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A Study of West Virginia State Police Academy Graduates' Perceptions of Their Degrees of Competence and the Relevance of the Marshall University Community and Technical College Police Science Curriculum

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**A STUDY OF WEST VIRGINIA STATE POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATES'
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR DEGREES OF COMPETENCE AND THE RELEVANCE
OF THE MARSHALL UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
POLICE SCIENCE CURRICULUM**

DISSERTATION

**Submitted to the
Graduate College
of
Marshall University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education**

**By
Walter E. Stroupe**

2003

Key Words: Higher Education, Police Training, Curriculum, Evaluation, Academy

ABSTRACT

A Study of West Virginia State Police Academy Graduate's Perceptions of Their Degrees of Competence and the Relevance of the Marshall University Community and Technical College Police Science Curriculum

This study investigated the perceptions of graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy regarding the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum as well as their perceived degrees of competence. The population of the study consisted of four selected cadet classes that were employed full time as West Virginia State Police Troopers in February 2003, N=153. Participants completed a survey questionnaire adapted from Brand & Peak (1995). Additionally, three open-ended questions were addressed by the survey. The survey measured the graduates' perception of the relevance of coursework and their degrees of competence. Data analyses suggested the graduates perceived the curriculum as relevant as well as perceiving themselves to be competent graduates.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my children, Amanda and Aaron. Their support and encouragement has made this endeavor possible.

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The completion of this doctoral program is the realization of a goal that could not have been accomplished without the help of my doctoral committee. My sincerest appreciation is extended to my each committee members as well as others who made this study a reality.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The success of any police organization depends upon the personnel who conduct its daily operation. In law enforcement, the pressure to change and modify police practices has increased due to highly publicized instances of police misconduct (Parsons, 1996). The advantages to proper training for police officers include lower liability costs, fewer lawsuits, recognition as professionals by the community, and better delivery of services to the public (Carter, Sapp & Stephens, 1989; Berg, 1994). Presently, civil liability due to failure to train has permeated all levels of public and private organizations (Pantel, 1996).

Traditionally, police training curricula focused on basic police subjects such as training in law, self-defense, firearms and physical training (Birzer, 1999). The police profession, however, also involves extensive contact between the community and the police. The interaction between the police officer and the community involves problem solving and the ability to use available resources to eliminate root causes of crime (Birzer, 1999). Preparation for these tasks is thought to be acquired through higher education (Birzer, 1999).

Kansas, Florida, North Carolina and Maryland are among the states currently using community colleges and four-year institutions of higher education to certify police officers (Etter, 1998). Wegener (1996) notes that higher education may, in fact, be the most cost efficient and viable option for training and certifying police officers.

The literature on higher education for police officers, however, is not conclusive on the necessity of higher education for police officers, although the value of a college education to effective work performance is accepted among human resource advocates (Truxillo & Bennett, 1998). Advocates of higher education for police have shown through research police officers

with baccalaureate degrees have greater sensitivity to citizens, better communication skills and display a more professional demeanor (Langworthy & Travis, 1999). Studies by Carter, Sapp and Stephens (1988), Dantzker (1993) and Bracci (1994) support higher education for police officers. Baro & Burlingame (1999) state police officers probably do not need four-year degrees. However, Truxillo & Bennett's (1998) research concerning higher education and police recommends more studies to determine its value.

In West Virginia, higher education is a central component of the West Virginia State Police Academy's (Academy) training curriculum. State Police cadet graduates of the Academy earn an associate's degree in police science from the Marshall University Community and Technical College.

This study proposes to evaluate the perceptions of the graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy regarding the higher education police science curriculum. Measuring the graduates' perception of the relevance of coursework and their degrees of competence regarding the tasks addressed by the curriculum will provide the first evaluation of a higher education police science curriculum used to train police officers in West Virginia.

Brief History of Police Training

There has been a long-standing relationship between higher education and the training of police officers. This relationship did not fully develop until more than a century after the first police agency was created in 1845 by the city of New York (Schmallegger, 1999). The concept of police officers' having baccalaureate degrees began during the 1930s, and by the 1960s and 1970s various commissions were recommending higher education for all police officers (Edwards, 1993).

Historically the police were established in Europe as citizen patrols, in which community members were obligated to patrol the streets (Calhoun, 1996). The community watch system evolved into the King's appointing a high sheriff to collect taxes and coordinate night patrols (Calhoun, 1996). Police employment was often a patronage job with officers trained on the job (Calhoun, 1996).

