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The Perceived Benefits of Diversity Training and Governing Policy for Law Enforcement Agencies

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Lance Isaiah Driskell

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

The Perceived Benefits of Diversity Training and Governing Policy for Law Enforcement

Agencies

by

Lance I. Driskell

MA, Capella University, 2016

BS, Troy University, 2013

Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

This research confronted a critical public administration challenge within a law enforcement agency: the absence of formal diversity training and policies. The study explored, from the perspective of officers, what the department should consider when developing future diversity training that can positively influence job performance, and from the perspective of officers, the policies or practices regarding diversity that would positively influence job performance. The study drew upon a conceptual framework, emphasizing the necessity of diversity training and its key components: why, who, what, and how. Employing a cross-sectional research design, quantitative data were gathered through surveys administered via SurveyMonkey to police officers. The analysis aimed at identifying areas to necessitate administrative adjustments and pinpointing topics crucial for inclusion in diversity training programs. Through analysis using SPSS, the study delved into the selected framework on diversity training, extracting conclusions and formulating recommendations. The findings offered valuable insights into the specific domains where training might be inadequate, delineating gaps, anticipated needs, and existing practices within the department's diversity training initiatives. The recommendations, encapsulated in a memo, presented the results and analysis of the survey along with proposing strategies for fortifying diversity, equity, and inclusion within the police department. Furthermore, the study's potential implications extended beyond the local context, aiming to inform law enforcement agencies nationwide to foster positive social change and advance public administration practices on a broader scale.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the enduring memory of my beloved father, Lee Roy Driskell, who passed away on July 20, 2021. His unwavering support, boundless encouragement, and steadfast belief in my abilities have been the driving force behind my pursuit of excellence. It is his indomitable spirit that continues to inspire me to be the best version of myself, both personally and professionally. To my mother, Gloristine Sessions Driskell, your relentless commitment to professionalism, character, and an unyielding work ethic has been an ongoing source of inspiration. You have instilled in me the values and determination required to overcome challenges and achieve milestones such as this. I am profoundly grateful for the immeasurable impact both of you have had on my life, and I dedicate this accomplishment to your enduring love, guidance, and the invaluable lessons you have imparted upon me. I cannot thank you enough for being the pillars of strength that have shaped my journey.

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

The landscape of law enforcement in the United States has been marked by increased scrutiny and tensions, particularly in relation to interactions with diverse communities. Recent events, especially those involving diverse ethnic groups, have underscored the pressing need for comprehensive reforms within law enforcement agencies to address issues of systemic bias and community mistrust. One glaring instance was found in a particular police department located in southeast Alabama, which sought to understand the specific needs of its officers for future diversity training. The department was interested in learning more about how its officers perceive potential deficiencies in departmental training and/or policies to enhance diversity competence among police officers as they discharge their duties in a diverse metropolitan area. The police department did not have a diversity training program. This study, however, postulated that the establishment of such a program could be effective in enhancing policing within a diverse population. Nevertheless, based on some literature indicating the ineffectiveness of police diversity training in the long run, this study argued that an effective program for the department could be established through the incorporation of the officers' perspective. Despite nationwide discussions and proposed reforms, a critical void exists, particularly concerning the absence of deliberate diversity training programs in many law enforcement agencies. This study, titled "The Perceived Benefits of Diversity Training and Governing Policy for Law Enforcement Agencies," aimed to shed light on this gap by conducting a training needs assessment for the police department.

The experiences and perceptions of ethnic and racial minorities in their interactions with law enforcement officers underscored the necessity for a targeted approach to diversity training.

Although the literature acknowledged the effectiveness of diversity training in enhancing positive policing, there was an ongoing debate regarding its overall impact. Some agencies lacked a structured diversity training program altogether. This study sought to fill this gap by examining the specific training needs of this police department and proposed a needs-based diversity training program based on this study's results. The study assumed that training of police officers on diversity and related factors such as inclusion and equity was likely to enhance the capacity of police officers to discharge their duties in communities with significant ethnic/racial, gender, sexuality, and cultural levels. Based on the assumed impact of diversity training on police officers, it was rational that police departments have diversity training, which is, nevertheless, not mandatory. The focus of this study was on the specific training needs of the police department under two possible scenarios.

Section 1 encompasses the purpose of the study, a summary of the data source and analysis methods employed, the underlying significance of the research, and a comprehensive overview of subsequent sections. By briefly introducing the topic and problem statement, the nature of the professional administrative study, and the transformative potential it holds for social change, this introduction sets the stage for a detailed exploration of diversity training within law enforcement.

Organization Background and Problem Statement

This police department is a law enforcement agency in southeast Alabama and is the eighth largest city in the state of Alabama, with a population of about 71,235 people as of July 1, 2022 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The department is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The agency's mission is to preserve public order and peace while ensuring the quality of life through cooperation with all parties or stakeholders who share a common interest. The police department has four main bureaus: Administrative Services Bureau, Investigative Services Bureau, Patrol Service Bureau, and Special Operations Bureau. Each bureau is headed by a police captain. The bureaus carry out the daily operations of the department.

According to the police department, the Administrative Service Bureau is responsible for overseeing the CALEA accreditation, city jail, technical services, ordinance compliance, the records division, and the front desk and evidence unit vault. The criminal investigation division is conducted by the Investigative Services Bureau. The bureau handles a range of crimes, including juvenile crime, violent crime, drug, prostitution, property crime, and gambling investigations. The Patrol Services Bureau is responsible for carrying out the traditional functioning that includes the four patrol squads, police K9 Unit, traffic division, and the crossing guards. Lastly, the Special Operations Bureau houses the community service division, the communications center, and the training and division. The Rapid Response Team, Special Response Team, and Bomb Explosive Disposal Team are also some of the special units that oversee the services of the Special Operations Bureau.

The police department provides a holistic approach to law enforcement in southeast Alabama. The safety and security of the people was a primary priority for state and federal governments. As Terrill (2015) argued, the various fundamental human rights as provided for in the U.S. Constitution are protected through law enforcement. As a result, law enforcement departments are responsible for serving and protecting the rights of every American citizen regardless of their socioeconomic, sociocultural, and geographic differences (Engel et al., 2017). However, historically, law enforcement organizations in the U.S. have always been under significant criticism for discriminatory services to the people, such that members of specific social groups, including ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities, are adversely treated by law enforcement agencies (Braga et al., 2019). Race, gender, and sexual orientation are reported as the major determinants of the experience of various social injustices by the police.

The police department in this study did not currently have a specific diversity training program plan, despite literature suggesting that diversity training could help eliminate or reduce diversity-biased policing, an issue that has persistently affected law enforcement in the United States. Social injustice by law enforcement agencies in the United States can be traced back to the historical slavery era. The segregation laws after the abolishment of slavery in the United States are argued to have been the legal framework for justifying racial discrimination. The Jim Crow laws were introduced in the Southern states in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to create and sustain racial segregation (Fremon, 2014). The term “Jim Crow” was a pejorative term used to refer to African Americans. In essence, the Jim Crow laws referred to the laws targeting African

American that sought to enforce segregation (Fremon, 2014). Alabama was one of the Southern states with an extensive history of slavery and discrimination against African Americans and other ethnic minority groups in the country.

According to Kennington (2020), the State of Alabama had one of the largest slave populations in the United States at the start of the Civil War. Kennington (2020) reported that the population of slaves in the state grew from under 40,000 to over 430,000 in the period 1808–1880. After the abolishment of the slave trade, some African Americans moved out to other states perceived as friendlier to African Americans, while others settled within Alabama as free men and women. In addition to African Americans, there are other ethnic minority groups living in the state of Alabama. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), Whites are the majority ethnic group in the state of Alabama (66.8%), followed by African Americans (26.5%), while two or more other races constitute approximately (3.11%) and Asians (1.4%). Alabama's population of African Americans are almost twice as much as the national African American population of (13%). According to World Population Review (2023), the District of Columbia has the highest African American population (49.36%) followed by the state of Mississippi (39.21%). Louisiana has the third highest African American population (34.28%), followed by Georgia (31.70%), Maryland (31.48%), South Carolina (26.49%), Alabama (26.46%), Delaware (22.71%), North Carolina (22.09%), and Virginia (20.67%).

Given the proportion of African Americans and the negative history of slavery and segregation in the State of Alabama, racism and discrimination by the police against diverse races and ethnicities are documented issues. Generally, issues with law

enforcement and dissatisfactory service discharge regarding race and ethnic diversity are long-standing in the United States and have even been on the rise in recent years. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2023) categorized types of force the police used into firearms, canines, Tasers, and hands-fist-feet. According to the FBI's (2023) Crime Data Explorer database, in 2022, approximately 32.4% of people died, while 53.4% were seriously injured due to the use of force by the police in the United States based on the data reported by the various law enforcement agencies. However, this data differed from that reported in 2021, where law enforcement agencies reported that the use of force by the police killed 33.1% of the people and injured about 50.6%. In 2023, the proportion of those killed due to law enforcement use of force declined to 31%, while individuals with serious bodily injuries increased to 54.8%. The proportion of African Americans and Hispanics killed by the police compared to the national population number was significantly higher compared to the Whites killed with respect to their majority representation in the United States (Lett et al., 2020).

Generally, the proportion of law enforcement use of force, leading to the death of the victims in the United States, has declined significantly from 33.1% in 2021 to 31% in 2023. However, serious bodily injuries increased from 50.6% in 2021 to 54.8% in 2023 (FBI, 2023). The proportion of African Americans shot dead by the police in the total United States population was significantly higher compared to that of the White majority. A similar trend was observed with other patterns.

Patterns of disproportionate racial discrimination in the United States justice system were also manifested in the proportion of people incarcerated. According to the

Federal Bureau of Prisons (2023), there were approximately 90,000 White inmates in United States prisons and 60,835 Blacks inmates. These numbers translate to Whites representing 57.3% of the inmate population and Blacks comprising 38.6%. It seems logical to argue that since Whites and Blacks form most of the ethnic population in the United States, the respective numbers of inmates are reflective of their distribution in the population. The glaring difference, however, can be observed when the total national population is factored in. African Americans make up 38.6% of incarcerated individuals in American prisons despite only representing 13% of the total national population, compared to the White population in the United States, which is 75% but makes up only 57.3% of the prison population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Underlying systemic issues have resulted in more Blacks being more likely to be locked up compared to other races, and racism in law enforcement and the criminal justice system has been identified as a primary reason (Siegler & Admussen, 2020). In the past 5 years, cases of police brutality and murder of African Americans in the United States have caused significant tension in the country.

In May 2020, a nationwide protest occurred in the United States, which consequently spread to other countries and regions around the world following the police killing of an African American—George Floyd, in Minneapolis (Garnett, 2020). The episode, which sparked a nationwide protest, was captured on video. Floyd's death occurred because of being held on the neck by the knees of a police officer—Derek Chauvin, who was later found guilty of murdering Floyd and sentenced to prison for 22 years. The other three police officers who were present were also charged with various

crimes. As Garnett (2020) asserted, Floyd's case only resulted in nationwide protests in the United States in the following months because of the video that was recorded by a bystander, which was shared online and went viral. The incident was, however, considered as a culmination of many other previous incidents, including the police killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 (Kolcak & McCabe, 2022). The protests were, therefore, considered a collective response to cases of police brutality that have been progressively suppressed.

The killing of George Floyd and the subsequent nationwide protest, particularly at a time when the stay-at-home COVID-19 orders were under enforcement, forced a re-examination of the law enforcement policy and practices in the United States. The racial justice movement, specifically the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that followed the killing of Floyd, was considered the largest after the civil rights movement of the 1960s. As Kolcak and McCabe (2022) observed, the United States National Guards were activated in more than 21 states across the country. Many cities were also forced to announce curfews to reduce the protests. Despite the racially motivated protests, law enforcement was criticized for responding to the protest with excessive force. Mass arrests, shooting rubber bullets at the protestors, and spraying of tear gas were some of the aggressive responses used by law enforcement.

As Cobbina-Dungy and Jones-Brown (2023) reported, the call to defund the police intensified in the months following Floyd's death, and several federal and state regulations have since been passed to address racial-biased policing. Cities such as Los Angeles, Austin, and many others pledged to cut their police budgeting to channel the

funds to other community-building initiatives, including housing. In Minneapolis, the reverse occurred since the police department spent even more than \$6.4 million to recruit more officers. In the same period, Subramanian and Arzy (2021) reported that at least 30 states enacted various legislations aimed at reducing police brutality. While there are a range of variations to the changes made by various states, one or two of the changes are directly related to the circumstances that resulted in Floyd's killing, which include the use of force, the intervention of duty officers, police misconduct, and policies that relate to law enforcement misconduct reporting and decertification; that was revoking the authority to police by an officer who was involved in misconduct.

Many other reforms that have since been enacted as a result of Floyd's killing include the bans on chokeholds or other neck restraint practices, restriction of neck restraint or chokeholds only under cases where fatal force was justified; restricted force necessary when shooting at a fleeing suspect or vehicle to prevent escape, change or clarification of fatal use of force, restricted use of less-lethal weapons during protests; required use of force reporting to the state; and lastly; required use of force reporting to the federal government (Subramanian & Arzy, 2021). All these policies have, thus far, been enacted by different states; some states have adopted most of the policies while some have adopted few. Arizona, for instance, has only adopted one—required use-of-force reporting to the state. A notable aspect regarding the reforms that followed the nationwide protests in 2020 was the absence of police diversity training.

Racial or ethnic issues in law enforcement are not the only diversity factors for which public concerns have been raised. Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) population have historically been subject to discrimination in various societal and community institutional orders, including law enforcement. As Nadal (2020) described, discrimination against LGBTQ individuals goes even earlier compared to racial discrimination in law enforcement. Nadal (2020) argued that police discrimination against the LGBTQ was culturally and religiously instigated and could even be worse compared to racial or other forms of diversity-based discrimination in society. Nadal (2020) argued that in ancient times, open homosexual behavior in society was severely punished. Over the years, the culturally and religiously influenced bias against members of the LGBTQ has been sustained in modern-day institutional service dispensation despite the various reforms that have since occurred.

According to Tucker et al. (2019), acceptance of the LGBTQ population in the United States and many other Western countries has increased significantly in the 21st century, and many of the efforts are credited to the legal framework for the protection of the members of the LGBTQ community. Further, the acceptance of other nontraditional practices, such as gay marriage, including the Catholic church taking an arguably soft stand on LGBTQ issues, indicates higher acceptance of LGBTQ persons. Despite such high acceptance, Tucker et al. reported that there was still a high negative attitude and perception towards LGBTQ police officers and individuals. Tucker et al. argued that most LGBTQ individuals and officers still face significant harassment and discrimination by police officers. Empirical evidence further suggested the prevalence of homophobic attitudes among students of the criminal justice career.

