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Influence of Implicit-Bias Training on the Cultural Competency of Police Officers

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Marvin Whitfield

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2019

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Columbia Southern University, 2014

MA, Columbia Southern University, 2013

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AA, Faulkner University, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

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Abstract

Highly publicized media events involving African American men and the use of deadly force by police officers have occurred between 2013 and 2014. These events have emphasized the need to examine the influence of implicit bias training on police officers' decision-making processes. During the past two decades, Community Oriented Policing Services has invested several billion dollars in training programs designed to eliminate racial bias within the law enforcement community. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. More specifically, this study examined the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training and how the training influences their cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. An online questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered to 32 sworn, full-time police officers who interact daily with members of diverse communities. The data were coded using evaluation coding, magnitude coding, and descriptive coding. This form of coding assisted in identifying attitudes and stereotypes as well as the impact of implicit bias training police officers' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Participants reported that implicit bias training made them better prepared to manage their biases while interacting with diverse communities. The findings of this study will provide police agencies and law enforcement training facilitators with the tools they need to improve future training outcomes. Successfully training police officers on how to manage implicit bias during the decision-making process will reduce the potential for stereotyping.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my fellow men and women of law enforcement, who remains on the right side of the "Thin Blue Line" in an ever-changing social and criminal environment. Also, to the researchers who search for truth and use their voices to promote positive social change.

Acknowledgments

The writing of this dissertation has been one of the most challenging tasks of my life. I owe my deepest gratitude to my wife, family, friends, dissertation chair, dissertation committee members, and mentor. Your support and dedication served as a solid foundation for my success in completing this task.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Racially biased police actions against black men were not documented until the 1960s (Siemaszko, 2012). However, since the 1960s, law enforcement agencies have engaged in different forms of diversity training in an effort to reduce the impact implicit bias has on police officers' decision-making processes (Davidson, 2016; Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). Implicit bias refers to the mindset or stereotypes that influence our understanding, decisions, and actions unconsciously, and in some cases, implicit bias is considered detrimental because of the potential for negative outcomes (Staats & Patton, 2013; Means & Thompson, 2016). Despite these efforts in diversity training, minorities have continued to experience aggressive tactics and questionable use-of-force practices by police officers (Grabiner, 2016; Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016).

Nelson (2017) reported that scholars and diversity experts view implicit bias training as an essential service within the workforce. Positive results related to implicit bias training have been reported to some extent within the healthcare system and the education system but even more extensively in the private sector (George, 2015; Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). Despite achieving success in other areas of the workforce, researchers have emphasized the limited success of diversity training programs for police officers (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

Spencer, Charbonneau, and Glaser (2016) discussed the limitations of implicit bias training and its influence on police officers' decision-making processes. More

specifically, these authors noted how police leadership could not adequately measure or understand the scope of this phenomenon within their agency using only minimum information. Their findings were based on their observation of the information gap that currently existed related to effective bias-based training programs at the time of their study.

Obtaining additional insight into the ways in which implicit-bias training influences police officers' decision-making process will illuminate strengths and weaknesses within implicit-bias training programs. These insights will provide police agencies and training facilitators with the tools they need to improve future training outcomes. Successfully training police officers how to manage implicit bias during the decision-making process will reduce the potential for stereotyping (Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016). As a result, stronger ties may be possible between police officers and the communities in which they serve. The remainder of this chapter consists of the following sections: the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, definitions of important terms, assumptions, scope of delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary. This chapter also includes the social change implications of this study.

Background

In 2014, the number of police-related fatal shootings involving unarmed African American boys and men increased dramatically. Subsequently, these shootings received significant media coverage, which resulted in public unrest (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). Mekawi, Bresin, and Hunter (2016) concluded that an individual's (i.e., suspect's) race

influences the decision-making processes that occur not only during live shoot-or-don't-shoot situations but also in similar training scenarios. Their research results further suggested that due to fear and dehumanization of African American men, they are more likely to be killed in comparison to Caucasians (Mekawi, Bresin, & Hunter, 2016).

Fridell and Lim (2016) identified the presence of implicit bias after examining 1,846 use-of-force cases involving police officers. Their analysis identified a correlation between race and the use of force. This phenomenon has continued to occur even though statistical data provided by the U.S. Criminal Justice Information Service Division have indicated that between the years of 2005 and 2014, more police officers were killed in the line of duty by Caucasian offenders than by African American offenders (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014). Grabiner (2016) described the current disproportionate killings of black males as a "health and public safety crisis" (p. 59).

In response to this phenomenon, police agencies have begun to introduce anti-bias training into their training curricula (Schlosser, 2013). According to Spencer, Charbonneau, and Glaser (2016), unconscious awareness and control of personal biases have been described as primary contributing causes of biased policing. However, despite the number of implicit-bias training programs that have been implemented, very little data have been available supporting their effectiveness (Bernier, 2015). Cultural competency is an essential component of providing quality public service (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012), so it is imperative that additional studies be conducted to examine the effectiveness of implicit-bias training.

Problem Statement

Studies have indicated that African American men historically have been disproportionately profiled and arrested by police officers in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts (Ibe, Ochie, & Obiyan, 2012). Racially-biased police actions against African American men were not fully documented until the 1960s (Siemaszko, 2012). Prior to that time, these biased police actions were referred to as "racial profiling" and were the result of conscious cognitive processes. However, since that time the processes formerly described as racial profiling have become subconscious or unconscious in the mindset of police officers, potentially making them more dangerous, more difficult to identify, and thus more difficult to manage. Highly publicized media events involving the use of deadly force by police officers occurred between 2013 and 2014. These events involved unarmed African American men, which has emphasized the need to examine the influence of implicit bias on police officers' decision-making processes (Fridell & Lim, 2016).

In 1994, the United State Department of Justice established the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to improve relations between police officers and the communities they serve. During the past 2 decades, COPS has invested several billion dollars in training programs designed to eliminate racial bias within the police community (COPS, n.d.). These training programs have included topics such as cultural awareness, how to serve diverse communities, and racial profiling (COPS, n.d.). However, despite this massive investment, incidents involving the use of excessive force

and racial profiling by police officers have continued to plague the African American community (Grabiner, 2016).

Spencer, Charbonneau, and Glaser (2016) described implicit-bias training as a new scientific approach to reducing bias within the decision-making process. This form of training teaches police officers how to recognize and manage their biases. Schlosser (2013) and Zimny (2015) conducted separate studies on the effectiveness of implicit bias training at a police academy in the Midwest. Schlosser (2013) reported that the diversity training offered in the police academy was unsuccessful in positively influencing the racial attitudes of recruits. As a result of the study, administrators made modifications to the academy's "Policing in a Multiracial Society Program" (PMSP) training curriculum. The PMSP training curriculum consisted of three key objectives: (a) develop awareness, (b) increase knowledge, and (c) improve skills pertaining to racial attitudes. The training consisted of three 3-hour modules (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). Unfortunately, Zimny (2015) reported results similar to Schlosser's (2013) examination of the PMSP training program, despite changes to the curriculum. Both researchers acknowledged limitations both in the training and amount of research data available on implicit bias training. Many researchers in this field of study have acknowledged that there is not enough data available to show that it is effective (Bernier, 2015). Additional research could fill this gap and provide a more in-depth understanding of how implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. Mekawi, Bresin, and Hunter (2016) identified implicit bias as a contributing factor in the decision-making processes that occur when police officers encounter shoot-or-don't-shoot training scenarios. In this study, the researcher explored police officers' understanding and perceptions of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. The data collection and data analysis processes consisted of administering questionnaires, reviewing training materials, and reviewing training practices in order to develop an understanding of the training processes related to implicit bias and its influence on the decision-making processes of police officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What influence, if any, does implicit-bias training exert on police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it?

Theoretical Framework

The researcher used the theoretical framework of cultural competency to analyze and interpret the collected data during the research process. Shafritz, Ott, and Jang (2016) defined *cultural competency* as the professional ability to interact successfully with

diverse individuals in terms of culture, race, class, gender, religion, mental or physical ability, age, and nationality. Cultural competency consists of three components: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). In 1990, Margo L. Bailey began the cultural competency theory building process. It was resumed by Mitchell F. Rice in 2010 and then later reevaluated by Audrey L. Mathews (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). The belief underlying this framework is that an organization should be culturally proficient (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016).

The researcher used the three components of cultural competency--cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills--to measure the outcomes of the implicit bias training being examined. The researcher used these components during the instrument development process and the data analysis process as a lens through which to explore the data. A similar study examining the outcomes of a diversity education program using the theoretical framework of cultural competency was conducted in 2015 at the University of Illinois Police Training Institute (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). The results of the study indicated that the program needed refinement and additional studies should be conducted (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

Nature of the Study

The researcher used a qualitative method with a phenomenological design for this study. Phenomenology is a reliable methodology when seeking to understand how implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. In this study, the researcher explored police officers' perceptions and understanding of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. Collected data included (a) meaningfully

designed, computerized questionnaires administered to police officers after they have completed implicit-bias training; (b) examination of the anti-bias training program lesson plan and student feedback forms; and (d) literature review of recent studies that are similar in nature.

The researcher analyzed participants' responses through the theoretical lens of cultural competency and examined for the presence of cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills. This approach is consistent with Rice and Mathews's (2010) advocacy of a new kind of public service professional who possesses cultural competency awareness, knowledge, and skills. The results of this study provided insight into the extent to which implicit-bias training influences police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms and definitions were used for this study:

Blacks: Individuals having ancestries in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Pinn, 1996).

Cultural Awareness: Awareness of personal biases, an ability to accept cultural differences, and openness to a variety of worldviews or perspectives (Rice & Mathews, 2010).

Cultural Competence: The ability to be more receptive of different cultures, beliefs, practices, and languages (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012).

Cultural Knowledge: A knowledge of diverse cultures and groups as it pertains to their history, differing worldviews, or divergent perspectives (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

Cultural Skills: The ability to use cultural awareness and knowledge to recognize and freely discuss cultural issues and differences (Kirmayer, 2012, p. 62).

Decision Making: The mental progression, stemming from the choice of an idea or a course of action amid multiple options (Voinson, Billiard, & Alvergne, 2015).

Full Time: When an individual's available working time is 40 hours a week.

Frontline Police Officer: Officers that interact directly with the community they serve.

Implicit Bias: The mindsets or stereotypes that influence our understandings, decisions, and actions in an unconscious manner (Staats & Patton, 2013; Hall, Chapman, Lee, Merino, Thomas, Payne, & Coyne-Beasley, 2015).

Implicit-Bias Training: Education that is designed to create fair and impartial policing practice, emphasize racial knowledge, and develop cultural empathy (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

Police Officers: Sworn individuals who enforce laws and have arrest powers.

Assumptions

A study involving participants who are police officers requires a number of basic assumptions. One assumption is that police officers are taught in the academy that stereotyping and all forms of discrimination are unethical. Police departments have created policies that not only discourage but also prohibit stereotyping and

discrimination. This assumption was necessary and relevant within the context of this study because guidelines and policies have been put in place that govern the behavior of police officers. These guidelines and policies are essential because they provide a standard against which behavior related to stereotyping and discrimination can be evaluated. The researcher also assumed that all police officers strive to uphold these standards of professional ethics during the performance of their duties and make contact with individuals or arrests based on justifiable reasoning.

The researcher's second assumption was that the implicit bias phenomenon is a valid construct that exerts a meaningful influence on individuals and can have a negative influence on police officers' decision-making processes. This assumption was necessary and relevant within the context of this study because it reflects the current state of research related to the psychological construct of bias and therefore enables the researcher to conduct investigation into implicit bias with confidence. Ultimately, this assumption allows research on implicit bias to (a) inform the ways that police officers manage implicit bias, (b) evaluate the influence of implicit bias, and (c) control the influence of implicit bias on their decision-making processes. Without this assumption, the researcher would be unable to report the results, findings, or conclusions with confidence.

The researcher's third assumption was that a better understanding of the results of this study will strengthen the relationship between police officers and the communities they serve, thus promoting positive social change. This assumption was necessary in the context of this study because the data collected from this research will provide a broader

understanding of the ways in which implicit bias training influences police officers'

awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias. Police agencies have

acknowledged that removing racial disparities in how they interact with African

Americans and people of color would rebuild trust and increase public safety (Weir,

2016).

Scope and Delimitations

The study consisted of 32 participants who had participated in some form of

implicit bias training through their department within the last year. In this study, the

researcher focused on the officers' perceptions of implicit bias training, its beneficial

aspects, and it influence on their understanding and ability to manage implicit bias.

Excluded from participation were (a) officers who had not attended implicit bias training

within the last year; (b) officers who were not sworn personnel and thus unable to make

lawful arrests; (c) officers who did not interact with the public sector on a regular basis;

and (d) individuals with whom the researcher had a personal relationship, including

family, friends, and personal or professional associates. This averted the perception of

favoritism between the participants and me. The participants in this study were delimited

to patrol officers because they are involved more frequently in daily interactions with

individuals within diverse communities.