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel formed the first modern police department, the Metropolitan Police of London. Peel advocated a professionally trained police force and his police department became the model for police agencies in the United States. (Schmallegger, 1999).

European cities were the first to establish training for police officers. In 1883, the first training school for police officers was established in Paris. Training for police officers became standard practice across Europe as evidenced by a study conducted in 1915 by an American, Raymond Fosdick. Examining all police departments in Europe, Fosdick published *European Police Systems*. Fosdick (1920) described European police departments as more professional and better trained than police departments in the United States where little initiative was taken toward implementing formal police training.

In 1906, the Pennsylvania State Police became the first American police agency to offer consistent police training. The Detroit Police Department began training their officers in 1911, followed by the New York State Police in 1917. In 1929, the first higher education classes were offered to police officers at the University of Chicago (Calhoun, 1996).

August Vollmer, Chief of Police in Berkeley, California from 1905 to 1932, was the first police administrator to propose that all police officers have college degrees. During his tenure as Chief of Police, Berkeley police officers received 312 hours of instruction in courses such as

criminal law and procedures, police psychiatry, criminal identification, police organization, first aid, photography, and criminal evidence (Schmallegger, 1999).

In 1931, the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, commonly known as the Wickersham Commission, recognized the need for increased educational and training standards for police officers and insisted all police officers should have a college degree. The status of police training in the United States was exemplified by testimony of police administrators. One former police chief testified that if one knows the Ten Commandments and sees somebody violating one of those, he can be pretty sure a law is being violated (National Commission, 1931).

In 1927, formal training for federal agents began. The Intelligence Division of the Internal Revenue Service began offering a two-week training course to new agents covering basic principles of enforcement and criminal investigations. In 1928, The Federal Bureau of Investigation began a two-month, on-the-job training program. In 1935, the FBI opened their first training facility, the National Academy Program, a forerunner of its National Academy. The training consisted of a twelve-week course in law enforcement for its agents and local police forces (Calhoun, 1996).

Beginning of Standard Training and Education for Police

During the 1940s and 1950s city, county and state police agencies began to implement various forms of training. The majority of police officers employed between World War II and the 1970s were military veterans. The majority of police applicants were in their twenties and possessed a high school or equivalency diploma. Very few police officers possessed college degrees (Varricchio, 1998).

During the 1950s, to meet the needs of police training, a Peace Officers Standards

and Training Commission (POST), was established by the state of New York. California then established a voluntary system of POST. These POST commissions were established to enhance education and ethics for police officers (Schmallegger, 1997). These goals were to be obtained by requiring police officers to meet minimum entry standards for competency and ethical behavior.

The POST Commissions recommended minimum hiring standards, reading level standards, in-service refresher training, and mandatory training standards for all law enforcement agencies. POST standards were voluntary, not a requirement. In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice recommended each state establish a POST Commission. (IADLEST, 1998). By 1981, all states had established POST Commissions (Linkins, 1995).

Higher Education for Police Officers

During the 1960s, reaction to police brutality during the civil rights movement led to a public demand for improvement in the quality of law enforcement in the United States. In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (The President's Commission) issued its *Task Force Report: The Police, (1967)*.

This report acknowledged the task of law enforcement as being more demanding than any other profession. The police officer's job is difficult and complex involving the task of regulating human behavior, which, in a democratic society is difficult. To control behavior, police officers must rely not only on their physical ability, but also on their intellectual ability. "The ultimate aim of all police departments should be that personnel with law enforcement powers have baccalaureate degrees" (1967, p.109)

The President's Commission sought to correct police misconduct and improve

professionalism by advancing education requirements for police officers. To promote higher education in law enforcement, the 1973 National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals advocated that by 1978 every police officer possess at least two years of college, and that by 1982 all police officers acquire baccalaureate degrees as a prerequisite for employment in law enforcement. This goal was considered an ultimate, but not an immediate one.

Despite recommendations from various government commissions, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1997) reported that only one percent of local law enforcement agencies require police officers to have four-year degrees (1997). Reaves & Smith (1995) reported that 86% of state police agencies have educational qualifications below an associate's degree.

Research Studies of Higher Education for Police

Carter, Sapp and Stephens (1988) studied the effects of higher education on police performance, reaching the conclusions that police officers with higher education received fewer complaints from citizens, used fewer sick days, were less likely to be assaulted on the job, and presented fewer discipline problems.