Hodge and Sexton (2020) also studied the interaction between LGBTQ members and law enforcement officers, considering the high reports of discrimination against LGBTQ individuals by the police compared to ordinary citizens. According to the study, LGBTQ members continue to have negative experiences and perceptions of law enforcers. According to Tucker et al. (2019), the negative experience of LGBTQ members and law enforcers can be conceptualized from the context that the victimized individuals are vulnerable to discrimination by any law enforcement officer regardless of their race or ethnicity, which was unlike the case of racial discrimination. Often, African Americans and other minority groups face disproportionate, unfair treatment by predominantly White police officers. LGBTQ members are, however, likely to experience discrimination and police harassment regardless of the officers' ethnicity.

Female gender was also a reported issue of concern regarding discrimination in law enforcement, particularly in the context of sexual and domestic abuse. Fagerlund (2021) reported that both male and female genders are more likely to experience discrimination by law enforcers regarding complaints of gender-based violence. In Finland, Fagerlund (2021) established that a male victim reporting gender-based violence to two or more male police officers was twice as likely to be dismissed than when a female victim reports a similar case to the police officers.

Decker et al. (2019) argued that despite intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence being among the major causes of female mortality and morbidity in the United States, IPV incidents are significantly underreported to law enforcement agencies. Using an in-depth interview analysis, Decker et al. found that racial-based and gender-

based inequalities intersected to discourage most women from reporting cases of IPV and sexual violence. The researchers argued that, generally, women are less likely to report cases of IPV and sexual violence because of fear of being dismissed by law enforcement officers. The case was, however, likely to be even worse when the victim was a racial or ethnic minority. In the same context, it was logical to argue that members of the LGBTQ and other minority groups are more likely to suffer police discrimination.

There was extensive evidence, as described thus far, of biased police interaction and law enforcement in a diverse population, which has negative consequences for law enforcement agencies and members of the public. The diversity issues and how they are handled by the police are essentially influenced by the underlying social and cultural experiences, knowledge, and socially constructed norms of law enforcement officers regarding various diversity (Bleich et al., 2019). White police officers are more likely to exhibit discriminatory law enforcement practices because of the underlying perception and attitude toward members of a diverse social group (Bleich et al., 2019). Although various laws and policies have since been put forth to deal with the issues of discrimination in law enforcement, training and education on diversity matters are less discussed, as demonstrated by the various legislations that have since been adopted following Floyd's killing.

The challenge in United States law enforcement was the lack of diversity training to enhance community relations. According to Al-Bayati et al. (2019), diversity training was argued to have the potential to change the perception and attitude of law enforcement officers on how they should handle the diverse community population. The police and

other law enforcement officers are trained in the technical policing aspects, but rarely are they prepared to deal with the cultural, social, ethical, racial, and religious diversity issues in the population. As a result, there are persistent challenges on how the police handle the diverse population in the United States in the context of the stated three diversity aspects of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The deliverable arising from this study, a Recommendation Memorandum and/or Policy Plan, holds profound significance for the police department. It serves as a tailored blueprint, informed by empirical evidence and best practices, aimed at implementing a robust diversity training program within the department. This program will be designed not only to address historical disparities and biases but also to equip law enforcement officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the cultural, social, ethical, racial, and religious diversity prevalent in the community.

Furthermore, the impact extends beyond the department itself. A well-implemented diversity training program has the potential to foster positive social change within the law enforcement community, contributing to enhanced community trust and collaboration. By promoting a more inclusive and culturally competent approach, the police department can become a model for other law enforcement agencies grappling with similar challenges nationwide.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived needs of the officers regarding diversity training and governing policy to positively impact their job performance. Building upon existing literature, which highlights both the positive and

limited effects of diversity training in law enforcement, this research aimed to address the specific context and needs of the police department. Recognizing the ambiguity surrounding the reasons for the perceived lack of sustainability in diversity training programs, I sought to identify potential deficiencies in knowledge and capacities among police officers concerning law enforcement in a culturally and racially diverse population, as highlighted by Onyeador et al. (2021), who proposed a lack of proper contextual understanding as a potential cause.

The study was framed within a training needs assessment model and employed a quantitative research design. All police officers were invited to participate in a survey focused on assessing diversity training needs, considering that the department currently lacked such a diversity training program, and that the absence could potentially hurt policing within a diverse community. The research questions driving this study were the following:

1. From the perspective of officers, what should the department consider when developing future diversity training that can positively influence job performance?
2. From the perspective of officers, what policies or practices regarding diversity would positively influence job performance?

The meaningful results of this study were encapsulated in a Recommendation Memorandum, serving as deliverables to the police department. This document offers valuable insights into the specific areas where training may be lacking, outlining what was missing, expected, and currently existing in terms of diversity training within the

department. By addressing the administrative problem of a potential lack of diversity training, the study aimed to assist the police department in determining the necessity for additional training at this time. Moreover, the research findings may provide valuable guidance to other law enforcement agencies grappling with similar challenges in promoting positive diversity-based law enforcement practices. This study focused on the perceived benefits of diversity training and governing policy aligned with the broader context of enhancing law enforcement practices and fostering community relations.

Summary of Data Sources and Analysis

This study employed primarily a quantitative approach, utilizing data sourced from the police department through a cross-sectional survey research design, aligning with the insights of Bougie and Sekaran (2019) on quantitative data's numerical nature. Focused on law enforcement officers in the department, the study aimed to inform the development of an effective diversity training program. The professional administrative study's scope was confined to identifying the diversity training needs specific to the police department.

The data collection targeted the current knowledge of various diversity issues among police department officers. Additionally, it aimed to gauge the department's present attitudes and perceptions regarding interactions with diverse community members. I further sought in this study to pinpoint areas where police officers believe they possess significant capacity in terms of diversity knowledge.

Descriptive statistics analysis, leveraging percentage frequency distributions for categorical variables and descriptive mean statistics for continuous variables (e.g.,

number of years of service at the police department), was employed to analyze the acquired data. All the variables in the study were categorical since they take multiple response levels, including demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnicity or race, among others. However, the main focus of the study was to explore the distribution of data using the frequency distribution method. Specifically, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 28) software facilitated data analysis.

Focused on police officers as the unit of analysis, within the training needs assessment framework and a quantitative design, this study aimed to ascertain the impact of the absence of diversity training on police department officers. The anticipated deliverables included insights into the necessity for additional training, along with specific topics and ideas to enhance diversity training tailored to the needs of the police department. Data were collected using SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based survey tool that provides a comprehensive understanding of officers' perceptions and training requirements in southeast Alabama.

Definitions

This quantitative study delved into the perceived benefits of diversity training and governing policy for law enforcement agencies. It meticulously examined and defined the listed terms, contributing to a nuanced exploration of the study.

Diversity: In the context of the current study, diversity is defined as the state of having people with fundamental differences regarding gender, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, race, age, and socioeconomic income (Sulik et al., 2022).

Diversity training: Diversity training is a deliberate educational initiative aimed at increasing diversity knowledge and awareness among a targeted population (Bezrukova et al., 2016), such as the police department.

Equity and inclusivity: Equity and inclusivity, within the context of law enforcement, denote fair and just treatment for individuals of diverse backgrounds, fostering an environment where everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, is included and treated with respect (McKinsey & Company, 2022).

Governing policy: Governing policy, within the scope of this study, refers to the established rules, regulations, and guidelines that direct the behavior and practices of law enforcement agencies, emphasizing the need for policies that address diversity and inclusivity (Law Insider, 2023).

Perceived benefits of diversity training: In the study, the perceived benefits of diversity training pertain to the subjective understanding and anticipated positive outcomes resulting from implementing diversity training programs, with a focus on improving law enforcement practices and fostering community relations (Rainone, 2022).

Positive social change: Positive social change, as outlined in the study, involves the improvement of relationships between law enforcement and the community, reduction of biases, increased cultural competence, and the creation of a more inclusive and responsive law enforcement agency (Stephan et al., 2016).

Training needs assessment: In the context of the study, a training needs assessment refers to the determination of specific gaps that should guide a training

program, with a focus on diversity training within the Police Department (Ferreira & Abbad, 2013).

Training program deliverables: In the study, training program deliverables represent the tangible outcomes expected from the research, specifically the Recommendation Memorandum and/or Policy Plan, offering insights and recommendations for implementing a robust diversity training program within the Police Department (Ferreira & Abbad, 2013).

Significance

This study has significance as it addressed the absence of formal diversity training in public administration, specifically within law enforcement agencies, focusing on a particular police department in southeast Alabama. The findings from this research, which illuminate the perceived impact of diversity training and governance policy for officers, have implications beyond this law enforcement agency. The study aimed to make an original contribution by providing evidence-based insights that could inform the development of effective diversity training programs. By filling the gap in understanding diversity training and governance policy needs within law enforcement, the research has the potential to significantly impact the police department and similar organizations nationwide.

The police department, lacking a diversity training program, stands to benefit directly from the study's findings. The research served as a basis for designing and implementing a potentially effective diversity training program that targets specific gaps self-reported by trainees. This bottom-up policy development approach aligns with the

identified needs of the department, ensuring a tailored and impactful training initiative.

The positive outcomes observed in this law enforcement agency could serve as a valuable model for other organizations facing comparable challenges, fostering improved community relations, reduced biases, and increased inclusivity.

The wider potential contributions of this study extend to the public and nonprofit sectors. Public organizations, including law enforcement agencies and governmental bodies, can draw on the evidence-based insights generated by this research to develop and implement tailored diversity training initiatives. By doing so, these organizations contribute to positive social change, creating more equitable and responsive environments. The study's impact transcends its immediate scope, offering valuable lessons and best practices for enhancing diversity and inclusivity in public administration at large.

The potential implications for positive social change were manifold. By addressing the organizational problem of the absence of diversity training, the police department can contribute to improved relationships between law enforcement and the community. The development and implementation of an effective diversity training program can lead to reduced biases among officers, increased cultural competence, and a more inclusive and responsive law enforcement agency. This positive change has the potential to create a ripple effect, influencing similar organizations and contributing to a broader societal shift towards greater equity and inclusivity in public administration.

Summary

Section 1 of this study introduced the focus on diversity training and governance policy within law enforcement, centered on a police department in southeast Alabama. It underscored the need for a diversity training needs assessment within the police department, emphasizing the potential positive social change that could result from the evaluation and enhancement of diversity training programs within law enforcement. The introduction provided a historical context of racism and discrimination in Alabama, highlighting statistical data on racial disparities in police interactions and incarceration. It also addressed diversity issues beyond race, including discrimination against LGBTQ individuals and gender-based discrimination in law enforcement. The purpose of the study was outlined and framed within a training needs assessment model, with a focus on investigating the impact of the absence of diversity training on officers' job performance in the police department. This section concluded by stressing the significance of the study for the police department, other law enforcement agencies, and the broader public sector, anticipating positive social change through the development of tailored diversity training programs.

Section 2 focuses on encompassing a detailed examination of the conceptual framework and relevant literature surrounding diversity training and governing policy within law enforcement. By delving into existing scholarly works, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence, Section 2 aims to provide a robust foundation for the subsequent analysis. This exploration will contribute essential insights into the theoretical underpinnings that guided the study and shed light on key concepts

influencing the perceived benefits of diversity training, specifically tailored to the context of the police department.

Section 2: Conceptual Framework and Relevant Literature

Introduction

The police department under study lacked a diversity training program, raising concerns about potential deficiencies in law enforcement practices. The following literature underscored that the absence of diversity training among law enforcement officers may lead to suboptimal policing. This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of the police department's officers regarding a diversity training program, specifically focusing on what should be included in the department's future diversity training program. In this section, I delve into the administrative problem at hand and the study's purpose. The structure of this section includes a detailed exploration of the literature search strategy, the development of a conceptual framework, a review of related studies, and a concise summary of the key findings. Each of these subsections contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the importance of diversity training and the specific needs within the law enforcement context.

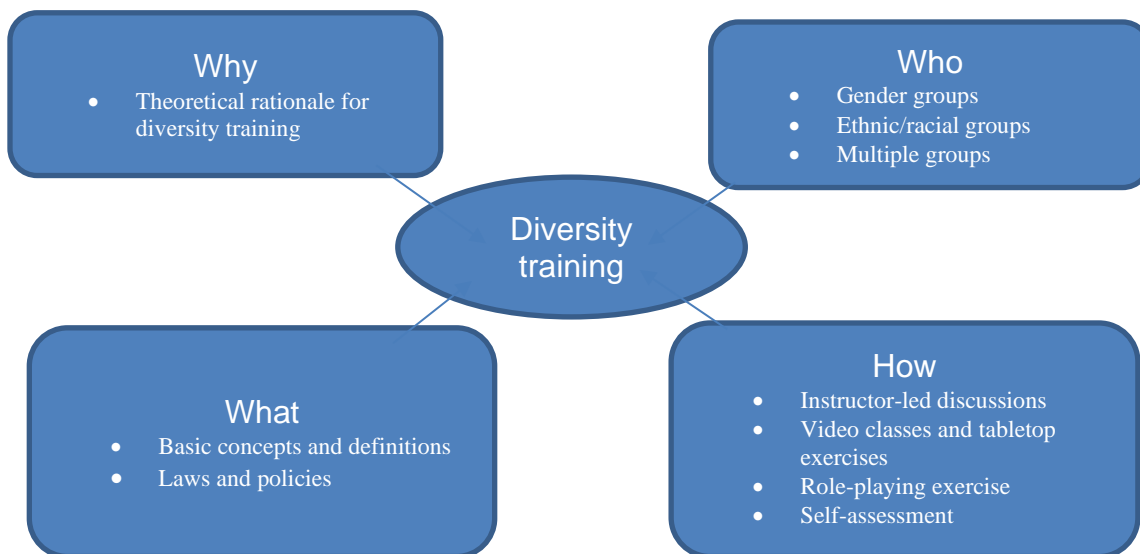
Literature Search Strategy

The relevant articles for the literature review were obtained from various research databases. Specifically, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Public Policy & Administration (PPA) databases; for example, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, Political Science Complete, SAGE Journal, Public Administration Abstract, Taylor and Francis Online and SocINDEX with Full Text were used to obtain relevant articles. The articles reviewed in the subsequent section of the literature review were derived from at least one of the mentioned databases. PPA databases were accessed

through the university library. Specific search terms were also used to obtain the relevant studies. The search terms, derived from the study topic, included “diversity training,” “needs assessment,” “cultural diversity training,” “law enforcement,” “law enforcement officers,” and “police.” These search terms were used in varying combinations to yield the necessary articles. When a given search term combination did not yield the necessary results, the combination was changed until the relevant articles were found. The titles of the articles were read to determine their suitability for inclusion in the literature review. All the databases were exhaustively searched using varying combinations of search terms to obtain the relevant articles for review.

Conceptual Framework

Cohen and Goodman (2023) explored the emphasis placed on diversity training in 49 states in the United States. Their study was necessitated by the numerous conflicts because of the citizens’ interaction with the police in the United States, raising the debate on the extent to which the police across the United States had adequate diversity training. Thus, using a mixed method research design of interviews and content analysis, Cohen and Goodman explored four main components of diversity training: the why, who, what, and how, from which a conceptual framework was designed (see Figure 1).

