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Social Influences on Citizens' Attitudes Toward the Police in a Public Assistance Role

Raymond Griego
Walden University

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Raymond Andrew Griego

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Review Committee

Dr. Tina Jaeckle, Committee Chairperson, Human Services Faculty
Dr. Gregory Hickman, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty
Dr. Molly Lauck, University Reviewer, Human Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Social Influences on Citizens' Attitudes Toward the Police in a Public Assistance Role

by

Raymond Andrew Griego

MS, California State University of Long Beach, 2005

BA, California State University of Fullerton, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

Much research is based on the experience of participants in crime-related situations where they have contact with police. It is significant, however, that researchers have documented that 70 to 80% of calls requesting police service are not related to criminal activity. Despite this little is known about how police interaction with citizens in noncriminal and nonemergency situations impacts public perception of law enforcement. The aim of this phenomenological study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. The conceptual framework for this study drew upon expectancy theory as well as confirmation bias and negativity bias/asymmetry theories applied to a constructivist model. The research question for this study examined how police are perceived by individuals living in a multicultural area of Los Angeles County who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. Data gathered during six telephonic interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and member checked for accuracy and were analyzed using Colaizzi's 7-step method of phenomenological analysis to pinpoint repeating patterns and themes relevant to their experience. Findings suggested that parental influence, environment, media, life experiences and age contributed toward bias development. Knowledge from this study can help achieve positive social change by enhancing law enforcement's understanding of the public perception of citizen-police interactions, which could mitigate incidents involving force.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother, Bertha Rothermel, who passed away shortly before its completion and Julie Perron, whom for without, I could never have made this dream possible.

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First, I would like to thank Almighty God for blessing me more than I deserve and the strength to finish this dissertation. I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my mentor and guide, Dr. Tina Jaeckle, whom for without her patience, encouragement, and understanding; I could not have researched this level of success. I also owe a deep sense of thanks to Dr. Gregory Hickman, who has been immensely valuable in directing me through 8 years of academic discovery. I am extremely thankful to my friend, Patrick Akhamlich, who empowered my skills measurably in the areas of technology and enabled me to complete my study. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank Pam Stamper-Taylor, whose unyielding love, support, and encouragement inspired me to succeed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Over time, humans have seemed to possess an innate capacity for basing reality on perception, so that what people perceive as reality often becomes their belief (Rutjens & Brandt, 2018). Bates et al. (2015) described an aspect of this concept, stating that perceptions and attitudes propel the way that individuals behave. Public perception of the police directs not only the way citizens feel toward the police but also the way they behave during encounters (Bates et al., 2015). Many police departments understand that public perception and negative public attitudes influence the community's relationship with the police. This can discourage cooperation with criminal investigations, public trust, and community support (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). A considerable amount of research on citizens' attitudes toward police has generated an exhaustive and primarily quantitative academic and crime-related literature (Vaughan et al., 2018). On the other hand, a limited amount of research has documented citizen experiences with police encounters in a noncrime related context (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Social implications stemming from this study could promote an understanding of the interactive dynamics of police-citizen encounters, and could help bridge the disconnect between community and police. In this chapter, I will briefly summarize the literature on this topic and describe the gap in this research. I will offer evidence that the limitations identified in the research are relevant, and describe the body of research that sustains the need for the study.

Background of the Study

The origins of public attitude research toward the police can be found in four conceptual traditions (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). Over time, some researchers began

combining these traditions until they emerged as a framework, while others used the same variables to measure different concepts (Czapska et al., 2014). Maguire and Johnson (2010) asserted that the four traditional schools of thought grounded in public perception literature include service quality, procedural justice, legitimacy, and public perception.

Service Quality

Service quality originated as a school of thought in research published by the private sector in marketing and business journals (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). The model soon influenced researchers, who began using quality of service the police provide as a focus for community-police relations (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Conducting one of the few studies to examine implied measures used in public perception studies, Maguire and Johnson (2010) sought to specify and test Mastrofski's (1999) six-dimensional conceptualization of perceived service quality. The six dimensions tested were attentiveness, reliability, responsiveness, competence, manners, and fairness. Their findings indicated that overall perceptions of service quality were measurable. However, the distinct dimensions were not distinguishable due to insufficient in-depth, detailed responses. Most importantly, the authors concluded that due to the unique nature and service that police provide, a service quality model would be difficult to apply (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). For example, the police have a monopoly on the service they provide. Moreover, not all customers want services, such as being arrested and taken to jail.

Procedural Justice

Tyler's (1990) theory of procedural justice is the framework for most of the published research on how people perceive the fairness of decision-making and treatment they received from the police. Tyler contended that when officers (or other authority figures) treat citizens with fairness and respect, their trust improved, and their authority was considered legitimate. As a result, people are more likely to comply with police demands and are more willing to conform to laws (Vaughan et al., 2018). However, when officers are disrespectful and show bias toward the public, then the opposite will occur; police lose the trust of the people and the legitimacy of authority. Researchers in support of Tyler's theory have agreed that this should establish the standard for how officers conduct themselves with the public (Vaughan et al., 2018). Conversely, those not in agreement, for example, Waddington et al. (2015) have found Tyler's theory one-sided, when examining the relationship between individual perception, action, and approval. In their study, the authors asked participants to view video clips taken from various British Broadcasting Corporation documentaries of police officers managing real-life incidents. The researchers noted that most of the participants focused on a particular part of a video, and each participant had their own interpretation of the incident. Waddington et al. concluded that even though officers acted in a manner as prescribed by procedural justice precepts, some participants still viewed the police unfavorably depending on how the participant perceived the situation and interpreted the officer's behavior. This demonstrates the problematic relationship that occurs between individual perception, action and approval. With respect to treatment, Jonathan-Zamir et al. (2016) have

indicated from studying the effects of high-policing tactics on airline passengers' perceptions of hostile treatment from airport security that procedural justice did not have the impact as Tyler predicted. Jonathan-Zamir et al. noted that regardless of the hostile treatment that passengers experienced as a result of invasive security measures of being questioned outside the presence of others and having luggage searched, it had no impact on the airport security's legitimacy of authority. Passengers still complied with security officials' demands and conformed to the laws.

Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy as a theoretical model originated with ideas concerned with the legitimacy of government as a whole (Gau, 2014). Weber (1978) argued that government agents and institutions holding authority over the public must find a way to justify why it is necessary for the public to submit to authoritative demands. Even though it is the people's belief in authority that decides the validity of its legitimacy, authorities must gain citizen support and cooperation to maintain order (Tyler, 2004). Researchers who have examined police legitimacy hypothesize that the quality of treatment received (procedural justice) links police intervention to citizen perceptions of authority (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). For example, Tyler (1990) examined the effect of legitimacy on citizen cooperation with the police. He concluded that citizens would likely comply with authority if they believe the police to be legitimate. However, depending upon race, there can be substantial differences in the way legitimacy and fairness of the police is perceived (Ferdik et al., 2014). For example, Posick and Hatfield (2017) introduced a model for police-citizen interactions specifically designed to increase perceptions of

legitimacy and fairness of the police. To test the model, the authors used survey data from 53 law enforcement agencies throughout the United States (Posick & Hatfield, 2017). The authors found that regardless of how officers attempted to implement the model, African American respondents perceived their outcome from the interaction as less fair than the outcomes Whites received or experienced (Posick & Hatfield, 2017).

Public Perception

Research examining public perception began in the disciplines of political science, public administration, and economics, which encompasses citizen satisfaction with government, public agencies, and public service (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). A review of the literature has revealed that most of the research has been quantitative, and this has led to a wide range of contributing factors as the basis for influencing citizen attitudes toward the police (Cheng, 2015). Researchers have looked at individual factors, such as race and ethnicity as determinants for influencing citizen attitudes (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016). Research have focused mainly on individual factors as they attempt to predict citizen perceptions toward the police (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016) and to provide a rationale as to which variables influence citizen attitudes (Cheng, 2015). These variables include race, age (Lyons, 2015), gender, income, education, crime, victimization (Scarborough et al., 2010), voluntary and involuntary police contact, and the news media as the basis for influencing citizen attitudes toward the police (Cheng, 2015). Related studies have also been conducted outside the United States. For example, Cheng, (2015) explored factors accounting for variations in citizen perceptions of the police by using phone surveys and quota sampling of public opinion. The author's

findings were consistent with study results from the United States, indicating that individual and contextual factors influence citizen attitudes toward the police to different degrees. In comparison, Wang (2015) used a mixed-method approach to examine the psychological effect of providing public assistance on police officers, and conceptualized public assistance as one of the most significant roles for law enforcement. Wang's study provided context for understanding the psychological impact citizen attitude and response has on public assistance provided by police.

Other researchers have examined the impact of contextual factors as a contributor to influencing attitudes (Zhao et al., 2014). In general, contextual factors refer to circumstances or situations indicative of police encounters with citizens. These factors include citizen perception of neighborhood safety (Zhao et al., 2014); traffic stops, voluntary or involuntary (Rosenbaum et al., 2005); and police-citizen contacts for the purpose of criminal investigations (Braga et al., 2014; Donner et al., 2015). Other researchers who examined the relationship between public perception of police legitimacy and cooperation with the police found similar links (Czapska et al., 2014; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). McNeely and Grothoff (2016) found that police-community relationships were challenged by perceptions the community had previously developed toward law enforcement. The authors also found that police-community relations are effective when public attitudes impair community trust in the police, discourage cooperation, and cause citizens to question police legitimacy (McNeely & Grothoff, 2016). In an attempt to address these issues, some officials believed that implementing community-policing models offered a means in which to rebuild police-community

relations (Kumar, 2014). The role of community policing was designed to build problem-solving partnerships with the community, in the context for developing a better public perception of interactions with police when they are providing services for the public; however, most attempts to address these concerns have largely been met with criticism and little success (Mastrofski, 1999; Rosenbaum, 2007). As Kumar (2014) found from researching factors influencing citizen assessment of police performance, that an increase in public expectation for services poses a challenge for police given their availability of trained officers and resources. Kumar also noted that the development of community policing further raises public expectation for greater police transparency and accountability.

Articles that support and clarify the central assertions for this study included research by Kappeler and Potter (2017) and Rosenbaum et al. (2015). In an effort to show the small percentage of time that police spend fighting crime, Kappeler and Potter used United States federal crime reports, and statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Other researchers have examined police-citizen encounters from a crime related aspect (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018). Even though it has been documented that police dedicate most of their time responding to requests for noncriminal assistance (Kappeler, 2013a, 2013b; Kappeler & Potter, 2017), little is known regarding noncriminal police-citizen social interactions, and how they influence public attitudes toward the police (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018).

Gap in the Literature

The last 40 years have produced more than 100 scholarly publications examining citizens' attitudes toward the police (Zhao & Ren, 2015). Further, a sizable body of research has come from a context of participants in crime-related situations during which they have contact with police (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018). It is significant, however, that researchers have documented that 70 to 80% of calls requesting police service are not related to criminal activity (Wuschke et al., 2017). For example, using police data from the United States Department of Justice (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012a, 2012b; Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2012), Kappeler and Potter (2017) documented less than one violent crime reported for every full-time sworn officer employed in the United States in 2015. Therefore, on average, each officer in the United States would have encountered less than one murder, rape, or robbery; one aggravated assault and one auto theft; three burglaries; nine thefts; and less than 17 arrests for that year.

Generally, enforcement of laws and maintaining public order are considered the two main responsibilities of the police. However, current research on temporal crime analysis has established that officers devote 20 to 30% of their work time to criminal matters, while the remaining is spent providing public assistance (Vaughan et al., 2018; Wuschke et al., 2017). Public expectations have extended the role of the police beyond law enforcement, and to the point that public expectations require public assistance as part of regular police duties (Wuschke et al., 2017). These assistance services include search and rescue; lost and found children; assistance to the mentally ill, elderly, and

dependent persons; dispute resolution; information on where to find other resources; and administration of emergency medical aid (Wang, 2015). In an early study, Wilson (1978) found that public's demand for police assistance was increasing. In his classic study describing how local political culture influences police officer behavior, Wilson used city and police statistics from 146 cities to document calls to the police (Leiderbach & Travis, 2008). Wilson found that approximately 10% of calls received were related to criminal issues and 38% to public assistance.

The gap identified in this study is a problem existing in the literature. Development of this presumption was based on an extensive review and the overwhelming amount of research focused on police-citizen encounters within a criminal context, which offers a restrictive and limited view of the complete picture. It is of concern that public expectations of the police have increased beyond the scope of law enforcement (Caputo et al., 2018). A considerable amount of research on citizens' attitudes toward police has generated an exhaustive and primarily quantitative academic and crime-related literature. Existing research has demonstrated that approximately 70 to 80% of calls requesting police service are not related to criminal activity but to public assistance. (Kappeler & Potter, 2017; Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018; Wuschke et al., 2017).

Although research regarding public attitudes toward the police has illuminated important findings, I found no research that has addressed police-citizen encounters beyond the limited scope of criminal-activity related situations. Given such a lack of results, further research is warranted that examines public attitudes toward the police in a

context not related to criminal-activity but to public assistance, in an effort to examine noncriminal police-citizen encounters that expend the vast majority of police time (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018; Wuschke et al., 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of noncriminal police-citizen social interactions, including situations involving police response to citizens requiring nonemergency assistance. Little is known regarding the influence of noncriminal police-citizen social interactions, including situations involving police response to citizens requiring nonemergency assistance. A significant portion of an officer's work shift entails responding to citizen requests for noncriminal assistance, which requires from the officer a different set of social skills than those that are crime-related (Vaughan et al., 2018). The importance of understanding the dynamic influences these types of encounters have on the public and how it personally effects citizens can assist police agencies in developing effective communication tactics that focus on positive aspects of the interaction that citizens find effective.

Research Questions

Research question: How are police perceived by individuals living in a multicultural area of Los Angeles County who have experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance by the police?

Conceptual Framework

The foundation for this study was drawn from concepts typically found in management, organizational behavior, and psychological literature and applied to a constructivist model. Several key theoretical models provided the conceptual framework, including expectancy theory, confirmation bias, and negativity bias/asymmetry. Theorists discussed for their contribution to these models include Vroom, Asch, and Jacob.

Expectancy Theory

Resulting from his research on motivations for decision-making, Vroom (1964) developed the expectancy theory (as cited in Juneja, 2018). The focus of Vroom's theory centers on the cognitive process and how people equate various motivational forces that drive behavior. His research was based on the belief that an expectancy relationship exists between effort, performance, and reward (Lunenburg, 2011). Rosenbaum et al. (2005) conducted one of the few studies applying the expectancy theory to attitudes among various racial groups, before and after contact with the police. The authors interviewed 2,500 randomly selected participants among young African American, Hispanic and White adults (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Efforts were made to test the authors' hypothesis formulated from Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory. Findings appeared to support the hypothesis that prior attitudes about the police could influence police-initiated encounters and that judgments regarding the quality of the contact were consistent with expectancy theory.

Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias has been recognized throughout psychological literature (Nickerson, 1998), particularly research on social perception (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Confirmation bias is the inclination to accept only information that supports a preestablished belief and goes to great lengths to justify and confirm that preexisting assumption while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict the belief (Bullard, 2016). One of the earliest studies on this topic was Asch's (1946) research on dominant effects in forming impressions of personality (as cited in Kassin et al., 2013). Asch found that participants gave more weight to information presented in the first sequence than to new information presented in the second sequence, which was either ignored or discounted. Asch's findings appear to be consistent with the confirmation bias hypothesis.

Negativity Bias/Asymmetry

Jacob (1971) proposed a hypothesis suggesting that police encounters have an asymmetrical impact on the public, no matter if the experience is positive or negative, and therefore may not have comparable consequences for determining quality of services provided by the police. A vast amount of research examining negativity bias can be found in psychological literature. Researchers have defined the principle as a general bias that exists in all humans due to innate predisposition and experiences that cause individuals to place greater emphasis on negative experiences (Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Considered by researchers a byproduct of negativity bias, asymmetry refers to that which is not equal, or as in this study, an observable imbalance within a

relationship or social setting in which one individual or group has authority or control over another (Rozin & Royzman, 2001).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was to qualitatively examine the research question using an interpretative phenomenological analysis. A qualitative research design was suitable for investigating complex social phenomena of noncriminal police-citizen relations through the perceptions gained from citizens' experiences (see Maxwell, 2012). A phenomenological design allowed for in-depth analysis that focused on personal experiences and considered how individuals developed and attached meaning to these experiences (see Drinkwater et al., 2013). This method was ideal for exploring through open-ended and probing interviews how diverse citizens who were active participants in receiving and interacting with police for nonemergency public assistance developed an understanding of their experiences. Examination of these subjective experiences using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of phenomenological analysis offered a way to develop common themes, and to draw out information from behavior and meaning implied in language (see Kruth, 2015).

Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation due to ambiguity or vagueness, the following section provides clarification of key concepts and terms.

Police officer: Sworn local, county or state officer (police officers, sheriffs' deputies, highway patrol officers) having a badge, firearm, and the legislated authority to detain or arrest. Law enforcement occupations excluded for the purposes of this study

were off-duty officers, reserved/volunteer officers, safety/resource officers, federal agents, parole officers, animal control officers, correctional officers, private investigators, security guards, crossing guards, and public safety officers working in a fire or paramedic capacity (see Tiesman et al., 2018).

Public assistance: Statutory services required of police to offer and provide to the public not within the scope of their authoritative duties, such as care and aid in situations not related to criminal activity, problem resolution, and information assistance. Types of public assistance police provide to the public include, but are not limited to, emergency aid, information provision, dispute resolution, lost and found, search and rescue, and humane assistance for dependent and mentally ill individuals (Wang, 2015).

Assumptions

A prevailing assumption was that participants were truthful during the interview process and that answers were honest and nonrestrictive of information. The description of the encounter as they lived it did not contain embellishments, and the thoughts and feelings expressed reflected the meaning they ascribed to the experience. To safeguard against dishonesty, participants were continually reassured that their identities would remain confidential and that their honesty was critical to the study.

Another assumption was that participants would become bias after having been informed that I am still currently employed as a deputy sheriff. It was critical not to withhold this information from participants; however, disclosing this information did alter the dynamics between the participants and myself and gave recognition of existing response bias that I was trying to control from entering the study.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study included individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. An attempt to gain a better understanding of the influence of police interaction with citizens in a noncriminal and nonemergency situation influences public perception of law enforcement. The setting for this research was the County of Los Angeles, in the State of California, located in the Pacific Southwestern United States. Los Angeles County contains more than 10 million residents (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a), and was selected based on its diverse population in terms of culture, religion, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomics (see Lee, 2016).

Selecting the most diverse sample population possible was my strategy for establishing transferability. For this reason, individuals selected from Long Beach, California, represented a broad range of characteristics, reflecting the diversity and breadth of the Los Angeles County population. The City of Long Beach is in the southern section of Los Angeles County and has the second largest diverse population in the county (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a).

Data for this study came from a purposive sampling strategy. A common strategy used in a phenomenological design for recruiting individuals having experience with the phenomenon under investigation is purposive sampling (Welman & Kruger, 2001). In purposive sampling, the researcher selects participants based on their understanding of and experience with the phenomenon (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Therefore, those interested in participating were required to have experienced a noncriminal police-citizen

interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. Another sampling strategy used was criterion-based selection. In criterion-based selection, the researcher specifies a common criterion required for all potential participants, from which they can select a group of individuals with shared experiences (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

The sample size for this study was to range from 10 to 12 participants, or until data saturation occurred (repetition of themes and no new information development), or until enough interviews conducted answered the research question satisfactorily (see Marshall, 1996). Gentles et al. (2015) indicated that a sample size for a phenomenological study should consist of 7 to 12 interviews. In the event that participants withdrew from the study, that the number of subjects was below the minimum sample size, or that saturation did not occur, new participants would have been selected from the study matrix to begin the interview process.

After having gained approval from the institutional review board (IRB), approval number 06-10-20-0405194, the recruitment process began. I created a participant recruitment flyer in Microsoft Word, which I saved in an electronic format and transferred to a USB thumb drive, to make copies for disbursement. However, prior to posting any flyers, I gained the approval of research partner organizations throughout the community to display a recruitment flyer at their location of business. To gain partner approval, I presented to each organization a copy of the recruitment flyer to be displayed and informed them of its contents. I invited Long Beach residents with no arrests who had experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving public

assistance from the police to take part in a research study conducted by myself, as part of my PhD dissertation. I then provided a brief description of the study, the purpose; interview time estimate, participant confidentiality, participant questionnaire, use of audio-recorded conversations consisting of an eligibility notification, in-home phone interview to assure both safety and privacy and follow-up call; my contact information, participant withdrawal information, and a \$25 gift card compensation for participant's time. Excluded from the study were individuals not living in Long Beach, those having an arrest, minors, and those unable to speak English or verbally communicate (see Cartledge et al., 2018).

Having gained approval, flyers were publicly posted for 4 weeks or until enough volunteers were recruited for the study. At no time did I actively seek or contact potential participants. Individuals interested participating were the only ones who initiated contact for enrollment.

Ensuring both safety and privacy during the process of data collection, no names were used throughout the study. Instead, each participant was assigned a numerical coding that was used in replace of names when entered in the study matrix and used for all data collection. All identifying information was hidden within the document that could only be retrieved by password that only I knew.

Volunteers responding to the flyer received via email a participation thank you reply (Appendix A) that included my law enforcement disclosure. Attached to the reply were two assigned numerically coded documents, a questionnaire (Appendix B) designed to gather demographical information from potential participants, and an informed consent

form outlining the purpose and type of study the volunteer was participating. Volunteers were also informed the study was strictly voluntary and could stop participating in the study at any time (see Creswell, 2013).

Two types of data were collected: questionnaire data and interview data. Data provided on the questionnaire was designed to pre-screen candidates and gather demographical information that was entered into the study's participation matrix (see Cartledge et al., 2018). The primary source of data came from semi structured, in-depth phone interviews. Interview sessions were audio recorded with the participant's consent and produced into a transcript that was later analyzed (see Cartledge et al., 2018). The interview questions (Appendix C) were open-ended and were designed to probe the participant's thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the encounter (see Groenewald, 2004), allowing for a more complex understanding of their lived experience (see Cartledge et al., 2018). The use of field notes provided a secondary source of data; documenting participant observations during the interview process (see Cartledge et al., 2018). Data collected from the interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of phenomenological analysis to identify codes and themes within the data (see Sarfaraz et al., 2012). Each step of the process was documented clearly and systematically to provide external researchers with a descriptive, detailed recording of the methods presented. Thus, they can be replicated, which ensures the reliability and transferability of the study (see Miles et al., 2018).

Limitations

Some limitations of this study included personal bias, generalizability, and comparability. I have personal knowledge and experience with this topic. I have been currently employed as a deputy sheriff with the Orange County Sheriff's Department for 23 years. For that reason, I made sure to bracket personal prejudgments, values and experiences in order to hear and understand the lived experiences of the participants without risk of influencing their ability to express the account truthfully.

Contrarily, another limitation included participants becoming bias toward me after being informed I am employed as a deputy sheriff. It was critical not to withhold this information from participants; however, disclosing this information did alter the dynamics between the participants and myself and gave recognition of existing response bias that I was trying to control from happening. For instance, Fridell and Wycoff (2004) found that police organizations that conducted their own survey within the community to measure public satisfaction with their services were met with skepticism with respect to the survey's validity. In addition, both Mastrofski (1999) and Reiss (1971) questioned the validity of research in which officers conducted surveys in their local community on behalf of the department. When a citizen is asked numerous questions from a local police officer, they may become intimidated and feel pressured out of fear not to respond truthfully. It is understandable for a citizen to perceive that someone may be in trouble when police are at the front door asking questions. In addition, these types of surveys do not provide confidentiality of the participants identities, which raise questions about the data collected and the validity of the research findings.

An additional limitation was that the study sample does not reflect all counties in the United States. Moreover, the lack of research conducted through similar studies created difficulties for comparing results. Therefore, further research from different counties is necessary to offset the limitations.

Significance of the Study

This study expanded upon and addressed the gap in research literature regarding the impact of noncriminal public assistance context on influencing citizen perceptions of police (see Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018). Furthermore, I examined how other duties performed by the police, which are non-enforcement related, influence citizen attitudes. Knowledge gained from this study illuminates relationships between noncriminal duties police perform when aiding citizens with public assistance, and the impact these interactions have on citizen perception of the police. This information provides law enforcement agencies a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of other duties performed for the public. These findings should be incorporated when designing new strategies to improve public perception and community relations, and thus legitimize police authority. The social implications stemming from this study help promote an understanding of the interactive dynamics of police-citizen encounters, and can help bridge the disconnection between community and police.

Summary and Transition

The aim of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of citizens and their perception and understanding of noncriminal, nonemergency police interaction. Their personal experiences were collected through in-depth interviews that

consisted of probing, open-ended questions, which were analyzed for interpretation to understand how they experienced the phenomenon. The following chapter provides a historical review of the research literature on public perception of citizen attitudes toward police, including a critique of research hypotheses, strengths and limitations, and the conceptual framework used to ground and define the research. I further demonstrate the relevance of the problem and the need to address the gap in the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the last 4 decades, researchers have produced more than 100 scholarly publications examining citizen attitudes toward the police (Zhao & Ren, 2015). A review of the literature has indicated that much of the research has focused on police-citizen contact involving crime-related issues (Vaughan et al., 2018), and that disproportionately fewer researchers have studied the effects of noncriminal police-citizen encounters (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Existing research has also documented that only 20 to 30% of police work is devoted to criminal activity, while the remaining 70 to 80% of the time is spent providing noncriminal public assistance (Wuschke et al., 2017). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the understanding and meaning gained from citizens who directly experienced a noncriminal police-citizen supportive interaction, and therefore to address this gap in the literature (see Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Aims of this review included describing the strategy used for searching the literature, using key terms and phrases in the application of pertinent databases. I also describe the conceptual framework adopted and its application in previous research. In addition, I provide a historical synopsis of the literature, including a comprehensive review of current research establishing the relevance of the issue, and offer a brief summary of major themes and findings in the literature. Lastly, I conclude with an overview of the research methodology.

Literature Search Strategy

A thorough and systematic search of the literature was conducted through Walden University Library, using various academic databases and search engines, such as PsychINFO, PsycARTICLES, SAGE Journals (formerly SAGE Premier), SocINDEX, EBSCO Host, Criminal Justice Abstracts, and Google Scholar. These resources were accessed using the key search terms *citizens*, *attitudes*, *perception*, *police*, and *encounters* as the basis for all inquiries. Additional search terms from prior research, such as *police legitimacy*, *citizen contacts*, *police encounters*, *police-citizen interactions*, *attitudes*, *police assistance* and *police impact* provided a mechanism for locating key phrases relevant to the search. Key phrases included *citizens' attitude toward police*, *citizens' perception of police*, *perception of police legitimacy*, and *officers' perception of citizens*, *police social services*, and *calls for police service*. Results from these findings produced over 100 references on the topic of citizen attitudes and perceptions toward the police. A detailed review of references cited within the research offered an additional search strategy to further narrow the focus of the search to the topic theme of police-citizen interaction.

Conceptual Framework

The foundation for this study was drawn from three concepts typically found in management, organizational behavior, and psychological literature. Key theoretical models in these areas included expectancy theory, confirmation bias, and negativity bias. Application of these theories has been applied to police-citizen encounters to examine the effects of police interaction on citizen attitudes and behavior; however, their effects on

noncriminal public-citizen encounters are largely unknown. Multiple theorists discussed for their contribution to these models included Vroom, Asch, and Jacob.

Expectancy Theory

In 1964, Vroom developed the expectancy theory as a result of his research on motivations behind decision-making (as cited in Juneja, 2018). Vroom (1964) applied his new theory directly to work settings. Whereas, Vroom's expectancy theory centers on the cognitive process of how people relate various motivational forces to each other, and how that process drives behavior (Lunenburg, 2011), Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory and Maslow's (1981) hierarchy of needs try to explain the physical and psychological factors that drive behavior in the workplace (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). In later years, Porter and Lawler (1968), as well as others, helped expand and refine Vroom's theory on the belief that a relationship exists between the effort put forth, the performance achieved from this effort, and the reward received as a result (Lunenburg, 2011).

Vroom (1964) based the expectancy theory on four assumptions. The first assumption was that people entered organizations with expectations concerning their needs, motivations, and prior experiences. Secondly, it was assumed that people were motivated to behave in a particular manner if the behavior resulted in their expected outcome. Another assumption made was that individuals wanted different things from their employers, such as a high salary, while others wanted advancement, and security. The last assumption was that people chose alternatives that gave them the best personal outcome.

These assumptions included three key elements, identified as valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. The degree of motivation and significance a person associated with the expected outcome, and not the actual gratification received, is known as valence (Juneja, 2018). Expectancy refers to the person's belief that a better effort would produce a better result, whereas instrumentality is the faith that if the performance was done well, then the desired results would follow (Juneja, 2018).

In the past, expectancy theory has been applied in studies beyond management and social behavioral research, such as studies on policing. For example, Dejong et al. (2001) applied expectancy theory to data collected from police ride-alongs and found that expectancy theory provided a plausible explanation for behavior observed in community police officers, specifically when officers were motivated to engage in problem-solving for recognition. To test this hypothesis, Rosenbaum et al. (2005) implemented the expectancy theory when measuring the effects on young male African Americans', Hispanics', and Whites' attitudes of direct and indirect contact with the police. Results from their findings were consistent with expectancy theory, in that when police stopped members of the public, some individuals expected that the experience would be negative. This negative attitude toward the police would remain unchanged. Furthermore, Rosenbaum et al. found another condition consistent with the hypothesis, indicating that when individuals called police for assistance, they expected a fast response to occur. When their expectations were not met with satisfaction, their attitudes toward the police were negative.

Confirmation Bias

The human phenomenon identified as confirmation bias has been found in the writings of Julius Caesar (Hochschild, 2008), William Shakespeare, and Francis Bacon (Risinger et al., 2002). Confirmation bias is the inclination to accept only information that supports a preestablished belief and goes to great lengths to justify and confirm that preexisting assumption while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict their belief (Bullard, 2016). This hypothesis has been recognized in a variety of settings throughout psychological literature (Nickerson, 1998), particularly in research on social perception (Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Asch (1946) helped pioneer social perception research with his study on dominating effect of first impressions of assessing personality (as cited in Kassin et al., 2013). In Asch's study, participants received information about the characteristics of a fictitious person and were asked to record their first impressions. The sequence was repeated, but at this time new information was presented that significantly changed the characteristics of that person. Asch found that participants gave more weight to information presented earlier in the sequence than to new information presented later in the sequence, which was either ignored or discounted. As a result of Asch's study, additional research has been conducted, which has documented that once a belief has taken root, it can persist even after being discredited with new evidence (Anderson et al., 1980).

Confirmation bias has been identified throughout research literature on policing (Lidén et al., 2018). For instance, when examining suspect-driven investigations,

Wagenaar et al. (1993) noted that in certain situations, investigators exhibited confirmation bias towards individuals they considered guilty, even with little or no evidence linking them to the crime, in order to ensure a conviction. The authors observed that police questioning was narrowed to circumstantial evidence indicating that person as the main suspect of the crime (as cited in Lidén et al., 2018). Alternatively, Rosenbaum et al. (2005) conducted two 2,500 interviews from randomly selected participants to examine the effects of police encounters on attitudes among various ethnic groups. Participants, presumably those who had experienced a negative police encounter were found to resist information that would change their beliefs about the police. The authors concluded that changing public attitudes toward the police would be difficult (Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Negativity Bias/Asymmetry

In 1971, Jacob proposed that police encounters may have an asymmetrical impact on citizens regardless if the experience was positive or negative, and therefore may not have comparable outcomes for assessing the quality of police services. Jacob (1971) also concluded that experiencing a positive police encounter might not have any favorable effect on citizen attitude toward police. While further research advanced Jacob's proposition, none linked research on asymmetry already existing in psychology literature as part of the theory of negativity bias (Lidén et al., 2018). Lewin (1951) first recognized this pattern when he introduced the term *valence* to describe the emotional forces that allure someone to pleasurable things and repel them from unpleasurable ones (as cited in Shuman et al., 2013). In appraisal theories, valence can be conceptualized as either

positive or negative (Shuman et al., 2013). For example, an event that is negatively valenced (i.e. receiving criticism) will have a greater effect on a person than a positively valenced event (i.e. receiving praise) of the same type (Baumeister et al., 2001).