A second delimitation was that participants worked primarily in urban districts,

sectors, or precincts. Police agencies utilize terminology such as *districts, sectors,* or

precincts to define patrol assignments. The U.S. Census Bureau has defined "urban" as

an area that (a) is characterized by dense housing or commercial structure within close

proximity, (b) is part of a municipality, and (c) normally has a population of at least 2,500 people (Census Bureau, 2010). The police officers assigned to urban areas are more likely to work within diverse communities and therefore more likely to encounter situations in which implicit biases are manifested in behaviors that affect community members. As a result, officers who work primarily in these areas were more likely to provide rich, meaningful data related to implicit bias and implicit bias training.

Limitations

This study included several limitations. The first limitation was that the perceptions of participants in this study may not reflect the perceptions of other police agencies. A reasonable measure to address this issue would be to generalize the results of this study only to police agencies that are similar in size.

The second limitation was the use of questionnaires to collect data. This data collection method does not allow the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and clarify responses. A reasonable measure to address this issue is to design an explanatory questionnaire formatted with open-ended questions designed to obtain rich, in-depth qualitative data.

In addition to limitations, several biases could have influenced the study outcomes. The first bias was personal bias due to my police background and race (African American). A reasonable measure to address this issue was for me to view all data through the cultural competency theoretical lens.

The second bias to consider was that the participants may have wanted to be perceived as socially desirable and did not respond to questionnaire items honestly. A

reasonable measure to address this issue was to administer the questionnaire online and provide participants with anonymity. The third bias was that the questionnaire could be designed in a way that may be leading, misunderstood, or unanswerable

Significance of the Study

This study will help fill the research gap in understanding how implicit-bias training is perceived by police officers and its influence on their decision-making processes. It seeks to address the identified need for an increased understanding of the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers (Bernier, 2015). This phenomenological research is unique because the results may be used as a teaching model for evaluating implicit-bias training programs. More specifically, the results of this study may contribute to more informed decision-making practices and increased accountability among police officers.

Summary

Studies have indicated that African American males historically have been disproportionately profiled and arrested by police officers in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts. Implicit bias has been identified as a contributing factor to this phenomenon. In this study, the researcher explored police officers' understanding and perceptions of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. The researcher used the cultural competency theoretical framework to analyze and interpret the collected data in a questionnaire format during the research process. This theoretical framework consists of three components—cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills—which are ideal when seeking to measure the outcomes of implicit bias training. In Chapter 2,

the researcher provides a review of related literature that pertain to the phenomenon of implicit bias and how it influences police officers' decision-making process. Additionally, the researcher presents gaps in the existing research along with how cultural competency can be used to modify implicit bias behavior.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Researchers have indicated that African American males historically have been disproportionately profiled and arrested by police officers in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts (Ibe, Ochie, & Obiyan, 2012). Racially biased police actions against African American males have been documented as far back as the 1960s (Siemaszko, 2012). More recently, highly publicized media events involving the use of deadly force by police officers have occurred between 2013 and 2014. These events have involved unarmed African American males, resulting in an urgent need to examine the influence of implicit bias on police officers' decision-making processes (Spencer, Charbonneau & Glaser 2016; Fridell & Lim, 2016).

Spencer et al. (2016) acknowledged limitations both in the training of police officers regarding implicit bias as well as in the amount of research that has been conducted on implicit bias training. In fact, many researchers in this field of study have acknowledged that limited data has been available to determine whether implicit-bias training is effective (Bernier, 2015; Johnson, 2017; Schlosser, 2011; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Additional research could fill this gap and provide a more in-depth understanding of implicit-bias training and its influence on the decision-making processes of police officers.

The purpose of this qualitative study with a phenomenological design was to examine the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. In this study, I explored police officers' understanding and

perceptions of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. The data collection and data analysis processes consisted of (a) administering meaningfully designed computerized surveys and (b) reviewing training materials and police department training practices in order to develop an understanding of the training process and its influence on the decision-making processes of police officers. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training?

RQ2: What influence, if any, does implicit-bias training exert on police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it?

In this chapter, the researcher summarizes and synthesizes the research studies that have been conducted on implicit-bias training and its influence on police officers' decision-making process. The researcher includes information regarding the history of policing, the history of implicit bias, implicit-bias training, current issues in policing, and implicit-bias training studies. Additionally, the researcher addresses how implicit bias has become an important topic in current research.

Literature Search Strategy

The researcher collected the information for this review of the current literature on the topics of implicit bias, police decision-making, and cultural competency through a variety of Walden University electronic databases and search engines that include but are not limited to the following: ProQuest, Criminal Justice, Oxford Criminology, Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, Ebscohost, LegalTrac, LexisNexis Academic,

Political Science Complete, and Sage Journals. The researcher used the following search terms and phrases to locate research reports and other information contained in this literature review: *implicit bias, implicit bias training, anti-bias, anti-bias training, explicit-bias, explicit-bias training, diversity training, cultural competence theory, cultural competency, cultural competency training, intercultural competence, cross-cultural competence, community policing, law enforcement evaluation, law enforcement review, law enforcement analysis, police, police relations, police shootings, police training, police bias, bias-based policing, multicultural policing, police-involved shootings, John Crawford, Philando Castile, Tamir Rice,* and *Eric Garner.*

The researcher conducted initial searches by applying keywords and keyword combinations to identify research studies that were conducted between 2012 and 2017. Additionally, a wide-ranging search using the same methodology was conducted to identify research studies that were conducted between 1980 and 2012 in order to obtain an historical perspective on the topic. The databases provided several document types, including articles, books, journals, dissertations, and reviews. For example, the researcher entered the phrase *police bias decision making* into the ProQuest Criminal Justice Database for the years 2012 to 2017, and this search produced 1,147 results. However, when separated, the terms *police bias* yielded 1,930 results, and *police decision making* yielded 3,174 results. The researcher assessed the results for relevance, accuracy, authority, coverage, and objectivity.

Theoretical Foundation

Several theoretical frameworks have been used during the past 30 years to examine the interaction between police officers and the minority communities in which they serve (e.g., rational choice, bounded rationality, police organizational culture). The researcher employed the use of two theoretical frameworks for this study: critical race theory (CRT) and cultural competence theory (CCT). Both of these theoretical frameworks provide distinct perspectives when examining negative stereotypes and racial hierarchy as they pertain to African Americans in the United States.

Critical Race Theory

One theory that could be used as a theoretical lens through which to examine implicit-bias training is critical race theory (CRT). The CRT framework examines the role that race plays within the power structure of American society. According to Chaney and Robertson (2015), CRT is a methodology used to study the ways in which society and culture intersect with race, power, and law. More specifically, CRT has been described as a consolidated effort by a group of scholars and activists to research and transform the relationships among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In the early 1990s, legal scholars such as Mari Matsuda and Derrick Bell conducted studies using CRT to examine how racism influenced decision-making processes within the criminal justice system (Savas, 2014). Additionally, Derrick Bell's use of *race hypos* (i.e., hypothetical scenarios involving racial issues) was considered as groundbreaking and contributed to the use of CRT within the field of educational research (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). However, despite its utility and advantages, CRT fails to provide the

necessary theoretical framework to appropriately examine the influence that implicit bias

training has on police officers' decision-making processes largely because CRT concepts

center around *explicit* bias rather than *implicit* bias.

Cultural Competency Theory

Despite the potential of CRT, the most appropriate theoretical lens through which

to explore the influence of implicit-bias training on police officers' decision-making

processes is cultural competency theory. Shafritz, Ott, and Jang (2016) described cultural

competency as the ability to interact in a positive manner with diverse cultures, beliefs,

practices, and languages. Cultural competency theory was designed to modify behaviors,

practices, and attitudes through training in a manner that promotes the ability to work

effectively in cross-cultural environments (Longoria, Thomas, Rangarajan, & Nandhini,

2015). The development of the cultural competency theoretical framework was the result

of evolving demographic changes within American society and their influence on the

workplace during the 1980s and 1990s (Shafritz et al., 2016).

The concept of cultural competence was initially developed and implemented

within the healthcare sector toward the end of the 1980s by researcher T. L. Cross

(Truong, Paradies, & Priest, 2014). This concept experienced a decade of exclusion from

academic dialogue but eventually found prominence within healthcare and education

training (Conti, 2011; Pay, 2014). Throughout the past 2 decades, cultural competence

has expanded beyond any one exclusive discipline. In fact, cultural competence has been

characterized as organizational sensitivity toward diversity issues, efforts to better

understand and engage in inclusion, and the intention to provide services across all

cultural boundaries (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013; Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

The cultural competency theoretical framework has been and continues to be used by researchers to examine the manner in which public service workers interact with members of the diverse societies in which they serve. Its use has been prevalent in research exploring healthcare; education; social work; and, most recently, public administration.

Cultural competence is the practice of educating individuals about ways to be more receptive of different cultures, beliefs, practices, and languages (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012). The cultural competency framework aligns with the methods that the researcher used in this study to identify the influence that implicit-bias training may have on police officers' decision-making processes. The cultural competency framework for public administration and public service delivery consists of three primary components that measure an individual's cultural competency: awareness, knowledge, and skills (Rice & Mathews 2012). These components were an asset to this study because the researcher sought to identify the participants' level of comprehension and perception of implicit-bias training.

Cultural competency theory for public administration and public agency service delivery. The cultural competency for public administration and public agency service delivery theory originated with scholarly research conducted by Margo L. Bailey in 2005 (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Bailey's research was inspired by earlier research on cultural awareness conducted by Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss in 1990, both of

whom emphasized the importance of conducting additional theoretical testing and sampling in the field of cultural competency (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Bailey suggested that cultural competency can be obtained by implementing equal opportunity employment, affirmative action, and diversity management (Rice, 2015).

In 2010, Audrey L. Mathews and Mitchell F. Rice reevaluated the theoretical foundation established by Bailey's previous research (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Research conducted both by Mathews and Rice expanded on the discussion of diversity (race, age, and gender) by including issues such as social equity, culture, efficiency, administrative neutrality, and effectiveness within an organization. Mathews (2015) emphasized the importance of approaching cultural competence implementation with a top-down approach, while Rice emphasized the importance of comprehension and how to properly evaluate cultural competencies. Mathews and Rice shared the same perspective as Bailey (2005) about the important role that equal opportunity employment, affirmative action, and diversity management play within organizations that adopt diversity programs and policies. In addition, Marina (2015) argued that while creating a diverse workforce through various hiring processes and policies is a good first step, success relies on the culturally sensitive manner in which this workforce is managed and trained. Organizations that adopt a balanced approach to diversity will be able to deliver more effective services to the communities in which they serve.

Three components of cultural competency theory. Rice and Mathews's (2010) cultural competency theoretical lens ultimately expanded to include the development of

professional skills in three areas associate with cultural behavior: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills.

Cultural Awareness. Rice and Mathews (2010) defined cultural awareness as an awareness of personal biases, an ability to accept cultural differences, and openness to a variety of worldviews or perspectives. Cultural awareness also provides the groundwork that enables cultural knowledge and cultural skills. Awareness cannot be compelled but should be received from an open-minded/hearted choice that goes beyond one's personal boundaries (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). Awareness involves empathy, which is the ability to consider the plight of others, share their experiences, and understand their feelings (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

Cultural Knowledge. Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) defined cultural knowledge as a knowledge of diverse cultures and groups as it pertains to their history, differing worldviews, or divergent perspectives.

Cultural Skills. The idea of cultural skills refers to the ability to use cultural awareness and knowledge to recognize and freely discuss cultural issues and differences. Cultural skills include the awareness and understanding that are demonstrated in an individual's daily actions and also reflect the goal of cultural competence training. However,

> The ingredients of competence, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, may
> be quite distinct from the mechanisms by which competence is certified and
> maintained—and both the content and the process of defining competence in
> different… systems deserve critical analysis (Kirmayer, 2012, p. 62).

Additionally, motivation and choice are two key components in the development of cultural awareness in that they help to validate authenticity. According to Matsumoto and Hwang (2013), without these components, cultural competence most likely will not be maintained, nor will it proactively influence cultural awareness. The requirement of motivation and choice underscores the point that in order to develop cultural awareness, choice and motivation are essential.

Previous applications of cultural competency theory. According to Rice and Mathews (2012), cultural competency is an effective theoretical lens to use when examining public programs, public agency service delivery processes, and the manner in which they influence the communities they serve. Cultural competency serves as a measure of an organization's decision-making processes, proficiency, and performance in the area of diversity. For these reasons, I utilized Rice and Matthew's cultural competency for public administration and public service delivery theoretical framework. This cultural competency theoretical framework offers a comprehensive lens through which to examine police officers' perceptions and understanding of implicit bias after they have received implicit-bias training.

The cultural competency theoretical framework has been extensively used in research within the healthcare community. For example, Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, and Ananeh-Firempong (2015) identified key components within the cultural competence theoretical framework that help reduce racial inequalities in healthcare and healthcare management (i.e., sensitivity, responsiveness, effectiveness, and humility). Researchers

in the medical community recognized that when healthcare providers fail to consider patients' cultural and social dynamics during the process of making important healthcare decision, treatment and management outcomes are negatively affected (Edge, Newbold, & McKeary, 2014; Simonds, Goins, Krantz, & Garroutte, 2014).