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework for Diversity Training*

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 was developed by Cohen and Goodman (2023) based on empirical and content analysis research procedures. The conceptual framework has four major components for diversity training, which include the why, who, how, and what. The “why” component relates to the primary reason why it was important to have diversity training. In the context of the framework by Cohen and Goodman, the rising civilian and police conflict in the recent past in the United States was a fundamental reason for exploring diversity training in various states in the country. The “why” presents the theoretical underpinning of why it was important to have diversity training. The theoretical rationale may involve real-time or practical experience of police–citizen conflicts from the diversity perspective. The “who” concept relates to the specific diversity groups on whom the training was designed. These groups include

gender, ethnic, racial, and other multiple groups, including the LGBTQ and any other group that may be vulnerable to police conflict. The “what” involves the training concepts, which are the laws and policies, and basic definitions and concepts. Lastly, the “how” includes the various pedagogical strategies for delivering the training instructions, which include instructor-led discussions, video classes, tabletop exercises, self-assessment, and role-playing.

The conceptual framework relates to the training needs assessment for the police department. As Ravitch and Riggan (2016) argued, a conceptual framework illuminates the important components of the research and shows the various connectivity and interrelation. Bordage (2009) also asserted that a conceptual framework provides the researcher with alternative strategies rather than focusing on one, which may not necessarily be the best practice for exploring a specific problem. The conceptual framework offers fundamental aspects of the training needs assessment.

The study was founded on the assumption that the lack of a diversity training program at the police department could potentially lead to police-citizen conflict, which, as Cohen and Goodman (2023) confirmed, was a common phenomenon in most states in the United States. This aspect of the research relates to the “why” concept in the conceptual framework. The theoretical rationale was that the absence of police training on diversity could result in higher conflict with the citizens (Jackson et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2020). A theoretical reason may include actual cases reported of gender mistreatment by the police and racial and ethical bias in handling citizens, among others.

A similar framework to the one by Cohen and Goodman (2023) was also reported by Patchet et al. (2021), although the latter developed a framework for use in collegiate recruitment. Patchet et al. focused on the how and why but also developed a framework for measuring the outcomes, which was lacking in Cohen and Godman's framework. Measuring the effectiveness of the diversity training framework was important in both establishing the effectiveness of the existing model and providing an opportunity to review areas for potential improvement, including the effectiveness of the diversity training program in minimizing diversity-based tension between the police and the community. Another study by Gupta and Aggarwal (2021) emphasized the "why" aspect of diversity training. The study also focused on gender and age as important aspects of diversity. Although Gupta and Aggarwal did not focus on diversity training for law enforcement, gender as an issue of diversity and negative police experience in the United States was apparent, hence the relevance of the study.

Literature Review for the Study

This section reviews empirical studies relevant to the topic of the current study—diversity training needs assessment. The review of literature discusses the main theme of the impact of diversity training in law enforcement.

Diversity Training in Law Enforcement

This theme holistically explored the concept of diversity training in law enforcement. The primary focus was to determine the extent to which diversity training was likely to impact the competence of law enforcement officers. Arguably, the perception and attitude of the trainees were a potential determinant of diversity and

training effectiveness. As such, the review herein explored both the impact of diversity training and the possible determinants of its effectiveness or shortcomings.

Israel et al. (2017) examined the reaction of law enforcement officers to diversity training on the LGBTQ diversity training program. The study specifically focused on resistance and receptive reactions from 120 law enforcement officers. The results found four main subthemes on resistance reaction, which included personal belief towards LGBTQ individuals, the perception of the role of law enforcement officers, expression of nonverbal forms of resistance, and defending law enforcement practices. Israel et al. (2017) established that law enforcement officers could express resistance based on individual beliefs about the diverse group or due to the need to defend law enforcement practices and not look as if they were contravening the laws they were supposed to uphold. On the other hand, the study also revealed positive receptiveness, summarized as a request for elaborate information from the trainers, a need for supporting the LGBTQ population through law enforcement, helping the trainers succeed in training, and appreciation of the training. These findings were relevant to the current study as they elucidate the potential enablers and barriers to training. Resistance, for instance, may adversely affect diversity training at the police department. As such, it must also be incorporated as a factor in the training needs assessment.

Moon et al. (2018) suggested the potential effectiveness of adopting an intercultural competence assessment and training among police officers. The study by Moon et al. was influenced by the high political and social controversy surrounding the police, excessive use of force, racism, and minority groups. Moon et al. noted the lack of

nationally centralized training assessment standards to aid police officers in discharging duties in cultural and other diversity scenarios. The study suggested that an intercultural competence assessment could be adopted based on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a tool used to train police officers through a development perspective. The IDI provides the trainees with their competency profiles on the following aspects: (a) goals for intercultural growth, (b) critical incidences when encountered with cross-cultural differences, (c) specific or individual challenges the officers face when dealing with cultural differences, and (d) strategies of navigating tension-related cultural differences.

Although the IDI was not tested by Moon et al. (2018), the authors argued that it could at least provide a profile on which cultural diversity competency can be assessed both by individuals and institutions. Regarding the current study, the findings suggest specific training needs assessment factors. The police department can adopt the four mentioned factors by Moon et al. and incorporate them with others to assess the diversity needs training for the officers therein. Kruse et al. (2014) tested the effectiveness of the IDI tool and reported positive results. The study found that IDI indicated that approximately 98% of the participants overestimated their cultural competency among a sample of mixed ethnicities. Further, the study found that Black participants were generally more culturally competent than participants from other ethnic groups.

Sereni-Massinger and Wood (2016) explored the impact of annual multicultural education through police agency partnerships with educational institutions. The authors cited practice that demonstrates the effectiveness of community-oriented policing, which

has always resulted in reduced tension and enhanced positive interaction between the police and culturally diverse populations. However, the study also reported that the increased negative perception towards law enforcement in the United States indicated a significant lack of cultural competence in law enforcement leadership. The study adopted a retrospective research approach. The results found a positive relationship between multicultural training of the police agency and enhanced self-perception of cultural competence among law enforcement officers. The study concluded that multicultural training of law enforcement officers could potentially reduce social conflict among the agencies in the United States.

Stepanovienė (2019) reported that law enforcement officers frequently encounter difficulty dealing with citizens of different cultures. Specifically, the study reports that law enforcement officers often experience significant challenges in interpreting or understanding cultural-based behaviors and actions of people from different cultures, resulting in potential conflict, mistrust, and negative attitudes from both parties. The study, therefore, sought to explore the attitude of the law enforcers towards cultural competence training. The results found positive attitudes, although variation existed among ethnic groups. Law enforcement officers from minority ethnic groups had a more positive attitude than the rest, findings consistent with those reported by Israel et al. (2017). In relation to the current study, the attitude difference towards cultural competency training of law enforcement officers was a relevant issue of focus in the training needs assessment. It was logical to argue that negative attitudes among some law enforcement officers towards culturally diverse groups were a result of a lack of adequate

cultural knowledge. Cultural humility precedes cultural competency (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015; Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013). Only when people admit they lack knowledge of other cultures will they be ready to learn.

Alhejji et al. (2016) explored the research on diversity training using a systematic literature review. The study focused on three critical aspects: diversity training for the business case, social justice, and learning. The review found that many of the prior studies on diversity training had largely focused on the business case and ignored social justice, which was relevant in the context of the police department training needs assessment case. Alhejji et al. further revealed mixed findings on the impact of diversity training, arguing that many of the outcomes were reported on contextual differences. The study by Alhejji et al. asserted the potential research and possibly practice gap in diversity training, which further justifies the need to conduct a diversity training needs assessment in the police department.

Bezrukova et al. (2016) also conducted a meta-analysis study on the research on the evaluation of cultural diversity training. The study focused on four crucial diversity training outcomes: reaction to training, cognitive learning, behavioral outcomes, and attitudinal effects. The meta-analytic review examined a sample of 260 independent groups derived from the individual studies included in the meta-analysis. A positive overall effect size of diversity training was revealed regarding reaction cognitive learning. A smaller effect was reported concerning behavioral and attitude factors, meaning that diversity training may fail to achieve the targeted goal of enhancing attitudes toward cultural diversity. In the case of the police department, these findings

indicate that without adequate training needs assessment, an effective diversity training program may not be impactful in enhancing the cultural competency of the officers. The study further revealed that the effectiveness of reaction and cognitive learning declined with time.

Blumberg et al. (2019) admitted to a deficiency of cognitive training of law enforcement officers in the United States, which was a significant cause of policy-community conflict and tension. Blumberg et al. argued that the police training policy and practice in the academy solely focuses on the law and other skills they term as perishable, for instance, driving, control and arrest, defensive tactics, and firearms. Blumberg et al. asserted that modern society and increased community policing require significant cognitive competence and social skills, including cultural competency, to enhance policing outcomes. The findings of Blumberg et al.'s study suggested that in the absence of diversity training programs, law enforcement officers were likely to be culturally incompetent when dealing with citizens of different cultural backgrounds, which justifies the need for diversity training. Needs assessment, therefore, was necessary for enhancing the effectiveness of a potential diversity training program that may be deemed necessary by the police department.

Gau et al. (2023) asserted that the police-citizen conflict in the United States sometimes stems from the wrong or negative perception of their security and safety by law enforcement officers while discharging their duties in a culturally diverse setting. The study tested the hypothesis by exploring the perception of the Latino and Hispanic police perception of occupational safety. When compared to the White police officers, the

results found that the Latinx and Hispanic officers were likely to perceive a higher sense of danger and cynicism compared to the other ethnic groups. This was a case in which a lack of cultural knowledge and competence resulted in a negative attitude, potentially leading to conflict when law enforcement officers discharge duties.

Like Bezrukova et al. (2016), Kalinoski et al. (2013) also used a meta-analysis research design to explore the efficacy of diversity training programs on cognitive-based, skills-based, and affective-based outcomes. Data were obtained from a sample of 8,465 studies included in a total sample of 65. The results found a substantial positive impact of diversity training on skills-based, affect-based, and cognitive-based outcomes. The findings were consistent with those of Bezrukova et al., except that the latter established a potential decline in the effectiveness of diversity training with time.

Noon (2018) disagreed with the possible impact of diversity training on ending or reducing racial bias in law enforcement and other sectors. The study focused on unconscious bias training as a potential intervention to reduce cultural bias. Based on the content analysis approach, the study concluded that despite the theoretical underpinnings that support the effectiveness of unconscious bias training, the effect was dependent on the type of racism that was under focus: that is, color-blind, modern, blatant, aversive, or symbolic racism. Additionally, the review asserted that even if the training would be effective, the structural impediments would still hamper the effectiveness of cultural diversity training. The study by Noon revealed fundamental issues that underlie cultural bias. The study further justifies the need for assessment needs for cultural diversity training. Understanding the various perspectives, cultural competencies, and

incompetencies of the police department could be effective in designing a potentially effective diversity training program.

Barlow and Barlow (2018) shared similar sentiments with Noon (2018) on the challenges of ending cultural bias in policing in the United Kingdom. According to Barlow and Barlow, cultural and ethnic bias in law enforcement agencies was essentially a replication of the biases and prejudice that otherwise exist within the larger American society. As such, the ethnic or cultural bias of a police officer was not necessarily associated with the profession but with the underlying belief and prejudice acquired at an early age. Therefore, Barlow and Barlow argued that improving cultural competency requires more than training. These findings justify the theory adopted in this study – the justification-suppression theory.

Cordner (2017) also reported on the monolithic bias perception of the police occupation as a factor in the context of cultural and diversity bias while discharging duties. Cordner explored the individual versus police department perception and attitude of bias among police officers. The survey data was drawn from a sample of 89 police and sheriff departments in the United States from 2014–2015. The study found that the officers' perspectives towards cultural diversity were more positive than expected as law enforcement officers. However, the study found that individual perspective toward diversity differs substantially across different organizations. The study, therefore, concluded that the often-reported negative police attitude towards diversity was less of a professional thing but, instead, more of an organization. These findings have important implications for the current study. The results assert that the police department's diversity

attitude could be significantly improved through training because their current attitude and perception were only specific to the department and not necessarily influenced by the police or law enforcement factor. Jurkanin and Sergevnin (2004) used the person-centered approach to cultural and diversity training of law enforcement officers because of the potential individual prejudice, which was often not associated with the organization.

Kopytowska et al. (2022) studied the effectiveness of intercultural training sessions for uniformed service officers in Poland under the Open Lodz project. The results positively impacted intercultural and diversity awareness training among the uniformed officers. Specifically, the results found a significant reduction in tension between law enforcers and immigrants of different cultural backgrounds. Fletcher (2014) studied the cultural competence among campus police departments. The findings reported low cultural competency among campus police department employees and recommended cultural diversity training and culturally competent leadership to avoid potential diversity bias. Whitfield (2019) argued that implicit bias always exists in law enforcement decision-making in a diverse population. The doctoral research by Whitfield concluded that cultural diversity training could effectively reduce implicit bias. Satterfield (2019) further reported on the positive impact of diversity training in incorporating the inclusivity needed in 21st-century policing.

A study by Lai and Lisnek (2023) argued that police diversity training, as it was currently designed, was less effective in improving police service discharge in a racially diverse community. The authors admitted that some states and police departments

actively practice diversity training. However, the study predicts low effectiveness, particularly in the long run. To test the proposition, Lai and Lisnek conducted trial research that involved a one-day diversity training of police officers ($N = 3,764$). The study specifically used implicit bias-oriented diversity training as the intervention. The diversity training was designed to increase the officers' knowledge of bias, concerns regarding bias, and the use of evidence-based strategies to mitigate bias. The pre-and post-intervention results indicated significant improvement in diversity or bias knowledge and concerns about bias. A follow-up examination reported sustained knowledge for a month, beyond which bias competence declined significantly. Lai and Lisnek concluded that while diversity training may improve knowledge, the application of the learned content in day-to-day practice was fundamentally different, which subsequently caused the authors to conclude that diversity training as constituted in the United States was less effective.

Based on the suppression-justification theory, it was argued herein that attitude and perception were fundamental regarding peoples' beliefs and behaviors towards the diversity of various kinds, including cultural, ethnical, and sexual. As such, the diversity training for law enforcement officers was primarily directed towards attitude and belief change, which were expected to be translated into diversity-competence police service delivery.

Platz et al. (2017) proposed that diversity training for police officers can help change their attitudes. So, to test the hypothesis, the study adopted a randomized controlled trial. The study explored the attitude and perception of police officers in two

groups: Group A received diversity training while Group B did not. A survey questionnaire designed to capture various aspects of attitude and diversity was administered to a sample of 260 police recruits. The data was administered to the same sample three times. The education program was delivered for 25 weeks of the police recruitment course. The data was collected six weeks after the commencement of the course, at the completion, and after another six weeks after the completion of the same. The results did not find a significant impact of the diversity training on police attitude and perception towards diversity, which somewhat concurs with Lai and Lisnek's (2023) finding. Nevertheless, the Platz et al. (2017) study found that the experimental group developed buffers against their decline to support diversity-based policing.

