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PTSD as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Police Discrimination and Family Relationship Among Black Americans

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Mary Camper

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University

2024

Abstract

PTSD as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Police Discrimination and Family

Relationships Among Black Americans

by

Mary Camper

MA, University of St. Francis, 2017

B.S., University of St. Francis, 2016

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

PhD Psychology

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

Police discrimination among Black Americans has been an ongoing trend for many years. Researchers have linked police discrimination to a traumatic experience that may result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms. In addition, researchers found that PTSD symptoms may impact the family relationship negatively. This quantitative study examined whether PTSD symptoms mediated the relationship between experiences of police discrimination and family relationships. The family system theory and the critical race theory guided this study. The family system theory described how one family member affects the whole family unit. The critical race theory described the systems that are in place that operate in systemic racism. The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) measured family relationships. The PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL-C) measured PTSD symptoms. The Police and Law Enforcement Scale (PLE) measured experiences of police discrimination. There were 49 Black American participants who reported having experienced police encounters. A multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to determine the mediating role of PTSD symptoms on the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships. The MLR revealed that the PCL-C mediated the relationship between the PLE and FAD scores, indicating that individuals who reported higher police discrimination who also reported higher PTSD symptoms and reported more family dysfunction. However, individuals who reported higher police discrimination but did not report high PTSD symptoms and did not report family dysfunction. This study can be used for positive social change to train police officers on the effect of their interactions with civilians and reduce police discrimination.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Keyaira Johnson, who made her transition at a young age before graduating from high school. She was full of joy, beauty, and love. She had great inspirations and goals for her life. You are truly missed. Love you always. I also dedicate this dissertation to my other children, Brian Roberts, Yasmine Roberts, Jaslyn Johnson, and Prince Solomon Camper, who are my inspiration and motivation to strive for greatness.

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I want to start by thanking God (the Heavenly Father) and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me a supernatural ability to press through some of the most complex and challenging times within my life and continue to be successful in the things I do.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

For decades, systemic violence in the form of police discrimination has been an ongoing issue among Black Americans. A study by Bor et al. (2018) found that Black Americans are three times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than White Americans. Structural racism contributed to the police killing of unarmed Black Americans (Duke & Kahn, 2017). Police discrimination has a negative impact on an individual's mental well-being. DeVylder et al. (2020) stated police discrimination was linked to stressful traumatic events that negatively affects a person's mental state. A person's mental state may influence their relationship with their family. Schrader (2014) stated that dysfunctional relationships come from a person's negative mental state. My study examined the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships by examining PTSD symptoms as a mediation variable. My study used the family system and critical race theories as the theoretical framework to guide my study.

Background

Discrimination has been an ongoing issue among Black Americans throughout the world. Discrimination has been displayed through negative police encounters against Black Americans. Lemieux et al. (2020) stated that there had been historic and current incidents of violent acts and murders against Black Americans by police officers. Negative police encounters have been a concern within Black Americans communities for decades. Bor et al. (2018) stated that between 2013 and 2016, police officers were responsible for more than 4,000 killings of Black Americans, and more than 1,000 of

those killings were Black Americans who were unarmed. Negative police encounters and experiences lead to psychological distress and post-traumatic stress symptoms (DeVylder et al., 2020). Boyd (2018) noted that police violence results in a mental health burden among Black Americans, which negatively affects the mental well-being of Black Americans. Kinkel-Ram et al. (2021) stated that discrimination causes depression, post-traumatic symptoms, feelings of hopelessness, and decreased motivation. James et al. (2018) noted that the central roles within the family could be affected due to negative experiences of racism and discrimination. Furthermore, the researcher stated that when one person is in distress it has a negative impact on the whole family system. Schrader (2014) stated that an individual's mental well-being impacts the person's interpersonal relationships. Studies have been conducted that link negative police discrimination to PTSD symptoms. There have been studies that show PTSD causes dysfunctional interpersonal relationships. This study is significant to my study because it helps us to understand that PTSD symptoms may develop through police discrimination. My study examined the relationships between police discrimination and family relationships by using PTSD as a mediator. My study may also educate us on the impact that police discrimination has on family relationships.

Problem Statement

Police brutality and discrimination have been seen as a social justice issue. Cauley (2018) conducted a study that examined how America destroys black families. Furthermore, this study has shown that discrimination has destroyed Black families throughout history. It explained how slavery broke Black families apart through family

members being sold at auctions by prohibiting Black families from being able to marry legally and the killing and lynching of black families. It also explained the modern forms of discrimination used against Black families. In addition, the researcher identified several variables used to discriminate against Black families, which included the legal system that separated black families at a higher rate than any other race. Black defendants were given much longer sentences than White defendants that have been charged with similar crimes. In addition, police brutality was identified as a variable that has destroyed Black families and that the child protection system disproportionately affects Black families.

The injustice resulting from police violence toward racial and ethnic minorities has been a continued problem and has been brought to the medias' attention. Graham et al. (2020) stated that Black people worry more about experiencing police brutality than white people. In addition, that psychological harm comes from the experience and/or exposure of police violence. Herd (2020) stated that the psychological damage from police brutality consists of anxiety, PTSD, psychotic distress, depression, suicidal ideation, and attempts. Police violence is linked to higher rates of physical injuries and worsens an individuals' mental health (Tynes et al., 2018). McLeod (2020) linked non-lethal encounters to Black Americans experienced by police officers with emotional trauma, stress responses, and depressive symptoms. The researcher found that systemic violence has resulted in mental health consequences and is linked to complications within interpersonal relationships. Miller and Vittrup (2020) noted that Black Americans have prepared themselves and their children on how to respond to police officers, if they

encounter one. This preparation is a technique used out of fear of experiencing systemic violence due to their ethnic and racial background. Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) stated that systemic violence impacts interpersonal relationships negatively. Systemic violence causes trauma among individuals who have been exposed to or have experienced it.

Jordan et al. (2020) recommended that future studies be conducted to confirm a feasible explanation for the linkage between police violence and mental health. Priest et al. (2020) suggested that future studies be conducted to obtain families' perspectives on discrimination and the personal nature of the family relationship.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the extent that PTSD mediates the relationship between police discrimination and family relationship. Police discrimination was used as the independent variable, family relationships was used as the dependent variable and PTSD symptoms was used as the mediator variable.

Questions and Hypotheses

RQ: To what extent does PTSD mediate the relationship between police discrimination experiences and dysfunctional family (communication, problem-solving, roles, affective involvement, behavioral control, general functioning) among Black Americans?

H_0 : PTSD does not mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships.

H_1 : PTSD does mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theories that ground this study include the family systems theory. The family system theory identifies family members as a system that impacts each other's level of functioning (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Police discrimination has a negative psychological and physical effect on Black Americans and has been identified as a traumatic event (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). Goff et al. (2006) noted that individuals who have experienced trauma and survived it have reported problems with their interpersonal relationships. Trauma affects the whole family, not just the member of the family that had experienced it or been exposed to it, leading to a systemic dysfunction within the family (Papero, 2017).

The critical race theory examined systems, policies, and laws' development, process, and procedures. Bell et al. (2021) stated that the critical race theory helps draw attention to things within the system that causes racial inequities. This framework helped us understand how the system has been structured to support racism and discrimination against Black Americans.

The logical connections between the framework presented and the nature of my study include the family system theory, which helped to identify the members within the family system, the factors that affect its members, and how those factors affect the family as a whole. My topic is to determine if police discrimination results in emotional trauma that causes dysfunctional family relationships. Studies have shown that police discrimination is a traumatic event and have psychological and physical harm on people

who have been exposed to or experienced it. Still, it is unclear whether police discrimination causes emotional trauma that leads to dysfunctional family relationships.

Nature of the Study

To address the research questions in this quantitative study, a nonexperimental correlational design was used to determine the extent PTSD mediates the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships among Black Americans. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data. The correlational method looked at the relationship between variables. This method design used PTSD as a mediator between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. Participants were recruited through social media and the Walden participation pool. I used the McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) for my planned research design to measure the dependent variable of family relationships.

I used the PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C) scale to measure PTSD symptoms as the mediator variable. I used the Police and Law Enforcement scale (PLE) to measure the independent variable of participants' experiences of police discrimination. The key variables in my study were police discrimination, PTSD symptoms, and family relationships. The definition of each variable is listed below in the next session.

Definitions

Black Americans: Blacks and African Americans terms are interchangeable (Jefferson, 2021).

Dysfunctional family relationship: A shift within the family relationship equilibrium, which causes a conflict in the relationship among family members (Schrader, 2014).

Police discrimination: Unfair treatment by police officers, which results in racial profiling, aggressive interaction, unlawful imprisonment, police violence, and murder (Kinkel-Ram et al., 2021).

PTSD symptoms: Symptoms that come from traumatic or stressful life events that cause psychological distress (Greene et al., 2018).

Assumptions

There were assumptions that participants will understand the questions that are being asked and that participants will be honest when answering the questions. I used an anonymous data collection tool to collect data which may help a person feel more comfortable with being honest and sharing sensitive information. There are assumptions that the questionnaires selected for this study are valid and have meaningful measures of the variables that are being tested. I selected questionnaires that measure the constructs and variables that are meaningful to my study. I also chosen questionnaires that have established validity and reliability. The specific aspects of the research problem that are addressed in my study are how police discrimination affects Black Americans, the mental health challenges that develop through the experiences of police discrimination, and how PTSD symptoms affect the family system.

Black Americans have been selected as the population of this study because Black American communities experience more negative police encounter and discrimination

compared to other communities. Police shooting and homicides among unarmed Black Americans have become a public health crisis (Lemieux et al., 2020). The theories that relate to my study are the family system theory and the critical race theory. The family system theory had been selected to help us look at the family system and family relationships. The family system theory has been theoretically used to examine Black families (James, 2020). The critical race theory had been selected to examine the systematic structure, policies and procedures that promote police discrimination among Black Americans. The race theory looks at historical factors, structures and systemic factors, structural intersectionality, systemic racism, and systemic inequality (Gwadz et al., 2022).

Limitations

The limitations and barriers of using surveys through the internet-based platforms such as, Facebook and LinkedIn and using the Walden University participation pool would exclude individuals who did not have access to those platforms. Oncol (2015) stated when an internet-delivered questionnaire is the only source used to collect data, it excludes participants without computer access. Furthermore, when an interviewer is not present during the completion of a questionnaire, the participants may not have the assistance needed when understanding the instruction or obtaining the encouragement to complete the questionnaire. Another limitation is that the scales used asked participants to recall information that may not be fully remembered as it had happened upon the actual encounter. The limitation of the correlational nature of this study is that it cannot predict the causation between variables (Crawford, 2014). One way to eliminate the

limitations is to increase the number of platforms used to make it easier for more participants to access it. Another way to eliminate limitations is to provide additional instructions to assist with helping to understand the process of the survey.

Significance

This study is significant, and this research will contribute to filling the gap by identifying PTSD symptoms as a role of a mediator and the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships among Black Americans. This study may help draw attention to the laws and procedures that do not address the issue of police discrimination or hold law enforcers accountable for their behaviors. This research may help support professional practices by examining the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships and could help families understand if PTSD is linked to police discrimination that results in dysfunctional family relationships and affect the family system as a whole. This research may also lead to police reform. Understanding the effects of police discrimination on the family system may bring changes in government facilities and police departments that guide the interaction between police officers and civilians. It could also help to hold officers accountable for their behavior.