Betancourt, Green, Carrillo and Ananeh-Firempong (2016) conducted an extensive literature review using the cultural competence theoretical framework as a lens. They examined research in the areas of academic and governmental publications pertaining to areas of disparities within the healthcare system. More specifically, they examined cultural competency efforts that have been implemented for the purpose of addressing these inequalities. These authors identified sociocultural barriers both at the leadership and workforce levels. The researchers concluded in their study that to enhance delivery of services and outcomes within the healthcare industry, a framework of organizational, structural, and clinical cultural competency should be established (DeMeester, Lopez, Moore, Cook, & Chin, 2016; Simonds, Goins, Krantz, & Garroutte, 2014).

A significant amount of research in healthcare cultural competency has highlighted the role that cultural skills play in the success of attaining health goals (Kirmayer, 2012). However, numerous additional research studies have defined and applied cultural competence beyond the healthcare arena. For example, research analyzing the business sector in terms of cultural competency has demonstrated the influence of leadership using cultural awareness in the form of innovation and collaboration during the implementation process (Pay, 2014). Despite being relatively

new within the police and criminal context, cultural competency has found traction through a number of fact-finding material and studies in this particular area, which makes it suitable to support this current study (Kang, Bennett, Carbado, & Casey, 2011).

How the current study aligns with cultural competency theory. Cultural competence training in the criminal justice field addresses complex sociological and cultural contexts as they pertain to policing and implicit bias. This current study benefits from this framework because the theoretical framework of cultural competency has been shown to provide "(1) effective communication and interaction between researchers and study participants; (2) adequate analysis and interpretation of results as they relate to the population impact; and (3) appropriate engagement in study design and implementation for community/population-based research" (Harvard catalyst, 2010, p. 7). The alignment between this framework and the topic of implicit-bias training allows for precision empirical investigation.

An Historical Overview of Policing in the United States

There is an array of literature available that provides varying perspectives pertaining to the history of policing in the US. Cooper (2015) described how policing was used as a critical component in the perpetuation of racial hierarchy. She explained that during the period of slavery, patrols consisting of white property owners were utilized to deter slaves from rioting and escaping. In 1704, South Carolina established slave patrols to assist with this suppressive practice (Durr, 2015). These patrols wielded broad authority to enter the homes of slaves and punish them at will (Turner, Giacopassi, &

Vandiver, 2006). The disbursement of the slave patrols created the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan as a way to maintain individual and societal control over blacks (Durr, 2015).

In the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement initiated as a challenge to the racist social policies and practices in the South (Button, 2014). Between 1964 and 1968, police forces were utilized to suppress the Civil Rights movement (Potter, 2013). Throughout this period, officers frequently engaged in police brutality when interacting with black protesters. This aggressive form of police action further deepened the social and racial tension between police officers and the black community (Potter, 2013).

The Evolution of Police Relations in Minority Communities

Since the 1960s, police agencies have engaged in different forms of diversity training in an effort to reduce tension between police officers and the minority communities in which they serve (Davidson, 2016; Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). Despite these efforts, minorities have continued to experience aggressive policing tactics and questionable use of force practices by police officers (Spencer, Charbonneau & Glaser, 2016; Grabiner, 2016). Whalen (2017) pointed out the potential for racism, explicit bias (i.e., conscious bias) and implicit bias (i.e., unconscious bias) in police officers' decision-making processes as well as the negative influence they can have on the communities served by police officers. Whalen further noted that explicit bias and racism within the police community has declined; however, implicit bias has continued to reflect problematic issues.

Police Officers' Decision-Making Process

Psychologists have defined the decision-making process as the mental progression, stemming in the choice of an idea or a course of action amid multiple options (Voinson, Billiard, & Alvergne, 2015). Several studies have been conducted to determine how police officers make decisions while engaging community members. Bonner's (2015) study examined the police officer's decision-making process during dispute encounters. Data for this study was assembled by conducting a systematic observation of officers while performing their duties as it pertains to disputes. Bonner concluded at the end of the study that officers sometimes utilized personal guidelines and working rules while making decisions but suggested that stereotyping (race) had a predominant influence on officers' decision-making process.

Akinola and Mendes (2012) conducted a similar study seeking to determine if stress influenced a police officer's decision-making process when confronted with a threat. The researchers sought to determine if an increase in cortisol (stress hormone) during a hazardous situation, influenced police officers' decision-making processes. Study subjects participated in mock stress-inducing scenarios, and their cortisol levels were monitored throughout the process. Akinola and Mendes concluded in their study that police officers' cortisol levels rose higher when confronted with a black male subject in comparison to a white male subject.

Akinola and Mendes (2012) discussed previous research conducted by Starcke, Wolf, Markowitsch, and Brand (2008) as well as Van den Bos, Harteveld, and Stoop (2009) designed to determine how internal and external variables influence a police

officer's decision-making process. These studies also found the common theme of race

playing a significant role in a police officer's decision-making process. Starcke et al.

(2008) and Van den Bos et al. (2009) reported results about the ways in which internal

and external variables influence a police officer's decision-making process. These studies

also found the common theme of race playing a significant role in a police officer's

decision-making process (as cited in Akinola & Mendes, 2012).

Evidence of Implicit Bias

Implicit bias has been defined as the mindsets or stereotypes that influence our

understandings, decisions, and actions in an unconscious manner (Staats & Patton, 2013;

Hall, Chapman, Lee, Merino, Thomas, Payne & Coyne-Beasley, 2015). In fact, Means

and Thompson (2016) suggested that implicit bias can potentially be more detrimental to

police officers' decision-making processes in some cases than explicit bias because

officers are unaware of its presence and influence. According to Means and Thompson,

the influence implicit bias exerts on officers' decision-making processes remains present

today and is a primary concern among police administrators.

Acknowledgement of the impact implicit bias may exert on police officers'

decision-making processes is the first step towards understanding its presence and

developing the ability of police officers to manage it. One characteristic of implicit bias

has been referred to as "disproportionate minority contact," which is the consequence of

the fact that minorities have been targeted more aggressively by police in comparison to

whites (Feinstein, 2015; Kahn & Martin, 2016). Rudd (2014) reported that implicit bias

results in an increased number of minority youths being treated as suspects, which leads

to an increased number of investigative stops, frisks, and arrests. Rudd further indicated that a large percentage of school arrests involve minorities who likely receive treatment based on a zero-tolerance policy. An analysis conducted by ProPublica indicated that between 2010 and 2012, young Black males are more likely to be killed by police than any other demographic group (Chaney & Robertson, 2015; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016).

According to Keene (2017), through previous judicial rulings (e.g., Terry v. Ohio), the courts have limited the discussion about the role implicit bias plays in traffic stops, despite the significant amount of data compiled by social scientists confirming its influence on officers' decision-making processes. More specifically, in the case of Whren v. United States, the Supreme Court unequivocally declared that police officers' biased intentions during a search or an arrest are not protected by the Fourth Amendment assessment (Chin & Vernon, 2014). Keene indicated that these types of court rulings have hindered the legal discussion of implicit bias and its role within the criminal justice system.

Implicit Bias and the Divide Between Races

Comprehending implicit bias, perception, and how it relates to action in the field of police work requires an understanding of the racial perceptual divide (Lyubansky & Hunter, 2014). The racial perceptual divide occurs when individuals base their perceptions of others on race and not factual knowledge, especially when these perceptions exert a negative influence on how they view them or their actions. The racial perceptual divide is the result of the vastly different cultural backgrounds in which two ethnic groups (i.e., blacks and whites) have grown up and with which they have identified

themselves. However, this divide is only a generalization, and as exemplified by the Obamas and many other black families who grew up in safe, middle-class neighborhoods, the term "racial perceptual divide" does not epitomize the cultural divide. Divergent perspectives about race and culture among police officers have been associated with different perceptions of risk, which has led to the practice of assigning police officers from specific ethnic backgrounds to neighborhoods with corresponding ethnic demographic profiles. This is because black police officers who grew up in black neighborhoods are less likely to overreact or experience fear when faced with expressions of black culture (such as posturing, loudness, etc.) in comparison to white police officers who may be culturally removed from such perceptions (Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016). While this practice may be helpful for limiting police violence, it is not a full solution.

Implicit bias is accumulated during a lifetime of cultural immersion and is very difficult to remove (Lyubansky & Hunter, 2014). The racial perceptual divide directly influences the willingness of United States citizens to realize the full impact of racism and to respond. For example, a national survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2008) found that 55 % of blacks in comparison to 24 % of whites believe that blacks receive lower-quality health care comparatively (Lyubansky & Hunter, 2014). A more recent study from AmeriSpeak Omnibus (2015) reported that the racial perceptual divide is illustrated in the opinion that "violence against civilians by police officers is an extremely or very serious problem according to nearly three-quarters of blacks and less than 20 percent of whites" (Swanson, 2015, p. 1). According to Schlosser,

Cha-Jua, Valgoi, and Neville (2015), such findings demonstrate the subversive

permissiveness from the privileged white class that has enabled racially charged violence

to thrive.

Unconscious Bias

Understanding the roots of unconscious bias has been at the forefront of cultural

competence research today. The unconscious undercurrent of the slogan "Black Lives

Matter" implies that there are those who do not value the lives of black Americans as

much as they do the lives of whites, and empirical evidence has supported this

psychological reality. For example, researchers Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, and Jackson

(2008) reported that blacks are implicitly correlated with apes (Goff et al., 2008; as cited

in Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). Such stereotypes are reminiscent of racist illustrations and

caricatures found in cartoons during the early age of television (Hall, Hall & Perry,

2016). Goff et al. (2008) also reported finding an unconscious association of similarities

with animals (as cited in Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). White male participants were

subliminally exposed to ape-related words while watching different videos--one of white

suspects being subjected to violence by the police and the other of black suspects being

subjected to violence by the police. In this study, participants exposed to ape-related

words were more inclined to see police violence justified in the case of black suspects but

not white suspects (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). These studies emphasize the power of

implicit bias when combined with networks of perceptual influence.

Characteristic of delusions, researchers also have reported that black

individuals are sometimes perceived unconsciously both as subhuman animals as well as

superhuman, magical beings (Goff, Jackson, Leone, Lewis, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014;

Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Little, 2017; Loughnan, Haslam, Sutton, & Spencer, 2014;

Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016). A lingering stereotype from the slave era

reinforcing the belief that blacks have higher pain thresholds evolved as a way of

justifying the dehumanizing purposes of slavery--a delusion that remains hidden in the

American unconscious to this day (Carr, 2016; Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). Whether police

officers are consciously aware of (or agree with) these perceptions, they have remained

rooted in the unconscious and thus serve as a source of implicit bias (Chaney &

Robertson, 2015; Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016; Little, 2017).

Based on psychological theory, researchers have emphasized that implicit bias is

rooted in the automatic tendency to categorize/stereotype people (Fridell, 2013). This is a

natural function of the brain (amygdala portion), which seeks to create shortcuts to

knowledge and understanding (i.e., efficiency) by making associative and holistic

judgments based on prior experiences. However, this process crosses the line into

delusion and prejudice when the unconscious plays a more dominant role than the

conscious (Moskowitz, Stone, & Childs, 2012). This crossover occurs when individuals

are overcome with fear and revert to a more primal psychological state from which many

acts of racially charged violence may occur (Fridell, 2013). Such violence is then

unconsciously reinforced when it goes unpunished within the context of the criminal

justice system.

However, research has indicated that unconscious or implicit bias can be modified

through exposure to (a) the group under stereotype threat and (b) information that

undermines prejudice (Fridell, 2013). Social psychologists have reported that through (a) training, (b) proper motivation, and (c) organizational accountability, "controlled" (i.e., unbiased, conscious) responses can be elicited instead of "uncontrolled" (i.e., biased, unconscious) responses (Fridell, 2013). Devine, Forscher, Austin, and Cox (2012) developed a prejudice-reducing training process with the belief that discrimination, like any habit (physical or mental), can be broken with the proper application of behavioral reinforcers. The results of this study not only helped participants reduce their own unconscious bias, but it also stimulated awareness to the degree that participants became more concerned about cultural bias on a larger scale (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012).

Devine et al.'s (2012) prejudice-reducing program rests upon two qualifiers. First, individuals must be aware of the biases and have a concern about the harm they do. Without awareness and the desire to alter these biases, any reductions in prejudice likely will be only temporary. Thus, a precursor to implementing this prejudice-reducing approach is increasing awareness about the harm unconscious bias inflicts on communities (Conti, 2011). However, education alone has been insufficient in reducing unconscious bias. Because conscious awareness is the crucial element, any meaningful and lasting change must come through choice (Conti, 2011).

Unconscious Collectivism Influencing Bias

An essential element in unconscious activity is the tendency to participate in collectivism, or "group think" (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). Studies have suggested that men are more susceptible than women to collectivist group think. Because 88% of police

are men, this tendency can over-engage unconscious programming (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). Group think at times brings out a heightened sense of biased thinking, "us vs. them" perceptions, and an increased sense of victimization that can precede violence (Van Dijk, 2015). This propensity toward group think (and the resulting violent behavior) has been supported as a predicate of police violence by the fact that male officers have been found to be less violent when they are alone than when they are with another male officer (Slocum, Wiley, & Esbensen, 2016).

