Job Satisfaction Among School Resource Officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated in memory of my Grandmother, Love Balance Warren, who believed I would do it long before I did. I wish she were here to see it.

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ABSTRACT

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN VIRGINIA

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This dissertation analyzes the factors that underlie job satisfaction for police officers who are serving as school resource officers. Assignment of police officers in schools as school resource officers is a practice that has grown in recent years and yet the role of the school resource officer remains inconsistently defined. This fluctuation in role definition leads to variation in practice. This study seeks to determine the factors that underlie SRO job satisfaction as a first step to determining ways in which the role could be more clearly defined to improve job satisfaction, align and identify best practices and conform to policy requirements.

Keywords: school resource officer, SRO, police job satisfaction

1. Introduction

Background

Characteristics and Training of School Resource Officers

A school resource officer (SRO) is a sworn law enforcement officer who has been assigned to work in a school environment and who serves in three different capacities, referred to as triad of duties by National Association of School Resource Officers: law enforcement officer, counselor, and educator. A lack of national demographic data on school resource officers limits the ability to understand and study the characteristics of police officers who are serving in schools. We do know, however, that the Kentucky Center for School Safety found, in a survey of SROs serving in the state of Kentucky, that 95% are male and 96% are Caucasian (May, 2009). The Minnesota based National Association of School Resources Officers, which claimed membership of 9,000 (www.nasro.org, retrieved November 2009), reported in membership survey results that 31% of their members hold a Bachelor's Degree (NASRO, 2002).

No state requires SRO training in order to serve in the position. However, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia have a state-offered SRO training that is used by their respective training officials to promote the state's version of best practices. Training also is offered by both for and not-for-profit agencies. Although some similarities exist in training offerings by these agencies and support the notion that the

SRO is more than a law enforcement officer, Forrester (2008) found that the trainings differ in regard to hours, topics and suggested best practices. This finding was determined through document analysis of a sample of training curricula obtained from Virginia and Florida, as well as curricula used by NASRO, and two anonymously provided samples from for-profit training agencies.

For the purpose of this study, which uses data from the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is important to note that SROs in Virginia are assigned by the police department for which they work, at the request of the school district, to serve in a particular school or schools. This is accomplished through the signing of a memorandum of understanding that outlines the SROs' service obligation to both the school and the police department, as decided by the individual districts and police agencies. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (VDCJS) offers a voluntary, 40 hour basic school resource officer course as well as in-service trainings on aspects of Virginia law that govern school security as well as a training on how to successfully complete the annual school safety audit, the submission of which is required annually for all schools in the Commonwealth (VDCJS, 2009). Although the annual school safety audit must be completed by each school in the Commonwealth, there is no requirement that specifies who is to complete the audit on behalf of the school. Moreover, there is no requirement that the person who performs the audit completes any training in order to do so.

The Problem

Because SROs are police, and because the role of the police is different from the role of school officials, it is sometimes confusing and complicated for the officers

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themselves, as well as school officials and police departments to understand the duties of the SRO as well as their appropriate use within the school (Devine, 1996). Confusion over role has contributed to the shortcoming of SRO efforts at improving school safety. Officers' responsibilities at the schools range from that of remote contact person in case of a potential violation of the law, to on-site hall patrol, to full immersion and involvement in the daily activities of the school and its students and staff. Even the way in which courts have interpreted case law on the role of the SRO highlights differences in standards, further contributing to the overall ambiguity of the position (Price, 2009).

Existing Definitions of the School Resource Officer

A lack of standardization in training and job definition as well as service requirements that vary from state to state (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2001; Forrester, 2008) make it challenging to define exactly what an SRO is and what he/she does within the school. Although the number of schools that employ SROs has increased (NASRO, 2009), the actual job descriptions and different ways in which the SROs provide service and understand their responsibilities within the school is substantially different from district to district (Jackson, 2002).

Case law from state to state also is inconsistent regarding SRO roles (Price, 2009), with some courts ruling that police officers in a school act on behalf of administrators and therefore are not held to the more restrictive search, seizure and interview requirements of law enforcement (*People v. Dilworth*, 1996). Others, however, have held that law enforcement officers are to be held to the standards of law enforcement even when working in the position of SRO (*People v. Bowers*, 1974).

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Policy Designed to Improve SRO Function

Attempts at designing policies that will make schools safer, such as The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1994) and pending legislation, H.R. 1489, The Bullying and Gang Reduction for Improved Education Act (2009), acknowledge the multidisciplinary focus that school safety and academic achievement demand. Laws and pending legislation, such as those cited above, authorize money for training programs, certification, community service involvement and physical improvement plans. Some existing or proposed policies go so far as to assert that schools can be identified as unsafe, and parents are given the choice of removing their children from an unsafe school and placing them in another school within the same district. School choice based on the designation of a school as unsafe also is found in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB, 2002). In this law, schools are required to report incidences of school violence and could, as a result of unsatisfactory numbers and types of incidents, be designated as persistently unsafe. Once a school has been designated as persistently unsafe, parents could make the choice to move their children to another school in the district that does not carry the "unsafe" label.

In an effort to address concerns about school safety and improve the school environment, schools have experimented with unconventional responses such as expanding the roles of non-law enforcement school personnel to perform as counselors, trainers and sources of information for parents and students about school violence problems and anger management (Peterson, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1998). Peterson et al.

(1998) collected data from teachers and administrators in 12 states using a Likert scale survey which generated a 48% response rate with a goal of identifying, among other things, the strategies that school personnel perceive as important to their efforts to provide a safe school environment. Among the most important were school security and police officers as well as before and after school programs. Business and community partnerships, schedule changes for students and teacher conflict management training were found to be the least effective.

Coelho, Kahan, Christie, & Sandeberg, writing in the Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (1998), suggested that physical education teachers would be ideal candidates to teach conflict resolution and anger management to students as they teach many students in the building and are able to work conflict resolution management lessons into team sports and discipline based sports such as martial arts. If this approach were adopted, they added, all teachers should include safety related messages in their teaching. This cross-over approach to school safety carries both legal implications and concerns for morale that districts must address (James, 1994). Not only are teachers unprepared for school safety service, but according to Forrester (2007) teachers who were members of school safety teams were not comfortable expressing themselves and had a low level of self-efficacy regarding their ability to make a meaningful contribution to the team. These educators did not feel adequately trained to contribute to the dialogue between safety team members, let alone teach appropriate material or become agents of school safety.

James (1994) asserted, in a legal comment published in School Psychology Review, that school safety issues and responses must align with a standard of reason, which is the test applied by the Supreme Court in deciding where the line exists for school officials when working on behalf of the safe school environment. Finding ways to balance the need for school safety with both reactive and proactive strategies must not be hindered by a fear of potential litigation on the part of administrators.

Purpose of Study

Whereas federal school safety policies encourage increased training, expansion of the SRO role within the schools and accountability for schools that fail to provide the safe school environment, no roadmap to compliance has been provided. The exploration of ways in which the SRO position can be more clearly defined and how the position can be best utilized to support positive student outcomes is necessary to align policy and practice. Given role and expectation confusion, understanding what influences a school resource officer's job satisfaction as a foundation for exploring their professional interests is a necessary component to establishing conformity on core elements of the position. This foundation could aid in the creation of policies that may maximize the effectiveness of the SRO within the school and align duties with existing and proposed policy recommendations.

Concern about school safety has been on the federal policy agenda for at least two decades. Although, as noted previously, there have been laws, regulations and school level policies to create and support the safe school environment, the potential of the SRO position has not been explored or identified. School staff, educational policy makers and

researchers all seek to find ways of using existing resources to improve the safe school environment, comply with policy requirements and improve the academic performance of students.

Before the role of the school resource officer can be altered and clarified for the furtherance of school safety, more must be known about the officers who serve in the role and about the dimensions that underlie their satisfaction in the role. Existing research suggests that race and gender could play a part in job satisfaction for general duty police officers, but little is known about SROs explicitly. More research is needed to understand how existing research on job satisfaction and police officers, specifically the relationships between race, gender, age, experience and job satisfaction, might be extended to police who are serving as school resource officers. Relationships that might exist between job satisfaction and background variables which are unique to school resource officers have not been explored in existing literature. The type of district in which the school resource officer serves (e.g. rural, urban, suburban) and the type of school assignment (e.g. assigned to serve at one school versus assigned to multiple schools) are needed in order to understand if and how the officer is positioned for service within the school setting is meaningful to job satisfaction.

Related to that need, the purpose of this study is twofold. The first purpose is to identify and validate latent factors (i.e. aspects, dimensions) that underlie the job satisfaction of police officers serving as school resource officers. The second purpose is to determine the relationships of background variables such as race, age and gender of the officers, type of district in which they serve (e.g. urban, rural, suburban), type of school

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assignment (e.g. single or multiple school assignment), and experience. To achieve this

purpose, the following two research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the dominant latent factors that underlie police satisfaction in the role of

school resource officer?

RQ2: To what degree are differences in job satisfaction explained collectively and

individually by the race and gender of the officers, type of district in which they serve

(e.g. urban, rural, suburban), type of school assignment (e.g. single versus multiple), age

of the officer, years of experience as a police officer and years of experience as a school

resource officer?