Summary

Black Americans have faced many challenges that relates to police discriminations. Police discrimination results in poor mental health and PTSD symptoms. Graham et al. (2020) stated that police harassment and the use of excessive force against Black communities have been an ongoing issue within the United States. Poor mental

health and PTSD symptoms have been linked to having a negative impact on interpersonal relationships. Sopp et al. (2022) noted that PTSD causes an impairment in an individual's level of functioning. My study determined the extent that PTSD mediates the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional relationships. The theoretical frameworks that were used in this study were the family system and critical race theory. I conducted a quantitative nonexperimental correlational study. I used self-administrated questionnaires which will include the FAD, the PCL-C scale and the PLE scale to collect data. PTSD was used as the mediator; police discrimination was used as the independent variable and dysfunctional family relationships was used as the dependent variable. Chapter 2 covers the literature review component of this study which expounds and looks more in-depth on the current issues and key variables that was used to conduct this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Discrimination against Black Americans has been an ongoing issue for many years today. Jefferson (2021) stated that the United States has developed a structural form of racial discrimination and has created an environment that dehumanizes Black people. Police killing and discrimination among Black Americans have been displayed in a form of structural racism for decades (Boyd, 2018). Discrimination has also caused many mental and health complications among Black Americans. For instance, police discrimination and killings have been linked to poor mental health (Bor et al., 2018). Kerr et al. (2018) also emphasized that discrimination has been a significant stressor that affects Black Americans. Moreover, Mekawi et al. (2022) asserted that an individual who has been exposed to or has experienced discrimination is at a higher risk for mental health complications. In addition, Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) found that discrimination significantly impacts an individual's mental health, often resulting in chronic mental health and PTSD symptoms.

An individual's mental status can have a major impact on their relationship with others. Alexander et al. (2001) explained that traumatic experiences may have a detrimental effect on an individual's intimate relationships, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, and communication with others. Furthermore, when one individual in a relationship is distressed, it affects everyone else in the relationship (Schrader, 2014). Traumatic experiences can cause relationships to become dysfunctional. Psychological distress also affects interpersonal relationships (Ortega-Williams et al., 2021). Hammock

et al. (2019) claimed that PTSD symptoms may result in relationship discord and physical and psychological aggressive behaviors toward others. In conclusion, current studies have revealed a relationship between police brutality and mental health complications, including PTSD disorder and symptoms. These studies also found that PTSD has been linked to having a negative impact on family relationships. Thus, in this study, I examine to what extent PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police violence and dysfunctional family relationships.

Literature Search Strategy

I searched for relevant literature from the PsycINFO, Criminal Justice, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycEXTRA, ESCO ebooks, Google Books, and Datasets databases. The search was limited to peer-reviewed scholarly journals using the search terms *Blacks or Black American or African American and PTSD or posttraumatic stress disorder* (1,461 results); *Blacks or Black American or African American and police discrimination* (679 results); *Blacks or Black American or African American and Dysfunctional family relationships* (six results); *police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships* (0 results); *experiences of police discrimination and family relationship* (one result); *PTSD symptoms and family relationships* (480 results); and *PTSD symptoms or posttraumatic stress disorder and police discrimination* (three results). I used a filter to limit the search from 2018 to the current.

Theoretical Foundation

The theories and concepts that ground this study include the family system theory and critical race theory. In this study, I examine the extent PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationship. The family system theory relates to my study because I examine the family relationship after one of the family members have experienced police brutality. Fine and Fincham (2013) explained that negative experiences and negativity have a negative impact on family relationships, which can lead to family conflict and dysfunctional relationships. The critical race theory relates to my study because I examine police brutality, which has been identified as a structured form of racism that may result in psychological distress. Delgado et al. (2017) stated that critical race theory focuses on the structure forms of discrimination that are linked to racism, race, and power.

Family System Theory

The family system theory identifies family members as interdependent on their members, who are influenced by each other's level of functioning and well-being (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Goff et al. (2006) found that individuals who have experienced trauma and have survived it reported problems with their interpersonal relationships. In other words, when one family member experiences trauma, it can affect the whole family and the function of the family system. When a person has a traumatic experience, it may affect the entire family, leading to dysfunctional relationships within the family (Papero, 2017). James et al. (2018) used the family system theory to explore the central roles in family and the practice of race and racism among Black Americans. This article was

written to help better understand and conduct family research and practice as it relates to race, ethnicity, and racism. The family system influences the parent-child interaction and parental socialization with a child. Black families who live in a society of racism often experience challenges raising their children due to the exposure to racism and its effects (James et al., 2018).

The family system model has been used to measure attitudes, beliefs, consciousness, and discrimination and its effect among Black Americans. Degner et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study that used a family system model and examined the status-legitimizing group stereotypes (intergroup attitudes, ideological beliefs stigma consciousness, and discrimination) among Black Americans. There were 209 Black or African American, 113 females and 96 males, participants within this study. The researchers found that Black Americans had been stigmatized within society and had experienced societal prejudice and discrimination and racial inequality. They found that negative events in life affect an individual's mental well-being and make it difficult for the person to master their social life, such as feeling a lack of purpose and having issues with control and mastery as well as self-worth and distinctiveness. Furthermore, it was noted that when Black Americans are not able to master their social life, it does not just affect their personal life but the lives of others who are within their social system. This study is relevant to my research because it used the family system theory to look at challenging events within a person's life, internal challenges a person faces after an event, and its impact on a person's personal life and relationships. In this study, I

examined the extent that PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination, which is a negative life event, and dysfunctional family relationships.

Critical Race Theory

The critical race theory examines systems, policies, and laws that operate in systemic racism. Bell et al. (2021) stated that critical race theory helps individuals to critically look at the system and help understand factors that cause racial inequities. This framework is helpful to understand how the existing system creates and accepts discrimination against Black Americans within a systematic structure. Johnson et al. (2022) conducted a study that used the critical race mix methods analysis theory as the framework to explore Black men's socialization experiences as doctoral students in a school setting. They examined how race, racism, and other factors have impacted Black men doctoral students' academic and social experiences. This study was conducted in two phases. Surveys were conducted in Phase 1. Phase 1 used a survey sample size of 612 graduate students. Interviews were conducted in Phase 2. There was a sample size of 20 individuals who participated in Phase 2. The researchers also discovered that Black men who were accepted into doctoral programs tended to experience an unwelcoming, unsupportive, and culturally disaffirming environment that resulted in stress and racial trauma. This theory is relevant to my study because the critical race theory looks at structural forms of racism that have been developed to discriminate against Black Americans, leading to racial trauma.

The critical race theory can be used to understand Black American communities' perceptions and experiences of the structural racism used by police officers toward Black

Americans. Lemieux et al. (2020) conducted a mix-method study that used the critical race theory, conflict theory, and a substantial corpus self-reported survey to assess American community members' perceptions of how the United States has failed to examine police bias, violence, and accountability in Black communities. This study included a sample size of 288 graduate and upper-level undergraduate students who attended southern universities during the fall semester of 2016. The researchers found that there have been an ongoing act of murder and violence against Black communities at the hand of police officers, which has been defined as a contemporary public health crisis rooted in social justice imperatives and discrimination. In addition, the researchers noted that an article written by Chaney and Robertson indicated that police brutality in Black American communities were an act of White supremacy, put in place and carried out through institutional embedded systems. Moreover, there has been an over policing of Black Americans within the Black community, racial profiling, unfair treatment, fatal encounters among police and unarmed Black Americans, and intensified experiences. The researchers stated that Cater et al. (2016) and Pew Research Center (1016b) conducted a national-level, self-reporting survey and founded that less than half of Black Americans compared to Whites was likely to have a positive view about police officers. The researchers stated that the Cater and Pew Research Center studies found that 33% of Black Americans compared to 75% of White Americans had positive views that law enforcers use the proper use of force, 35% of Black American compared to 75% of Whites thought that there was equitable treatment of racial minorities, 31% of Black Americans compared to 70% of Whites stated that police was held accountability for

misconduct, and 79% compared to 54% of Whites thought that Blacks experience a greater proportion of fatal encounters compared to Whites. This study is relevant to my study because it looks at how the system is set up to discriminate against Black Americans and the experiences of Black Americans have which had been accepted by the White Supremacy that designed the structure of the system. My study looks at police discrimination among Black American. My study examined the extent that PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

Discrimination Among Black Americans

Black Americans have faced many challenges as it relates to discrimination for decades. Lewis et al. (2018) stated that discrimination has been defined as unjust or prejudicial treatment of a person or group, including a person's race, age, or gender. The researchers noted that African Americans reported experiencing more discrimination and unfair treatment than other racial/ethnic groups.

Discrimination has been associated with high levels of psychosocial distress and challenges with managing emotions. Saleem et al. (2022) conducted a moderation study examining how ethnic-racial socialization moderates the relationship between discrimination and psychosocial well-being outcomes and African American and Caribbean Black adolescents. There were 810 African Americans participants and 360 Caribbean Black Adolescents participants. There were five different tools used to examine the relationship between ethnic-racial socialization and discrimination and psychosocial well-being. Secondary data from the National Survey of American Life for

adolescents used to assess the moderating effects of ethnic-racial socialization. The comprehensive race socialization inventory scale was used to measure ethnic-racial socialization. The 13-item everyday discrimination scale was used to measure discrimination. The Cohen's Perceived Stress scale was used to measure perceived stress. The seven-items Pearlin Mastery scale was used to measure mastery. Saleem et al. (2002) found that participants that had experienced higher levels of bias and discrimination had less mastery belief in their ability to achieve things in their personal life. In addition, discrimination was linked to higher levels of stress, lower levels of mastery, and challenges coping with the experience.

Systemic Discrimination

Systemic discrimination has been a way to oppress Black Americans that prevents Black Americans from obtaining the resources and services needed. Gonzales et al. (2020) stated that systemic discrimination is a structural form of racism that encompasses a psychosocial process of stereotyping and inequitable access to resources. Gelber (2019) defined systemic discrimination as an organizational structure that develops policies, procedures, services, and programs that discriminate against the minority groups. This has been an ongoing issue and a national crisis for decades.

Systemic discrimination leads to high levels of stress that affects an individual's mental well-being and relationships. Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) wrote a peer review article that explored the need for trauma recovery for minorities who have experienced systemic violence. This study looked at three types of traumas which included historical trauma (HT), posttraumatic growth (PTG), and historical trauma- posttraumatic growth

(HT-PTG). The participants in the articles studied consisted of African Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indigenous Mexicans, and Indigenous Taiwanese. Furthermore, researchers found that systemic violence causes both acute and chronic stress and that systemic violence harms interpersonal relationships, emotional and physiological regulation, cognitive functioning, and development. In addition, there is a division among racial and ethnic groups, and depending on an individual's racial or ethnic group determines the individual's resistance to oppression. This article has identified that systemic violence causes chronic traumatic stress, which negatively impacts interpersonal relationships.

Racial Discrimination

Racism has been another form of discrimination that had negatively impact Black Americans. The study conducted by Bleich et al. (2019) was a quantitative study that examined racial discrimination Black Americans experienced in the United States that resulted in poor health outcomes. This study compared Black American experiences of racial discrimination compared to Whites. There were 802 non-Hispanic black participants and 902 non-Hispanic White adult participants within this study. The authors found that there has been a broad pattern of racial discrimination among Black Americans, which exists on nearly all dimensions within the public and private institutions, and it goes beyond isolating Black Americans. Thirty-two percent of Blacks in the study reported experiencing discrimination when obtaining services in a clinical setting compared to 5% of Whites. Twenty-two percent of Black Americans reported not seeking health care for themselves or family because of the belief of going to experience

discrimination compared to 3% of Whites. Sixty percent of Black Americans reported being stopped unfairly by officers compared to 6% of Whites. Fifty-two percent of Blacks reported hearing microaggression on a systemic level compared to nineteen percent of Whites. Fifty-one percent of Black Americans reported experiencing racial slurs used against them compared to 23% of Whites. Blacks reported significantly higher experiences of racial discrimination compared to Whites, which had been displayed in different forms. Bleich et al. noted that experiencing racism in any of its forms can result in Black Americans internalizing it, which may result in high levels of anxiety, unhealthy behaviors, a decline in communication with providers, and other medical concerns.

