

PERCEPTIONS AND PERCEIVED CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH A
HYPOTHETICAL CAREER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: DIFFERENCES AMONG
MALE AND FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS.

by

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ABSTRACT

JOSIE FRANCESCA CAMBARERI. Perceptions and perceived challenges associated with a hypothetical career in law enforcement: Differences among male and female college students. (Under the direction of DR. JOSEPH B. KUHNS)

While many agencies have expanded their efforts to hire and retain females, women remain underrepresented across local, state, and federal law enforcement. Researchers have often studied the experiences and challenges of women who are currently employed in law enforcement. However, there is less knowledge of whether women, who are not yet officers, also perceive future challenges and gender discrimination within a hypothetical law enforcement career. The current study surveyed 387 male and female undergraduate students, most of whom are criminal justice majors/minors, to compare perceptions and beliefs of a hypothetical career in law enforcement. Bivariate analyses were used to compare male and female perceptions and a series of linear and logistic regression models were used to predict perceived success and interest in a future law enforcement career. These results suggest that female students are less interested in a law enforcement career, perceive themselves as potentially less successful as officers, and perceive less personal fulfillment from a hypothetical career in law enforcement. Young women were also more likely to believe that female officers receive less respect, acceptance, and opportunity within law enforcement. Multivariate models indicated that gender, perceptions of personal fulfillment, perceived support of family/friends, and interest in a law enforcement career significantly predicted perceived future success as an officer; gender and interest were also found to have a significant interaction effect when predicting perceived success. A second model suggested that

perceptions of fulfillment and success were significantly and positively impacting interest in a law enforcement career. Additionally, fulfillment and success mediated the impact of gender on interest in a law enforcement career. These findings are important for recruiters because the sample is comprised of a large target applicant pool for law enforcement (i.e., young, college-educated, criminal justice students). Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to proactively recruit young women, while making an effort to discuss the negative perceptions of the career, particularly perceptions surrounding their potential success, perceived fulfillment, and support of family/friends.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite recent efforts to increase female representation in law enforcement, women remain severely underrepresented across local, state, and federal agencies, making up only about 12 percent of officers (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; FBI, 2015; Kringen, 2014; Langton, 2010). For decades, law enforcement agencies have been trying to remedy the difficulties in recruiting females into law enforcement careers, and retaining female officers in their agencies. There are qualitative and quantitative studies examining barriers and challenges that current female officers perceive within their agency's culture (support from family/friends, respect from the community, respect from fellow officers), as well as organizational barriers associated with hiring and promotion (undesirable aspects of the career, advancement opportunities, and effect of children on advancement). However, there is very little research exploring the perceived difficulties among women who are not yet employed in law enforcement (Kringen, 2014). Studying both women who are currently employed as officers and women who are not is important in understanding why they are harder to recruit and retain. Recruitment strategies that directly target women, while not widely used, have had some success in select agencies (Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani & Kubu, 2009). Despite efforts to narrow this gap, it seems that females remain less interested in a career in law enforcement than males; furthermore, low proportions of females in law enforcement may be attributed to sex differences in perceptions and beliefs about the profession.

Research conducted by agencies has primarily focused on surveying female officers; however, a more comprehensive understanding of the differential interest in law enforcement can be achieved by surveying a broad potential applicant pool (Jordan et al.,

2009). This study will address these issues by comparing males and females in regards to their perceptions and beliefs regarding different aspects of, and viability of, a career in law enforcement. Specifically, a survey instrument will be distributed to a large sample of undergraduate students in order to explore students' perceptions of a career in law enforcement, as well as their perceptions of personal success and/or anticipated challenges they may face if pursuing this career. Analysis will seek to find significant differences in perceptions between males and females; personal perceptions of fulfillment, support, and interest will be measured, as well as general perceptions of the career, including experiences of officers, and undesirable aspects of law enforcement. If female students are significantly less interested in a career in law enforcement than male students, which is hypothesized in the current study, agencies will benefit from a deeper understanding of how potential female applicants' beliefs differ from that of males; in addition, the current study will seek to understand which perceptions are predictive of a decreased interest and a decreased perceived success in this career for females.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief History of Women in Policing

In the mid to late 1800s, before any woman held the title of police officer, women were employed as “jail matrons” and were given authority to care for incarcerated females and juveniles because it was believed that women were best-suited to fill these positions (National Center for Women and Policing). The notion that women possessed a certain set of skills and were natural caretakers kept them limited to these roles for some time. The first woman to be classified as a “safety worker” and have arrest powers was Lola Greene Baldwin in 1905. Baldwin served the Portland, Oregon city police department and acted as the director for Portland’s Department of Public Safety for the Protection of Young Girls and Women (Horne, 2006; Lonsway et al., 2005). Baldwin influenced the future role of women in law enforcement because her duties and accomplishments resembled the image of an officer as a “protector,” an image traditionally embodied only by male officers. In 1910, Alice Stebbin Wells became the first woman to hold the title of “policewoman,” serving the Los Angeles Police Department for 30 years, while advocating for women and children who were victims of crime. Wells founded the International Association of Police Women, which provided training, mentoring, and support for female officers (Horne, 2006). Although neither Baldwin nor Wells held the same police powers as males in their respective organizations, both women paved the way for increased opportunities for women in law enforcement careers.

Few female officers were employed throughout the 1910s and 1920s and their police duties remained limited to crimes involving women and children, such as truancy,

prostitution, or other roles akin to that of social workers (Lonsway et al., 2002). Progress was nearly stagnant in the 1930s when the Great Depression kept many women out of the workforce. During this decade, women in police departments largely held administrative or support positions such as dispatchers or clerical workers, in addition to their former roles of assisting with women and children (Marshall, 2013; Lonsway et al., 2002). After World War II, female officers experienced an increase in representation and more equality as law enforcement officers. Although still small in number, women in larger city departments began to be assigned to the same patrol duties as their male counterparts. Legislation in the 1960s and 1970s, including the 1963 Equal Pay Act, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Act of 1972, and the Crime Control Act of 1973, brought increased awareness and standards of equality to hiring women across all professions, including law enforcement (Schulz, 2004). Despite substantial growth in opportunity and equality, the percentage of female officers in 1990 reached only nine percent (Price, 1996).

While women have expanded their influence in local, state, and federal agencies, the FBI's annual Police Employment data source reports that the percentage of full-time female law enforcement employees has seen very little growth since the year 2004 (See Appendix C, Table 1). The most substantial growth has occurred in federal agencies or large city departments (100 officers or more), where the percentage of female officers increased by four percent between 1990 and 2000 (Reaves & Hickman, 2002; Schulz, 2009). Today, the proportion of female officers remains lowest in smaller, rural agencies (an average of six percent), and increases gradually as the size of the departments increase (as high as 15 percent for large departments) (Graue, Hildie & Weatherby,

2016). As of 2014, women accounted for about 12 percent of full-time, sworn officers nationwide (FBI, 2015).

Issues of Recruitment and Retention of Female Officers

With focused efforts to increase the proportion of female officers in local, state and federal agencies, women still remain severely underrepresented at each of these levels. To propose solutions to address this gender gap, researchers have sought to identify and measure difficulties in recruiting and retaining women in law enforcement careers by studying current officers. Difficulties in recruitment may be a result of differences between men and women in regards to perceptions of challenges in a law enforcement career. Generally, women perceive more formal and informal barriers (as a result of being female) in the police force, and they more often believe that these barriers negatively affect the recruitment of women (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). Specifically, Cordner and Cordner (2011) surveyed police chiefs (all male) and female officers in three metropolitan cities found significant gender differences of opinions about the success of recruiting women; approximately 48 percent of (male) police chiefs felt that agencies do not recruit women proactively, compared to 69 percent of the female officers surveyed. A majority of both groups felt that low female representation in law enforcement is primarily due to a small number of applicants. So, while male chiefs and female officers may agree that women are less likely to apply to law enforcement agencies, female officers are more likely to feel that departments are not effectively recruiting women.