In another study, Whitfield (2019) studied the impact of implicit bias training on law enforcement officers in the United States. The findings of Whitfield disagreed with those of Lai and Lisnek (2023). Whitfield reported that implicit bias training among police officers was associated with better diversity-competence policing. The two studies examined the same training of police officers but reported different findings. It was logical to argue that Whitfield's study used a qualitative method, while Lai and Lisnek's study used quantitative approaches. In Whitfield's study, a sample of 32 full-time police officers working in racially diverse communities were interviewed, and the results found that police knowledge of bias and diversity helped them to effectively discharge their duties and consequently reduce bias-based police actions that were undesired. A key advantage of interview research methods was that they uncover in-depth information that would otherwise be captured ineffectively through quantitative methods. However, the

major shortcoming of the interview technique was the subjectivity of the interpretation of the results, which was usually associated with potential bias. Regardless of the potential shortcomings, the study by Whitfield pointed to the possibility of the effectiveness of the implicit bias training of police officers. The results further indicate that the effectiveness of implicit bias training may vary significantly among police officers, a factor that should likely be considered in the diversity training program.

A study by Fasbender and Wang (2017) explored the impact of attitudes towards older workers and hiring decisions. The study theorized that recruitment managers with a negative attitude towards older workers were likely to be biased toward hiring them into their organizations. Using a sample of 102 workers, the results found that, indeed, managers with negative attitudes towards older employees were less likely to hire relatively older workers. The importance of the study by Fasbender and Wang implied that the attitude of the hiring team influences the characteristic of the organization's workforce. In law enforcement, it was argued that if the hiring process incorporated the assessment of the candidates' attitude towards diversity in the United States, it could help develop a police workforce that was more competent regarding diversity-based policing. It was argued that diversity training programs for such workers could be more effective in further improving law enforcement officers' encounters with a diverse population.

Lasley et al. (2011) also conducted a longitudinal study to determine the impact of police officer race and assumed attitudes toward diversity at hiring and in practice. The study theorized that affirmative action hiring in law enforcement could increase effective diversity-based policing. The study used a retrospective design and obtained data from

405 law enforcement officers hired in 1985 after the affirmative action policy implementation. Data was collected from the Los Angeles Police Department. Data on diversity attitudes were collected at two points—1992 and 2007. The results found that over time, the officers developed a positive attitude towards partnership law enforcement practice with the community regardless of race (Lasley et al., 2011). These findings confirm yet, that police force entry attitude towards diversity could be an effective tool for subsequent improvement of their diversity-policing competence.

The literature review explores the impact of diversity training, particularly cultural competency training, on law enforcement officers and their interactions with diverse communities. While some studies suggest that such training can mitigate culturally biased policing, others indicate potential short-lived effects, raising concerns about sustained improvements in officers' diversity competence. The review highlighted a focus on cultural and ethnic diversity in existing studies, with limited attention to LGBTQ issues and a complete absence of gender diversity training for law enforcement. Notably, there was a significant gap in the literature concerning training needs assessment for diversity training in law enforcement, and randomized controlled trials were notably lacking, which could provide higher-evidence research to better understand the causal effects of such interventions on police practices in diverse populations.

Summary

In Section 2, this study extensively explored the absence of a diversity training program at the police department, emphasizing its significance for improving law enforcement practices. The review incorporated a thorough literature search strategy, a

conceptual framework, and various theoretical models to underscore the need for diversity training and its potential impact on police–citizen interactions. This section delved into existing studies on diversity training effectiveness, covering cultural competence, intercultural assessment, bias, reduction, and officer perceptions. The literature review culminated in a compelling case for a diversity training needs assessment of the police department.

Section 3 transitions to the practical aspects of the research, detailing the data collection process and analysis methods employed to discern the specific training needs of the department’s personnel, thereby contributing valuable insights to the discourse on diversity training in law enforcement.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

Introduction

The major problem faced by the police department was the lack of a diversity training program, which the literature indicates could be a potential contributor to the common police–citizen conflict and tension in a diverse community. It is, however, not known how the police were likely to perceive a diversity training program, hence the need to conduct a survey to explore the perception of the officers at the police department regarding their diversity competency, the effect on performance, and the need for a training program. In this section, I present the data collection process and analysis under the following headings: Practice-Focused Research Questions and Research Design, Roles of the Researcher and the Client Organization, Methodology, Strategy for Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, Ethical Procedures, and Summary.

Practice-Focused Research Questions and Research Design

For this quantitative study to investigate the perceived benefits of diversity within the police department, the research questions were the following:

1. From the perspective of officers, what should the department consider when developing future diversity training that can positively influence job performance?
2. From the perspective of officers, what policies or practices regarding diversity would positively influence job performance?

This study employed a quantitative survey methodology approach, utilizing a training needs assessment framework and a quantitative cross-sectional research design.

This method was ideal for systematically measuring the perceived benefits of diversity training and governing policy. The deliverable, a recommendations memo, synthesized quantified survey results, offering insights into enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the police department. In summary, the chosen quantitative approach was well-suited to efficiently answer the research questions and provide actionable recommendations for the client organization.

Roles of the Researcher and Client Organization

My role as the researcher was to conduct the research by following all the necessary procedures, from the development of the research plan to the dissemination of the information to the targeted audience, that is, the officers at the police department. I was responsible for the design of the data collection instrument as informed by the underlying literature, the distribution of the survey to the participants, data analysis, and the final report, which was disseminated in the form of deliverables to the police department's administrators.

Any action taken on the findings of the study was exclusively a decision by the department. The police department, an agency of the local government, maintains tranquility and order. This order ensures everyone goes about their businesses without unnecessary disruptions. The organization aims to safeguard everyone's safety and security, uphold the rule of law, and provide fair and prompt law enforcement services. The police department serves a broad community with various socioeconomic statuses, personal characteristics, and cultural backgrounds. Its target market was the city's

population, including urban and suburban areas. The department is a municipal law enforcement body that operates in the public sector.

Although I had a personal relationship with the police department, as a law enforcement officer who served in the department for the period 2012–2018, there was no potential researcher bias since I no longer serve at the police department. As such, all the information obtained was independent and an accurate reflection of the police officers at the department. Furthermore, the online administration of the questionnaires served to eliminate potential response bias that may have been embedded due to the personal relationship between the researcher and a potential participant. The online response created an anonymous condition for the participants, which influenced the further validity of the information.

Methodology

This section describes the specific steps and procedures that were followed to collect the data or information to be used in answering the research questions. The methodology contains details on the type of information sources, procedures, and strategies for data collection, data analysis strategy, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Data for the study were organized around the guiding conceptual framework on diversity training needs assessment of the why, what, how, and who. The study targeted the perspective of the police officers regarding what should be included in the future diversity training program since the department currently lacked such a program. The data were also collected on why the department needed to have a diversity training program. The underlying literature suggested that having such programs can be

effective in eliminating or reducing the police–community conflict and tension based on diversity issues such as ethnicity, gender, and culture. Thirdly, the data were collected on who the diversity training should focus on. Lastly, the data were collected on how an effective diversity training program should be delivered to the police officers at the police department to ensure that the intended effectiveness was achieved.

Sources of Data

The study used primary data, which were obtained from the police officers at the police department. According to Harris et al. (2019), primary data are first-hand information obtained from a study's participants or research subjects. Data can be qualitative or quantitative. For this research, quantitative primary data formed the main basis for the research. The data were collected based on four main elements as presented in the conceptual framework on training needs assessment, which primarily focused on diversity training in the context of the why, what, who, and how. Quantitative data examined the participants' rationale for having diversity training: that was the why. In essence, the survey questions at this point examined whether the participants believe that it was necessary to have diversity training. The what focused on the specific definitions and concepts of diversity; the who was the people who were affected by diversity; and the how focused on how to effectively deliver diversity training programs to the police officers.

The collection of data was informed by the conceptual framework and helped the researcher answer the question of the specific diversity training needs of police officers at the police department. Again, the key assumption was that the department did not

currently have a diversity training program. As such, it was important to assess through a baseline survey to establish the specific needs of the police officers at the department. The findings of this study formed an important basis of information that could have been used by the department to design its diversity training program, including a framework for measuring its effectiveness.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants

Given the workforce at the police department, the study targeted all the officers; however, awareness was that not all the workers were willing to participate in the study or may be available for data collection. As such, the study targeted at least 80% of the department's workforce. According to the police department, there are 171 sworn officers and another 90 civilian administrative employees in the department. The focus was, however, on the trained police officers and not the civilians who also work in various capacities within the department. Of the targeted population, response was obtained from a total of 141 officers. Although the target was to have as many officers participate in the study as possible, the participation was voluntary. Each police officer was equipped with a department-issued laptop that has Wi-Fi capabilities and allows for seamless email communication. I sent an email to the administrators of the police department, who subsequently broadcasted a mass invitation to all police officers, encouraging their participation. The email included a link to access both the consent form and survey. For reference, please find an example of the participation letter in Appendix D.

The data collection was self-administered, that is, the participants responded to the online questionnaires on their own. I was, however, involved in issuing the links to the targeted participants. The link was used to access the online survey questionnaire. Given the data collection method, the study collected data over a period of 2 weeks. Participants were required to carefully review the provided consent form at the commencement of the survey, which was facilitated through the online platform SurveyMonkey. The consent form served the purpose of elucidating the nature of the study, emphasizing its voluntary nature. Participants comprehended that there were no associated fees for participation, and their involvement was not legally binding, nor would it have adversely affected their standing within the organization. An illustrative example of the consent form is provided in Appendix B.

Procedure

A structured, close-ended questionnaire was used to collect the data from the sampled participants (see Appendix A). According to Story and Tait (2019), close-ended questionnaires are always preferred in quantitative studies because of their convenience regarding data coding, analysis, and interpretation. The principle of using close-ended questions was that the participants were directed to respond to options that best suited their thoughts, perceptions, and observations. This was particularly important in a descriptive study where the core purpose of the research was to understand how the research phenomenon was distributed. For instance, having close-ended questions enabled me to establish among the provided options, which ones were the most dominant and otherwise.

The instrument was developed as guided by the conceptual framework of training needs, which focused on four major elements: why, what, who, and how. Further, the literature also found mixed results regarding the effectiveness of diversity training programs. As such, the instrument was designed to capture fundamental diversity issues at the department and among the officers. Specifically, the instrument focused on the following key diversity attributes: the police department on diversity, the department practices on diversity training, department and diversity equity and inclusion, the need for improvement of areas of diversity, attitudes towards DEI, cultural competence, exposure to diversity training, personal biases, recruitment, retention, and promotional practices on diversity, and attitude of administrators towards diversity. The instrument also captured the demographic information of the participants. Both multiple-choice and Likert scale questions were used. For the Likert scale, a 5-point scale was designed such that 1 represented *strongly disagree*, and 5 represented *strongly agree*.

The demographic section of the questionnaire captured the following attributes: gender, age, level of education, ethnicity/race, and the number of years worked at the department. Multiple choices were used to capture this information. The second section of the questionnaire focused on diversity practices and diversity training for the police officers at the police department. Five items were used to measure these constructs, including questions on specific diversity issues and statements in the United States, which were derived from the study by Olzmann (2020). I used a Likert scale to capture data on the police department practices on diversity and inclusion and to measure the officers' attitudes and perceptions towards diversity, inclusion, and equity. A similar

strategy was used to examine personal bias toward diversity and the need for diversity training by the officer. All the variables were measured on an ordinal scale. For the Likert scale variables, the measurement was designed such that 1 represents *strongly disagree* and 5 for *strongly agree*. As such, measures of central tendency were analyzed.

A pilot test was done on the instrument to determine its effectiveness in capturing the relevant information, including establishing how well the participants comprehend the question to elicit reliable responses. The pilot test was conducted among 15 police officers at the police department. It was important to have the pilot study on these participants because of the specific nature of the study on the police department. The assumption was that adjustments to the survey may have been necessary to capture additional information or change some questions that may not be clear. In such a case, the data from the 15 participants may be excluded from the final analysis. However, if the pilot survey data did not necessitate adjustment of the survey, the data shall be included in the final analysis. Table 1 shows the data that were collected in the study.

Table 1*Type of Data to Be Collected*

| Elements of conceptual framework | Characteristics | Attributes | Measurement |
|---|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Demographic information | Age | Ordinal |
| | | Education | Ordinal |
| | | Ethnicity/race | Nominal |
| | | Number of years at the PD | Scale |
| Current state of the department (why) | The current practices of diversity and inclusion at the department | Items 1–5 (Section 2) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| | Training practices by the department | Items 6–9 (Section 3) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| | Department practice in inclusion | Items number 1–4 (Section 4) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| Attitude and perception (why) | Officers attitude and perception towards diversity, equity, and inclusion | Items 1–5 (Section 5) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| | Personal bias towards diversity | Items 1–5 (Section 6) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| Needs for diversity training program (what) | Participants perception on what should be done on diversity training | Items 1–4 (Section 7) | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| | Administrators needs for diversity training | Items 1–2 | Ordinal (5-point Likert scale) |
| | | Item 3 | Nominal |

Strategy for Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 28). The data were cleaned and checked for potential discrepancies that could compromise the quality of the findings. The data was analyzed to produce means for continuous variables and percentage frequencies for the categorical variables. Inferential statistics were also used to examine further specific patterns as revealed by the descriptive statistics. A chi-square test was performed to determine how specific factors influence the officer's perception of diversity training in their department. For instance, the chi-square test was used to establish whether factors such as age, gender, education level, and ethnicity were associated with officers' perceptions and attitudes toward diversity training. According to Sharpe (2019), a chi-square test is used to explore the statistical relationship between two or more categorical variables. Age, for instance, was measured as a categorical variable, so the chi-square test was used to explore whether there was statistical significance towards the perception of training needs assessment and different age groups. A similar test was necessary to explore other categorical variables, such as ethnicity. The deliverables to the client included the survey statistics on the perception of the police department's perception of what should be included in the future diversity training program in the context of what, who, how, and why elements of diversity training. Also, information on specific determinants of the officers' perception, such as age, race/ethnicity, gender, and education, would be presented in case a significant relationship was established through inferential statistics. Additionally, recommendations for practice regarding the development of a diversity training policy as well as recommendations for future

research, were also presented to the client. For purposes of validity and reliability, the research process, that was, a detailed description of the data collection and analysis procedure, was also presented to the client.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of research findings hinged on several key factors, encompassed by the attributes of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Farrelly, 2013). Credibility, within the study was bolstered by the strategic use of a large sample size, specifically targeting over 80% of the police officers at the police department. This approach aimed to ensure that the research findings faithfully captured the perspectives and experiences of the participants. Employing an online survey design further mitigated potential biases by granting participants the flexibility to complete surveys at their convenience, fostering a sense of anonymity conducive to candid responses.

Transferability revolved around the applicability of study findings in diverse contexts. The study's deliberate inclusion of a large and diverse sample of police officers enhanced the transferability of its conclusions beyond the confines of the police department. The assumption was that insights garnered from this research could hold relevance and applicability to other law enforcement agencies in the United States, rendering the findings transferable to analogous settings.