A study conducted by Dantzker (1993) examined the relationship between higher education and police job satisfaction, studying 535 sworn police officers from five police agencies in Illinois, Texas and California. Dantzker's study concluded that the higher the education level of the police officer, the higher the job satisfaction.

Bracci (1994) stated police officers must have a broad based education to maintain professionalism in law enforcement, and advocated critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and effective verbal and written communication skills in police training. Varricchio (1998) agreed, stating the experience of police departments nationwide has seen the advantages of higher

education for police. Police officers with higher education have an enhanced general knowledge and better problem solving skills (Varricchio, 1998).

A ten-year study conducted by Truxillo & Bennett (1998) specifically examined police job performance and higher education, showing a statistical relationship between higher educated officers regarding promotion and supervisory ratings of job knowledge, but an inconsistent statistical relationship with measures of disciplinary action. The authors concluded that higher education is relevant to many aspects of police work, but should not be assumed to predict all areas of job performance, and recommended further studies to determine the value of higher education relative to other predictors of job performance.

Advocates of higher education for police have shown that police officers with baccalaureate degrees have greater sensitivity to citizens, better communication skills and display a more professional demeanor (Langworthy & Travis, 1999). Further, they confirmed the findings of earlier studies that indicated that police officers with a higher education background would be expected to have a better job perspective and perform more effectively (Langworthy & Travis, 1999).

Police Training Curricula Studies

During the 1970s and 1980s police training curricula were designed and implemented largely by subjective judgment as opposed to empirical studies (Ness, 1991). Talley (1984) stated one reason for making subjective curriculum changes in a piecemeal fashion was the absence of an objective systematic curriculum evaluation instrument designed to assess the police occupations. A number of studies have been conducted since that time which attempted to address the efficiency of police training curricula.

Tally (1984) conducted a study of the Oakland Basic Police Academy curriculum, designed to identify and prioritize curricular deficiencies to improve basic training. Most officers responded that in general, the training prepared them to perform patrol tasks from “quite well” to “very well.” On rating individual tasks, however, graduates reported the training was less than effective to prepare them adequately for a significant portion of the job tasks reported.

In 1988, Ness conducted a study of Illinois police recruits to assess the value of the police-training program. The study results indicated that while 90% of the recruits perceived their training as adequate, an examination of individual courses revealed the recruits rated the police training as less than adequate for almost half of the 305 job tasks. An empirical study to validate the police-training curriculum conducted by Koroloff (1989) indicated that police academy performance does not predict whether or not a police officer will be identified as a standout officer on the job.

Brand & Peak (1995) developed a survey instrument to determine the usefulness and comprehension of the police training at the POST-certified academies in the state of Nevada. Surveying graduates of the police training academies, this study was conducted to evaluate and identify deficiencies of the training program. The study results indicated that overall, officers responded that the training programs prepared them to perform their jobs within a range of “average” to “quite well.”

Marion’s 1998 study of the content of academy training in Ohio indicated that the recruits were receiving quality training within time and budgetary constraints, although the author noted elements of sexism and elitism in the conduct of the instructors. Marion noted instructors made obscene gestures and sexist comments, which were transmitted, to the recruits. A statewide assessment of recruit-training programs was also conducted on the South Dakota Law

Enforcement Training Basic Certification Course from 1996-1998. The respondents rated their training highest in criminal procedure and lowest in non-traditional classes such as domestic violence (Traut, Emmert, & Thom, 2000).

These studies suggest the importance of police training academies evaluating their curricula. Objective assessment helps identify strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum allowing training academies to make changes designed to more effectively train officers.

Problem Statement

Is the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceived by graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy to have been relevant while providing an adequate degree of competence enabling them to perform their duties?

West Virginia has a need for competent professional police officers, employed by the state government. The West Virginia State Police require all state police recruit officers to attend and pass a 26-week residential academy program, after the completion of which all recruits are assigned to a Field Training Officer for an additional one-year of supervised training. This study proposes to examine whether the higher education curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy was relevant and provided officers with a degree of competence necessary to successfully perform their duties as uniformed State Police Troopers.

Four West Virginia State Police graduating classes of the Academy will be surveyed consisting of two graduating classes of the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum and two graduating classes of the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum. The Academy's higher education police science curriculum was altered in 1995 .