In addition to issues of recruitment, female officers voluntarily depart from their agencies at higher rates than male officers (Doener, 1995; BJA, 2001). When measuring beliefs about difficulties in retention, female officers were more likely to report that

retention issues stem from an academy that is male-dominated and not woman-friendly, a culture that is male-dominated and not woman-friendly, and a lack of family-friendly policies such as child-care and maternity leave (Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). Beliefs of a male-dominated police academy and police culture are likely deeply rooted in decades of inequality and underrepresentation of women and these perceptions may be slow to change. However, agencies can address specific perceptions and beliefs that are unique to women in order to more effectively recruit females into this career.

The Value of Females in Law Enforcement

Addressing the issue of low female representation in policing is not simply about creating equal proportions of male and female officers. While most believe that gender diversification is important within the police force, there are differing beliefs regarding the proportion of female officers that departments should strive to hire. Police agencies have increased their efforts to recruit female officers with the belief that women have qualities or policing styles that can make them equally successful officers, and possibly more effective than their male counterparts in certain situations (Lonsway et al., 2002; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2005). The idea that “gender matters” has long permeated police work and police culture. Subscribing to gender differences worked discriminately against women in the past when they were limited to maternal or caregiver roles; however, recognizing these gender differences seems to be working in reverse (at times) and in support of women in recent years. Today, law enforcement agencies attempt to recruit more female officers because it is believed that their policing style differs from that of male officers (Kringen, 2014). However, departments that intentionally exaggerate these gender differences during their hiring and training processes (in an attempt to appeal to

female applicants) may actually discourage women who already perceive themselves as being less physically and mentally capable of police work (Kringen, 2014).

Responses to sexual assault and domestic violence incidents provide an illustration of the effectiveness of increasing female representation in law enforcement agencies. Today, nearly 1 in 4 women in the United States will be a victim of intimate partner violence (Breiding et al., 2014), and research finds that female officers place a greater emphasis on characteristics of sympathy and compassion, and feel a greater responsibility for responding to domestic violence calls (Homant & Kennedy, 1985). Victims of domestic violence also generally report more positive experiences with female officers than male officers (Kennedy & Homant, 1983). Furthermore, researchers find that female officers perceive themselves as having more empathy and stronger communication skills than their male counterparts (Lonsway et al., 2003; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). In contrast, other findings have resulted in few significant differences between female and male officers in terms of their attitudes towards inmates (in a survey of correctional workers) and the general public (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Poteyeva & Sun, 2009).

There is reason to believe that women may be initially interested in pursuing law enforcement careers for different reasons than men. For example, Secklecki and Paynich (2007) found in their large survey of female officers that the primary motivation to pursue a career in law enforcement was a desire to help people. Further, in studies of both men and women, female recruits were significantly more likely to indicate “the opportunity to help people” as a primary motivation (Raganella & White, 2004). Similarly, a survey of correctional officers found that a much greater proportion of

women claim an “interest in human service work or inmate rehabilitation” than men (Jurik & Halemba, 1984).

Women may possess characteristics that make them effective officers; the debate that remains is whether or not females have certain characteristics or traits that make them equally or more effective/successful than their male counterparts. In a new era of rising public scrutiny against police use of force, findings suggest that women are significantly less likely to use excessive force and deadly force, less likely to receive citizen complaints, less likely to have complaints against them sustained, and are less authoritarian (Horvath, 1987; Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991; Lonsway et al., 2001). Furthermore, incidents involving female officers account for only about six percent of the funds used to settle complaints of excessive force (Lonsway et al., 2002). These findings have important implications for law enforcement agencies that may be worried about citizen complaints or lawsuits, and for departments that wish to establish stronger working relationships with their respective communities.

Perceptions and Experiences of Women in Law Enforcement

If law enforcement agencies want to make meaningful changes in the representation of women in the police force, it is important for them to understand and respond to what women believe are the challenges that are unique to them within this career. There is an abundance of literature on perceptions of current females in law enforcement; however, there is significantly less research that has attempted to measure perceptions of females who are not yet employed (Kringen, 2014). Women, who are interested in law enforcement, but perceive significant challenges to females in this

career, will be more difficult to recruit into agencies. In addition, there may be perceptions and beliefs that deter some women from considering a career in law enforcement at all. These factors below are experiences and challenges that female officers report experiencing more often than male officers; these are factors that will be important for law enforcement agencies to consider.

Fulfillment, Success, and Support

Research has found that women place greater significance on personal rewards, such as fulfillment, from their career than men (Bridges, 1989). Similarly, women in male-dominated professions define success in terms of work-life balance, maintaining relationships, and personal fulfillment, rather than material rewards or compensation (Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Eccles, 1987).

Balancing Work and Family Life

One challenge of particular importance to women is that policing is not a family-friendly profession, a perception that is based on limited maternity policies and the inflexibility of work schedules (Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Yu, 2015). More female officers (66%) than male officers (48%) reported a lack of family-friendly policies as an explanation for a low representation of female officers. It seems likely that creating policies supporting families and encouraging a work-life balance would increase the number of female officers (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). While both male police chiefs and female officers largely agreed that it was necessary to adopt targeted recruitment strategies for women, female officers are more likely to support policies that would balance work and family life. Female officers, who are often the primary care-givers for their children, are more likely to face difficult occupational barriers from agency policies

concerning pregnancy, maternity leave, child care, rotating shift work, and required relocation practices (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). Beyond law enforcement, research finds that women generally are concerned with work-life balance and desire a career with scheduling flexibility (Frome, Alfeld, Eccles & Barber, 2006).

Acceptance and Respect

A lack of respect from fellow officers and acceptance into the policing culture are additional experiences that women struggled with in the first few decades of their service as officers, and these struggles persist today (Martin & Jurik, 2006; Seklecki & Paynich, 2007; Yu, 2015). For example, in a random sample of over 500 female police officers, Seklecki and Paynich (2007) found that 39 percent of officers felt that they were less accepted in their agencies than their male counterparts, and 32 percent felt they were treated with less respect. Findings from a survey of female federal officers (Yu, 2015) indicate that the most frequently reported challenge to women in federal law enforcement was a lack of respect from male colleagues, followed by a lack of family-work balance (45% and 26%, respectively). Furthermore, about one fourth of female officers reported “pervasive negative attitudes from their male colleagues” (p. 268). Explorations of female officers’ experiences find that women perceive gender discrimination at many levels; discrimination is felt from males within their own rank, supervisors, administrators, and even the general public (Gossett & Williams, 2008; Martin & Jurik, 2006; Secklecki & Paynich, 2007). Female officers report that they are initially met with hesitation and scrutiny by male officers until they have proven themselves competent enough for the job (Graue, Hildie & Weatherby, 2016).

Promotion/Advancement

An underrepresentation of female across all agencies contributes to a lack of women in high-ranking law enforcement positions. Agencies do often encourage female officers to consider promotional opportunities; however, research finds that female officers are still less likely to pursue these positions (Archbold, Hassell & Stichman, 2010; Archbold & Schulz, 2008, 2012; Graue, Hildie & Weatherby, 2016). Being promoted often requires a schedule change, including the evening/overnight shift, which may be problematic for female officers who are also primary caregivers for their family. In addition, obstacles of childcare and maternity leave may deter female officers from seeking promotional opportunities (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Consequently, the increase in female patrol officers has grown at a faster rate than the promotion of women to leadership or command-level positions (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). The percentage of female officers who are promoted to leadership positions remains significantly lower than male officers.

