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School Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives Of Youth In A Southern State

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SCHOOL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES OF YOUTH IN A SOUTHERN STATE

A Dissertation

by

SHANNON APRIL DAVENPORT

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Prairie View A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2023

Major Subject: Juvenile Justice

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ABSTRACT

School Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives of Youth in a Southern State

(December 2023)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Myrna Cintron

The empirical literature has identified that school law enforcement officers respond to youth based on their training, personal feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions. Therefore, the perspectives that shape school law enforcement officers' feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions are vital to understanding their use of discretion as they interact with youth in a school setting. This study utilized an exploratory descriptive research design via survey to examine school law enforcement officers' perspectives of youth, the training received, their stress and emotional regulation.

School law enforcement officers were selected using systematic sampling after compiling a list of all the school districts in this southern state and selecting every 10th school district out of 1,026 school districts on the list. Surveys were distributed by contacting the school district's superintendent. A total of five superintendents granted permission to proceed forward. Police chiefs of the districts were contacted and

distributed the surveys among the officers. A sample of 132 police officer participants were included in the study.

A hierarchical regression was conducted to address research questions: (1) How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth? (2) How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of legitimacy based on their interactions with school-aged youth? (3) How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to the officers' self-reported interaction with school-aged youth? The results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that there was a positive interaction among school law enforcement officers and school-aged youth because a majority of the participants had a meaningful and pleasant experience with school-aged youth. The result also revealed that there was a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perceptions of legitimacy and self-reported procedural justice with school-aged youth. On the contrary, there was not a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school aged youth. The information provided allows for a better understanding of law enforcement and school-aged youth interactions and helps to provide the fields of juvenile justice, criminal justice and law enforcement with factors that could contribute to interactions between the two groups.

Keywords: youth, law enforcement, interaction, legitimacy, perception

DEDICATION

Writing this dissertation was an arduous and tedious task while adjusting and coping with a pandemic that shut the world down abruptly. During this process, personal factors arose that made me question my ability to complete this process. I wanted to throw in the towel and give up on many occasions; however, I knew God could not have brought me this far just for my journey to end without completing this doctoral program. I want to first give honor and glory to God for providing me with the tenacity to help me persevere through all the hardships I endured during this process, academically and personally. God continued to light my path even when I saw no light at the end of the tunnel.

To my family, I want to thank you all for the support, love, and encouragement throughout this process. First, I want to thank my father, Joseph Jr., for continuing to encourage me through prayer. If not for your constant encouragement and daily talks, I would have quit this program a long time ago. Secondly, to my mother, Sandra, you have always been my cheerleader, cheering me on to the finish line. Thank you. With your daily encouragement, I completed this process. Thirdly, to my brothers Demond Sr. and Joshua (RIP), I want to thank you both for continuing to believe in me and encouraging me through this process. The support during this time is immeasurable. Finally, I would like to thank my daughter Charlie for giving my life purpose and being the reason to get up and push forward. You are my biggest blessing. I love you to the moon and back and then some.

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I would like to thank my cohort members. We laughed and cried together through this process, and I definitely would not have made it without all of your support. You girls rock! I am so blessed to not only call you all cohort members but to call you all my sisters. I thank God for placing you four in my life. Thank you for the countless tears and laughs that were shared. I will always cherish those moments. I would also like to thank all of my family and friends who encouraged me along the way! Thank you so much!

I would also like to thank the superintendents who allowed me to move forward with my research. I would like to also thank all the officers who participated in the study. Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without your participation!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School law enforcement officers were permanently assigned to schools in the 1950s to address safety issues (Higgins et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2018). In the 1960s and 1970s, school law enforcement officers' role was extended to address racial tensions, particularly in southern states (Coon & Travis, 2012). In the 1980s and 1990s, interest in juvenile delinquency led to the presence of school resource officers (SROs) in schools. Another factor that contributed to the need for SROs in schools was the “super predator” myth coined by John Dilulio Jr., which perpetuated the idea that many juveniles were reckless and had no care or value for the lives of others (Dilulio, 1996, p. 2). Dilulio (1996) warned that by 1995 there would be 30,000 juveniles who would be considered murderers and rapists, causing havoc and mayhem. The idea was that the alleged behavior would also be evident in schools, hence the need for SROs.

Even though school law enforcement's presence was expected to promote a safer school climate, their presence has been controversial (Nance & Heise, 2021). For example, the "school-to-prison pipeline" and zero-tolerance policies have contributed to the criminalization of student behavior and increased in-school suspension, detention, and arrests (Javdani, 2019). Thus, resulting in the over-criminalization of minority youth.

In 2015-2016, a nationwide survey of schools reported that 48% had a police presence, which increased from 36% in the 2005-2006 academic year (Higgins et al., 2020; McCurdy et al., 2019). Due to gangs, drugs, violence, and school shootings, law

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This dissertation follows the style of the *American Psychological Association, 7 Ed.*

enforcement officers' role has been extended to provide delinquency services like Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT), and alcohol awareness programs, for the assigned schools. These initiatives were established to promote safe and positive school environments by developing partnerships between school administration and law enforcement. These initiatives aimed to help enhance youth safety and ensure fair, nondiscriminatory policies and practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). However, despite these efforts, questions and concerns remain about the effectiveness of law enforcement officers in schools (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

Over the last two decades, highly publicized violent school incidents have shaken the country, including tragic events such as the shootings at Columbine (1999), Parkland (2018) (Nance & Heise, 2021), and, more recently, on May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas. Due to the highly publicized incidents of school shootings, SROs' effectiveness, and their training, a less publicized issue has now come into question. There is still a need for a more systematic approach to improving school safety effectiveness. According to Ryan et al. (2017), only a handful of states have a set of requirements for SROs, including Texas. This can be problematic because different training requirements influence how SROs enforce the rules.

Different training mechanisms can induce stress due to officers not knowing how to enforce their discretion in different interactions they may encounter (Javdani, 2019; Mckenna & White, 2018). According to Forber-Pratt et al. (2020), a state policy review determined that 31 states do not mandate school or youth-related training. SROs must

receive proper training as it will allow them to maintain and promote a safe school environment. Also, proper training will allow for a clear description of job duties and responsibilities that can reduce stress related to the job due to the uncertainty of work expectations. Ryan et al. (2018) asserted that SROs programs frequently made the mistake of not clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the job to help guide officers. Examining SROs' effectiveness as it relates to training can help create a standard policy for SRO programs to assist the officers working in a school setting and help define roles and duties clearly and, in turn, help alleviate stress related to the job.

The Importance of Law Enforcement in Schools

Police presence in schools can be traced back to the 1950s (Higgins et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2018). School-based policing is one of the fastest-growing areas that requires unique skills and law enforcement training (Scheuermann et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), there are two common types of sworn law enforcement officers (LEOs): school police and SROs. Depending on the school district, some officers may be full- or part-time employees. According to Forber-Pratt et al. (2020), most school LEOs wear uniforms, 93% carry guns, and 40% work in multiple schools.

School police officers and SROs fall under the general categories of school LEOs and school-based officers. The labels are often used interchangeably in the literature, even though some job duties, training, and responsibilities may differ (Montes et al., 2021). For example, some officers are responsible for performing sweeps and searches and responding to general disorders in the school. At the same time, other officers may

also be tasked with teaching different delinquency prevention programs, such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), Gang Resistance Education (GREAT), and other preventative programs (Rhodes, 2017). Rhodes (2017) added that SROs may also perform counseling, teaching, and mentoring duties.

School police officers are employed by the school districts through police departments and follow the standard chain of command as any other police department (Montes et al., 2021). These are sworn police officers who can arrest and detain individuals within the school jurisdiction. Recently, attention has focused on school officials and communities collaborating to address school safety (Montes et al., 2021).

SROs were coined by a police chief in Miami, Florida (McKenna et al., 2014) and are defined as licensed peace officers employed by the local police department, sheriff's office, or school department (Montes et al., 2021). Although the definitions and descriptions may vary, SROs aim to provide school security and safety (McKenna et al., 2014). SROs evolved from the philosophy of community-oriented policing, which emphasized a partnership between police officers and community members (Rhodes & Clinkinbeard, 2020). Community-oriented policing focuses on integrating citizens to solve community and school problems. This assumes that trust between police and citizens will increase. While officers can establish a relationship with citizens in the community, it also allows the children who attend the schools they serve to build trust in them (Rhodes & Clinkinbeard, 2020).

Although there are different definitions and descriptions of LEOs, a modern approach has emerged, providing school districts, specifically in Texas, with law

enforcement services called school-based law enforcement (SBLE). These categories are often used synonymously; however, there is a clear distinction between SROs and SBLEs. The difference is related to the department's organizational structure (McKenna et al., 2016, p. 422). SROs typically provide school services through contracts between the school district and the local police department. Several officers are assigned to schools during the school year and return to their regular duties during the summer. SBLE officers are employed through the district as a part of the school-based police department (Mckenna et al., 2016).

Bridges (2020) asserted that states have taken initiatives to increase and promote school safety by utilizing different mechanisms to ensure positive school environments. The U.S. Department of Justice (2016) and states have required school LEOs to complete training to prepare them for school settings adequately. However, depending on the jurisdiction, the type of training may differ. This can present questions and concerns regarding the effectiveness of the training (Higgins et al., 2019).

According to Forber-Pratt et al. (2021), the variability of training across the school, district, and state levels causes job title and responsibilities issues, resulting in role conflict. Forber-Pratt et al. (2020) added that there is a need for SROs to continuously receive training to effectively fulfill their duties and focus on salient topics related to child development and creating a safe school environment. Continuous training will allow for the solution of role conflict while also providing the necessary skill set to help foster better interaction between the youth and law enforcement.

It is important to understand school LEOs and their functions in schools to protect, serve, and prevent law-breaking. It is also important to understand the dynamics of what they do and what they believe they should be doing in the school, as it will allow for better training of school LEOs since this area has yet to receive much attention. According to Higgins et al. (2019), the prevalence of SROs has grown exponentially over the past few decades, with over 46,000 full-time and 36,000 part-time SROs (Higgins et al., 2020). Despite the criticism of SROs in schools, given the recent events, their presence seems increasingly necessary to assure stakeholders, such as parents, community members, and school administration of the importance of having them present for school safety.

Thus, there is a need for a more systematic approach to training methods. Granted, no standard or one-size-fits-all training method applies across the board. Training varies according to the jurisdiction, which can create issues when measuring the effectiveness of school safety (Ryan et al., 2017). Ryan et al. (2017) explained that juvenile justice training is only mandated within the training received during basic training at the police academy. Furthermore, most states, 40, focus on juvenile justice ethics and codes and not on properly managing juvenile behavior, properly engaging with students with disabilities, child management, and effective communication skills (Ryan et al., 2017).

Police Legitimacy

"Police legitimacy is associated with how citizens in the community perceive their treatment during interactions with police and how the officers use their discretion"

(Brunson & Pegram, 2018, p. 91). For example, it includes whether constituents perceive the outcome as fair and favorable (Tyler & Fagan, 2012). A citizen can have an unfavorable outcome during the interaction, such as receiving a ticket for speeding, but perceive the outcome as fair (Tyler & Fagan, 2012). In the case of youth in school settings, SROs have been associated with negative perceptions because of the punitive approach and unintended consequences of their interaction (Gottfredson et al., 2020). Gottfredson et al. (2020) asserted that students were more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system for minor infractions in the presence of SROs.

Skiba et al. (2016) noted that it has been documented that punitive practices and policies such as expulsions and suspensions disproportionately affect youth with disabilities and minority youth. Law enforcement officers are more likely to be present in schools in urban jurisdictions and schools that serve diverse, underserved youth (Morris et al., 2017). Unfortunately, these youth are disproportionately affected by zero-tolerance policies and are more likely to be criminalized (Javdani, 2019). Javdani (2019) asserted that "Black students were 2.6 times more likely to receive suspensions and represented the largest percentage of suspensions for subjective offenses" (p. 2). Additionally, there was a rise in the percentage of Black and Latina girls with suspension and expulsions due to discipline practices (Javdani, 2019). These zero-tolerance policies impact police legitimacy, causing more tension, especially with the minority population.

Zero-tolerance policies were developed to address school juvenile delinquency (Richard, 2022). The Gun-Free Schools Act was passed in 1994, which mandated schools to enforce harsher consequences, such as expulsions for a year for students who brought

guns to school (Javdani, 2019; Skiba, 2016). This act, in part, created zero-tolerance policies to make schools safer. Due to the harsher punishments that include suspensions for children with guns, which is not extreme, critics argue that policies that criminalize students for normal childlike behavior have unnecessarily introduced them to the juvenile justice system, thereby creating the school-to-prison pipeline (Collier et at., 2019). These extreme disciplinary actions are of great concern. Not only do they affect legitimacy, but they also have harsher implications for the youth's future. These consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, reduce academic success and may *push* youth into the juvenile justice system (Skiba et al., 2016), creating a dislike for police officers among youth. Studies have determined that youth removed from school are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

Crime control policies and security measures have increased in schools, such as metal detectors and security cameras, because of the concern and growth of juvenile delinquency (Higgins et al., 2019). This increase in security measures allows the intersection of the juvenile justice system and education to merge more frequently because of LEOs' presence in schools than it would typically outside of a school setting (Higgins et al., 2019). For example, research suggests that the presence of LEOs in some jurisdictions has contributed to the overcriminalization of students with minor infractions. Dress code violations and normal youth behavior such as horseplay, are cited as school code violations that constitute school disciplinary issues (Montes et al., 2020). This, in turn, affects the legitimacy of school officers and youth. Granot et al. (2020) asserted that

youth who had perceptions or experienced unfair treatment by police were associated with an increased trajectory for future criminal behavior.

