheriff's departments to determine if their personalities and associations influence their perceptions of society, work, and police leadership. Results indicate that law enforcement officers have more positive attitudes than expected and do not differ by officer qualities. They vary widely across law enforcement agencies, demonstrating that police culture is more organizational than professional. Responses to this question were not SLT.

7. "I am familiar with adolescent brain development."

Most respondents agreed ($N = 81$, 61.36%), followed by those who disagreed ($N = 29$, 21.97%), strongly agreed ($N = 20$, 15.15%), and strongly disagreed ($N = 2$, 1.52%). Most respondents to this question (76.86%) report familiarity with adolescent brain science. These findings are pleasantly surprising, as the literature suggests otherwise. Meyer and Repucci (2007) used quantitative methods to survey 332 police officers on interrogation strategies and youth developmental problems. While the police acknowledged differences between adolescents and adults, how they regard juveniles in general and how they understand and recognize them in interviews may be inconsistent. Their findings suggested that police officers in the study believed juveniles could be treated like adults.

Aalsma et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of adolescent brain training by offering a training course called Policing the Teen Brain. About 87% of pre-and post-test survey respondents showed significant differences before and after training. After the instruction, individuals have more positive views of juveniles (Booth et al., 2017; Brady & Childs, 2022; Childs et al., 2020). This finding highlights the positivity of the response to this survey question.

8. "My department/training academy offers training on juvenile topics."

Most respondents agreed ($N = 88$, 66.67%), followed by those who disagreed ($N = 25$, 18.94%), strongly agreed ($N = 11$, 8.33%), and strongly disagreed ($N = 8$, 6.06%). The findings from this question are positive, as (75%) of respondents reported access to training on juvenile topics, which is not in line with what the literature reports. While law enforcement officers receive extensive training, most require more training on juvenile topics (Fix et al., 2021; Williams, 2020). Fix et al. (2021) quantitatively surveyed 1,030 police officers from 24 agencies to assess their juvenile interaction training. Self-identified training demands, law enforcement experience and position, and rank influenced law enforcement personnel's opinions of juveniles, and training requirements were examined. The study found that school resource officers were more comfortable working with juveniles than patrol and beat or neighborhood officers and were less likely than trainees and non-patrol officers to feel prepared to work with traumatized youths.

9. I would like more training on juvenile topics.

Most respondents agreed (N =55, 41.67%), followed by those who disagreed ($N = 46$, 34.85%), strongly disagreed ($N = 18$, 13.64%), and strongly agreed ($N = 13$, 9.85%). The results were almost evenly mixed for respondents, as (51.52%) would like more training on juvenile topics (48.48%) would not like more training on juvenile topics. Understanding how police perceive adolescents requires evaluating how their training may affect their perceptions. According to previous findings, police patrol officers do not receive appropriate training on juvenile issues (Fix et al., 2021; Meyer & Reppucci, 2007).

Implications

This study added to the literature by providing information on the perceptions of juvenile offenders by police patrol officers. This study aimed to supplement the existing literature by assessing police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders. Until academics focused on

other elements of policing in the 1960s and 1970s, studies analyzing police and juvenile interactions were common (Brunson & Pegram, 2018; Liederbach, 2007). Although studies have assessed juveniles' attitudes toward law enforcement, research evaluating law enforcement officers' perspectives of juvenile offenders is outdated (Development Services Group, 2018; Liederbach, 2007; Lynn Skaggs & Sun, 2017; Richards et al., 2018). Adverse interactions with police diminish juveniles' trust in law enforcement and their perception of the legitimacy of the justice system, leading to negative future results. Because existing findings are limited and different variables influence police officers' perceptions, it is necessary to understand how police officers' perspectives affect their encounters with juveniles. This study employed a quantitative approach, with participants recruited from samples of police patrol officers and police patrol supervisors from police departments across the United States.

As stated in the results sections, findings suggest that police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders are neutral. Despite the neutral findings, this study identified implications for police agencies. First, most respondents do not enjoy interactions with juvenile offenders. Unfavorable experiences with police diminish juveniles' trust in law enforcement and their perception of the validity of the judicial system. This finding significantly impacts policing policy and practice (Development Services Group, 2018; Richards et al., 2018). Second, juvenile court processes and decisions influence police patrol officers' perceptions of youth. Again, this finding has severe ramifications for police agencies, as processes are influencing perceptions of juveniles. Third, almost half of respondents report that departmental policies influence their perceptions of juvenile offenders.