Research finds that women perceive gender discrimination in considerations of assignments, promotions, and training opportunities (Yu, 2015). There is evidence that men and women value salary, opportunity, and advancement as equally important when considering careers (Bridges, 1969; Raganella & White, 2004); furthermore, males and females in law enforcement have similar aspirations in regards to promotion and advancement (Fekjaer & Halrynjo, 2011). Women who weigh these factors heavily in career decision-making may not believe a career in law enforcement is viable if they also believe female officers are less likely to be promoted.

Agency Efforts to Increase Female Representation

A national survey of state, county and municipal police agencies found that about one in five agencies utilized a recruitment strategy that directly targeted women (Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani & Kubu, 2009). Focused efforts to increase female hires are more prevalent in larger agencies, and these agencies are more likely to operate (currently or in the past) under a state mandate or court order for equal employment opportunity (Lonsway et al., 2002). Methods used by agencies include adopting hiring preferences (lower education standards, lower fitness standards, exam exemptions, setting a quota, offering faster promotion or higher pay, and preference on waiting lists) during the hiring and training processes; however, the utilization of these preferences is rare. About three to five percent of agencies reported having lowered fitness standards for female applicants and one to four percent reported giving preference to females on a waiting list; other preferences, such as quotas, exam exemptions, or higher pay were used in less than one percent of agencies surveyed (Jordan et al., 2009). These automatic preferences, used in a very small percentage of agencies, have had no statistically significant impact on female applicants or female hires (Jordan et al., 2009).

For agencies that did subscribe to some preference or targeted recruitment strategy, the subsequent results have been mixed. Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani and Kubu (2009) found that while higher pay did increase female applicants by 89 percent, there was no significant effect on the actual number of female hires. Increases in agency recruitment budgets had more promising effects on recruiting and hiring female officers; some agencies saw significant effects on female applicants, and a 48 percent increase in female hires, after increasing recruitment budgets (Jordan et al., 2009). Overall, agencies

that reported using targeted strategies or increased recruitment budgets, rather than automatic preferences, significantly increased their female hires. Departments will need to utilize focused campaigns in order continue to increase their visibility for female applicants and subsequently, increase female hires.

Summary of the Literature and Focus of the Current Study

Arguably, women in law enforcement must overcome organizational, social, and cultural barriers that are different or non-existent for men. Research indicates that female officers have a difficult time balancing work and family life, and inadequate pregnancy/maternity policies are commonly reported barriers to recruitment and retention of females. Within their own agencies, female officers report that they feel less respected than their male counterparts and perceive negative attitudes from male counterparts. These beliefs and experiences of women are likely not unique to a few select agencies, rather, they are experiences felt as a result of joining a continuing, male-dominated culture.

Despite increased efforts to attract women, the proportion of female officers has experienced little growth since the year 2000. Female representation will likely expand meaningfully when law enforcement agencies identify and incorporate female experiences and perceptions into focused recruitment and retention strategies. Part of this strategy must involve understanding the experiences and perceptions of among women who may be interested, but have not yet embarked on, a career in law enforcement. There is an abundance of research on the experiences of female officers; however, there is a need for additional research that expands our understanding of how women perceive the viability of pursuing a law enforcement career, and whether their perceptions about the

career are related to a decreased interest in becoming an officer, or a decreased perception of future success as an officer.¹

Much of what we know about women's perceptions of a law enforcement career, and how they differ from men's perceptions, comes from research on current officers (Kringen, 2014). The current study will take a new approach by studying a sample of students, who are likely in a position where they are considering a law enforcement career. Specifically, this study will survey male and female students who are enrolled in undergraduate criminal justice courses; it is likely that a reasonable proportion of these students will be interested in a law enforcement career (Krimmel & Tartaro, 1999). The survey results will help to educate scholars and practitioners of any differences between young men and women in regards to their perceptions and beliefs associated with a potential career in law enforcement. Specifically, this study will seek to explore the perceived challenges to success among young women who may be interested in law enforcement and are considering this career path, or young women whose perceptions may have dissuaded them from pursuing a career in law enforcement altogether. Specifically, this study will test the following hypotheses:

H₁: Female students will be less interested than male students in a career in law enforcement.

¹ Perceptions data, or subjective data, can have methodological issues that are not present in objective data; perceptions data allows researchers to ask respondents how they feel about something or what they believe about something, whereas this information could not be known with objective questions (Takeuchi, Hine & Chavez, 2015). Ben and Benedict (2002) reviewed over 100 articles on citizens' perceptions of police and emphasized the value of survey research among law enforcement practitioners. Many studies compare perceptions among race or economic status, however, the relationship between gender and perceptions is unclear (Ben & Bennett, 2005). Perceptions data may be crucial to the current study because it can help capture the "evolution of social norms that drive unequal outcomes for women through their life-cycle in domains such as education, health, political representation and labour markets" (Takeuchi, Hine & Chavez, 2015, p.13).

H₂: Female students will perceive themselves as being less successful than male students if they pursued a career in law enforcement.

H₃: Female students will have different perceptions associated with a career in law enforcement, including:

- a. Female students will perceive the career as less fulfilling than males.
- b. Female students will perceive less family/friend support associated with a decision to become a law enforcement officer than men.
- c. Female students will perceive more difficulties in receiving respect, acceptance and opportunities in a law enforcement career than men.
- d. Female students' views of the undesirable aspects of a law enforcement career will differ than those of men.

H₄: Perceptions of a law enforcement career will predict students' perceived success in a law enforcement career differentially across sex.

H₅: Perceptions of a law enforcement career will predict students' interest in law enforcement differentially across sex.

METHODOLOGY

Data and Procedure

Data from this study were collected by distributing an anonymous, in-person, self-administered survey to 630 students enrolled in five undergraduate criminal justice introductory courses. Courses that were surveyed include *Introduction to Criminal Justice* (3 sections of 159, 176, and 58 enrolled students), *Introduction to Law Enforcement* (1 section of 202 enrolled students), and *Introduction to Corrections* (1 section of 35 students). Students enrolled in these courses were surveyed in March and April of 2016 within the Criminal Justice and Criminology Department of a large, urban southeastern university. Students who were enrolled in two or three of the targeted courses were asked to not complete the survey a second time. Most students were between the ages of 18 and 24, and both male and female students were invited to participate.

After receiving permission from each course instructor, the researcher administered the survey at the beginning of a class session. The purpose of the study was explained as well as any potential benefits associated with the research. All students were invited to participate; however, the researcher explained that participation was entirely voluntary. A consent form was distributed before the survey to obtain permission to participate from each student (see Appendix A). Surveys were then distributed to all students, who were given approximately 15 minutes to complete the instrument (see Appendix B). Consent forms and survey instruments were collected at the completion of the administration period. Of the 630 students invited to participate in this study, 387 students returned surveys, an overall response rate of 61% (see Appendix C, Table 2).The

highest response rate for a single course (1a, see Appendix C, Table 2) was likely due to that particular professor offering an extra credit incentive to students who chose to participate. Other professors did not offer extra credit. These response rates were calculated based on the number of students enrolled in each course, not the number of students who were in attendance the day the survey was administered or the number in the class who had not yet completed the survey in another course; therefore, true response rates for individual course sections and the overall response rate are higher. For a full list of survey questions see Appendix B.

Measures

Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables in this study were; 1) perceived potential success in a law enforcement career; and 2) interest in a law enforcement career. All participants, even those who indicated they were not interested in a law enforcement career, were asked about their perception of anticipated success with the following question: “I would be successful (able to perform duties effectively and fairly) as a law enforcement officer if I chose that career path.” Answers choices were given in an 11-item Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (-5) to strongly agree (5). An 11-item Likert scale was used to increase variability among answers and to increase the power of detecting and explaining differences between male and female students (Wittink & Bayer, 2003).