Like confirmation bias, many prominent thinkers in history, such as Shakespeare, Pushkin, and Schopenhauer (Rozin & Royzman, 2001), have noted negativity bias. According to Rozin and Royzman (2001), the principle of negativity bias holds that a general bias exists in humans, based on innate predisposition and experience, in which greater weight is given to negative details than aspects equally as positive. In other words, the positive nature of something will have less of an effect on an individual's behavior and cognitive process than negative aspects of the same intensity. Moreover, the authors identified four elements of negativity bias that include negative potency, negative differentiation, steeper negative gradient, and negativity dominance (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Negative potency refers to the idea that something (i.e. events, experiences, and items) having both positive and negative aspects of equal magnitude is not equally measured with the same importance (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Similarly, negative differentiation has the same asymmetrical impacts of positive and negative events however, a greater emphasis is given to the notion that negativity, by its nature, is more emotionally significant and complicated in terms of its effects than positivity (Taylor, 1991). Steeper negative gradient manifests when the negative experience associated with an impending is perceived as increasing in magnitude as it approaches (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). With respect to negativity dominance, Baumeister et al. (2001) considered this to be the most common and vigorous element of negativity bias and

described the overall perception and appraisal of events as continuously negative, regardless of the outcome.

Similarly, Rozin and Royzman's (2001) description of negativity dominance proposed that if a sequence of events was equal in occurrence, but positively and negatively opposite, the whole experience overall would be considered negative. The two researchers further described two types of negativity dominance as diachronic and synchronic. Diachronic is the consideration that if one negative event occurs, it will cancel a positive event, and vice versa. In addition, the occurrence of an event will neutralize a prior event. Alternatively, synchronism occurs when consideration of both positive and negative events is simultaneously viewed as a whole, and evaluated to form impressions of the person or event considered. Even though positive and negative events may have occurred equally, greater emphasis will be given to the negative events when deciding the overall appraisal.

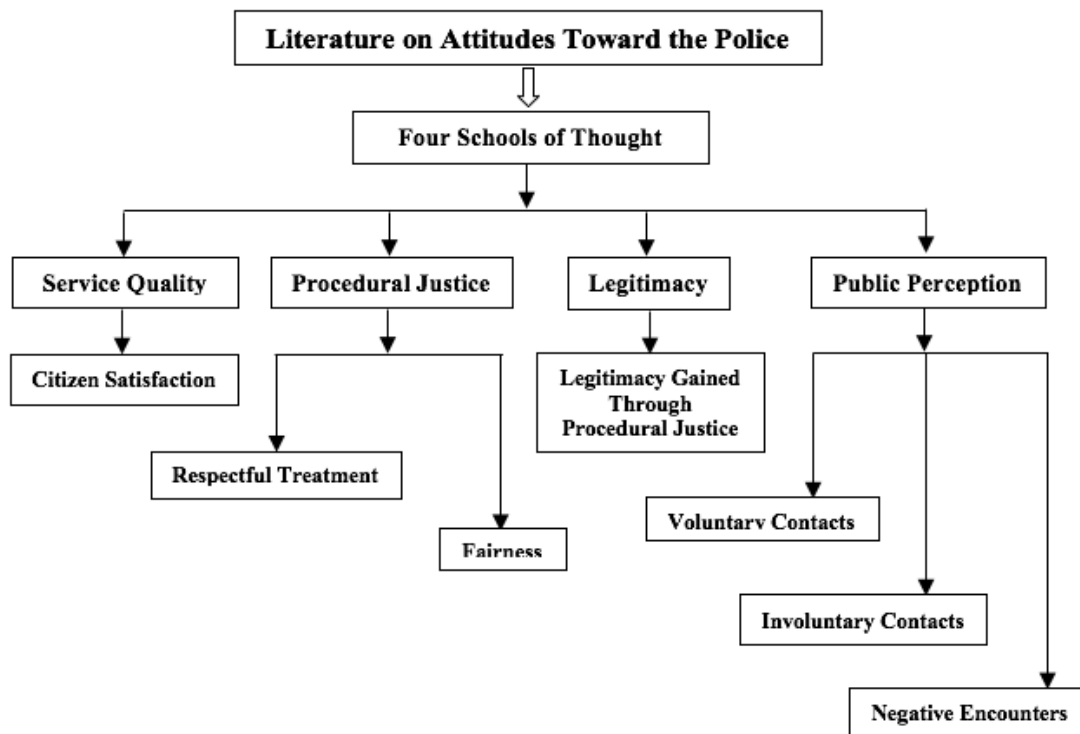
Positive and negative asymmetry can be observed in instances of synchronism. For instance, when Skogan (2006) analyzed the effect of a negative police encounter on citizen perceptions, he found that the experiences from those events were not considered comparable consequences for assessing positivity or negativity, making the impact of the experiences asymmetrical (i.e. not equal). In testing Skogan's findings, Stanko et al. (2012) agreed that encounters with the police could possibly have an asymmetrical negative influence on perceptions of the police. However, they also established that positive contact with police could improve community relations and restore confidence in police fairness.

Literature Review

The foundation for attitude research toward the police was formed by four traditions of theory regarding public perceptions of the police (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). Since then, researchers have overlapped these traditions as a framework, while others have used the same indicators to measure different research concepts (Czapska et al., 2014). According to Maguire and Johnson (2010), the four traditions in attitude research toward the police consist of service quality, procedural justice, legitimacy, and public perception (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Research on Attitudes Toward the Police



Service Quality

One tradition of research into citizen perception was framed on the concept of service quality, which the private sector published in marketing and business journals (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). Influenced by this idea, researchers began using service quality as the focus for police-community interaction surveys (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). While standardized instruments have been developed to measure service quality, no established benchmarks or system to evaluate public sector policing exist in the United States (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Some researchers have considered service quality as a framework for policing practices (Janstrup et al., 2017). For example, in research designed to examine validity construct measures applied in public perception studies, Maguire and Johnson (2010) sought to test Mastroski's (1999) model of the six-dimensional conceptualization of perceived police service quality. They surveyed 374 residents selected from a pseudo-random sample for subjects who had direct police contact. Data findings did not correspond with Mastroski's (1999) six-dimensional model, but the data did fit a one-factor model. The authors concluded that citizen perception of police service quality was one-dimensional. Other research has identified that only for victims of crime does service quality influence citizen attitudes toward police (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Applying the theory of service quality to policing practices has been difficult, due to the unique nature and services police provide for the public, which is altogether different from those provided by the private sector (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2016). Moreover, the police have a monopoly on the type of services they provide for the public; nor do all want police services, especially when are in the process

of committing a criminal act (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). Interestingly, prior research has indicated that for many groups, perceived police effectiveness in enforcing the law (namely, giving traffic citations or taking someone to jail) was a poor predictor of satisfaction and in some cases led to a decrease in positive police performance evaluations (Rosenbaum et al., 2015).

Procedural Justice

Some researchers have utilized this tradition as a lens for examining public perceptions of police (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). Procedural justice consists predominantly of two types of justice, intellectual (quality of decision-making) and distributive (quality of treatment) (Czapska et al., 2014). Intellectual justice, or quality of decision-making, often refers to the perceived fairness that individuals prescribe to decisions made by legal authorities (Reisig et al., 2007). The quality of treatment (distributive justice) is the perceived fairness in treatment, from initial contact with police to the final outcome (Tyler, 1990, 2003). Collectively, the quality of treatment and quality of decision-making form the central concept of procedural justice. Tyler (1990) asserts that when officers act with fairness and respect upon exercising their legal authority they establish greater trust and satisfaction from citizens. In recent years, Tyler expanded his theory to include a concept called ‘motive-based trust’, which has the same premise, but a different perspective (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2016). Tyler contends that when people are treated respectfully and in a fair manner by authorities, people will then infer that the authority’s actions were based on trustworthy motives. However, Jonathan-Zamir et al. (2016) have indicated from studying the effects of high-policing tactics on

airline passengers' perceptions of hostile treatment from airport security found that procedural justice did not have the impact as Tyler predicted. Jonathan-Zamir et al. noted that regardless of the hostile treatment passengers experienced as a result of invasive security measures of being questioned outside the presence others and having luggage searched had no impact on the airport security's legitimacy of authority. Moreover, passengers still complied with security officials' demands and conformed to the laws. Consequently, Tyler's theory has provided the framework relied upon for much of the literature in this research tradition (Waddington et al., 2015), which overlaps the body of research grounded in the third tradition, legitimacy.

Absent any scientific agreement as how to properly measure relationships between procedural justice and police legitimacy, researchers began using global and specific attitudes as a method to gauge these two models (Gau, 2014). Global attitudes are often referred to as vicarious (indirect) experiences, and are developed from second-hand information through collateral sources, such as exposure to the personal experience of a family member or close friend, or news media's portrayal of police behavior (Brunson, 2007; Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Specific attitudes, otherwise known as direct experiences, are developed through first-hand experience, such as the impressions one has of the officer as a result of direct contact (Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Gau, 2014). As a method for measuring procedural justice, Mazerolle et al. (2012, 2013a) used specific attitudes from survey respondents as a way to gauge citizen attitudes about direct police contact. In contrast, Sunshine and Tyler (2003) utilized general attitude responses from citizens to identify the quality of police treatment of the public.

Legitimacy

Research on the third tradition of attitudes toward the police focuses on the concept of police legitimacy. This theoretical tradition began with concepts stemming from the legitimacy of government as a whole (Gau, 2014). Pioneering the way for modern concepts of police legitimacy, Weber (1978) stated that agents and institutions asserting authority over the public must conceive a way for subjects to rationalize why it is necessary for them to submit to the law, since implied belief in authority is the dominant basis for claims to legitimacy. Not all researchers supported Weber's position; Beetham (1991), for example, argued that Weber put too much emphasis on people's subjective beliefs, and that studies should consider objective validity, as well as the manner in which authority is exercised and is consistent with the shared values of the people (Czapska et al., 2014). Tyler and Huo (2002) asserted that legitimacy is a characteristic or quality held by law, an institution, or agent that causes citizens to feel obligated to voluntarily obey decisions and directives. Similarly, Skogan (2006) suggested that the manner in which the public perceives the police, and the attitude they formed from this perception, is vital to law enforcement in gaining public trust. Tyler (1990, 2003) however, concluded that the extent to which citizens see police as legitimate determines whether people obey and comply with police. Furthermore, when individuals believe the police have acted in a fair and open manner, they are more receptive to police requests. Tyler's findings on procedural justice and legitimacy have been the theoretical model for much of the literature, regarding public perception (Tankebe, 2013). Nevertheless, those not in agreement, for example, Waddington et al. (2015) found

Tyler's theory one-sided, when examining the relationship between individual perception, action and approval. In their study, Waddington et al. asked participants to view video clips taken from various British Broadcasting Corporation documentaries of police officers managing real-life incidents. The authors noted that most of the participants focused on a particular part of a video and each participant had their own interpretation of the incident. Waddington et al. (2015) suggested that even though officers acted in a manner as prescribed by procedural justice precepts, some participants still viewed the police unfavorably depending on how the participant perceived and interpreted the officer's behavior.

Public Perception

The fourth tradition, public perception, encompasses research on citizen satisfaction with government, public agencies, and public service, including individual and contextual factors and police-citizen encounters. Roots for this tradition originated in the disciplines of political science, public administration, and economics (Maguire & Johnson, 2010). The central focus of satisfaction research centered on overall citizen satisfaction with government entities, and their level of confidence in these institutions. Researchers routinely relied on surveys from national opinion polls as a measure for determining the public's overall opinions and satisfaction (Gallagher et al., 2001). While most adults responding to national surveys shared a positive sentiment toward the police (Gallagher et al., 2001), many respondents lacked a personal experience of direct police contact (Frank et al., 2005). From this perspective, annual opinion polls were more accurate measures of vicarious (indirect) experiences than overall opinions and

satisfaction. Statistically, results showed that the vast majority of Americans did not experience any contact with police (Langton & Durose, 2013). Researchers have estimated that each year only 1 in 5 individuals had direct police contact (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Research documenting the effects of vicarious (indirect) experiences on citizen attitudes established that individuals having no police contact were influenced by the information they received from family members and friends with personal experience, social media and news coverage, which was misleading or inaccurate (Langton & Durose, 2013; Rosenbaum et al., 2015). It was concluded that officers should consider their behavior, comments, and actions during a citizen encounter, which could have an impact on the attitudes of others beyond a specific encounter (Alpert et al., 2004).

Other researchers have pointed out that information generated from national surveys lack transferability to local communities; nor do they capture an encounter's complete sequence of interactions. More importantly, surveys represent one side of a two-party experience (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). In support, Sun and Triplett (2008) emphasized that much of the research had analyzed citizen and officer perceptions separately and rarely simultaneously. In particular, studies conducted to examine citizen satisfaction with the police asked participants to describe their perception of the officer's demeanor during the encounter; no reference was made indicating the type of call the officer came from before encountering the participant. However, if the officer had responded to a call for a baby not breathing, and a frantic mother, it would affect the officer's demeanor during a subsequent encounter.

Considering the disparity between information gathered in surveys, Fridell and Wycoff (2004) found police organizations that conducted their own survey within the community to measure public satisfaction with their services were met with skepticism with respect to the survey's validity. Studies by Mastrofski (1999) and Reiss (1971) have documented validity issues that arise when officers conduct surveys in their local community on behalf of the department. Participants may be intimidated or feel pressured about responding truthfully, when they know the person asking the questions is a local police officer who patrols their neighborhood. More importantly, these surveys do not provide participant confidentiality, which can raise questions about the data collected and the validity of the research findings.

A primary issue that researchers have considered was whether the discrepancy between groups in survey responses arose from an individual's predisposition and social characteristics or as a result of different treatment by the police (Waddington et al., 2015; Zhao & Ren, 2015). The process by which the public evaluated the police has produced an overwhelming amount of literature (Cheng, 2015; Waddington et al., 2015) focused on linking individual and contextual determinants that influence public attitudes (Scaglione & Condon, 1980). Further examination of the literature reveals that research on determinants has led to a wide range of contributing factors, such as demographics (Hollis, 2016), race (Lai & Zhao, 2010; Oliveira & Murphy, 2014), age (Lyons, 2015), gender (Vogel, 2011), income (Wu et al., 2009), education (Chow, 2011), and the news media (Intravia et al., 2018). There was also research that predicted citizen perceptions

toward the police in any given situation (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016), and examined the reasons why a diversity of variables influenced citizen attitudes (Greene, 2014).

Consequently, many researchers have emphasized the importance of contextual factors influencing public perception of the police. Historically, most of the research on contextual factors primarily involved criminal circumstances (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018). Contextual factors researched for their effects on citizen attitudes included: fear of crime (Hauser & Kleck, 2017), victimization (Aviv, 2014; Scarborough et al., 2010), perceived neighborhood safety (Zhao et al., 2014). As well as, different types of encounters with the police (Donner et al., 2015), and traffic-stops (Bates et al., 2015), police response to citizens calls (Braga et al., 2014), police-citizen interaction (Leslie et al., 2018), either voluntary or involuntary (Decker, 1981).

Public expectation of the police's role in society has expanded beyond what was traditionally expected in the past (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). As society becomes more complex, citizens not only expect officers to reduce crime, but also to solve with fairness and sensibility a multitude of personal issues, often in the capacity of a psychologist, marriage counselor, mental health therapist, or juvenile guidance counselor (Skogan & Frydl, 2004; Tyler, 2005). Research by Wheller et al. (2013) found that an officer expressing concern for a citizen's feelings was a strong predictor of citizen satisfaction with the encounter. As community leaders and police administrators understood the importance of responding to public expectations as a way to gain trust and legitimacy (Tyler, 2005); the development of community policing models offered a means, which this could possibly be achieved (Kumar, 2014). The role of community policing was

designed to build problem-solving partnerships with the community, on the context for developing a better public perception of interactions with police when they are providing services for the public; however, most attempts to address these concerns have largely been met with criticism and little success (Mastrofski, 1999; Rosenbaum, 2007). As Kumar (2014) found from his study on factors influencing citizen assessment of police performance, that an increase in public expectation for services posed a challenge for police given their availability of trained officers and resources. The author also noted that the development of community policing further raised public expectation for greater police transparency and accountability.