Given that youth are impressionable and malleable, negative police contact at an early age can lead to negative attitudes that can persist into adulthood (Harris et al., 2019). On the one hand, negative interactions contrary to promoting perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy undermine perceived fairness and acceptance of police authority (Hofer et al., 2019). On the other hand, fairness, through actions that are proportionate to the situation, is a component that can provide opportunities to eliminate negative perspectives and allow for trust to develop between youth and police (O'Leary, 2019).

Providing safe spaces for police and youth to interact may increase police legitimacy and prosocial interaction with police and youth. This process can foster positive police-youth interaction, altering the negative perceptions that youth may hold toward police officers. Goodrich et al. (2014) stated that providing positive police-youth interaction outside of encounters stemming from the usual police setting, intervention, and prevention programs promote this interaction (Goodrich et al., 2018).

Stress and Emotional Regulation among School Law Enforcement Officers

Understanding the factors contributing to the interaction between law enforcement and youth is essential. While jobs, in general, are often stressful, the job of school law enforcement officers could be more stressful than others. They supervise traffic, control disruptive students, facilitate delinquency programs such as DARE, and gather intelligence for criminal justice officials (Javdani, 2019). School law enforcement

officers are given various responsibilities that are typically more cumbersome than non-specialized law enforcement officers (Javdani, 2019). These tasks and responsibilities may vary depending on the jurisdiction. However, these individuals have the authority to enforce school penal codes, enforce arrests, and remove students from school property without the parent's consent, adding more stress and pressure (Javdani, 2019).

Many school-based officers receive different training and have different work experiences that contribute to their job performance. They may also have different levels of authority, which may influence their confidence in fulfilling the role (Montes et al., 2020). In addition, stress from the events that police officers experience can have long-lasting implications regarding work performance, emotional stability, and overall health (Blumberg et al., 2019).

School law enforcement officers' stress broadly represents a growing field with different training methods and job descriptions pursuant to the jurisdiction and agency (Javdani, 2019). Javdani (2019) asserted that according to the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and self-reports by school police officers, satisfaction levels are reported differently based on each role. Some of the responsibilities are based on the jurisdiction.

The school law enforcement officers may be expected to take a more active approach to assist the educator in teaching students a curriculum and other school staff by for instance, mentoring. Some of these roles need to have defined training explanations and need to be clarified in terms of the expected responsibility for those specific roles (Javdani, 2019). Mckenna and White (2018) stated that role conflict was a severe

problem associated with school policing. The role conflict involves a need for more clarity regarding the responsibilities of the SRO. This results in different approaches to enforcing authority and discretion, resulting in certain students receiving harsher consequences.

In general, stress from incidents that police officers experience can lead to long-lasting implications regarding their work performance, emotional stability, and overall health (Blumberg et al., 2019). For example, the role overload that school police officers experience, which places expectations on them by internal and external stakeholders (Javdani, 2019; Mckenna & White, 2018), can cause excessive stress because job duties affect their emotional stability. Fluctuation in emotional regulation with police officers coping with a stressful experience could influence their discretion and decision-making process. This can also result from situations that may occur off the job. Emotional regulation relates to police officers' stress tolerance (Blumberg et al., 2019; Thornton et al., 2016). Emotional regulation includes conscious and unconscious internal processes that act as an emotional response (Gross, 2001).

When police and youth interact, police officers are less likely to be lenient on youth whose behavior displays defiance (Goodrich et al., 2014; Wolfe et al., 2020). In addition, police officers who lack an understanding of the developmental process of youth often mistakenly interpret youth behavior and attitudes negatively (Goodrich et al., 2014). Addressing the issue of emotional regulation is key, as researchers have found that many fatal police shootings occur during an escalated emotion or in situations of fear

when interacting with the public (Wolf et al., 2020). Poor quality interactions have negative implications for youths' perceptions of police legitimacy.

Problem Statement

Due to a lack of police trust and legitimacy among youth, researchers have noted a need to improve social interaction skills and de-escalation techniques among law enforcement officers (McLean et al., 2020). As children get older and become more independent, they experience broader police discretionary powers (Petrosino et al., 2010). School law enforcement officers respond to youth based on their personal feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions (Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Peck & Jennings, 2016). Therefore, the perspective that shapes school law enforcement officers' feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions is vital to understanding their discretion with youth in a school setting. This study used an exploratory, descriptive research design to examine school law enforcement officers' perspectives of youth, their training, level of stress, and emotional regulation like officers' feelings, emotions, and socio-psychological reactions. Using a survey, data were collected to understand how school law enforcement officers perceived diverse youth based on different races and ethnicities.

Background of the Problem

Scholars have acknowledged the similarities in the experience of police officers throughout the United States and other countries (Rhodes & Clinkinbeard, 2018). They also noted that different situations and environments were likely to influence their

performance and perception of their work (Rhodes & Clinkinbeard, 2018). For example, police officers transitioning from patrolling to working in a school environment may experience a shift in attitude and behavior because they must learn to function under different social conditions, including role expectations (Rhodes & Clinkbeard, 2018).

Due to a lack of legitimacy and trust based on the actions of police officers, there is an ongoing problem in society with police-youth interactions, specifically with individuals of diverse backgrounds within a school setting. Researchers have found that older individuals have greater trust in police than younger people (Lee et al., 2022). Moreover, youth with negative attitudes toward police are less likely to comply with police officers (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Tyler et al., 2014). Police officers, in turn, are likely to exert their authority or arrest these youth, whom they characterize as disrespectful and non-compliant (Liederbach, 2007).

Rengifo and Slocum (2020) explained that thinking about police-youth interaction without associating race and ethnicity was difficult. Studies revealed that Black students were more likely to receive harsher punishment and were likely to receive discipline referrals than any other race or ethnicity (Mayer et al. (2021). This included racial bias playing a role in students receiving an out-of-school suspension. Girvan et al. (2021) noted that youth's race/ethnicity influenced their victimization because of implicit and explicit biases. Consequently, this led to an over-criminalization of marginalized Black and Brown youths and perceptions that certain youth were more dangerous and had a propensity to commit a crime (Baldwin, 2018). Such perceptions have, therefore, led to the dual issue of a lack of trust in police officers (Culhane & Schweitzer, 2018; Culhane

et al., 2016; Desmond et al., 2016; Wolf et al., 2020) and school law enforcement officers overexerting their authority by enforcing zero-tolerance policies resulting in the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Mayer et al., 2021).

Research Objectives

It is vital to understand the factors that contribute to law enforcement officers' perspective when interacting with diverse school-aged youth of different races and ethnicities in a school setting to implement training for effective long-term strategies to change these dynamics. The objectives of this study were based on police-youth interaction and police officers' perspectives of school-aged youth interactions. Regarding officers in schools, it:

- Explored the perspectives of school law enforcement officers about school-aged youth,
- Sought to identify legitimacy challenges in the law enforcement interactions with school-aged youth as reported by school law enforcement officers,
- Sought to investigate factors such as personal stress, emotional regulation, and training of school law enforcement officers that may contribute to improved interactions between school officers and school-aged youth,
- Sought to identify key themes in school law enforcement officer training to improve job satisfaction with school-aged youth,
- Sought to describe policy implications for improving outcomes in school law enforcement officers and their interactions with school-aged youth.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore school law enforcement officers' perspectives when encountering school-aged youth. By exploring these perspectives, identified challenges and potential solutions to improving school law enforcement officers' and school-aged youth interactions are discussed. The perspectives and experiences of school law enforcement officers related to how they viewed interacting with school-aged youth and key themes regarding how to improve school law enforcement perspectives of youth, training, level of stress and emotional regulation, and legitimacy with diverse school-aged youth of different races and ethnicities in schools. Based on these critical factors, implications for improving school law enforcement officers' and school-aged youth interactions and training are discussed. This study examined school law enforcement officers' and school-aged youth interactions from the school law enforcement officers' perspectives. It offers policy implications for improved legitimacy and officer training.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The following research questions and hypotheses were addressed:

RQ1: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of their legitimacy based on their interaction with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship with law enforcement officers' perception of self-reported legitimacy based on their interaction with school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of self-reported legitimacy with school-aged youth.

RQ3: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to their self-reported interaction with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical grounding for this study was based on the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis and Appraisal Tendency Theory. Symbolic Threat Hypothesis (Peck & Jennings, 2016; Tittle & Curran, 1988) explains how minority youth are perceived as a threat in society. Peck and Jennings (2016) asserted that Black youth are seen as aggressive with a tendency to engage in violence, delinquency, and lack discipline. The Symbolic Threat Hypothesis is based on the psychological perspective with which juvenile court actors and law enforcement officers respond to minority youth based on

their feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions given the race of the minority youth (Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Peck & Jennings, 2016).

The Symbolic Threat Hypothesis extends the conflict theory framework, which contends that those with authority use social control to criminalize minority youth (Albonetti, 1991; Quinney, 1970). As a result, they may enforce more social control on minority youth. Based on the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis, averse racial stereotyping toward minority youth is implicit rather than explicit (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Peck & Jennings, 2016; Stevenson & Bottoms, 2009), particularly in the criminal justice system. Moreover, such implicit feelings may lead to negative feelings and beliefs toward minority youth (Cohn et al., 2009; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Peck & Jennings, 2016), including fear of them (Leiber, 2003; Tittle & Curran, 1988). This hypothesis is therefore appropriate in understanding how police officers may have an implicit bias reaction to minority youth due to fear, based on the combination of the perceived characteristics of minority youth and the feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions evoked due to racial stereotyping (Cohn et al., 2009; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Peck & Jennings, 2016; Stevenson & Bottoms, 2009).

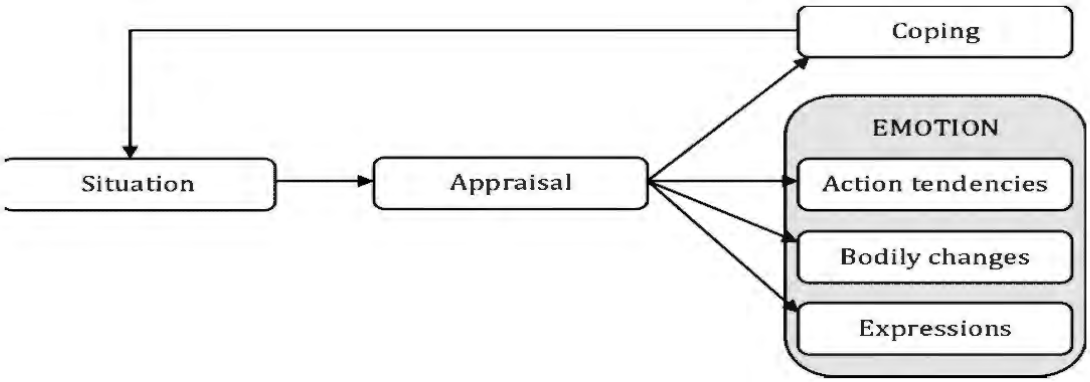
Appraisal Tendency Theory (Lerner & Keltner, 2000) addresses decision-making processes and how an individual's emotions could influence situations. It also addresses how different factors influence decisions and related behaviors. Appraisal Tendency Theory lists variables associated with events or experiences (Dias et al., 2014). Importantly, emotions can be potent and often associated with specific experiences that affect decision-making (Lerner et al., 2015).

The central tenet of Appraisal Tendency Theory hinges on how and why emotions affect the judgment and decisions of individuals (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). According to Lerner and Keltner (2000), individuals gather information about situations and stimuli to create an informed appraisal. Appraisals then contribute to demonstrations of emotion, including action tendencies, bodily changes, and expressions. For example, Parkinson and Manstead (2015) concluded that individuals may purposely avoid situations that may make them anxious situation selection or with expressions such as facial that may be used to show disappointment or disapproval of an action.

Figure 1 depicts the elements of appraisal tendency process. According to Lerner and Keltner (2000), emotions can trigger a set of responses (physiology, behavior, experience, and communication) that allows for individuals to deal with the present situation quickly.

Figure 1

Elements of Appraisal Tendency Theory



Note. The elements and processes that are addressed by Appraisal Tendency Theory (Parkinson et al., 2005, p. 9).

Appraisal Tendency Theory distinguishes anger from other negative emotions regarding appraisals. Anger makes individuals less risk-averse and more likely to support aggressive behavioral responses (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). Appraisal Tendency Theory has been utilized in diverse empirical contexts to examine the influence of fear and the formation of other emotional responses (Garyn-Tal & Shahrabani, 2020; Melde et al., 2020), including criminal justice contexts (Petty & Wiener, 2019). It is important to note that during interactions between school law enforcement officers and students, the officer may experience various emotions.

According to this theoretical framework, affective tendencies influence both the perceptions of risk and the behaviors of individuals. When fear is the prevalent emotion, the more likely behavior is avoided to minimize the potential harm that the person anticipates. When facing a perceived violent threat, Melde et al. (2020) argued that individuals are likely to be violent to minimize the risk of being victimized, acting as a preemptive response to anticipated violence toward them.

This study used an integrative approach of the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis and Appraisal Tendency Theory as the theoretical framing to examine school law enforcement officers' perceptions of school-aged youth.