2. Review of the Literature

Role of the School Resource Officer

Existing Definitions

The role of the school resource officer (SRO) is highly variable in both definition and practice. SROs are defined in H.R. 3711, The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, Title I Part Q, Public Law 110-199 as amended (2005) as sworn law enforcement officers who are assigned by the police department, in a community policing capacity, to work with schools in a collaborative nature. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a professional organization representing over 9,000 SROs nationwide, developed what they named the triad of duties that defines the role of the school resource officer as law enforcement officer, counselor and educator. SROs are to serve in these three roles equally, but guided by one's primary expertise as a law enforcement officer, in furthering the safe school mission (National Association of School Resources Officers, 2006).

A similar definition that includes counseling and teaching responsibilities, in addition to law enforcement activities, was adopted by North Carolina (Center for the Prevention of School Violence, 2001). The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (2009) and Kentucky Center for School Safety (2009) assert that the SRO is primarily a law enforcement agent assigned to carry out appropriate law enforcement duties to minimalize crimes committed at school and by students, but also tasked with the

duties of role model and community liaison.   In contrast, the American Civil Liberties Union (2009) published a white paper calling for a governance document that clarifies the role of the SRO as "primarily in support of the educational climate of schools through the improvement of school safety and not as a disciplinary arm" (p. 7).

Building on the triad of duties as defined by NASRO, The Center for the Prevention of School Violence, a division of The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention defined the SRO on their website as:

> a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school or set of schools and is specifically trained to perform in three roles: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related education teacher. The SRO is not necessarily a DARE officer [Drug Awareness and Resistance Education] (although many have received such training), security guard, or officer who has been temporarily placed in a school in response to a crisis situation, but rather acts as a comprehensive resource for his/her school. (www.ncdjjdp.org, Center for Prevention of School Violence, para 1)

This definition is one of the most specific as compared to other definitions in that it seeks to clarify who should not be considered as an SRO.

Variations in Definition and Practice and Indications for Future Role Expansion

The lack of consistency in definition and role for the SRO from state to state is well documented in the literature. McDaniel(1999, 2001), Finn and McDevitt (2005) reported to the Department of Justice that even when an SRO attends a training program that identifies a model highlighting several distinct areas of job function, such as the triad developed and taught by NASRO, there is significant variation in how an officer's time is allocated among those duties. Johnson (1999) was interested in understanding ways in which the inconsistency in definition and practice affected the overall safety goals of the districts where SROs were assigned, as well as highlighting the roles the SROs were actually serving. This was accomplished through the use of a multi-component data collection process. Results from a questionnaire, researcher observations of the SROs' interactions with students and interviews conducted with school personnel were the primary data for the study. One of the limitations of this study was that the goals of the SRO program were not clearly defined at the inception, but rather were written once the school resource officer was already serving, which could cause the evaluation to be based on feelings and perceptions of the job the school resource officer is doing and not on actual measurable objectives. Because of the small number of respondents in this study, (17 SROs), findings must be viewed with a level of caution. Nevertheless, several findings are interesting and germane to the current study. One such finding is that SROs reported having served as a counselor for at least 30% of the students in their assigned building, and further indicated that 50% of their counseling time was spent talking to

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students about academic performance, a time expenditure that is clearly not described or indicated in the existing definitions of SRO duties.

If Johnson's (1999) findings about the amount of time spent by SROs counseling students are accurate, particularly the provision of academic counseling, then Brown's (2006) assertion on SRO effectiveness is important. His suggestion that the biggest policy concern in regard to the use of police in schools is the SROs' lack of basic knowledge about student learning and positive academic environments is meaningful for future study. What does not align between Brown's 2006 commentary and Johnson's earlier findings (1999) is the suggestion that, as a result of the SROs' lack of knowledge concerning academic outcomes, the goals of SROs tend to be more in line with the goals of traditional policing and not with the goals of schools.

Because Brown's 2006 commentary was a review of existing literature and a consideration of possible methods for evaluation, which he acknowledges do not provide the foundation necessary to draw solid conclusions, one must question if his assertions would hold up under empirical testing. Questions expressed by Brown in regard to the appropriateness and sufficiency of available training for SROs and the rates at which SROs access available training have not been explored. However, the limited evidence of an empirical nature available on the ways in which school based police officers spend their time suggests, on the contrary, that SROs are not serving primarily within the goals of law enforcement at the expense of the goals of schools. Thus, Brown may be justified in his questioning of the appropriateness of available training.

Johnson's (1999) findings were similar to those found in a survey commissioned by the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2009). SROs who attended a national professional conference were surveyed on how they spend time at work. It was found that 50% of an SRO's time during the school day was spent in the combined roles of counselor and educator with the other 50% spent serving in a law enforcement capacity. Further, 94% of SROs who participated in this study indicated that they had referred students to outside service agencies for assistance, such as Department of Health and Human Services and Legal Aid, among others. In contrast to Johnson's study, further details about the substance of the counseling sessions were not ascertained. Acknowledging that these findings are also suspect due to the limited information available about the study, when and how it was conducted and the methods used, it provides further evidence of the differences that exist between role definition and professional practice. In support of the finding that law enforcement is only a portion of the role the SRO serves, Delisio (2001, October 18) found that the daily job activities of SROs include the handling of only minimal incidents of actual violent acts committed at school (90% say the handled between 1-25 incidents in the year 2000) and that 93% of SROs are involved daily in the counseling of students and not in law enforcement duties.

Supposing for a moment that the actual practice of SROs is more heavily focused on educational and counseling duties and not primarily on law enforcement, as these studies suggest, one may wonder if the safety of schools is promoted through the provision of proactive educational and counseling efforts rather than of reactive policing

strategies. Finding number 10 of the Safe Schools Initiative, a joint effort by the U.S.

Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education to understand common threads

between violent incidents occurring in schools in the 1990's, states that incidents of

violence at school typically conclude before police officers are able to respond

(Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2004), limiting the ability of reactive

strategies to be useful in stopping the most outrageous incidents of school violence. If

this finding is accurate, then it is possible that the current practice of SROs as

documented in the limited available research is more consistent with the goal of

providing safe schools than is the highly variable definition of the SRO which has, at its

core, law enforcement elements.

Johnson's research (1999) also documented the indication by teachers and

administrators that they wanted to see school resource officers take a more active role in

the classroom environment and increase their direct involvement with children. Also

noted was an interest on the part of the SROs in additional professional development

training specific to the skills needed by the SRO to work in the school environment.

Safety teams comprised of teachers, principals and SROs working in collaboration was

also identified as a helpful and needed component of efforts to maximize the safety of

schools. Brown's (2006) and Johnson's (1999) notations about the importance of

appropriate and clearly defined training for SROs is paralleled by a calling by the ACLU

for mandatory pre-service and in-service training for SROs on child development,

positive behavioral supports, restorative justice principles and working with children with

disabilities (Kim & Geronimo, 2009). In addition, SROs have voiced an interest in a

more stable role in the school through single-school assignment rather than serving in multiple schools simultaneously, a condition that hinders relationships and bonds between SROs and students (Forrester, 2008).

In an attempt to identify the value that the SRO brings to a school's safety efforts as perceived by school administrators, Time & Payne (2008) collected data from all high schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia through the use of a 28-item mail survey. Each high school principal in Virginia was asked to provide information on the demographic qualities of their schools, their experience in education, the seriousness of safety violations within their schools, as evidenced by number of confiscations of contraband during the school year, and their opinions on the usefulness of various resources available to them for use in maintaining a safe school environment. Forty-five percent of principals surveyed responded. Among Time & Payne's (2008) findings, and significant in consideration for this study, is the perception that an SRO's relationship with students and an ability to build strong relationships between staff and students are essential to maximizing the effectiveness of school based violence intervention strategies. They further found that interdisciplinary efforts between school counselors, teachers, administrators for school personnel in areas outside of their core competencies improves the perception of the effectiveness of school violence policy.

The Vera Institute of Justice (1999), under a contract from New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, issued a report on key elements of school safety initiatives in five cities; Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, New York and Philadelphia. VERA contacted representatives from all cities to identify elements of their school

security programs and details about the effectiveness of identified efforts. Participants included representatives from school boards, non-profit advocacy groups, professional organizations, psychological service agencies, criminal justice agencies and school personnel from each geographic area. Highlighted strategies used by the districts to combat threats to school safety included school security personnel, security equipment and incident reporting procedures. It was concluded that all five cities used some form of school safety officer with variation in duty as well as in definition, althoughsome were police officers and others were unarmed security officers. Regardless of the job description, a key element in school resource officer effectiveness was the SRO's integration into the school in which he/she works and the extent of the relationship the SRO had with students and staff at the school (VERA, 1999). The program analysis and subsequent report as written by VERA are not empirical in nature but provide further confirmation about the variation that exists in SRO definition and function and sheds light on the perception that the role of the SRO, whereas not clearly defined, is something broader than law enforcement officer.

It is interesting to note that in addition to the existence of the notion that school resource officers must be fully integrated into the school culture to be perceived as effective, as found by Time & Payne (2008) as well as by Vera (1999), students have also expressed the importance of having an active SRO who connects with them (Johnson, 1999). A program evaluation conducted by Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (2001) of the Virginia School Resource Officer Program supports this assertion. The evaluation was based on data gathered from 78 districts that employed school

resource officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia during 2000. Each had received a

federal grant for the establishment or furtherance of the use of SROs in their districts.

Collectively, 107 new SRO positions in the Commonwealth were funded. In addition to

funding the position of SRO, the grants supported their training and paid for curricular

materials on drug resistance positive choices for the SRO to use in service to students.