Studies have examined Black Americans experiences of racial discrimination, unfair treatment, and limited resources during the national crisis. Gonzales et al. (2020) performed a quantitative study that examined Covid-19 effects on an individual by race and ethnic group. Secondary data collected by the New York City Department of Health was used. These data included 11,087 White participants, 4,104 Black participants, and 3,007 Latinx participants. The researchers found that Blacks and Latinx were more likely, on a national level to contract COVID-19, end up hospitalized, and die due to COVID-19-related problems. In addition, Blacks and Latinx were denied access to resources and care much more often than Whites.

Racial Discrimination and Mental Health Outcomes

There has been continuing and growing evidence that racial discrimination affects Black Americans' mental health, which consists of posttraumatic stress and depressive symptoms. Mekawi et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study that moderated the

association between racial discrimination and mental health outcome among Black Americans. Participants were recruited from the waiting room in a public-funded Atlanta hospital, individuals that were potentially at high risk for posttraumatic symptoms. The sample size consisted of 401 adults; 56.1% were women, and 43.9% were men. In addition, the researchers used the modified posttraumatic stress disorder symptom scale, the Beck Depression Inventory-II, and the Traumatic Events Inventory to measure traumatic events and posttraumatic symptoms. Furthermore, racial discrimination predicts depressive symptoms and other severe mental health symptoms. Racial discrimination has been linked to post-traumatic stress which negatively impact the health and well-being among Black Americans.

Racial discrimination impacts the psychosocial well-being of Black Americans (Bleich et al., 2019). Gibbons et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study that explored relationships between perceived racial discrimination and illegal behaviors. Participants consisted of several hundred Black respondents. Furthermore, racial discrimination among Black Americans is an endemic within the United States and takes place on an economic, institutional, and societal level. It was also noted that racial discrimination causes harmful effects on an individual's psychosocial well-being. Individuals that encounter racial discrimination reported engaging in more illegal behaviors after experiencing discrimination by a police officer and the individual's illegal behavior decreased once the police officer was no longer present racial discrimination causes psychological distress and interferes with an individual quality for life. Duke and Kahn (2017) wrote a peer review journal which indicated that racial discrimination had been

linked to higher levels of psychological distress, major depression, and depressive symptoms and lower happiness and life satisfaction levels. Simons et al. (2018) stated that several studies had reported a relation between racial-related stressors and poor health among Black Americans. Due to the racial discrimination, unfair treatment, and limited resources, Black Americans and ethnic minorities experience more episodic and chronic forms of mistreatment daily throughout their adult lives compared to Whites and experience mental, physical, and cognitive challenges that affects their overall health (Gonzales et al., 2020).

Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) stated that individuals who experience systemic violence or discrimination because of their racial and ethnic group develop traumatic symptoms through the experience. Kinkel-Ram et al. (2021) stated that there is a relationship between discrimination and suicidal ideation among Black Americans. Furthermore, discrimination has been associated with an escalation of suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts among Black Americans.

Racial discrimination may result in racial trauma which has a negative impact on Black Americans psychological well-being. Turner and Richardson (2016) wrote a peer review article that explained how racism discrimination negatively impacts Black Americans mental and physical health, causes racial trauma, and how unresolved trauma increases chronic stress and decreases immune system functioning, affecting the quality of emotional attachment in family and social relationships. Secondary data were used from existing research to conduct the review The researchers found that when Black Americans are treated harshly by police officers it causes them to develop a negative

perception of police officers; and the racial trauma that had developed through racial discrimination caused depression, anxiety, irritability, low level of self-motivation and self-perception and interfere with an individual's concentration and ability to focus.

Discrimination has been linked to high death rates and physical and psychological harm (Herd, 2020). Discrimination causes depression and suicidal ideation which interferes with an individual mental stability. Kinkel-Ram et al. (2021) used a preliminary cross-sectional analysis that tested whether or not discrimination leads to thoughts of suicide resulting from social pain or negative police encounters which affects the body. Participants consist of Black Americans over the age of 18. There were 320 participants in this study. Discrimination was measured through the 9-item everyday discrimination scale. Social pain was measured by participants' feelings of social pain with an eight-item measure. Suicidal ideation was measured using the Depressive symptom inventory-suicidal subscale. Researchers found a significant relationship between discrimination and suicidality. In addition, racial discrimination was linked to increased suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts among Black Americans.

Traumatic Events and PTSD Symptoms

PTSD symptoms develop when an individual has experienced a traumatic event in their life that causes significant stress. Pacella et al. (2013) stated that PTSD symptoms develop through traumatic events that cause physiological effects on the nervous system. Greene et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study that investigated the dynamic networks of PTSD symptoms during the conflict. The sample size in this study was 96 individuals that had been exposed to rocket fire during the Israel-Gaza War. For 30 days, participants

used their smartphones to report PTSD symptoms. The researchers used the PTSD Checklist to report participants' traumatic stress symptoms. This study examined the dynamic networks, which included contemporaneous and temporal networks. Furthermore, researchers found that the contemporaneous network was linked to flashbacks, trying not to rethink the traumatic event, hyperventilation, and negative association. The temporal network was linked to restricted affect and blame, which negatively affects the individual's emotions and avoidance of thoughts. Fried et al. (2018) noted that trauma can cause PTSD symptoms. Posttraumatic symptoms among Black Americans have been an ongoing issue resulting from several factors. Hammock et al. (2019) asserted that trauma results from an experience or event that threatens individuals' well-being and/or functioning, and there is a linkage between PTSD and negative mental and physical health, including mood disorders, suicide, and/or functional impairment.

Police Encounters Among Black Americans and Other Minorities

Black Americans experience police discrimination in the form of police violence more often than Whites. Boyd (2018) wrote a peer review article that used data from the U.S. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance system and the Mapping Police Violence database between 2013 and 2015 to conduct a study that explored how police violence relates to population-level mental health inequity. The author focused on comparing Black American mental health and how police killings of an unarmed Black American impacted the person's mental health. Furthermore, police killings among Black Americans have been identified as the oldest type of structural racism within the United States. Moreover, police killings and violence are built on racism which affects an

individual's mental well-being, and that police killings and violence had been linked to increasing self-reported poor mental health days and recurrent mental health distress. In addition, police killings and violence cause immediate or acute chronic impairment.

Police brutality and violence have been an ongoing problem that Black Americans faced throughout the world. Zeiders (2021) conducted an empirical study that used existing literature that examined police brutality and violence among Black Americans, Latinx and Whites. The sample size that was used in the study that was conducted by Umana-Taylor and Douglass (2017) was 1,378 participants. Participants self-reported ethnic-racial police discrimination. Data had shown that 24% of Blacks and 20% of Latinx experience at least one encounter of ethnic-racial police discrimination within the last year compared to 2.9% of Whites. The researchers noted that Blacks experienced significantly greater ethnic-racial police discrimination compared to Whites. Turner and Richardson (2016) stated that men of color had been treated more harshly, and African American families had been exposed to police discrimination more often than other races.

Police Encounters and Mental Health Outcomes

Studies have shown that police encounters have negative effects on Black Americans that experience it. Geller et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative study that explored young men's experiences of police encounters and the subsequent of their mental health. Within this study, there were 1,261 participants recruited between the ages of 18 to 26. There were 85% of participants that were stopped in their lifetime, and 78% of participants had no history of criminal activity. Furthermore, this study has shown that more intrusive police contact increases the severity of anxiety and trauma symptoms.

Moreover, it was noted that Black Americans experience hidden wounds caused by discrimination and negative police encounters and are worn on Black Americans like invisible weights. The researchers found that racial trauma or race-based trauma affects Black Americans in many ways, including increased vigilance and suspicions, increased sensitivity to threat, increased psychological and physiological symptoms, increased alcohol and drug usage, increased aggression, and a narrowing sense of time.

Turner and Richardson (2016) reported that individuals that have experienced police violence have experienced intrusive police encounters, which increased trauma and anxiety symptoms. Miller and Vittrup (2020) stated participants who experienced police bias or discrimination experienced feelings of worthlessness, chronic stress, fear, and anger. Moreover, it was noted that participants reported that they prep themselves and their children on how to deal with police bias and interaction with the police. Police discrimination and interaction result in psychotic experiences, psychological distress, depression, PTSD, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and attempts among Black Americans (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). Herd (2020) stated that police violence causes anxiety, PTSD, psychotic experiences, psychological distress, depression, and suicidal ideation and attempts. The researchers have confirmed that an individual who has been a victim of police violence tends to have significant mental health problems. Police killings are linked to worse mental health outcomes among Black people, which causes stress, depression, and a worse state of emotional distress (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). The Duke and Kahn journal article stated that recurrent exposure to police discrimination/violence against members of one's racial or ethnic group could be interpreted as a form of

discrimination and that it has the potential to impact an individual's physical and mental health in a negatively.

Police discrimination/violence are trauma events that take a toll on an individual's health. Tynes et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study that collected data from a national online survey that examined mental health challenges and individual experiences resulting from online police violence exposure. This study had 302 participants, which included African Americans and Latinx. Participants were selected that witnessed online trauma or had a traumatic experience which resulted from the online exposure of a police violence. Furthermore, it was noted that two factors played a significant role in the virtual traumatic event among adolescents of color. These factors include virtual videos of immigrants who have not been documented, who have been put into cages, and the second factor is police officers killing unarmed citizens. Researchers found that poor mental health status was linked to an individual's racial-ethnic group or immigration status. Poor mental health was related to depressive symptoms, anxiety, and trauma. Negative mental health among African Americans has increased in participants who completed the survey who live in a state where a police officer killed an unarmed man within the past three months. Furthermore, symptoms of depression and PTSD were higher among girls than boys. The researchers stated that according to the data from police shootings, there was a .14 day increase in mental health days among adults according to the individual's geographical area. Moreover, it was found that media exposure harms a person's well-being. Police violence has been a consistent problem among Black Americans, which has been linked to PTSD symptoms. Dukes and Kahn

(2017) stated that police violence has the potential to impact an individual's physical and mental health in a negative way.

Black Americans experience discrimination during police encounters, even when the individual has not shown any sign of violent behavior. Police discrimination among Black Americans has been an ongoing issue throughout the world. Turner and Richardson (2016) reported that individuals who have reported experiencing police discrimination or had a more intrusive police encounter reported an increase in trauma and anxiety-related symptoms after the encounter compared to individuals who have experienced fair treatment. Eighty-five percent of the participants reported being pulled over at least once within their lifetime, and 78% of participants did not have any history of criminal activity (Turner & Richardson, 2016). Exposure to police discrimination causes challenges to Black Americans' mental and physical health.