The Significance of the Study

This study was based on the topic of school law enforcement officers, their level of stress and emotional regulation, training and perspectives of youth, and the implications for law enforcement officers and youth interaction. Examining school law enforcement officers' perspectives of school-aged youth may help better understand how

and why officers respond the way they do during interactions. This has implications regarding school law enforcement officers' training in youth relations and building police legitimacy (Ryan et al., 2017). Possible uses of the findings also include more informed intervention, prevention, and mentoring programs by school law enforcement officers for youth-serving in Big Brother, Big Sister, Boys and Girls Club, and Teen and Police Service (TAPS) Academy.

The problem statement, the background of the study, its significance, and issues related to school law enforcement officers' interaction with school-aged youth were provided in this chapter. Studies have examined legitimacy from the perspectives of citizens and youth; however, few studies have examined school law enforcement officers' perspectives, stress, and emotional regulation while interacting with youth, specifically diverse youth.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I described the study. This includes the literature review provided in Chapter II. Chapter III describes the quantitative method design used in the study, as well as the research questions, hypotheses, target population and sample population. The procedures for data collection and survey distribution are also described in this chapter. In addition, the chapter provides the statistical analysis as well as ethical concerns. Chapter IV provides the result. Chapter V provides the interpretation of the study's results limitations of the study, and implications for policy and future research recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the empirical literature on law enforcement in schools, police legitimacy, and stress and emotional regulation among school law enforcement officers. It is important to understand school law enforcement interactions to improve policies on how to effectively train school law enforcement officers and incorporate the best practices when interacting with diverse youth (McLean et al., 2020). The empirical evidence related to the effects of wrongdoing, including youth among the police, supports the finding of the decreased likelihood that the public will report crimes due to a mistrust of police (Culhane & Schweitzer, 2018; Culhane et al., 2016; Desmond et al., 2016; Wolf et al., 2020). By exploring and attempting to understand factors that contribute to undesirable outcomes with school law enforcement and youth interaction, the effectiveness of police training to improve social interactions may also become clearer (Wolfe et al., 2020).

This chapter has three sections. The first section is a review of studies on law enforcement in schools. The second is police legitimacy, and the third section describes stress and emotional dysregulation. This section has two subsections discussing the relationship between emotional regulation, job stress, and violence. A summary concludes the chapter.

Law Enforcement in School Districts

It is important to examine the role and function of school-based police to understand the training that according to researchers, can be employed to help improve

situations that may arise in a school setting (Bridges, 2020). Bridges (2020) examined the experiences and the training of LEOs to determine how this helped them prepare for their role. A qualitative phenomenological methodology was used as the research design. Eight Florida public middle school LEOs participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. The findings highlighted the training of LEOs with specific populations, such as children with disabilities, and how their role consisted of many responsibilities, such as security and resource for staff, students, and parents. Analysis of data indicated that participants in the study believed that students' impressions of LEOs were molded through witnessing the arrest of a parent/guardian while the LEO served as a patrol officer before becoming a school LEO. The LEO participants' findings noted that relationship building between LEOs, and students would be beneficial in maintaining the students' safety at the institution.

Henry (2021) asserted that SROs were the entry point for the criminal justice system; however, limited research compares states and cultural competency training to combat vulnerable groups such as Black and Hispanic youth from being marginalized and targeted by LEOs. Henry (2021) conducted a correlational study to explore whether there was a significant relationship between SROs' cultural competency training and school-based arrest of marginalized students. Using public school archival records from 2016-2019 in a southeastern school district that identified 10,058 school-based arrests by SROs, the findings did not support a significant relationship between SRO's cultural competency training and school-based arrest of marginalized students of K-12th grade students. The results of the study highlighted positive social change, such as adjusting

and creating educational environments through the need to investigate cultural competency training in public schools with SROs, especially with Black or Hispanic students. One limitation of the study was that it did not explore the roles and functions of the SROs based on the different schools within the district, which could have provided more insight into the training protocol for that specific school. According to Henry (2021), "responsibilities of SROs differ from school to school" (p.115).

Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) emphasized that having SROs in the school setting may be beneficial in preventing crimes such as violence and drug activity but could also be detrimental based on how the crime is reported and recorded. They examined the role of SROs and whether their role influenced how recording and reporting school crime to law enforcement differed. They used cross-sectional data from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) compiled over three school years (2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008). The datasets were merged to analyze 475 schools. The dependent variables in the study were crime by examining the number of crimes the school recorded and crimes reported to law enforcement. The category of crime was labeled as nonviolent crimes, such as threats of physical attacks without a weapon, property crimes, such as theft, and serious-violent crimes, such as rape and physical fight with a weapon. The independent variable was the roles of SROs in schools. A control condition was used with schools with no police presence and was compared to schools that used law enforcement only and a mixed approach, that is, SROs served as the role of law enforcement in addition to mentor/teacher role. The findings indicated that schools with only SROs and schools with the mixed approach recorded more crimes for all three types

of crimes than those without police. Additionally, schools with a mixed approach reported more crimes in all three categories than schools where SROs served in the role of law enforcement only.

Kupchik et al. (2020) conducted a study that analyzed school law enforcement interaction with school-aged youth from two school districts in the southeastern part of the United States. The researchers used data from interviews and focus groups to explore SROs with school youth, their impact on students, and their perceptions of police. A comparative method approach was used to code themes to create thematic categories such as school safety, different roles of SROs, and SRO training, and background.

The findings indicated that SROs focused on shaping students' perceptions of police by teaching students to trust the police and that police were the "good guys" (p. 404). The study also found that SROs were keen on getting to know the students to assess their body language better, notice whether something was wrong, and take the necessary steps to address the situation. The findings also indicated that SROs explained how reaching younger students, particularly elementary students, taught them to trust the police because they were impressionable and willing to interact with adults compared to middle and high school students.

Theriot (2016) administered a comprehensive survey to measure students' experiences with school safety, school violence, and perceptions of police. The sample consisted of five high schools and seven middle schools selected from one school district in the southeastern part of the United States because these schools had at least one full-time SRO present. These SROs received extensive training on working with children,

such as being a positive role model, adolescent development, child abuse, and classroom management. The remaining middle and high schools in the school district were assigned SROs who received minimal training and had an irregular police presence.

Approximately 2,010 surveys were completed and returned by middle and high school students; however, after screening for incomplete or missing data, a final sample consisted of 1,126 middle school and 830 high school students for a total of 1,956. The 60-question survey explained students' feelings and perceptions of school safety and police in general, school violence they may have experienced that school year, school violence they may have witnessed, feelings about SROs, contact with SROs, and demographic questions. They found that 48% of students (944) reported having at least one interaction with SRO during the current school year.

Furthermore, students' feelings and perceptions of SROs interactions contributed to positive attitudes. Additionally, the more interaction students had with SROs, such as having attended a class or presentation led by a SRO, the lower the school connectedness, defined as a multidimensional construct that involves students care, investment, and attachment to school based on the belief that the rules are fair and consistent. In addition, the more contact or interaction the student had with the SRO, the more attitudes increased positive feelings, such as fairness, helpfulness, and the competency to improve school safety. One possible explanation for the increase in positive attitudes and feelings toward SROs and lower levels of connectedness is the presence of SROs who draw attention to school crime, which can incite student fear and worry (Theriot, 2016).

Gleit (2022) used population-level data for all U.S. elementary and secondary schools. The relationship between racial composition and police presence was measured. Measures of police presence were calculated from 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data sets. The study measured three school-level categories for police in a school setting: prevalence, students' exposure to police within a school setting, and officers' roles within a school setting. The final sample of schools consisted of 6,700 elementary and 5,600 secondary schools.

The results indicated that the prevalence of police did not vary substantially based on racial composition in general. However, secondary schools' racial composition varied considerably. The number of SROs present in schools and the amount of time the SROs were present would likely determine how often students would interact with them in school. Based on the ratio of 1.46 officers per 1,000 students per elementary school and 1.52 officers per 1,000 secondary school, the findings determined that schools with high numbers of Black, Latinx, and Native American students had more SROs per student. Lastly, officers in elementary schools that consisted of Black, Latinx, or Native American students were less likely to carry a firearm but patrol the school more in comparison to officers working at schools with no Black, Latinx, or Native Americans.

Gottfredson et al.'s (2020) study used two approaches to analyze data. Data from middle and high schools in California evaluated SRO staffing levels and were used as the treatment schools and schools that matched the criteria that did not increase SROs at the same time as the treatment school were considered the comparison schools. The study examined the effects of increased SROs on intervention and disciplinary offenses. Using

administrative data for the 2011-2012 to 2016-2017 school years, data were collected from local law enforcement agencies to access reports of disciplinary offenses from students with special needs based on individualized education plans compared to students without special needs. The study expanded the administrative data with self-report data from local law enforcement agencies responsible for the placement of SROs, school administrators, and SROs currently working in selected schools with a web-based interview, with an email and telephone follow-up. Interview questions focused on SRO activities, training, and some of the challenges they faced. The survey also asked administrators about disciplinary offenses at each school while gathering information on school safety practices such as prevention programs and security practices.

The study found that in these treatment schools, recordings of crimes involving weapons, drug crimes, and violent offenses increased in response to student crime and disorder. The findings also indicated that schools that had SROs who focused on the law enforcement aspect of the job recorded more offenses than schools that did not have any SROs. The results also indicated that increasing the number of SROs did not increase school safety and that the criminalization of the students increased by increasing punitive responses to minor incidents.

In sum, it is necessary to understand the role and function of law enforcement in schools and the initial purpose of law enforcement officers to understand how better to address their interaction with school-aged youth through practical training. As previously stated, school resource officers are the first point of contact for the justice system for school-age youth. As a result, Blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately affected by the

interaction differently than their White counterparts. Examining and understanding different training methods can assist with the challenges school resource officers face with role conflict and the responsibilities associated with the assigned role.

Police Legitimacy: Zero Tolerance and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

According to Fine et al. (2020), the perceptions of police by youth under 18 are more significant compared to their adult counterparts due to youth being more impressionable and malleable. Fine et al. (2020) also indicated that interactions with police officers are crucial as they have implications for youth perceptions, which can affect future offending. Youth in schools have more direct contact with law enforcement officers, resulting in more interaction. As a result of different initiatives that were created and implemented, such as zero-tolerance policies, minority youth have been disproportionally targeted (Moritz, 2019). The marginalization or targeting of minority or diverse youth has resulted in a lack of police legitimacy, increasing the strain and tension between the two groups (Moritz, 2019). This strain and tension has led to the overexertion of police authority affecting their perception of their legitimacy.

Ryan et al. (2017) used quantitative research from the National Center for Education Statistics and the Department of Education Officer for Civil Rights. They determined that the consequences of SROs dealing with traditional student misbehavior have led to an increase in the criminalization of minority youth in schools and have intensified the school-to-prison pipeline. They highlighted that 260,000 students were referred to law enforcement during a recent academic school year, and 92,000 students were arrested.

Renbarger et al. (2022) explained how the SRO's presence is supposed to enhance school safety by encouraging preventative practices to reduce nonviolent crimes; however, their presence is correlated with increased reports of nonviolent behaviors. According to Renbarger et al. (2022), the increase in nonviolent crime reports is associated with the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline may be the result of SRO's presence at schools that have high rates of poverty and higher rates of minority students.

Zero-tolerance policies were created to make schools safer and prevent guns in schools because of unfortunate events (Richard, 2022). Bleakley and Bleakley (2018) examined the connection between policing and behavior management in education using first-hand ethnographic observation over a year in a North Carolina middle and high school. The research revealed that since the start of these zero-tolerance policies, there was an increase in school expulsions and suspensions which disproportionately affected minority students (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Students were five times more likely to be charged for disorderly conduct, combined with expulsion in schools with SROs as a result of zero-tolerance policies. The authors also expressed that the increased presence of SROs resulted in around 10,000 charges for disorderly conduct per academic school year. Critics argue that no consideration of the impact of these initiatives was taken when developing zero-tolerance policies because it was designed as a one size fits all. Furthermore, how the policy was enforced was not considered.

According to Cornell et al. (2018), zero-tolerance policies have not achieved the initial mission or goal. Other factors may contribute to the environment of schools that

were not considered, such as different minor infractions that could be handled through school administration (Cornell et al., 2018). Furthermore, harsher consequences are not regarded as a preventive or practical problem-solving method to deter violence or crime in schools (Cornell et al., 2018).

Granot et al. (2021) asserted that youth in general and youth of color in particular described their interactions with SROs as unjust or unfair due to their experiences and unexpected violations . The authors also expressed that youth of color felt disconnected from their community as a result of the interactions. According to Gellar et al. (2014), negative interactions can shape and cement future interactions and expectations of the interactions.

According to Pigott et al. (2018), critics have been skeptical of having school law enforcement officers in schools because of the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline is characterized by students arrested for behaviors that constitute minor infractions and are generally not considered dangerous, as well as infractions that could be considered severe, such as assault. For example, "horseplay" is considered unruly behavior by youth; however, it can be viewed as a behavior infraction or disorderly conduct by SROs, and the student could be charged (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016, p. 2). According to Sullivan and Hausman (2017), there were approximately 850,000 nonfatal victimizations in 2014; 363,700 included thefts, and 486,400 included violent victimizations.

Zhang (2019) analyzed 238 middle and high schools in West Virginia using three years of data to measure police presence in schools. Binary and multinomial logistic

models were used to estimate the effects of police presence in schools and the extent of the impact on students. Zhang (2019) found that the presence of police in schools was associated with increased drug arrests and out-of-school suspension.