Exploring the underpinnings of collectivist values that exist among police officers may help in understanding why many choices rooted in bias seem unrelated to the external context viewed by "us vs. them" (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016, p. 13). Feather (1996) conducted a study that required participants to view a scene in which a suspect refused to obey a police officer (as cited in Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). Results indicated that participants who valued conformity and held "low universalism values (values similar to those commonly held by police officers) evaluated the failure to comply as more serious, believed the offender was more deserving of the penalty, rated the penalty as less harsh, and had less sympathy" (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016, p. 13). This outcome supports the experiences of many unarmed black men who have died after police officers have relied on "resisting arrest" or "failure to comply" as an excuse for using deadly force. When reinforced by collectivism's values and rewards, such overreactions may be unconsciously embraced and perceived as appropriate behavior by individuals who share similar values.

Removing Implicit Bias

Implicit-bias training is a training method that increasingly has been employed to address biased behavior by police officers when they interact with diverse communities (Kline, 2012). But the implementation of this type of training or any form dealing with diversity or cultural issues should be strategically planned. Dobbin and Kalev (2016) discussed the negative impact forced compliance can have on training participants. One of the primary goals of implicit-bias training is to teach police officers how to identify and manage personal biases of which they may not be fully aware. The overwhelming amount of negative media coverage focused on Ferguson, Missouri, and Toronto, Ontario, following the police-involved shooting deaths of Micheal Brown (Ferguson) and Sammy Yatim (Toronto) demonstrated to police officials the importance of embracing anti-bias training (Bernier, 2015).

The implicit bias among police officers is only one of many perceptive representations of racism inherent in American culture (Fridell, 2017; Lyubansky & Hunter, 2014). Therefore, acceptance of this reality must be at the forefront of implicit-bias education, awareness, and cultural competence training. Research into removing implicit bias emphasizes the difficulty of eliminating or modifying perceptions that have developed from an early age. In fact, some researchers have suggested that the best results that can be achieved is bringing implicit bias into the forefront of police awareness (Fridell, 2013). However, one study found a high rate of success using sleep therapy to help participants "unlearn" implicit social biases (Hu, Antony, Creery, Vargas, Bodenhausen, & Paller, 2015). While this approach has produced results, it ultimately

inhibits free will in terms of developing conscious awareness, and it ultimately reflects a form of behavioral conditioning in alignment with environmental conditions that actually nurture implicit bias (Feld & Born, 2015).

Hu et al., (2015) emphasized that even if implicit-bias training attempts to remove bias consciously, unconscious programming may still be the impetus for violent and fearful responses. These researchers further reported that overt acts of racism are not as socially acceptable today as they were in the past; however, covert and unconscious racism has remained among certain members of the US population. In delivering semi-hypnotic suggestion to participants while they were asleep, Hu et al. (2015) were able to reduce implicit bias considerably and in a long-lasting manner. They postulated that the ability to address unconscious, counter-stereotype training is sleep-dependent. The methodology of this study included pairing sounds with counter-stereotype data for each bias and presenting these sounds to study participants (40) repeatedly during a slow-wave sleep (Hu et al., 2015).

Expanding Collaborations and Isolating Bias

Researchers have found that identifying and isolating implicit bias is helpful when providing training (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012; Fridell, 2017). Other psychological factors are present in police culture, such as social dominance orientation, but including these factors in a training program can create confusion when the purpose is to increase awareness of implicit bias and mitigate its effects (Gatto & Dambrun, 2012; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). Researchers further have emphasized that separating implicit bias from these other factors is beneficial for two key reasons. First, by "conflating

police's and racists' motivations, concerned observers fail to disentangle the unique social-psychological antecedents [of police violence]. of the killings. Second, a hyper-focus on police officers' racial bias diminishes the impact of the more significant epidemic of racism within the greater population" (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016, p. 3). Just as the broader population view racism from different perspectives, so do police officers. Effective collaboration between community members and police hinges upon both groups having a grounded understanding that racism and violence are issues the entire nation is struggling with (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016).

Separating implicit bias from social dominance orientation is essential in training and empowering police officers to improve their understanding about the ways in which bias affects decision-making. However, attempting too much change at one time can backfire and cause reinforcement of delusions, and make training participants feel threatened or under attack (Dover, Majo, & Kaiser, 2016; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). Social dominance orientation is the process of continually defining relationships and interactions with others based on a scale of dominance, and it typically reinforces implicit racial bias in a social hierarchy. When this dominance is closely associated with identity and ego definition, it can become a delusion that warps individuality and sanity in favor of reinforcing power perception in ways that encourage violence (Slocum, Wiley & Esbensen, 2016). Many individuals who attempt to become police officers are attracted to the power and hierarchy of the institution and may use the position as a means of violently placing themselves above others (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016; Waterman-Smith, 2017). Navarrete, McDonald, Molina, and Sidanius (2010) found that men who are

engaged in a collectivist social dominance orientation group are more likely to use violence against "outgroup" males as a form of bonding and reinforcing social standing (as cited in Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). As a result, collectivism and social dominance orientation must be separated from implicit bias to improve general awareness and perception in police officers (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016).

Diversity Education--Establishing Cultural Skills

Implicit bias training has been promoted as a valuable service in the workforce industry by diversity experts and scholars (Nelson, 2017). Hunt, Layton and Prince (2015) discussed how companies that promoted diversity outperformed their counterparts by 35% who lacked in diversity. Various forms of education have played essential roles in addressing implicit bias, but notably the most influential form of education has been the public school system (George, 2015). The rates of (a) escalating school violence, (b) zero-tolerance policies, and (c) the emergent school-to-prison pipeline collectively have provided evidence that schools are no longer serving as moral adjudicators (Nance, 2015). Black students have been disciplined at a higher rate in similar circumstances as their white student counterparts (Nance, 2015). Thus, the first area that needs attention and improvement (and in which future police officers are going to be educated in ways that influence their implicit biases) is schools (George, 2015).

Reacting to the need to change police certification education programs, researchers from the University of Illinois developed the Policing in a Multiracial Society Project. It was designed to nurture racial literacy among police officers and foster cultural empathy. The goals of this program focus on the following areas:

(a) awareness of their own social identities and racial beliefs; (b) knowledge about

theory and research related to police misconduct and the socio-historical

experiences of racial minority communities, especially with police and the

criminal justice system; and (c) efficacy to apply the communication and basic

policing skills learned at the Police Training Institute in a culturally informed

way. (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi & Neville, 2015, p. 115)

To test the efficacy of the Policing in a Multiracial Society Project, two cohort groups

participated in this study to further refine the education process. Data were gathered

through pre-intervention and post-intervention survey data, focus group discussions, and

module evaluation (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

This program was created for police training with an emphasis on the importance

of preparing recruits to engage in appropriate responses when faced with diverse

situations within their communities. Researchers have emphasized that while diversity

training programs for police officers have been in place since the Rodney King incident,

they have achieved only very limited success (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville,

2015). Effective education programs also serve to help identify those police cadets with

violent prejudices. Actively preventing some cadets from completing their police training

for the health of the community has been a new approach to implicit bias and cultural

competency training.

The Policing in a Multiracial Society Project identified the characteristics that

make a good police officer. Potential police recruits should possess an innate compassion

for the community, a willingness to serve, bravery, excellent communication skills,

physical and mental strength, and the ability to overcome fear (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). If police officers were required to demonstrate these characteristics, both during the certification process and while serving the public across time, police officers could re-earn the public's trust (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). Racially bias policing can be reduced by improving the recruit selection process, diversity & bias based training, and reinforced discipline (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi & Neville, 2015).

The Policing in a Multiracial Society Project was organized and developed based on the three domains of cultural competence as the framework for training (cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills) and form the tripartite model for developing the awareness of police officer's possible bias. Cultural awareness is cultivated through education of "(a) their own cultural heritage and social identity attitudes; (b) how multiple identities influence their own experiences and life decisions; (c) their biases and assumptions; (d) how discrimination affects their personalities; and (e) the impact of their style on others" (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi & Neville, 2015, p. 118). Cultural knowledge is cultivated through education about the influence of bias as well as the socio-historical context of diverse groups that police officers will be exposed to on the job. Cultural skills are developed across time through culturally responsive policing, which is evidenced in the ability to adopt appropriate intervention while in the field (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015).

However, research has indicated that many police certification programs encourage collectivist values rather than individual accountability (Conti, 2011). In

addition, researchers have emphasized that many police training programs are conducted in a paramilitary style that seeks to break down the cadet's psyche in order to build up discipline and obedience (Conti, 2011). Some evidence has been reported of (a) police trainees who have been removed from the program for being too smart as well as (b) training programs that condition trainees to choose conformity and power over being right (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). Research into police training has found that control, dominance, and violent impulses are encouraged far more than deliberation, communication, and the ability to search for an accurate understanding of a given policing situation (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). These findings seem reasonable when considering the general lack of accountability in the police hierarchy, which seeks self-protection of police officers and further emphasizes the "us vs. them" mentality between the public and those who are meant to serve and protect.

Summary and Conclusions

Major themes revealed in the literature review include (a) implicit bias in the racial perceptual divide, (b) the process of unlearning implicit bias, (c) the challenge of the unconscious, (d) the role of collectivism and rewarding violence, (e) diversity education, and (f) the need to isolate bias. Throughout these themes, a common thread is the consequences or lack of presence of cultural competency as a means of addressing bias and the ways in which perceptions are evaluated by the academic community. Acceptance of the reality of implicit bias is essential in increasing awareness about the problem, which leads to the will to change. This increasing awareness and the will to

change leads to the possibility of empathy; however, empathy will be challenged by the racial perceptual divide, mistrust, and reversed racism (Lyubansky & Hunter, 2014).

The process of unlearning implicit bias is a process of self-discovery that, while assisted by education, cannot thrive within an organizational structure that does not hold its members accountable (Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016). Unlearning implicit bias is a difficult process that is unlikely to persist if the will is not engaged. The best place for the process of unlearning implicit bias to begin is within the public schools, which are training grounds for future police officers as well as nesting grounds where biases may grow or be softened by experience (Fridell, 2013).

The challenge of the unconscious is a lingering problem both in terms of (a) removing/overcoming implicit bias as well as (b) the ability to modify behaviors associated with it. This is because the emotional state of police officers during training/education programs is much different than their emotional state while on duty and surrounded by peers (Slocum, Wiley, & Esbensen, 2016). The role of collectivism cannot be overstated but must be dealt with independent of bias education. The most appropriate venue to address the effects of collectivism is the organizational culture of the police academy, which often protects the most violent members within its ranks (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). Diversity education is essential in supporting a healthy perception of bias and empowering proactive change. While many police districts have upgraded their approach, far too many simply have created the appearance of cultural competency while continuing to encourage biased behaviors and attitudes (Fridell, 2013).

The perceptions and beliefs of the police officers about implicit bias have remained mostly unknown. This may be because of the collectivist behavior and mindset that it is better to keep opinions within the group as a form of protection, which also is one reason offending officers rarely provide statements about incidents in which deadly force has been applied (Hall, Hall & Perry, 2016). However, implicit bias is evident and manifested both among police officers as well as the general US population. This reciprocal relationship requires increased accountability in order to address the root causes of implicit bias in schools and in the media. Likewise, a great deal of research has reported failed training/education programs that do not effectively identify implicit bias or its resulting behaviors. The organizational culture within most police departments does not reflect cultural competency, and new methods of oversight may need to be created to ensure this.

Because the perceptions and beliefs of police officers about implicit bias are mostly unknown, this study has an exceptional value within the current criminal justice climate today. Helping police officers become aware of the importance of implicit bias training could increase awareness, which could help evolve police culture from within. Understanding how police officers feel about implicit-bias training is essential to better understand how to transform education and training programs to meet their unique needs. Being able to isolate implicit bias and enable change rooted in the unconscious is helpful for healing on many levels.

This literature review provided a clear and expansive overview of the psychological, sociological, and empirical discussion and academic investigations that

have been conducted concerning the influence of implicit bias within the law-enforcement context. The gap in the literature consists of the perceptions of police officers, whose opinions have been encased primarily within a closed organizational culture. Using cultural competency as a means of empowering change in this context is an effective way to decrease this gap.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Researchers have acknowledged limitations both in implicit-bias training as well as the amount of research data available on implicit bias training (Schlosser, 2013; Zimny, 2015). Many researchers in this field of study have acknowledged that an insufficient number of studies have been conducted that explore whether this type of training is effective (Bernier, 2015). Additional studies could advance this field of research and provide a more in-depth understanding of the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police officers. Based on a phenomenological design, this qualitative study examined the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police officers. This chapter includes the following sections: research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The qualitative phenomenological research design assisted in examining the influence implicit-bias training had on the awareness, knowledge, and perceptions (practical value) of police officers. Implicit bias refers to the mindsets or stereotypes that influence our understandings, decisions, and actions in an unconscious manner (Hall, Chapman, Lee, Merino, Thomas, Payne, & Coyne-Beasley, 2015; Staats & Patton, 2013). Implicit bias training refers to education that is designed to create a fair and impartial practice, emphasize racial knowledge, and develop cultural empathy (Schlosser, Cha-Jua, Valgoi, & Neville, 2015). Rice and Mathews (2012) suggested that cultural competency

is an effective theoretical lens to use when examining public programs, public agency service delivery processes, and the manner in which they influence the communities they serve.

In this qualitative phenomenological research study, I addressed two research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training?

RQ2: What influence, if any, does implicit-bias training exert on police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it?