Black Americans who had experienced police encounters tend to have negative experiences which result in negative mental health outcomes. Miller and Vittrup (2020) conducted a qualitative study that investigated 18 African American parents who had been exposed to police bias and brutality. Furthermore, it was noted that negative police encounters among Black Americans included racial profiling, prejudiced actions, and acts of discriminations. Black Americans seem to have harsher sentences, unjust incarcerations, and imprisonments, and are targeted because of their race. Researchers collected data from a study conducted by Chaney and Robertson (2013). Chaney and Robertson noted within their study that Caucasians support and justify police brutality used toward Black Americans and that Black Americans deserve unfair treatment. In

addition, it was found that participants and some of their children had negative encounters with law enforcement, which resulted in mental health problems. These mental health challenges included feelings of worthlessness, chronic stress, fear, and anger. Most participants in the study reported that they prep themselves and their children for police bias, encounters, and interactions with the police, which has been seen as a strategy for survival.

Exposure to police killings takes a toll on an individual's mental health and causes severe emotional distress. Bor et al. (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental study that focused on police killings among Black Americans who were unarmed and Black American adults who self-reported their mental health in the United States. Data were collected on police killings from individual-level data that had been reported between 2013 and 2015 in the U.S. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Furthermore, this study found an increase in poor mental health by 3.3% on a population level where there were police killings among unarmed Black Americans. These police killings were linked to worse mental health among black people. It was noted that police killing caused stress, depression, and a worse state of emotional distress.

Black Americans tends to experience negative encounters by police officers which often leads to police violence and brutality and causes severe physical and psychological complications. Herd (2020) explored the case of Graham vs. Connor. Within this case, policies were codified which related to the health inequities among African American communities caused by police violence. In addition, researcher has drawn attention to how police violence caused a high rate of deaths and physical and

psychological harm. Moreover, it was found that police brutality causes anxiety, PTSD, psychotic experiences, psychological distress, depression, and suicidal ideation and attempts. The researcher noted that research has confirmed that an individual who had been a victim of police violence or brutality tends to have significant mental health problems. There is a multidimensional effect that African Americans experience due to police violence. An opt-in panel survey was used to collect data from a national survey designed which was conducted by the research team, YouGov America, Inc. There was a pool of over two million U.S. residents that participated in the survey. There were 48.6% participants that were men. There were 11.9% Black participants, and 15.7% Hispanic participants. It was also found by the researchers that there is a framing that takes place as it relates to health problems among Black Americans, and instead of assessing their need for treatment and providing treatment, it seems like a crime that needs policing and punishment. Research has shown that police killings are underrepresented and that, on average, police officers kill 2.8 men daily. Between 2012 and 2018, police officers was responsible for 8% of homicides.

McLeod (2020) conducted a systemic literature review to assess if interactions with police are associated with mental health outcomes among Black Americans. Furthermore, it was found that a Black American interaction with the police resulted in negative mental health outcomes. Interactions among police officers and Black Americans have resulted in psychotic experiences, psychological distress, depression, PTSD, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and attempts. This study has shown that police

interaction also increases poor mental health twofold compared to individuals without interaction with the police.

Police Discrimination and PTSD

Exposure to police discrimination causes severe symptoms of PTSD. DeVlyder et al. (2020) stated that there are eight factors that could potentially influence trauma. These factors include increased exposure to police violence, coping or recovering from the exposure of police violence, increased exposure related to the policing within Black communities, the lack or limited access to resources, lack of accountability among police officers, the belief of police violence, racial and economic disparities, police violence is stigmatizing, and police officers being armed. Police violence has been linked to various mental health challenges that differ from other forms of violence and stress exposure. Avoiding the police causes stress and severe depression among black men (DeVlyder et al., 2020). Studies have shown that discrimination takes on different forms which includes systemic, racial, police discrimination and violence and all forms of discrimination have been linked to severe mental health and PTSD symptoms. I selected PTSD symptoms as the mediation variable because police discrimination has been identified as a traumatic event among Black Americans which may result in PTSD symptoms.

Dysfunctional Family Relationships/Measure

A dysfunctional family relationship negatively impacts the family system and affects each part of the family system. Schrader (2014) reported that with dysfunctional family relationships, the relationship bond weakens, there are repeated unresolved

conflicts, and there is distress among family members. The family system theory explains how every part of the family relationship influences and communicates with each other. One aspect of the family system affects the different parts of the family system (Allen, 2017). The Bowen Family Model explains human relationships and functioning through a systemic lens; it describes the emotional process of human relationships (Regina, 2011). Jefferson (2020) reported that the family system theory had been used to examine the social system among Black Americans, the importance of their environment, and its effects, which include social, political, and economic factors. When one member is affected by one of these factors, it affects the family system.

A traumatic event has been defined as an event that interferes with an individual's central nervous system that affects a person's level of functioning (Badura-Brack & Earl, 2020). Police discrimination is a traumatic experience that can lead to PTSD symptoms (Kinkel-Ram et al., 2021)

PTSD and Dysfunctional Family Relationship

PTSD symptoms have a negative effect on Black Americans' family relationships. Geller et al. (2014) stated that trauma symptoms cause a disruption in child development and the quality of emotional attachment as it relates to family and social relationships. Hammock et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study that examined couples functioning after experiencing trauma. There was a purposive sample from an original 311 oral potential participants, a two-step process was conducted. The researchers used a thematic analysis with a purposive sample of 49 responders who had responded to the 9/11/01 terrorist attack. Data had been collected from participants from

2010 to 2015 from responders and their families who had experienced the 9/11/01 terrorist attack firsthand. There were 34.7% participants who reported being diagnosed with PTSD, and 22.7% of participants that had reported experiencing at least one PTSD symptom. Also, the researchers found that mental health challenges that result from trauma cause negative effects on the partner relationship and that PTSD symptoms significantly affect partner relationship discord.

Traumatic stress and symptoms impair an individual's interpersonal relationship and attachment with others. Alexander et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study that looked at the impact that major stressor had on an individual relationship. Furthermore, the researchers examined the effect of trauma on attachment behavior and its disruption by the interpersonal aspects of traumatic memories. In addition, the researchers studied firefighters who fought in the 1983 Ash Wednesday Bushfire in Australia. The researchers found that 80% of participants reported being more irritable with their family eight months after the fire, 50% of participants spent less time with their loved ones and were more withdrawn and fought more with a family member, and 65% reported that they avoided discussing their problem with their family. Moreover, the researcher looked at trauma's impact on relationships during pre-traumatic, epi-traumatic, and posttraumatic. The researchers found that traumatic experiences and symptoms have a detrimental impact on an individual's self-awareness, intimacy, sexuality, and communication, which are significant factors in maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the researchers noted that a traumatic experience becomes embedded in the memory structure that causes a progressive avoidance of interpersonal

triggers which can interfere with an individual's relationship. Also, it was found by the researcher that trauma and PTSD significantly impact interpersonal relationships; they are highly disruptive and impair attachments and self-awareness. Furthermore, it was reported that individuals who had developed PTSD during a traumatic event often develop irritability and tend to display re-enactment of the fear within the relationship, which results in detachment and affectionlessness. The researchers also stated that when the family relationship triggers traumatic memories, it may lead to avoidance and a detachment from that relationship and ruptures the relationship bond. These studies are relevant to my study because my study examines PTSD symptoms and its effect on dysfunctional family relationship among Black Americans. My study used PTSD symptoms as a mediation between police violence and dysfunctional family relationship among Black Americans.

Police Discrimination and Dysfunctional Family Relationships

Police discrimination has an impact on family relationships. African American children who experience police discrimination tend to have behavioral disturbance, which interferes with the family structure (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). Police discrimination had been linked to high levels of stress within African American families, marital abuse, and stressors among children (Priest et al., 2020). Furthermore, the researcher noted that 77.8% of participants indicated the reason they experienced discrimination was because of their ethnicity was Black American. Discrimination has also been linked to having a negative impact on parent-adolescent relationships, co-parenting relationships, and intimate relationships (Kerr et al., 2018). It was also noted by the researchers that Black

Americans who experienced racial discrimination tend to relate to their family through emotional dysregulation and a negative psychological response, and fathers who had experienced discrimination impair their perception of a quality relationship. Fathers develop a different perspective on the meaning of quality relationships, negatively affecting the family. Furthermore, researchers found that men who experienced racial discrimination are less likely to develop a long-lasting relationship or get married, negatively impacting interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. Black Americans experience police racial bias and discrimination three times more than any other race, which damages the self-worth of the family and causes behavioral challenges among family members (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). Police discrimination has the ability to completely disconnected families from their loved ones who has experience death due to police discrimination. Wiggins (2020) stated that a young Black man who resided in Maryland's Eastern Shore died at the hand of police offices, similar to Anton Black a nineteen year old Black man who died at the hands of police officers in Greensboro, MD two years prior, and George Floyd who also died at the hands of an officer who pressed his knee against Floyd's neck until the air and life left his body. Police discrimination or encounters may result in police brutality or death that may cause a great morning due to the grief, loss, and the longing of waiting to have an interaction with the decease. Holcombe and Snyder (2020) noted that a 26-year-old woman by the name of Breonna Taylor home was raided by officers who shot her eight times after breaking down her door at nighttime. McLeod et al (2020) noted that although, Black Americans represents thirteen percent of the U.S. population but also represents 23% of individuals who have

been fatally shot police officers. This is an issue and trend that continues to exist today. Police violence may have long-lasting effects on individuals, families, and the community (Dukes & Khan, 2017).

Police Discrimination, PTSD, and Dysfunctional Family Relationships Among Black Americans

Discrimination has been linked to having a negative impact on an individual's mental well-being. Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) stated that systemic discrimination causes acute and chronic stress, which causes unhealthy interpersonal relationships, emotional and physiological regulation, cognitive functioning, and development. It was stated by the researchers that there are poor health outcomes that have been rooted in historically situational traumatic events, which have been paired with persistent systemic oppression. Fan (2018) stated that individuals who have experienced discrimination tend to develop issues with trust among their family members. Kerr et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study that used data from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's longitudinal Child Community Health Network to examine the impact of discrimination and other stressful factors on intimate relationship status and quality among African Americans. Furthermore, the researchers looked at the relationship between socioeconomic factors and racial discrimination. There was a clinic-based sample of 203 African American fathers in Baltimore, MD, and Washington, DC. The researchers looked at what extent racial discrimination, perceived stress, and financial strain are linked to marital status and relationship quality among African American fathers. Moreover, it was found through this study that African

Americans had a lower marriage rate and engaging in intimate relationships less compared to Whites. The lower marriage and relationship rates were related to experiences of discrimination and financial strains. Furthermore, it was identified that racial discrimination is a significant stressor that affects Black Americans, and the stress diminishes the quality of relationships and the dissolution of marriages. Due to the high levels of stress experienced among Black Americans their relationships had become more dysfunctional which often results in a divorce. African American men who had experienced discrimination affected their parent-adolescent relationships, co-parenting relationships, and the quality of intimate relationships because the experience of discrimination affect the individual's perception and causes the person to operate in emotional dysregulation (Kerr et al., 2018). This study is relevant to my study because it examines the effects of discrimination on family relationships.

What we know through current studies is that police discrimination may have a psychological effect on Black Americans, which may lead to PTSD symptoms. Discrimination causes psychological distress among Black Americans (Kinkel-Ram et al., 2021) PTSD symptoms may have a negative impact on family relationships. PTSD symptoms harm the family's interactions with each other (Greene et al., 2018). Police discrimination may cause damage to family relationships (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). What we do not know is if PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. Negative police encounters and discrimination among Black Americans have been a continued trend that exist today and

have been going on for decades. Police discrimination may result in psychological distress and PTSD symptoms that can have a negative impact on the family relationship.