Student and staff surveys, incident reports and field notes by the officers were used in the

evaluation of the usefulness of SROs as agents of school safety. Evaluators found,

among other things, a positive correlation between student familiarity with his/her

assigned SRO and his/her indication that the SRO was an effective and valuable resource

for the school. The evaluators concluded that when SROs were on single school

assignment and actively involved in the school culture, they are perceived by students as

a key element of safe schools (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2001).

These findings are mirrored in a 2005 study by McDevitt & Panniello, who found

a relationship between a student's familiarity and comfort with an SRO and a willingness

to report incidents of crime that were known to the student. McDevitt & Panniello (2005)

used univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis to identify the factors of an SRO

program that underlie student perception of safety and comfort level with reporting

potential criminal activity at school.   Upon evaluation of responses from approximately

900 students in four school districts described only as "large" and with having a newly

implemented SRO program, a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) was found

between a student's trust and respect for the SRO and the student's perception of safety at

his/her school. Having an active SRO within the school who connects with students and

who is singularly focused on the needs of the school of assignment helped ensure overall safety and the perception of safety (McDevitt & Panniello, 2005).

Whereas the existing literature on SROs is scant (Brown, 2006), a review of what exists in regard to the variation in SRO definition and practice as well as perceived best practices exposes a need for clarity and consistency in definition. The literature further suggests that a complete and consistent definition, although currently non-existent, is something more than that of a sworn law enforcement officer.

Historical Underpinnings of Police Professionalization

In 1929 President Herbert Hoover appointed a special commission on law enforcement to study, among other topics, prohibition, illegal immigration and police professionalization in the United States. The commission was further tasked with recommending ways to improve the practice of law enforcement. George Wickersham chaired the commission comprised of attorneys and justice professionals and, under his leadership, reports were issued that addressed requested areas of study. All reports were submitted by 1931, and having completed their task, the commission was disbanded (Harvard Law School, 1975). The *Wickersham Commission Reports* of the 1930's (named after the chairman) included a study by Monroe & Garrett (1931) in which police professionalization was established as the cornerstone for all police reform and was seen as essential to police job satisfaction. Police officers with substantial training and a college education were determined by the commission's researchers to be imperative to effective law enforcement efforts. To date "few have challenged" the findings of the Wickersham Commission, that effective policing is dependent upon and associated with

professionalization (White, 1972, p. 61). Even though effective policing has been associated with professionalization, it also has been posited that professionalization can present challenges in regard to general duty policing. Classical criminal justice scholars, Wilson (1968) and Westley (1970), suggested that professionalization could actually cause officers to become resistant to direction given by managerial staff and policy makers and disinterested in public opinion about their job performance. These concerns did not hold up under further empirical analysis by Smith (1978) in an examination of attitudes of over 700 police officers in St. Louis. No relationship was found between an officer's level of education and training, as associated with professionalization, and his/her indicated resistance to authority or perception of the work environment as negative. Race and gender of the officers were also found to be unrelated to the variables under examination. A slightly positive correlation was found between officers with some level of higher education and their stated desire to raise the level of required education for their fellow officers, a suggestion that perhaps professionalization, or at least the desire for professionalization among officers, is positively correlated with the experience of becoming more highly educated. In light of these findings, and given the research which suggests that only about 30% of SROs have a college education (NASRO, 2002), it is unclear what the level of interest in professionalization might be for police officers serving as SROs.

It is expected that findings related to police professionalization and job satisfaction also would apply to school resource officers due to the fact that SROs are a facet of the larger profession of policing. However, the consideration for what

professionalization means and what it needs to encompass is different for SROs than for general police officers because of the unique involvement of SROs with children and within the school environment. It is unclear what, if any, effect that this difference in service population and possible difference in reactive versus proactive policing style could have on police professionalization in regard to SROs.

What is clear is that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002) requires every school to provide the safe school environment and allows parents to transfer their children out of schools which have been found to be "persistently dangerous" and move them to other schools in the district which are safe (NCLB, 2002). However, the question remains, are expectations written in this law consistent with the actual role and day to day work of the SRO? As reported by Delisio (2001) NASRO's survey found that 70% of SROs are concerned that policy makers do not understand their job and their needs.   Thus, the literature indicates a disconnect between what the policy community expects of the SRO and how the position is described by the profession, by school personnel and others. One measure of whether or not there is an impact of this disconnect may emerge from studies that consider SRO job satisfaction.

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Background Variables in Police Officer Job Satisfaction

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Race and Gender

Martin (1980) wrote the first comprehensive work on females in policing to assess the condition of women as an underrepresented group in a male dominated field. The major theme of her book was that women who were recruited into policing were assigned duties working with children and issues of domestic violence, assignments that were

more closely aligned with traditionally female roles. Because of this, and because of

negative views of females as held by their male peers, females were less satisfied in the

role of police officer. If this funneling of female officers into assignments which closely

align with traditionally female professions is accurate and holds true over time, it could

be hypothesized that female officers are disproportionately represented in the role of

school resource officer than in other police assignments, and that perhaps this

disproportionate representation could skew job satisfaction for SROs.

National statistics on police officers across the United States indicate that about

24% are minorities and only 11% are female (Hickman & Reaves, 2006). For the

purposes of this study, because the data used are from police officers who are serving as

school resource officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is important to note that

minorities and women serving in the Commonwealth trail the national average with

minorities making up about 10.8% of the police force while only 9.8% of those serving

are women (Chappell & Gibson, 2007).

Given the under representation of women in the male dominated police

environment, it has been hypothesized that female officers would have a low level of job

satisfaction. Fry & Greenfeld (1980) used a short-form of the Minnesota Satisfaction

Questionnaire, a survey used in human resources for decades, to study the role gender

plays as a construct of job satisfaction and attitudes toward police work for women. Five

hundred twenty nine male and 21 female officers serving in a Midwestern city completed

the survey. Through the use of a one-way analysis of variance, it was determined that

there was no significant difference in job satisfaction held between male and female

officers. This research was limited by the lack of female participants and could have been enhanced by the participation of officers from multiple departments in various geographic areas. Additionally, the number of female participants in the study is too small to use Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as a statistical method, which affects the validity of the study findings. Similar findings were reported nearly two decades later in a comprehensive analysis by Poteyeva & Sun (2009), who summarized information specifically about the role gender plays in police attitudes towards their jobs as found in 32 previously published studies completed over a 17 year period. Only two out of thirty-two studies reported a significant main effect on attitudinal differences based on gender, a finding Poteyeva & Sun posit could be a result of the fact that the studies had used gender as an independent variable and not as a control. It is important to note that, for the purposes of parallels drawn for this study, job satisfaction and attitudes toward the job of policing may be related, but are not the same.

In an attempt to understand the role that race, as well as gender, play in the job satisfaction of police officers, Krimmel & Gormley (2003) secured a response rate of 53% on a survey of 300 female officers who were attending a professional conference designed for female officers who were serving in New Jersey. The instrument was designed to collect data on female officers' efficacy and job related stress, as indicators of job satisfaction. When an initial review of results indicated average levels of job satisfaction for the female officers, including the minority female officers, the researchers conducted a more in depth examination of the data. To do this, the data were divided so that the responses of women who worked in police departments where very few other

women worked could be compared with responses from women who worked in larger departments with larger numbers of female officers. Ordinary least squares regression was used to determine that job satisfaction for female officers increased with the number of female officers working in a department. It also was found that the age, marital status (being married) and level of education were significant indicators of the level of stress felt by female officers on the job as well, and additionally were related to their indicated job satisfaction. Race was not found to be a factor.

Minorities also are traditionally underrepresented in police work (Kappeler, Sluder & Alpert, 1998), and as such, the variable of race has been examined as a determinate of job satisfaction. An ANOVA was used by Raganella & White (2004) to investigate motivational differences among white and black male and female academy members who were preparing to become police officers in a New York City. A Likert-scaled survey was used to ascertain information on a recruit's reason for joining the police department for 300 new recruits. The response rate was 82%. Mean score differences were evaluated using t-test and ANOVA. Females and minority males ranked the opportunity to help people significantly higher than white males, with white males ranking relationships with coworkers highest. Although motivation for joining the police force and job satisfaction are not the same, and both motivation and job satisfaction for general police officers may be different for officers serving as SROs, this information is worth noting for a better understanding of the role that race and gender may play in the professionalization of SROs in the future.

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Carlan (2007) explored the underlying constructs of police job satisfaction among police officers in Alabama through the use of a mailed survey which generated approximately 1100 respondents or a 45% response rate. He used a regression model to examine age, gender, rank, education and experience in policing as possible satisfaction factors but found that the biggest contributor to job satisfaction was an officers perception that his/her understanding of the job assignment and the contribution he/she would make were in line with actual experiences on the job. No significant relationship was found between race, gender and job satisfaction, a finding that was confirmed by Miller, Mire, & Kim (2009). Their study only consisted of 83 participants who responded to a mail survey. The low n notwithstanding, Miller et al. were able to report the existence of a negative correlation between age and years of experience and job satisfaction, that is, the older the officer and the more years of experience he/she has, the lower the level of job satisfaction held by that officer. In regard to gender and race, the results aligned with previously discussed studies in their finding that gender and race play no significant role in the prediction of job satisfaction, nor do they account for any variance in job satisfaction as held by police officers.