An online survey using vignettes was conducted by Mckenna and White (2017) among 2,801 school law enforcement officers in schools across the state of Texas to measure officers' roles and assess officers' responses in situations involving students. Officers were asked to respond to questions in five categories: (1) officers' roles, (2) officer response to misconduct, (3) officer training, (4) school demographics, and (5) individual demographics. Of the 564 surveys received, 522 responded to at least half of the vignette questions. The study's independent variables examined officer roles that assessed a series of activities such as providing emotional support, investigating criminal activity, giving presentations, teaching classes, and offering advice about home. that officers may or may not engage in while working at the school. The vignettes used in the study assessed the officer being called to a situation where a student was involved in an incident of misconduct. Four factors were constant for the vignette: age, seriousness, cooperation, and misconduct history.

The results of the study indicated that school law enforcement roles may have an impact on how they respond to students. More specifically, the more law enforcer role the officers presented, the more use of legal means such as citations and arrest increased. The study also found that establishing clear roles with officers affected their level of discretion, impacting the school-to-prison pipeline. Officers' roles were used to define

their behavior and the discretion associated with it in response to student misconduct (Mckenna & White, 2017).

Payne-Tsoupros (2021) explained that analysis of data on a national and state level indicated that the school-to-prison pipeline affects minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth at disproportionate rates. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that minority youth misbehave at a greater rate. Black students are consistently found to receive harsher consequences and are disciplined at greater rates than their White counterparts. Payne-Tsouros (2021) also stated that harsh consequences such as an arrest made by SROs deprive students, minority students in particular, of the right to receive an education by removing the student from the classroom environment. Overall, some studies have found that SROs may be a force that accelerates the exclusion of youth from schools.

In sum, due to the different initiatives that were created and implemented, zero-tolerance policies not only disproportionately affect minority youth but also affects police legitimacy in total. Research continues to support the connection between the zero-tolerance policies "one size fits all" approach and the consequences of increased in-school suspensions and expulsions. As a result, the strain and tension between school resource officers and school-age youth need to be examined to help aid with how to enforce consequences related to a specific type of offense.

Stress and Emotional Regulation among School Law Enforcement Officers

According to Levenson (1988), emotional regulation is the intrinsic and extrinsic process responsible for biologically organizing and coordinating emotional reactions

significant to environmental events. Emotional regulation is related to managing emotions and includes emotional intelligence and stress tolerance (Blumberg et al., 2019). The process of managing emotions is a central component of developing emotional maturity that reflects self-regulation. Experiences may acquire new meanings that become associated with them and can be integrated into the behavioral process of how individuals use self-control (Thompson, 1991). For example, when a child is socialized by his/her mother using *tough* consequences or responses to prepare the child for likely challenges in life, that child may then processes aggression as a form of self-control because it is reinforced. The child has now learned to regulate feelings of anger as a functional mechanism, even if the social setting does not evoke that type of response (Thompson, 1991).

Emotional regulation can be improved by learning different performance-enhancement techniques, such as decision-making skills, impulse control, attention to safety, and adaptability (Blumberg et al., 2019). The role of policing, by definition, requires effective emotional regulation for many professional responsibilities to be fulfilled (Adame et al., 2019; Kaldewaij et al., 2019; Lennie et al., 2020). Kaldewaij et al. (2019) noted that police officers are carefully recruited based on their ability to demonstrate effective emotion regulation. However, there is still an indication that many police officers need help regulating their emotions effectively. Excessive aggression is particularly problematic in some police officers (Kaldewaij et al., 2019).

Adame et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine anger, emotion dysregulation that describes emotions that are traditionally not accepted as an emotional

reaction or response, and conflict management style among police officers. Data were collected from 184 police officers from various demographics based on sex, age, marital status, and job position. Standardized tests and in-depth interviews were the sources of data for the study. The analysis revealed that the sample generally had low anger during conflicts. This study's findings suggested that emotional dysregulation may not be a common characteristic of police officers. This study provided background knowledge regarding emotion dysregulation and its implications for the actions of police officers while on duty. The dynamic is important to understand how officers from local police departments in some jurisdictions may assume the role of SROs in a school setting.

Job stress is common among police officers and is detrimental to their job performance and well-being (Lipp et al., 2009; Viegas & Henrique, 2020). However, it is essential to note that most data on stress among police officers is self-reported. Thus, certain limitations can affect the extent to which the data accurately reflects the stress experienced by officers. Lipp (2009) found that in a sample of 418 high-ranked officers, each participant rated their job stress level on a scale of 1 to 10. The mean score for the participants was 7.8, meaning they ranked their job as "highly stressful" (p. 597). The female participants in the study (54%) indicated they suffered from stress, and the male participants (40%) indicated they suffered from stress. However, the women in the study reported advanced phases of stress levels. Half of participants (50%) responded that they had psychological symptoms, whereas 39% had physical symptoms, and 11 responded that they had a combination of both.

Acquadro et al. (2020) conducted a study to compare secondary traumatic stress, defined as "a set of psychological symptoms that mimic post-traumatic stress disorder but is acquired through exposure to persons suffering from the effects of trauma" (p.1) between police officers and healthcare professionals. Examples of secondary traumatic stress included negative emotions and burnout related to job demands, work satisfaction, cognitive load, role clarity, and job resources. Using a questionnaire, data were collected from 112 police officers and 286 healthcare professionals.

The study's results indicated that police officers suffered from secondary traumatic stress significantly more than healthcare professionals. This study provided insight into job stress experienced by the police, underscoring the perceived stressful nature of their job, particularly compared to other professionals. Even though police officers, in general, are more at-risk, other jobs are more dangerous, where workers die more frequently than officers, causing stress as a result. However, police experience more traumatic events at a greater rate compared to civilians in general (Klimley et al. 2018).

Rhodes (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine how police officers adapted to their role as SROs. A sample of 182 officers from the midwest was gathered from qualitative interviews and participant observation. The survey instrument found that SROs acted as conventional officers. Conventional officers are tasked with crime control, prevention, and order maintenance and service (Rhodes, 2019). The study supported the many roles that SROs are challenged with within a school setting. These roles' responsibilities were also associated with different training to help the officer effectively execute the role.

Bishopp et al. (2018) collected data via the Police Work Experience Survey (PWES) using Qualtrics to measure the effects of strain on environmental and organizational stress with negative emotions such as anger, depression, and burnout agencies. A total of 1,400 surveys were used after dropping the surveys with missing data and incomplete responses. The results found that organizational stress among police officers was significantly associated with three negative emotional outcomes: anger, depression, and burnout.

Doyle et al. (2021) noted that factors such as resilience can have a protective effect that lessens the association between job stress and emotional dysregulation. Doyle et al. (2021) conducted a study with 201 first responders including mostly police officers; however, civilian law enforcement personnel and police detention jailers were also a part of the study. Most of the participants were males, averaging 43.73 years of age. The participants completed a survey with questions from the ORQ, DMS-5 Level 1 measure, and CD-RISC. Doyle et al. (2021) found that the level of resiliency mediated the relationship between the five components of occupational stress, operationalized as role overload, insufficiency, role boundary, role ambiguity, and role responsibility and the anger of police officers.

Queiros et al. (2020) examined operational and organizational stress, burnout, resilience, and coping strategies among police officers. The psychometric properties of the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire were also assessed. The rationale for this study hinged on the premise that police work is characterized by stress and physical and mental health.

Data were collected from 1,131 police officers, who were asked to answer online questionnaires. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the instrument was psychometrically adequate. In terms of the variables, job stress and burnout were found to be correlated negatively with resilient coping, highlighting the role of stress in the ability of police officers to cope. The study offered background information regarding the nature of emotional regulation and job-related stress experienced by the police.

In sum, understanding emotional regulation and managing emotions is essential when examining school resource officers and school-age youth. If school resource officers are incapable or unaware of managing their stress, it will impact how they interact with others. Training and learning different techniques can help assist with effective emotional regulation; however, it remains a problem with some officers.

The Relationship between Job Stress and Emotional Regulation

Several studies suggest a relationship between stress and problems with effective regulation of emotions (Gärtner et al., 2019). However, most studies conducted among police officers on these topics center on either job stress or emotional dysregulation rather than both topics. It is beneficial to examine the intersection of both topics and the impact and implications regarding police officers' effectiveness while on the job.

Brough et al. (2018) conducted a study to examine how "two types of job demand (cognitive and emotional) are both moderated by job control and social support and mediated by coping for the prediction of work engagement and psychological strain over time" (p. 2). Data were collected from 2,481 respondents, who were asked to answer several self-reported survey questionnaires administered twice within 12 months. The

results indicated that emotion regulation using accommodation and avoidance mediated the relationship between job demands and work outcomes over time. How individuals coped emotionally was a necessary pathway to explain work outcomes. However, this mediated relationship was moderated by job support and job control. The results also demonstrated that the type of job demands did not disproportionately influence the process of stressors and work engagement to which police were exposed. The negative implications of the association between emotional dysregulation among police officers and job stress can cause issues in officers' personal and professional lives, thus further perpetuating stress and adverse emotional outcomes (Bishopp et al., 2018; Doyle et al., 2021).

Research such as that conducted by Brough et al. (2018), Gärtner et al. (2019), and Queiros et al. (2020), suggested that there was a relationship between stress and problems with effective regulation of emotions. Most studies on these topics tend to center on either job stress or emotional dysregulation that police officers experience. This makes the literature that addresses the relationship between emotional dysregulation and job stress among police officers very limited (Doyle et al., 2021).

The association between emotional dysregulation among police officers and job stress has significant negative implications for officers' personal and professional lives, thus further perpetuating stress and dysregulation. For example, Doyle et al. (2021) found that work schedules, lack of communication, and work overload were significant stressors that had implications on physical and psychological well-being, thus carrying over to officers' personal and professional lives. These findings on job stress and

emotional dysregulation suggest that job stress and coping strategies are significantly associated with emotional well-being. Emotional regulation has been found to moderate the relationship between job stress and psychological distress, and high expressive suppression leads to job stress contributing more prominently to psychological distress (Doyle et al., 2021).

McCarty et al.'s (2019) research expanded the literature that examined burnout among police officers based on the types of demand and negative work-life elements such as identity separation from the job and social interaction, using a survey of over 13,000 law enforcement personnel in 89 various agencies across the United States. McCarty et al. (2019) examined demographics such as education, race, gender, rank, and age. They examined emotional exhaustion and depersonalization through a four-item scale. Workload was measured through a single survey item on a 5-point scale that captured whether the participant thought that there was insufficient time to manage life outside of the job.

The results indicated that participants reported that between two to three months, they felt emotionally exhausted. The results also indicated that emotional exhaustion was primarily due to workload contributing to burnout. Participants also indicated that they felt like they did not have time to manage their lives outside of the job, also contributing to emotional exhaustion and burnout.

In sum, some research focuses on stress or emotional regulation without looking at both factors contributing to the officer's overall emotional health and stability. Understanding emotional regulation or lack thereof can aid in providing mechanisms to

assist with job stress that officers may experience effectively. Examining both emotional regulation in relation to job stress while allow for implementation of policies to also help assist with this dilemma.

The Relationship between Emotional Regulation, Job Stress, and Violence

Despite preliminary evidence of the association between emotional dysregulation and violence in different police populations and contexts, there remains a significant lack of research concerning the relationship between emotional dysregulation and violence among police officers (Cojean et al., 2020). Emotions can play an influential role in the decision-making of police officers (Fridman et al., 2019). Law enforcement often involves officers encountering high-stress, high-emotion situations where they are expected to take quick and decisive action (Cojean et al., 2020; Fridman et al., 2019).

Thus, how officers process emotions and react when they are faced with emotional situations shapes the decisions they make about themselves and the individuals with whom they interact. For example, Fisher et al. (2020) conducted a study that analyzed 73 SROs from two different school districts. The racial composition was different at each school; however, the SROs were asked about their perceptions across three categories of threats: student-based, intruder-based, and environment-based. The large population of White students was perceived as external threats such as intruder-based and environment-based.

In contrast, the students with the larger population of Black students were perceived as a threat. This is an example of how Black students are perceived as threats; therefore, SROs will not only interact with them differently but will also exert their

authority differently. If SROs perceive Black students as a threat, it can evoke an emotion of fear and a premature response to the interaction without thoroughly assessing the situation.

Fridman et al. (2019) noted, how emotions and emotional regulation, or lack thereof, influenced police officers' actions and decisions in potentially volatile interactions such as officer involved shootings, emotional regulation is challenging to study and teach. Using the theory of constructed emotion (TCE) framework, Fridman et al. (2019) explained that the physiological arousal associated with volatile, high-stress situations decreased an officer's ability to make objective decisions and accurately assess incidents. However, training that generally instructed officers on what to do during volatile interactions could be ineffective if police officers did not experience training that simulated or triggered the same state of heightened physiological arousal that they would experience in the line of duty. Thus, failure to train police officers in this way can trigger emotional dysregulation and significantly increase the likelihood of unnecessary or misdirected violence due to poor decision-making. As Fridman et al. (2019) explained:

> In the case of police officer training, the TCE emphasizes the importance of recognizing that each instance or experience of "distress" can be quite different from every other one and that sensations from the body also can vary considerably depending on the affective or performative (action-oriented) context of the situation. Because officers will experience a wide range of stressful situations in the field, including critical incidents, the TCE suggests that training must also occur across a range of diverse and highly realistic scenarios, which we

> propose would hasten the process of gaining needed experience and reduce the chances of real-world errors. Such training also can enable an officer to focus on important features of the external environment and, simultaneously, reduce physiological arousal that could lead to poor decisions. (p. 1946)

In another study that confirmed Fridman et al.'s (2019) findings about the association between the violence perpetrated by police officers and emotional dysregulation, Cojean et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review to examine the different psychological and sociological factors that contributed to the decisions of police officers concerning the use of force. Among the many factors that were identified, emotions and the ability to regulate emotions effectively were key factors that influenced violent behaviors among police officers. Emotion regulation was included in the different personality factors, including an individual's cognitive abilities. For instance, the systematic review led the researcher to hypothesize a strong association between officers' emotion regulation and the frequency and intensity of their use of force on other people.