Summary

Studies have confirmed a link between discrimination and PTSD symptoms. McLeod (2020) and Herd (2020) reported that police interactions could lead to symptoms of depression, psychosis, PTSD symptoms, mental distress, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and attempts. Ortega-Williams et al. (2021) stated that systemic discrimination has been linked to chronic traumatic stress, which causes interpersonal, emotional, physiological, cognitive, and developmental impairment. Mekawi (2022) stated that there is a relationship between police discrimination and violence and posttraumatic stress among Black Americans. DeVlyder et al. (2020) stated that increased exposure to trauma causes significant mental health problems among Black Americans.

Likewise, racial discrimination and police encounters may impact family relationships and functioning. Kerr et al. (2018) reported that racial discrimination and financial strains have a negative impact on marriages and relationships. Hammack et al. (2019) stated that partner relationships are usually affected when one individual has experienced a form of trauma. McFarlane and Bookless (2010) stated that PTSD symptoms had a detrimental effect on interpersonal relationships. These studies have indicated that the experience of police discrimination may be associated with PTSD symptoms and that PTSD symptoms may cause negative effects on family relationships.

Given these known relationships between police encounters, violence, and discrimination and both mental health outcomes such as PTSD and interpersonal and

family relationships, my study addresses whether the level of trauma and PTSD symptoms operates as a mediator between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine whether PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationship. Studies have been conducted that linked negative police encounters and police discrimination to PTSD symptoms. Studies have shown that police discrimination has been seen as a traumatic experience which can affect a person's mental wellness. Ongoing studies have also linked PTSD symptoms to disruptions within the family system which also has a negative effect on family relationships. Furthermore, studies have indicated that PTSD symptoms impact a person's intimate, interpersonal, and personal relationships. What studies have not determined is how police discrimination may cause PTSD symptoms and its impact on family relationships.

Research Design and Rationale

I am used the mediation model to determine how variables change because of a variable. The mediation model is a type of analysis that is used to help identify the mechanism that underlies the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable which uses a mediator variable to explain the relationship (Hampson, 2021). The independent variable that was used in this study is police discrimination. The dependent variable for this study is family relationship. The mediation variable is PTSD symptoms. My study used a quantitative non-experimental research design to evaluate relationships among variables. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the

statistically significant mediating effect of PTSD symptoms on the relationship between police discrimination and family relationship.

Methodology

Population

The target population for this study is Black Americans (Black Americans and African Americans) who are 18 years old or older who have experienced police encounters. The reason I selected Black Americans is because Black communities are over policed and experience police discrimination more than other races (Mekawi, 2022). There are no restrictions on gender for this study. My study examined the impact of individuals' police discrimination and its effects according to gender to help us determine if gender plays a role in outcomes. Johnson et al. (2021) stated that Black men reported experiencing police discrimination two times more than Black women. This study is open to individuals who reside in the United States. Black Americans living in both rural and urban locations will be included in this study. Alang (2018) stated that homicide among Black Americans that involved the police was significantly higher in metropolitan areas but police killing, and negative encounters happens in rural areas as well.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

I used a purposive sampling technique to select participants for this study. The purposive sampling technique has been referred to as a non-probability method that has been used by researchers to select participants. This strategy was used to help me select participants who have characteristics that are required for my study and meet the criteria (Dudovskiy, 2022) by providing a convenient way to identify demographic criteria

through a self-selections format. My study focused on Black Americans who had experienced a police encounter.

Power Analysis

I used the G *Power 3.1.9.7. software (2023) to determine the population size for my study. I set the test family to F tests. The statistical test that I used was the Linear Multiple Regression: fixed model, R2 increase. The type of analysis used was a priori: compute required size given the error probability, power, and effect size. I set the effect size for .15, the error probability for 0.05, and the power for .80. I had two test predictors which are police discrimination and PTSD symptoms. After calculating the input of the parameter, the G power software produced a total sample size of 78. I included an additional 10 participants (15%) of the total sample size, to account for missing data.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.

SurveyMonkey was the platform used to distribute the informed consent form and surveys that needed to be completed by participants. An invitation (see Appendix A) to take the survey was posted on Facebook, LinkedIn and in Walden's participation pool. Once participants accepted the invitation to take the survey, the link directed them to the informed consent form to review and agree too prior to accessing the link for the survey. There was a description of my study included in the invitation link. The demographic information collected from participants includes the individual's race, age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, whether the participant has children or not, location where the participant lives (rural or urban area) and if the person experienced police discrimination. My study used a kick out clause to identify individuals

who have not experienced police discrimination. The questions from the McMaster Family assessment by Epstein, Baldwin, and Bishop, PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL-C) by Weathers, Davis, Witte, and Domino, and Police and Law Enforcement Scale by English, Bowleg, del Rio-Gonzalez, Tschann, Agans, and Malebranche were also uploaded into SurveyMonkey. Participants can exit the study by clicking off of the questionnaire.

Instruments and Operationalization of Constructs

Demographic Questionnaire

I used a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) that I developed to ensure that the demographic data meets the requirement for my study. The demographic questionnaire asked participants race, age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, whether the participant has children or not, location where the participant lives (rural or urban area) and if the person experienced police discrimination. The demographic questionnaire helped me determine if participants meet the inclusive criteria for my study.

McMaster Family Assessment Device

The McMaster FAD (see Appendix C) was utilized to measure family relationships. The McMaster FAD was developed by Epstein, Baldwin, and Bishop in 1983. The McMaster FAD is open to the public. Epstein et al. (1983) stated that the McMaster FAD measures multidimensional functioning within the family. This tool assesses six dimensions of family functioning, such as behavioral control, problem-solving, communication, affective responsiveness, roles, and affective involvement. The

FAD is a 60 item self-reported questionnaire rated on a 4-point Likert scale which includes strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3), and strongly disagree (4). The FAD subscale will measure problem-solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavior control, and general functioning. The dimensions range from 1-4, with 1 being a high level of functioning and 4 being poorer levels of functioning. The range of the total score is between 60 and 240. Each subscale were measured separately, and a separate analysis was conducted for each subscale.

Zulkifli et al. (2017) stated that the reliability for the McMaster Family assessment was .971 which exceeded the alpha value of 0.6. Furthermore, the author indicated that the FAD scale is a widely used scale to measure family relationships. Miller et al. (1990) conducted a psychometric study of the McMaster FAD using psychiatric, medical, and nonclinical samples. Previous studies have shown that there was a basic reliability and validity data for this scale. There was a coefficient invariance range from .95 to .99 which indicated that there was a strong structure among all three variables which included psychiatric, medical, and nonclinical samples. Furthermore, the FAD scale correlated to .85 in nonclinical settings, .87 in psychiatrist settings and .88 in medical settings. The Cronbach's alpha level in nonclinical settings were .57, and .69 alpha level in both psychiatric and medical settings.

PTSD Checklist Civilian Version

The PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL-C) scale was developed by Weathers, Davis, Witte, and Domino in 1993 (Norris & Hamblen, 2003; see Appendix D). The PCL-C scale is open to the public. The PCL-C scale was be used to measure PTSD

symptoms. Weathers et al. (2013) stated that the PCL-C scale is one of the three versions of the PCL for DSM-IV. Norris and Hamblen (2003) stated that the PCL-C scale consists of 17 items that relate to key PTSD symptoms and measure symptoms of a 5-point severity scale. The scale ranges from 1, which means not at all, to 5, which means extremely. Once the checklist has been completed, the score will be added up to determine the severity level. The total range of the total score is between 17-85.

The PCL-C has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of PTSD symptoms; this includes nonclinical samples. Conybeara et al. (2012) stated that the PCL-C scale has been shown to be superior to other alternative measures of PTSD. Norris and Hamblen (2003) stated that the PCL-C scale has a sensitivity of .97, a specificity of .87 and an overall diagnostic efficacy of .94. Ruggiero et al. (2023) conducted a psychometric property of the PTSD Checklist Civilian Version on college students in a university setting. Students were assessed for different forms of psychopathology which included depression, general anxiety, and PTSD. There were three subscales used, such as, re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal subscales. The researchers found that subscales hyperarousal and avoidance had a reliability correlation coefficient of .73, the scale re-experiencing had a correlation coefficient of .76 and the PCL-C scale reliability correlation coefficient ranged from .85-.94. The validity was between .88-.92. Conybeara et al. (2012) conducted a study using the PCL-C scale to examine the reliability, validity, and factor structure of the scale. The researchers examined the psychometric properties of the PCL-C in a nonclinical setting where they examined the internal consistency, retest reliability and convergent validity. They found that the PCL-C scale had a retest

reliability of .96, internal consistency of .97, and a convergent validity of .93.

Police and Law Enforcement Scale

The PLE scale (see Appendix E) was used to measure participant's experiences during police encounters. The PLE scale was developed by English, Bowleg, del Rio-Gonzalez, Tschann, Agans, and Malebranche in 2017. The PLE scale started as a 5 item self-reporting questionnaire rated on a 6-point Likert scale but added 3 items, which rates from (1) never to (6) always. I obtained an email on February 14, 2022, from Lisa Bowleg at George Washington University granting me permission to use the PLE scale. Bowleg also provided a copy of the 8-item scale. Bowleg recommended that I use the 8-item scale (see Appendix F). The content added on the 8-item PLE scale consisted of "would you say often, sometimes, rarely or never." English et al. (2017) stated that the PLE scale has a moderate-high reliability coefficient level of .72. The researchers stated that the PLE scale is an effective tool to measure Black Americans experiences of discrimination from PLE Bowleg et al. (2017) conducted a study that measured Black men's police-based discrimination experiences using the development and validation of the PLE scale. After conducting the study on 633 Black men between the age of 18 and 65, Bowleg et al. found that the PLE scale rate a .87 for the validity alpha correlation.

Data Analysis Plan

The demographic questionnaire, McMaster Family assessment, PCL-C and PLE Scale was imported into the IBM SPSS software. The IBM SPSS statistic software was utilized to analyze data within this study. I checked for missing data and accuracy. Also, I ensured that all values in the data are within the range for each variable. The means and

standard deviation for each variable will be measured and reported after this study has been completed. Through my study the following research questions was addressed.

RQ: To what extent does PTSD mediate the relationship between police discrimination experiences and dysfunctional family (communication, problem-solving, roles, affective involvement, behavioral control, general functioning) among Black Americans?

H_0 : PTSD does not mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

H_1 : PTSD does mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships.

The research questions and hypotheses were addressed through a mediation multiple regression analysis. Once all data have been collected and reviewed, data will be prepared to be entered into the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software to test the assumptions that my dependent variable was measured on a continuous scale to determine whether I have a linear relationship between my dependent variable and both of my independent variables, and that I will have two or more independent variables.

I checked data for errors. I check the original data to ensure data has been entered into the SPSS software accurately. I used the Likert items scales to measure my variables; I created scatterplots and partial regression plots to check for linearity when doing my multiple regression. I used an independent and a mediator variable to carry out my study.

The mediator analysis using the multiple regression is appropriate to assume a

three variable system that includes the two causal pathways (path c, the direct influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable and, path b, the effect of the mediator variable has on the dependent variable). Furthermore, it includes a third pathway for the independent variable to the mediator, path a.