Police-Citizen Contacts

Scholars have distinguished police-citizen encounters by type, either as police-initiated or citizen-initiated contacts (Skogan, 2006). In styling the terms “voluntary” and “involuntary,” Decker (1981) also referred to these contacts as “proactive” and “reactive.” On the other hand, Clancy et al. (2001) preferred using “sought,” and “unsought”, and Scaglione and Condon (1980) identified these encounters as either “formal” (official) or “informal” (unofficial). Others combined existing terms to form keywords, such as “involuntary police-initiated” and “voluntary citizens-initiated” when depicting these interactions (Scaglione & Condon, 1980).

Extant literature has revealed a common hypothesis: direct personal (first-hand) contact with police is a significant determinant of citizen attitudes (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Others would argue that a citizen’s perception of the encounter has a substantial impact on their attitudes toward police (Correia et al., 1996; Wells, 2007). Nevertheless,

it was agreed that these experiences have provided researchers with vital information on the correlation between demeanor and interactions developed during the encounter (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). In their analysis of general and specific attitudes towards law enforcement, Frank et al. (2005) tested the direct personal contact hypothesis and observed variations in attitudes depending on officer demeanor and behavior. As a result, they concluded that direct personal experience might have an impact, given that citizens seem not to base their attitudes on vague general beliefs about the policing profession. However, a considerable body of research indicates that what an officer does during public encounters has a strong impact on citizen satisfaction (Decker, 1981; FitzGerald et al., 2013; Wells, 2007). For example, when Mazerolle et al. (2013b) examined the effects of a positive police encounter on citizen satisfaction, they discovered that brief positive encounters resulted in a more positive feeling about law enforcement in general. Other circumstances suggest that during encounters both officers and citizens determine how they will respond to one another, depending on their interpretation of the encounter and each other's behavior (Alpert et al., 2004; Correia et al., 1996; Todak & James, 2018).

Another form of contact individual's experience with the police was demonstrated among those who share a close relationship. In earlier research, Scaglione and Condon (1980) found that individuals who had informal encounters were to some extent less critical than those who had not. They also noted that individuals with family or friends who were officers were not less judgmental of police, nor did these close relationships have any bias effect on the individual's feelings toward law enforcement.

Involuntary Police-Initiated Contacts

Prior research, both in the United States and in Great Britain, has established that the public is less content with involuntary police-initiated contacts than voluntary citizen-initiated contacts (Wells, 2007). Interestingly, from their research on the effects of police contact with young ethnic adults, Rosenbaum et al. (2005) discovered significant links between contact and influence. Originally, the authors suggested that a negative experience with an involuntary police-initiated contact did not influence an individual's attitudes about the police. The rationale was that most citizens expect a negative experience when having involuntary contact with the police, and when the negative experience occurs as expected, the experience will have no effect on their attitude. However, results also indicated that the quality of service received from a voluntary citizen-initiated contact had sole influence on citizen attitudes toward the police. There was also research supporting the idea that a police-initiated encounters are the reason that a majority of the public held negative views toward the police (Schneider, 2018). Many others have suggested that minorities experience the highest amount of negative contacts (Correia et al., 1996), with African Americans having expressed the least favorable attitudes (Frank et al., 2005), although not all social groups have shown a consistent pattern when it comes to attitudes toward the police (Frank et al., 2005).

Voluntary Citizen-Initiated Contacts

Earlier research has shown that citizen-initiated contacts are almost three times as frequent as police-initiated contacts (Skogan, 2006), and that citizens are more satisfied with voluntary citizen-initiated encounters than with involuntary police-initiated

encounters (Decker, 1981; FitzGerald et al., 2013; Wells, 2007). However, a considerable disparity in satisfaction exists among citizen-initiated contacts, depending on the type of service requested, and the perceived quality of service received (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). Studies conducted on satisfaction of police service quality have found crime victims to be the only group influenced by police encounters (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Scaglione & Condon, 1980). Police are not only judged by their politeness, helpfulness, and fairness, but also what Skogan (2006) characterized as their “bedside manner”. An officer with excellent bedside manners shows concern for the victim, displays a willingness to listen, and indicates to the citizen that their feelings are important. When Frank et al. (2005) asked participants in their study to give reasons for having a specific attitude after interacting with the police, the most common response was that the officer was friendly, listened to their problems, was responsive to their concerns, and expressed interest in their feelings.

Negative Police-Citizen Encounters

Prior research has established that the most significant conflict in police-citizen interaction occurs in the enforcement of laws, which typically resulted in negative attitudes and resentment toward police (Correia et al., 1996). Researchers have also documented that a negative experience was likely to produce a far greater impact on citizens than a positive police experience (Skogan, 200). In other circumstances, citizen assessments of negative experiences with government agencies were not confined to the police. Prior research by Katz et al. (1977) indicated similar effects on citizens who reported having experienced a negative bureaucratic encounter with federal government

programs. Nevertheless, it is still not clear which type of encounter yields the most significant effect on citizen attitudes (Brown & Benedict, 2002).

The majority of police-citizen encounters are typically helpful, courteous and professional. However, words, actions, and behavior that each participant perceives of the other can alter a positive encounter into a negative one (Alpert et al., 2004). In his analysis of police-citizen demeanor during encounters, Lundman (1994) found a link between citizen demeanor and officer behavior. Subsequent research by Brandl et al. (1994) found similar results, which indicated that an officer's behavior is influenced by a citizen's demeanor. To better understand police-citizen differential perceptions, Sun and Triplett's (2008) surveyed fifty mid-western neighborhoods, and discovered that most of the research on officer and citizen perceptions had been conducted separately and rarely simultaneously. The authors further indicated that disparate perspectives of the situation caused high levels of conflict between citizens and police.

Inherently notable from some negative situations where the applications of basic key concepts associated with prejudice, negativity bias and confirmation bias. Prejudice is a hostile attitude or feeling based solely on affiliation that one has towards a particular person or group, and which one has assigned undesirable qualities; when this negative behavior is acted upon it is referred to as discrimination (Allport, 1958). The expression of prejudice and discrimination escalates in levels of violence, ranging from negative behavior directed toward a specific group, verbal antagonism, group segregation, physical attack, to group extermination (Allport, 1958). Unlike prejudice, which is learned, negativity bias is a general bias existing in all humans due to innate

predispositions and experiences that cause individuals to place greater emphasis on negative experiences and personal traits when appraising the overall perception of events to continually be evaluated as negative (Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). On the other hand, individuals exhibiting confirmation bias tend to only accept selective information that supports a pre-established belief, going to great lengths to justify and confirm that preexisting assumption, while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict their belief (Bullard, 2016). The following scenario illustrates the relationship between these concepts and police-citizen encounters.

Some police-citizen encounters escalate from verbal conflict to use of force that result in a citizen's death. This was the case in 2015, when an 18-year-old African-American man from Ferguson, Missouri was fatally shot during a police encounter (Mazerolle et al., 2013b). Public outrage ensued, and received a large amount of national media attention (Gallagher et al., 2001). Media headlines spotlighted the police, accusing officers of using deadly force on an unarmed African-American man. It emphasized allegations of racial profiling and police brutality, which fueled more public outrage expressing both negativity and confirmation bias (Nix & Wolfe, 2017). A preponderance of media and research scrutiny surrounded the negative impact police have on citizens and the community, further reinforcing negativity and confirmation bias (Nix & Wolfe, 2017). The influence of negative publicity sparked activist protests associated with increased levels of antagonism and violence toward the police, and eventually erupted in rioting and looting, expressions of asymmetrical and prejudicial behavior (Gallagher et al., 2001). Several media outlets criticized police for their passive response to the rioting,

and others expected the police to allow protesters to exercise their right to peacefully protest, also expressions of negativity bias and asymmetry (Frizell, 2015).

In response to the civil unrest, an executive order was signed creating the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015). After their investigation, the Task Force recommended that law enforcement agencies needed to acknowledge the role of past injustice and discrimination and begin steps to restore public confidence and trust (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; as found in Gallagher et al., 2001). In response to the Task Force final report, the president of the National Fraternal Order of Police, Chuck Canterbury, wrote a letter to President Obama. In his letter, Canterbury (2016) expressed a real concern for the deliberate campaign directed to terrorize America's law enforcement officers, which the media had provided a platform for those declaring police officers as enemies and calling for their attack, signs of prejudice and discrimination (see Gallagher et al., 2001). Such hostility could lead to an increase of more police officers being assaulted and killed as past research has indicated (Gallagher et al., 2001).

Summary and Conclusions

The way citizens perceive the police has become an increasing concern among the public, police, and city administrators (Caputo et al., 2018). As indicated in the literature review, the public's attitude toward the police is deeply rooted in social history, current experiences, and personal beliefs (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). What has not yet been identified by previous research are the influences police-citizen encounters requesting police assistance, which occurred outside a criminal context have on public perception.

The following chapter expands this issue, with research design, methodology, instrumentation, analysis, ethical concerns, and issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from police. This chapter outlines the methodology selected to address the research question, as well as the procedures adapted for participant selection, and research instrumentation. Also included is a detailed plan regarding ethical procedures, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Research Design and Rationale

The goal for this phenomenological study examined how police are perceived by individuals living in a multicultural area of Los Angeles County who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from police. A considerable amount of research on citizens' attitudes toward police has generated an exhaustive quantitative academic and crime-related literature (Vaughan et al., 2018). On the other hand, limited research has documented citizen experiences with police encounters in a public assistance context. To further explore this phenomenon, a qualitative method was deemed the most appropriate approach to gain insight into the complexity of supportive police-citizen interactions and of public reactions to the police from these experiences. Sutton and Austin (2015) asserted that a qualitative method offers the researcher techniques for accessing the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of citizens and for developing an understanding of the meaning individuals attached to their personal experiences. In this way, the researcher could articulate clearly the position and

viewpoint of the participants. Thus, qualitative design was suitable for investigating complex social phenomena of noncriminal police-citizen relations through the perceptions gained from citizens' experiences (see Maxwell, 2012).

The quantitative method is appropriate for measuring variables, predicting and confirming empirical relationships, developing generalizations, and testing hypotheses (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). A quantitative approach was therefore deemed inappropriate because the method did not align with the purpose of the study. Moreover, data collection is typically numeric and uses mathematical model analysis (Williams, 2011). By contrast, a phenomenological design allows for in-depth analysis, which focuses on personal experiences, and considers how individuals develop and attach meaning from these experiences (Drinkwater et al., 2013). A phenomenological design was implemented for exploring how diverse citizens, who were active participants in receiving and interacting with police for public assistance, developed an understanding of their experiences. Examination of these subjective experiences offered a way to explore common themes and to draw out information from behavior and meaning implied in language (see Kruth, 2015).

Other research designs considered were ethnography and grounded theory. An ethnographic design requires the researcher to immerse themselves into the community in order to observe the experience of the participants in their real-life environment (Sutton & Austin, 2015). However, an ethnographic design would not have been appropriate for this study because there was no need to collect data through persistent engagement with participants, in the context of their environment, to answer the research question. In

grounded theory, the researcher uses face-to-face interviews to interact with participants in a group setting to explore a particular phenomenon and offer clarification of something less well understood. (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Grounded theory uses a similar method to phenomenology for collecting data, but the emphasis is on understanding how people experience their world, rather than on a specific phenomenon (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

In this phenomenological study, I was an active participant in the process by performing various functions (see Hertz, 1997), and ensuring that ethical practices were maintained (see McDermid et al., 2014). I was the primary data collection instrument, by conducting audio-recorded interviews that were unstructured and probing, resulting in detailed data. As a secondary source of data, I simultaneously took field notes during each interview, which recorded participant verbal reactions to each question (see Polit & Beck, 2003). After each individual interview, I transcribed verbatim each recorded interview. This process allowed interviews to be stored as analytical text, and for me to analyze data for themes, relationships, word patterns, and frequency of word usage (see Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

I was an active participant throughout the research process, drawing on personal knowledge of this topic and 23 years of experience as a deputy sheriff, a position in which I am still currently employed. For this reason, I restricted my role to that of a student researcher and did not reply to questions appealing to my experiences in this area, so not to be perceived as an expert in citizens' attitudes toward the police, which would have influenced participants' ability to express their accounts truthfully. I also bracketed

my personal prejudgments, values, and experiences in order to hear and understand the participant's lived experience. Participants were informed that I am currently employed as a deputy sheriff; disclosing this information gave recognition of existing response bias and of altering the dynamics between the participants and myself.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Phenomenological design requires that participants have prior experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling is a common strategy used in phenomenological design for recruiting individuals having experience with the phenomenon under examination (Welman & Kruger, 2001). In purposive sampling, the researcher selects participants based on their understanding of and experience with the phenomenon (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Another sampling strategy used was criterion-based selection. In criterion-based selection, researchers specify common criteria required for all potential participants, from which they select a group of individuals with shared experiences (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

The setting for this study was Los Angeles County, in the State of California, located in the Pacific Southwestern United States. The County of Los Angeles has a diverse population in terms of culture, religion, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomics (Lee, 2016), and is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country, expanding 4,084 square miles (County of Los Angeles, 2019). In addition, it is the most populated county in the nation, containing more than 10 million residents, of which 3.5 million are foreign born (County of Los Angeles, 2019). The County of Los Angeles,

where nearly 200 languages are spoken, has a diverse ethnic make-up, containing 44% Hispanic, 31% Whites, 12.3% Asian, 9.7% African American, 0.5% American Indian, and 0.3% Pacific Islander (County of Los Angeles, 2019). The median age in the county is 36, and the percentage of high school graduates is about 78.2% (United States Census Bureau, 2018). In terms of median income, earnings for workers are close to \$30,952.00; average weekly wages are about \$1,225, and the unemployment rate is approximately 4.6% (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; United States Census Bureau, 2018). The median housing value is \$543,400.00, the average household income is roughly \$61,015.00, and the median family income is close to \$68,272.00 (United States Census Bureau, 2018). The unemployment rate for Los Angeles County is approximately 4.6%, and the poverty rate is 14.2% (United States Census Bureau, 2018).

Law enforcement from various municipalities as well as county and state agencies provide police services for the County of Los Angeles. Agencies having jurisdiction within the City of Los Angeles include the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Park Ranger Division, Los Angeles Airport Police Department, Los Angeles Port Police Department, and the Los Angeles School Police Department (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019b). Within the county, surrounding the City of Los Angeles are 45 municipal police departments having jurisdiction within their city (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019b). In addition, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provides police services for 54 unincorporated cities in the county (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019b). Although California Highway Patrol is a state agency, it provides police services on the freeways in the County of Los Angeles (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019b). In 2019, the City of Los Angeles

had 30,126 violent crimes, the most in the county. The combined total included 258 homicides, 2,528 forcible rapes, 10,327 robberies, and 17,013 aggravated assaults (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a).

Selecting the most diverse sample of the population as possible was my strategy for establishing transferability. For this reason, individuals selected from Long Beach, California, represented a broad range of characteristics, reflecting the diversity and breadth of the Los Angeles County population. Long Beach is a land area of 50.29 square miles located in the southern part of Los Angeles County (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a). The city of Long Beach has a population of 462,257, the second largest in Los Angeles County (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a). According to the Los Angeles Almanac (2019a), the demographical profile of Long Beach is comprised of 188,412 Hispanics, 135,698 Whites, 59,925 African Americans, 58,268 Asians, 4,915 Pacific Islanders, 1,349 Native American Indians, and 13,690 other races. Among Long Beach's diverse population are 15,383 same-sex couples. In 2019, Long Beach was second in the county for total violent crimes, which included 30 homicides, 219 forcible rapes, 979 robberies, and 2,056 aggravated assaults (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a).

Once approval was granted on June 10, 2020 from the IRB, approval number 06-10-20-0405194, the recruitment process began. I created a participant recruitment flyer in Microsoft Word, saved it in an electronic format, and transferred it to a USB thumb drive, which I used to make copies for disbursement. Before posting any flyers, I obtained prior approval from research partner organizations throughout the community to display a recruitment flyer at their location. To obtain prior approval, I presented to each partner

organization a copy of the recruitment flyer and gave a brief summary of its contents. Partners were informed that the flyer was an invitation for Long Beach residents to participate in a research study conducted by a student researcher, as part of his PhD dissertation. Then a brief description of the flyer was given, outlining the study, purpose, eligibility notification, participant confidentiality, voluntary participation withdrawal, and research questionnaire. Also explained was the use of three audio-recorded conversations consisting of a brief one-time, 10-minute phone conversation to determine eligibility, a one-time, 30-minute, in-home phone interview assuring both safety and privacy, and a one-time, follow-up call lasting 15-minutes to verify that the information was recorded correctly. Further included was my contact information, IRB approval number, and the offer of a \$25 gift card as compensation for participant's time. Excluded from the study were those not living in Long Beach, those having an arrest, minors, those unable to speak English, and those unable to verbally communicate (see Cartledge et al., 2018). Partner organizations agreed to publicly post recruitment flyers for 4 weeks or until enough volunteers were recruited for the study. However, conditions changed.