A variety of research designs and methods could have been used for this study. I considered a quantitative method because many members of the scholarly community view it as scientific, objective, and replicable. However, a quantitative method is less effective in collecting and analyzing responses to open-ended questions that allow participants to explain their choices (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Likewise, a mixed-method design offers the strengths both of qualitative and quantitative methods, but a mixed-method approach is unnecessary to answer the research questions posed in this research study. A qualitative method is more appropriate to effectively gather rich, in-depth descriptions of human behavior and the lived experiences of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Guetterman (2015) described five types of qualitative research designs: case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology. I chose phenomenology because of its ability to yield insights into the perceptions and subjective

experiences of participants (Kuper, Reeves, & Levinson, 2008). I used a phenomenological research design to explore the manner in which police officers value and perceive implicit bias training as well as the influence, if any, that implicit-bias training exerts on police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it.

Role of the Researcher

I used a qualitative phenomenological research design for this study to examine implicit-bias training and its influence (if any) on police officers' awareness, knowledge, and skills pertaining to cultural competency. There was no direct contact with study participants. I did not take part in the recruiting process of study participants. Questionnaires containing open-ended questions were administered online by a third party in a manner that protected the identities of participants. This practice limited unintended influence by the researcher during the data collection process. Additionally, using an electronic questionnaire may encourage participants to respond to questionnaire items honestly and not simply in a fashion that is considered to be socially desirable (Gnambs & Kaspar, 2017). Upon the completion of the data collection process, I analyzed and interpreted the collected data. During the data collection and data analysis processes, I employed strategies to manage self-awareness and biases.

Methodology

The methodology is presented in this section and structured according to the following subsections: participants and sample, instrumentation, field test, data

collection, and data analysis. Each subsection provides insight into the process used by this researcher.

Participants and Sample

I purposefully selected thirty-two participants from a sample of police officers spanning multiple midsize (50–999 sworn officers) police agencies. These law enforcement agencies were dedicated to a variety of geographic areas, that serve urban, suburban, and rural environments with a population of a minimum of 50,000 residents. Inclusion criteria consisted of the following: (a) participants who participated in some form of implicit-bias training within the past 12 months, and (b) participants who are involved in regular patrols or frequently engage with the community at some level (e.g., patrol response, community relations, enforcement actions). Exclusions consisted of police officers who are not sworn in as officers or do not engage in frequent interactions with community members.

An online questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered by Qualtrics, via email, to 32 police officers who work in several midsize law enforcement agencies across the United States. Qualtrics, founded in 2002, is a private company that provides subscription software for collecting and analyzing data worldwide (Qualtrics, n.d.). Qualtrics provided access to research participants, data collection software, and data analysis software assisted in identifying study participants, administering the questionnaire, and managing data (Qualtrics, n.d.). Qualtrics meets the IRB and security standards and is familiar with university protocols as they pertain to collaborating with research students (Qualtrics, n.d.).

Instrumentation

The instrument for this research study consists of two primary sections. The first section contains demographic items. The second section contains questionnaire items.

Demographic items. I collected demographic information in two categories: personal understanding and administrative understanding. Personal understanding included participants' age, race, and gender. Administrative understanding included years of law enforcement experience and prior training related to diversity, culture, or bias.

Questionnaire items. A review of the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire (CCSAQ; Mason, 1995) and the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Checklist (CCSAC; Chen & Androsiglio, 2010) provided insight on how to design a useful questionnaire. Each of these instruments was designed to assess cultural awareness and cultural competence in a variety of professional settings.

Questionnaire items reflect each domain relevant to the research questions of this study. Concerning RQ1, the domains of practicality include communication (social), interaction (cultural) and decision making (cognitive). Concerning RQ2, the domains of cultural competency includes awareness, knowledge, and skills. The questionnaire items were open-ended, and for the purposes of alignment with the research questions and data collection/analysis methods, they were categorized into the three domains of the cultural competency theory (i.e., awareness, knowledge, skills). This study was not designed to identify potentially biased officers. The goal was primarily to assess the degree to which implicit-bias training is positively and or negatively received. While several research questions pertaining to an individual's bias, the qualitative approach does more to

evaluate one's perceptions of one's own biases--which influences the manner in which individuals perceive the need for implicit-bias training--rather than bias itself.

Domains of practicality--RQ1. To align the data collection method with RQ1 and the theoretical framework, the questionnaire items were categorized into three categories: communication (social), interaction (cultural), and decision making (cognitive). Table 1 displays the questionnaire items related to RQ1.

Table 1

Domains of Practicality for RQ1

Communication (Social)	Interaction (Cultural)	Decision Making (Cognitive)
Q1 Do you believe implicit bias training has the potential to increase the frequency of communication between police officers and members of the diverse communities they serve? If so, how? If not, why not? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q1 Describe what value, if any, implicit bias training contributes to building stronger relations between police officers and the diverse communities they serve? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q1 In what ways, if any, do you think implicit bias training assists in removing bias when assessing a scene? Please be sure to explain your answer.
Q2 Do you believe implicit bias training has the potential to improve two-way communication between police officers and members of the diverse communities they serve? If so, how? If not, why not? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q2 Describe what value, if any, implicit bias training contributes to reducing escalation between police officers and the diverse communities they serve? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q2 In what ways, if any, do you think implicit bias training assists in removing bias when making an arrest? Please be sure to explain your answer.

Domains of practicality--RQ2. To align the data collection method with RQ2 and the theoretical framework, the questionnaire items were categorized into three categories:

awareness, knowledge, and skills. Table 2 displays the questionnaire items related to

RQ2.

Table 2

Domains of Practicality for RQ2

Awareness	Knowledge	Skills
Q1 Are you aware of any biases you might have—either consciously or unconsciously—about community members of color in your service area? Please provide an example if possible. Q2 Do you believe implicit bias influences a person's understanding, actions, and decisions? If so, how? If not, why not? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q1 To what extent has implicit bias training increased your knowledge of cultural competency? Please be sure to explain your answer. Q2 As a result of implicit bias training, has your understanding changed about mistrust, fear, and negative perceptions that may exist between police officers and members of diverse communities? Please be sure to explain your answer.	Q1 If you recognize that a bias might be impacting your decisions when assessing a scene or making an arrest, do you modify your behavior appropriately? Do you think that doing this makes you a more, or less, effective police officer? Please be sure to explain your answer. Q2 Has implicit bias training made you more effective as a police officer when engaging minority communities? If so, in what ways? Please be sure to explain your answer.

Data Collection and Analysis

In an article titled "Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry," Creswell (2007)

stated, "Often data collection in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews

and multiple interviews with participants" (p. 61). For this study, an online questionnaire

containing open-ended questions was administered by Qualtrics, via email, to 32 police

officers who work in several midsize law enforcement agencies across the United States.

Polkinghorne (1989) recommended that "researchers interview from 5 to 25 individuals

who have experienced the phenomenon" (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 61); however,

Houser (2008) has noted that "the sample size is not predetermined, although the researcher may consider a general sample size as a goal at the beginning of data collection" (p. 482).

Recently, McClain (2018) conducted a similar study examining whether race, culture, or national identity influenced leadership training transfer. More specifically, McClain used a phenomenological approach to obtain an understanding of how the training influenced 12 participants. McClain noted that the sample size of 12 participants provided saturation to the point that the collected data produced no new or additional information. Recommendations from Hauser (2008) regarding sample sizes for qualitative studies support McClain's decision to terminate the data collection process after interviewing 12 participants in that "determining when an adequate sample has been achieved is the responsibility of the researcher" (p. 225).

An online questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered by Qualtrics, via email, to 32 police officers who work in several midsize law enforcement agencies across the United States. Qualtrics, founded in 2002, is a private company that provides subscription software for collecting and analyzing data worldwide (Qualtrics, n.d.). The access to research participants, data collection software, and data analysis software provided by Qualtrics assisted in identifying study participants, administering the questionnaire, and managing data (Qualtrics, n.d.). Qualtrics meets the IRB and security standards and is familiar with university protocols as they pertain to collaborating with research students (Qualtrics, n.d.).

Berg (2012) discussed the importance of establishing a system for managing data before actually collecting the data. Management of the data collected for this research study took place by utilizing Qualtrics Survey Flow. Qualtrics Survey Flow is a research software application (both qualitative and quantitative) designed to assist researchers with organizing, coding, sorting, and storing data during their research study. The initial stage of analysis began by sorting data and identifying what's useful and what's not.

This research examined the influence of implicit-bias training on the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police officers. I accomplished this objective through the sorting and coding of data. The data analysis process involved identifying, coding, categorizing, and labeling meaningful patterns within the data.

Simplifying and comprehending the complexity of the responses collected during research is one of the challenges faced by qualitative researchers (Patton, 2015). Because this is a phenomenological research study designed to measure perception and value, participants' responses were coded using three forms of coding: (a) evaluation coding, (b) magnitude coding, and (c) descriptive coding. These coding methods assisted me in connecting the data to the primary research questions.

Evaluation coding. Evaluation coding is used to assign judgment as it pertains to the value, worth, or significance of policies or programs (Grbich, 2013). It is the systematic collection of data about activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs (Saldaña, 2015). Rossman and Rallis (2003) described the process of evaluation coding as a method of gaining insight into the degree to which research participants value a program; how the program compares to other programs; and how recommended changes,

if any, might be implemented. For this research study, evaluation coding helped measure participants' perceptions of program effectiveness related to implicit bias training.

Magnitude coding. Magnitude coding is used to indicate intensity, frequency, direction, and presence when analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data (Saldaña, 2015). Magnitude coding assigns supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic codes to existing codes or categories within a study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This form of coding is appropriate for qualitative studies involving social science and helped measure the intensity and frequency of the evaluation-coded data.

Descriptive coding. Descriptive coding is used to summarize a portion of text into one word or short phrase and is appropriate in all qualitative studies (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Relevant data can be identified in a one-word format, usually a noun, and is an efficient tool for beginning qualitative researchers (Saldaña, 2015). This coding method assisted with packaging phrases into a one-word format for categorizing purposes (see Table 3).

Table 3

Example of the Coding and Data Analysis Process

Sample Text Segment	Descriptive Code	Evaluation Code	Magnitude Code	Assertion
"I believe implicit bias training has provided me with insight about the negative impact that some of my decisions may have on the	Awareness	Training: Valuable or effective	High	Implicit bias training increases awareness.

Sample Text Segment	Descriptive Code	Evaluation Code	Magnitude Code	Assertion
community in which I serve."				

Issues of Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) outlined four distinct constructs for enhancing trust among researchers, participants, and the readers of qualitative studies: "a) credibility (in preference to internal validity); b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalizability); c) dependability (in preference to reliability); d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity)" (p. 64). Credibility refers to the quality of the research design, the ability to collect a random sample, and the ability to establish reasonable inclusion/exclusion criteria for participants (Shenton, 2004). Why is this here? Please do apply more specifically to your study. Each of the four distinct constructs was applied in this study.

Credibility

Credibility also requires disclosure on the part of the researcher of any conflicts of interest. Further, credibility requires submitting the study for peer review and recognizing any limitations associated with the study (Shenton, 2004, pp. 65-69). In research, credibility is supported by the believability of the findings (Shenton, 2004). Credibility in quantitative research is based on the participants. They judge the credibility of the research. Credibility is supported through triangulation, which refers to the process of

relying on multiple sources to verify the results. Applying triangulation supports comprehensive and robust research findings.

Credibility was established by identifying any conflicts of interest within this study. Credibility was supported by the methodical manner in which data were collected from police officers and the detailed explanation provided by the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Believability of the findings was established by articulating the process through which the data were coded, categorized, and interpreted. Data were collected from multiple sources to verify results and produce comprehensive and robust findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the understanding that similar results ought to be able to be replicated when investigating similar situations and populations (Shenton, 2004). While the sample of participants need not be universally transferable to any population, similar results should be discernible when the same study is replicated amongst similar populations. This means that even while maintaining participant confidentiality, certain information must be reported in the study. This information includes, "a) the number of organizations taking part in the study and where they are based; b) any restrictions in the type of people who contributed data; c) the number of participants involved in the fieldwork; d) the data collection methods that were employed; e) the number and length of data collection sessions; and f) the time period over which the data was collected" (Shenton, 2004, p. 70).

In the case of this research, the results should be transferable to other police officer populations. Transferability was supported in the use of participants from multiple midsize law enforcement agencies. Using more than one police department resulted in a more diverse sample and supports the generalizability of the results to the police officer population. Variations in participant selection help to ensure the entire population is properly represented. Transferability also was enhanced by thoroughly describing the research context and identifying the assumptions that are central to the research (Shenton, 2004). Good. Apply to the previous two questions.

In the case of this research, the results should be transferable to other police officer populations. Transferability was supported in the use of participants from multiple midsize law enforcement agencies. Using more than one police department resulted in a more diverse sample and supports the generalizability of the results to the police officer population. Variations in participant selection help to ensure the entire population is properly represented. Transferability also was enhanced by thoroughly describing the research context and identifying the assumptions that are central to the research (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability

Dependability is similar to transferability, but it is more specific. Dependability means that "in addressing the issue of reliability, the positivist employs techniques to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained" (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). It should be noted, however, that dependability is a value that should be pursued but may

never be entirely achievable. The same participants, for instance, might have additional reflections after participating in the study that they wish they had included. Further, in a qualitative study, participants may have other experiences either concerning implicit bias, or implicit bias training, during the time period between participating in the study that might lead to changed perspectives. Nonetheless, this study intends to maximize dependability by outlining a methodology that is easily repeatable.