Both the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education curricula are as follows:

41st and 42 nd Cadet Class Curriculum	49 th and 50 th Cadet Class Curriculum
Communications I	Communications I
Technical communications	Communications II
First Responder	First Responder
General Psychology	(deleted in post-1995 curriculum)
Technical Math	Mathematics for Police Science
American State Government and Politics	(deleted in post-1995 curriculum)
Deviant Behavior	(deleted in post-1995 curriculum)
Introduction to Sociology	(deleted in post-1995 curriculum)
Computer Technology	Fundamentals of Computers
Law Enforcement Orientation	Law Enforcement Orientation
Police Defense Tactics	Police Defense Tactics
Psychology for Law Enforcement	(deleted in post-1995 curriculum)
Patrol Operations & Procedures	Patrol Operations & Procedures
Police Arsenal & Weapons	Police Arsenal & Weapons
Fundamentals of Criminal Law	Fundamentals of Criminal Law
Fundamentals of Criminal Investigation	Fundamentals of Criminal Investigation
Police Organization/Administration	Police Organization/Administration
Police Role in Crime & Delinquency	Police Role in Crime & Delinquency
Criminal Evidence & Procedure	Criminal Evidence & Procedure
Police/Community Relations	Police/Community Relations
Introduction to Criminalistics	Introduction to Criminalistics

Police Records & Reports

Police Records & Reports

Traffic Administration/Enforcement

Traffic Administration/Enforcement

Criminal Law Litigation

Internship

Internship

The alteration of the higher education curriculum from 1994 to 1995 consisted of the deletion of four classes i.e., (psychology, government, deviant behavior and (sociology) and the addition of one i.e., (criminal law litigation).

The hypothesis is as follows: The pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police Science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy is relevant and prepares competent graduates enabling them to perform their duties as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant?
- 2) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance?
- 3) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant?
- 4) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance?

- 5) Does age have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 6) Does sex have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 7) Does level of education have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 8) Does prior military experience have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 9) Does prior police experience have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?

Operational Definitions

For the purposes of the study, the following operational definitions are used.

1. Relevance – The perceptions of graduates of four cadet programs of the West Virginia State Police Cadet Training Program of the relationship between the West Virginia State Police Academy’s higher education police science curriculum, and their job responsibilities measured by their response scores on the curriculum inventory survey adapted from the survey developed by Brand & Peak (1995). Relevance is defined as pertinent, fitting, closely akin to the subject as to reinforce it (American Heritage Dictionary, 1995).
2. Competence – The perceptions of graduates of four cadet programs of the West Virginia State Police Cadet Training Program of their competence as it results from the West Virginia State Police Academy’s higher education police science curriculum, measured by their response scores on the curriculum inventory survey adapted from the survey developed by Brand & Peak (1995). Competence is defined as the quality or condition of being qualified (American Heritage Dictionary, 1995).
3. West Virginia State Police Cadet Training Program – 26-week residential state police training program.
4. West Virginia State Police Cadet Training Curriculum – The pre-1995 and post-1995 Marshall University Community and Technical College Associate Degree of Police Science Curriculum.
5. West Virginia State Police Cadet – Probationary member of the West Virginia State Police attending the 26-week residential state police cadet-training program.
6. Graduate of the West Virginia State Police Academy – Full-time sworn uniformed member of the West Virginia State Police who performs basic police services in

accordance with the mission, goal and objectives of the West Virginia State Police and in compliance with governing federal and state laws.

7. Age – Current age in years of the West Virginia State Police Trooper as reported on the demographic component of the curriculum survey instrument.
8. Sex – Male or Female, as reported on the as reported on the demographic component of the curriculum survey instrument.
9. Level of education – Number of higher education hours and/or degrees, as reported on the level of higher education component of the survey instrument.
10. Prior Military Experience – Number of years of military service as reported on the prior military component of the survey instrument.
11. Prior Police experience – Previous years of employment as a police officer before employment with the West Virginia State Police, as reported on the prior police experience component of the curriculum survey instrument.

The independent variables defined in this study will be the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the Academy and the post-1995 Academy higher education police science curriculum. The dependent variables will be the perceptions of the West Virginia State Police graduates of the 41st, 42nd, 49th and 50th cadet recruit classes regarding the relevance of the West Virginia State Police Academy's higher education police science curriculum and the extent to which it prepared them to become competent officers. The demographic variables will include age, sex, level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience of the graduates.

West Virginia State Police Training

At the West Virginia State Police Academy, Marshall University's Community and Technical College police science curriculum is used as the foundation for current law enforcement training. The current higher education police science curriculum includes forty-eight criminal justice course hours and seventeen hours of general education classes.