There are cases that highlighted acts of violence against students in schools by SROs. According to an article by Kamenetz (2020), over a dozen incidents documented harsh acts of violence and the use of force conducted by SROs toward students. Students were tased, pepper sprayed, and handcuffed for minor infractions. Kamenetz (2020) found that data showed that in schools with officers, students were more likely to be referred for nonviolent behaviors. The author described two separate events to demonstrate the horrific acts of police violence in schools. One incident in Florida involved a six-year-old Black girl handcuffed. Another incident involved an 11-year-old

Black girl pushed against the wall. Both incidents were caught on body cameras displaying the use of force by SROs in school.

In sum, this section reviewed research that suggests that there is a relationship between stress and problems with effective regulation of emotions and most studies on these topics tend to center on either job stress or emotional dysregulation experienced by police officers, making literature that addresses the relationship between emotional dysregulation and job stress among police officers very limited. Limited evidence suggests that emotion regulation that involves accommodation and avoidance strategies mediate the relationship between job demands and work outcomes. Further, rumination and suppression strategies are associated with experiencing significantly more work-related stress and stress-related symptoms. Job stress and burnout are negatively associated with a resilient coping strategy. A problem-solving coping strategy, however, can mediate stress. Overall, these findings suggest that job stress and coping strategies are significantly associated with emotional well-being. Particularly, emotion regulation moderates the relationship between job stress and psychological distress, and high expressive suppression leads to job stress contributing more prominently to psychological distress.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the literature regarding law enforcement in schools, police legitimacy, stress, and emotional regulation among school law enforcement officers. While significant work has been done to explain law enforcement in schools, police legitimacy, stress, and emotional regulation, there is still a gap in

knowledge that addresses how these variables contribute to the interaction between school law enforcement officers and school-aged youth due to the school-to-prison pipeline. It is also important to note, as stated in the literature, the role of emotional regulation or lack thereof in reference to law enforcement officers and the impact and lasting implications it can have on interactions. Chapter III provides an overview of the methodology and rationale for the procedures used to conduct the research.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The research design is described in this chapter. This includes the methodology and rationale for sample size, sampling procedures, data collection, and analysis plan. Empirical data indicating a lack of police trust and legitimacy among youth has led researchers to recommend improving social interaction skills and de-escalation techniques among law enforcement officers (McLean et al., 2020). Findings also suggest that as children get older and become more independent, they experience broader police discretionary powers (Petrosino et al., 2010). School law enforcement officers respond to youth based on their personal feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions (Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Peck & Jennings, 2016). Therefore, the perspective that shapes school law enforcement officers' feelings, emotions, and social-psychological reactions is vital to understanding their discretion with youth in a school setting. This quantitative study aimed to explore police officers' perspectives when encountering diverse youth by addressing the following three research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth?

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of police legitimacy and procedural justice based on their interactions with school-aged youth?

RQ3: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to the officers' self-reported interaction with school-aged youth?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were measured:

H1: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

H2: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of self-reported legitimacy with school-aged youth.

H3: There is a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative predictive research design. The predictor variables were self-reported perceptions of police legitimacy, emotional regulation, and occupational stress. The predictor variables were measured using continuous scales. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between occupational stress, emotional regulation, and perceptions of police legitimacy. Regression analysis is a set of statistical processes for estimating the relationships between a criterion variable and one or more predictor variables (Nimon & Reio, 2011). Regression analysis serves three purposes: description, control, and prediction. Therefore, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was appropriate for the study.

Correlational research designs determine relationships between numerically measured variables (Curtis et al., 2016; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2013). Correlation provides an opportunity to evaluate the strength of the relationships between two or more

variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012; Whitley et al., 2013). This design should yield insights into stress and emotional regulation related to the interactions between school law enforcement officers and youth. This research design should also yield insights into self-reported legitimacy and procedural justice by school law enforcement officers.

Participants

The target population for this study was school police officers in multiple Independent School Districts in a southern geographical region. Over 12,000 officers were systematically selected through the different school districts' police departments to participate in the survey. This number was determined by going to the school district's police department's website and determining how many school law enforcement officers are assigned to each of the schools as full-time or school resource officers.

Sampling

Utilizing systematic sampling of officers in the 1,026 public school districts, this process was used to select law enforcement officers to participate in the study. Every 10th school district police department in the southern state was systematically selected to participate in the study. The number of school districts systematically selected out of 1,026 was 102. The total number of school law enforcement officers that were assigned to the schools within the 102 school districts ranged from 120-300 officers. Taking the lower number of school law enforcement officers assigned to the districts of 120 officers, the total population of school law enforcement officers is 12,240 when multiplied by the total number of school districts selected. Due to the large number of school law enforcement officers within the southern state region school districts (12,240), G*Power

analysis was conducted to determine the target sample, effect, and power size. The method that was used did not allow for generalizability because the sample only applied to a specific geographical location. However, it provided a basis for exploring this topic. The inclusion criteria for this study were that the participants must be 18 years old, have been a police officer for at least a year, and work in one of the Independent School Districts.

The required sample size of 138 school law enforcement officers was determined by conducting a power analysis using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2013). Significance level, effect size, power of test, and statistical tests were the four factors considered in the power analysis. Significance level refers to the probability of rejecting a true null hypothesis, also called a Type I error (Haas, 2012). On the other hand, the power of test refers to the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis (Haas, 2012). In most quantitative studies, the significance level is set at 95%, and the power of the test is set at 80% (Koran, 2016). The same factors for this study were used. Effect sizes are usually categorized into small, medium, and large. A medium effect size is commonly used for quantitative studies.

Using a 95% significance level, 80% power of test, medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), and hierarchical regression analysis with four predictors, the minimum required sample size was 138. Using a regression model, the covariates/control variables were used as predictor variables when running a G*Power test. As a result, there were three predictor variables in the study: occupational stress, emotional regulation, and self-reported police legitimacy among school law enforcement officers, and three

covariates/control variables: gender, years of experience, and training. The outcome variable: interaction with school-aged youth.

Data Collection

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured at Prairie View A&M University. The participant recruitment procedure was as follows. First, email notifications were sent to superintendents of the independent school districts. Once permission was granted, police chiefs in this southern state's independent school districts (102) were emailed and asked to participate. A link to the survey was sent through email to the chief to distribute among officers within the department to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Participants and police chiefs were assured of their anonymity and that no personal identifiable information was provided to the researcher by Survey Monkey Audience®. The survey took around 12 minutes to complete.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The research questions were answered by using a survey. It contained items to describe police-youth interaction, police officers' perspectives of youth, the composition of youth in their school district, how often they made contact with students, and how the everyday challenges of life and the school environment affected their stress level. For example, questions were asked about how much interaction they had with youth in schools daily, the population of youth with whom they interacted daily, and to describe their perceptions of police legitimacy. Additionally, demographics about the police officer such as title/rank, gender, and age group were collected and included.

Questions from two instruments were included. The Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Op; McCreary & Thompson, 2006) (see Appendix B), and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski et al., 2001) (see Appendix C). Police legitimacy questions that have been used in prior research to measure legitimacy were used in this study to measure school law enforcement officers' perspective of police legitimacy (see Appendix D).

PSQ-Op

The 20-item PSQ-Op measures stressors that are common among police officers – occupational stress (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). Survey items are rated using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (No stress at all) to 7 (A lot of stress). Sample survey items are "Lack of understanding from family and friends about your work," and "Feeling like you are always on the job." The total stress score is calculated by summing the scores from all 20 survey items. The higher the score is, the higher the occupational stress the police officer is experiencing. The PSQ-Op was found to be highly reliable (alphas > .90; corrected item-total correlations between .40 and .60) and positively correlated (r = .50 or less) with the other general stress measures (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). No permission was needed for use of this questionnaire if used for research purposes. (see Appendix B).

CERQ

A short CERQ questionnaire by Garnefski et al. (2001) was used to measure cognitive emotions with just two subscales that consist of 18 questions. Garnefski and Kraaji (2006) examined the factorial validity of the short questionnaire with a factor

analysis. The short questionnaire validity and reliability were compared. The short questionnaire Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient obtained ranged from 0.63 to 0.74 for the dimensions compared to the original questionnaire Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient 0.65 to 0.78. The instrument assesses nine 4-item dimensions related to the emotion of fear: Self-blame, Blaming others, Acceptance, Refocusing on planning, Positive refocusing, Rumination, Positive reappraisal, Putting into perspective, and Catastrophizing (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007). Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to (almost always). Therefore, subscale scores can range from 4 to 20, with higher subscale scores indicating a greater frequency of using the specific cognitive strategy. Sample survey items are "I feel that I am the one to blame for it," "I think of nicer things then what I have experienced", and "I continually think how horrible the situation has been." The CERQ was found to be highly reliable (alpha for Self-blame = .86, Blaming others = .92, Acceptance = .77, Refocusing on planning = .83, Positive refocusing = .83, Rumination = .84, Positive reappraisal = .80, Putting into perspective = .79, and Catastrophizing = .82) (Feliu-Soler et al., 2017). Permission was granted via email to use the questionnaire for research purposes. (See Appendix C).

Police Legitimacy

This study used questions from a scale created by Tankebe et al. (2016) to measure the school law enforcement officers' perspectives of police legitimacy; however, questions were modified for the current study. The variable police legitimacy is centered on the officer’s perspective, which is opinion based. Tankebe et al. (2016) used a multidimensional scale to measure legitimacy. The first dimension is lawfulness, which

measures whether police officers work within the rules, the second-dimension measures procedural fairness to capture the extent of police authority and whether it is exercised fairly and respectfully. The third-dimension measures distributive fairness, which captures "variations in police fairness in outcomes and allocations of resources" (Tankebe et al. p. 14). The fourth and final dimension is police effectiveness which measures the ability of police to respond successfully to citizens' safety needs. This study used seven questions from the procedural fairness dimension to measure legitimacy among law enforcement officers in schools. Questions that used the terminology “citizens” was replaced with "youth" to gauge police officers' perspective of police legitimacy regarding school-aged youth. A Likert scale was used to analyze responses to measure self-reported police legitimacy from law enforcement perspectives. No permission was needed for use of this questionnaire if used for research purposes. (See Appendix D).

Data Analysis Plan

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 was used to analyze the data for this study. SPSS provides a range of descriptive and inferential statistics, including statistical correlations. All required statistical tests for this study could be conducted in SPSS (Admin, 2020).

Data Cleaning

Before conducting the hierarchical regression analysis, data cleaning was performed on 145 cases imported from Survey Monkey Audience ®. Data cleaning was necessary to remove cases that could have hindered the analysis or provided inaccurate results such as incorrect, missing, or improperly formatted data (Mertler & Vannatta,

2016). The following steps were performed: Missing Value Analysis, Out-of-the Range Values, and Detecting and Removing Outliers, these are described below.

Missing Values

A total of 145 school law enforcement officers participated in the survey. After removing responses with missing values, a total of 132 responses from school law enforcement officers were included in the analyses. Due to some of the questions on the survey questionnaire having the option to select multiple responses to the question, it created missing data. For example, when the dataset was exported from Survey Monkey Audience ®, questions such as "What is the racial composition of youth at your school? Select all that applies" had the option to select from seven options. The options that were not selected from the participants created missing data values. To address this issue, a frequency analysis was conducted, and the cells with missing values were transformed by using series means in SPSS to fill the missing cells of the participants with missing data. Another frequency analysis was conducted to ensure that there was no missing data.

Out-of-the-Range Values

An out-of-range values procedure was conducted to determine whether there were any values also known as data entry errors in the dataset (Mertler & Vannatta, 2016). Conducting a frequency analysis, it was determined there were no out-of-the-range values due to the dataset being exported by Survey Monkey.

Outliers

The data were examined for outliers. This process was important as it could affect the results of the analysis (Mertler & Vannatta, 2016). Univariate outlier analysis was

conducted with questions that measured the variable *interacting with school-aged youth* to determine any outliers. Once the data were transformed into z-scores, the cases were examined. The cases that fell three standard deviations outside of the mean were deleted. Multivariate outlier analysis was conducted with questions that measured the independent variables of legitimacy, gender, training, occupational stress, and emotional regulation. The variable *interacting with school-aged youth* was used as a dummy variable since it was already analyzed during the univariate outlier analysis. The Mahalanobis distance was calculated to identify any outliers. After analyzing the Mahalanobis distance, the outliers were removed by deletion.

The research questions and corresponding hypotheses were:

RQ1: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth?

H1- There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of police legitimacy and based on their interactions with school-aged youth?

H2- There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of legitimacy and self-reported procedural justice with school-aged youth.

RQ3: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to the officers' self-reported interaction with school-aged youth?

H3- There is a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation

among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

The predictor variables in the study were occupational stress, emotional regulation, and perceptions of police legitimacy. Questions on a survey measured stress related to job training and overall stress-related events that could potentially impact school law enforcement interaction with school-aged youth. The outcome variable in the study was interaction with school-aged youth. The control variables gender, years of experience, and training were measured to determine their impact on the outcome variable based on the literature. Descriptive statistics, namely frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe the participants.