Some positive implications of this study are that most respondents are familiar with adolescent brain science, contrary to what is reported in literature. According to researchers, law

enforcement professionals undergo significant training due to the complexity of their jobs, but most receive little training on adolescent behavior (Fix et al., 2021). Physiological variations between juveniles and adults influence interactions between law enforcement officers and juveniles (Aalsma et al., 2018; Bateson et al., 2019; Development Services Group, 2018; Jackson et al., 2019). These findings are significant, as police departments recognize the importance of adolescent brain science. Respondents reported that departments offer training on juvenile topics, which is crucial because the literature reports that law enforcement receives considerable training due to their demanding jobs, and most law enforcement officers need more training on juvenile behavior (Fix et al., 2021; Williams, 2020).

Finally, another key finding is that most respondents report that training officers, peers, and supervisors do not influence their perceptions of juvenile offenders. This study's findings do not support SLT, while other studies offer mixed results. Studies on police culture yield mixed results. Police culture is a complex concept (Gutschmidt & Vera, 2020; Ingram et al., 2018; Kurtz & Upton, 2017; Marnier & Moule, 2018; Miles-Johnson, 2019; Paoline & Gau, 2017; Silver, 2017; Silvestri, 2017; Somers & Terrill, 2021). Studies have implied that police culture is cumulative rather than individual (Ingram et al., 2018). Another study indicated that institutional variables affect officers, not supervisors, and officer qualities do not affect police culture support (Silver et al., 2017). As Cordner (2017) argued, the institution sets the tone for police culture, not individual officer traits. Porter et al. (2017) found that police culture affects police trainees' attitudes toward civilians. Another study revealed that police culture is complex and diverse. (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019).

Limitations

Initially, I planned to survey police patrol officers and patrol supervisors in a specific geographic region. Because I only received one response to inquiries from that region, I focused instead on a single police agency in the Midwest. The agency head was interested in the study and reported a juvenile crime problem. The agency head followed through and disseminated the survey to police patrol officers and supervisors.

Because of a low response rate, expansion of the study to other police departments was necessary. I contacted 217 police departments via email and phone and received commitments from 21 police departments across the continental United States. Nine police departments disseminated the survey, and $N = 132$ responses were received. Other limitations are that the results could have been different if another investigator had done the study in a different city, county, state, department type, or department size. Finally, events at the research sites may not have been typical of those in other parts of the country not surveyed.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Replicate the study in targeted geographical areas to compare differences between police departments to examine if differences in police perceptions of juvenile offenders exist in different regions of the United States.
2. Replicate the study with specialized police agencies, such as airport police, railroad police, and state police agencies, to compare those results with traditional agencies.
3. Replicate the study with police agencies outside the United States to examine similarities and differences with police agencies in the United States.

4. A study investigating how departmental policies and procedures influence police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders would help determine if perceptions are influenced by policies and procedures.
5. A study investigating how juvenile court processes influence police patrol officers' perceptions of juvenile offenders to determine if changes are necessary to improve perceptions.
6. Replicate the study to include all sworn police officers and supervisors because regardless of rank or assignments most police officers start off as patrol officers and may have valuable insight.
7. Replicate the study using qualitative methods because while quantitative methods include more participants, qualitative interviews provide deeper insight to the question.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIBERTY UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 16, 2023

Charles Freitag
Jonathon Zemke

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1572 A Survey of Police Patrol Officers' Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders

Dear Charles Freitag, Jonathon Zemke,

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

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

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

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;

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

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, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 19, 2023

Charles Freitag
Jonathon Zemke

Re: Modification - IRB-FY22-23-1572 A Survey of Police Patrol Officers' Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders

Dear Charles Freitag, Jonathon Zemke,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY22-23-1572: A Survey of Police Patrol Officers' Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders.
Decision: Exempt

Your request to add five additional study sites has been approved. Thank you for submitting documentation of permission from your additional sites for our review and documentation. For a PDF of your modification letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Modification under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. If your modification requires you to submit revised documents, they can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.
Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Project: "A Survey of Police Patrol Officers' Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders"
Principal Investigator: Charles B. Freitag Jr., Doctoral Candidate, Helms School of Government, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a sworn officer or supervisor that is assigned to patrol. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.
Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

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

The purpose of this study is to investigate police perceptions of juvenile offenders, as the current findings are limited. Many factors influence police patrol officers' perceptions. Determining if a substantial, measurable perception exists between police officers and juvenile offenders may have important implications for policing policy and practice.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

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

How could you or others benefit from this study?

- Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. This study may:
- Provide information on the factors influencing how police patrol officers perceive juveniles.
- Provide those responsible for training police patrol officers with essential information for more effective training of patrol officers.
- Provide information to help improve both juvenile and youth perceptions of one another.

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. Participant responses to the online survey will be anonymous. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

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

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your department. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions 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 Charles B. Freitag Jr. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [redacted] or his faculty sponsor, Dr. Jonathon Zemke, 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 IRB. Our physical address is [redacted], our phone number is [redacted] and our email address is [redacted].

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