To successfully complete the associate degree program, graduates of the Academy must complete a one-year probationary period working as a full-time uniformed West Virginia Trooper. The Academy is unique as being the only academy in the United States in which a two-year degree is earned during training and granted upon completion of a one-year probationary period.

A study of the higher education curriculum at the Academy is important for several reasons. The Academy is statutorily required to train every state police officer in the state of West Virginia (15-2-3, West Virginia Code, 2001) as well as training every municipal and county police officer. The current Academy curriculum was last changed in 1995. There has been no formal evaluation study to determine the extent to which the Academy's higher education police science curriculum is adequate to train officers to perform their uniformed duties.

Second, while the Academy has incorporated the associate degree program into the training process, there has been no evaluation to discern whether the higher education curriculum is superior to the previous system. This study is being conducted to determine the perceived relevance of the post-1995 and the pre-1995 curricula in preparing the recruits to perform their duties in a competent fashion. This study will use an adaptation of a survey instrument

previously developed and validated by the State of Nevada POST commission to measure the academy's graduates' perception of the curricula.

The survey evaluation instrument was developed by Peak & Brand (1995) to measure two aspects of the curriculum. The Nevada survey measured the students' comprehension and the usefulness of each class. This survey was examined by Nevada academy staff members for face and content validity prior to distribution. A Cronbach alpha test was administered to determine internal consistency to measure the reliability of the survey instrument. The alpha value was determined to be 0.9591 (Brand & Peak, 1995).

The Peak & Brand (1995) survey evaluation instrument will be adapted to determine the perceived relevance of the higher education curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as well as the perceived degree of competence of the graduates. Face Validity will be sought through a pilot test of the adapted survey.

Significance of the Study

No evaluation of the training curriculum at the Academy has been conducted, despite the fact that the current curriculum is seven years old. The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) (2002) recommend the curriculum be updated and evaluated at least every five years.

The findings from this study will help to assess the relevance of the two-year associate degree program to the Academy curriculum. Since 1985, graduates of the academy have received an associate's degree upon completion of their internships (Young, 1988). If the findings support the higher education curriculum, administrators can justify the cost of Academy training and possibly expand cooperative programs with four-year universities and colleges allowing officers to obtain baccalaureate degrees. By identifying classes that are related to

improved job performance and successful completion of a probationary period, administrators can have confidence that the recently trained graduates of the academy will perform their duties satisfactorily.

Second, the empirical data can identify ineffective areas of the curriculum, which are not relevant to meeting student needs. Such data could result in the elimination or revision of course work considered irrelevant, thus strengthening the curriculum. Additionally, institutions of higher education currently offering criminal justice programs would have access to data indicating which classes may be beneficial to students majoring in police science who are seeking careers as police officers. These data could also prove useful to community colleges that currently certify police officers in certain states, and to other training academies by identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses in the similar curricula.

Third, this study will be applicable to the Academy's basic training curriculum. The Academy trains and certifies all municipal and county police officers in the State of West Virginia in a 15-week program. The Academy's curriculum for state police recruits contains identical core classes required for certification in the basic training program. This study would allow the results of this study to be generalized to the basic police officer training program.

Fourth, this study will add to the body of knowledge of police training. The literature is contradictory on the necessity of police officers' acquiring a college degrees and the relevancy of a college degree to police practice. This study will reflect the current officers' view of the relevance of incorporating the two-year degree program into police training.

Nationwide there is much diversity in police training. Different police agencies have different training standards and offer varying numbers of hours for the same courses. This study

will enable police trainers to better understand what classes are valuable in training police officers.

By examining the educational variables of the students, this study can confront the issue of the possible need to examine the acceptance of higher education transfer hours for related criminal justice hours completed at a two or four-year institution of higher education. Currently, if a state police recruit has a four-year degree in criminal justice, no higher education hours are transferable for Academy purposes. The lack of transferable course hours could result in duplication of credit hours and degrees.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, this study would be limited to West Virginia. Generalizability to other police agencies is limited as police training curricula vary in course content and length of study, and different states have varying beliefs as to training and certification standards, including variations in requirements, physical training and number of hours in each subject.

Second, the differences in police agency functions limit the generalizability of to other police training academies. Some state police agencies are strictly highway patrol agencies, which train their officers on traffic enforcement, while other state police agencies focus on training involving investigation and traffic enforcement.

Third, the method of training would limit the generalizability of this study. Training academies may be full stress academies, modified stress academies or no stress academies. Additionally some training academies are residential, while others operate daily on an eight-hour basis only in which students leave at the end of the day. This study will focus on the curriculum and will not examine the methodological or residential issues.