At this point of the study, two unexpected events occurred that influenced the public's attitude towards police, and restricted public contact limiting the number of volunteers. Beginning in late February 2020, the detection of the wide spread transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) caused fear and uncertainty throughout the country. To safeguard the health of the public and decrease potential exposure to COVID-19, residents were directed to follow public health guidelines. A Stay at Home

order was issued requiring that all gatherings cease, and not engage in any interaction outside the household.

Then, On May 25, 2020, following the death of George Floyd while in police custody, demonstrations in major cities throughout the United States against police brutality and racism, turned into civil unrest that resulted in businesses being looted and deliberately set on fire (Bowden, 2020). Police officers nationwide were confronted with ambivalent feelings from the public (Bonifacio, 1991). Nationwide, more than 700 officers were injured or fatally injured during the protests (Bowden, 2020). Due to civil unrest that resulted in businesses being looted, and deliberately set on fire, most of the partner organizations feared these same circumstances and rescinded their consent to display recruitment flyers. Having to disclose my connection to law enforcement as a deputy sheriff, also presented viable risks such as, the potential for danger to recruit volunteers safely, exposure to legal ramifications, and the ability to gather unbiased data.

Due to the circumstances, using social media as a recruitment tool was not a viable option. Moreover, different ethical consideration was associated with posting notices on specific sites. For example, posting invitations on some public and private websites require prior approval, while other organizations prohibit ‘solicitation’ and define solicitation broadly to include any form of data gathering. In addition, membership in Facebook and other social media groups was required before posting an invitation, which I do not have due to safety reasons.

To overcome these challenges, some alterations were made in order to complete the study. For example, from June to October, I continued asking research partner

organizations throughout the community if they would display a recruitment flyer at their location, which most declined. In support, family, friends and co-workers shared the recruitment flyer and increased the number of potential volunteers who the flyer reached.

After 5 months of recruitment, the sample size for this study was 6 participants. While the sample size is smaller than originally planned, the data provided insight how individuals perceive the police as a result of noncriminal interaction with them. Basis for this conclusion was drawn from participant responses having similar themes, subthemes, and multiple biases. In support, Guest et al. (2006) have indicated that data saturation could possibly occur with 6 interviews.

Once a volunteer responded to the flyer via email, I immediately replied (Appendix A), thanking them for their consideration to participate in the study. Attached to each email reply was an informed consent form, and study questionnaire (Appendix B) containing the volunteer's assigned numerical code,. The consent form outlined the purpose and type of study; procedures for the study, including the use of audio-recorded interview; risks and benefits; and provision to decline further participation in the study at any time (Creswell, 2013). The form included safeguards designed to protect the participant's identity, such as using an assigned numerical code rather than their name, and any information that could potentially reveal the person's identity would be redacted (Creswell, 2013). Volunteers were encouraged to read the informed consent form and ask questions, which I went over with them in detail. If subjects understood the study well enough to want to participate, their voluntary consent was accepted. Those who declined to give their consent were not pressured to continue in the process (Groenewald, 2004).

The questionnaire was designed as a tool to assist in the prescreening process, as well as gather participant demographical information.

To ensure both safety and privacy during the process of data collection, no names were used throughout the study. Instead, those responding to the recruitment flyer, were assigned a numerical coding, which was used when entering data collection in the study matrix. Each of the instruments used for data collection was individually marked with the participant's assigned coding before it was administered. All identifying information in the study matrix was hidden within the document that could only be retrieved by password.

Once consent was granted and the questionnaires returned via email, candidates were evaluated against inclusion and exclusion criteria, and their demographical information was added to the study matrix. Due to the environmental challenges and volunteer schedules, instead of contacting individuals by phone as originally planned, they were contacted via email to notify them of their eligibility status and determine their interest and willingness to still participate in the study (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Each participant email correspondence was separately labeled with the date and participant's assigned numerical code, and backed up on a USB hard drive that was stored in a locked metal filing cabinet.

Those not meeting the criteria were thanked for taking part in the recruitment process. Each was informed that the study required individuals to meet certain criteria in order to be considered for participation, and that if this criteria was not met they would be

excluded from participating in the study. They were also told that the information they provided would be destroyed immediately following this disclosure.

Individuals eligible to participate were thanked for taking part in the recruitment process, and informed that once the screening procedure was complete, they would be notified if they were selected as a participant, or as an alternate should someone withdraw from the study. Selected participants were then scheduled for a one-time telephonic interview, lasting no longer than 30-minutes, on a selected day and time of their choosing.

Instrumentation

As the primary data collection instrument in this study, I gathered, reflected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported all data. The two types of data collected were questionnaire and interview data. Data provided on the questionnaire was used for demographical information, and provided a baseline to gauge participant responses for biases. Participant responses to the questionnaire were entered into the study matrix as questionnaire data, then backed up on a USB hard drive, and stored on a password protected computer (Cartledge et al., 2018).

All interviews were conducted privately over the phone in the safety of the participant's home and audio recorded on Google Voice with the participant's consent. Individual phone interviews lasted no longer than 10-minutes. Interviews were separately labeled with the date and participant's assigned numerical code, saved on a password-protected computer and later produced into a transcript (Cartledge et al., 2018). All audio recordings and transcripts were backed up on a USB hard drive and stored in a locked

metal filing cabinet. Subsequent follow-up (member checking) discussions with participants were conducted via email instead of by phone as originally planned. This modification allowed participants adequate time to review and verify the information contained in the transcript was correct.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Interviews were estimated to last no longer than 30-minutes; however, this time estimate could vary depending upon participant responses. At the time of their interview, participants were reminded that their participation was strictly voluntary, and that at any time and for any reason they could stop their participation in the study. In the event that a participant withdrew from the study, a new participant would be selected from the study matrix to begin the process. With participants' consent, each interview was audio-recorded using Google Voice. Interview sessions followed a strict protocol (Appendix C), but were designed to be semi-structured in order to allow participants to openly share their experiences. Utilizing a semi-structured approach enabled participants to relax, so that they could provide a detailed and descriptive interpretation of their experience of the phenomenon (Cartledge et al., 2018). As participants described their experience, I remained coherent of my personal experiences, which I did not express to any participant.

If during the interviews, new questions developed relevant to the study, they were added to the field notes and asked in future interviews. Participants whose interview occurred prior to any new questions were contacted by phone and given the chance to answer. Upon completion of each interview, participants were thanked for their assistance, and told that they would be contacted once the audio-recorded interview was

transcribed, to verify that I accurately described their experience in their own words. Participants were also informed that after the study was completed, approved, and submitted to ProQuest, a copy of their transcribed interview and preliminary findings of the research would be provided for them either by email or by U.S. postal service. Participants were then offered the opportunity to ask questions or express their concerns about the interview. If a participant expressed any emotional concerns following their interview, they would be provided mental health resources in the geographical area closest to their residence.

Data Analysis Plan

Data was analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of phenomenological analysis to identify codes and themes (Sarfaraz et al., 2012). Each step of the process was performed with the intention to be clear, systematic, and to provide external researchers with a descriptive, detailed recording of the methods, thus ensuring the reliability and transferability of the study (Miles et al., 2018).

Interviews were audio-recorded separately, and labeled with the date and an assigned code, such as '07/18/2019, Participant 1' (Groenewald, 2004). When more than one interview took place, an alphabet letter was added after the date, '07/18/2019, (B), Participant 2' (Groenewald, 2004). Pam Stamper-Taylor, a professional certified court reporter, with the Superior Court of the State of California, was originally going to transcribe each audio-recorded interview. Since Pam Stamper-Taylor's work agreement addressed confidentiality, the IRB did not require one from her (Footnote [g], of the IRB's Research Ethics Planning Worksheet). However, as a result of COVID-19, Pam

Stamper-Taylor could not transcribe the interviews. Instead, I personally transcribed each audio-recorded interview. After the interviews were transcribed, Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of member checking was applied to ensure the quality and rigor of the study, and to ensure that the information reflected the participant's experience rather than the researcher's own. This approach required contacting participants for a one-time 15-minute follow-up call asking them to verify their intended meaning and to authenticate the results. Once data accuracy was confirmed, the data was then analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of phenomenological analysis. Each transcript was carefully read to get an overall sense of the participant's experience. Individual statements were then separated and reviewed again to identify significant statements (Steps 1-3). During this time, field notes were reviewed as an additional tool for extracting meaning from significant statements, and to identify codes and themes (Steps 3-4). Frequent discussions of key themes and data analysis will occur between researcher and committee members assisting in the peer check (Cartledge et al., 2018). Regular review of the data will allow interconnected sub-themes to be distinguished from main themes (Step 5). Using questionnaire data obtained during prescreening provided an additional step of analysis to examine the patterns of themes, with the participant's profile allowing for deeper insight (Cartledge et al., 2018). Finally, the description was condensed to a statement that captured those aspects key for the construct of the phenomenon (Step 6) (Morrow et al., 2015).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Internal validity (credibility) measures incorporated in this study were derived from standards that included how the research was conducted, analyzed, and reported; and how the sequence was described in order to collect, process, code, and analyze the data (Miles et al., 2018). Credibility was achieved through the purposive-criterion sampling strategy. To further establish credibility, Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of member checking was used to maintain the quality and rigor of the study, and to confirm that the information gathered reflected the participant's experience rather than that of my own. I contacted participants and asked them to verify the intended meaning and to authenticate results.

Transferability

Selecting as diverse a sample population as possible was the strategy for establishing transferability. Individuals selected from Long Beach, California, for participation represented a broad range of characteristics, reflecting the diversity and breadth of the Los Angeles County population. Moreover, the study was repeated on various subjects of race, culture, age, socioeconomics, and sexual orientation. The dearth of research conducted through similar studies created difficulties for comparing results and establishing transferability. However, the transferability of this study can be applied quantitatively to future research.

Dependability

Procedures outlined in this study were designed to be clear, systematic, and to provide external researchers with a descriptive, detailed recording of the methods, thus enabling replication, and ensuring reliability and transferability of the study (Miles et al., 2018). Moreover, each stage of the study was developed to incorporate techniques that addressed potential issues regarding ethical concerns, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To establish confirmability, I made every effort to bracket personal prejudgments, values, and experiences in order to hear and understand the lived experiences of the participants, without risk of influencing their ability to express their accounts truthfully. Each audio-recorded interview was transcribed, and member checked to ensure the quality and rigor of the study.

Ethical Procedures

To ensure ethical research procedures, agreements were required to gain access to participants and to collect data. After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I began the recruitment and data collection process. Participants were not solicited or pressured to take part in the study. Each participant was informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time. If a participant withdrew or refused participation, a new participant was selected from the study matrix. If participants expressed any concerns following participation in the study, counseling resources were provided nearest their residence.

All selected participants received a consent form outlining the purpose and type of study in which they were participating. Procedures for the study, included the use of audio-recorded conversations, risks and benefits, and the provision to decline further participation at any time were explained in the consent form. In addition, participants were guaranteed confidentiality and no participant names were used. Instead, each was assigned a number to protect their identities. No personal identifiers were used, and any information that could identify the person's identity was redacted. Subjects were given as much time as needed to read the consent form and ask questions before committing to participate. To take part in the study required the participant's consent, and those who declined were not pressured to continue in the process.

Both hardcopy and electronic data were dated, labeled, and cataloged. Audio recordings of interviews were separately labeled with the date and an assigned code. Electronic data and audio recordings were backed up on a USB hard drive, and stored on a password-protected computer that only I knew the password. Hardcopy data and the USB hard drive were stored in a locked metal filing cabinet that only I had the key. All data will be stored for 5 years and when the 5 years expires, all data will be destroyed.

Summary

The strategies and procedures presented for research design and rational, methodology, instrumentation, data analysis, and issues of trustworthiness were designed to be structured and straightforward. This provides external researchers with a comprehensive, detailed recording of the methods utilized, with which they can replicate.

The following chapter further expands the research methodology, with presentation of the results and the analysis process.

Chapter 4: Results

A substantial body of research comes from the context of crime-related situations during which participants have contact with police (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vaughan et al., 2018). However, researchers have documented that 70 to 80% of calls requesting police service are not related to criminal activity (Wuschke et al., 2017). Understanding the impact that noncriminal encounters have on the public and how it affects citizens can assist police agencies in developing effective communication strategies that focus on aspects of the interaction that citizens find effective. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of those having experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result from receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. The scope of this study was to answer the following research question: How are police perceived by individuals living in a multicultural area of Los Angeles County who have experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police? This chapter outlines (a) the research setting and conditions of study; (b) participant demographics and characteristics; (c) location, frequency, and duration of data collection; and (d) a detailed description of the ethical procedures taken to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

Research Setting

The setting for this research was the County of Los Angeles, in the State of California, located in the Pacific Southwestern United States. Los Angeles County contains more than 10 million residents (County of Los Angeles, 2019), and this county

was selected based on its diverse population in terms of culture, religion, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomics (Lee, 2016). Therefore, I aimed to select the most diverse sample population possible. For this reason, individuals selected from Long Beach, California, for participation represented a broad range of characteristics, reflecting the diversity and breadth of the Los Angeles County population. The City of Long Beach is in the southern section of Los Angeles County and has the second largest diverse population in the county (Los Angeles Almanac, 2019a). Participants from various parts of Long Beach responded to the recruitment flyers.

Demographics

Demographical information for this study came from 6 volunteers residing in Long Beach who were selected based on their understanding of and experience with the phenomenon under investigation. The demographical characteristics of the 6 participants that took part in the study are depicted below in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Participant Characteristics

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION																				
Participants	Gender		Education					Occupation			Income			Politics		Ethnicity				
	Age	Male	Female	GED	HS	AA	BA	MA	PhD	Work	Student	Low	Middle	Upper	Party	African	Hispanic	White	Asian	Other
26			✓			✓				Nursing Student		✓			Independent			✓		
21			✓				✓			Student		✓			Democrat		✓			
41	✓					✓				Paralegal			✓		Democrat		✓			
49		✓						✓		Public Defender				✓	Democrat	✓				
41			✓				✓			Court Clerk III				✓	Republican		✓			
39			✓			✓				Public Safety				✓	Independent	✓				

Data Collection

Number of Participants

Eleven individuals responded to the recruitment flyers. Of those 11 volunteers, 6 gave their consent and returned completed questionnaires, 3 did not reply after the initial

response, and 2 did not meet the criteria specified. The 6 consenting volunteers met the required inclusion criteria that included English-speaking adults with no arrests, living in Long Beach, and having experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result from receiving police assistance. Each of the 6 participants scheduled and completed phone interviews without cancellation.

Location, Frequency and Duration

Recruitment for the study started June 12, 2020 and ended October 15, 2020. Flyers were posted at participating businesses throughout Long Beach, California, and remained publicly displayed for 4 weeks. In light of COVID-19 and safety concerns due to civil unrest from demonstrations, participant correspondence was conducted via email with the only exception being phone interviews, which were recorded using Google Voice. Upon receiving a volunteer participation response, an email reply was immediately sent, thanking them for their interest in the study and my disclosure to law enforcement. Attached with each reply were two numerically coded documents that were individually assigned to each volunteer: the study questionnaire (Appendix B) and a consent form. Volunteers were informed that if they wanted to participate in the study, their voluntary consent was needed, and that they could indicate their consent to participate by completing and returning the attached questionnaire. Once consent was granted and questionnaires were returned, candidates were evaluated against inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants needed to meet the specified criteria for participation in the study: English speaking adults with no arrests, residing in Long Beach, and having experience with a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving assistance

from the police were requested to reply via email with a day and time convenient for them to be interviewed.