My study will show a mediator effect if path c is reduced to zero when paths a and b are controlled. However, if path c does not reduce to zero, it would show that an operation of multiple mediating factors exists (Baron & Kenny, 1986). MacKinnon and Valente (2019) stated that the mediation analysis is a statistical method that is used to quantify the causal sequence by which an antecedent variable causes a mediating variable that causes a dependent variable. Within my study, the independent variable is police discrimination. The dependent variable is family relationship. The mediator variable is PTSD systems. I performed a multiple regression to help determine the extent that PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

Threat to Validity

Threats to the validity may include internal, external, and construct and statistical validity. PTSD symptoms may develop through traumatic life events. May and Wisco (2016) stated that PTSD can result from violence, accidental death, and challenging events. My study measures PTSD symptoms that may result from a police encounter. The measurement of PTSD symptoms can be an internal validity threat because there is a possibility that some participants may have experienced multiple traumatic events within their life that caused PTSD symptoms which may affect some of the responses. Another

threat to the internal validity would be the possibility that participants were having challenges within their family relationship prior to the encounter. Cuncic (2022) stated that the impact of time is a threat to the internal validity. My study required participants to think back in time and remember the event and the threat of using retrospective data. To help eliminate the risk of recall validity this study was narrowed down to focus only on the specific event and PTSD symptoms and family relationship experiences that took place right after the police discriminative encounter.

In addition to the internal validity, there are external threats to the validity. For example, my population size is 78 participants, which is a small sample size, which makes it challenging to generalize the finding to a larger group. Also, a threat to the external validity includes whether participants truly reflect the target population for my study. Bhandari (2022) stated ecological validity relates to whether I can generate the finding of my research, and population validity refers to the ability to generalize the result to a large group of individuals.

Ethical Procedures

For my study, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved me to conduct my study. Walden University (2022) stated that the IRB makes sure that all research that is conducted through Walden University meet the requirements for the university's ethical standards and the U.S. federal regulations. After the study has been approved by IRB, I distributed the surveys on the selected internet platforms. Everyone that was willing to participate in the study obtained an invitation, including a link that took them to the survey. After the individuals review the invitation and agree to

participate in this study, they were asked to move forward by clicking the link, which took them to the survey. Participants gave consent by clicking on the link and moving forward to completing the survey. Participants will remain anonymous, and information provided by participants will be kept confidential. Data collected is stored in a secure way. The data collected will be stored for 5 years beyond the CAO approval (Walden University, 2023). The only individuals who have access to the data collected are me and committee members. Participants were informed of the risks and benefits of participating in the study.

Ethical Concerns

An ethical concern as it relates to the recruitment of participants is the usage of the internet platform and ensuring that participants know how to access the survey and have internet access. Another ethical concern is that participants may have questions related to the study, or the participant does not understand the information provided. Another ethical concern is that participants may withdraw from the study due to the difficulty of rethinking about a past traumatic event and experiences.

Summary

For my study, I conducted a non-experimental quantitative study that examined the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships by using PTSD symptoms as a mediator variable. Police discrimination was my dependent variable, and family relationships was my independent variable. My target population consists of Black Americans 18 years old or older who have experienced police discrimination. This study will include at least 78 participants who have experienced police discrimination. The G

*Power 3.1.9.7. software was used to determine my population size, which included the linear multiple regression, fixed model, and an R2 increase. I went through an IRB review process to obtain approval to conduct my study. I will recruit participants through Facebook, LinkedIn, and Walden University participant pool. Consent forms and survey questionnaires will be provided to participants via SurveyMonkey. Participants completed self-administered questionnaires which include questions from the demographic questionnaire, the McMaster Family Device, the PCL-C, and the PLE scales to measure variables. The demographic questionnaire will collect the demographic information of participants, The research question that will be addressed is, to what extent PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships. There are internal and external threats to validity, which includes rethinking about the PTSD symptoms that come through difficult life events and whether the population size reflects the larger population. Data were collected and put into the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software for multiple regression statistical testing. The data collected will be stored securely for five years after receiving the CAO approval. The ethical concern related to my research is that questions may retrigger symptoms of PTSD.

Chapter 4: Introduction

This quantitative correlation study aimed to examine whether PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. The research questions and hypotheses addressed are listed below:

RQ: To what extent does PTSD mediate the relationship between police discrimination experiences and dysfunctional family (communication, problem-solving, roles, affective involvement, behavioral control, general functioning) among Black Americans?

H₀: PTSD does not mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships.

H₁: PTSD does mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

This chapter contains the results of the data collected and analysis which was conducted to answer the research question. There is a description of the data collected and the sampling size. Next, there will be the results of the analysis which has been conducted. This section will conclude with a summary of the findings.

Data Collection

SurveyMonkey was used to collect data in August 2023. Data were collected from July 11, 2023, to August 28, 2023. The survey was closed once there were 78 participants that completed the survey. There were 18 participants excluded due to not having police encounters and one participant who did not answer the question of having police encounters that were cleansed from the data. Furthermore, two participants still needed to

complete the questions on the questionnaire, and four participants only completed part of the questionnaire, which was also eliminated. Furthermore, there were four participants cleansed from the data because they did not identify themselves as African American. There were 49 participants' responses used for the study after the data was cleansed.

Demographics

There was data collected from 49 participants. Participants consisted of 65.4% female, 30.6% male, and 4% participants reported other. The sample demographics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Demographics (n=49)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	32	65.4%
Male	15	30.6%
Other	2	4%

Most of the participants reported their age is between 35-44 ($n= 13, 26.5\%$), and the largest proportion of participants identified being employed full-time ($n= 28, 57.1\%$). Most participants identified themselves as being single ($n=28, 57.1\%$), most of the participants reported having a high school diploma or GED ($n=25, 51\%$), and most participants reported having 0-3 children ($n=16, 32.7\%$) and no children ($n=16, 32.7\%$). The most significant proportion of participants live independently ($n=25, 51\%$), most participants live in an urban area ($n=44, 89.8\%$), and the largest representation of the

sample were Black or African Americans ($n=49$, 100%). Most participants reported experiencing police encounters ($n=49$, 100%).

Table 2

Sample Characteristics (N=49)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
Under 18	0	0
18-24	5	10.2
25-34	11	22.4
35-44	13	26.5
45-54	9	18.4
55-64	6	12.2
65-75	5	10.2
Over 75	0	0
Employment status		
Fulltime	28	57.1
Parttime	7	14.3
Unemployed	5	10.2
Retired	5	10.2
Disabled	4	8.2
Marital status		
Married	18	36.7
Single	28	57.1
Divorce	3	6.1
Separated	0	0
Education level		
Less than 12 th grade	0	0
High school or GED	27	46.56
Associate	9	15.51
Bachelor	9	15.51
Master	10	17.24
Doctoral	3	5.18
Children		
None	16	32.7
0-3	16	32.7

4-6	8	16.3
7-11	0	0
12-15	3	6.1
16-18	1	2.0
Over 18	5	10.2
Living quarters		
Independently	25	51
With family	21	42.9
In shelter or residential home	0	0
Homeless	0	0
With friends	0	0
Other	3	6.1
Community resides		
Urban	44	89.8
Rural	4	8.2
Unanswered	1	2
Race		
White	0	0
Black or African American	49	100
Hispanic or Latino	0	0
Asian or American	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Another Race	0	0
Unanswered	0	0
Experience police encounters		
Yes	49	100
No	0	0

Descriptive

The PLE was scored on a 6-point Likert scale from (1) often, (2) sometimes, (3) rarely, and (4) never, which indicates that lower scores represent more experience of police discrimination. For this study, the PLE 8-item scale was used. The PLE was used

to measure the independent variable, police discrimination. The mean score was 3.51 and standard deviation was .64.

The PLC-C scale was rated on a 5-point severity scale from (1) not at all to (5) extremely. The PLC-C scale consists of 17 items that relate to PTSD symptoms. The PLC-C scale was used to measure the mediation variable, PTSD symptoms. Higher scores represent greater symptoms of PTSD. The mean score was 2.21 and standard deviation was .84.

The FAD is a 60-item self-reported questionnaire rated on a 4-point Likert scale from (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree and (4) strongly disagree, which indicates that higher scores represent greater family dysfunction. The subscales include communication, problem-solving, roles, affective involvement, behavioral control, and general functioning. The FAD device was used to measure the dependent variable, family relationships. I used the mean of all items on the 60-item questionnaire for this study. The mean for FAD was 2.34, and the standard deviation was .36. The mean for the subscales included problem-solving with a mean of 2.22 and a standard deviation of .38, communication with a mean of 2.40 and a standard deviation of .43, role with a mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of .43 and affectiveness responsiveness with a mean of 2.43 and a standard deviation of .51. In addition, there were subscales for affective involvement with a mean of 2.55 and a standard deviation of .50, behavior control with a mean of 2.11 and a standard deviation of .38 and general function with a mean of .28 and a standard deviation of .50.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics on Key Composite Variables (N=49)*

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Std. deviation
PTSD symptoms	0.94	4.12	2.21	0.84
Police discrimination	1.75	4.00	3.51	0.64
Family relationships	1.63	3.03	2.34	0.36
Subscale				.389
Problem-solving	1.50	3.00	2.22	.361
Communication	1.78	3.33	2.28	.431
Roles	1.64	3.55	2.45	.514
Affective response	1.50	3.50	2.43	.501
Affective involvement	1.71	3.71	2.55	.388
Behavior control	1.22	3.00	2.11	.507
General function	1.25	3.33	2.40	

Assumptions

I used a multiple linear regression to test my hypothesis. There are five assumptions required for a multiple linear regression, which includes linear relationship, no multicollinearity, independence, homoscedasticity and multivariate (Zach, 2021). The linear relationship examines the relationship between my predictor variables police

discrimination and PTSD symptoms and the response variable family relationship. The multicollinearity determined if the predictor variables are highly correlated. The independence examined if the observations of the dataset are independent. The homoscedasticity will determine whether the residuals have constant variance at every point within the linear model. The multivariate normality determined if the residuals of the model are normally distributed.

Linearity

The linearity is shown in the scatterplots below in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