Dependability was addressed by meticulously accounting for factors of instability and change within the natural context. The study's robust methodology, supported by a large sample size and clear documentation of the research process, contributed to the

dependability of its findings. By capturing and acknowledging naturally occurring phenomena and potential sources of instability, the research aimed to provide a reliable and consistent portrayal of the situation within the police department.

Confirmability underscored the capacity to authenticate the internal coherence of data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations. The study's meticulous design, including transparent sampling methods, data collection processes, and analysis techniques, ensured a high degree of confirmability. Additionally, by recognizing the role of the "researcher as instrument" and addressing potential sources of bias, the study maintained transparency and authenticity, further contributing to the confirmability of the research.

In essence, the study strategically addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to bolster the trustworthiness of its findings, establishing a robust foundation for the research's overall reliability and applicability.

Ethical Procedures

The research rigorously addressed ethical concerns associated with recruitment, adhering to Walden University Institutional permissions, and securing necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals, with relevant approval numbers provided (the approval number for this study is 03-21-24-0722541). Upon IRB approval, the client organization received a confirmation email specifying the dates for survey dissemination. Approval was also sought from the administrators of the police department and informed consent was diligently obtained from participants. The study encouraged voluntary participation, emphasizing that participants join based on their clear understanding and

acceptance of the outlined terms in the informed consent. Anonymity was prioritized by abstaining from collecting personal details, and the online survey platform afforded participants the flexibility to complete questionnaires at their convenience and with ensured privacy. Data access was exclusive to the researcher, who securely stored downloaded files in a password-protected folder on their personal computer. Following the study's completion, the SurveyMonkey link was promptly deactivated upon reaching the required sample and permanently deleted. Additionally, a transparent description of the process through which participants provide informed consent was provided.

Summary

Section 3 of the research project employed a quantitative approach to investigate the perception of officers at the police department on diversity in the context of their training needs. Utilizing a training needs assessment framework and quantitative cross-sectional research design, the study explored officers' perceptions of the absence of diversity training on job performance. The researcher's roles covered the entire research process, targeting 80% of the police department's 171 sworn officers through a voluntary participation approach. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire addressing diversity issues in law enforcement. Trustworthiness was ensured with a large sample size for credibility and transferability. Ethical procedures included obtaining IRB approval and maintaining participant anonymity. Section 4 presented quantitative results and actionable recommendations based on the data, specifically addressing the perceived impact of the absence of diversity training on job performance.

Section 4: Results and Recommendations

Introduction

The study aimed to explore the perceived needs of police officers regarding diversity training and governing policy to improve their job performance, building upon existing literature on the efficacy of such training in law enforcement. Framed within a training needs assessment model, it utilized a quantitative research design, inviting all officers to participate in a survey. The research questions focused on officers' perspectives on what factors should be considered in developing diversity training and which policies or practices would positively influence job performance. The deliverable, a Recommendation Memorandum, encapsulated meaningful results, offering insights into areas where training may be lacking and providing guidance for addressing these deficiencies. Ultimately, the study aimed to assist the police department in determining the necessity for additional training and to provide valuable guidance to other agencies facing similar challenges in promoting diversity-based law enforcement practices and community relations.

This section presents the results and recommendations of the study. The results were presented based on the procedure described in Section 3. The findings also include discussions that compared the findings to the literature to establish concurrence or potential points of departure. This section is organized into the following sections: Data Collection, Data Analysis, Findings, Deliverables and Recommendations, Evidence of Trustworthiness, Strengths and Limitations of the Study, and Summary.

Data Collection

The data for the study was collected online. The structured questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed in SurveyMonkey. The link to the questionnaire was shared with the willing participants at the police department. A formal consent was done together with the questionnaire such that the participants were required to read, understand, and agree to the voluntary terms of participation. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants to inform their consent decision. The survey was available to participants for a period of 2 weeks. While the study targeted a total of 171 law enforcement officers at the department, only 141 responded to the questionnaire online, approximately an 82% response rate, which was high enough considering the size of the targeted population. Since the study was cross-sectional, data were only collected once, that is, one participant only needed to respond once to the online survey. The online survey data system availed the data in different formats, which made it easier for the data analysis process. In this study, the data were available in both Excel and CSV format. The latter format was compatible with SPSS. Participants completed the survey questions during their respective time. A 2-week period was allowed for participants to complete the online survey, although the 141 capacity was achieved within a shorter period.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic and Descriptive Statistics

Demographic information is summarized in Table 2. Of the 141 participants who filled out the online survey, the majority (94.3%) were male, another 5% were female,

and the remaining 0.7% identified as other gender. The largest age group of participants (39%) was those aged 25–34 years, followed closely (37%) by ages 35–44. Another 13% were ages 18–24; 9% were in the age bracket of 44–54 years, and the remaining 0.7% were 55 years and over. Additionally, most of the participants (90.7%) were White; 5% were African Americans, and another 2.1% identified as others. The Hispanic race constituted 1.4% and mixed races were 0.7%. Further, most of the participants (55.3%) had high school level education, and another 40.4% had college or university level education. The other 2.8% had vocational postsecondary education; 0.7% had primary education, and 0.7% described their education level as other. Additionally, the mean number of years participants had served as law enforcement officers was 7.98 (see Table 3).

Table 2*Demographic Information*

| Demographic statistics | <i>N</i> | % |
|---------------------------|----------|------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 133 | 94.3 |
| Female | 7 | 5 |
| Other | 1 | 0.7 |
| Age | | |
| 18–24 | 19 | 13.5 |
| 25–34 | 55 | 39.0 |
| 35–44 | 53 | 37.6 |
| 45–54 | 13 | 9.2 |
| 55+ | 1 | 0.7 |
| Ethnicity/race | | |
| White American | 127 | 90.1 |
| African American | 7 | 5.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2 | 1.4 |
| Mixed Race | 1 | 0.7 |
| Other | 3 | 2.1 |
| Education level | | |
| Primary | 1 | 0.7 |
| High school | 78 | 55.3 |
| College/university | 57 | 40.4 |
| Vocational/post-secondary | 4 | 2.8 |
| Other | 1 | 0.7 |

Table 3*Number of Years Served as Law Enforcement Officer*

| Question | <i>N</i> | Minimum | Maximum | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| How many years have you served at the department? | 141 | 1 | 26 | 7.98 | 5.677 |
| Valid <i>N</i> (listwise) | 141 | | | | |

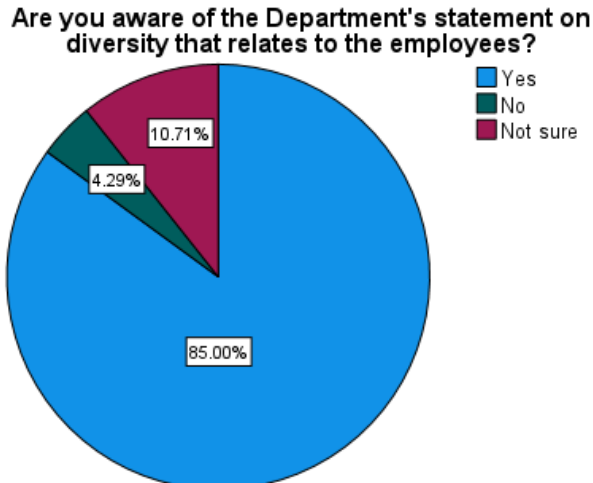
Research Question: What Is the Perception of Law Enforcement Officers on the Need for a Diversity Training Program at the Police Department?

Current Status of the Department on Diversity

As a basis to establish the need for diversity training at the police department, it was necessary to determine the extent to which the department currently has diversity training practices, including a statement on diversity and the specific issues on which diversity was based in the department. To measure this variable, I used five multiple-choice questions that sought to capture the participants' knowledge and awareness of the department's practice of diversity. The responses are reported in Figures 2–5.

Figure 2

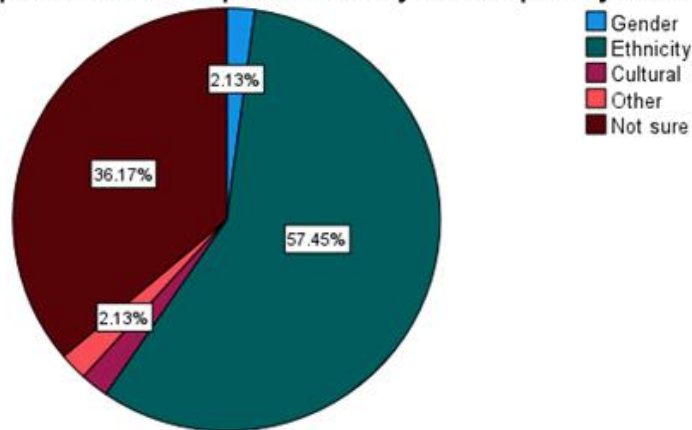
Awareness of the Police Department Statement on Diversity



According to Figure 2, most of the participants (85%) agreed that the police department has a statement on diversity as it relates to the employees. Another 4.729% reported that they were not aware of the department's statement on diversity, whereas the other 10.71% reported they were not sure whether the department had such a statement.

Figure 3*Main Diversity Issues*

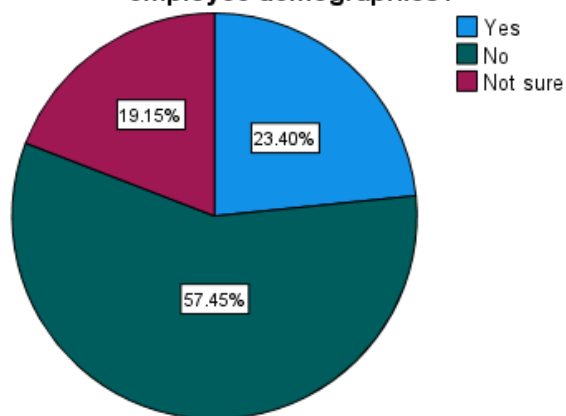
Diversity issues involve ethnicity/race, gender, age, culture, sexual orientation, and religion. If the Department has any statement or practice on diversity, please select the specific diversity issue of primary focus



According to Figure 3, 57.45% of the participants reported ethnicity as the main diversity issue on which the department has a statement. Another 36.17% were not sure, while 2.13% reported gender, culture, and other.

Figure 4*The Police Department's Diversity Status*

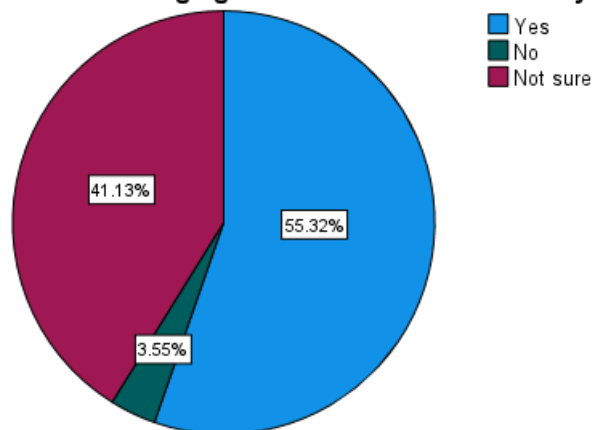
Based on your answer to question (7) immediately above, do you think the department has effectively achieved diversity regarding the employee demographics?



Based on the responses reported in Figure 3 regarding the diversity issues that were common and pertinent in the United States, the participants were asked about the extent to which the police department has achieved diversity regarding employee composition. The results, as indicated in Figure 4, show that more than half of the participants (57.45%) disagreed that the department had adequate ethnical diversity. Another 23.40% agreed that the department has effective diversity, while the remaining 19.15% reported not being sure. The majority of responses herein were consistent with the demographic finding reported in Table 2, which showed that most police officers in the department were Whites and only 5% were of African American descent.

Figure 5*Officer's Consideration of Diversity While Discharging Duties*

Based on your response to a question (7), do you think officers from the Department consider diversity aspects while discharging their duties in the community?



According to Figure 5, most of the participants (55.32%) agreed that law enforcement officers from the police department do consider diversity issues while discharging their duties. Another 41.13% were not sure, while 3.55% disagreed.

Current Status of the Police Department on Diversity Training Program

The primary goal of this study was to establish whether the police department has a training need regarding diversity in policing. Therefore, I sought to explore the current status of diversity training as the baseline. Four multiple-choice items were used to measure the diversity training program at the department and the perception of the participants on the need for one. The results are reported in Figures 6–9.

Figure 6*Diversity Training Program at the Police Department*

Does the Department have a current diversity training program for the employees?

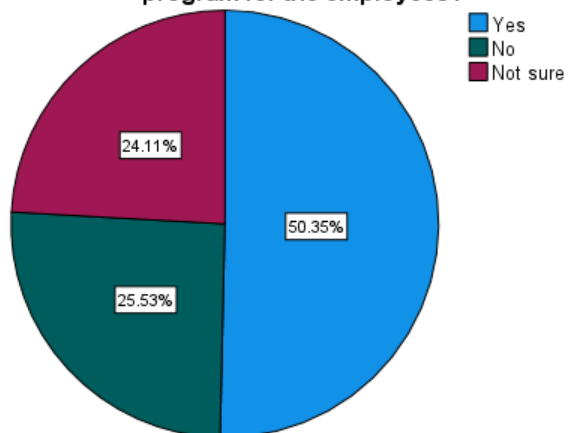
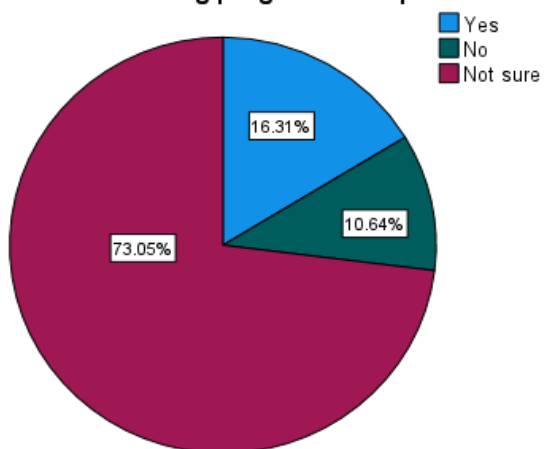


Figure 6 shows that half of the participants (50.35%) agreed that the police department has a diversity training program. Another 25.53% disagreed, and the remaining 24.12% were not sure.

Figure 7*Diversity Training in the Past*

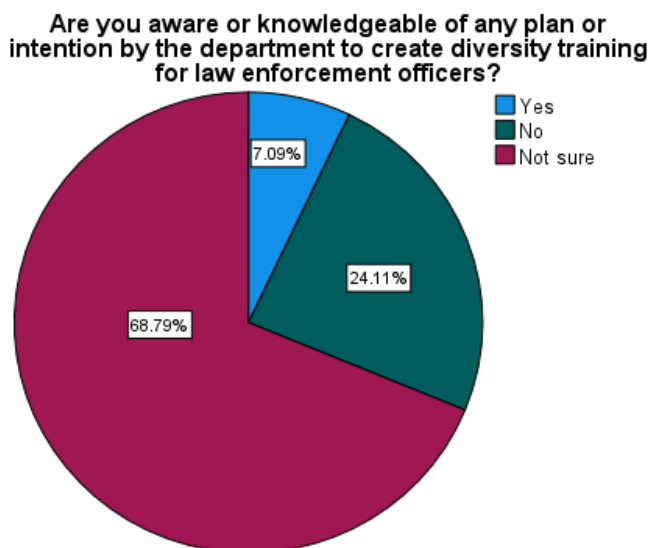
Has the department ever had a diversity training program in the past?