Interest was measured by the question, “I have an interest in becoming a law enforcement officer.” Participants chose one of three answer choices: yes, I’m unsure, or no. Those that answered “yes” or “I’m unsure” were asked to indicate the extent of their interest in a law enforcement career. These participants could answer that they were

somewhat interested (I have given the career path some thought), interested (I have given the career path serious thought), or very interested (I am seriously considering this career path). For use in multivariate analyses, interest was dichotomized where a value of '1' is interpreted as "interested" (somewhat, interested, very interested) and a value of '0' is interpreted as "not interested".

Independent Variables

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and beliefs about the viability of pursuing a law enforcement career and whether these perceptions and beliefs differ between male and female college students. Variables thought to impact interest and perceived success in a law enforcement career include perceptions of fulfillment and success, support of friends and family, respect from the community, respect and acceptance from fellow officers, opportunities for advancement, qualities of successful officers, and undesirable aspects of the career. Survey questions were developed by the author to measure these various constructs (See Appendix B). Survey questions that asked students about undesirable aspects of the career and qualities of successful officers were based on a prior online survey conducted by a local police department in August 2008.

Perceptions of Fulfillment

Personal fulfillment was measured with the statement "I would feel a sense of personal fulfillment if I became a law enforcement officer" (a definition of personal fulfillment was offered as the achievement of life goals that are important to an individual, and give satisfaction to that individual). Students were asked to record their

agreement or disagreement with this statement using an 11-item Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (-5) to strongly agree (5).

Perceptions of Support

Using the same 11-item Likert scale, students were asked to record their agreement with the statement: “my family and friends would support my decision to become a law enforcement officer.”

Perceptions of Respect/Acceptance

A set of questions was used to measure student perceptions of respect and acceptance. Using the same Likert scale mentioned above, students were first asked to report their level of agreement with the statement “law enforcement officers are respected by their communities.” Several additional questions asked participants to indicate whether male and female officers differentially experienced acceptance into the culture of their agencies, and whether male and female officers differentially receive respect from their communities and from fellow officers (see Appendix B, items 4-6).

Perceptions of Opportunity and Advancement

Three questions were used to measure perceptions of opportunity and advancement. Students reported whether they believe male or female officers differentially receive opportunities for advancement and promotion, are differentially considered for promotion, and whether their advancement is differentially affected by having children (see Appendix B, items 6-9).

Perceptions of Undesirable Aspects of the Career

Finally, participants were asked to rank-order (1-8, where 1= the least desirable or worst aspect) various aspects of a law enforcement career that they may find undesirable;

including 1) pay not being high enough; 2) limited advancement opportunity; 3) dangerousness of police work; 4) lack of respect from the community; 5) physical fitness expectations; 6) not being a family-friendly profession; 7) high-stress situations; and 8) lack of respect from fellow officers. Aspects chosen for inclusion in the current study were those frequently reported by respondents in a similarly designed online survey of college students (Author omitted, 2008). Based on prior studies, limited advancement opportunity and lack of respect from fellow officers were also included as undesirable aspects because these are perceived challenges of female officers (Kringen, 2015; Yu, 2015; Raganella & White, 2004).

Demographics and Other Variables

Demographic variables measured included sex, age, and race. Participants were also asked whether they have any immediate family members who work as law enforcement officers, or if they have experienced an encounter with an officer where they felt they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully. In addition, females participants were asked how being a female impacted their interest in law enforcement. Female participants could choose one of five answers: strongly and negatively impacts my interest (makes me not want to be an officer), negatively impacts my interest to some degree, has no effect on my interest or lack of interest, positively impacts my interest to some degree, and strongly and positively impacts my interest (makes me want to be an officer).

Analytical Strategy

This study sought to identify differences in perceptions and beliefs associated with a law enforcement career between male and female students. Also, the study explored whether female college students perceive different sets of challenges to their

potential success as a law enforcement officer, or whether females have more negative perceptions of a law enforcement career. Finally, the study examined whether certain perceptions and/or perceived barriers are related to a decreased interest in a law enforcement career or a lower perceived potential success, and whether these perceptions differentially impact success and interest for female college students.

This study utilized t-tests, non-parametric tests, and chi-square cross-tabulations to compare group differences (male and female students) in terms of perceptions and beliefs associated with the pursuit of a law enforcement career. These bivariate analyses explored differences among male and female students, and specifically tested the assumptions of H₁, H₂ and H₃. At the multivariate level, linear regression models were used to predict the perceived potential success of students; predictor variables included gender and other perceptions, as well as interactions effects between gender and perceptions. Finally, perceived success, gender and other related perceptions were used in a logistic regression to predict interest in a law enforcement career; this study also tested for interaction effects between gender and these perceptions when predicting interest.

RESULTS

Returned surveys yielded a sample size of 387 undergraduate students. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 47 with a mean age of 20.8 (SD= 3.3). Male students were an average of one year older than female students (21.2 vs. 20.3, respectively; $p < .01$). The sample of students was approximately 56% male and 44% female. Slightly less than two thirds (61.9%) of the sample respondents were Caucasian, 19.7% were African-American, 9.8% were Hispanic, 3.9% were Asian, and the remaining 4.7% were mixed races or other races. In comparison to the demographics of all students at the university, the study sample was fairly representative. The university reports the student population to be about 49% female students, 58% Caucasian, 16% African-American, 8% Hispanic, and 5% Asian. Within the sample, female students were more likely to have a family member in law enforcement than male students (24.3% vs. 13.8%, respectively; $p < .01$). Students were asked to report whether or not they had a negative experience with a law enforcement officer where they felt they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully; proportions of male and female students that reported having a negative experience were similar. Demographic characteristics for the sample are presented in Table 3.

Results of the Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: Female students will be less interested than male students in a career in law enforcement.

Fundamental to the current study is the notion women are less likely to be interested in a law enforcement career. As hypothesized, there are significant differences in levels of interest between male and female students ($\chi^2=7.949$, $p < .05$). Similar

proportions of male and female students reported being “somewhat interested,” however, male students were almost twice as likely to report being “very interested.” Varying levels of interest among the sample as a whole, and by sex of participant, are displayed in Table 4.

- Hypothesis 2: Female students will perceive themselves as being less successful than male students if they pursued a career in law enforcement.

Findings within the sample support the hypothesis that women perceive themselves as being potentially less successful as law enforcement officers if they were to choose that career path. As seen in Table 4, female students had a significantly lower average perceived success ranking than male students (7.5 vs. 8.6, respectively; $p < .01$).

- Hypothesis 3: Female students will have different perceptions associated with a career in law enforcement.

a. Female students will see the career as less fulfilling than males.

As hypothesized, male students had a higher average ranking for “I would feel a sense of personal fulfillment if I became a law enforcement officer” than female students (6.9 vs. 6.0, respectively). Group differences in personal fulfillment were statistically significant when utilizing a t-test to compare means ($t=3.144$, $p < .01$). Results for the sample as a whole and by sex of participant are displayed in Table 4.

b. Female students will perceive less family/friend support for their decision to be law enforcement officers than men.

Results in Table 4 also include group comparisons for the question “My family and friends would support my decision to be a law enforcement officer.” Interestingly,

there were no significant differences between male (mean=7.6, SD=2.5) and female students (mean=7.5, SD=2.5).

c. Female students will perceive more difficulties in getting respect, acceptance and opportunity in a law enforcement career than men.