For research to be dependable, it must be replicable (Shenton, 2004). This phenological qualitative research study is easily replicable following the clearly constructed research design. When testing the reliability of the results, researchers conducting similar results should reach similar findings. Triangulation can be used to support the conclusions to show they are replicable. In this research, attitudes and stereotypes are essential variables involved in implicit bias. These findings can be supported by introducing research with similar findings. Research by James et al. (2016) connected the attitudes of police officers to the use of deadly force when addressing minority suspects. Similar findings may support the reliability and validity of the research findings in the current research.

A research audit trail can also support the dependability of the research. Researchers use the research audit trail to improve the trustworthiness of the research (Shenton, 2004). When other researchers want to replicate a particular study, they can refer back to the audit trail. "The audit trail enables readers to trace through a researcher's logic and determine whether the study's findings may be relied upon as a platform for further inquiry" (Carcary et al., 2009, p. 13). The audit trail provides a logical path

through the research. Each of the key stages in the research is fully described by providing data for conducting further research on the same topic (Carcary et al., 2009). The audit reflects both the key research methodology decisions and provides the data that indicates what the researchers were thinking while conducting the research.

Confirmability

Confirmability means that researchers leave an "audit trail" so that if the study is later scrutinized, the researchers can adequately explain the processes and procedures followed at every stage of the process (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). For the most part, this was possible. These interests, however, must be balanced with the interests of the participants themselves. Confirmability can also be reached through reflexivity. Reflexivity is an effective approach for promoting reliability, validity, and rigor in the research (Darawsheh, 2014). The proper analysis of the research findings and an effective research design can yield reliable and valid results.

Researchers must be able to establish rigorous criteria and understand their attitude towards the research before and during the research process. This can be accomplished by using a reflexive journal. Researchers must examine their attitudes and background to determine if they influence the outcomes of the research. The background of researchers could influence how they analyze the data and interpret the results. The reflexive journal can be used to provide rationales for the research and provide specific data on the process. Valuable insight can be provided to researchers wishing to conduct similar research.

Accordingly, trust between the researcher and participants is an integral component of any research study. Particularly in a phenomenological design, when open-ended questions give the participants a wide degree of flexibility in how they engage with the instrument, trust is essential. Questionnaires are effective tools for revealing the attitudes of participants. If participants believe that they, for whatever reason, cannot trust researchers to protect their confidentiality, or that participants might face consequences of any kind based on their responses, the entire study becomes compromised. Establishing trust is important in eliciting a truthful response from research participants and for removing any barriers that could affect the response of the sample. The next section examines the ethical procedures followed, primarily to preserve both the integrity of the study and the personal autonomy/confidentiality of the participants.

Ethical Procedures

Regardless of domain or discipline, qualitative research design necessitates several ethical questions. While a phenomenological research design in sociology or criminal justice might differ in significant ways from a study in healthcare, for example, consideration must be given to specific ethical considerations governing the relationship between researchers and subjects. Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001) suggested that three principles should guide the ethics of qualitative research: the respect of people and their autonomy, beneficence, and justice.

In this study, respecting the rights and privacy of the participants is paramount. Due to the delicate nature of implicit bias and implicit bias training, the contentiousness associated with these topics in public discourse, and the very personal way that

accusations of bias have impacted police departments across the country, it is paramount

that participants fully understand that their responses are confidential. This is more than

an ethical concern; it also affects the validity of the study. The fear of being labeled

"racist," for instance, and experiencing professional discipline, could dissuade some

participants from being honest without an assurance of confidentiality. Accordingly, each

participant was provided with an opportunity to provide informed consent before

completing the questionnaire (see Appendix X [to be added to the final draft]). In any

form of social research, confidentiality means "(1) not discussing information provided

by an individual with others, and (2) presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals

cannot be identified (chiefly through anonymization)" (Wiles, Crow, & Charles, 2008, p.

418). No data will be shared beyond what is published in the final version of this

dissertation. Ultimately, preserving each participant's anonymity is necessary both to

protect the rights of the participants and to ensure the validity of this study.

These practices also reflect the principle of beneficence as it pertains to

participants. As mentioned earlier in this section, the purpose of this study is not to

identify potentially biased officers. Responses to the questionnaire do not indicate bias,

per se, but they do reflect how participants perceive their own bias within the context of

police work. Still, participants' responses might reveal information that could be

professionally compromising. Accordingly, participants were assured that their personal

information will remain confidential and will not be given to their supervisors or other

vested parties who might use the data to disparage the officer or his or her department.

The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding rather than advance any particular

agenda. All of this is made clear in the informed consent information provided to each participant.

Summary

The phenomenological research design sets this study apart from others that have explored similar topics. It is important to understand perceptions of implicit bias, particularly regarding the effectiveness of implicit bias training, in order to evaluate whether or not implicit bias training is beneficial for police departments. Certainly, the issue of implicit bias touches upon many controversial and disputable propositions. In other words, even though implicit bias training might accomplish some departmental goals or satisfy some policy requirements, this study explores whether implicit bias training is actually productive in enhancing the equity and effectiveness of law enforcement. Police officers, by and large, welcome implicit bias training as a way of overcoming their own biases in police work. However, some view it as a punishment stemming from the protests of who do not understand the rigors of their daily work, and other officers recognize that attitudes and stereotypes can influence their interactions with minority suspects. This research project requires gathering data by administering electronic questionnaires to police officers from various mid-size police departments. The data were gathered from participants who met the inclusion criteria.

There are limitations in a study of this nature. While the phenomenological method is appropriate for this study, there are limits and challenges associated with this method. For instance, researcher bias can play a more prominent role when interpreting responses and coding them. The reliability and validity of the research is another concern.

Triangulation supports the generalizability and reliability in the research while the audit trail can be used support dependability. Confirmability is reached through the audit trail and reflexivity.

Further, since this study examines participants' perceptions and the departments that participate are not all the same, it does not follow that each department's implicit bias program is necessarily up-to-date or follows best practices, nor does it follow that those who conduct the implicit bias training programs in each department are equally effective. Finally, the questionnaire items ask open-ended questions in as neutral a way as possible, without leading the participants toward certain responses. The questionnaire items selected were designed to align with each research question and with the theoretical framework. Many of the questions are not targeted at implicit bias training, directly, but are constructed in order to glean participants' perspectives on the very topic of implicit bias. These questions helped the researcher analyze, at greater length, the reasons why some participants perceive implicit bias training as either worthwhile or unnecessary.

Researchers have an ethical duty to research participants. Ethical consideration involves obtaining informed consent from participants and protecting their confidentiality. Every participant should be fully informed about the research and provide informed consent agreeing to participate in the research. Every participant was given an opportunity to provide informed consent.

In short, this study used a phenomenological qualitative design so that researchers can gain a better understanding of the ways that implicit bias training is perceived within law enforcement agencies. While most police officers recognize that bias can play a

negative role in law enforcement, it does not necessarily follow that "implicit bias" is

something that can be effectively managed through training. This study provides insight

into how effective these trainings are and, therefore, how they might be either improved

or abandoned as a result.

Chapter 4: Results

Researchers have acknowledged limitations of implicit-bias training as well as the

limited amount of research that has been conducted on implicit-bias training (Schlosser,

2013; Zimny, 2015). Many researchers in this field of study have acknowledged that an

insufficient number of studies have been conducted exploring whether this type of

training is effective (Bernier, 2015). Additional studies could advance this field of

research and provide a more in-depth understanding of the ways in which implicit-bias

training influences the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police officers. Based on a

phenomenological design, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the ways

in which implicit-bias training influences the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police

officers. In this qualitative phenomenological research, I sought to address the following

two research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of

implicit-bias training?

RQ2: What influence, if any, does implicit-bias training exert on police officers'

awareness, knowledge, and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it?

Chapter four consist of seven sections, that describe the process. These are labeled

as: setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness,

results, and summary.

Setting

It is possible that organizational conditions may have influenced participants or

their experience at the time of study. These conditions may have affected the nature of

participants' responses and therefore the interpretation of the study results. One potential influence that may have affected participants' responses is the fact that implicit bias training application currently has no standardization.

Moon, Morgan, and Sandage (2018) discussed the importance of developing a nationalized training standard and assessment in the area of cultural competency. Additionally, these researchers described the limited amount of available data indicating how police agencies have measured and accounted for cultural competency training. Moon et al. (2018) suggested using an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) tool, which is a 50-item questionnaire that assesses intercultural competence, similar to the questionnaire utilized in this study.

Fundamentally, for most forms of training to be beneficial, a time-tested process needs to be established. When implemented correctly, standardization of training can (a) reduce confusion and ambiguity and (b) increase the potential for desired outcomes. Training standardization provides stakeholders within organizations a basic and mutual understanding of a concept, intended outcomes, and a method by which to measure results. Developing a standardization of training and a tool to measure the outcomes will increase the potential for successful training. For implicit bias training to be effective, it needs to be standardized, ongoing, long-term, and supported by evaluation practices and organizational policies. Because participants in this study were employed by police departments across the United States, they unquestionably experienced a variety of different environmental, personal, and organizational conditions that may have influenced their responses and, therefore, the interpretation of their responses.

Demographics

The 32 participants in the study were certified full-time police officers, with a minimum of 5 years of experience. Each of the participants completed some form of implicit bias training within the past 12 months. Their actual time employed as police officers ranged from 5 to 25 years in a midsize police department, and they patrolled within diverse communities. All participants were over 21 years of age, with the exact range being 25–64 years of age. Participants required a mean average of 24 minutes to complete the questionnaire, with a minimum of 6 minutes and a maximum of 153.4 minutes (2 hr. 33.4 minutes). The inordinate length of the maximum response time likely was attributable to the participant pausing and returning to the questionnaire. The racial makeup of the participants included white ($n=25$), black ($n=4$), Hispanic ($n=2$), and other ($n=1$). The gender make-up consisted of 22 men and 10 women (see tables 4-7).

Table 4

Number of Years in Law Enforcement

Number of Years in Law Enforcement	n	%
<5 Years	1	3.13
5-10 Years	6	18.75
10-15 Years	6	18.75
15-20 Years	8	25.00
20-25 years	6	18.75
>25 Years	5	15.63
Total	32	100

Table 5

Gender of Participants

Gender	*n*	*%*	*Nat. Avg.*
Male	22	68.75	87.9
Female	10	31.25	12.1
Total	32	100	100

FBI: UCR Full-Time Law Enforcement Employees (2016)

Table 6

Age Ranges of Participants

Age Ranges	*n*	*%*
25-34	8	25.00
35-44	9	28.13
45-54	11	34.38
55-64	4	12.50
Total	32	100

Table 7

Race of Participants

Race	n	%	Nat. Avg.
White	25	78.13	72.8
Black or African American	4	12.50	12.2
Hispanic/Latino	2	6.25	11.6
Other	1	3.12	3.4
Total	32	100	100

FBI: UCR Full-Time Law Enforcement Employees (2016)

Data Collection

Data was collected via an online questionnaire consisting of 11 open-ended questions was administered via email by Qualtrics, an online information gathering platform, to 32 police officers. These police officers met the inclusion criteria, which required participants (a) to have been employed in midsize law enforcement agencies across the United States and (b) to have patrolled within diverse communities. The data were collected between January 11, 2019, and January 31, 2019.

Data for this study were collected and managed by using Qualtrics Survey Flow. This is a research software application designed to assist researchers with organizing, coding, and storing data during the research process. There were no deviations encountered throughout the data collection process. The only unusual circumstances were

the challenges faced during the participant recruitment process. Participants were

recruited from multiple agencies to obtain a sufficient sample size for this study.

Data Analysis

The theoretical framework of cultural competency was used as a framework to

analyze and interpret the qualitative data collected from participants. The theory of

cultural competency is comprised of three components: cultural awareness, cultural

knowledge, and cultural skills (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). In 1990, Margo L. Bailey

began the cultural competency theory-building process. The belief underlying this

framework is that an organization should be culturally proficient (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang,

2016). These three components of cultural competency—i.e., cultural awareness, cultural

knowledge, and cultural skills—were used to explore perceptions of police officers

regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training (RQ2). In addition to the cultural

competency framework, a second conceptual framework was used to explore the

influence that implicit-bias training may exert on police officers' awareness, knowledge,

and skills related to implicit bias and their ability to manage it (RQ2). This framework is

composed of three domains of practicality: communication (social), interaction (cultural),

and decision making (cognitive). I then applied each of the following coding types to the

responses of each participant.

Evaluation Coding

Evaluation coding is used to assign judgment as it pertains to the value, worth, or

significance of policies or programs (Grbich, 2013). It is the systematic collection of data

about activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs (Saldaña, 2015). Rossman and

Rallis (2003) described the process of evaluation coding as a method of gaining insight into the degree to which research participants value a program; how the program compares to other programs; and how recommended changes, if any, might be implemented. For this research study, evaluation coding helped measure participants' perceptions of program effectiveness related to implicit bias training.