Having a diversity training program in place was one thing, and conducting actual training was another. The participants were asked whether, in the past, they have had diversity training. The results in Figure 7 show that an overwhelming majority (73%) were not sure. Only 16.31% agreed that they had ever had diversity training in the past, and the remaining 10.64% disagreed that there had ever been a diversity training program at the department in the past.

Figure 8

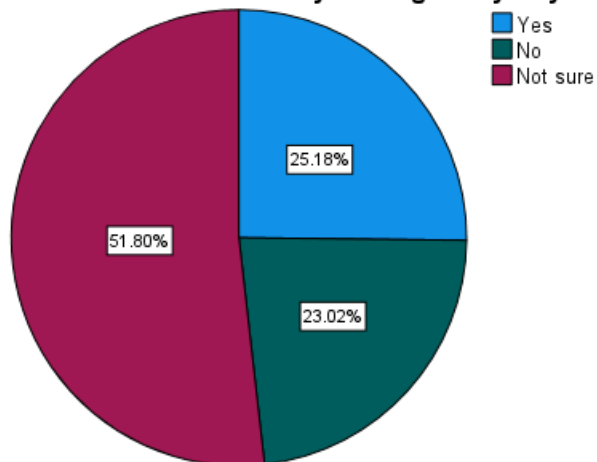
Plans for Diversity Training



When asked about the knowledge or awareness of the department's plans or intentions to have diversity training for law enforcement officers, most of the participants (68.79%), as indicated in Figure 8, reported not being sure. Another 24.11% indicated that they were not aware of such plans, while the remaining 7.09% agreed that there were such plans or intentions.

Figure 9*Alternative Diversity Training*

If the Department does not have a diversity training program, both in the past and present, have you ever been offered diversity training in any way?



The participants were further asked whether they have participated in an alternative diversity training in the past, other than ones offered by the department both presently and in the past. As Figure 9 indicates, more than half of the participants (51.8%) were not sure; another 25.18% agreed that they had been offered alternative training, while the remaining 23.02% disagreed that they had ever participated in a diversity training program that was not offered by the department.

Department on Inclusivity

Inclusivity was an important and inherent element of good organizational functioning. Diversity functions best when there is inclusion, which brings knowledge, experience, culture, and capacities from different backgrounds. Only an inclusive workforce can best understand the importance of diversity because of their fundamental differences (Al-Bayati et al., 2019). The study, therefore, sought to explore the perception

of law enforcement officers regarding inclusivity. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the items of inclusivity. The findings are reported in Table 4–6.

Table 4

Perception of Inclusiveness in Decision-Making

| Do you think you are actively involved in decision-making, policies, and general behavior and culture at the department? | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 7 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| | Disagree | 21 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 19.9 |
| | Neutral | 48 | 34.0 | 34.0 | 53.9 |
| | Agree | 52 | 36.9 | 36.9 | 90.8 |
| | Strongly agree | 13 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to Table 4, most of the participants agreed (36%) that they were included in decision-making at the department. Another 34% were neutral, while 14.9% disagreed.

Table 5

Perception of Exclusion Due to Racial Background

| Have you ever believed you were excluded from general decision-making, routines, and organizational practices because of your ethnicity/racial background? | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 45 | 31.9 | 31.9 | 31.9 |
| | Disagree | 56 | 39.7 | 39.7 | 71.6 |
| | Neutral | 35 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 96.5 |
| | Agree | 4 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 99.3 |
| | Strongly agree | 1 | .7 | .7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to Table 5, most of the participants (39.7%) disagreed that they have ever been excluded from decision-making by the organization. Another 31.9% strongly disagreed, implying that the participants were highly included in the decision-making processes at the police department.

Table 6

Perception of Exclusion Due to Age

| Have you ever believed you were excluded from general decision-making, routines, and organizational practices because of your age? | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 43 | 30.5 | 30.5 | 30.5 |
| | Disagree | 61 | 43.3 | 43.3 | 73.8 |
| | Neutral | 37 | 26.2 | 26.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to Table 6, most of the participants (43%) disagreed that they have ever been excluded from decision-making because of their age. Another 30.5% strongly disagreed, while the remaining 26.2% remained neutral.

Law Enforcement Officers' Beliefs and Attitude Towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Five items were used to measure the officers' beliefs and attitudes toward diversity, equity, and inclusivity. The items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale designed such that 1 represented *strongly agree*, and 5 represented *strongly disagree*. The items were asked both positively and alternatively to effectively capture the participants' perspectives. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7*Attitude and Perception Towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity*

| Survey Item | <i>N</i> | Minimum | Maximum | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| I don't think police officers discriminate against members of the community based on their ethnicity/race, gender, and age. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.7092 | .90663 |
| I believe the police officers in the department discriminate against members of their community based on ethnicity/race, gender, and age. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.3404 | .78221 |
| Enhancing proficiency in understanding and appreciating the diversity among individuals can significantly contribute to the enhancement of community policing efforts. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9929 | .63804 |
| Cultural sensitivity by the police can positively affect their work. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.0000 | .72703 |
| Cultural competence by police can be achieved through deliberate training. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9291 | .73334 |
| Valid <i>N</i> (listwise) | 141 | | | | |

As shown in Table 7, the participants seemed to disagree that police officers discriminate against members of the community based on their race or ethnicity ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.90$). The findings were confirmed in the second item, where the participants seem to strongly disagree that police officers at the police department discriminate against community members based on their ethnicity, age, and gender ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.78$). The participants also seemed to agree that enhancing proficiency, understanding, and appreciation of the diversity among individuals can significantly contribute to enhanced community policing ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 0.63$). Further, cultural sensitivity by the police was agreed to be an important strategy for enhancing police work ($M = 2.0$, $SD =$

0.72). The participants also positively responded to the fact that cultural competence by the police could be achieved through deliberate training ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.73$).

Individual Perception Towards Diversity in Policing

The study further sought to explore the extent to which individual officers perceived themselves regarding bias toward diversity in their police work. As a department, there may be a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusivity. However, police work involves more individual interaction with members of the community. The study, therefore, sought to explore the perception of the individual police officers towards issues of diversity in police work. The findings are reported in Table 8. Similarly, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure five items that were designed to capture the participant's perception of diversity.

Table 8

Individual Perception Towards Bias in Diversity Issues

| Survey Item | <i>N</i> | Minimum | Maximum | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| I don't think I am biased towards people based on their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other difference. | 141 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 1.4610 | .57963 |
| To some extent, I have underlying prejudice about certain diverse groups. | 141 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.4184 | .64538 |
| I am neutral towards the diverse groups within the society. | 141 | 1.00 | 3.00 | 1.5816 | .54975 |
| My ethnicity/race significantly influences how I perceive other people in the community. | 139 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.0360 | .97364 |
| I think ethnic and sexual minority groups usually exaggerate their prejudiced or stereotyped experience. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.8582 | .84161 |
| Valid <i>N</i> (listwise) | 139 | | | | |

According to Table 8, the results show that individual law enforcement officers at the police department do not think they were biased towards people based on their race, gender, age, religion, or any other demographic difference ($M=1.46$, $SD=0.57$). The participants also strongly disagreed that they potentially have underlying prejudice towards certain diverse groups ($M=4.4$, $SD=0.64$). Also, the results indicate higher levels of agreement towards neutrality of the officers towards diverse groups ($M=1.58$, $SD=0.54$). Additionally, the participants strongly disagreed that their ethnicity or race influenced or impacted how they perceived other communities ($M=4.0$, $SD=0.97$).

Perception of the Need for Diversity Training

As already mentioned, the primary goal of the study was to establish whether there was a need for training on diversity at the police department. The findings on the department's training indicate low training, with most of the participants indicating "not sure" whether they have had diversity training offered by the department in the past. Similarly, a larger majority indicated not to be sure whether they have ever been offered alternative diversity training other than by the police department. There seems to be a lack of certainty on whether the department has had a diversity training program for its employees in the past. Less than 25% of the participants could confidently agree that they have had diversity training offered by the department in the past; despite the average years of work being 7 years. The study, therefore, sought to explore the extent to which the officers believed that diversity training would be important for the department. The findings are reported in Table 9 below.

Table 9*Perception of the Need for Diversity Training at the Police Department*

| Survey Item | <i>N</i> | Minimum | Maximum | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Given my self-awareness of diversity, I believe training can help significantly with diversity competence in policing. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9645 | .74077 |
| Even without my self-awareness, I believe diversity training is fundamental for effective policing. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9504 | .76836 |
| I believe that implementing diversity training within the department holds significant potential for improving police–community interaction. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9291 | .74302 |
| I believe diversity training for the police should be ongoing right from initiation to the end to improve the community’s attitude and perception towards police. | 141 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.9504 | .78673 |
| Valid <i>N</i> (listwise) | 141 | | | | |

The participants seemed to agree that diversity training could improve policing ($M=1.96$, $SD=0.74$). Even without self-awareness, the participants agreed that diversity training was fundamental for effective policing ($M=1.95$, $SD=0.76$). Additionally, the study found that most of the participants agreed that implementing a diversity training program within the department would potentially improve police–community interaction and, hence, effective policing ($M=1.91$, $SD=0.74$). Additionally, the participants seemed to agree that diversity training for police officers should be an ongoing practice from the time of initiation to the end to improve the community’s attitude and perception towards the police ($M=1.95$, $SD=0.78$).

Administrators and Diversity Issues

The administrators were important in the development and implementation of policies and practices at the police department. As such, their actions and perception of diversity were important. The study, therefore, sought to determine from the participants, their thoughts on the administrators regarding diversity. The findings are reported in the tables below.

Table 10

Perception of Administrators on Diversity Issues

| Administrators at the Department are keen on diversity issues and how they affect the police and the community. | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 12 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.5 |
| | Disagree | 50 | 35.5 | 35.5 | 44.0 |
| | Neutral | 50 | 35.5 | 35.5 | 79.4 |
| | Agree | 19 | 13.5 | 13.5 | 92.9 |
| | Strongly agree | 10 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to Table 10, most of the participants (35.5%) disagreed that the administrators at the police department were keen on diversity issues and how they affect the police community. Another (35.5%) remained neutral, while (13.5%) agreed, and another (7.1%) strongly agreed.

Table 11*Diversity Training During Recruitment and Selection*

Administrators at the Department consider diversity competence during the recruitment and selection of police officers.

| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 7 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| | Disagree | 21 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 19.9 |
| | Neutral | 85 | 60.3 | 60.3 | 80.1 |
| | Agree | 19 | 13.5 | 13.5 | 93.6 |
| | Strongly agree | 9 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

According to Table 11, most of the participants (60.3%) were neutral regarding whether the administrators at the police department consider diversity competence during recruitment and selection of the police officers. Another (14.9%) disagreed, and (13.5%) disagreed.

Table 12*Diversity Competence Assessment During Recruitment*

Do you think including diversity competence assessment during recruitment and selection can enhance police competence when dealing with a diverse population?

| | Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 46 | 32.6 | 32.6 | 32.6 |
| | No | 57 | 40.4 | 40.4 | 73.0 |
| | Not sure | 38 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 141 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 12 shows that most of the participants (40.4%) did not agree that including diversity competence assessment during recruitment could enhance police competency in dealing with a diverse population. Another (32%) agreed while the remaining (27%) were not sure.

Inferential Statistics

Research Question: What factors influence the perception of the need for a diversity training program at the police department?

Chi-Square

The chi-square analysis method was used to explore the potential factors that influenced the perception of the participants on the need for diversity training at the police department. The chi-square method was used because of the ability to compare multiple variables with different response levels or categorical variables. The literature suggested that factors such as ethnicity, education level, and gender could be potential determinants of how people perceive the need for diversity training; hence, the comparison was made using the mentioned variables with the need for a diversity training program at the department. Among the selected variables, only ethnicity/race was found to have a significant relationship with the need to have diversity training at the police department, as reported in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13*Ethnicity Versus Needs for Diversity Training*

| Item | Response | Ethnic or racial identity of the participant | | | | | Total |
|--|----------------------------|--|------------------|-------------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | | White American | African American | Hispanic of Latin | Mixed race | Other | |
| I believe that implementing diversity training within the department holds significant potential for improving police–community interaction. | Strongly agree | 34 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 38 |
| | Agree | 74 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 81 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 19 |
| | Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Strongly disagree | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | | 128 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 141 |

According to Table 13, most of the participants, 74, who were Whites, agreed that there was a need to have a diversity training program within the department to improve community-police interaction. Another majority (34) of Whites also strongly agreed, while (18) neither agreed nor disagreed. All the African Americans both agreed and strongly disagreed, and the Latinos. Important to note was that (2) Whites strongly disagreed that diversity training programs would enhance police-community interaction. Table 14 below shows the significance of the findings.

Table 14*Chi-Square Test*

| Statistic | Value | <i>df</i> | Asymptotic significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Pearson chi-square | 53.728 ^a | 16 | < .001 |
| Likelihood ratio | 17.911 | 16 | .329 |
| Linear-by-linear association | 3.474 | 1 | .062 |
| <i>N</i> of valid cases | 141 | | |

^a 22 cells (88.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 14 shows that the relationship between ethnicity/race of the participants was significantly related to the need for a diversity training program within the department, $df(16)$, $X^2 = 53.72$, $p = .001$. These findings imply that the race or ethnicity of the police enforcement officers was a crucial determinant of the diversity training needs and would, therefore, be of fundamental importance for consideration if a diversity program were to be developed at the department.

Findings

To answer the above research questions, it was important to report the current status of diversity issues at the department as found and reported in the above section. The study found that the police department has a statement on diversity but with regards to the employees, not the community members to whom service was discharged. Most of the participants reported being aware of the department's statement on diversity. Despite having a statement on employees' diversity, the results also established that most participants believed that the department had not achieved appropriate diversity among its employees, with approximately 90% of the participants being Whites despite the

racial/ethnic composition of this city in southeast Alabama, which was 58% Whites, and 34% African American (U.S. Census. Bureau, 2024). Compared to the national population composition, which was only (13%) African Americans or Blacks and (75%) Whites, there were significantly more Blacks in the city, and similarly, there were fewer Whites in the city. As a result, having a police department with 90% of the workers being White to conduct effective policing in a community with significantly more Blacks seems significantly disproportionate.

Regarding the existence of a training program in the department, half of the participants (50%) agreed that there was a training program. Another majority disagreed, and the remaining participants were not sure. Having a diversity training program did not necessarily reflect or translate to having regular diversity training. When the participants were asked whether they had been engaged in diversity training in the past, a majority (73%) were not sure. Considering the finding that the average number of years served by the participants at the department was 7 years, not being sure whether there has been a diversity training program in the past was surprising.