Other Identified Variables

The most well known work in regard to police professionalism and job satisfaction, specifically what negatively affects job satisfaction, is Niederhoffer's (1967) *Behind the Shield,* in which he asserts that cynicism is the most pervasive hindrance to job satisfaction and that it does not discriminate along the lines of race, gender, education or years in service. To test his theory, he developed a 20 item cynicism scale, an

instrument he used to survey 220 police officers in the state of New York. The most

notable finding was the curvilinear relationship between years of service and cynicism,

with new recruits demonstrating the lowest levels followed by a sharp increase through

mid-career and then slight declines into the retirement years. Due to shortcomings in the

research methods deployed by Niderhoffer, most notably the lack of a statistical

foundation for his conclusion and questionable validity and reliability, in 1976 Regoli

redesigned the survey and administered it to a broader sample of the police population.

Specifically, Regoli changed the survey to a five point Likert scale and administered it to

nine departments, and for 324 officers. From the Regoli research came an assertion that

cynicism is made up of multiple factors that account for the variation in reported

cynicism.

   A number of studies (Langworth, 1987; Rafkey, Lawley, Ingram, 1976; Regoli,

1976; Regoli & Poole, 1979; Singer, Singer, & Burns, 1984; Wilt & Bannon, 1976) have

been completed over the years using Niderhoffer's (1967) work as a foundation, all

finding what was ultimately expressed by Langworth (1987), that the instrument, even

the modified instrument designed by Regoli (1976) did not produce similar results

through replication and therefore was not accurately measuring cynicism. Hickman,

Piquero & Piquero (2004) sought to confirm the validity of the original Niderhoffer

(1967) scale as well as a modified scale developed by Langworth (1987). Of 504 police

officers in Philadelphia who were invited to participate in the Hickman et al. survey, 499

agreed. The Rasch model (1960), a statistical model used to test the validity of question

response, was used to decipher whether or not cynicism was being accurately measured

in the use of scales modified over the years since the Niderhoffer work. The major

findings from this replication study included an affirmation that the scale itself was being

properly utilized, but that gender and race bias were at play in the results. The most

notable shortcomings of cynicism research, as indicated by Hickman et al. (2004) include

a lack of longitudinal data and an inability to study the ways in which cynicism may

differ based on police assignment, for example, officers who serve as traffic officers

versus ones who have been assigned to community policing jobs.

In summary, this literature review describes the differing definitions of the role of

the school resource officer as held by various state agencies and professional

organizations, as well as ways in which the school resource officer's job is defined in

federal education policy. Additionally, the body of literature documents the actual

practice of some SROs and perceptions of what practices make an SRO effective. Lastly,

a discussion of the variables which have been studied in regard to police job satisfaction,

including cynicism, were reviewed.

In order to understand how job satisfaction for SROs could be improved and how

that job satisfaction could potentially impact SRO effectiveness, more must be known

about the police officers serving in the role. Existing research fails to provide

information on ways in which trends in policing affect job satisfaction or what those

trends even are (Maguire & King, 2004). The limited research that does exist, as

reviewed in this chapter, supports the need for clarification of the characteristics of

SROs, their duties, and the factors that underlie their job satisfaction. In pursuit of that

end, this study contributes to the gap in the research describing the job satisfaction of

those who serve in the role of SRO, as a foundation for further analysis and professional

consideration.

3. Methods

As stated in Chapter 1, to achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the dominant latent factors that underlie police satisfaction in the role of school resource officer?

RQ2: To what degree are differences in job satisfaction explained collectively and individually by the officers' race, gender, age, experience as a police officer, experience as a school resource officer, type of district in which they serve (e.g. urban, rural, suburban) and type of school assignment (e.g. single versus multiple)?

Data

This study was conducted using a portion of an existing data set owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Center for School Safety. Data may be requested from Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services at 804-371-6506. The researcher compiled the data for the Commonwealth during a previous research undertaking. A contact list held and maintained by the Commonwealth's Center for School Safety (VCSS) for school resource officers in Virginia was used to identify potential participants at the time of data collection. In 2009, 400 SROs from all counties in the Commonwealth were invited to participate in an online survey. The response rate was 33% (132 participants). There is no evidence to support the existence of bias in the response rate.

However, the response rate could have been affected by the level of turnover in the

position of SRO as indicated by the number of hard-bounced email status updates

received. Respondents were mostly white (65%) and male (89%). Specific demographic

data for the participants from this data set are found in Table 3.1. For the purposes of

analysis in this study, race was recoded into White and Minority, due to the small number

of participants in the individual categories considered to be of minority race: African

American, Asian, Hispanic and Other.

Table 3.1.
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Percent
Race	
White	65%
African American	22%
Asian	2%
Hispanic	5%
Other	6%
Gender	
Male	89%
Female	11%
Level of School Assignment	
Elementary	0%
Middle	24%
High	33%
Middle and High	14%
Dual assignment/all	29%
Age	
21-27	0%
28-35	13%
over 35	87%
Police Experience	
1-3 yrs	1%
4-7 yrs	4%
Over 7 yrs	95%
SRO Experience	
1-3 yrs	9%
4-7 yrs	57%
Over 7 yrs	34%

Instruments and Measures

A survey consisting of 30 questions, the full version of which is attached as Appendix A, was used to collect the data for the Commonwealth of Virginia during a separate research project. The researcher designed the survey and collected the data based on the information desired by the Commonwealth. Participants were identified because of their inclusion in a data set owned and maintained by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Respondents were asked to rank their agreement with statements based on a standard, 5 point Likert scale; Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree or Strongly Agree. Statements were made about various aspects of job satisfaction including the SROs' perceived acceptability of their pay, relationships with coworkers, relationships with students, support received by supervisory staff, satisfaction with the assignment as compared to other possible assignments, willingness to participate in the school and in the lives of students outside of police functions and general interest in remaining in their assignment as SRO. Additional data were collected in an open-ended format about the individual respondents' self-identified contributors to job satisfaction and considerations for making the job better. The full instrument is included as Appendix A.

For the purpose of this study, only those quantitative data that are directly related to the research questions were analyzed. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used as a preliminary step to the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) used to validate the factorial structure. It is generally recommended that EFA and CFA not be performed using the same data when there is no evidence about the possible factorial model. For this study,

because existing literature suggests the factors and questions which underlie job satisfaction, the EFA was used as a piloting step within the CFA, and not as an independent statistical test. The CFA was used to identify the individual questions that underlie the factors that contribute to job satisfaction. In other words, the CFA is used to identify the indicators that relate to the observable variables, or questions (Dimitrov, 2008).

Through the use of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in SPSS, three underlying factors were identified in job satisfaction; F1: Job Commitment, F2: Relationships with Others and F3: Job Experience. The following survey items were found to be indicators of the factors:

F1: Job Commitment

10. The job itself is better than other police assignments I have had.

17. I am proud to tell others that I am an SRO.

19. I am glad I chose the job of SRO over other jobs within the police force that I considered.

21. For me, this is the best of all possible police assignments.

23. With promotional opportunities and chances to work toward the job of SRO as a specialization, I would be willing to make a career of the SRO assignment.

For the purposes of further analysis, only the questions which were found to be relevant to Factor 1 of job satisfaction were used, resulting in the renumbering of questions 10, 17, 19, 21 and 23 (all related to F1) to questions 3, 6, 8, 9, 10.

F2: Relationships with Others

14. The people you work with in your school (teachers, administrators, etc) ask you

    to help students succeed.

16. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order

    to help students be successful.

18. I would accept almost any type of duty assignment within the school in order to

    help the faculty and students, both academically and in regard to safety.

24. Being an SRO gives me a chance to make positive changes in the lives of

    students.

For the purposes of further analysis, only the questions that were found to be

relevant to Factor 2 of job satisfaction were used, resulting in the renumbering of

questions 14,16,18 and 24 (all related to F2) to questions 4,5,7 and 11.

F3: Job Experience

1. How many years have you been a police officer?

2. How long have you been a school resource officer?

30. How old are you?

For the purposes of further analysis, only the questions that were found to be relevant to

Factor 3 of job satisfaction were used, resulting in the renumbering of questions 1, 2 and

30 (all related to F3) to questions 1, 2 and 16.

Background Variables Used in the Analysis

Because race (Carlan, 2007; Fry, & Greenfield, 1980; Miller, Mire & Kim, 2009;

Poteyeva & Sun, 2009) and gender (Carlan, 2007; Felkenes & Lasley, 1992; Krimmel &

Gorley, 2003; Miller, Mire, & Kim, 2009; Raganella & White, 2004;) have been closely

studied as potential variables in police job satisfaction, and because the results on the

degree to which these two variables impact job satisfaction for general police officers has

been documented, this study also sought to see what, if any, part of the variation in each

of the previously identified factors that underlie job satisfaction (job commitment,

relationships with others and job experience) for school resources officers can be

explained collectively or individually by the variables of race and gender. Although

previous research suggests that gender does not play a part in the prediction or

explanation of job satisfaction, because this variable has been at the center of theoretical

positioning in criminal justice (Martin, 1980) for many years, and because women remain

underrepresented in police departments, this variable was explored in the current

research.

Years of experience as a police officer (Carlan, 2007; Niederhoffer, 1967) and age

of the police officer (Carlan, 2007; Krimmel & Gorley, 2003) also have been explored as

potential indicators of job satisfaction, with mixed findings. As previously discussed,

Carlan (2007) found a slight difference in the indicated job satisfaction of police officers

based on age, with older officers being slightly more satisfied than younger officers.