Magnitude Coding

Magnitude coding is used to indicate intensity, frequency, direction, and presence when analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data (Saldaña, 2015). Magnitude coding assigns supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic codes to existing codes or categories within a study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This form of coding is appropriate for qualitative studies involving social science and helped measure the intensity and frequency of the evaluation coded data.

Descriptive Coding

Descriptive coding is used to summarize a portion of text into one word or short phrase and is appropriate in all qualitative studies (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Relevant data can be identified in a one-word format, usually a noun, and is an efficient tool for beginning qualitative researchers (Saldaña, 2015). This coding method assisted in packaging phrases into a one-word format for categorizing purposes (see Table 8).

Table 8

Example of the Coding and Data Analysis Process

Sample Text Segment	Descriptive Code	Evaluation Code	Magnitude Code	Assertion
"I believe implicit bias training has provided me with insight about the negative impact that some of my decisions may have on the community in which I serve."	Awareness	Training: Valuable or effective	High	Implicit bias training increases awareness.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) outlined four distinct constructs for enhancing trust among

researchers, participants, and the readers of qualitative studies: "a) credibility (in

preference to internal validity); b) transferability (in preference to external

validity/generalizability); c) dependability (in preference to reliability); d) confirmability

(in preference to objectivity)" (p. 64). Credibility refers to the quality of the research

design, the ability to collect a random sample, and the ability to establish reasonable

inclusion/exclusion criteria for participants (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility

The were no adjustments made to the strategies described in Chapter 3 during this

study. Credibility requires disclosure on the part of the researcher of any conflicts of

interest. During this study, this researcher did not experience any conflicts of interest. Precise data collection and analysis were conducted, ensuring credibility (Shenton, 2004). Collection of data occurred until the point of saturation, which adds validity to the study. Credibility is supported through triangulation, which refers to the process of relying on multiple sources to verify the results. Study participants were selected from several midsize police agencies and varied in demographics.

Transferability

The were no adjustments made to the strategies described in Chapter 3 during this study. In the case of this research, the results are transferable to other police officer populations. Transferability was supported in the use of participants from multiple midsize law enforcement agencies. Variations in participant selection helped to ensure the entire population was properly represented. Transferability also was enhanced by thoroughly describing the research context and identifying the assumptions that were central to the research (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability

The were no adjustments made to the strategies described in Chapter 3 during this study. Dependability was established by utilizing an online questionnaire containing open-ended question that was administered by Qualtrics. This is a private company that provides subscription software for collecting and analyzing data worldwide and meets the IRB and security standards and is familiar with university protocols as they pertain to collaborating with research students (Qualtrics, n.d.). This phenomenological qualitative research study is easily replicable following the clearly constructed research design.

Confirmability

The were no adjustments made to the strategies described in Chapter 3 during this study. Confirmability means that researchers leave an "audit trail" so that if the study is later scrutinized, the researchers can adequately explain the processes and procedures followed at every stage of the process (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). A thorough description of assumptions and explanations was provided, demonstrating that all of the results were data driven.

Study Results

The following sections provide the results for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 as well as additional findings. The first research question was designed to explore domains of practicality related to the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training. These domains were divided into social, cultural, and cognitive domains, which characterize the ways in which police officers interact with members of diverse communities. More specifically, the social domain reflects the ability to communicate effectively with members of diverse cultures; the cultural domain reflects the ability to engage in meaningful and productive ways with members of diverse cultures; and finally, the cognitive domain reflects the ability to make decisions that are not negatively influenced by bias in relation to members of diverse communities.

Research Question 1

Responses to the first research question provided insight into the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training. More specifically, the collected data revealed the perceptions of police officers using a conceptual

framework consisting of three domains: communication (social), engagement (cultural), and decision making (cognitive). The framework identified the following themes: communication, engagement, and decision making.

Communication. A significant number of participants stated that implicit bias training improves communication between community members and police officers. For example, one participant commented on the value of implicit bias training in terms of communicating about cultural issues: "This training can help everyone understand the cultural differences and traditions in their community. This [training] will make it easier to respond, understand, and help the members of the community." Another participant reported that implicit bias training helps police officers communicate in ways that help community members better understand the roles and responsibilities of police officers: "Yes, it [implicit bias training] can improve relations. The community can find out why police have to take certain measures when working, and the police can get insite [sic] into cultural differences that they may encounter." In fact, several participants suggested that implicit bias training would be more effective and enhance communication if community members were to complete similar training. For example, one participant reported, "Effective communication takes both parties' involvement. It is possible that community members have implicit bias towards law enforcement." However, some participants reported that as a result of existing biases held by community members, implicit bias training would not assist them. For example, one participant reported, "I think the diverse community has the same biases and no desire to learn about it or accept it." Ultimately, the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training

suggest that it enhances communication not only among police officers but also between police officers and the diverse communities they serve.

Engagement. The majority of participants reported that the training increases engagement and improves relations between community members and police officers. More specifically, these participants suggested that implicit bias training enhances cultural engagement by fostering trust between community members and police officers. For example, one participant reported, "It [implicit bias training] has high value to the officers. It increases understanding between the groups which helps to build trust." Another participant reported that the training enhances "community trust [and] relationship building between police and those they serve." One participant reported, "It [implicit bias training] helps give ideas about how people of the community view the police and how police can do a better job of earning trust from the community." Participants also described how engagement with community members was enhanced after implicit bias training. For example, one participant reported, "Yes... understanding their culture, lifestyles, makes for better relations in that community. Communication is key." Another participant reported the value of implicit bias in terms of engagement: "Cultural awareness training and job experience helped me become more effective in minority communities. Speaking to people in the communities and being concerned for their problems makes me more effective. Training on implicit biases helped me understand that biases exist; however, they aren't always acted upon. Making decisions based on a bias is not acceptable." Overall, the perceptions of officers regarding the

practical value of implicit-bias training indicate that it increases engagement and improves relationships between police officers and the diverse communities they serve.

Decision-making. The majority of participants acknowledged their ability to recognize their biases and modify their behavior before these biases negatively impact their decision-making process. For example, one participant reported "I try to keep my bias in check. Follow the law as it applies to everyone. Behavior adjustment can make more effective." Another participant reported "you have to modify according to the situation. Every situation is different. One way might be effective at one scene, but maybe not a different scene. You have to adapt to situation, will make you a better police officer for you and the community you serve." One participant described how the training adjusted their decision-making as it relates to the use of deadly force and reported "The inherent fear we Officers have of young black youth leads us to be quick to draw our weapons. But now I draw my taser before I draw my firearm." Very few participants who completed implicit bias training reported no benefit in this area, and even fewer stated they have no biases. Primarily, the perception of officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training suggest that it enhances their decision-making process while engaging with members of the diverse communities they serve.

Overall, the study participants acknowledged that implicit-bias training has practical value. Participants described how by recognizing and managing their biases, they could communicate and interact more effectively with members of diverse communities. Additionally, participants reported that as a result of implicit-bias training, they were able to manage assumptions during their decision-making process.

Research Question 2

Data collected from the second research question provided insight into the influence of implicit bias training on police officers' ability to manage implicit bias. More specifically, the collected data revealed the influence of implicit bias training from within the three components of the cultural competency framework: awareness, knowledge and skills.

Awareness. Slightly more than half of the participants reported that implicit bias training is likely to increase their awareness and limit bias during the arrest process. For example, one participant reported that even though officers may disagree with an arrestee, showing respect by limiting bias during the arrest process is an important aspect of remaining aware: "Often I don't disagree with an arrestee but sympathize with them while with them to reduce possible problems--even though I completely disagree personally and professionally." More specifically, participants described enhanced awareness, understanding, tolerance, objectivity, and improved community support as primary benefits of implicit bias training. Another participant reported that maintaining cultural awareness can result in increased flexibility in responding to various events: "Officers can understand people from different cultures and how they may be acting where the officer can adjust their response." On the other hand, several participants reported that implicit bias training did not limit bias or increase their awareness. For example, one participant reported that implicit bias training "might give you a couple of cliché things that vastly stereotype a race or class of people, but it's largely a useless training." Most of the participants denied being aware of any biases towards community

members of color, consciously or unconsciously. A few participants acknowledged their biases, but they also stated they were able to manage these biases. For example, one participant reported, "I do have some biases, but I do not let them make my decisions. I apply the law equally to all." All but a few participants recognized the influence that implicit bias has on an individual's understanding, actions, and decisions. Participants reported that areas that are likely to be influenced by biases include perceptions, interactions, and judgements. For example, one participant reported "The fear associated with black men leads us to shoot first, ask questions later." Participants also reported that past experiences and assumptions were negative influences that helped to create biases. Overall, participants reported that the influence of implicit-bias training plays a moderate role in increasing the awareness of police officers in terms of their ability to accept cultural differences and remain open to a variety of worldviews and perspectives.

 Knowledge. Overwhelmingly, participants reported that they obtained additional knowledge about cultural competency as a result of their implicit bias training. They reported that implicit bias training was a positive influence in the areas of de-escalation, insight, interaction, and personal growth. For example, one participant reported that implicit bias training helps increase empathy: "It helps in understanding their [members of other cultures and subcultures] way of life and struggles. Officers understanding this can help defuse a situation before it turns violent." Another participant reported, "I can better understand the diversity of the community." Several participants reported no increase in knowledge as a result of implicit bias training. The response of one participant in particular reflected especially strong negative feelings about the value of implicit bias

training: "[It does not help] one iota. It's an excuse for our PC dimwit brass to make themselves look progressive and concerned about race relations. It's a hustle. The people training us are profiting from saying the obvious to a room full of uninteresting and annoyed cops." A significant number of participants stated that the training increased their knowledge of diverse cultures by reducing mistrust, fear, and negative perceptions. For example, one participant reported, "It [implicit bias training] has made me aware that members of the community harbor their own biases towards police officers when they do not understand what is happening. Mistrust, fear, and negative perceptions in my experience have come from people who lack the knowledge or understanding of the facts that occurred in their cases. Also, more recent media events involving police officers have been very negative, causing people to not trust officers." Several participants indicated that implicit bias training can be used to build trust and improve relations. A few participants reported that officers should possess knowledge about implicit bias even before they begin implicit bias training. Overall, the majority of participants reported that the influence of implicit-bias training plays a moderate role in increasing police officers' knowledge about diversity, differing world views, and divergent perspectives.

Skills. An overwhelming number 22 of the participants acknowledged that the training increased their ability to reduce escalation between police officers and diverse community members. Participants described cultural understanding and the building of trust as two primary skill sets. For example, one participant reported, "The escalation of an event can sometimes be attributed to misunderstanding. Understanding the culture of a community can make the police aware of the underlying stresses so that they can help

without offending or escalating the situation." On the other hand, one participant reported an appreciation of the role of fear over skills and reported that "tear of police by the black community can help a white officer handle the situation."

Most of the participants reported that implicit bias training improved their scene assessment skills by building of trust, awareness, and understanding. For example, one participant reported, "Officers have the ability to understand different cultures while assessing a scene. Another participant reported, "First, training helps you understand the consequences of not acting professionally and without bias. Secondly, learning about different cultures helps officers understand the background of those they are dealing with, such as their fears and ways of their old country." Some participants stated that implicit bias training assisted them in managing their biases and improving their ability to interact with community members.

A notable number of the participants reported that the training made them better prepared to interact with diverse communities. Areas of enhanced skills were identified as perceptions, empathy, decision-making, understanding, communications, interaction, and personal growth. One participant reported, "I think it [implicit bias training] has helped because I've been able to try to better communicate with different cultural members." Another participant shared a similar perspective: "Yes, it has helped in understanding their culture, lifestyles... makes for better relations in that community... communication is key." On the other hand, a few participants reported that the training did not improve their skills. For example, one participant reported, "No. I treated everyone exactly the same before this BS training and continue to do so now. A very

large percentage of the people we deal with hate the police. So what? I don't have an obligation to change their entrenched biases toward us, and, frankly, I don't care. "

"I treat everyone with respect and dignity and have never had a bad paper in my file due to being an asshole or being reactive to their disrespect or violence toward me." Overall, participants reported that the influence of implicit-bias training plays an important role in developing the skills of police officers in terms of their ability to use cultural awareness and knowledge to recognize and freely discuss cultural issues and differences.

The cultural competency theoretical framework for public administration and public service delivery consists of three primary components that measure an individual's cultural competency: awareness, knowledge, and skills. Overall, the majority of the study participants acknowledged that implicit bias training increased their awareness of its existence, expanded their understanding of other cultures, and improved their ability to manage their personal biases.

Additional Findings

In addition to providing information about the domains of practicality related to the perceptions of police officers regarding the practical value of implicit-bias training (RQ1) and the influence of implicit bias training on police officer's ability to manage implicit bias (RQ2), the data analysis also revealed additional findings. (see Table 9).