Arguably, the department has not conducted a diversity training program in the recent past that the participants could easily recall, which points to a fact of the lack of diversity training programs in police departments in the United States. These findings were consistent with the literature. The study by Moon et al. (2018), as reported in the literature review, found that there were no nationally centralized training assessment standards to help police officers in their duties in a culturally diverse community. The lack of a standardized cultural and diversity training program for the police in the United

States could be associated with the government system and structure, where the state and federal law enforcement officers were constituted differently under different laws.

Consequently, the state of Alabama, for instance, was not required by any law to have a diversity training program for its officers. However, the racial composition of the city and the recent police–community tension in the United States along racial and ethical lines should have been a signal for the department to at least consider developing a diversity training program.

The results generally demonstrate a significant lack of diversity training for the police officers at the police department. While the department may not have offered training on diversity in the recent past, some organizations often consider outsourcing training for their employees. The findings of this study indicated that more than half of the participants were not sure whether they had ever been offered alternative diversity training other than by the police department. The findings by Stepanoviene (2019) asserted that law enforcement officers encounter culturally different citizens, whom effective dealing with requires adequate cultural competence; yet the findings of this study suggested a lack of regular police training on cultural diversity. This could, however, be attributed to the self-assumption of cultural and diversity competence.

The findings of this study established a higher self-rating of the police officers towards diversity bias. Most of the participants disagreed that they were biased towards citizens of different ethnicities, genders, and ages, despite (41%) of the participants reporting not being sure whether they consider diversity while discharging their duties. These results relate to the findings of the study by Israel et al. (2017), which explored the

police officers' reaction to diversity issues as related to gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, and queer diversity training programs. Israel et al. (2017) found four key factors that influenced the officers' reactions, which were personal belief, defending law enforcement practices, perception of the role of law enforcement officers, and nonverbal forms of resistance. In the context of this study, on the one hand, the participants expressed significant confidence in not being biased toward a citizen of a different race, ethnical, sexual, or cultural background; on the other hand, a fair majority of the participants were not sure whether they consider diversity issues while discharging their duties.

It was normal for individuals to have a positive self-evaluation on various matters, particularly on fundamental issues such as potential discrimination or bias while discharging police duties. According to Israel et al. (2017), the perception of the role and duties of law enforcement officers can potentially obscure the need for cultural sensitivity while discharging police duty, which was arguably one of the primary sources of conflict between the police and an ethnically and racially diverse community. At the same time, the police may see his or her duty as being fundamental to arrest and prosecute a citizen of a different ethnic background, such as African Americans perceive policing from the perspective of unfairness and bias (Robinson et al., 2017). As such, the self-evaluation of not being biased toward a diverse community by the participants was not an indication of cultural competency by the police; instead, it may be significantly biased.

The study found that most officers did not believe that there was discrimination when discharging police duties within the community. Again, based on the assertions of

Israel et al. (2017), such perceptions could be highly biased, considering that most of the police officers at the department were Whites. A study by Zell and Lesick (2022) found that non-ethnic minority individuals in the United States were likely to report that racism and discrimination no longer exist. On the contrary, ethnic minority members were likely to report racial discrimination. The case could be relevant to the findings of the study in which no potential bias or discrimination was reported by most of the participants.

Despite a majority holding the belief that they were neutral in discharging their duties, there seemed to be a high concurrence among the participants for the need for a diversity training program to enhance policing within the community. As shown in Table 12, most of the participants, who were Whites, both Agreed and Strongly Agreed that having a diversity training program within the department could be effective in enhancing police–community interaction, which subsequently resulted in effective policing. The findings on the need for diversity training programs by the police were consistent with the literature as reported by (Alhejji et al., 2016 Bezrukova et al., 2016 Israel et al., 2017; Moon et al., 2018; Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016). The findings in the literature also agree that diversity training programs could have a positive impact on community policing.

Another salient finding of the study was that most of the participants believed that the administrators at the police department were not keen on establishing and implementing a diversity training program. This finding was particularly important as it directly relates to the need for a training program and its effectiveness in implementation. As Andersen and Gustafberg (2016) reported, police training was structural and based on

specific procedures embedded in law and order. For instance, the procedure for approaching and arresting a suspect was the same unless under fundamentally different circumstances. Furthermore, much of policing occurs in the field, and the emerging issues of diversity at work can best be handled by the administrators who are abreast with the various professional codes of conduct and the changing of state and federal policies, among others. As the gatekeepers of policy formulation for the police department, the administrators needed to be the ones taking the lead in policy change. A lack of interest from the police department administrators, therefore, underscores the need for a diverse training program therein.

Deliverables and Recommendation

In the context of the current study, only recommendations were provided. The findings of the study suggested that there was a lack of diversity training among the law enforcement officers at the police department. Further, the results indicate that despite the lack of a training program, the participants expressed a positive attitude towards a diversity training program at the department. Recommendations are, therefore, made based on the key findings regarding the current status of a diversity training program and the participant's positive inclination towards diversity.

Regarding the various diversity issues that were pertinent to law enforcement at the community level, ethnicity/race was found to be the most salient. Also, most of the law enforcement officers at the police department agree that having a regular diversity training program could improve community policing. The study, therefore, recommends

that the police department develop a diversity training program that fits into the following aspects of the conceptual framework.

- Why: To enhance effective community-police interaction in the culturally diverse community.
- Who: The diversity training program should primarily focus on ethnicity and race, although other factors such as gender, sexuality, age, and religion should be included for a comprehensive program.
- What: Training should focus on cultural sensitivity, basic laws and ethical principles, and effective communication and interaction with community members of diverse races.
- How: The training should be done by an instructor, as well as the use of audio-visual aids. Since the department's administrators seem reluctant on the issues of diversity, the department could organize for an external consultant with experience to regularly deliver the training.

In designing the recommendation for the study, the following key findings were reiterated: (a) most participants believed that ethnicity was one of the most diversity factors with regards to diversity training; (b) only half of the participants were aware of the department's diversity training statement; (c) a majority of the participants disagreed that there was ethical diversity in the department with regards to hiring; (d) over 70% of the participants were not sure whether there had been a diversity training offered to them in the past; (e) 48% of the participants reported neutrality with regards to being included in the organization decision-making; (f) majority of the participants agreed that cultural

sensitivity was important in diversity training and police work; and (g) the results indicated that there was less transparency with regards to diversity during recruitment training. Based on these key findings, the following recommendations were made.

The study recommends that the training should be offered regularly, such as twice every year, with regular assessment and self-reports of cultural competence as evidenced through policing and communication with citizens of culturally diverse populations. As already mentioned, cultural sensitivity was one of the factors for which most participants expressed a positive attitude as an important aspect of diversity training. Learning and knowing the different cultures and how they relate to policing including arresting and holding individuals in cells among other issues could be effective in enhancing the community's perception of the police. Cultural competency was fundamental in almost every aspect of human resource relationships and interaction. Arresting a person of Islamic descent at the mosque while worshipping, for instance, may be considered to be culturally insensitive. It was important, therefore, for the training program to target cultural competency as it relates directly to the improvement of ethnic diversity elements in policing at the community level. To address the lack of communication and bolster diversity initiatives, the police department should prioritize clear and consistent communication about its diversity statement and initiatives. This includes regularly updating all employees on diversity training programs, progress, and plans. Implementing transparent channels for feedback and input from staff will ensure initiatives are relevant and effective. Additionally, promoting cultural competence through deliberate training efforts will enhance the department's ability to address diversity issues and foster a more

inclusive work environment. Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress will enable the department to make necessary adjustments and continue moving toward its diversity and inclusion goals. Body cams could be used to review the officers' interaction and communication with members of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds to assess the extent to which the trainings were implemented.

The study also recommends that the department should review its hiring policy and bring in more law enforcement officers from minority ethnic groups. Having diversity at the organizational level was arguably crucial to achieving diversity policing competence, as the officers were capable of learning from one another how to handle members of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Using the example provided on arresting Islamic people at a mosque during worship and having a better proportion of members from different ethnic minorities in the department could help further a police officer's development of cultural competency. One-time training on cultural competency, for instance, may not be as effective because it was only a one-time service. However, community policing was continuous. As such, a diverse police force at the department can help to confirm and reaffirm the various cultural competency lessons learned during the diversity training.

The findings also established that only 50% of the participants agreed that they had been offered training by the department. A majority also reported not being sure if they have ever had diversity training provided by a third party other than the department. It was recommended herein, that the department also consider liaising with other public administration agencies that offer regular diversity training to their workers. The

department could create a collaborative program that would see more officers from the department have frequent diversity training programs in addition to the ones offered at the department.

In addition, the department should consider enhancing its transparency during the recruitment stage. The findings suggest a lack of transparency at the recruitment stage by the administrators, which could be responsible for the higher proportion of Whites in the department despite the Black population constituting a substantial proportion of the population. It was possible that enough measures were not being taken to deliberately improve ethnic diversity within the department. The study, therefore, recommends an enhanced transparency process in recruitment.

Recommendation for Future Research

The study found that most participants had higher self-evaluation regarding unbiased policing in the context of diversity, while at the same time, more than 40% reported not being sure whether they considered issues of diversity while discharging their duties. The officers might have a different perception of what unbiased policing in the context of diversity is. This study, therefore, recommends that future studies should examine the perception of law enforcement officers regarding effective policing in a culturally and ethnically diverse population. A qualitative study was preferred to have an in-depth analysis of how officers consider law enforcement when dealing with citizens from a different race/ethnicity; specifically, the minority groups.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The credibility of the study was derived from the fact that the data was collected from the law enforcement officers at the police department. Further, the study assumed that the participants provided credible information since the questionnaire was filled autonomously which inferred autonomy to the participants to provide truthful information without fear of compromise.

The study was very specific to the police department; hence, there was low transferability considering the potential differences in police practice and the ethical constitution of different states. While it seems that the police department did not have an active diversity training program, it was possible that other police departments, even within Alabama, have the program. As such, the findings were specifically limited to the department.

The findings of the study were dependable as far as they relate to the department because they represent the assumed factual opinion and perception of the participants. Furthermore, the link to the questionnaire was only issued to members of the department, and the study trusts that the link was not shared with any unauthorized person to respond to the survey.

Confirmability of the study was assessed using the Alpha Cronbach test to explore the internal consistency of the items used to measure some construct, such as officers' attitudes and beliefs towards diversity. An alpha of (0.74), which was 74%, was established and showed a higher degree of consistency of the items in measuring the construct. A pilot test was also conducted to test the reliability of the tool in collecting the

data. No adjustments were necessary after the pilot test, and the researcher proceeded to collect data with the originally designed instrument.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The key strength of the study was that the data or information were derived from the participants who were involved in policing activity; hence, it has higher validity. The fact that the results were obtained from law enforcement officers of the department makes the study more reliable and valid. This was particularly important since the data can be reliably used to inform the development of a diversity training program. Additionally, the key strength of the study was the use of a large sample size, that is, 80% of the targeted population, which made the results more of a reflection of what would have been established from the entire population.

The main weakness of the study was that the research topic was sensitive; that is, diversity issues primarily revolve around ethnic minorities, yet most of the participants were Whites. The rationale for the study was that an effective diversity training program could improve community policing where most White police interact and work cordially with the minority groups who are, herein, assumed to be underserved. Chances of bias from the participants are, therefore, high, especially regarding the presence of bias while discharging duties in the community.

Summary

The findings indicate that the department has a statement on the diversity of the employees, yet it was highly less diverse, with most of the officers being Whites. A sizeable majority of the law enforcement officers at the department were not sure whether

they have ever been engaged in a diversity training program by the department in the past, or present. Further, a substantial majority were not aware of any department's plan to have a diversity training program. The study found that most participants did not believe that they were biased in their duty when dealing with a diverse community, although another sizeable majority were not sure whether they considered diversity issues while policing in the community. Most participants, however, agreed that there was a need for a diversity training program at the department and that its presence would improve police–community interaction. Further, the ethnicity of the participant was found to be a significant determinant of the perception of the need for a diversity training program. The study also found that the department's administrators were less keen on diversity training and policy programs.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan and Conclusion

Dissemination Plan

The police department where the data were collected was the primary targeted organization. The plan was to disseminate the findings to the leaders of the organization through a recommendation memorandum (see Appendix C). To achieve this, various communication strategies were used. First, a brief with the leaders with a summary of the findings was organized between the researcher and the department's leader. The leaders of the department were also supplied with full reports in a digital version. Some hard copies were printed for filing at the department. For leaders, it was important to have a simple report that could easily be used for policy decision-making.

I prepared a brief of the findings, which contained the following sections: the rationale or importance of the study, the methodology, the findings, and the recommendation. Unlike in the dissertation, I used simple language to communicate the briefs, especially on the statistical reporting. I also shared publication information with the department to further enhance access to the study by various members of the police department.

The outcome of the study apply to the broader audience of the United States, where the police–community conflict has been a major issue. The outcomes of the study also apply to the greater issue of inequality, especially in the workplace. The findings herein established that in a city where Blacks constitute 34% of the total population, only 5% were employed at the police department. Such was a significantly large disparity, which is not only a problem in America's law enforcement institutions but also other

employment institutions. As a police department is a public office, it is important to have an effective representation of the community. In law enforcement, given the perceived adversities in law enforcement, especially in recent years, including the George Floyd case in Minneapolis in 2020, it is only prudent that deliberate measures be taken by the federal and state police to make tangible reforms.

The findings of the study indicate the systemic issues that underlie the frequent police–community conflict, particularly in the context of the African American or Black community. Such disparities in the diversity constitution of the law enforcement officers in the United States could further apply to even wider systemic issues. The proportion of African American males in United States correctional facilities, for instance, has been significantly disproportionate to the national population: over 35% of the males in United States correctional facilities are Black, despite African Americans only constituting less than 15% of the population (Beck & Blumstein, 2018). The correlation between police department ethnic/racial constitution, police-community conflict, and disproportionate arrests and imprisonment may not be obvious. However, findings such as those revealed in the study were an indication that there was a need for further exploration of the underlying issues that result in persistent pressure and conflict between the police and members of the ethnic minority, particularly African Americans.

The findings herein are a justification for the need for a wider reform strategy in America’s social justice system, which could be affected through effective public administration policies. While it was clear in this study that the findings were specific and applicable to the police department, they were an indication of a possible pattern in

different police departments and even other states. There is a need for a nationwide survey to explore the ethnic/racial constitution of the various law enforcement departments in the United States to better understand the social justice context of the whole country. The findings could also be used by other groups that have experienced different forms of social injustice in the United States as a basis for conducting baseline surveys to explore the underlying causes of their issues or problems, not necessarily in the context of law enforcement but in any other relevant context of social justice.