Predictor PLE Scatter Plot

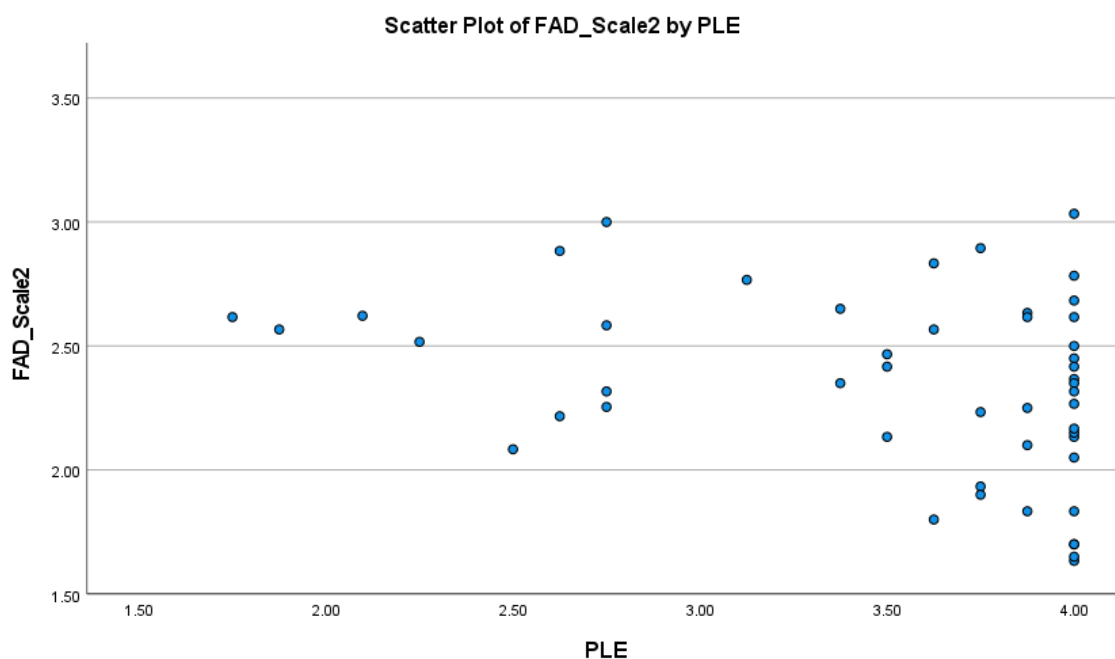


Figure 2

Predictor PLCC Scatter Plot

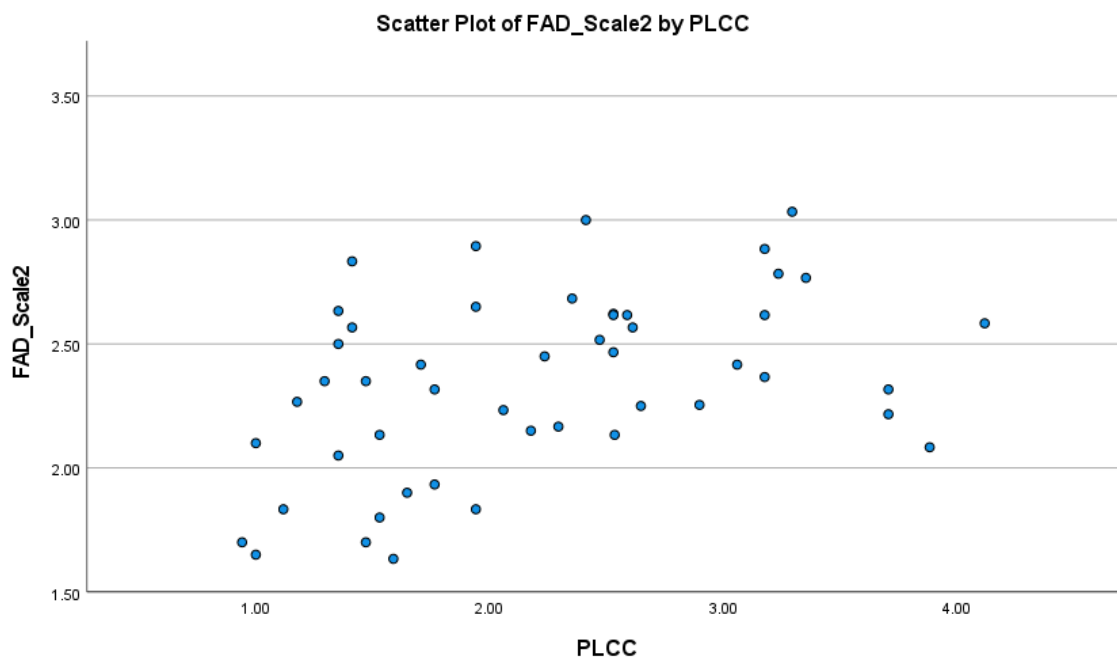


Table 4 shows that police discrimination has a significant linear relationship with family dysfunction of $r=-.313$, $p<.028$ and PTSD symptoms have a significant linear relationship with family dysfunction ($r=.436$, $p<.002$).

Table 4*Correlations Among Variables for Hypothesis Test*

Variables		PTSD symp.	Police dis.	Family relat.
PTSD cymp.	Person Correlation	1	-.545**	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.002
	N	49		
Police dis.	Pearson Correlation	-.545**	1	-.313*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.028
	N	49		
Family relat.	Pearson Correlation	.436**	-.313*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.002	.028	
	N	49		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Multicollinearity

The correlations among predictor variables were examined to investigate multicollinearity. The investigation determined that multicollinearity was not present.

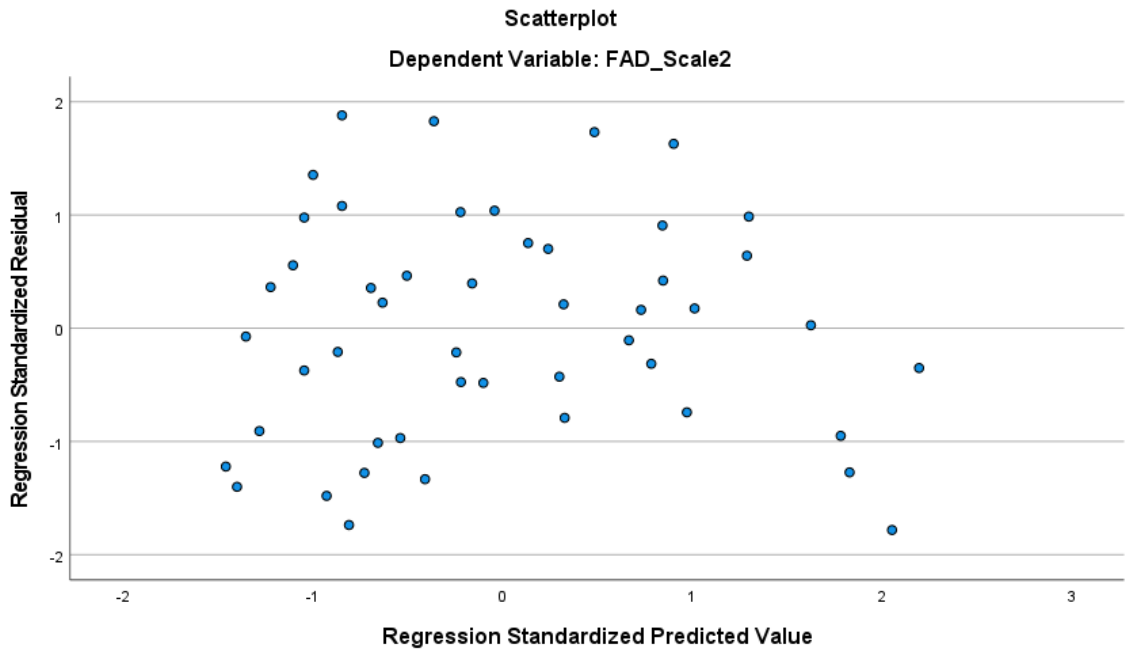
This was confirmed by examining the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) in Table 5. The tolerance should be at .10 or greater to ensure that multicollinearity is not a problem for a particular variable. Both police discrimination and PTSD symptoms have a tolerance of .703. The VIF should not be greater than 10. The VIF displayed in Table 5 shows a VIF value of 1.422.

Independence

A Durbin-Watson test was conducted to determine whether the dataset is independent. The Durbin-Watson test has shown a value of 2.036 which assumes that each observation in the dataset was independent.

Homoscedasticity

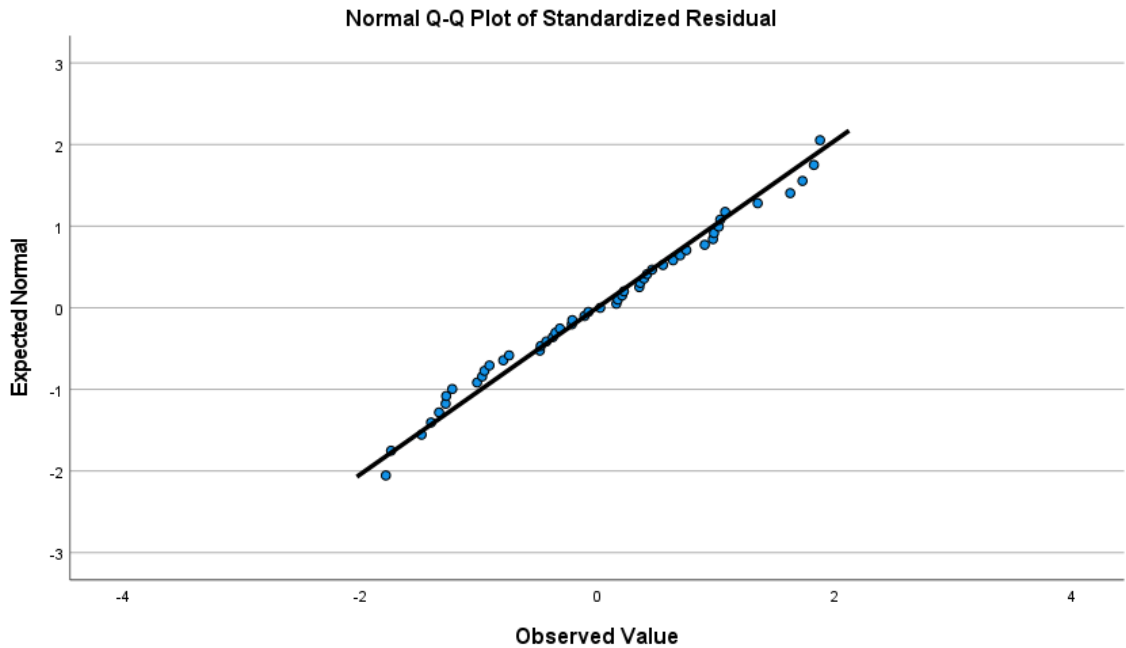
Figure 3 shows that there is a constant variance and going into the same direction. The data collected met the homoscedasticity requirements.

Figure 3*Homoscedasticity***Multivariate Normality**

I used the Q-Q Plot to assess the normality of residuals. As shown in Figure 4, residuals and the predictor Y value are sufficiently distributed. Most of the variation was normally distributed, although there were slight skews away from the predicted line.

Figure 4

Normal Q-Q Plot of Regression Residuals for Dependent Variable, Family Relationship

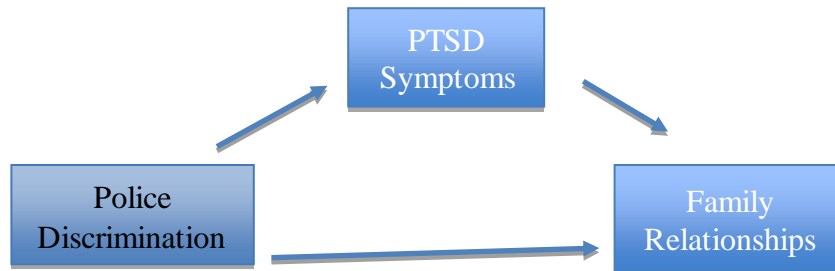


Testing the Hypothesis

The following section shows the mediation model for the data analysis and research questions. The research questions will be examined with the model using a table presenting coefficient measure and statistics among predictor variables and the dependent variable.

H_0 : PTSD does not mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships.

H_1 : PTSD does mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships.

Figure 5*Mediation Model***Results**

To determine whether PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships, I conducted two regression analyses. The first regression analysis was to determine the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships. The results from the regression shown in Step 1 shows that police discrimination is a significant predictor of family dysfunction ($F(1,47) = 5.12, p = .028$) See Table 5 below.