On June 25, 2020, 14 days after the initial June 12, 2020 posting, 2 volunteers (213 & 320) responded to recruitment flyers via email. I immediately replied to both volunteer responses and provided each with a study questionnaire and consent form. The following day, both Volunteers 213 and 320 gave their consent and returned completed questionnaires. Both volunteers were notified that they met the study requirements and were invited to schedule a time to be interviewed. Immediately, Participant 213 responded requesting to be interviewed that day around 1:30 pm, over the phone. Five days later, Participant 320 responded requesting to be interviewed on July 13, 2020 at noon. On June 27, 2020, the 3rd volunteer (142) responded to the recruitment flyer. I replied to Volunteer 142 that same day; however, I did not receive a response. Three days later, I sent Volunteer 142 a follow-up email to determine if they were still interested in participating in the study. However, Volunteer 142 did not respond and was considered a withdrawal. On August 20, 2020, 10 days after Participant 320's phone interview, the 4th volunteer (168) responded to the recruitment flyer. I immediately sent a reply, to which there was no response. On September 1, 2020, 8 days later, I sent Volunteer 169 a follow-up email to determine if they were still interested in participating in the study. That same day, Volunteer 168 responded to the follow-up email and returned the completed questionnaire giving their consent to participate. After Participant 168 was notified of having met the requirements, they requested to be interviewed on September 4, 2020 at noon, over the phone. On September 18, 2020, the 5th volunteer (480) responded to the

recruitment flyer via email. I replied to Volunteer 480's response and included the study questionnaire and consent form. Two days later, on September 22, 2020, Participant 480 returned the completed questionnaire giving their consent to participate. Participant 480 was immediately notified that they met the study requirements and was given an interview invitation, which they scheduled for October 6, 2020, 14 days later. The 6th volunteer (710) responded to responded to the recruitment flyer on September 30, 2020, which I sent a reply with a consent form and questionnaire. Three days later, I sent Volunteer 710 a follow-up email to determine if they were still interested in participating in the study. Volunteer 710 did not respond and was considered a withdrawal.

At this point of the recruitment process, 4 months after the initial flyer posting, only 4 participants had been recruited. To overcome this challenge, I continued asking research partner organizations throughout the community if they would display a recruitment flyer at their location, which most declined. To assist with this process, family, friends and co-workers shared the recruitment flyer and increased the number of potential volunteers who the flyer reached.

On October 1, 2020, the 7th and 8th volunteers (600 & 513) responded to the recruitment flyer. I immediately replied to both volunteer responses and provided each with a study questionnaire and consent form. The following day, both Volunteers 600 and 513 gave their consent and returned completed questionnaires. Both volunteers were notified that each met the study requirements and were invited to schedule a time to be interviewed. Each of the volunteers accepted the interview invitation; Participant 513 requested to be interviewed on October 15, 2020 and Participant 600 requested October

21, 2020. I received a 9th volunteer (225) response, on October 3, 2020, to which a reply was sent; however, upon receiving their questionnaire, they did not meet the study requirement. On October 12, 2020, the 10th and 11th volunteers (126 & 146) responded to the recruitment flyer. I replied to both volunteers with a study questionnaire and consent form. Volunteer 126 did not meet the requirements and Volunteer 146 withdrew. However, after Participant 600's interview on October 21, 2020, participant responses began having similar themes. In addition, biases and theories presented in the conceptual framework began to emerge in participant statements. Although the sample size was smaller than originally planned, the data obtained from participant interviews provided some insight about how individuals perceive the police as a result of noncriminal interaction with them.

Data Recording

Data for the study was gathered through participant questionnaire responses and in-depth phone interviews. All participant interviews were conducted privately over the phone on the day and time requested. No interviews were cancelled. Interviews followed a scripted protocol (Appendix C) that helped guide participants and during the interview sessions, providing consistency throughout each interview. Handwritten notes were taken during each interview, documenting participant reactions to each question. Before each interview, participants were asked again if they give their consent to be audio-recorded, which each replied "yes" in agreement. Interviews sessions were recorded with the use Google Voice, using the following procedure: (a) From my password protected computer, I used the web browser Google Chrome to access Google Voice; (b) After logging onto

Google Voice, from my cellphone I dialed the phone number assigned to that Google Voice account; (c) Once the incoming call to Google Voice began to ring on my computer I answered the call; (d) On my cellphone, I pressed the Add Call button, then dial *67 and the participant's number; (e) Once the participant answered the incoming call, I pressed the merge button on the cellphone to merge the call with Google Voice; (f) I then clicked the number 4 button of the dial key pad located on the computer screen to start the audio-recording on Google Voice; (g) After the interview, I clicked on the number 4 button again to stop the audio-recording.

In the event Google Voice failed to record due to a malfunction, system failure or loss of internet access, a SONY IC Recorder (ICD-PX440), was also incorporated as a fail-safe mechanism. This precaution was beneficial in ensuring that all interviews were recorded and no vital data was lost. Immediately after each interview, audio-recordings were downloaded onto a password-protected computer. Each audio-recorded interview was reviewed several times before transcribed verbatim onto pleading paper. Pleading paper is a formatted legal document used by court reports, with numbered lines on the left side, allowing for easy referencing of participant statements when member checking.

Transcripts were then compared with the audio recordings verifying its accuracy. All transcript headings were labeled with the participant's numerical code, date, and start and end times of interview. Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of member checking was then used to ensure the rigor and quality of the study. Originally, member checking was to be done by a follow up phone call, however this method was changed to an email containing the participant's interview transcript. Not only did this change make it easy for

participants to verify the information, but it provided them the time to review the transcript in order to ask questions. Each participant was emailed a copy of their interview transcript and asked to verify that the information collected accurately reflected the meaning of their experience rather than my own. Upon participant review, all transcripts were authenticated and deemed correct without any clarifications or disputes.

Data Analysis

Coding Process

Once accuracy was confirmed, transcript data was then transferred reviewed, and methodically compiled before being entered into the study matrix. This process allowed interviews to be stored as analytical text, which allowed for all participant responses to be viewed and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step method of phenomenological analysis (see Figure 3). Each transcript was carefully read to get an overall sense of the participant's experience. Individual statements were then separated and reviewed for themes, relationships, word patterns, and frequency of word usage (Vaismoradi et al., 2013) (Steps 1-3). Field notes were reviewed and used as an additional resource to assist in extracting meaning from expressions to identify sub-themes based on participant actions, thoughts, and feelings significant to their experience (Steps 3-4).

Figure 3

Study Matrix

Participants	Question 16		Question 17		Question 18	
Numerical Code	What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you hear the word "police"?	Theme & Sub-Themes	Once you have formed an impression of the police, would you perhaps accept any new information presented to you that disproves or contradicts your belief? Why?	Theme & Sub-Themes	What are your expectations of the police?	Theme & Sub-Themes
320	<p>Response: "I believe they are here to protect us but sometimes things don't go as planned. I recently began to feel that police officers should be required to obtain an associate's degree similar to nursing, tailored to their career path that would help them better deal with the issues they encounter every day in their line of work."</p>	<p>Theme: Effects when hearing the word "police"</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Protect Require college degree</p>	<p>Response: "I would absolutely accept any information presented to me and I am open to changing my perception."</p>	<p>Theme: Able to accept new information after forming an impression</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Absolutely accept Open to change perception</p>	<p>Response: "That they are fair, unbiased, just and honest."</p>	<p>Theme: Personal expectations of police</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Fair Unbiased Honest</p>
213	<p>Response: "Growing up, my impressions of police were positive. I thought them as the people that would protect me and my family if we needed them to. Recently my feelings towards police have shifted to a more negative impression."</p>	<p>Theme: Effects when hearing the word "police"</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Growing up positive Protect Now negative</p>	<p>Response: "Yes I would."</p>	<p>Theme: Able to accept new information after forming an impression</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Yes, I would</p>	<p>Response: "I expect police to maintain order and help civilians in times of need. They should attempt to be mediators in all civil situations and should de-escalate issues. They should treat all civilians equally and never abuse their positions of power."</p>	<p>Theme: Personal expectations of police</p> <p>Sub-Themes: Maintain order Help civilians Mediate Deescalate issues Treat equally Never abuse their power</p>

Note. Theme development (red font) was based on questions originating from the study questionnaire and phone interview (white font in top gray header). Significant words, statements and recurring responses relevant to experience were separated and labeled as subthemes (blue font).

Frequent discussions of key themes and data analysis occurred between researcher and committee members assisting in the peer check (Cartledge et al., 2018). Regular review of the data allowed interconnected sub-codes to be distinguished from main codes, and provided an exhaustive description (Step 5). Questionnaire data provided an additional step of analysis to examine the patterns of codes, with the participant's profile allowing for deeper insight (Cartledge et al., 2018). Finally, the description was condensed to a

statement that captured those key aspects for the construct of the phenomenon (Morrow et al., 2015) (Step 6). The main themes and sub-themes, resulting from the analyzed data are provided in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Main Themes and Subthemes

<p>Theme 1: Personal expectations of police Fair and unbiased College degree</p> <p>Theme 2: How expectations developed Upbringing Life experience (own and others)</p> <p>Theme 3: Sources of information Social media Family and friends</p> <p>Theme 4: Able to accept new information after forming an impression Yes If verified</p> <p>Theme 5: When evaluating negative news involving police View facts Skepticism Critically Demeanor</p>	<p>Theme 6: Effects when hearing the word “police” Caution Protection Nervousness Lack of trust</p> <p>Theme 7: Personal experience Childhood interaction Friendly demeanor</p> <p>Theme 8: Perception of police prior to personal experience Positive Negative</p> <p>Theme 9: Influences affecting personal beliefs of police Others’ alleged experiences Direct personal interaction Special effort (going out of their way) Age Childhood experience Negative experience</p>
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Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Internal validity measures utilized in the study originated from standards by which this research was conducted, analyzed, and reported. As well as, how the sequence of procedures was described in order to collect, process, code and analyze the data (Miles et al., 2018). Moreover, credibility was achieved through the purposive-criterion sampling strategy used for this study. Credibility was also obtained through triangulation, in which a diverse group of participants ranging from different ethnicities was separately interviewed resulting in different perspectives of the same experience. To further establish credibility, Colaizzi’s (1978) method of member checking was used to maintain

the quality and rigor of the study, and to assure that the information gathered reflected the participant's intended meaning and to authenticate the results.

Transferability

Selecting as diverse a sample of population as possible was the strategy for establishing transferability. Individuals selected for participation included a range of genders, races and education levels that reflect the diversity of Los Angeles County's population. The interviews were conducted using the same methods with participants of various races, cultures, age groups, socioeconomics and sexual orientations. At the same time, the lack of research conducted through similar studies created difficulties for comparing results and establishing transferability. However, the transferability of the study can be applied quantitatively to future research.

Dependability

Dependability was established through clear and systematic procedures outlined in the study, providing external researchers with a descriptive, detailed recording of the methods, thus enabling replication, and ensuring reliability and transferability of the study (Miles et al., 2018). To further establish dependability, an audit trail, consisting of emails, questionnaires, interview recordings, transcripts and study matrix, triangulated the study activity log. Moreover, each stage of the study incorporated techniques to address any potential issues regarding ethical concerns, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Confirmability

Confirmability was established through bracketing personal prejudgments, values and experiences, in order to allow participants to express the account of their experience truthfully. Further establishing confirmability, each audio-recorded interview was reviewed several times before being transcribed verbatim; guaranteeing the quality and rigor of the study. Moreover, each participant received a copy of their interview transcript via email to personally validate its accuracy and authenticity.

Study Results

Theme development originated from questions specifically designed for the study questionnaire and interview, as well as codes from recurring participant responses to questions relevant to their experience. This process provided a strategy for classifying and interpreting participant responses, in an effort to capture the intended meaning that best reflected their lived experiences.

Theme 1: Personal Expectations of Police

To explore indications of expectancy theory, participants were asked to describe their expectations of the police. Fair, honest, unbiased and college educated were common participant responses. Expectations included, “That they are fair, unbiased, just and honest” (Participant 320), and “My expectations of the police are to keep the community safe, to be unbiased, fair and aware of the community they serve” (Participant 168). Participant 600 stated, “To protect life and property. To assist in maintaining order and the enforcement of our laws.” Likewise, Participant 213 said,

I expect police to maintain order and help civilians in times of need. They should attempt to be mediators in all civil situations and should de-escalate issues. They should treat all civilians equally and never abuse their positions of power.

Participant 513 expected police officers to possess and exhibit particular qualities, “integrity, humility, ethical, honest, and empathetic.” Another expectation among participants was that police officers have a college degree. “Police officers should be required to obtain an associate’s degree similar to nursing, tailored to their career path that would help them better deal with the issues they encounter every day in their line of work” (Participant 320). Similarly, Participant 480 expects police “to be professional and courteous.” Participant 480 also expects, “Criteria to become an officer should be they have a college degree.”

Theme 2: How Expectations Developed

The impact that movies, television, schooling and upbringing had on each participant provided insight into how their expectations of the police developed. For example, Participant 213 explained, “I developed these expectations from school and movies/tv shows where police were always portrayed.” Participant 600 stated, “Early on in life my parents, school, community programs and television were the primary contributors. As I grew older, personal experiences and the media have also played a part.” Also influenced by their upbringing was Participant 168, who said, “I developed these expectations during my upbringing, having worked in a law office and listening to my community's needs.” Participant 513 cited developing their expectations through “life experience, involvement with police officers and based on what I was taught as a child.”

Participant 480 described developing expectations through “personal and professional experience.” Participant 320 responded, “The police are who you call if there is a problem, and in order for those problems to be solved properly.”

Each participant was asked to describe how he or she were raised to view the police. Although many participants were raised to respect the police, parental influence regarding the police were often cautionary and fear based. For example, Participant 480 stated, “To respect the police. But also, be careful with the police.” Participant 600 recalled, “My parents raised me to respect the law and police officers. I was always told that if I needed help or was in danger, I was to run to a police officer because they would protect me.” Participant 513 stated, “As people who are there to help you stay safe, leaders of the community and mentors.” In terms of fear, some participants were not only taught to respect the police, but were also instructed to avoid them altogether. For example, “My parents raised me to be respectful, truthful to police and to avoid any contact, whether it's good or bad” (Participant 168). Participant 213 said, “My parents raised me to view police as those who would get me in trouble if I did anything wrong. If I didn't do anything wrong there should be no reason for them to hurt me.” Only one participant admitted having no parental influence regarding the police. “They did not really raise me to feel one way or the other. I was taught to respect every human life, and officers are no exception” (Participant 320).

Theme 3: Sources of Information

Participants were asked where they acquired their news. Many stated they received their information from online news outlets, while others said social media,

family and friends were the sources of their information. Responses included, “News outlets and social media,” Participant 213 said, “More recently expectations and new ideas have come from articles and social media.” Participant 320 stated, “Facebook posts and Twitter,” and Participant 513 said, “CNN, word of mouth, newspaper.” Another participant shared, “I receive my news information from news channels, online newspapers and friends/family” (Participant 168). Instead of relying on social media as a news source, other participants chose more traditional approaches, such as Participant 600, “Various news outlets both on television and on the web. I also read newspapers and listen to podcasts,” While, Participant 480 preferred watching “NPR, MSNBC, CNN, and some Fox.”

Participants were asked if the majority of their attention was engaged with positive or negative information. Many participants indicated that a majority of their time was exposure to negative information. Examples included, “These days, it's impossible to find all positive information, so the majority of the information that is news outlets is negative” (Participant 168). Participant 600 stated, “Unfortunately, I feel that I spend more time trying to decipher the validity of the negative information released by news outlets.” Participant 513 believes that “facts to find the truth” can be found in “negative news.” Other responses included spending equal time on both positive and negative information, as Participant 480 indicated: “I prefer positive news, but listen to everything.” Participant 320 who added, “I would say I spend equal amounts of time on each.” Although, Participant 213 emphasized, “The positive will always be present, but

the negative is where attention should be focused. Those are the stories that need to be heard and where actions should be taken.”

Participants were asked if they searched for stories with opposing views. Several participants shared that they do not search for opposing views. “No, if they come up I will read them, but I do not actively search for them” (Participant 213). However, other participants with similar responses believed their information sources provided unbiased facts. Examples include, “I don't necessarily search for stories with opposing views. For the most part, the news outlet I watch is impartial or unbiased” (Participant 168); and “Not necessarily. I prefer facts versus opinions” (Participant 320). Alternatively, two participants did report searching for opposing views. Participant 480 stated, “Yes, thus Fox News” and Participant 513 simply said, “Yes.” Participant 600 response contained negativity bias regarding stories dominating the news: “There really is no need to search for these stories, they currently dominate the news.”