Regression analyses are parametric tests. Thus, there was a need to examine first whether the data gathered adhered to the statistical assumptions of these tests. The level of measurement, sampling, normality, linearity, and homogeneity assumptions were tested and ensured. The normality assumption is that the distribution of the test is normally distributed with a mean of zero, one standard deviation, and a symmetric bell-shaped curve (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2013). A normal probability plot was generated to examine if there was a violation of the normality assumption.

Prior to testing the hypotheses for the study, assumptions of regression analyses were conducted. The first assumption is that the dependent variable was continuous. The outcome variable for the study was interacting with school-aged youth, which describes self-reported perceptions of police legitimacy based on the interaction of school law enforcement officers with school-aged youth. The second assumption was that the

predictor variables that were measured on a continuous scale to determine if this was the appropriate analysis. The predictor variables in the study were self-reported perceptions of police legitimacy, occupational stress, and emotional regulation, which were measured using continuous scales. Thus, the first two assumptions of linear regression were met. The third assumption was the assumption of outliers. Boxplots were used to determine whether there were outliers in the dataset. The outliers were removed from the dataset before conducting the regression analyses.

The next assumption was the assumption on independence of observations. Durbin-Watson Statistic was used to assess whether the assumption was met. The Durbin-Watson statistic was calculated as 1.46 which is below 2.5 indicating that the observations were independent. Moreover, the assumption on homoscedasticity was measured using the scatterplot of predicted and residuals. There was no pattern in the scatterplot indicating that the assumption on homoscedasticity was met.

Finally, to test the assumption on multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factors were calculated. As presented in Table 1, the Tolerance values are greater than 0.1 and the VIF values are below the value of 10 with a range of 1.019 to 1.234. Therefore, the assumption on multicollinearity was met. All the assumptions of linear regression analysis were met. Thus, Hierarchical Multiple Regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses for the study.

Table 1

Collinearity Statistics

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Legitimacy	.981	1.019
CERQ	.811	1.234
Operational Stress	.823	1.215

Hypothesis testing was done on all analyses with a 0.05 level of significance (Weakliem, 2016). This means that all p-value output of the regression analysis was assessed using a 0.05 level of significance. A p-value of less than 0.05 signifies a statistically significant relationship between the variables that the null hypothesis is rejected, whereas a value greater than 0.05 dictates that there is no statistically significant relationship between variables.

Threats to Validity

Three threats that affected this research study were construct, internal, and external validity. Specific to this study, threats to internal validity in correlational research designs included the issue of data normality and the existence of cofounding variables (Tharenou et al., 2007). The study included valid and reliable instruments to help alleviate the internal validity threat of instrumentation. Clear instructions were given to the participants so they could answer the survey items to the best of their ability.

External validity refers to generalizing results to a larger population (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2016). The design of this study did not allow for the generalizability of the

results beyond the sampling frame. Moreover, external validity threats in this study included the interaction of the relationship with different settings (Tharenou et al., 2007).

Ethical Procedures

The Institutional Review Board of Prairie View A&M University approval was granted to ensure ethical standards were met. The research was not expected to harm participants for several reasons. There was no identifiable information due to the nature of anonymity to link the participants. A copy of the data was saved on a password-protected flash drive. All data related to the study will be destroyed seven years after study completion.

Summary

This quantitative study aimed to explore school law enforcement officers' perspectives when interacting with youth. The participants for this study were law enforcement officers working in independent school districts in a southern state. The predictor variables were occupational stress, measured using PSQ-Op (McCreary & Thompson, 2006), and emotional regulation measured using CERQ (Garnefski & Kraaji, 2006) and perception of police legitimacy using the legitimacy scale modified from a scale created by Tankebe et al. (2016). The control variables were gender, years of experience, years of experience related to youth, and training. The outcome variable was officers' perceptions of the nature of their interaction with youth. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was utilized to address the research questions and hypotheses of the study. Chapter IV presents the results.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This quantitative study explored school law enforcement officers' perceptions about interacting with school-aged youth. By exploring these perceptions, the study identified challenges and offers potential solutions to improve school law enforcement officers' and school-aged youth interactions. The perceptions and experiences of school law enforcement officers related to how they viewed their interaction with school-aged youth and key themes regarding school law enforcement's training, stress and emotional regulation, and legitimacy with diverse school-aged youth were examined.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth.

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of their legitimacy based on their interactions with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship between law enforcement officers' perception of self-reported legitimacy based on their interaction with school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of self-reported legitimacy with school-aged youth.

RQ3: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to their self-reported interaction with school-aged youth?

H_0: There is no relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

H_a: There is a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

This chapter includes the presentation of the demographic characteristics of law enforcement officers' participants. The descriptive statistics of study variables such as occupational stress, emotional regulation, and self-reported police legitimacy from a school law enforcement perspective are presented. The inferential statistics to test the hypotheses are also presented. The chapter ends with a summary of the key findings.

Demographic Characteristics

A total of 132 law enforcement officers' responses were included in the study. Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of participants. There were 83 male participants (62.9%) and 48 female participants (36.4%). In terms of age, 58 participants are 35 to 44 years old (43.9%), 43 participants are 45 to 54 years old (32.6%), 18 participants are 25 to 34 years old (13.6%), and 13 participants are 55 to 64 years old (9.8%). For race/ethnicity, 54 participants were White (40.9%), 39 participants were Hispanic or Latino (29.5%), and 32 participants were Black (24.2%). For the highest educational attainment, 54.5% of participants completed a bachelor's degree (n = 72),

while 31.8% of participants completed some college (n = 42). Most of the law enforcement officers' participants had children (n = 121, 91.7%).

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	83	62.9
	Female	48	36.4
	Total	131	99.2
Missing	System	1	.8
Total		132	100.0
Age	25-34	18	13.6
	35-44	58	43.9
	45-54	43	32.6
	55-64	13	9.8
	Total	132	100.0
Race/Ethnicity	White or Caucasian	54	40.9
	Black or African American	32	24.2
	Hispanic or Latino	39	29.5
	Asian or Asian American	4	3.0
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.8
	Total	130	98.5
Missing	System	2	1.5
Total		132	100.0
Highest Level of Education	High School	2	1.5
	Some College	42	31.8
	Bachelor's Degree	72	54.5
	Master's Degree	16	12.1
	Total	132	100.0
Do you have children	Yes	121	91.7
	No	11	8.3
	Total	132	100.0

Table 3 presents the police officer's work-related characteristics. About 38.6% of participants had 10 to 20 years of work experience (n = 51), 36.4% of participants had 5 to 10 years of work experience (n = 48), and 14.4% of participants had over 21 years of work experience (n = 19). In terms of identifying themselves as an officer, 48 participants

responded that they were an officer assigned to a police department and working full-time at a school (36.4%). Thirty-seven participants self-identified as a school resource officer assigned to a specific jurisdiction/school district (28%), and 36 participants identified themselves as an officer assigned to a police department who worked part-time at a school (27.3%). For the jurisdiction, 52 participants were in an urban location, 48 were in the suburbs (36.4%), and 30 were in rural areas (22.7%). Participants were also asked about their daily interactions with school-aged youth.

A total of 49 participants responded that they had 4 to 5 hours of interaction with youth per day (37.1%), while 48 participants responded that they had 3 to 4 hours of interaction daily (36.4%). About 27.3% responded that they interacted with high school students daily (n = 36), 24.2% of participants interacted with middle school students daily (n = 32), and 15.2% of participants interacted with junior high school students (n = 20). Participants had the option to select multiple responses in reference to the type of school to explain the percentage. Regarding the racial composition of youth, most participants responded Hispanics or Latinos (n = 124, 93.9%), followed by Blacks (n = 109, 82.6%). Participants had the option to select multiple responses for racial compositions of youth on the survey, resulting in a large percentage per racial composition.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Work-Related Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Years of Police Experience	Fewer than 2 years	2	1.5
	2-5 years	11	8.3
	5-10 years	48	36.4
	10-20 years	51	38.6
	Over 21 years' experience	19	14.4

	Total	131	99.2
Missing	System	1	.8
Total		132	100.0
How do you identify yourself as an officer?	School resource officer assigned to a specific jurisdiction/school district	37	28.0
	Officer assigned to a police department that works part-time at a school	36	27.3
	Officer assigned to a police department that works full-time at a school	48	36.4
	Other (please specify)	10	7.6
	Total	131	99.2
Missing	System	1	.8
Total		132	100.0
What type of jurisdiction (location) do you work in?	Suburbs	48	36.4
	Rural	30	22.7
	Urban	52	39.4
	Other (please specify)	2	1.5
	Total	132	100.0
How much interaction (talking, teaching, assisting youth etc.) do you have with youth in schools daily	1-2 hours	12	9.1
	3-4 hours	48	36.4
	4-5 hours	49	37.1
	6-7 hours	13	9.8
	More than 7 hours	10	7.6
	Total	132	100.0
What population of youth do you interact with daily	Elementary	6	4.5
	Middle School	32	24.2
	Junior High School	20	15.2
	High School	36	27.3
	Other (please specify)	38	28.8
	Total	132	100.0

Table 3 (continued).

What is the racial/ethnic composition of youth at your school? Select all that applies	White or Caucasian	99	75.0
	Black or African American	109	82.6
	Hispanic or Latino	124	93.9
	Asian or Asian American	61	46.2
	American Indian or Alaska Native	17	12.9
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	16	12.1
	Other (please specify)	3	2.3
While interacting with youth in schools, how would you describe your typical interaction	Pleasant	39	29.5
	Frustrating	10	7.6
	Meaningful	56	42.4
	Stressful	3	2.3
	Other (please specify)	24	18.2
	Total	132	100.0

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of study variables police perceptions of police legitimacy, emotional regulation, operational stress, and perceptions about working with school-aged youth. Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, the working with school-aged youth variable had a mean of 17.61 (SD = 2.48) with a range of 12 to 23. The legitimacy responses had a mean of 10.25 (SD = 3.49) with a range of 7 to 21. The CERQ or the measure of cognitive emotions had a mean of 49.12 (SD = 14.15) with a range of 25 to 90. The operational stress scores of participants had a mean of 35.01 (SD = 7.76) with a range of 19 to 57.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Working with School-Aged Youth	132	12.00	23.00	17.61	2.48
Legitimacy	132	7.00	21.00	10.25	3.49
Emotional Regulation (CERQ)	130	25.00	90.00	49.12	14.15
Operational Stress	130	19.00	57.00	35.01	7.76

Research Question 1

To address the first research question: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their interactions with school-aged youth? H1- There was a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' interaction with school-aged youth, the item on participants' response in describing their typical interaction with youth in schools was used. Based on the responses presented in Table 5, a majority of the participants had positive descriptions of their interactions such as pleasant (n = 39, 29.5%) and meaningful (n = 56, 42.4%). Thus, most reported positive interaction school-aged youth.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Description of Interaction with School-aged Youth

		n	%
While interacting with youth in schools, how would you describe your typical interaction	Pleasant	39	29.5
	Frustrating	10	7.6
	Meaningful	56	42.4
	Stressful	3	2.3
	Other (please specify)	24	18.2
	Total	132	100.0

Research Questions 2 and 3

Questions 2 and 3 were examined with the same procedure. The second research question: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of police legitimacy and procedural justice based on their interactions with school-aged youth? H2: There was a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of legitimacy and self-reported procedural justice with school-aged youth.

The third research question: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to the officers' self-reported interaction with school-aged youth? H3: There was a positive relationship between high stress and low emotional regulation among law enforcement officers in schools and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth.

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with two block variables using working with school-aged youth variable as the dependent variable and legitimacy as the predictor variable. The first block included the control variables gender, years of experience, how many hours of training, and how many of those hours of training are related to working with youth. The second block included the independent variables legitimacy, emotional regulation (CERQ), and occupational stress. The results increased from 6.8% to 31% from Model 1 to Model 2, indicating that the variables in block 2 explain interaction with school-aged youth beyond the variables in block 1.

As presented in Table 6, 31.0% of interacting with school-aged youth is explained by legitimacy, stress, and emotional regulation (CERQ) collective. This is a positive relationship that is statistically significant. When controlling for gender, years of

experience, hours of training, and hours of training related to youth, 24.1% of the outcome variable is explained by legitimacy, emotional regulation (CERQ), and operational stress, indicating a large effect size. The coefficient of non-determination is 69%.

Table 6

Model Summary of Variables

					Change Statistics					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.262[a]	.068	.035	2.39900	.068	2.039	4	111	.094	
2	.557[b]	.310	.265	2.09340	.241	12.591	3	108	<.001	1.733

a. Predictors: (Constant), Years of Police Experience, How many hours of training did you receive, Gender, How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Years of Police Experience, How many hours of training did you receive, Gender, How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth, Legitimacy, Operational Stress, CERQ

c. Outcome Variable: Interaction with School-Aged Youth

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression were used to assess if legitimacy, stress, emotional regulation, years of police experience, how many hours of training did you receive, gender, how many of those hours of training, were related to working with youth significantly predicted interaction with school-aged youth. The overall regression model was significant in predicting the outcome variable interaction with school-aged youth ($F(7,108) = 6.926$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 26.5$), as presented in Table 7. It was found that legitimacy, operational stress, and emotional regulation (CERQ) collectively significantly predicted the interaction between law enforcement and school-

aged youth. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Table showed that the first model (control variables) was not significant in predicting the outcome variable interaction with school-aged youth. However, the second model (predictors) was significant in predicting the outcome variable interaction with school-aged youth.