There were significant differences between male and female students in regards to their beliefs about experiences of officers. For ease of interpretation, beliefs regarding officer experiences were collapsed from a 5-point Likert scale to three levels of agreement: favorable to female officers (women receive a little/a lot more respect, acceptance and opportunity), neutral (men and women receive equal respect, acceptance and opportunity), and favorable to male officers (men receive a little/a lot more respect, acceptance and opportunity). As hypothesized, chi-square cross-tabulations yielded significant differences between male and female students across all included experiences (respect from the community; $p < .05$, respect from fellow officers; $p < .05$, acceptance into agency culture; $p < .01$, opportunity for advancement; $p < .01$, consideration for promotion; $p < .01$, and the effect of children on advancement; $p < .01$). As seen in Table 5, more male students indicated that male and female officers receive an equal amount of support from their community whereas more female students reported “male favorable” answers (male officers receive a little more or a lot more) for experiences including respect among their fellow officers, acceptance into agency culture, opportunity for advancement and promotion. Additionally, more male students were inclined to believe that male and female officers were equally impacted by having children.

d. Female students’ views of the undesirable aspects of a law enforcement career will differ than those of male students.

Male and female students were asked to rank order aspects of a law enforcement career that they may find undesirable. As seen in Table 6, the three most undesirable aspects for male students were low pay, dangerousness of the work, and lack of respect among the community. Female students reported that dangerousness was the most undesirable aspect of the career, followed by low pay and high-stress situations (low pay and high stress had the same mean ranking for females). Statistically significant differences in ranking (scores) existed for aspects of low pay ($p < .05$), limited advancement ($p < .05$), dangerousness ($p < .01$), and high-stress ($p < .05$). Male students reported that low pay (mean rank = 3.2) and limited advancement (mean rank = 4.6) were more undesirable, while female students found that the dangerousness (mean rank = 2.8) and high-stress situations (mean rank = 3.7) were more undesirable.

- Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of a law enforcement career will predict students' perceived success in a law enforcement career differentially across sex.

A series of linear (ordinary least squares) regression equations were used to test the effects of numerous independent variables on students' perceived potential success in a law enforcement career. Initially, the independent variables included were personal fulfillment, support of family and friends, sex, and interest in a law enforcement career, as well as measures of respect, acceptance, and advancement. In bivariate analyses, some findings related to respect, acceptance and advancement were significantly different between male and female students; however, these measures did not have a significant impact on the primary dependent variable (perceived success) when included in linear regression models. However, as seen in Table 7, the variables sex, personal fulfillment, support of family and friends, and interest in a law enforcement career were statistically

significant. Being female negatively impacted perceived success when controlling for all of the aforementioned perceptions.

In order to have a more parsimonious model and to test for interaction effects, the researcher re-ran the regression to include only perceptions that were statistically significant in the “full model”; these variables were then used to create the interaction terms. As seen in Table 8, variables in the final model include were sex, personal fulfillment, support of family and friends, interest, and the interaction between sex and interest. Sex was significantly (and inversely) predictive of perceived future success; specifically, being female was significantly related to a lower perceived potential success ($p < .001$). Personal fulfillment, support of friends and family, and interest in a law enforcement career were all positively and significantly predictive of a higher perceived success. The researcher tested for interaction effects between gender and fulfillment, gender and support, and gender and interest. Findings suggest that fulfillment and support do not differentially impact perceived success across males and females. An important finding was the significant interaction between gender and interest ($p < .05$). In subsequent analyses (not shown), the predicted values of success for each sex and interest level were computed. The results revealed that uninterested males perceive success nearly equal to females who are interested in law enforcement. The final model was statistically significant ($f = 14.665$; $p < .001$) and explains 22 percent of the variance in perceived success.^{2,3}

² Because the dependent variable was arguably an ordinal measure, the stability of the model was also tested using ordinal regression. The results were essentially the same.

³ When included in this model, having a family member in law enforcement was also positively related to success and nearly significant ($p = .056$). While an interesting finding, this variable was not included in the reported model because the researcher did not see any theoretical reason to include it at this time. This result will be discussed more in the Discussion section.

- Hypothesis 5: Perceptions of a law enforcement career will predict students' interest in a law enforcement career differentially across sex.

A series of logistic regression equations were used to predict interest (dichotomized) in a law enforcement career. Initially, independent variables included were personal fulfillment, support of family and friends, perceived success, gender, respect, acceptance, and advancement. In bivariate analyses, findings related to respect, acceptance and advancement were significantly different between male and female students; additionally, bivariate analyses found that females were significantly less likely to be interested in a law enforcement career. Despite these bivariate findings, gender, support of family and friends, respect, acceptance, and advancement measures did not have a significant impact on the primary dependent variable (interest in a law enforcement career) when included in logistic regression models (see full model displayed in Table 9). Parallel to the analysis of success, variables that were not statistically significant in the "full model" were excluded from the final model and from the interaction effects. When testing for interaction effects between gender and fulfillment, as well as gender and success, analyses found that neither of these interactions were significant.

Predictor variables included in the final logistic regression model (see Table 10) were sex, race, age, personal fulfillment and perceived potential success. Personal fulfillment ($p < .001$) and perceived success ($p < .05$) were both positively related to interest in a law enforcement career. Odds ratios for fulfillment and success were greater than one, meaning that a unit increase in fulfillment and success subsequently increases the probability of having an interest in a law enforcement career. Significant Wald statistics

were found for both predictor variables, meaning both fulfillment and success independently have a significant contribution to the prediction of interest in a law enforcement career. Inconsistent with hypothesis five, these perceptions did not impact interest differentially for males and females. The logistic regression model displayed in Table 10 explains about 44 percent of the variability in interest.⁴

⁴ Having a negative experience with a law enforcement officer was negatively and nearly significantly predictive of interest in a law enforcement career ($p=.057$). While an interesting finding, the researcher has chosen to omit it from the final model because there is no theoretical reason to include it. Again, this will be discussed later.

DISCUSSION

Relying on a sample of 387 undergraduate students enrolled in criminal justice introductory courses, this study explored differences among male and female students in regards to their perceptions and beliefs associated with a hypothetical career in law enforcement. This study measured personal perceptions of potential careers in law enforcement, as well as perceptions of the experiences of sworn officers. Differences in perceptions among male and female students may help to explain differences in perceived success in a law enforcement career and subsequently, may impact interest in a law enforcement career.

Overall, female students were less interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement and reported lower perceived success if they were to choose that career path. Additional analyses found significant differences in perceptions of a law enforcement career and experiences of officers between males and females. Female students reported a lesser sense of personal fulfillment if they were to become law enforcement officers in the future. Inconsistent with the original hypotheses, male and female students had similar levels of agreement regarding support from family and friends if they were to become law enforcement officers. Regarding perceptions of the experiences of law enforcement officers, female students were more often inclined to believe that female officers receive less community respect, less respect from fellow officers, less acceptance into the culture of their agency, and less opportunity for advancement. When ranking aspects of the career found to be undesirable, females were more concerned with the dangerousness and high stress of police work.

Analyses were also used to predict the two dependent variables within this study: perceived success and potential interest in a law enforcement career. It was found that perceived success was impacted by certain perceptions of a career in law enforcement for both male and female students. Students' perceptions of whether male and female officers differentially receive respect, acceptance, and promotion were not predictors of perceived success when included in multivariate models. Perceptions of fulfillment, support of friends and family, and interest in a law enforcement career positively and significantly impacted students' perceived success in a law enforcement career. Being female was a significant and inverse predictor of perceived success; the effect of sex was not fully mediated by these other variables, or the interaction terms. When testing for interaction effects between gender and these perceptions, interest in a law enforcement career was differentially predictive of perceived success for male and female students.