Miller et al. (2009) found older officers to be slightly less satisfied. Niederhoffer's

(1967) work on police officer cynicism, albeit unable to be replicated in subsequent

studies (Langworth, 1987; Rafkey, Lawley, & Ingram, 1976; Regoli, 1976; Regoli &

Poole; 1979; Singer, Singer, & Burns, 1984; Wilt & Bannon; 1976), suggested a

curvilinear relationship between years of experience and cynicism with mid-career

officers being the most cynical. Cynicism then declined as an officer progressed into the

final years of his career. If there also is a relationship between age, years of service as a

police officer and/or a school resource officer and job satisfaction for school resource

officers, this could be meaningful to understanding and improving job satisfaction for

police officers serving in the SRO assignment.

In addition to race, gender, professional experience and age, and in recognition of

the unique positioning of school resource officers within the school environment and with

respect to the juvenile population being served, the variables of district classification

(urban, suburban or rural) and level of assignment (middle, high school or both) were

also used to identify potential contribution to the variance in job satisfaction and the

identified underlying factors. It is important to note that whereas there are specific

census classifications for rural, urban and suburban communities, the Virginia data used

in this study is based on self-reported classifications and not on official classifications.

Statistical Analysis

To address the first research question (RQ1), a confirmatory factor analysis

(CFA) was employed. To explain the choice of confirmatory over exploratory factor

analysis in this study, a brief methodological clarification is necessary. In general, an

exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used when there is not enough theoretical and/or

empirical information to hypothesize how many factors underlie the set of observable

variables (e.g., survey items) and which variables form which factor. In contrast, a

confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is employed when the goal is to test the validity of a

hypothesized model of factors and their relationships to a set of observed variables. In

this study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to specify and validate

constructs that underlie the responses on job satisfaction questions for the study

population of police officers. The CFA choice was guided by the substantive meaning of

the survey items and their relationships to three hypothesized latent factors: job

commitment, relationships with others, and job experience. Prior to performing the CFA,

a preliminary EFA was conducted to provide some statistical information about which

items were appropriate to serve as reference indicators for the factors specified in the

CFA model. The scale of the reference item for a given factor becomes the scale for this

factor. To clarify, the EFA played a preliminary technical role, not a guiding role in

determining the factor structure tested in this study (e.g., Dimitrov, 2008; Muthén &

Muthén, 2008).   The CFA was performed by using the computer program for statistical

analysis of latent variables, M*plus* (Muthén & Muthén, 2008). To test the goodness-of-fit

of the CFA model was evaluated through the use of the chi-square value in combination

with the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), standardized mean square residual

(SMSR) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA, Steiger, 1990).

The second research question (RQ2, p. 11) is addressed by using a series of

multiple regression analyses. In each regression model, the dependent variable is one of

the identified factors of job satisfaction and independent variables (predictors) are as

follows: race, gender, age, and years of experience of the officers, type of district in

which they serve, and type of school assignment. Specifically, (a) race is categorized into

two levels: White ($n = 86$) versus Minority ($n = 34$), (b) type of district is categorized into

two levels: rural ($n = 41$) versus urban and suburban combined ($n = 91$), and (c) type of

school assignment: single school assignment (SSA, $n = 76$) versus multiple school assignment (MSA, $n = 56$). The multiple regression analyses are performed using the statistical package SPSS.

Limitations of the Study

The survey used in this study presents several potential limitations. Because the researcher participated in the design of the survey and its administration during a previous research undertaking which was unrelated to the study at hand, it is possible that some researcher bias could exist. Additionally, and again, because the survey was designed for and used in a previous study, the researcher was limited as to what variables could be considered in the regression models for the current study. Specifically, it would have been advantageous to examine what, if any, predictive value the variable of level of education could lend to the findings. Due to the fact that data was not available on the level of education of the school resource officers who participated, the researcher was not able to examine that variable. This study is further limited by the number of respondents. Although the limited number of respondents could suggest the existence of response bias, this is unlikely due to the fact that the background characteristics of the respondents closely align with demographic information that is known about SROs (May, 2009).

Additionally, it is important to note that because Virginia tracks SROs serving in the state only by their attendance at Department of Criminal Justice SRO trainings, there is no way to know how many additional police officers may be serving in Virginia's schools but were not on the contact list maintained by DCJS. Officers may potentially serve as SROs but have not attended a Department of Criminal Justice Services

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sponsored training, or they may have attended a training but failed to register their contact information with the state. In regard to type of district in which an officer serves, this data was self-reported and may not conform to census or other official district classifications.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the nature of the data set used in the study, the background variables along with the justification for their selection and a description of the statistical design for data analysis and software. The demographic variables of race, gender, age, and experience, along with the work related variables of type of district (e.g. urban, rural, suburban) and type of school assignment (e.g. single versus multiple) were investigated to see if and to what extent they contributed, individually and collectively, to the variance in job satisfaction as determined by the three factors identified in the factor analysis of the data. Lastly, potential bias and study limitations were explored.

4. Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that underlie job satisfaction for school resource officers. The previous chapter serves to identify and explain the data set used in the study, the variables examined and the methods employed to investigate statistical relationships. This chapter is a detailed discussion of the findings of the statistical analysis. Survey questions that were determined to be substantively correlated with job satisfaction during exploratory factor analysis (EFA) are provided in the first section of this chapter. Following a discussion of such responses, the findings of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are discussed as they serve to address the following two research questions:

RQ1: What are the dominant latent factors that underlie police satisfaction in the role of school resource officer?

RQ2: To what degree are differences in job satisfaction explained collectively and uniquely by race, gender, age, experience as a police officer and experience as a school resource officer, type of district in which they serve (e.g. urban, rural, suburban) and type of school assignment (e.g. single versus multiple)?

General Survey Response Information

As shown in Figure 4.0, of the 132 school resource officers in Virginia whose responses make up the existing data set used in this study, 65% were white, 22% were African American, and 13% identified themselves as Hispanic, Asian or other. Because

of the small number of minority respondents in the Hispanic, Asian and other categories,

these groups were combined with African American respondents under the broader

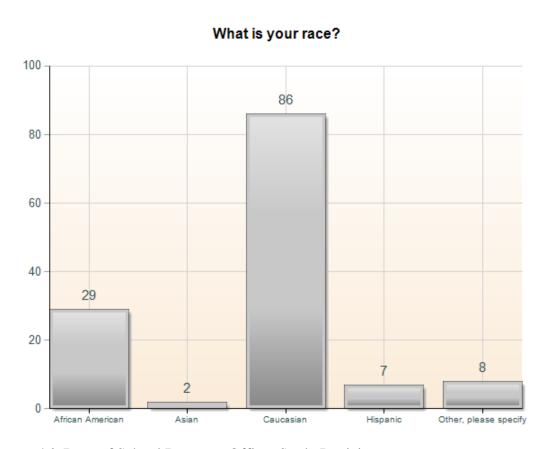category referred to in this research as Minority.

What is your race?

Figure 4.0. Race of School Resource Officer Study Participants

Eighty-nine percent of respondents were male, 11% female. Twenty-four percent

were assigned to work exclusively in middle schools, 33% exclusively in high schools,

14% split duties between both middle and high schools and 29% served as the school

resource officer for all levels, elementary through high school in their district (see Figure

4.1). Because the goal of this study was to identify what, if any, relationship exists

between an officer's school assignment (e.g. single or multiple school assignment) and

the three factors identified as underlying job satisfaction, in response to RQ1, this

variable was recoded to reflect an officer's assignment to single or multiple schools.

What school level of students do you work with?

Figure 4.1. Grade Level of Students with Whom SROs are Assigned

Respondents were approximately equally representative of the three types of districts;

rural (31%), urban (30%) and suburban (39%).

Eighty-seven percent of respondents were over the age of 35. None of the

respondents were younger than 28. When asked about experience, 95% of school

resource officers indicated they had been police officers for over seven years, with the majority of respondents (57%) having served as an SRO for somewhere between 4-7 years. Only 34% of officers had been serving as SROs for longer than seven years (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

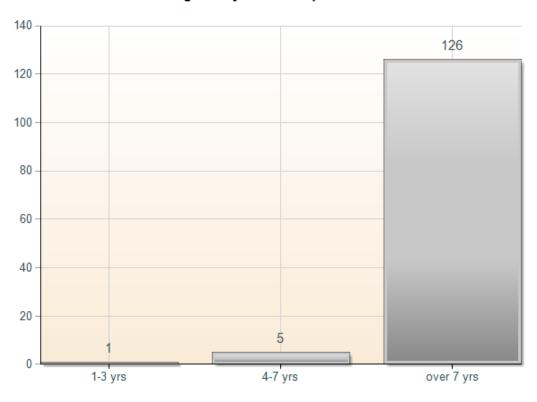**How long have you been a police officer?**

Figure 4.2. SROs' Years of Experience as a Police Officer

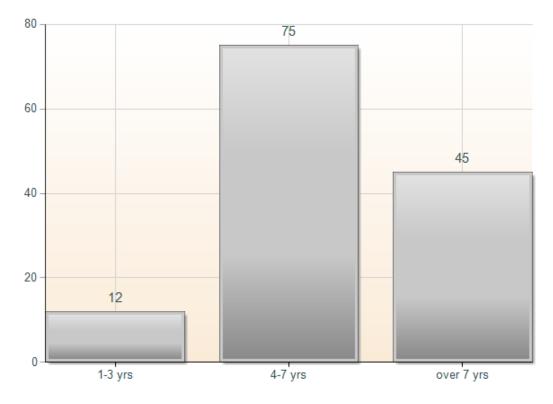**How long have you been a School Resource Officer?**

Figure 4.3. SROs' Years of Experience as a School Resource Officer

Analysis

To address the first research question (RQ1, p. 11), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was hypothesized based on a preliminary exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which was conducted using SPSS 15.0. The hypothesized CFA is described in Table 4.1 and depicted in Figure 4.4. Factor loadings in Table 4.1 represent standardized values and were all statistically significant at the .01 level. Figure 4.4 depicts the hypothesized factor model that relates observable variables to latent factors, as depicted by one way arrows. Although not depicted, it is important to note that there was a statistically significant correlation between Factor 1, Job Commitment and F2, Relationships with Others.