The potential positive impact for social change of the findings of the study is about the reform in policing. The police service in the larger United States has been viewed negatively because of the various historical injustices that families and communities have experienced. According to Robinson (2017), African Americans have borne the brunt of the excessive police force as exhibited through their negativity towards law enforcement and the high rates of incarceration. In practice, however, the police play a fundamental role in keeping the community safe. A poor working relationship between the police and the community is a vulnerability that has been exploited by criminal gangs in various communities of African Americans. Such a poor working relationship and the thriving of criminal gangs in the community only make the environment unsafe, as many innocent people, including women and children, sometimes get crossed in the conflicts. A neighborhood of high criminal behavior and culture has been a negative social health determinant for multiple reasons, including deaths, injuries, and limited access to healthcare resources. Although it may seem a far-fetched connection, the reforms of the police department through diversity training could be the foundation for creating a

positive policing culture where there is mutual and effective collaboration between the citizens and the community. Consequently, safer neighborhoods can be created, which is a positive social determinant of health.

Other than criminal behavior, Decker et al. (2019) established through research that victims of domestic violence, particularly women, were less likely to report cases of abuse to the police because of fear of judgment or prejudice. This was a strong indication of the lack of gender sensitivity in law enforcement offices, which were predominantly male. Another study by Torres et al. (2024) concurred that women have reportedly indicated that reporting cases of sexual and domestic abuse to male law enforcement officers has always been met with skepticism. Such is a serious breach of human rights, and the police must ensure safety in the community. The results indicated that most of the participants believed that issues of diversity were only related to ethnicity or race. Very few participants mentioned gender, yet gender inequality, even in policing, remains a major factor. As the study found, most of the police officers at the department were male. Their knowledge of the various gender issues and difficulties that women encounter in their homes was potentially limited. Yet, gender never featured as an important diversity issue. Having a diversity training program that incorporates the gender sensitivity issue, therefore, could be significantly effective in reducing gender-based violence, which is a critical social determinant of health.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the diversity training needs of the police department based on the recently increasing cases of tension between the police and the

community. The study also sought to explore factors that impacted the perception of diversity training needs. Using a quantitative design, data were obtained from 141 law enforcement officers at a police department in southeast Alabama. The results found a low level of diversity training offered either by the department or any other third party, which signifies the need for a diversity training program. The participants also strongly agreed that there was a need to have a diversity training program within the department to enhance police-community interaction. Further, the results indicated that ethnic/racial diversity was a significant determinant of how law enforcement officers perceive the issue of diversity both at the department and community levels. The study concluded with a recommendation memorandum for the development of a diversity training program at the police department.

The findings of this study were largely consistent with the literature. The study, for instance, found low workforce diversity in the department, which could be attributed to the administrative practices in recruitment and hiring. Specifically, the findings of the study suggest that administrators may not be transparent with diversity issues during hiring. These findings were consistent with those of Fasbender and Wang (2017), who found that the attitude of the hiring team determined the characteristic of the workforce in an organization. It was argued in this study, therefore, that potential poor attitudes toward ethnic minorities as police officers could be associated with (a) a workforce that was significantly underrepresented by ethnic minority workers and (b) poor attitudes toward the establishment of a diversity training program for the law enforcement officers at the department in the past periods.

The findings of the study also indicated that the officers in the department expressed a positive attitude towards the establishment of a diversity training program to enhance community policing. The participants, for instance, indicated that being culturally sensitive was one of the important factors in enhancing community policing and should be included in diversity training. This finding was consistent with that of Whitefield (2019), who established that police awareness of diversity and bias was important in helping them discharge their duties. If a White police officer, for instance, was aware of the potential systemic discrimination against Black males in the United States, he or she was likely to be cautious in the investigation, arrests, and prosecution of a member from the said community, with a focus on being more accurate and effective to ensure that people were only charged for crimes that they commit. Such cases were only possible if the police were knowledgeable and aware that sometimes bias and discrimination occur in the justice system against members of the ethnic minority at proportionally higher rates than other ethnicities. Additionally, the findings of the study regarding the potential lack of a diversity training program, or the existence of a non-effective program were consistent with the literature (see Bloomberg, 2019; Fasbender & Wang, 2017; Lai & Lisnek, 2023).

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Appendix A: Police Department Survey

Demographic Information

1. What is the gender of the participant?

- Male ()
- Female ()
- Other ()

2. What is the age of the participant?

- 18–24 ()
- 25–34 ()
- 35–44 ()
- 45–54 ()
- 55 and over ()

3. What is the highest educational level attained?

- Primary ()
- High school ()
- College/university ()
- Vocational post-secondary education ()
- Other ()

4. What is the ethnic or racial identity of the participant?

- White American ()
- African American ()
- Hispanic of Latin ()
- Native Alaska and American Indians ()
- Asian American ()
- Mixed Race ()
- Other ()

5. How many years have you served at the Police Department (_)

**Police Department Practices on Diversity and Diversity Training
Department on Diversity**

1. Are you aware of a Police Department statement on diversity that relates to the employees?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

2. Are you aware of a Police Department statement on diversity that relates to policing in the community?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

3. Diversity issues and statements in the United States are mainly based on ethnicity/race, gender, age, culture, sexual orientation, and religion. If the Police Department has any statement or practice on diversity, please select the specific areas where the statements are mostly targeting.

Gender ()

Age ()

Ethnicity ()

Cultural ()

Religion ()

Other (specify)

Not sure ()

4. Based on your answer to question (3) immediately above, do you think the department has effectively achieved diversity regarding the employee demographics?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

5. Based on your response to a question (3) in this section, do you think officers from Police Department consider diversity aspects while discharging their duties in the community?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

Department on Diversity Training

6. Does the Police Department have a current diversity training program for the employees?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

7. Has the department ever had a diversity training program in the past?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

8. Are you aware or knowledgeable of any plan or intention by the department to create diversity training for law enforcement officers?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

9. If the Police Department does not have a diversity training program, both in the past and present, have you ever been offered diversity training in any way?

Yes ()

No ()

Not sure ()

Department on Diversity and Inclusion

1. Do you think you are actively involved in decision-making, policies, and general behavior and culture at the department?

Strongly disagree ()

Disagree ()

Neutral ()

Agree ()

Strongly agree ()

2. Have you ever believed you were excluded from general decision-making, routines, and organizational practices because of your ethnicity/racial background?

Strongly disagree ()

Disagree ()

Neutral ()

Agree ()

Strongly agree ()

3. Have you ever believed you were excluded from general decision-making, routines, and organizational practices because of your age?

Strongly disagree ()

Disagree ()

Neutral ()

Agree ()

Strongly agree ()

4. Have you ever believed you were excluded from general decision-making, routines, and organizational practices because of your age?

Strongly disagree ()

Disagree ()

Neutral ()

Agree ()

Strongly agree ()

Officers Attitude and Perception towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Please only select one relevant response to every item listed in this section.

| Item | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| I don't think the police officers discriminate members of the community based on their ethnicity/race, gender, and age. | | | | | |
| I believe the police officers in the Police Department discriminate against members of their community based on ethnicity/race, gender, and age. | | | | | |
| Enhancing proficiency in understanding and appreciating the diversity among individuals can significantly contribute to the enhancement of community policing efforts. | | | | | |
| Cultural sensitivity by the police can positively affect their work. | | | | | |
| Cultural competence by police can be achieved through deliberate training. | | | | | |

Personal Bias Towards Diversity

| Item | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| I don't think I am biased towards people based on their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other difference. | | | | | |
| To some extent, I have underlying prejudice about certain diverse groups. | | | | | |
| I am neutral towards the diverse groups within the society. | | | | | |
| My ethnicity/race significantly influences how I perceive other people in the community. | | | | | |
| I think ethnic and sexual minority groups usually exaggerate their prejudiced or stereotyped experience. | | | | | |

Need for Improvement on Diversity

| Item | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Given my self-awareness of diversity, I believe training can help significantly with diversity competence in policing. | | | | | |
| Even without my self-awareness, I believe diversity training is fundamental for effective policing. | | | | | |
| I believe that implementing diversity training within the department holds significant potential for improving police–community interaction. | | | | | |
| I believe diversity training for the police should be ongoing right from initiation to the end to improve the community’s attitude and perception towards police. | | | | | |

Administrators

1. Administrators at the Police Department are keen on diversity issues and how they affect the police and the community.

Strongly disagree ()
Disagree ()
Neutral ()
Agree ()
Strongly agree ()

2. Administrators at the Police Department consider diversity competence during the recruitment and selection of the police officer.

Strongly disagree ()
Disagree ()
Neutral ()
Agree ()
Strongly agree ()

3. Do you think including diversity competence assessment during recruitment and selection can enhance police competence when dealing with a diverse population?

Yes ()
No ()
Not sure ()

Appendix B: Anonymous Survey Consent Form

You are invited to complete an anonymous online questionnaire for a Walden University doctoral study. To provide your informed consent, please review the information below and continue on to the survey if you choose to proceed.

Your role:

- is completely voluntary and can end at any time you wish.
- is anonymous (your name will not be requested).
- involves completing a questionnaire.
- involves little or no risk.

Privacy:

To protect your privacy, the researcher will not collect, track, or store your identity or contact info. In place of a consent signature, your completion of the questionnaire would indicate that you consent to your responses being analyzed in the study.

Data will be kept secure by using password-protected devices and platforms. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Once the doctoral student graduates, the study's results will be posted online in [Scholarworks](#) (a searchable publication of Walden University research).

Contacts and Questions:

Questions about the study can be emailed to the student researcher via (XXX-XXX-XXXX). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 03-21-24-0722541.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Appendix C: Recommendations Memorandum

To: Client Organization

From: Lance Driskell, Doctoral Student Walden University

Date: 04/19/2024

Subject: Recommendations Based on Diversity Training Needs Assessment

Introduction

I extend my heartfelt gratitude for granting me the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive study within your esteemed organization and for facilitating interviews with your staff. This study, essential for my doctoral degree pursuit at Walden University, has been made possible through your unwavering support and cooperation.

Study Overview

The research focused on assessing the diversity training requirements within your law enforcement agency, utilizing data gathered from a sample of 141 law enforcement officers. Stringent adherence to ethical research practices was maintained throughout, ensuring no adverse impact on the organization. Employing a masked approach, the study safeguarded the anonymity of your department while collecting invaluable insights.

Recommendations

Based on the responses garnered from the survey questionnaire, the following recommendations are proposed based on Cohen and Goodman's (2023) conceptual framework (Why, Who, What, and How):

- I. **Why:** Develop a diversity training program aimed at fostering effective community-police interaction within a culturally diverse environment. The diversity training program will help law enforcement officers to continuously learn the matters of diversity, their dynamism, and the emerging issues that could adversely affect effective policing within the community. A departmental diversity program will ensure that the officers are trained regularly.
- II. **Who:** The training should primarily target ethnicity and race, with the inclusion of other pertinent factors such as gender, sexuality, age, and religion for a comprehensive approach. The diversity training should focus on the people who are likely to be affected by a police workforce that is either competent or incompetent concerning diversity. These people include ethnic minorities such as Blacks and Latinos, citizens who identify as non-heterosexuals, and minority religious groups.

- III. **What:** Focus the training on cultural sensitivity, basic laws, and ethical principles, and enhance communication and interaction skills with diverse community members. Historically, the tension between the community and police has always focused on ethnic minorities. As such, the diversity training should prioritize issues of ethnicity ineffective policing, but should also include other factors including gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation.
- IV. **How:** Utilize trained instructors and audio-visual aids for effective delivery. Considering the department's administrative reluctance, engage external consultants with expertise in diversity training regularly. Other than the established department's diversity training, the department should also consider collaboration with other like-minded agencies to enhance diversity among the police.

Training and Assessment:

Offer biannual training sessions focused on cultural competence. Coupled with regular assessments and self-reports, these sessions will gauge officers' cultural competency and the application of training principles. Additionally, utilize body cameras to evaluate officers' interactions with ethnically and racially diverse individuals.

Transparent Communication and Feedback:

Prioritize clear and consistent communication about diversity initiatives and training programs. Implement transparent channels for feedback and input from staff to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of initiatives.

Recruitment Policy Review:

Conduct a review of hiring policies to prioritize the recruitment of law enforcement officers from minority ethnic groups. Diverse recruitment fosters learning opportunities among officers, enhancing their ability to handle diverse communities effectively.

Collaboration with External Agencies:

Collaborate with other public administration agencies offering diversity training to supplement internal training efforts. Exposure to diverse perspectives and methods enriches officers' skills in handling diversity-related challenges.

Enhanced Transparency in Recruitment:

Improve transparency in the recruitment process to address concerns about ethnic diversity and ensure fair representation within the department. Transparent recruitment practices are crucial for building trust with diverse communities and attracting a diverse pool of applicants.

Organizational Diversity:

Review the department's hiring policy to increase representation of minority ethnic groups among law enforcement officers. Diverse organizational composition fosters learning opportunities among officers, enhancing their ability to handle diverse communities effectively.

Recommendation for Future Research:

Future studies should explore law enforcement officers' perceptions of effective policing in culturally and ethnically diverse populations through qualitative analysis. Understanding officers' perspectives on unbiased policing and diversity considerations in their duties can inform ongoing training and recruitment efforts. These recommendations aim to address current shortcomings in diversity training and recruitment practices within your department, fostering a more inclusive and culturally competent police force that better serves your diverse community. Thank you for considering these suggestions for enhancing your department's effectiveness and community relations.

Contact Information

For further inquiries or information regarding the study, kindly reach out to the researcher at (XXX-XXX-XXXX). Your dedication to promoting diversity within law enforcement is commendable, and these recommendations aim to facilitate constructive progress in this regard. Should you require any clarification or assistance in implementing these recommendations, I am at your disposal.

Best Regards,

Lance Driskell
Walden University, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D: Participant Letter

There is a new study about “The Perceived Benefits of Diversity Training and Governing Policy for Law Enforcement Agencies. You are invited to complete a 20-minute anonymous survey.

Seeking volunteers that meet these requirements:

- 18 years old or older
- Sworn Police Officer

This study is part of the doctoral program for Lance Driskell, a doctoral student at Walden University. The survey will be open until the end of March. Questions should be directed to (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

Please click (XXXX) to view the consent form and begin the survey.

Appendix E: Partner Organization Agreement

The doctoral student, Lance Driskell, is approved to collect anonymous survey data from people at our organization who are Sworn Police Department.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I understand that, as per the student doctoral program requirements, the student will publish a scholarly report of this study in ProQuest as a doctoral capstone (withholding the name of the organization), as per the following ethical standards:

- a. In all reports (including drafts shared with peers and faculty members), the student is required to maintain confidentiality by removing names and key pieces of evidence/data that might disclose the organization's identity or inappropriately divulge proprietary details. If the organization itself wishes to publicize the findings of this project, that is the organization's judgment call.
- b. The student will be responsible for complying with the organization's policies and requirements regarding data collection (including the need for the partner organization's internal ethics/regulatory approval, if applicable).
- c. Via an Anonymous Survey Consent Form, the student will describe to invitees how the data will be used in the doctoral project and how their privacy will be protected.
- d. The doctoral student will not use these data for any purpose other than the doctoral study outlined in this agreement.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research activities in this setting.

Signature _____

Partner Organization Leader's Name and Title _____