Table 5*Regression*

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.
Regression	.627	1	.627	5.123	.028
Residual	5.749	47	.122		
Total	6.375	48			

a. Dependent Variable: FAD_Scale 2

b. Predictor: PLE

Table 6*Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	2.96	.278		10.64	<.001
PLE	-.176	.078	-.313	-2.26	.028

a. Dependent Variable: FAD_Scale 2

The second regression analysis was to evaluate the mediation model that PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. The results of the ANOVA shown in Table 7 for of the overall model were significant, $F(2,46) = 5.69$, $p = .006$. As shown in Table 8, adding the mediation variable PTSD symptoms resulted in a non-significant relationship between police discrimination and family dysfunction and a significant relationship between

PTSD symptoms and family dysfunction ($B=.163$, $p = .021$, *Partial r*=.333). The mediation model as stated in the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.
Regression	1.26	2	.632	5.69	.006
Residual	5.11	46	.11		
Total	6.37	48			

a. Dependent Variable: FAD_Scale

b. Predictors: PLCC, PLE

Table 8

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Correlations		
	B	Std. error	Beta	T	Sig.	partial	Part
Constant	2.19	.416		5.28	<.001		
Police discrimination	-.067	.089	-.108	-.686	.496	-.101	-.091
PTSD symptoms	.163	.068	.377	2.39	.021	.333	.316

a. Dependent Variable: FAD_Scale 2

b. Predictors: PLE,PLCC

Summary

A mediation regression analysis was conducted to determine if PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships. After the data was cleansed, there were a total of 49 participants responses used out of 78 original participants. The PLE was used to collect data for police discrimination. The PLCC scale was used to collect data for PTSD symptoms. The FAD scale was used to collect data for dysfunctional family relationships. There was a multiple linear regression conducted, which included five assumptions. The five assumptions that must be met for my multiple linear regression included linearity relationship, no multicollinearity, independence, homoscedasticity and multivariate. The results from my data have shown a significant relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional relationship, however, once the mediation variable was added the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationship became insignificant. My data has shown that PTSD symptoms do mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. The null hypothesis was rejected. Chapter 5 will discuss these findings, the implications of the results, and recommended future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to address whether PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. Current studies reported that there has been an ongoing trend of police discrimination among Black Americans. Police discrimination has taken on different forms, such as, excessive force, profiling, police brutal and often times death (Duke & Kahn, 2017). Studies has also shown that police discrimination can cause trauma which may result in PTSD symptoms (DeVylder et al., 2020) As a result, PTSD symptoms that have been developed through police discrimination may have a negative impact on family relationships (Schrader, 2014).

I measured my mediator variable PTSD symptoms using the PLC-C scale. I measured my dependent variable, police discrimination using the PLE scale. I measured my independent variable using the FAD scale. This study was designed to examine the relationships between police discrimination and family relationships by using PTSD symptoms as a mediator.

Key Findings

The key findings of my study were that higher levels of police discrimination resulted in higher PTSD symptoms. Individuals who experienced higher levels of PTSD symptoms also experienced higher family dysfunction. PSTD symptoms were the variable that influenced the relationship between police discrimination and family

dysfunction. PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family dysfunction.

Interpretation of the Findings

There has been an ongoing problem of negative police encounters among African American people. Although it has gotten more media coverage, it continues to be a consistent issue. A major critical issue in policing today is citizen deaths that result during a police encounter (Bowler et al., 2020). Although police discrimination has led to death in many situations, death is not the only challenge an individual may face when having a police encounter. Herd (2020) reported that negative police encounters may lead to high rates of deaths, physical injuries, psychological harm, fear, chronic stress, and lower resistance to diseases in communities, which has a significant impact on families. Poor mental health has been related to negative police discrimination, police killing, excessive force, and discrimination (Tynes et al., 2019). Police violence has been identified as a cultural trauma among African Americans and within Black communities (Gregory & Tucker, 2023). The hysterical symptoms that are a result of trauma are sudden paralysis, amnesia, memory loss, and convulsions due to having to bear unbearable experiences (Brandell & Ringel, 2019). In my study, I found a significant relationship between police discrimination and both PTSD symptoms and dysfunctional family relationships. Furthermore, my study shows that if an individual encounters police discrimination the individual may experience high levels of PTSD symptoms and higher dysfunction among family members. Current studies also found that police discrimination may weaken the relationship bond among family members, cause distress and unresolve

conflicts (Schrader, 2014). Black families navigate experiences of police brutality, must manage grief after a loss, tend to engage in racial, gender, and sexual socialization of children, and try to understand Black motherhood (Hutchins & Nelson, 2023). Miller and Vittrup (2020) conducted a study that looked at the indirect effects of police racial bias among African American Families and found that participants and some of their children had a negative experience, which led to mental health and a strain on relationships.

PTSD symptoms have negative effects on individuals and their interactions with others (Schrader, 2014). PTSD has a negative impact on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning, which impacts relationship functioning (Haper et al., 2022). Jensen et al. (2021) found that PTSD symptoms have a negative impact on parent-child relationships, such as parent-child activities and emotional numbing, which affect engagement and expression. Bryant et al. (2018) found that PTSD symptoms influence emotional dysregulation due to the increase of anger and hostility. PTSD causes reexperiencing of thoughts and emotions, avoidance, an alteration in arousal and reactivity, and mood changes and changes in cognition, which cause dysfunctions within family relationships (Schumm et al., 2023). PTSD changes the family function due to the indirect emotional regulation that is linked to the trauma (Pan & Yang, 2023). My study shows that police discrimination was related to both high levels of PTSD symptoms and high family dysfunction; however, PTSD symptoms mediates this relationship. Individuals with higher levels of police discrimination who also have high levels of PTSD symptoms reported higher levels of family dysfunction. However, individuals with

high levels of police discrimination who do not report high levels of PTSD symptoms did not show family dysfunction.

In conclusion, findings from my study do show a relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. Individuals who experience a negative police encounter are at a higher risk of developing PTSD symptoms. This finding is based on the significant correlation of .585 between police discrimination and PTSD symptoms. Furthermore, findings in my study also show that individuals who experience PTSD symptoms experience challenges with family relationships. However, my study has determined that PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and family relationships. Individuals who experienced police discrimination that resulted in high levels of PTSD symptoms scored higher on family dysfunction compared to individuals who experienced police discrimination who have lower levels of PTSD symptoms.

Theoretical Interpretations

The theoretical framework I used to guide my research was based on Fitzgerald et al. (2020) family system theory and Bell et al. (2021) critical race theory. The family system theory indicates that each member of the family is interconnected and interdependent, and one member may disturb the system of the family. The family system theory has shown that when one member of the family experiences PTSD symptoms, it has an impact on the other member of the family. My results found that family relationships have been negatively impacted due to PTSD symptoms. Individuals with higher levels of PTSD symptoms were related to higher levels of family dysfunction.

Furthermore, the critical race theory focuses on understanding institutional structure that is race-based and racism (Bell et al., 2021). The hypothesis from the critical race theory indicates that institutional structures and systems have been used to exploit people of color. The critical race theory examines systems, policies and laws that have been developed and implemented in society and how those systems, policies and laws that discriminate against Black Americans (Johnson et al., 2022). My study measured participants perception of police discrimination and how the encounter led to PTSD symptoms and their perception of how their family relationships was affected.

Limitations of the Study

I used internet-based platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn) and Walden University participation pool to conduct my study which excluded individuals who did not have access to these platforms or access to computers. There was no interviewer present during the completion of the questionnaire to assist participants who may needed assistance to complete the questionnaire. Not having a random recruitment process may diminish the generalization of the findings to the larger study population. Furthermore, the recommendations were to collect data from 78 participants with the goal of having 60 solid responses to analysis; however, after cleansing the data, I ended up with 49 participants but despite this my hypothesis was supported. My study shown that police discrimination causes higher levels of PTSD symptoms, which may cause a higher severity level of PTSD symptoms among individuals. Another limitation was that we did not screen for individuals who may have had other types of experiences that may have

caused PTSD symptoms. This could have resulted in high levels of PTSD symptoms, which may also result in higher levels of dysfunction among family members.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for further research based on the key findings and limitations. Research could be conducted to exclude participants who have experienced a traumatic experience prior to the police discrimination, this will help determine that the PTSD symptoms are a result of the police discrimination and not another experience. Qualitative research could provide a more in-depth understanding of the nature, details, and experiences of PTSD symptoms that have been a result of police discrimination. More attention should be drawn toward negative police discrimination, which may be linked to institutional structural racism and bias. It was recommended that police informed and training that address racism and bias against African Americans while policing be developed and enhanced. Therefore, it is imperative to address negative police discrimination and interaction among African Americans, as my study has shown, police discrimination result in family dysfunction. Whether there is ongoing annual training on police and civilian interactions, police reforms, and policy revisions, it is necessary to help reduce and/or eliminate the trauma on family relationships that are linked to police discrimination. As the study shows, PTSD symptoms mediate the relationship between police discrimination and dysfunctional family relationships. My study has shown that the higher the police discrimination the higher the PTSD symptoms, the higher PTSD symptoms resulted in higher levels of family dysfunction. However, PTSD symptoms were the underlining cause of the family dysfunction. If a person

experience police discrimination and does not develop PTSD symptoms the police encounter may not affect the family functioning.

Implications

In conducting this research, I found that police discrimination increases the risk of developing PTSD symptoms. However, results also show that higher levels of PTSD symptoms and dysfunction family relationships are heightened because of police discrimination. Participant who reported high police discrimination also reported high PTSD symptoms. In addition, PTSD symptoms seem to be the psychological mechanism that causes the effect on family relationships. The findings of this study can be used to revise institutional structures that allow and condone racism and bias against Black Americans. The results can be used for police reform and to help revise police training regarding the traumatic effects of racial bias in policing.

Police officers are an essential part of community safety; however, over-policing, excessive force, and police brutality have a negative effect on Black Americans and their families. Family relationships are an imperative part of family functioning. Negative police discrimination and PTSD symptoms cause impairments within the family system (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Implementing police reform, policies, and procedures to help reduce and eliminate police profiling, excessive force, police beating, and brutality and killing helps to prevent challenges that develop through negative police discrimination.

Conclusion

Police discrimination has been an ongoing trend that Black Americans have been dealing with for decades, which continues to exist today. In addition, social media has

drawn more attention to this trend and the need to address it. It is important to change methods and approaches of policing that cause psychological harm and psychological effects on a person's personal and family relationships. My study shows that high levels of police discrimination are related to high levels of PTSD symptoms. Also, high levels of police discrimination are related to high levels of family dysfunction. Furthermore, PTSD symptoms are the underlining factor that influences family dysfunction. Police discrimination does not have a direct effect on family relationships, but PTSD symptoms that have been developed through the encounter may result in family dysfunctional.

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Appendix A: Invitation

Greetings,

This letter invites you to participate in a research project I am conducting for my dissertation in my Ph.D. program at Walden University. I am conducting this study to understand how police encounters affects Black American family relationships. I will look at PTSD symptoms caused by police discrimination and how these symptoms may interfere with family functioning and interaction.

My study is focusing on Black Americans who have experienced a police encounter.

You are not obliged to take part in this study. You may discontinue completing the survey if you agree to participate without any disadvantage to yourself or obligation to give a reason.

If you meet the criteria listed in this invitation and would like to participate in the study, click the link, and it will take you to the self-administered survey.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Sincerely,

Walden University Student

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Race	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____
Age Group	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66-75 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____
Level of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 12 grade <input type="checkbox"/> High School or GED <input type="checkbox"/> Associate <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
Employment Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Fulltime <input type="checkbox"/> Parttime <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled
Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce <input type="checkbox"/> Separated
Children	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 0-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Over age of 18
Living Quarters	<input type="checkbox"/> Independently

	<input type="checkbox"/> With Family <input type="checkbox"/> In Shelter or residential Home <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> With friends <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Community Resides	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
Experience Police Encounter	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Appendix C: Email Approval for the Police and Law Enforcement Scale

Dear Ms. Camper,

Thank you for your interest in the Police and Law Enforcement Scale. Attached is a copy of the 8-item scale that uses a one-year timeframe. We highlight this version and the shorter 5-item version in the original manuscript. We recommend using the 8-item scale with the one-year timeframe, though. Please note that the content in parentheses (Would you say often, sometimes, rarely or never?) is not necessary in the survey-- we used this originally when we had phone administration. Please also note that the response options "Don't Know" and "Refused" were originally included in the scale but are not necessary if you allow participants the option to skip items in the survey administration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

All the best,

Research del Assistant Professor

Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

The George Washington University