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Additionally, F3, Job Experience, was also found to correlate with F1, Job Commitment.

The goodness of fit indices suggest that the CFA model provides an adequate data fit.

Specifically, although the chi-square test was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (51) = 84.96$, $p =$

.002, all other indices (reported in the M*plus* output) were within an acceptable range:

CFI = .934, TLI = .914, SRMR = .056, and RMSEA = .071 with 90% confidence interval

(.043, .097); (see Dimitrov, 2008, pp. 388-389). Also, as shown in Table 4.1, all factor

loadings were statistically significant and of sizeable magnitude, thus providing support

for the dependability of the survey items as measures of the hypothesized constructs of

job satisfaction.

Table 4.1.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Factorial Structure of Job Satisfaction

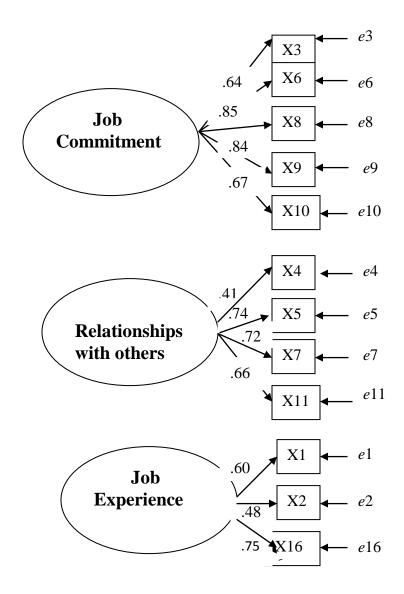| Factor/Item	Item description	Factor loadings	S.E.
Job Commitment			
Item 3	The job itself is better than other police assignments.	.620***	.061
Item 6	I am proud to tell others that I am an SRO.	.638***	.058
Item 8	I am glad I chose the job of SRO over other jobs within the police force that I considered.	.858***	.034
Item 9	For me, this is the best of all possible police assignments.	.849***	.035
Item 10	With promotional opportunities and chances to work toward SRO specialization, I would make a career of the SRO assignment.	.679***	.053
Relationships with others			
Item 4	The people you work with in your school ask you to help students succeed.	.407***	.084
Item 5	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help students be successful.	.745***	.057
Item 7	I would accept almost any type of duty assignment within the school in order to help the faculty and students be successful academically and in regard to safety.	.723***	.058
Item 11	Being an SRO gives me a chance to make positive changes in the lives of students.	.662***	.063
Job Experience			
Item 1	How long have you been a police officer?	.599***	.093
Item 2	How long have you been a school resource officer?	.484***	.096
Item 16	How old are you?	.753***	.101

$*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.$

Figure 4.4. CFA Model of SRO Job Satisfaction

The second research question (RQ2, p. 11) was addressed by using a series of

multiple regression analyses. In each regression model, the dependent variable was one of

the identified factors of job satisfaction and independent variables (predictors) are as

follows: race, gender, age, years of experience as a police officer, years of experience as

a school resource officer, type of district in which they serve, and type of school

assignment. Specifically, (a) race is categorized into two levels: White ($n = 86$) versus

Minority ($n = 34$), (b) type of district is categorized into two levels: rural ($n = 41$) versus

urban and suburban combined ($n = 91$), and (c) type of school assignment: single school

assignment (SSA, $n = 76$) versus multiple school assignment (MSA, $n = 56$). The

multiple regression analyses are performed using the statistical package SPSS.

The factors (F1, F2, F3) as identified and in response to RQ1, were analyzed

using multiple regressions with job commitment (F1), relationships with others (F2) and

job experience (F3) as the respective dependent variables and race, gender, age, years of

experience as a police officer, years of experience as a school resource officer type of

district and type of school assignment as the independent variables. In interpretation of

the results, the first step was to determine whether or not the seven independent variables

of race, gender, age, years of experience as a police officer, years of experience as a

school resource officer, type of district and type of school assignment account for a

statistically significant proportion of the variance in each of the three factors using the F-

test. The results from the omnibus regression tests showed that the prediction of the first

factor, job commitment, from all seven predictors together was statistically significant,

$F(7,120) = 3.727, p = .001$. However, that was not the case for the second factor,

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relationships with others, $F(7, 120) = 1.016$, $p = .423$ or for the third factor, job

experience, $F(4, 126) = .185$, $p = .946$. Additional information on the regression results is

provided in Table 4.2. For F3, Job Experience, the variables of age, years of experience

as a police officer and years of experience as a school resource officer were left out of the

regression model because they overlap with the dependent variable and would have

obscured the effect of other potentially substantively important predictors.

Table 4.2.

Multiple Regressions for the Prediction of Factors of Job Satisfaction

from Race, Gender, Age, Experience, Type of School Assignment and Type of District

Dependent variable/ Predictors	B	SE(B)	R^2
Job Commitment			.180
Race	-5.00**	1.75	
Gender	-2.62	2.68	
Assignment	2.39	1.68	
District	-.42	1.86	
Age	7.28**	2.78	
PO Experience	-.190	3.64	
SRO Experience	2.34	1.45	
Relationships with others			.056
Race	-2.67	1.89	
Gender	.098	2.90	
Assignment	-.861	1.82	
District	-1.13	2.01	
Age	.43	3.01	
PO Experience	-3.26	3.94	
SRO Experience	2.88	1.57	
Job Experience			.006
Race	0.75	1.90	
Gender	1.86	2.87	
Assignment	-1.03	1.85	
District	-0.67	2.03	

$*p < .05.$ $** p < .01.$ $*** p < .001.$

Because only two variables, *race* and *age* were found to be statistically significant predictors for F1, a comparison was made between the full model (all possible predictors) and the restricted model (only predictors which are statistically significant) to determine if the same proportion of the variance in the Job Commitment was accounted for by both

models. The R^2 change between the full and restricted models was not statistically significant, R^2 change $= .044$, $F (5,120) = 1.269$, $p = .282$. For this reason, the decision was made to use the restricted model.

For job commitment, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .140$) indicates that 14% of the variance in job commitment for SROs can be attributed to differences in race and age combined. Because both race and age were statistically significant ($p = .005$ and .001), in order to examine the unique contribution that both race and age make to job commitment, the part correlation was squared. The squared value of the part correlation between job commitment and race was $(-.237)^2 = .056$ thus indicating that 5.6% of the variance in job commitment is uniquely explained by the variance in race. The squared value of the part correlation between age and job commitment was $(.291)^2 = .085$ thus indicating 8.5% of the variance in job commitment is uniquely explained by the variance in age.

Summary

This chapter discussed the EFA, CFA and multiple regression analyses that were used to investigate statistical relationships in the data. Those results were used to answer the research questions posed in this study. Figures and charts were provided to illustrate statistical relationships as well as to communicate general demographical information about the study population. In sum, out of the seven predictors tested in multiple regression, race, gender, age, years of experience as a police officer, years of experience as a school resource officer, type of district (rural or urban/suburban) and type of school assignment (single or multiple assignment), only race and age were found to be

statistically significant predictors of job satisfaction with minority officers being less

satisfied than white officers and older officers being more satisfied than younger ones.

5. Conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of the focus of this study, job satisfaction among school resource officers, a discussion of the results of the study as provided in Chapter 4, policy implications and suggestions for future research. The purpose of this dissertation was to identify factors that contribute to job satisfaction for school resource officers and to understand if the demographic variables of race, gender, years of experience as a police officer, years of experience as a school resource officer, type of district in which they serve, and type of school assignment may predict job satisfaction for police officers who serve as SROs. Related to that purpose, the following two research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the dominant latent factors that underlie police satisfaction in the role of school resource officer?

RQ2: To what degree are differences in job satisfaction explained collectively and individually by the race, gender, age, years of experience as a police officer, years of experience as a school resource officer, type of district in which they serve (urban, rural, suburban) and type of school assignment (single versus multiple)?

Before discussing the conclusions drawn from the findings specific to the two research questions as addressed in Chapter 4, it is important to note basic, surface level reporting of the officers on several questions related to job satisfaction. When asked to

rate their agreement with several statements determined to be indicators of Job

Commitment, F1 in this study, the following results were found: When asked to indicate

agreement with the statement "The job itself is better than other police assignments I've

had" (survey question 10, Appendix A), 68% indicated that they either somewhat or

strongly agreed and 90% stated that they were glad they choose the assignment of SRO

over other assignment options which were available to them (question 19, Appendix A).

Sixty-six percent stated that the assignment of SRO was the best possible police

assignment for them (question 21, Appendix A) and only 39% somewhat or strongly

agreed that they would like to work in another policing assignment outside of the role of

school resource officer (question 22, Appendix A). Ninety-two percent of officers

indicated that they were "proud to tell others that I am an SRO" (survey question 17,

Appendix A). This surface level evaluation of the responses provided by the school

resource officers in this study suggest that the assignment of school resource officer is

one that generates a large degree of job satisfaction for police officers. What,

specifically, contributes to that high rate of reported job satisfaction is not as clear.