Table 7

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.934	4	11.733	2.039	.094[b]
	Residual	638.825	111	5.755		
	Total	685.759	115			
2	Regression	212.468	7	30.353	6.926	<.001[c]
	Residual	473.291	108	4.382		
	Total	685.759	115			

a. Outcome Variable: Interacting with School-Aged Youth
b. Predictors: (Constant), Years of Police Experience, How many hours of training did you receive, Gender, How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth
c. Predictors: (Constant), Years of Police Experience, How many hours of training did you receive, Gender, How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth, Legitimacy, Operational Stress, CERQ

Police officers' perceptions of police legitimacy increased with the nature of the interaction school-aged youth (β=.327, p=<.001) as observed in Table 8, indicating that legitimacy had a positive relationship and increased by 32.7 units with interaction with school-aged youth. Operational stress increased with overall interaction with school-aged youth (β=.074, p=.018) by 7.4 units, indicating that stress increased with interaction with school-aged youth, also as observed in Table 8. Emotional regulation (CERQ) decreased

as stress increased with interaction with school-aged youth (β=-.019, p=.377) by -.1.9 units. However, it was not significant, as observed in Table 8.

Table 8

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	19.114	1.349		14.170	<.001
	Gender	-.005	.489	-.001	-.011	.992
	How many hours of training did you receive	-.122	.127	-.110	-.961	.339
	How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth	-.181	.111	-.188	-1.624	.107
	Years of Police Experience	-.272	.264	-.101	-1.027	.307
2	(Constant)	13.562	1.732		7.832	<.001
	Gender	.370	.440	.072	.841	.402
	How many hours of training did you receive	-.078	.115	-.070	-.674	.502
	How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth	-.169	.099	-.176	-1.719	.088
	Years of Police Experience	-.274	.231	-.102	-1.187	.238
	Legitimacy	.327	.058	.461	5.600	<.001
	Emotional Regulation	-.019	.021	-.082	-.887	.377
	Operational Stress	.074	.031	.214	2.411	.018

a. Outcome Variable: Interaction with School-Aged Youth

Summary

This quantitative study aimed to explore school law enforcement officers' perceptions when encountering school-aged youth. A sample of 132 police officer participants was included in the study. Among the participants, there were more males than females. Most of the participants were aged 35 to 44. The first research question asked participants about their typical interaction with youth in schools. Most responded that they had a meaningful and pleasant experience with school-aged youth. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study. The results indicated that officers with positive perceptions of police legitimacy had more positive interactions with school-aged youth. There was also a positive relationship between operational stress and negative perceptions of interactions with school-aged youth. Emotional Regulation (CERQ) decreased when stress increased, indicating that some school law enforcement officers were not able to control or regulate their emotions when under stress. However, the variable was not significant in predicting interaction with school-age youth.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this exploratory research design was to investigate the viewpoints of school law enforcement officers regarding the youth population, their training, the impact of stress and emotional regulation, the officers' affective experiences, and socio-psychological responses. The collection of data through a primary survey was employed to gain insights into the perceptions of school law enforcement officers regarding diverse youth, focusing on variations based on race and ethnicity. The study included a sample of 132 law enforcement participants. The male participants outnumbered the female participants. Most of the participants were males between 35 and 44 years old, and most had over five years of law enforcement experience. Further, officers with a positive view of police legitimacy reported more positive interactions with school-aged youth. A positive correlation was also observed between elevated stress levels and low emotional regulation in law enforcement officers working in educational institutions. However, emotional regulation was not significant in predicting the quality of police interactions with school-aged youth.

Interpretation of the Findings

Given the largely positive interaction between school law enforcement officers and school-aged youth, these findings affirm the literature's previous findings of school law enforcement officers and school-aged youths were generally favorable relations (Culhane & Schweitzer, 2018; Kupchik et al., 2020; Wolfe et al., 2020). Based on this study's findings, in environments similar to those examined, the interactions between

young individuals and law enforcement officials are generally positive and conducive to mutual understanding.

The second research question addressed: How do law enforcement officers in schools describe their perception of police legitimacy based on their interactions with school-aged youth? The results indicated a positive relationship between law enforcement officers in schools' perception of police legitimacy and a positive interaction with school-aged youth. Thus, concluding the importance of positive interactions contributing to police legitimacy. Previous empirical studies emphasized the importance of the perception of legitimacy and procedural justice in facilitating a positive relationship between youth and law enforcement (Kupchiek et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2017; Skiba et al., 2016). As these findings demonstrate, it is crucial to school law enforcement officers' effectiveness that they conduct themselves professionally to increase the perception of their legitimacy during interactions, especially when dealing with more impressionable individuals, such as school-aged youth.

The third research question: How do law enforcement officers in schools' stress and emotional regulation contribute to the officers' self-reported interaction with school-aged youth? It was hypothesized that a positive relationship existed between high stress and low emotional regulation among school law enforcement officers and self-reported negative perceptions of school-aged youth. The direction of the findings was supported, indicating that as stress increased, emotional regulation decreased. However, the hypothesis was not supported because the emotional regulation variable was not significant. While stress is inherent to the law enforcement profession, extensive training

in emotional regulation should still be considered to help officers manage stress. This would also ensure that encounters with youth remain positive and that their perception of legitimacy and procedural justice is high (McLean et al., 2020; Melde et al., 2020; Petty & Wiener, 2019).

The findings herein do not support the theoretical framework of the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis and Appraisal Tendency Theory that was used to inform the study. The Symbolic Threat Hypothesis, as posited by Peck and Jennings (2016) and Tittle and Curran (1988), explained that minority youth are perceived as a societal threat. Peck and Jennings (2016) suggested that Black youth are perceived as aggressive, participating in violent activities and delinquency, and lacking discipline.

The Symbolic Threat Hypothesis posits that the responses of juvenile court actors and law enforcement officers toward minority youth are influenced by their psychological perspective, specifically their emotions, feelings, and social-psychological reactions, which are in turn influenced by the race of the minority youth (Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Peck & Jennings, 2016). The evidence presented in this study did not support the theoretical assumptions that there was a significant relationship between the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis regarding emotional regulation and interaction with school-aged youth. The results of the study indicated that law enforcement officers perceived their interaction as pleasant and meaningful, which conversely is the opposite of the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis. Moreover, if law enforcement officers perceive their interaction positively, it can be inferred that those who chose to work with youth do not see youth as a threat.

According to the Symbolic Threat Hypothesis, negative racial stereotypes toward minority youth are more implicit rather than explicit, as supported by previous research (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Peck & Jennings, 2016; Stevenson & Bottoms, 2009), especially within the context of the criminal justice system. Results from this study indicated that interactions between school-aged youth and law enforcement were generally positive. Conversely, this theory is not applicable to officers in the school context based on the results of the study.

Limitations of the Study

While findings from this study are believed to offer an essential contribution to understanding a core issue and problem affecting juvenile justice, some limitations are present that may have impacted the results. Potential threats to validity include internal and external validity.

Potential challenges to internal validity within a correlational research design encompass the concern of data normality and the presence of confounding variables (Tharenou et al., 2007). While this study incorporated reliable and valid measurement tools, the research's self-report design and the correlational nature of the study created some potential sources of bias and error. For example, self-report instruments can reduce the authenticity of participant responses. Additionally, the correlational nature of the design prevents the ability to establish causation between the measured variables. Items on the survey were modified for the specific target population to accommodate time while taking the survey. Modifying the instruments by using different terminology, such as changing the word "citizens" to "youth" for the study, could have an impact on the

overall instrument's validity, affecting the study's results. Variables in the study that were used to describe the type of interaction did not have a conceptual definition such as "pleasant, frustrating, meaningful, stressful, and other, which could have resulted in different interpretations of words. Another limitation presented was the option to select multiple responses for some of the questions on the survey. It created missing data and could have affected participants' selection process. However, this could have been corrected by setting the different responses to equal 100 to prevent missing data for the responses that were not selected.

Another potential limitation was the sample size. The required sample size of 138 school law enforcement officers was determined by conducting a power analysis using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2013). Four factors considered in the power analysis were significance level, effect size, power of test, and statistical test. The number of responses used in the study was 134, which could have had an impact on the power of the test conducted and affected the results of the study.

While comprehensive guidelines were provided to the participants to facilitate their optimal response to the survey items, the potential for these sources of bias and error to have influenced results still existed. External validity pertains to generalizing research findings to a broader population (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2016). A limitation of this study was that the design could not extend the findings' generalizability beyond the sampling frame's boundaries. Each potential threat to validity may have impacted the findings, and the results must be interpreted with a certain degree of caution.

Policy Implications

The findings from this study have significant implications for research, practice, and social change. This study was grounded in the subject matter of school law enforcement officers, their viewpoints on young individuals, and the interactions between law enforcement officers and youth. Exploring school law enforcement officers' viewpoints regarding school-aged youth in this study helps provide valuable insights into their behavioral responses and decision-making processes during various interactions. Results from this study offer valuable knowledge regarding the training programs for school law enforcement officers, specifically focusing on their interactions with youth, the establishment of legitimacy, and the underlying factors that influence the development of interactions that foster legitimacy (Ryan et al., 2017).

The findings of this study can be applied in various ways, such as enhancing the training of law enforcement personnel and facilitating the development of more informed intervention, prevention, and mentoring programs to maintain legitimacy between law enforcement officers and school-aged youth. School law enforcement officers can implement these programs to benefit youth in different settings and continue building legitimacy in educational institutions and community organizations like Big Brother, Big Sister, Boys and Girls Club, and TAPS Academy.

Recommendations

Potential future research and practical applications can be extracted from the findings of this study, which presented a positive correlation between the police perceptions of their own legitimacy as law enforcement officers in schools when

interacting with school-aged youth. Future research recommendations can be made considering the current study's findings. The research would benefit from replication with a longitudinal design. Rather than assessing perceptions and adherence simultaneously, analyzing temporal changes could offer valuable insights into causal connections and enduring effects. These recommendations explain how perceptions of legitimacy and police-youth interactions change over time.

Future research endeavors may incorporate qualitative methodologies, such as conducting interviews or organizing focus groups. Gaining insight into the cognitive and affective states and the driving forces of law enforcement officers and young individuals involved in the interactions could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms governing the observed associations. Furthermore, diverse samples should be included when conducting the study. Analyzing law enforcement officers in different school environments, such as international, public, private, Montessori, and Parochial schools, can offer insights into how cultural, socioeconomic, and other variables might shape their view of legitimacy and procedural justice.

Future research endeavors may explore potential factors that moderate or mediate the observed relationships. For instance, an exploration of whether the correlation between perceived legitimacy and procedural justice exhibits greater strength among officers of specific hierarchical positions or within educational institutions implementing policies. Following these recommendations demonstrates how various contextual factors influence the relationships and interactions between law enforcement and school-aged youth.

The findings indicate that how individuals perceive legitimacy can impact their behavior. Additionally, the findings of this study can serve as valuable information for policymakers in shaping the formulation of school policing policies. Given that the perception of legitimacy is positively correlated with adherence to procedural justice, it is advisable for policies to endorse initiatives that cultivate favorable perceptions of law enforcement among young individuals.

Law enforcement officers should continue to actively engage in community-building initiatives for school-aged youth to increase their perceived legitimacy and promote procedural justice. Potential strategies to foster student engagement include organizing school visits, implementing mentorship programs, or encouraging active participation in various school events. Finally, there is a need to create and validate instruments for assessing the perceived legitimacy and adherence to procedural justice within the educational setting. These tools can be utilized in the continuous evaluation of school policing endeavors.

Conclusion

The objective of this quantitative, exploratory, descriptive study was to examine the perspectives of school law enforcement officers concerning the school-aged youth population, their training, and the elements of stress and emotional regulation, encompassing the officers' affective experiences, emotions, and socio-psychological responses. A primary survey was conducted to gather data on the perspectives of school law enforcement officers regarding diverse youth, specifically examining differences related to race and ethnicity. The research encompassed a cohort of 132 individuals who

were employed as law enforcement officers. The number of male participants exceeded that of female participants. The age range of 35 to 44 encompassed most of the participants. To explore the primary research inquiry, the researcher employed questions from the different instruments collectively that related to participants' accounts of their daily interactions with school-aged youth in an educational environment.

Concerning primary outcomes, a noteworthy association was identified between school-based law enforcement personnel and individuals of school age, as most respondents indicated experiencing a significant and favorable interaction with this group. Hierarchical Multiple Regression analyses were utilized in the study to investigate the hypotheses. The results of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between the perception of legitimacy among law enforcement officers in educational institutions and their self-reported commitment to procedural justice during interactions with young individuals attending school. Furthermore, it was noted that there was a positive correlation between heightened stress levels and reduced emotional regulation among law enforcement officers employed in an educational setting of individuals of school age. However, it was not significant in reference to interaction with school-aged youth.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
A Member of the Texas A&M University System

To: **Myrna Cintron, Ph.D.,** Principal Investigator
Shannon A. Davenport, Co-Investigator

From: Marco L. Robinson,
M.A.Ed. Director,
Research Compliance
Office of Research
Compliance

Date: May 3, 2023

Re: IRB Protocol #2023-037
School Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives of Youth in a Southern State

This serves as an official notice that your IRB protocol application submitted falls under the Exempt Review, category 2, according to the Code of Federal Regulations.

Please note, any changes to the exempt protocol must be re-reviewed by the IRB.