Additionally, models were used to predict student interest (interested vs. not interested) in a law enforcement career. While sex and perceptions of family/friend support were predictive of perceived success, these variables were found to have no impact on interest. The sex effect found in bivariate analyses and in predicting success is explained away by fulfillment and perceived success when predicting interest. Similar to models predicting future success, student perceptions of experiences of active officers did not predict the likelihood of interest. Students' beliefs regarding personal fulfillment and success in a law enforcement career positively and significantly increased the odds of being interested in a law enforcement career. Personal fulfillment and perceived success did not differentially impact interest between male and female students.

Study/Policy Implications

Research that examines perceptions of current officers is critical for understanding the career and organizational challenges that exist for female officers and for learning why women are more difficult to recruit into law enforcement. This study broadens this understanding by surveying males and females who are not employed in law enforcement and by comparing their perceptions and beliefs regarding this career path. Women remain severely underrepresented in law enforcement (Archbold & Schulz, 2008 & FBI, 2015) and research finds that women are more difficult to recruit (BJA, 2001; Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Kringen, 2014). The current study confirms that young, college-educated women are less interested in a career in law enforcement than similarly aged and educated males. This finding may be problematic for agencies who desire higher proportions of female officers because the students surveyed in this study comprise what would be considered a target applicant population (young, college-educated, mostly criminal justice students). Knowing that young women are less interested should encourage police agencies to actively target females during presentations and recruitment events, especially at universities. Perhaps women are less interested in law enforcement because they perceive challenges the career presents to their success. Subsequent findings of this study can help to inform agencies what these perceptions are and how to address them.

To help explain this gender disparity in interest, perceptions of self (success, fulfillment, support of friends/family) and perceptions of a law enforcement career more generally (experiences of officers and undesirable aspects of the career) were compared between male and female students. Among the sample, which is arguably a target applicant pool (Jordan et al., 2009), there was a relationship between gender and

perceptions of success and fulfillment. Research on women in male-dominated professions has found that women value personal fulfillment more than men and often define success intrinsically while considering feelings of personal fulfillment (Bridges, 1989; Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Eccles, 1987) The current study also finds that female students are more inclined to believe that male officers receive more support, respect, and promotion within their agencies, which is consistent with studies of female officers (Gossett & Williams, 2008; Martin & Jurik, 2006; Seklecki & Paynich, 2007; Yu, 2015).

The implications of these findings are significant; young women are less likely to believe they will be successful as officers and perceive feeling less fulfilled by the thought of police work. In response, agencies could stress the community-centered and service-oriented aspects of police work, which would make the profession seem more personally fulfilling. Additionally, young women who are not employed as officers perceive that female officers face gender discrimination in promotion and advancement, and are less respected and accepted. This perception will continue to dissuade young women who have some interest in law enforcement, but believe they will face certain challenges or discrimination even after being hired. Agencies should proactively discuss these perceptions at informational and recruitment events and explain how their organization is working to address these challenges, both during hiring and following employment.

Perceived success in a law enforcement career and interest in a law enforcement career were significantly and positively predictive of one another in this study. It is not clear from this one study exactly how these two constructs are related, but one possibility is that perceptions of success in a career would ultimately impact whether or not one

wanted to pursue a career. Specifically, students who do not believe they would be successful as officers are unlikely to consider pursuing a career in law enforcement. These findings suggest that agencies should focus on ways to influence perceived success among potential female applicants. Female students who *are* interested in law enforcement perceive success nearly equal to male students who *are not* interested in law enforcement. Male students may perceive a greater degree of success, even if they are not interested, because policing continues to be a male-dominated career and has been characterized by physical strength (Lonsway et al., 2003). Recruiters may be able to increase perceptions of success among female applicants by educating them regarding what characteristics or practices are common among successful officers. Specifically, it is important that female applicants know that female officers are increasingly being sought after by agencies because they are less likely to use excessive force, more likely to respond effectively to domestic violence situations, and their policing styles are more likely to improve police-community relations (Lonsway et al., 2003; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2005). While doing so, agencies should not lose sight of the importance of personal fulfillment, which may be driving perceptions of success and interest.

Other Factors that May Impact Perceived Success and Interest

A number of other factors, that may or may not be related to perceived success and interest, were also examined. For example, students who had a family member in law enforcement had more favorable perceptions of their potential success if they were to become officers in the future. It may be the case that students who have an immediate family member in law enforcement are more likely to understand some of challenges of a career in law enforcement, and their perceived success may be positively impacted by

this additional insight. The implications of this finding should facilitate more education and interaction between law enforcement officers and young potential (female) applicants. These interactions could potentially be enhanced by ride-along programs, internships, and volunteer work within law enforcement agencies, as examples. It may be the case that the more realistic students' understanding of the career, the more confidence they may have in their success as future officers.

Another potentially important finding was that students' ranking of the dangerousness of police work was inversely related to their perceived success; alternatively, a greater concern regarding the dangerousness of police work was related to a lower perception of success. Recruiters should educate potential applicants, who may have an exaggerated understanding of the dangers associated with police work. This concern should be addressed particularly with young women who reported danger as the most undesirable aspect of the profession.

Finally, experiencing an encounter with a law enforcement officer, where a student believed they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully, was inversely related to an interest in a law enforcement career. It cannot be determined if a negative encounter has caused disinterest. However, it seems logical that being disrespected by an officer has the potential to create an unfavorable perception of law enforcement, in general, and this perception could dissuade one from being interested in a policing profession.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study targeted a sample of over 600 students, only 387 surveys were returned for analysis. A larger sample would have provided more power in comparing male and females in the bivariate analyses, and would have allowed for a

more comprehensive test of other variables in both the linear regression and logistic regression models. Further, all respondents were undergraduate students at a large, urban, southeastern university, most of whom are criminal justice minors/majors; thus, caution should be exercised when generalizing these results to a broader population. However, for this study, criminal justice students were intentionally chosen for inclusion because they are arguably in the best position to be considering a career in law enforcement. Future studies might gather similar data from multiple universities with equally diverse populations.

Given that participants were self-selected volunteers, there is potential for nonresponse bias in that students who completed the survey are systematically different than students who decided not to complete the survey. This study utilized a cross-sectional survey to measure beliefs and perceptions of students, and introductory courses were targeted, where many students may be at the beginning of their college education. Future research could use a repeated cross-sectional survey designs to capture student perceptions later in their criminal justice coursework, when they are more likely to be considering the viability of career options and when they have a deeper understanding of the role of law enforcement in the criminal justice system. The survey also includes single-item measures of specific beliefs and perceptions, where internal reliability cannot be assessed.

Additionally, this study cannot provide evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between the dependent and independent variables. It is not known whether perceptions of the career that are measured are operating to affect perceptions of success and interest, or rather, if perceived success and interest are affecting these perceptions.

While it would be difficult to do so, future research could attempt to uncover a causal relationship by asking respondents which beliefs or perceptions, if any, are impacting their decisions to pursue a career in law enforcement (or if their disinterest is not due to perceived challenges in the career).

Further, the findings of this study suggest that perceptions of success and personal fulfillment are significant predictors of interest in a law enforcement career for both males and females. What is not known is whether perceived success impacts interest, or if interest in the career is responsible for perceptions of success. Some suggestions for future research would include testing the causal relationship between these two variables and examining how personal fulfillment interacts with success and interest. Future inquiry may also include examining the interaction between gender and interest, specifically why interested women perceive less success than interested men and nearly the same as uninterested men. Finally, since this study found that women were less likely to be interested in law enforcement, perceive potential success, and perceive future fulfillment, a subsequent study should determine how women define success and fulfillment, and how these definitions are different from their male counterparts.