Table 9

Themes, Evaluation Codes, and Magnitude Codes

Theme	Evaluation Code			Magnitude (Negative)			Magnitude (Neutral)			Magnitude (Positive)			Magnitude (Total)		
	-	**0**	**+**	**L**	**M**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**H**	**L**	**M**	**H**
Relationship	4	6	22	0	3	1	0	6	0	0	18	4	0	27	5
Communication	4	7	21	0	4	0	0	7	0	0	21	0	0	32	0
De-escalation	6	4	22	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	20	2	0	30	2
Scene Assessment	4	4	24	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	24	0	0	30	2
Removal of Bias	7	7	18	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	18	0	0	32	0
Decision-Making	5	9	18	0	5	0	0	9	0	0	18	0	0	32	0
Awareness CC	5	16	11	0	5	0	0	9	0	0	18	0	0	32	0
Understanding Implicit Bias Influence	3	4	25	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	25	0	0	32	0
Knowledge CC	6	3	23	0	5	1	0	3	0	0	22	1	0	30	2
Understanding Perceptions of Community Members	9	5	18	0	9	0	0	5	0	0	18	0	0	30	2
Effectiveness	5	5	22	0	4	1	0	5	0	0	22	0	0	31	1

In addition to providing answers for RQ1 and RQ2, the data analysis process revealed several additional findings. First, as a result of applying evaluation coding, the highest number of negative responses reported by participants were categorized as understanding (9) and the removal of bias (7) (see Table 9). This suggests that when

responding to questionnaire items that were perceived as personal, participants responses were categorized as reflecting more negativity.

Secondly, participants reported more positive responses pertaining to the value of implicit bias training in the areas of scene-assessment (24), effectiveness (22), communications (21), and de-escalation (20). This suggests that when responding to questionnaire items about applying implicit-bias training in the field, there was a substantial increase in the number of positive responses.

Third, participants reported more positive responses pertaining to the value of implicit bias training in the areas of understanding implicit bias influence (25), knowledge (22) and effectiveness (22). This suggest that the majority of participants demonstrated the desired level of cultural competency.

Summary

In Chapter 4, a detailed explanation of the study research questions and participants' responses was provided. The results of the study indicated that 29 out of 32 participants acknowledged that implicit bias training improved their ability to interact with diverse communities and strengthened relations between police officers and the communities they serve. Additionally, a substantial number of participants' responses indicated professional growth in the area of cultural competency--more specifically in the three critical areas of cultural competency (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skills). The results indicated that implicit-bias training had some form of influence on the ability of police officers to manage implicit bias.

A majority of the participants indicated that conducting similar training for community members would be beneficial in improving interactions and relations. Participants described multiple barriers associated with attempting to improve ties with diverse communities and police officers. These barriers included the following: trust, public support, and formal training and education both for law enforcement personnel and community members.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings, presents several interpretations of the findings, describes the limitations of the study, provides several recommendations for future research as well as practical application, and presents a concluding section that describes the value of implicit bias training.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Based on a phenomenological design, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. Mekawi et al. (2016) identified implicit bias as a contributing factor in the decision-making processes that occur when police officers encounter shoot-or-don't-shoot training scenarios. My study explored police officers' understanding, perceptions, and application of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. The data collection and data analysis processes consisted of administering open-ended electronic questionnaires, coding and analyzing data, reviewing training materials, and reviewing training practices in order to develop a better understanding of the training processes related to implicit bias and its influence on the decision-making processes of police officers.

Interpretation of the Findings

The following section provides a summary and interpretation of the findings. More specifically, this section provides a discussion about the positive influence of implicit-bias training, explores the differences between personal evaluations and professional evaluations of implicit-bias training, and discusses the role of cultural competence in relation to the findings.

Positive Influence of Implicit Bias Training

Spencer et al. (2016) suggested that the racial perceptual divide has been prevalent as a result of vastly different cultural backgrounds in the United States. These

authors described divergent perspectives about race and culture among police officers. They suggested that the perspectives of police officers have been associated with and shaped by varying perceptions of risk. These researchers further suggested that by incorporating an understanding of implicit bias into their policies, procedures, and training, police departments would have greater success managing biased behaviors within their workforce.

The findings in this study revealed that although participants seemed cautious in their responses, many officers, more than expected, acknowledged the positive influence of implicit bias training in terms of their understanding of the communities in which they serve, their communication with diverse members of these communities, and the process of relationship building in these communities. Participants reported that the training provided valuable insight about cultural differences and perceptions. Additionally, participants stated that the training provided the necessary tools to communicate and interact with diverse cultures positively and effectively.

This study advances the work of Schlosser et al. (2015), who explored the value of a pilot educational training program at the "Northwestern Police Academy" (a pseudonym). After exploring the value of implicit-bias training, and after implementing a modification to a previously implemented implicit-bias training program, these researchers reported no significant/observable change in perceptions.

The results of this study indicated that implicit-bias training provided participants with the ability to recognize their biases and modify their behavior before these biases negatively impacted their decision-making. For example, the results indicated that 22 out

32 participants reported that implicit-bias training enabled them to be more effective as officers. These participants reported that implicit bias training made them better prepared to manage their biases while interacting with diverse communities.

Personal and Professional

The findings of this study indicated a difference in responses between the personal and professional value of implicit-bias training. More specifically, participants provided more negative responses related to the value of implicit bias training focused on personal aspects (i.e., removal of bias, awareness, and understanding). On the contrary, the findings of the study indicated that more positive responses related to the value of implicit bias training focused on professional aspects (i.e., decision-making, communications, de-escalation, and scene assessment).

One possible explanation for these findings could be the method in which the training was delivered—e.g., workshop, seminar training, lecture format. Seminars usually are 90 minutes to 3 hours in length and require minimum participant interaction. However, workshops are usually longer in duration (e.g., 1 hour to 5 days) and allow for interaction as well as question-and-answer sessions. Workshops are normally more informal and engaging, and they often promote group discussions in a safe environment. In other words, thoughts, feelings, perspectives, and experiences are shared on a more personable level during workshops.

Implicit-bias workshops usually consist of participants engaging in baseline implicit bias testing, in-depth group discussions, and a variety of activities--all designed to increase participants' levels of cultural competence throughout the workshop. Unlike

workshops, seminars take place with little to no interaction between students and facilitators. As a result, this reduction of communication and interaction between facilitator and participant could have an adverse reaction on training outcomes. In other words, participants may have reported more negative responses regarding personal aspects of their implicit-bias training based on the format or method of delivery.

Another possible explanation for these findings is the level of expertise or experience possessed by the implicit-bias training instructor. Instructors in this area of training need to possess (a) in-depth knowledge (i.e., be a subject matter expert) of the subject being taught as well as (b) the skills in which to deliver the information. Due to the sensitive nature of implicit bias, especially as it relates to law enforcement, training should be conducted in a controlled environment that promotes the sharing of perceptions and validated information without judgment. Unfortunately, some instructors lack this subject matter expertise, and failure to create judgement-free training environment can result in defensive posturing and refusal to acknowledge the science that informs implicit-bias training.

Implicit bias training is designed to expose individuals to their biases, provide tools to modify unconscious patterns of thinking, and ultimately eliminate discriminatory behaviors. Due to the sensitive nature of this form of training, it is essential that training facilitators have advance knowledge of the topic as well as the necessary skills required to guide and redirect conversations that are not productive. Failure to possess these tools could have an adverse effect on participants and their view of the training program and concept. As a result, participants may have reported more negative responses regarding

personal aspects of their implicit-bias training based on the experience or skill level of their respective instructors.

Cultural Competence

Rice and Mathews's (2010) cultural competency theoretical lens ultimately expanded to include the development of professional skills in three areas associated with cultural behavior: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills. These researchers successfully utilized this theoretical framework to examine public programs, public agency service delivery processes, and the ways in which these programs and processes influence the communities they serve.

In this study, I was able to utilize the cultural competency theoretical lens to measure the level of intensity and frequency implicit-bias training had on study participants. Survey questions administered to study participants were designed by me in a manner that provided adequate data to measure levels of awareness, knowledge and skills.

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Limitations of the Study

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Researchers face multiple challenges when conducting a qualitative study (e.g., time constraints, limited access to participants, etc.; Yin, 2013). These challenges are sometimes seen as a weakness within a study, despite the lack of set standards for qualitative research (Yin, 2013).

The first limitation of the study was the reduced availability and access to police officers for in-person interviews. I made multiple unsuccessful attempts to identify police agencies willing to participate in this study and allow access to police officers. Negative

media coverage and tension between police agencies and communities of color at the time of this study, played a significant role. I administered a formatted explanatory questionnaire with open-ended questions that were designed to obtain rich, in-depth qualitative data. However, because participants responded asynchronously in writing, this data collection method did not allow me with the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and clarify responses.

The second limitation of the study was the lack of information available about the training delivery format and instructor qualifications related to the individual implicit-bias training programs participants had completed. Understanding training delivery methods and the instructor qualifications would have provided additional insight into how information in the implicit-bias training program was conveyed to participants. These two variables could have influenced participants' responses to the questionnaire.

Recommendations

Recommendations within this study are a result of findings. This study focused on mid-size departments (i.e., 50-999 officers). The first recommendation for future study is to focus on larger departments (1,000 officers or more) or smaller departments (i.e., 1-49 officers) departments. The value in performing studies in police departments ranging in size will be the ability to gain insight on a broader spectrum about their training practices and standards in the area of implicit bias. Nearly half of the 18,000 police agencies in the United States employ fewer than 10 officers (Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016). Sherman (1998) discussed the uneven or non-existent training standards that exist within smaller police agencies. A lack of resources for training and equipment

are often common within smaller police agencies, and future studies exploring

departments of these sizes could provide a more in-depth understanding of implicit-bias

training and its influence on police officers.

The second recommendation for future study is to determine which training

methods are more effective--online training or in-person workshops. The method in

which training is administered is equally as important as the training itself. Online

training has increased in popularity due to its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and

scalability. Attending workshops provides participants with the opportunity to learn about

a particular subject while simultaneously interacting and networking with others. During

this process, facilitators can actively engage with participants and measure their level of

comprehension of the course topic. Exploring delivery methods would provide insight

into which approach produces the best training outcomes.

The third recommendation for future study is to explore the perceptions of police

officers who completed implicit bias training more than one year ago. This approach

would investigate the degree to which police officers may persist in their understanding

and application of principles of implicit bias management as well as the factors that may

predict such persistence. This information could then be integrated into future implicit-

bias training programs in order to increase the longevity and efficacy of implicit-bias

training programs.

Implications

The results of this research study have a significant potential for contributing to

positive social change. For example, the findings of this study provided further insight

into how police officers perceive implicit-bias training and its influence on their awareness, knowledge, and skills in the area of cultural competence. Spencer et al. (2016) described implicit-bias training as a new scientific approach to reducing bias within the decision-making process. This form of training teaches police officers how to recognize and manage their biases--an increasingly essential skill as diversity within cultures, societies, and communities continues to expand.

The sample consisted of thirty-two participants selected from police officers spanning multiple midsize (50-999 sworn officers) law enforcement agencies. These law enforcement agencies were dedicated to serving a variety of geographic areas that serve urban, suburban, and rural environments with a minimum population of 50,000 residents. Inclusion criteria consisted of the following: (a) participants must have participated in some form of implicit-bias training within the past 12 months, and (b) participants must have been involved in regular patrols or frequently engaged a diverse community at some level (e.g., patrol response, community relations, enforcement actions).

A questionnaire designed to extract information that can be used to evaluate participants' comprehension of implicit bias and perceptions of implicit-bias training was used to collect data. A cultural competency theoretical lens was used to analyze the participant's responses. This approach is consistent with Rice and Mathews's (2010) advocacy of a new kind of public service professional who possesses cultural competency awareness, knowledge, and skills.

Obtaining additional insight into how implicit-bias training influences police officers' perceptions and behavior will illuminate strengths and weaknesses within

implicit-bias training programs. These insights will provide police agencies and law enforcement training facilitators with the tools they need to improve future training outcomes. Successfully training police officers on how to manage implicit bias during the decision-making process will reduce the potential for stereotyping (Spencer, Charbonneau, & Glaser, 2016). As a result, the disproportionate arrests and shootings of black males by police officers in comparison to their white counterparts can be reduced. This improvement in police practices can assist in establishing stronger ties between police officers and the diverse communities in which they serve.

Conclusion

Researchers have acknowledged limitations of implicit-bias training as well as the limited amount of research that has been conducted on implicit-bias training (Schlosser, 2013; Zimny, 2015). Many researchers in this field of study have acknowledged that an insufficient number of studies have been conducted exploring whether this type of training is effective (Bernier, 2015).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the ways in which implicit-bias training influences the decision-making processes of police officers. Therefore, my study explored police officers' understanding and perceptions of implicit bias after receiving implicit-bias training. Overall, in response to RQ1, the study participants acknowledged that implicit-bias training has practical value. Participants described how by recognizing and managing their biases, they can communicate and interact more effectively with members of diverse communities. Additionally, participants reported that as a result of implicit-bias training, they were able to manage assumptions during their

decision-making process. In addition, in response to RQ2, the majority of the study participants acknowledged that implicit bias training increased their awareness of its existence, expanded their understanding of other cultures, and improved their ability to manage their personal biases.

As a result of this study, I collected, additional research data, contributing to the research base focusing on how implicit-bias training influences the awareness, knowledge, and skills of police officers in the area of cultural competency (Bernier, 2015). This additional data will provide police agencies and training facilitators with important information necessary to improve future training outcomes in the area of implicit-bias training.

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