Marco Robinson

Marco L. Robinson,
M.A.Ed. Director,
Research Compliance
Office of Research
Compliance Email:
mlrobinson@pvamu.edu

TITLE OF STUDY: School Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives of Youth in a

Southern State

PROTOCOL NUMBER:

DEAR STUDY PARTICIPANT:

You are invited to participate in a research study of School Law Enforcement and School-Aged Youth. You were selected as a possible participant because there is a need for more information regarding school police officers' perspectives when interacting with school-aged youth, specifically diverse youth. Working in a school institution while allow for a better examination of school police officers interaction with youth. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Shannon A. Davenport, Juvenile Justice department at Prairie View A&M University

Background Information

The purpose of this study is: While researching the topic of police and youth interaction for my dissertation, I noticed a need for more information regarding police officers' perspectives when interacting with school-aged youth, specifically diverse youth. I am addressing this with my research by allowing police officers in schools to have a platform to openly and confidentially express their perspectives on their experience with interacting with school-aged youth.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

1. Consent to participation in the study.
2. A survey link will be provided that will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete that should be distributed to police officers on campus or in department.
3. Identify the person or overseer who will distribute the link to police officers

Risks and Benefits of participating in **the Study**

The study has minimal risks:
The risks are no greater than those encountered in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are:
It will provide school police officers with a platform to express their perspectives of working with school-aged youth in a safe space. This opportunity will also enable contribution to the body of knowledge in the Criminal Justice field through research through the lens of police officers working in schools.

Compensation:

You will receive payment: There will be no compensation for participation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In all reports resulting from this study, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The principal investigator and student conducting the study are the only two who will have access to the information stored. Records will be destroyed after three years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Prairie View A&M University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researchers conducting this study are Myrna Cintron and Shannon A. Davenport. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the Principal Investigator Myrna Cintron at Prairie View A&M University, 963-261-5261, mycintron@pvamu.edu. Co-Investigator Shannon A. Davenport, Prairie View A&M University 832-279-4427, sdavenport1@pvamu.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Office of Research Compliance at researchcompliance@pvamu.edu or 936-261-1553 (Fax 936-261-3528).

Statement of Consent:

___ I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.
___ I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I do not consent to participate in this study.

Appendix B: Operational Police Stress Questionnaire

Operational Police Stress Questionnaire

Below is a list of items that describe different aspects of being a police officer. After each item, please circle how much stress it has caused you over the past 6 months, using a 7-point scale (see below) that ranges from "No Stress At All" to "A Lot Of Stress":

No Stress At All			Moderate Stress			A Lot Of Stress
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. Shift work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Working alone at night	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Over-time demands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Risk of being injured on the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Work related activities on days off (e.g. court, community events)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Traumatic events (e.g. MVA, domestics, death, injury)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Managing your social life outside of work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Not enough time available to spend with friends and family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Paperwork	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Eating healthy at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Finding time to stay in good physical condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Fatigue (e.g. shift work, over-time)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Occupation-related health issues (e.g. back pain)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Lack of understanding from family and friends about your work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Making friends outside the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Upholding a "higher image" in public	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Negative comments from the public	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Limitations to your social life (e.g. who your friends are, where you socialize)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Feeling like you are always on the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Friends / family feel the effects of the stigma associated with your job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The Operational Police Stress Questionnaire is provided free for non-commercial, educational, and research purposes.

Survey Website: https://www.midss.org/sites/default/files/psq-op.pdf

Appendix C: Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ); **© Garnefski, Kraaij & Spinhoven, 2001**

How do you cope with events?

Everyone gets confronted with negative or unpleasant events now and then and everyone responds to them in his or her own way. By the following questions you are asked to indicate what you generally think, when you experience negative or unpleasant events.

	(almost) never	**some-times**	**regularly**	**often**	**(almost) always**
1. I think that I have to accept that this has happened	1	2	3	4	5
2. I often think about how I feel about what I have experienced	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think I can learn something from the situation	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that I am the one who is responsible for what has happened	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think that I have to accept the situation	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am preoccupied with what I think and feel about what I have experienced	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think of pleasant things that have nothing to do with it	1	2	3	4	5
8. I think that I can become a stronger person as a result of what has happened	1	2	3	4	5
9. I keep thinking about how terrible it is what I have experienced	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel that others are responsible for what has happened	1	2	3	4	5
11. I think of something nice instead of what has happened	1	2	3	4	5
12. I think about how to change the situation	1	2	3	4	5
13. I think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think that basically the cause must lie within myself	1	2	3	4	5
15. I think about a plan of what I can do best	1	2	3	4	5
16. I tell myself that there are worse things in life	1	2	3	4	5
17. I continually think how horrible the situation has been	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel that basically the cause lies with others	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D: Police Legitimacy Questions

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. The police treat citizens (students) with respect
2. The police take time to listen to people
3. The police treat people fairly
4. The police respect citizens' (students) rights
5. The police are courteous to citizens they come into contact with
6. The police treat everyone with dignity
7. The police make decisions based on the facts

Source: Tankebe, J., Reisig, M. D., & Wang, X. (2016). A multidimensional model of police legitimacy: A cross-cultural assessment. *Law and human behavior*, *40*(1), 11.

Appendix E: School-Based Law Enforcement Officer Survey (Survey Monkey)

This survey is anonymous and voluntary. No identifiers such as names or department will be connected to survey responses. Once you start the survey you may stop at any time, however I would like for you to complete to survey as thorough as possible for educational purposes. Section I questions are demographic questions, Section II, Section III, Section IV, Section V and Section VI will consist of you answering questions related to your job as a School Law Enforcement Officer in your school district. Thank you for your participation!

Section 1 Demographics: Select the best response that applies to you.

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to answer; ☐ Other

2. Age: ☐ 18-24 ☐25-34 ☐35-44 ☐45-54 ☐55-64 ☐65 or older

3. Race/Ethnicity (select one):
   ☐ Black, non-Hispanic
   ☐ Hispanic
   ☐ White, non-Hispanic
   ☐ Asian
   ☐ Native American
   ☐ Other

4. What is your highest degree earned?
   ☐ High School
   ☐ Some college
   ☐ Associate Degree
   ☐ Bachelor's Degree
   ☐ Master's Degree
   ☐ Ph.D.

5. Do you have children: ☐ Yes ☐ No
   a. If so, how many_____

6. Years of Police Experience:

   ☐Fewer than 2 years
   ☐ 2-5 years
   ☐ 6 – 11 years
   ☐12 – 20 years
   ☐ More than 21 years

7. How do you identify yourself as an officer?
   ☐ School resource officer assigned to a specific jurisdiction/school district;
   ☐ Officer assigned to a police department that works part-time at a school;
   ☐ Officer assigned to a police department that works full-time at a school;
   ☐ Other, if other please specify_____

8. What type of jurisdiction (location) do you work in?
   ☐ Suburbs
   ☐ Rural
   ☐ Urban

Section II Questions about School-Aged Youth: Please select the one response that best describes your opinion.

9. How much interaction (talking, teaching, assisting youth etc.) do you have with youth in schools daily?
   ☐ 1-2 hours
   ☐ 3-4 hours
   ☐ 4-5 hours
   ☐ 6-7 hours
   ☐ More than 7 hours

10. What population of youth do you interact with daily?
    ☐ Elementary
    ☐ Middle School
    ☐ Junior High School
    ☐ High School
    ☐ Other_____

11. Which best describes the racial/ethnic composition of the school you work at Select all that applies
    ☐Black, non-Hispanic
    ☐Hispanic
    ☐White, non-Hispanic
    ☐Asian
    ☐Native American ____
    ☐Other, please specify _____

12. While interacting with youth in schools, how would you describe your typical interaction?
    ☐ Pleasant
    ☐ Frustrating
    ☐ Meaningful
    ☐ Stressful

Select the response which best describes your opinion of working with school-aged youth

13. Youth in schools are respectful when interacting with officers
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

14. Officers are respectful when interacting with youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

15. It is important for police officers to build relationships with youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

16. As a police officer, I can help eliminate unequal treatment of diverse youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

17. As a police officer, I should be cautious when interacting with diverse youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

18. I feel comfortable starting a conversation with youth in schools that I don't know.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

19. I feel nervous when interacting with youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

20. I am fearful when interacting with youth in schools
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

21. Working with youth will allow for a better understanding between police officers and youth in general
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Section III Questions about Legitimacy: **Select the response which best describes your opinion of law enforcement officers interacting with school-aged youth**

22. The police treat students with respect
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

23. The police take time to listen to students
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

24. The police treat students fairly
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

25. The police respect students' rights
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

26. The police are courteous to students they encounter
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

27. The police treat students with dignity
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

28. The police make decisions based on the facts
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Section IV Questions about Training: Select the response that best applies

29. How many hours of training did you receive
☐1-2 hours ☐3-4 hours ☐5-6 hours ☐7-8hours ☐9-10 hours
If more than 10 hours, please specify_____

30. How many of those hours of training are related to working with youth
☐1-2 hours ☐3-4 hours ☐5-6 hours ☐7-8hours ☐9-10 hours
If more than 10 hours, please specify_____

Questions 31-36: Select the response which best describes your opinion.

31. The training I received prepared me to interact with youth in schools.
☐ Yes ☐No

32. I received proper training for interacting with diverse youth in schools.
☐ Yes ☐No

33. The duties and responsibilities were explained to me before taking the position at the school?
☐ Yes ☐No

34. The training I received relate to my job duties and responsibilities in the school.
☐ Yes ☐No

35. I feel the training I received help to promote a safe school environment.
☐ Yes ☐No

36. I feel I have the necessary skills for interacting effectively with youth in schools?
☐ Yes ☐No

Section V: Everyone gets confronted with negative or unpleasant events now and then and everyone responds to them in his or her own way. By the following questions you are asked to indicate what you generally think, when you experience negative or unpleasant events (CERQ Questionnaire)

37. I think that I have to accept that this has happened
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

38. I often think about how I feel about what I have experienced
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐ Often ☐Almost always

39. I think I can learn something from the situation
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

40. I feel that I am the one who is responsible for what has happened
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

41. I think that I have to accept the situation
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

42. I am preoccupied with what I think and feel about what I have experienced
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

43. I think of pleasant things that have nothing to do with it
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

44. I think that I can become a stronger person as a result of what has happened
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

45. I keep thinking about how terrible it is what I have experienced
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

46. I feel that others are responsible for what has happened
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

47. I think of something nice instead of what has happened
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

48. I think about how to change the situation
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

49. I think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things

☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

50. I think that basically the cause must lie within myself
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

51. I think about a plan of what I can do best
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

52. I tell myself that there are worse things in life
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

53. I continually think how horrible the situation has been
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

54. I feel that basically the cause lies with others
☐Almost never ☐Sometimes ☐Regularly ☐Often ☐Almost always

Section VI: Please select the response which best describes the amount of stress each situation has caused you over the past 6 months (Operational Police Stress Questionnaire)

55. Shift work
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

56. Over-time demands
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

57. Risk being injured on the job
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

58. Work related activities on days off (e.g. court, community events)
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

59. Traumatic events (e.g., MVA, domestics, death, injury)
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

60. Managing your social life outside of work
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

61. Not enough time available to spend with family and friends
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

62. Paperwork
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

63. Eating healthy at work
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

64. Finding time to stay in good physical shape
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

65. Fatigue (e.g., shift work, over-time)
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

66. Occupation-related health issues
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

67. Lack of understanding from family and friends about your work
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

68. Making friends outside the job
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

69. Upholding a "higher image" in public
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

70. Negative comments from the public
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

71. Limitations to your social life (e.g., who your friends are, where you socialize)
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

72. Feeling like you are always on the job
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

73. Friends/family feel the effects of the stigma associated with you job
☐No stress at all ☐moderate stress ☐A lot of stress

Appendix F: Permission for CERQ Survey

From: service@datec.nl
Subject: CERQ for research approved
Date: October 30, 2022 at 9:50 AM
To: sdavenport1@pvamu.edu

Dear Shannon A. Davenport

Your request for the use of the CERQ has

been approved You can download the

CERQ here.

The password is--

Please only download the files you have permission for. The password changes regularly, don't wait too long for obtaining your downloads.

This mail has been automatically generated, please do

no reply directly. For more information mail to Nadia

Garnefski or Vivian Kraaij

Shannon A. Davenport

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CURRICULM VITAE

EDUCATION

- M.A. in Criminology, University of Houston –Clearlake Webster, Texas 2013
- B.S. Psychology, University of Houston-Downtown Houston, Texas 2010

EXPERIENCE

- Workplace: Teen and Police Service (TAPS Academy)
  Position: Researcher (January 2022-January 2023)
- Workplace: Prairie View A&M University (2017-2021)
  Position: Graduate Research Assistant, (2017-2019); Graduate Teaching Assistants (2019-2020); Courses Taught: Crime in America, and Corrections

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Jones, C., Penn, E.B. & Davenport S. A. Race and Social Distance Between Minority Youth and the Police: An Exploratory Analysis of the TAPS Academy.
- Gibson, C., Davenport, S.A., Fowler, T., Harris, C., Prudhomme, M., Whiting, S. & Horton-Simmons, S. Humanity and Society- Understanding the 2017 "Me Too" Movement's Timing

BOOK PUBLICATION

- Penn, E. B., & Davenport, S. A. (2021). Police and youth. Routledge.

WORK IN PROGRESS

- Davenport, S. A., Penn, E. B., & Guliex, L. The Community Safety Education Act of Texas: Training Police, Youth and Citizens What to do during a Traffic Stop (2023) manuscript.