Conclusion

While women have made advances in the male-dominated profession of policing, they remain underrepresented across local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies (Archbold & Schulz, 2008; FBI, 2015; Kringen, 2014; Langton, 2010). Prior research has examined recruitment and retention of female officers, as well as the experiences of women in policing (Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Jordan, Fridell, Faggiani & Kubu, 2009). This study contributes to this knowledge by comparing males and females, who are not

employed as officers, in order to understand how their perceptions of a law enforcement career differ. As hypothesized, young women were less likely to be interested in law enforcement, less likely to perceive themselves as successful officers, and were less likely to perceive themselves as feeling fulfilled by police work. Young women were also more likely to believe that female officers received less respect, acceptance and opportunity within their agencies. Other findings include the significant impact of gender, fulfillment, support of friends/family and interest on perceived success. An interesting interaction between gender and interest when predicting success was found; young women who are interested in law enforcement perceive less success than interested males, and nearly equal success as males who are not at all interested. In another model, fulfillment and success significantly impacted interest among all respondents, and mediated the effect of sex.

Future suggestions for other researchers would include testing the causal relationship between perceptions of success and interest in law enforcement. It would also be beneficial to explore why the effect of interest on perceptions of success is different for males and females. Additionally, studies should seek to understand how young women define fulfillment and success, and how recruitment efforts can be designed to reflect and respond to these internal definitions. While there were limitations to the survey design used here, this study reached a large sample of young men and women, most of whom are criminal justice students, and many of whom would likely to be targeted for recruitment into law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to actively recruit young women, while making serious efforts to discuss the

negative perceptions of the career, specifically perceptions of their potential success, personal fulfillment, and support of family and friends.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**“Student Perceptions of a Potential Law Enforcement Career”**

You are being asked to participate in a research study, “Student Perceptions of a Potential Law Enforcement Career.” The purpose of this research study is to better understand how students perceive their potential success as a law enforcement officer and to understand perceptions of different aspects of a law enforcement career. Please read the information carefully. At the end, you will be asked to sign this consent form if you agree to participate in the study.

Josie Cambareri, a UNC Charlotte graduate student in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, will be conducting this research project. Dr. Joseph Kuhns, who is a UNC Charlotte associate professor, will be supervising this research study.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are enrolled in a criminal justice introductory course and these courses tend to attract students who may be interested in law enforcement.

A survey will be distributed by Josie Cambareri. Completing this survey should take you approximately 10 minutes. The survey will consist of questions about your interest in law enforcement, perceptions of a law enforcement career and beliefs about your potential success as an officer. Some survey questions could make you feel uncomfortable. Therefore, you are welcome to skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, and you may also stop your participation in the survey at any time.

There are no guaranteed benefits to participating in this survey. There are, however, broader benefits for conducting this research, such as understanding students' perceptions of law enforcement careers, and how these perceptions may differ among males and females or among other groups of students.

The research team will make every effort to protect your privacy. The survey instrument does not ask you to identify yourself. When this data is coded, answers will have no names or identifiers recorded with them. During the study, all responses will be kept in a locked filing cabinet inside a locked office and electronic data will be kept on a password-protected computer. If and when the results of this study are published, participants will not be referred to by name or any other identifier.

The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate in this study. If you decide to participate in the study, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that all research participants are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the university's Office of Research Compliance at (704)-687-1871 if you have questions about your rights as a study participant. If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, and outcome of this project, contact Josie Cambareri at jcambare@uncc.edu or Dr. Joseph Kuhns at (704)-687-0750.

This form was approved for use on February 11th, 2016 for a period of one (1) year.

I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study, and those questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am at least 18 years of age, and I agree to participate in this research project. If requested, I understand that I can receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the principal investigator of this research study.

Printed name of participant

Signature of participant

Date

Person obtaining consent

2. Female officers receive a little more respect
 3. Male and female officers receive an equal amount of respect
 4. Male officers receive a little more respect
 5. Male officers receive a lot more respect
6. Think about how officers are **accepted into the culture** of their agencies. Who do you think is more accepted: Male or Female officers? *Please circle one answer.*
1. Female officers are accepted a lot more
 2. Female officers are accepted a little bit more
 3. Male and female officers are equally accepted
 4. Male officers are accepted a little bit more
 5. Male officers are accepted a lot more
7. Think about officers' **opportunities for advancement and promotion**. Who do you think has more opportunity: Male or Female officers? *Please circle one answer.*
1. Female officers have a lot more opportunity
 2. Female officers have a little bit more opportunity
 3. Male and female have an equal amount of opportunity
 4. Male officers have a little bit more opportunity
 5. Male officers have a lot more opportunity
8. Think about a police agency's **decision to promote** an officer. Who do you think is given greater consideration for leadership positions: Male or Female officers? *Please circle one answer.*
1. Female officers are given a lot more consideration
 2. Female officers are given a little more consideration
 3. Male and female are given equal consideration
 4. Male officers are given a little more consideration
 5. Male officers are given a lot more consideration
9. Think about **how having children may affect an officer's opportunity for advancement**. Who do you think is more affected: Male or Female officers? *Please circle one answer.*
1. Female officers are a lot more affected
 2. Female officers are a little more affected
 3. Male and female are equally affected
 4. Male officers are a little more affected
 5. Male officers are a lot more affected

10. A successful police officer is one that can perform his or her duties effectively and fairly. Below are 9 personal qualities. Please rank-order (1-9) these qualities in terms of how important you believe they are to being a successful police officer. Let 1 = **the most important** quality and let 9 = **the least important** quality.

Please be sure to rank each quality, and use each number (1-9) only once.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Intelligence _____ | f. Problem-Solving Skills _____ |
| b. Teamwork _____ | g. Physical Fitness _____ |
| c. High Moral/Ethical Character _____ | h. Compassion _____ |
| d. Decision-Making Skills _____ | i. Communication Skills _____ |
| e. Discipline _____ | |

11. Below are the same 9 personal qualities from the previous survey question. Please indicate whether you believe “female” or “male” officers are **more likely to naturally possess each of these qualities**. If you believe female and male officers are equally likely to possess the quality, choose “both”.

Who is MORE likely to possess the quality?

a. Intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
b. Teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
c. High Moral/Ethical Character	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
d. Decision-Making Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
e. Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
f. Problem-Solving Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
g. Physical Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
h. Compassion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both
i. Communication Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both

Undesirable Aspects of a Law Enforcement Career

12. There are several aspects of a law enforcement career that people may find undesirable. Below is a list of such aspects.

Please rank-order (1-8) these aspects in terms of how undesirable they are to you.

Let 1 = **the least desirable (or worst) aspect to you**

Please be sure to rank each aspect, and use each number (1-8) only once.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Pay Not High Enough _____ | e. Physical Fitness Expectations _____ |
| b. Limited Advancement Opportunity _____ | f. Not Family-Friendly _____ |
| c. Dangerousness of Police Work _____ | g. High-Stress Situations _____ |
| d. Lack of Respect from Community _____ | i. Lack of Respect from Fellow Officers _____ |

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

13. I have an interest in becoming a law enforcement officer.

Yes
 I'm Unsure
 No (skip to question 15)

APPENDIX C: TABLES

Table 1: Full-Time Female Law Enforcement Employees (Sworn) Across All Agencies
by Year

2014	11.9%
2013	11.6%
2012	11.9%
2010	11.8%
2009	11.7%
2008	11.9%
2007	11.7%
2006	11.8%
2005	11.6%
2004	11.6%
2003	11.4%
2002	11.3%
2001	11.2%
2000	11.0%
1999	10.7%
1998	10.5%
1997	10.3%
1996	10.1%
1995	9.8%

FBI: UCR, Police Employee Data, Table 74
data retrieved from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s>

Table 2: Courses and Response Rates

	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Participated</u>	<u>Response Rate</u>
Introduction to Criminal Justice (1a) (extra credit offered)	159	137	86%
Introduction to Criminal Justice (1b)	176	119	68%
Introduction to Criminal Justice (1c)	58	29	50%
Introduction to Law Enforcement (2)	202	81	40%
Introduction to Corrections (3)	35	25	71%

Note: The number of students invited to participate across the five courses is not mutually exclusive.