Theme 4: Able to Accept New Information After Forming an Opinion

Questions developed for Theme 4 were specifically designed as a baseline to gauge participant responses for confirmation bias, in which they dismiss or ignore information contrary to their beliefs. Lidén et al. (2018) have suggested that although a person may consciously try to be objective, they may in reality be biased. Participants were asked if once they have formed an impression of the police, would they then accept any new information presented to them that disproves or contradicts their belief. In response to the question, participants either answered or indicated that they would accept contradictory information. Responses included the following: “Yes, I would,” stated

Participant 213. "I would absolutely accept any information presented to me," Participant 320 said, "I am open to changing my perception." Participant 168 reported, "I'm open to any information." Participant 480 stated,

Of course. However, my beliefs are based on personal and professional interactions. Although, the negative outweighs the positive. I have a positive impression of the police. I also think they are a necessary component to society that serve a critical and necessary role. However, they can do better.

Other participant responses were conditional, "Yes, if verified" (Participant 513) and "If the information has merit and is based on facts, I would consider it" (Participant 600).

What do participants do with information that is not consistent with their beliefs?

When confronted with contrary information, most participants indicated they were skeptical. "I view all news with skepticism," said Participant 480. Participant 513 expressed that they would "Research it." Other participants thought it best to discuss it with family and friends, "If the information I read/hear is contrary to my beliefs." Participant 168 said, "I will research more articles or talk to family/friends to get their take." Whereas, Participant 320 stated discussing the matter over with family, "I'm surrounded by family members that feel completely different than I do, but I always listen to their side of things. Maybe! I can agree on some points but not on others" (Participant 320). Participant 213 stated with conviction, "I know I am getting information from a reliable and unbiased source." Expressing a more direct approach, Participant 600 asserted, "If the information cannot be supported by facts, I simply dismiss the information."

Theme 5: When Evaluating Negative News Involving Police

In order to determine how police are assessed, participants were asked how they evaluate negative news involving police. Some participants stated being skeptical of the source providing the negative news story, while others were critical. When evaluating negative news, Participant 513 based the information “on the source.” Likewise, other participants viewed negative news with “skepticism.” For example, besides being “rather skeptical” about negative news involving police, Participant 600 feels that “personal biases are being presented as news to society, and news outlets have become rather negligent by reporting unverified information to the public which in turn can have a great effect on the ‘court of public opinion’.” Participant 480 was also skeptical: “The news media is not the source of complete facts or objective analysis.” Other participants wanted to see things from different angles before making “an independent decision,” Participant 168 would “listen to the facts that are presented.” Participant 320 reviewed several “articles to get the full picture of the situation,” then usually would “read an article and then google the topic.” Also getting their information online, Participant 213, noted, “I try to read multiple stories/videos with as much information as possible, especially if there is video evidence of the incident. Then, I make evaluations on the actions taken and if they were justified.”

Each of the participants were asked to describe how they evaluate officers in negative news stories. Their responses were not only insightful but surprising. To remain as objective as possible, Participant 600 explained,

I try not to evaluate the officers. I am not in law enforcement and am not versed on departments' policies or training procedures. If an officer's response to an incident is called into question, I assume that is how he or she was trained to respond.

In contrast, Participant 480 evaluated officers “with a critical but objective eye,” as did, Participant 320 who felt, “officers should be dealt with the legal way and held accountable for their actions.” Participant 213 expressed,

Finding the story online will never give me the full context of what occurred but many times, video clearly shows police panicking and using excessive force on civilians when it is not necessary. Every time a situation like this is shared, my viewpoint on police diminishes.

Concerned more with how officers conducted themselves during the incident, Participant 513 wanted to know if the officers expressed “empathy” and “concern.” Sharing a similar concern was Participant 168 who wanted to know “if their conduct was fair, and did they try other avenues/tactics before they got the end result.”

Theme 6: Effects When Hearing the Word “Police”

Participants were asked to share their thoughts and feelings when they hear the word “police”. The psychological and physical effects participants expressed provided insight into how each was impacted. “Courageous, self-sacrificing, professional, honorable, underpaid and under-appreciated” were the thoughts that came to Participant 600’s mind. “Help!” was Participant 513’s first thought, followed by, the police are the “people who stop bad things from happening and help everyone stay safe”. Similarly,

Participant 320 believes “they are here to protect us,” but also understands that “sometimes things don’t go as planned.” Participant 168 associated the word “police” with trouble, stating, “My first thought is caution, I look around to see if there's trouble and question whether or not I committed an offense.” Growing up, Participant 213’s impressions of police were positive; “I thought of them as the people that would protect me and my family if we needed them to.” However, recently Participant 213’s “feelings towards police have shifted to a more negative impression.” Expressing a sense of concern based on past experiences Participant 480 stated,

Concern. I remain very skeptical of law enforcement. Although I have never been arrested, I was routinely stopped or detained by the police into my late 20’s.

Sometimes the stops were legitimate, meaning I had committed a vehicle code violation. However, too many other interactions had no justification.

Participants were asked to share their initial thoughts and feelings when they first saw an officer. The most common feeling expressed was nervousness, which arose from participants believing the officer was going to stop them for something they had done wrong. Participant 213 described, “Always feeling, nervousness and anxiousness.” Beside feelings of nervousness, and with no sign of being stopped, Participant 168 still mentally rehearsed the non-pending traffic stop thinking, “speak calmly, follow any/all directions from the officer, ask smart questions, make sure my responses are clear and understood.” Also concerned with being stopped by police, Participant 320 said, “my first thoughts are, Please don’t pull me over, I don’t need a ticket today, because I don’t want a ticket, and I’m probably on my phone.”

Other participants initially recalled past experiences with law enforcement. After having experienced multiple negative police interactions as a youth, Participant 480 developed a “lack of trust based on experiences.” In contrast, Participant 513 described experiencing, “safety, peace, and understanding” from the officers, who they believed were “honest” and “fair.” “My initial thoughts are to thank them for their service,” said Participant 600, “The demands placed on officers currently by society are ludicrous.”

Theme 7: Personal Experience

Participants were asked to share their own experience of having noncriminal police-citizen social interactions. All of the participants described the experience as positive and for some the impact has lasted since childhood. “Growing up, I remember a police officer that would patrol our area and every shift he would always stop by and talk with us,” said Participant 320, “He always made us feel very protected and safe in the neighborhood because he was always there to make sure we were okay.” Likewise, Participant 480 remembered, “I can think of a time that an officer was patrolling our street and just waved and said hello and I was surprised by that and pleased by that at the same time.” As a youth, Participant 168 recalled having “a neighbor who was elderly,” whom they had not seen in a while. Concerned, Participant 168 “called the police for assistance” to check on the neighbor. Participant 168 said, “it was nice the law enforcement officer was able go in and kind of assess the issue and answer any questions or concerns that we had.” One time that really rang a bell for me said Participant 513, Approximately two months ago, my children and I where inside a restaurant getting food. There were two officers inside the restaurant also preparing to eat

their lunch, and they stopped what they were doing and just started having a conversation with my children. The officers were empathetic, they were smiling, they were asking questions and waiting to hear answers and ended it with handing my boys stickers, which ultimately just left a great impression on my children and I (Participant 513).

One night, after getting out of work around 11 PM, Participant 213 realized they had locked their keys in the car. After calling for a tow truck from inside the restaurant, Participant 213 decided to wait in the parking lot for them to arrive,

When I walked outside there was already a police car in the parking lot. He saw that I was just kind of waiting outside my car. So, he came and asked if there was a problem or if I needed any help. I said, I locked my keys in my car and I was already waiting for AAA to come. Because it was late at night and I was by myself, the officers to stayed and waited with me until AAA came making sure I was safe (Participant 213).

Having had concerns for their safety due to the surrounding environment of their work location, Participant 600 explained, “I did receive assistance when I was trying to get some information about obtain a firearm, the process and how to use it.”

Theme 8: Perception of Police Prior to Personal Experience

Prior to this study participant perceptions of the police ranged from positive/neutral to negative. Those having a positive police perception shared that their perception had always been positive, Participant 600 said, “Because I recognize they put themselves on the lines for strangers most of the time.” Participant 513 expressed, “they

are people just like I am and that they just want to see the best for people, they ultimately just really want to make our world a safer place.” Those participants having experienced both positive and negative encounters shared a neutral perception of the police. For example, when Participant 480, was asked the question jokingly said, “Ah – that’s a loaded question.” After laughing from the comment, Participant 480 answered,

I would say from my early thirties and beyond my perception has generally been positive for noncriminal encounters. Before that though, it was more negative but keep in mind that my encounter with police officers were either being pulled over or a police officer breaking up a party or either something along those lines.

While it didn’t rise to being a crime of any kind it just necessarily wasn’t positive.

Also having experienced both positive and negative police encounters, Participant 168 indicated the negative encounter had the most impact stating,

For the experience I personally experienced. I was disappointed because I thought by being open, honest, and transparent that situation could be defused and that there was a misunderstanding or it might be better in the end. Instead, there was a lot of accusing. Before that, I was raised to have respect and to just be honest with law enforcement. After that incident, I was kind of disappointed, because I was hoping that being open, honest and transparent with the officer things would have went easy or leaving the situation without being disappointed.

Participant 320 indicated having a fear of the police stating,

I don't know why I just always been scared to be pulled over. I don't want a ticket. I don't want to get in trouble, I don't want, but then if a cop gets behind me, I'm like oh my gosh. And then I just to think like all the what ifs.

One participant shared having mixed feeling toward the police. "It's always been sort of a mixed feeling," said Participant 213 "They are there I guess to protect, but then there's also many stories or news articles showing the negative things police do."

Theme 9: Influences Affecting Personal Beliefs of Police

Each participant was asked if anything had ever influenced or reinforced his or her beliefs about the police. The most common response was "personal experience". For example, Participant 513 explained from their "personal experience," when officers went "above and beyond" their duty had influenced their beliefs the most. Participant 480 indicated having been influenced from "both positive and negative" interactions. Also having experienced both positive and negative police encounters, Participant 168 expressed that the negative encounter they experienced continues to have an impact on their belief. Participant 168 stated,

Yes, years ago I pulled off the highway after my tire was low on air. A CHP officer pulled up behind me. My initial thought was, they're checking to see if I need assistance. Instead, they began to ask questions about where I was coming from and what was my destination. I let the officers know that I had just left a barbecue and once I got onto the highway, I felt my tire was low on air. Immediately the officer started yelling, he would not allow me to speak, threatening to take me into custody for resisting and obstructing. I allowed the

officer to continue with the field sobriety test. After passing the test, I was allowed to leave, but I felt disrespected.

Alternatively, Participant 600 had a different perspective about police encounters, “It's very simple; I have not had a negative experience with law enforcement because I choose not to break the law.”

Participants were asked if the officer expressed a helpful response and concern for their feelings at the time of their experience. All of the participants expressed having felt a sincere concern from the officer during their encounter. “He wanted to make sure I was okay,” Participant 213 said, “so that I wasn't by myself late at night waiting.” In an exhilarated tone, Participant 320 described having felt, “Oh, absolutely! He was always very kind and very thoughtful.” When asked if the officers expressed concern during their experience, Participant 513 elatedly stated, “Yes they did! Just by going out of their way.” Moreover, Participant 513 was also impressed by the two officers' actions. “They took it upon themselves to try to start a conversation, and were open to get to know members of the community they serve.” Embarrassed, at the time of their experience, Participant 168 stated having “felt kind of silly calling law enforcement to come and do a welfare check on the neighbor, but the officer was able to calm us down and explain to us that no call is insignificant.” Participant 600 also felt the officer's concern, “Yes he did! He actually was quite knowledgeable, and it was extremely helpful.” In a less enthusiastic tone, Participant 480 stated, “I would say it was a positive experience, I was not expecting anything more from it.”

When participants were asked if any experience with officers had an effect on your perception of the police, provided insight into influences that affected their perception of police. Regardless of how insignificant the encounter, every police-citizen interact has an immense impact on the public was what Participant 480 conveyed,

Yes, I think every encounter I have with police officers affects my perception and so more times than not it's positive. So just a friendly hello or maybe just laughing and joking about something while just standing in line at some place or a restaurant. Yeah, it always affects my impression of police.

The psychological and emotional impact of these experiences has had a life-long affect, as many of these experiences are rooted in the participant's youth, stemming back as far as elementary school. Responses included, "It started when I was in elementary school, and there was a DARE officer assigned to my elementary school," said Participant 513, "I still remember her. She was phenomenal! She was always there and available and greeted us with a smile." The same program had an effect on another participant, "When I was younger and in school things," Participant 600 said, "Law enforcement came in on such programs like DARE and they were always seen in a positive light. They always made sure we stayed away from certain things like drugs." Participant 320 recalled as a youth, the officer that patrolled the neighborhood, "He made the police officer like a person to us and not someone to be scared of, but someone who is like there to be your friend and take care of us." Having experienced only one police encounter, Participant 213 said this about the interaction, "The only experience I've personally had with police, and it was a positive one. So, it definitely increased my opinion of police." In contrast,

Participant 168's prior encounter with law enforcement had such a negative impact that it still overshadows any future positive police experiences,

Yes, then I have my own personal situation with an officer where it wasn't as pleasant. I know that not all officers can be categorized as the same, but it hasn't changed my mind about law enforcement or about my interaction I personally had.

Age and life experience were the most common responses given. For example, Participant 480 stated, "I guess with time, with age – encounters with law enforcement, assuming that you're not engaged in any nefarious activities will turn more positive." In terms of experience, Participant 513 explained why their perception of police had always been positive, "Just based on my experiences. I never personally had any experiences where I would feel any other type of way. So, that's why I feel that way." Also having an impact on prior perceptions was age. Whereas, Participant 168 referred to a negative experience from the past stating,

The reason I perceived it this way, all I was doing was being accused of something that was not my intention. Not being able to express or to do or to explain rather it was more of just being quiet and just kind let things pan out – I guess.

Participant 168 did not say he did not do what he was accused of, rather he said, "all I was doing was being accused of something that was not my intention." Depending on the type of experience and the age it occurred was another determinant in perceptions of the police. Those having experienced police interaction as youth from school programs such

as DARE, expressed a more positive perception of law enforcement. “I don’t know what has made that perception of a police officer,” Participant 320 said, “but Bill when he was patrolling my area as a policeman was kind.” Participant 600 shared,

I think it had a lot to do with how I was raised – my family. My family has always instructed us kids, told us that if you ever need help or in danger to run to law enforcement. To run to a police officer and ask for assistance and they would be there to help you and protect you and make sure you made it safely back home.

Contrarily, those having experienced police interaction as a young adult expressed a less positive perception of law enforcement. After having locked their keys in the car. Participant 213 was about to wait in a parking lot at 11:00 PM. As it turned out, a police officer was there to wait with them until the tow truck arrived. Participant 213 explained, “For this specific situation, the policeman was very helpful and so I guess you can say or it was like a good interaction.”

Summary

This chapter provides detailed methods and procedures used to explore 6 participants’ perceptions who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance by the police. Also provided in Figure 2 were the demographical characteristics of those 6 individuals who participated in the study. In addition, participant responses from the questionnaire were added to the study matrix as a data source and analyzed. Data gathered during telephonic interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, member checked for accuracy and were used as the primary data source. Interview transcripts were analyzed using Colaizzi’s (1978) 7-step method of

phenomenological analysis to pinpoint relevant patterns and themes. Figure 3 illustrated theme development based on questions derived from the study questionnaire, interview guide, and codes from recurring participant responses. Data analysis revealed 18 themes and 36 subthemes having an impact on participant perceptions. Results indicated that participant perceptions of the police were unknowingly bias. Developed through upbringing, age, experience, media, and environmental influences. Participants expressed having been raised to respect the police, but that their parents also instructed them to avoid and to fear the police. Those having experienced police interaction from school programs as a youth expressed a more positive perception of law enforcement than those having had a police interaction prior to their noncriminal police contact. Participants indicated on the study questionnaire they could remain fair and open-minded, however many responses contained bias remarks. The next chapter provides interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Research on citizens' attitudes toward police is primarily based on the experience of participants in crime-related situations during which they have contact with police (Vaughan et al., 2018). However, research that documents citizen experiences with police in a noncriminal assistance role is limited. Therefore, our understanding at how noncriminal assistance impacts public perception of law enforcement is limited. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance from the police. Using a small sample of six participants, questionnaire responses, and in-depth interviews, this study examined how police were perceived by individuals who experienced a noncriminal police-citizen interaction as a result of receiving nonemergency assistance. Results suggest that people's attitudes toward the police are biased, and that contributing factors include parental influence, environment, media, experiences, and age. This chapter outlines: whether the results confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the research literature; limitations that emerged from carrying out the study; recommendations for further research; and the potential impact for positive social change.