Specific to F2, Relationships with Others, 92% of respondents indicated that they

either somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am willing to put in a great deal

of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help students be successful" (question

16, Appendix A) and 77% said that they would accept almost any type of duty

assignment if they "could help students and teachers to be successful, both academically

and in regard to safety" (question 18, Appendix A). Ninety-nine percent of respondents

stated that being an SRO gave them an opportunity to help students (question 24, Appendix A).

Specific to RQ1 in this study and as indicated in Chapter 4, the latent factors of job satisfaction for police officers serving as SROs in the Commonwealth of Virginia were found to be job commitment, relationships with others and job experience. The specific survey questions that were hypothesized to be indicators of the three identified factors based on their substantive relationship to the factors and as validated through the use of confirmatory factor analysis are shown below. The full survey is attached as Appendix A.

F1: Job Commitment

11. The job itself is better than other police assignments I have had.

19. I am proud to tell others that I am an SRO.

20. I am glad I chose the job of SRO over other jobs within the police force that I considered.

22. For me, this is the best of all possible police assignments.

25. With promotional opportunities and chances to work toward the job of SRO as a specialization, I would be willing to make a career of the SRO assignment.

F2: Relationships with Others

15. The people you work with in your school (teachers, administrators, etc) ask you to help students succeed.

17. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help students be successful.

20. I would accept almost any type of duty assignment within the school in order to help the faculty and students, both academically and in regard to safety.

26. Being an SRO gives me a chance to make positive changes in the lives of students.

F3: Job Experience

3. How many years have you been a police officer?

4. How long have you been a school resource officer?

30. How old are you?

The findings of RQ1, that is, the factors which were found to underlie job satisfaction; job commitment, relationships with others and job experience mirror what the literature on police officers and police who are assigned as school resource officers suggests. Johnson (1999) found that much of a school resource officers' day is spent in a relationship building role within the school with as much as 50% of the officers' time being spent in a counseling capacity. This finding was inconsistent with Brown's (2006) finding that school resource officers generally tend to function along the job description of general duty police officers and, as such, are not situated to function appropriately within the school environment. The current research establishes support for Johnson's (1999) findings and extends the Johnson findings by identifying relationships with others as not only a key part of the role the SRO serves, but also as a key factor in the SRO's satisfaction in the role. Kim and Geronimo (2009) called for a stronger awareness among school resource officers about child development, positive behavioral supports, restorative justice and working with students with disabilities. The current study's

findings in response to RQ1, that job commitment, relationships with others and job experience all underlie job satisfaction suggests that officers who are serving as SROs may embrace the call for policy that clarifies their role as more than a general law enforcement officer. Further, given Time and Payne's (2008) findings that the SROs' relationships with students and staff are essential to their overall effectiveness at maximizing school based violence intervention strategies, the current study strengthens and confirms that the role of the SRO is broader than general duty officer for the sample of school resource officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia who participated in the current study. As the Time and Payne (2008) findings relate to the current study, the suggestion is that not only is the role of the SRO broader than that of the general police officer but also that SRO job effectiveness could be strengthened by relationships with coworkers and the student body.

RQ2 sought to specify which background variables might explain the variance in job satisfaction from officer to officer. Because race and gender (Carlan, 2007; Felkenes & Lasley, 1992; Fry & Greenfield, 1980; Krimmel & Gorley, 2003; Miller, Mire, & Kim, 2009; Poteyeva & Sun, 2009; Raganella & White, 2004) have been closely studied as potential independent variables in police job satisfaction for general police officers, and because the results on the degree to which these two variables impact job satisfaction for general police officers has been inconsistently documented, this study also sought to see what, if any, part of the variance in each of the previously identified factors that underlie job satisfaction (job commitment, relationships with others and job experience) can be explained collectively or individually by the variables of race and gender. In the current

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study, the gender of the officer was not found to be related to any of the three factors that were determined to underlie job satisfaction for police officers who serve as school resource officers. This finding is consistent with previous research findings on the role played by gender in the job satisfaction of general police officers (Carlan, 2007; Fry & Greenfeld, 1980; Poteyeva & Sun, 2009). In consideration of Martin's (1980) assertion that females have historically been funneled into police assignments that align with traditional female roles, thought was given to the possibility that female officers may be overrepresented in the assignment of school resource officer as compared to other assignments within the field of policing. As previously discussed, national statistics on police officers across the United States indicate that about 24% are minorities and only 11% are female (Hickman & Reaves, 2006). Minorities and women serving in the Commonwealth of Virginia trail the national average with minorities making up about 10.8% of the police force and only 9.8% of those serving in Virginia are women (Chappell & Gibson, 2007). Of the Virginia school resource officers who are represented in this data, 35% are minority and 11% are female. These percentages suggest that, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, minorities are overrepresented in the assignment of SRO as compared to general duty police officers at both the state and national levels. Women are slightly overrepresented in the assignment of school resource officer as compared to general police officers in the Commonwealth, but are on target with the number of females serving as police officers in the United States as a whole. Therefore, women are not overrepresented in the assignment of school resource officer and this study supports

previous research findings that the gender of a police officer does not impact his/her job satisfaction, even specific to the assignment as an SRO.

Race has also been a key component of background variable investigation in the police field. Results from prior studies, as reported in the literature review, have shown race to be unrelated to job satisfaction for police officers (Carlan, 2007; Krimmel & Gormley, 2003; Miller, Mire, & Kim, 2009; Smith, 1978). Contrary to these findings, the current study found that, for the study population of school resource officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia, race is a predictor of job satisfaction with white officers being more satisfied than minority officers. The finding of the current study is particularly meaningful in light of Raganella & White's (2004) finding that there are differences in what factors motivate white and minority officers to join the police force. Specifically, they found that minority officers were more often motivated to join the police force by a desire to help others. Relationships with coworkers was the most frequently identified motivator for joining the police force among white officers. Further, Carlan (2007) found that the single most important factor in a general duty police officer's job satisfaction was the level of positive alignment between an officer's reason for joining the force and his/her actual experiences on the job. When considering the Raganella and White (2004) and Carlan (2007) findings together, the implications for the findings of the current study are meaningful. If an officer's job satisfaction is most dependent on the alignment of job expectations and job experiences (Carlan, 2007) and minority officers join the force primarily out of a desire to help others while white officers join primarily for the relationships they experience with coworkers (Raganella &

White, 2004), then this could explain the current finding in response to RQ2, that race is a predictor of job satisfaction among school resource officers in Virginia with white officers being more satisfied. In response to RQ1 in the current study, it was found that relationships with others was one of three factors that underlie job satisfaction for the study population. If Raganella and White (2004) and Carlan (2007) were accurate in their findings, it makes sense that white officers are more satisfied than minority officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia given the link that was found between job satisfaction and relationships with others in the current study.

The size of the district and the type of school assignment were explored as potential predictors of job satisfaction because these variables relate to conditions that are somewhat unique to police officers who are serving in the assignment of school resource officer. Additionally, previous research (Forrester, 2008) suggested that relationships with others, an identified aspect of job satisfaction in the current study, were stronger for SROs when they served in a single school rather than multiple schools due to their limited ability to build relationships when working in multiple locations. Further, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (2001) and McDevitt and Panniello (2005) found relationships with the student body through single school assignment to be the primary indicator of a perception of school safety. Contrary to the suggestion that SROs serving in a single school assignment would be more satisfied than those who split their time at multiple locations, the current study found that whether an officer served as a school resource officer in only one school or in multiple schools had no bearing on the

indicated job satisfaction of the officer. District size also was not an indicator of satisfaction.

It is interesting to note that although one might expect that larger and urban districts may have more school resource officers, an expectation that is confirmed by the number of school resource officers listed in the database of school resource officer contact information which is maintained by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, that condition was not represented in the data used in the current study. Respondents in the current study were equally representative of rural (31%), suburban (39%), and urban (30%) districts.

Niederhoffer (1967) identified cynicism as the major factor affecting police officer job satisfaction. He further identified age as a predictor of cynicism, with younger and older officers being the least cynical. Although Niederhoffer (1967) studied cynicism, an aspect of job satisfaction that is not examined in the current study, and acknowledging that Niederhoffer's (1967) instrument of measurement is questionable given the fact that it has not produced similar findings despite several replication attempts (Langworth, 1987; Rafkey, Lawley, & Ingram, 1976; Regoli, 1976; Regoli & Poole, 1979; Singer, Singer, & Burns, 1984; Wilt & Bannon, 1976) it is interesting to consider his findings on age in relation to cynicism as a potential aspect of job satisfaction. Age was also found to be a factor in job satisfaction in Carlan's (2007) work with older officers being slightly more satisfied. To the contrary, Miller et al. (2009) found a negative relationship between age and satisfaction. The current study identified age as a predictor in job satisfaction for school resource officers with older officers being more

satisfied, a finding which is not surprising given previous research which documents age as playing some part, although not clear on what part, in the job satisfaction of police officers.

Given the links in the literature among job satisfaction, job commitment and role definition, several policy implications emerge. Because of the nature of the preexisting data used in the current study, the researcher was limited in the ability to comprehensively study all the potential relationships among job satisfaction, job commitment and role definition. Still, the current study assists in providing some confirmation about the nature of job satisfaction specific to school resource officers, an important step in directing future study and policy.