Table 3: Participant Demographics, by Sex of Participant

	Total (N=387)	Male (N=218)	Female (N=169)	Test Statistic
Mean Age (SD)	20.8(3.3)	21.2(3.9)	20.3(2.4)	t=2.815**
Race				
% White/Caucasian	61.9	66.5	56.0	$\chi^2=6.991$
% Latino/a	9.8	8.3	11.9	
% African American	19.7	16.1	24.4	
% Asian-Pacific Islander	3.9	4.6	3.0	
% Other	4.7	4.6	4.8	
Any law enforcement family members?				
% No	81.3	86.2	75.7	$\chi^2=7.005^{**}$
% Yes	18.3	13.8	24.3	
Ever treated unfairly by LEO?				
% No	64.6	62.4	67.5	$\chi^2=1.070$
% Yes	35.4	37.6	32.5	

*Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p < .05$

**Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p < .01$

Table 4: Interest In, Fulfillment From, and Support For a Career in Law Enforcement, by Sex of Participant

	Total (N=383)	Male (N=216)	Female (N=167)	Test Statistic
Level of interest in LE career				
% Not at all interested	52.0	46.3	59.3	$\chi^2=7.949^*$
% Somewhat interested	26.1	27.3	24.6	
% Interested	10.7	12.5	8.4	
% Very Interested	11.2	13.9	7.8	
I would be successful if I became a LE officer. Mean (SD)	8.1(2.2)	8.6(1.9)	7.5(2.6)	t=4.677**
I would feel a sense of personal fulfillment if I became a LE officer. Mean (SD)	6.5(2.8)	6.9(2.5)	6.0(3.0)	t=3.144**
My family and friends would support my decision to be a law enforcement officer. Mean (SD)	7.6(2.5)	7.6(2.5)	7.5(2.5)	t=.361

*Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.05$

**Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.01$

Table 5: Perceptions of Who Receives More Respect, Acceptance, Opportunities for Promotion, More Affected by Children, by Sex of Participant

	Total (N=387)	Male (N=218)	Female (N=169)	Test Statistic
Who receives more respect from the Community?				
% Female Officers More	11.6	10.6	13.0	$\chi^2=7.202^*$
% Equal for Female and Male Officers	11.4	15.1	6.5	
% Male Officers More	77.0	74.3	80.5	
Who receives more respect from fellow officers in their agency?				
% Female Officers More	4.9	5.5	4.1	$\chi^2=8.225^*$
% Equal for Female and Male Officers	27.6	33.0	20.7	
% Male Officers More	67.4	61.5	75.1	
Who is more accepted into the culture of their agency?				
% Female Officers More	1.6	2.8	0.0	$\chi^2=22.451^{**}$
% Equal for Female and Male Officers	17.9	24.9	8.9	
% Male Officers More	80.6	72.4	91.1	
Who has more opportunity for advancement and promotion?				
% Female Officers More	3.1	4.6	1.2	$\chi^2=13.619^{**}$
% Equal for Female and Male Officers	23.1	28.7	16.0	
% Male Officers More	73.8	66.7	82.8	
Who is given more consideration for leadership positions within the agency?				
% Female Officers More	4.9	7.4	1.8	$\chi^2=15.126^{**}$
% Equal for Female and Male Officers	18.4	23.0	12.4	
% Male Officers More	76.7	69.6	85.8	
Who is more affected by having children (in regards to promotion)?				
% Female Officers More	86.5	82.5	91.7	

% Equal for Female and Male Officers	10.6	16.1	3.6	$\chi^2=18.832^{**}$
% Male Officers More	2.8	1.4	4.7	

Table displays column percentages.

*Differences between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.05$

**Differences between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.01$

Table 6: Perceived Ranking of Undesirable Aspects, by Sex of Participant

	Total (N=387)	Male (N=218)	Female (N=169)	Test Statistic
Mean (SD) Ranking of:				
Dangerousness of police work	3.2(2.3)	3.5	2.8	$t=2.694^{**}$
Pay not high enough	3.4(2.2)	3.2	3.7	$t=-2.299^*$
High stress situations	3.9(2.0)	4.1	3.7	$t=2.164^*$
Lack of respect from community	4.0(2.0)	4.0	4.0	$t=-.169$
Not family friendly	4.5(2.0)	4.4	4.6	$t=-.652$
Limited advancement opportunity	4.7(1.9)	4.6	5.0	$t=-2.324^*$
Lack of respect from fellow officers	5.4(2.1)	5.4	5.4	$t=-.052$
Physical fitness expectations	6.6(1.8)	6.7	6.6	$t=.277$

*Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.05$

**Difference between Male and Female Participants is Significant at $p<.01$

Table 7: Linear Regression Equation Predicting Perceived Success as a LEO (full model)

Variable	Coefficient	SE	t	B
Sex(F=1)	-.739	.226	-3.268*	-.166
Race(W=1)	-.010	.226	-.042	-.002
Age	.015	0.32	.462	0.022
Personal Fulfillment	.160	.048	3.345*	.198
Support of Family/Friends	.124	.045	2.732*	.139
Interest in LE	.708	.250	3.833*	.160
Community Respect	-.328	.250	-1.309	-.063
Fellow Officer Respect	.255	.232	1.098	.054
Community Acceptance	.139	.288	.483	.025
Opportunity Advancement	.108	.270	.399	.021
Promotion	.121	.281	.430	.023
Child Effect	-.325	.316	-1.029	-.049
Intercept (Constant)	5.858	.811	7.125**	

*p<.01 **p<.001; R Square: 0.221; F-statistic: 8.427; N= 369

Table 8: Linear Regression Equation Predicting Perceived Success as a LEO

Variable	Coefficient	SE	t	B
Sex(F=1)	-1.244	.291	-4.272**	-.280
Race(W=1)	.070	.214	.327	.015
Age	0.14	0.31	.450	0.21
Personal Fulfillment	.160	.046	3.430**	.198
Support of Family/Friends	.128	.045	2.865**	.144
Interest in LE	.332	.303	1.096	.075
Sex*Interest in LE	.962	.419	2.297*	.169
Intercept (Constant)	5.985	.774	7.729**	

*p<.05 **p<.01; R Square: 0.220; F-statistic: 14.665; N= 371

Table 9 : Logistic Regression Equation Predicting Interest in a LE Career (full model)

Variable	Coefficient	OR	SE	Wald
Sex(F=1)	.146	1.158	.289	.256
Race(W=1)	.133	1.142	.288	.214
Age	-.056	.945	.040	1.954
Fulfillment	.578	1.783	.073	62.728**
Perceived Success	.242	1.274	.077	9.909*
Community Respect	.123	1.131	.315	.153
Fellow Officer Respect	-.341	.711	.293	1.352
Community Acceptance	.427	1.533	.365	1.367
Opportunity Advancement	-.291	.747	.341	.728
Promotion	0.17	1.017	.347	.002
Child Effect	-.125	.883	.424	.086
Intercept (Constant)	-4.869	.007	1.241	15.388**

*p<.01 **p<.001; Nagelkerke R Square: 0.452; N= 370

Table 10: Logistic Regression Equation Predicting Interest in a LE Career

Variable	Coefficient	OR	SE	Wald
Sex(F=1)	.113	1.120	.271	.175
Race(W=1)	.026	1.026	.273	.009
Age	-.050	.952	.038	1.708
Fulfillment	.559	1.749	.071	61.473**
Perceived Success	.245	1.278	.076	10.397*
Intercept (Constant)	-4.960	.007	1.035	22.954**

*p<.05 **p<.001; Nagelkerke R Square: 0.439; N= 372