Interpretation of Findings

The intent of this study was to provide deeper insight into citizen experiences with police encounters in a noncriminal supportive role, and citizen reactions to the police as a result from these experiences. Findings from this research support the literature review that demonstrates strong evidence indicating a public bias toward the

police that include expectancy theory as well as confirmation bias, and negativity/asymmetry theories. The focus of expectancy theory centers on the cognitive process and how people relate various motivational forces that drive behavior. It is based on the belief that a relationship exists between effort and performance achieved, and the reward received as a result (Lunenburg, 2011). Asymmetry refers to an observable imbalance within a relationship or social setting in which one individual or group has authority or control over another (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Confirmation bias is the inclination to seek, interpret, or accept only information that supports preexisting assumption, while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict beliefs (Bullard, 2016). Negativity bias is the tendency to give greater importance to negative experiences than to neutral or positive experiences (Frothingham, 2019). Results also indicate that parental influence, environment (friends and school), media (news outlets, movies/TV programs, and social medial), experiences (youth interaction, and positive and negative encounters), and age contribute toward bias development.

Results from this study support Brunson (2007) and Rosenbaum et al. (2005), by suggesting that individuals develop experiences from second-hand information through various sources, such as exposure to family and friends, social media, and personal experiences. For example, Participants 213 and 320 answered that negative police interaction that others may have had would not affect their ability to remain fair and open-minded. However, Participant 213 gave a direct admission to being influenced, “Stories of police interactions with civilians (especially people of color) has greatly influenced my beliefs about the police.” Participant 320 described never having had

“personal bad interactions with the police,” but they “know people who have,” and therefore believe “more education requirements” are needed for officers, due to their “loved one’s experiences.” Furthermore, on the study questionnaire completed and returned prior to being interviewed, both participants were asked, “Would any negative police interaction that you, your family, or friends may have had in the past affect your ability to remain fair and open-minded as a participant in the study?” Participants 213 and 320 answered “No” to this question, indicating that another individual’s past experiences with law enforcement would not affect their ability to remain fair and open minded. However, their contradictory response demonstrates that although a person may believe they are being objective, they subconsciously manifest their biases into words and actions (see Lidén et al., 2018).

Parental influence was an important determinant to whether participants learned to respect and fear law enforcement. Participants reported being raised having respect for the police. However, many reiterated that their parents raised them to fear and avoid the police even if the situation was positive.

Another finding from this study consistent with research literature is the significant impact social media has on influencing thoughts and beliefs (see Nix & Wolfe, 2017). Nix and Wolfe (2017) have indicated that influences from social media are a driving force in developing, encouraging, and fostering biases in younger individuals. For example, Participant 213 identified their source of information as “news outlets and social media,” and then later admitted that social media was also the source for their ideas, “More recently expectations and new ideas have come from articles and social

media.” In another response, Participant 213 stated with conviction, “I know I am getting information from a reliable and unbiased source.”

Age and life experience are also important determinates influencing citizens’ attitudes toward the police. As participants aged and acquired more life experience, their attitudes toward the law enforcement became more positive. However, an exception did emerge, consistent with Rosenbaum et al. (2005), that participants who had experienced a negative police encounter prior to this study were found to resist any positive experience that would change their beliefs about the police. For example, Participant 480’s response contained a series of backhanded compliments, which are statements that blur the line between compliments and insults (Consulting, n.d.). The response also contained negativity bias, the propensity to place greater emphasis on negative experiences than no positive experiences (Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001):

Of course. However, my beliefs are based on personal and professional interactions. Although, the negative outweighs the positive. I have a positive impression of the police. I also think they are a necessary component to society that serve a critical and necessary role. However, they can do better (Participant 480).

Participant 213 also ended their statement with a backhanded compliment coupled with negativity bias: “It’s always been sort of a mixed feeling. They are there I guess to protect, but then there’s also many stories or news articles showing the negative things police do” (Participant 213).

Findings are consistent with research by Rosenbaum et al. (2005) indicating that people are unwilling to accept new information that would challenge their beliefs about the police. In Theme 4, participants were asked if once they have formed an impression of the police, would they then accept any new information presented to them that disproves or contradicts their belief. In response to the question, Participant 320 indicate that they would accept contradictory information. In discussing the matter over with family, Participant 320 expresses some bias in having already drawn a conclusion, but would listen anyway, knowing their way is right: "I'm surrounded by family members that feel completely different than I do, but I always listen to their side of things. Maybe! I can agree on some points but not on others."

With regard to expectancy theory, participants report that if they behaved in a certain way, then a particular response from the officer would occur and that their desired outcome of not receiving a ticket would be achieved. However, if expectations of their desired outcome were not met with satisfaction after having received the ticket, their attitude changed negatively toward the officer. For example, Participant 320 said: "The police are who you call if there is a problem, and in order for those problems to be solved properly." According to Casad (n.d.), beliefs consist of expectations in a given event and predictions about the desired outcome. Therefore, if the police solve a problem, but the outcome is not to Participant 320's expectations, then was the problem was not solved properly.

In another illustration of expectancy theory Participant 168 stated:

For the experience, I personally experienced. I was disappointed because I thought by being open, honest, and transparent that situation could be defused and that there was a misunderstanding or it might be better in the end. Instead, there was a lot of accusing. Before that, I was raised to have respect and to just be honest with law enforcement. After that incident, I was kind of disappointed, because I was hoping that being open, honest and transparent with the officer things would have went easy or leaving the situation without being disappointed” (Participant 168).

The emotional and physical impact of this experience is indicated by the frequent use of the word “disappointed.” Moreover, several sentences depict the use of expectancy theory. For example, "Being open, honest and transparent” with the officer to defuse the situation was the motivational force driving Participant168’s behavior. Believing that a relationship exists between their effort, performance achieved, and the reward received, Participant 168 was disappointed when their effort did not achieve the expected result (see Lunenburg, 2011).

In order to determine how police are assessed, participants were asked how they evaluate negative news involving police. Earlier, Participant 320 said, “Officers should be dealt with the legal way and held accountable for their actions.” Subsequently, Participant 320 stated, “My first thoughts are, please don’t pull me over, I don’t need a ticket today, because I don’t want a ticket, and I’m probably on my phone.” This response indicates that Participant 320 did not want to be held accountable for their actions, reversing the roles and asymmetrically impacting Participant 320’s authority and

control over officers (see Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Furthermore, Participant 320's statement is contradictory to the response given on the questionnaire regarding the ability to remain fair and open-minded.

Participant 213 also expressed contradictory views:

Finding the story online will never give me the full context of what occurred. But many times, video clearly shows police panicking and using excessive force on civilians when it is not necessary. Every time a situation like this is shared, my viewpoint on police diminishes (Participant 213).

In the above statement, the first sentence conveys negativity bias, the tendency to give greater importance to negative experiences than to neutral or positive experiences (Frothingham, 2019). The second sentence illustrates implicit bias proposed by Lidén et al. (2018) that although a person may consciously try to be objective, in reality they are biased. Confirmation bias, present in the final sentence above, is the inclination to seek, interpret or accept only information that supports preexisting assumption, while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict their belief (Bullard, 2016). Accepting only, the situation that is shared confirms Participant 213's preexisting viewpoint. In terms of expectancy theory, the expectation is that Participant 213's viewpoint of the police will diminish.

To further demonstrate confirmation and negativity bias, Participant 168's prior encounter with law enforcement had such a negative impact that it overshadowed any future positive police experiences:

Yes, then I have my own personal situation with an officer where it wasn't as pleasant. I know that not all officers can be categorized as the same, but it hasn't changed my mind about law enforcement or about my interaction I personally had" (Participant 168).

The impact associated with people stereotyping the police, and selectively perceiving their own experiences, has a strong influence on how the public evaluates law enforcement (Brandl et al., 1994; Skogan & Frydl, 2004). Moreover, Participant 168's response illustrates the inclination to confirm only selective information that supports a preestablished belief; and going to great lengths to justify a preexisting assumption, while ignoring information that may disprove or contradict such a belief (Bullard, 2016). In another example, Participant 213 emphasizes, "The positive will always be present, but the negative is where attention should be focused. Those are the stories that need to be heard and where actions should be taken." In the previous statement, positive information is completely filtered out, while the negative details are magnified resulting in polarized thinking.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study include the ability to recruit participants, which resulted in a small sample size, and participant biases. At the time of the study, events occurred that influenced the ability to recruit participants, and galvanized the public's attitude toward law enforcement. Detection of the wide spread transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) caused fear and uncertainty throughout the country (Schuchat, 2020). To safeguard the health of the public and decrease potential exposure to COVID-19,

residents were directed to follow public health guidelines. A Stay at Home order was issued requiring that people cease to gather and engage in any interaction outside the household, practice social distancing, and wear face coverings, all of which hindered the ability to recruit volunteers. Then, in major cities throughout the United States, demonstrations against police brutality and racism turned into civil unrest that resulted in businesses being looted and deliberately set on fire (Bowden, 2020). Police officers nationwide were confronted with ambivalent feelings from the public (Bonifacio, 1991). Nationwide, more than 700 officers were injured or fatally injured during the protests (Bowden, 2020). Having to disclose my connection to law enforcement as a deputy sheriff presented viable risk, such as the potential for danger to recruit volunteers safely, exposure to legal ramifications and the ability to gather unbiased data. After 5 months of effort, 6 participants were recruited. While the sample size was smaller than originally planned, their responses provided insight as to how individuals perceive the police as a result of their noncriminal interaction.

Recommendations

Researchers have concluded that changing public attitudes toward the police would be difficult (Locke, 1996; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Skogan, 2006). At one end of the spectrum, Skogan (2006) claimed that law enforcement agencies could do nothing to help improve their public image. While on the other end, Bradford et al. (2009) maintained that departments could improve community relations, and restore public confidence. For law enforcement to have a positive social impact and improve public perception, I recommend that police agencies nationwide adopt a strong social marketing

campaign to identify and discourage passive aggressive behavior and ask for public support in recognizing these efforts. In the past, government agencies have requested citizens to participate in national campaigns, such as the United States Forest Service's Smoke Bear Wildfire Prevention and Woodsy Owl antilitter campaigns (Fuller-Bennett, & Velez, 2012). Both campaigns successfully altered individual behavior and changed public policy (Thompson et al., 2017). A persuasive messaging campaign can create new methods of crisis intervention, by providing communication tools that change the public's attitude, belief, and behavior towards the police (Ricketts, 2015). A persuasive message to the public about not engaging in passive aggressive behaviors when specifically asked to follow directions so that the situation does not escalate to use-of-force.

Implications

This study examines how nonenforcement duties performed by police influence citizen attitudes. Insights gained from this research illuminate the relationship between police, when aiding citizens with public assistance, and the citizen perception of these interactions. Social implications stemming from this study provide an understanding of the interactive dynamics of police-citizen encounters, the influence these types of encounters have on the public, and how it personally affects citizens. It can assist in developing effective communication tactics focused on positive aspects of police interaction, and help bridge the disconnection between community and police.

Conclusions

Police are a necessary component to society; they serve a critical and necessary role, which requires public support. Every encounter a citizen has with police officers has

lasting effects on the public's perception of law enforcement. Impressions that citizens develop from these experiences are expressed through social media, which in turn, has an impact on influencing others. Public expectation of the police's role in modern society has expanded beyond what was traditionally expected in the past (Rosenbaum et al., 2015). As society becomes increasingly complex, the public not only expect officers to confront crime, but also to solve with fairness and sensibility a multitude of personal issues, often in the capacity of a psychologist, marriage counselor, mental health therapist, or juvenile guidance counselor (Skogan & Frydl, 2004; Tyler, 2005). Research from this study supports the premise that police require additional training to meet these expectations, and the public needs an increased awareness of how this training manifests in police-citizen interactions. Moreover, findings from this study support the need for a collaborative approach to the public's relationship with the police by documenting citizen experiences with police encounters in a noncriminal assistance role.

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Appendix A: Email Response to Volunteers

Dear Volunteer:

Thank you for considering my request and taking the time out of your busy schedule to volunteer in the recruiting process of the research study. Currently, I am a doctoral student conducting a research study as part of my Ph.D. dissertation (IRB Approval Number 06-10-20-0405194).

The aim of the study is to explore the personal experiences of those having had a noncriminal police interaction, as a result from receiving police assistance. You are encouraged to read the attached informed consent form and should you have any questions, please contact me, which I will go over with you in detail. If you would like to participate and understand the study well enough, your voluntary consent will be needed. Please indicate your consent by returning the completed attached questionnaire. Your identity as a participant, as well as the information you provide will remain confidential.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code typed here)

1. *Is English your primary language?* Yes _____ No _____
2. *Do I have your permission to record 3 phone conversations: 1 - pre-screening phone interview, 1 - phone interview and 1 - follow-up phone call?* Yes _____
No _____
3. *Have you ever been arrested?* Yes _____ No _____
4. *Have you personally received police assistance for a noncriminal matter?* Yes _____
No _____
5. *Would any negative police interaction that you, your family, or friends may have had in the past affect your ability to remain fair and open-minded as a participant in the study?* Yes _____ No _____
6. *Age:* _____
7. *Gender:* _____
8. *Education:* _____
9. *Occupation:* _____
10. *Income:* Less than \$39,500 _____ Between \$40,500 and \$122,000 _____
More than \$118,000 _____
11. *Political Party:* _____
12. *Ethnicity/Race:* African-American _____ Hispanic _____ Caucasian _____
Asian _____ Other _____

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code)

13. *What phone number is best to contact you?* _____

14. *What is the most convenient time to reach you?* _____

15. *Address:* _____

16. *What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you hear the word "police"?*

17. *Once you have formed an impression of the police, would you perhaps accept any new information presented to you that disproves or contradicts your belief? Why?*

18. *What are your expectations of the police?* _____

19. *How did you develop these expectations?* _____

20. *How did your parents raise you to view the police?* _____

21. *Where do you go to get your information?* _____

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code)

22. *What do you do with that information if it is contrary to your belief?* _____

23. *What type of information do you spend more time on negative or positive?* _____

24. *Do you search for stories with opposing views?* _____

25. *How do you evaluate negative news stories involving police officers?* _____

26. *How do you evaluate those officers?* _____

27. *What are your initial thoughts and feelings when you first see an officer? Why?*

28. *What has influenced or reinforced your beliefs about the police? Why?* _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol and Questions

Phone Script

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code typed here)

Researcher: Hello I am a doctoral student, conducting a research study as part of my Ph.D. dissertation.

Researcher: Thank you very much for considering my request and your assistance in participating in the interview process of the research study.

Researcher: The aim of the interview is to gain insight into your thoughts and feelings of having had experience a police-citizen interaction from a noncriminal encounter, as a result from receiving police assistance.

Researcher: To ensure the quality and reliability of the research data collected is accurate, the phone interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribe for analysis.

Researcher: Do you consent to audio-recorded phone conversations? Yes ___ No ___

Researcher: Participation in the study is strictly voluntary, and at any time, you can to decline further participation in the study without question. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential, including our conversations. In addition, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to or feel comfortable answering.

Researcher: Do you accept the terms and conditions of the study in order to participate in the research study? Yes ___ No ___

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code typed here)

Researcher: Do you have any questions for me at this time? Yes ____ No ____

Question(s) _____

Researcher: Are you ready to start the interview? [*Begin interview questioning*]

Closing the Interview:

Researcher: Thank you for taken time out of your busy schedule to take part in the interview. Once I transcribe the audio recording from this interview, I will contact you to verify that I accurately described the meaning of your experience in your own words.

Researcher: Before closing, do you have any questions, or concerns? Yes ____ No ____

Question(s) _____

Interview Questions

Coding Number: (Participant's assigned numerical code typed here)

Date of Interview: _____

Time of Interview: Starting time: _____ Ending time: _____

Method of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Questions:

1. *Please tell me about your noncriminal police encounter?*

2. *Did the officer express a helpful response and concern for your feelings during that encounter? If so how?* _____

3. *Did that or any other experience with officers have an effect your perception of the police?* _____

4. *Before that experience, what perception did you have of the police?* _____

5. *Why did you perceive the police in this way?* _____