Policy Implications

The current study helped to clarify previous findings about the factors that underlie job satisfaction as well as what variables do, and do not, predict a police officer's satisfaction in the role of school resource officer. Because age and race were found in the current study to be predictors of job satisfaction, and because job commitment, relationships with others and time on the job were confirmed to be factors in job satisfaction, more should be done to consider and implement policies which enhance those aspects of job satisfaction for SROs.   Because we know that job experience is a factor in overall satisfaction and age is a predictor of satisfaction, it may be helpful to implement policies that encourage police officers to remain in the assignment indefinitely, or as a career assignment. This could be accomplished through clearly defined promotional opportunities for officers who are serving as SROs.

Unrelated to job satisfaction and, as a result, not discussed previously in the study, 53% of the SROs represented in the data used in this study indicated that promotional potential was "very limited" in the assignment of SRO. Moreover, when asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "With promotional opportunities and chances to work toward the job of SRO as a specialization, I would be willing to make a career of the SRO assignment" (question 23, appendix A), 81% either somewhat or strongly agreed. This suggestion that SROs are interested in professional policies which would provide the opportunities to serve in the SRO assignment for extended periods of time coupled with research findings that age and job experience are related to job satisfaction invite appropriate police changes.

A strong understanding of the police officers who serve in the position along with their willingness to mold to policies designed to improve job satisfaction in support of those who work to ensure school safety helps policy makers to move forward. Although a national definition has existed for some time as a result of H.R. 3711, The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, Title I Part Q as amended (2005), little policy attention has been given to aligning that definition with local SRO practice, nor has consideration been given to how the definition could be augmented in light of more recent research and think-tank policy recommendations (ACLU, 2009; Carlan, 2007; Time & Payne, 2008). Further suggestive of the willingness of SROs to accept and support alterations to their job description and professional advancement through the use of policy, 78% of those surveyed stated their opinion that the job of the SRO could change a lot in the future.

Relationships with others, another component of job satisfaction, also could be improved with policies that support teamwork and collaboration in support of school safety. When asked if other school employees could be helpful to them with appropriate training, 50% of Virginia SROs represented in this data set used in the current study agreed. This finding aligns with a previous finding as discussed in the literature, that some teachers experience low levels of self-efficacy in regard to collaborating with police officer in support of school safety (Forrester, 2008). Training policies that acknowledge and support the collaborative nature of school safety practice could improve the efficacy of teachers and encourage strong relationships between SROs and faculty.

Before these policy recommendations can be fully considered, more research should be done to understand how a standardized role could be beneficial to the SROs, if the police officers who serve as SROs would be receptive to such a standardization and what the impact of such changes could be. With what is known currently, policy initiatives should focus on key aspects of job satisfaction, such as relationships with others, and work to find ways to improve what we know is important to job satisfaction specific to SROs.

Although the current study found few statistically significant variables contributing to the understanding of what makes a police officer satisfied to be a school resource officer, it does suggest that SROs in the Commonwealth of Virginia are satisfied in their assignment as such. Further, this study served to confirm what does not contribute to an officer's satisfaction in this role. The elimination of gender, type of district and type of assignment (single vs. multiple school assignment) as potential

predictors in SRO job satisfaction help to narrow and direct the focus of future research in this regard.

The understanding of race and age as predictors of job commitment among SROs helps to direct future research and exploration by identifying target variables for further study. In the meantime, the conformation of job commitment, relationships with others and job experience as factors that underlie job satisfaction for SROs closes the loop between what other researchers have found (that an officer's involvement with students and staff is key to the SROs success) and what we know about how the SRO position is currently defined and implemented (with little consistency and variation in understanding of the extent to which SROs are an extension of traditional policing, positioned within the schools).

As national policy makers prepare to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, and in recognition of the fact that school safety is and will remain on the national radar, the time is appropriate for policy makers to make informed policy adjustments. By maximizing the job satisfaction of the officers who are serving as SROs, policy makers could potentially improve the safety of schools.

In the event that national policy leaders fail to implement measures aimed at improving school resource officer functioning and job satisfaction, professional organizations can take the lead. By designing training programs based on existing research findings and tailored to the needs specific to the SRO, and by conducting studies to further the literature base, professional organizations for police officers who serve as school resource officers can assist their members in enhancing their careers while

informing the pursuit of more accuracy in role definition. To assist in the effort, future research should be target gains in specific information which is needed to advance the role of the school resource officer.

Future Research

To assist in the improvement of job satisfaction for police officers who serve as school resource officers, and in pursuit of a standard definition of job description if such a change is desired, it will be helpful to have a deeper understanding of the ways in which school resource officers function currently; how they work to build relationships, what they do to encourage positive behavioral conditions in schools and what training could assist them in working within the school environment. Case studies, empirical research and an extension of existing research is recommended in the pursuit of that end.

It is suggested that a series of case studies be conducted in various geographic locations to provide a level of depth in analysis of SRO involvement that cannot be identified through empirical research methods. Information should be gathered and analyzed about the aspects of relationships with others and job commitment which are most satisfying to SROs and ways in which these dimensions of job satisfaction can be enhanced. Qualitative research such as case studies also could be suggestive of research questions appropriate for qualitative analysis.

Empirical research could be helpful in gauging ways in which others with whom SROs work (e.g. teachers, principals, parent-teacher organizations) perceive their role and the strength of their relationships with others in the school environment.

The empirical framework for SRO job satisfaction and for their usefulness as a tool for the provision of school safety has been identified in the literature. A link could be made between SRO job satisfaction and the provision of school safety by comparing the safety of specific schools (as indicated by crime reports and behavioral infractions and referrals) based on the level of job satisfaction indicated by the SRO assigned to each school.

It would also be helpful to understand which types of training programs are most useful to school resource offices and how training, what amount of training, and what frequency of training, impacts job satisfaction and its deminsions for school resource officers.

The finding of the current study, that minority school resource officers are somewhat less satisfied than white school resource officers, suggests that more research must be done to investigate the potential relationship between the overrepresentation of minority officers as SROs and their lower job satisfaction. Also, more must be known about what, specifically, leads all officers, regardless of race and/or age, to generally be satisfied in the SRO assignment.

By clarifying and directing the growth of the school resource officer through improved job satisfaction gained by the implementation of research based policies, districts can better utilize the SRO. Providing for the safety goals/needs of schools, a federal mandate, could be achieved by attracting and retaining quality police officers to the role of SRO. Understanding what leads an officer to be satisfied in the role, as well as understanding how to improve that satisfaction once the factors involved are identified, could assist policy makers, professional organizations and school personnel in

their responsibilities in regard to school safety.   An immediate next step in the research should be to replicate and extend the research of the current study to the national population of school resource officers to identify ways in which officers across the country are similar, or dissimilar, to those SROs in Virginia, in regard to job satisfaction and commitment. Additional information on cynicism as a dimension of job satisfaction and on level of education as a predictor of satisfaction is suggested in existing literature and should be explored. Research should be further extended to establish the level of interest among SROs in the establishment of a standardized role and professional designation should be explored.

Summary

Chapter 5 served to connect the findings of the research to previous research undertakings as reviewed in the literature for the purpose of suggesting policies to enhance the job satisfaction of school resource officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Further, suggestions for future research in pursuit of an understanding of how the findings from the current study about the job satisfaction of SROs could align with job satisfaction for SROs throughout the country. The implementation of research based policy, combined with further research to understand the extent to which job satisfaction is similar across geographic regions of the country, could lead to professional standards for those serving as SROs.

APPENDIX A

Question 1

How long have you been a police officer?

    1-3 yrs
    4-7 yrs
    over 7 yrs

Question 2

How long have you been a School Resource Officer?

    1-3 yrs
    4-7 yrs
    over 7 yrs

Question 3

Do you belong to a professional organization for School Resource Officers?

    Yes
    No

Question 4

Is your professional organization responsive to the changing needs of members?

    YES
    NO
    UNSURE

Heading

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Question 5

My pay as a School Resource Officer is fairly satisfactory.

Question 6

Prospects for promotion as an SRO are very limited.

Question 7

The job itself is worthwhile.

Question 8

The job itself could change a lot in the future.

Question 9

The job itself could be structured to better serve the needs of students.

Question 10

The job itself is better than other police assignments I've had.

Question 11

Being and SRO is a dead-end job.

Question 12

Your immediate police supervisor has been an SRO.

    Yes
    No

Question 14

Your immediate supervisor understands the differences between the SRO job and other police jobs.

    Yes
    No

Question 14

The people you work with in your school (teachers, administrators, etc) ask you to help students succeed.

Question 15

The people you work with in your school (teachers, administrators, etc) could help you more with appropriate training.

Question 16

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help students be successful.

Question 17

I am proud to tell others that I am an SRO.

Question 18

I would accept almost any type of duty assignment within the school in order to help the faculty and students be successful, both academically and in regard to safety.

Question 19

I am glad I chose the job of SRO over other jobs within the police force that I considered.

Question 20

There's not much to be gained by sticking with an SRO assignment indefinitely.

Question 21

For me, this is the best of all possible police assignments.

Question 22

I would like to work in another assignment within the police force.

Question 23

With promotional opportunities and chances to work toward the job of SRO as a specialization, I would be willing to make a career of the SRO assignment.

Question 24

Being and SRO gives me a chance to make positive changes in the lives of students.

Question 25

Please provide any additional information that you would like to share.

Heading

Please answer the following questions about your background and experience.

Question 26

What is your race?

African American
Asian
Caucasian
Hispanic
Other, please specify

Question 27

Are you male or female?

Female
Male

Question 28

What school level of students do you work with?

Elementary
Middle
High
Middle and High
All levels

Question 29

What type of district do you work in?

Rural
Urban
Suburban

Question 30

How old are you?

21-27
28-35
over 35

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