Fourth, this study will not examine the quality or education level of the instructors. It should be noted that the majority of instructors who teach at the academy are unpaid volunteers. The only paid instructors are employed by Marshall University.

Fifth, this study omits evaluation of in-service training. However, if the data from this study suggest the current curriculum was not effective in training police recruits, the data could be used to retrain the graduates during in-service sessions.

Sixth, this study will not gather data from supervisors or field training officers. Police supervisory and field training officers ratings could be beneficial in determining student needs, and could constitute a valuable area for additional research.

Seventh, the limitations of the survey instrument are several. The survey instrument was adapted from a previous survey instrument developed by Brand & Peak (1995). While the reliability of the original instrument was confirmed in measuring officer perceptions of the curriculum by Talley (1984) and by Brand & Peak (1995), the reliability and validity of the adapted survey are unconfirmed. A pilot test has been completed by the graduates of the 114th Basic Training class the results of which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Eighth, this study is subjective, not empirical. There will be no manipulation of the independent variable and no random sample will be used. Additional subjective limitations involve the participants' willingness to participate, their personal perspectives and their physical and emotional states.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to attempt to answer two questions regarding the higher education police science curriculum of the Academy. First, is the Academy's curriculum

relevant police practice? Second, is the Academy's higher education police science curriculum preparing competent graduates?

The need for proper police training in a complex legal and social environment is imperative. The literature strongly recommends a systematic analysis of police training curricula to ensure effective police training.

The data from this study have several applications. This study will apply to the curriculum of the West Virginia State Police in determining training needs of state police recruit classes. Data obtained from the demographic variables can also apply to employment and recruitment standards involving the age, sex, educational levels of applicants, prior military experience and prior police experience.

Statistically identifying the correlation of the perceptions of graduates to the training academy's higher education curriculum can inform a decision concerning the transfer of previously earned higher education credit hours and the acceptance of previously earned certification hours from the basic training program of the Academy. Also, data from this study can be applied to police training curricula used by institutions of higher education in other states that certify police officers.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Traditional Police Training

The purpose of police training has been to prepare police officers to perform their jobs (Ness, 1991). McGreedy (1983) described most traditional police training as being based on three precepts: police training follows a military training model; police training is a punishment centered experience in which trainees must prove themselves; and police training helps screen out trainees who are not up to a particular standard.

The military model organization of police was first adopted in the early 1900s to eliminate graft, corruption and assign responsibility for discretionary tasks performed by police officers (Patterson, 1991). In addition, a military structure provided the internal control and discipline considered essential to coordinate police officers during emergencies while allowing for accountability of individual action and behavior (Patterson, 1991).

Post (1992) believed police recruit training evolved naturally from the military model as some police agencies originated as state militias that were staffed by military personnel. Police agencies recruited former military personnel for police agencies because they would be more adaptable to the paramilitary organization of police agencies (Post, 1992).

The classic military training model for police recruits was adopted to deliberately induce high levels of nonspecific stress. Stress was defined as “the application of pressure on recruits, singularly or in groups, for the sole purpose of generating a response to that pressure (Post, 1991 p. 20).”

Post (1991) defined classic stress training as punishment by verbal harassment, criticism and physical activity in which group cohesiveness would develop that prepared recruits for

situations they would encounter in the police profession (Post, 1991). The traditional method of teaching police recruits consisted of the classroom lecture delivered in a uniform manner, although this method of instruction was not conducive to soliciting trainee input (Apa & Jurkanin, 1990).

During the 1970s and 1980s police agencies began to question the effectiveness of classic stress training. Earle (1973) conducted one of the first studies that compared stress trained recruits with non-stress trained recruits. The results of this study determined non-stress trained recruits displayed a higher level of performance proficiency and higher level of job satisfaction (Earle, 1973). Violanti (1993) also examined the high stress police training model and suggested high stress training environments for police recruits led to maladaptive coping strategies, such as emotionally distancing and escape avoidance responses.

Police Training Standards

The professionalization of the police was first attempted through standardized personnel selection and training (Apa & Jurkanin, 1990). Furthermore, the problem of professionalism was evidenced by the fragmented jurisdictions of police and the problem of ensuring all police agencies were properly selecting and training personnel (Apa & Jurkanin, 1990).

During the 1950s, the Peace Officers Standards Training Commission (POST) was established to enhance education and ethics for police officers (Schmallegger, 1997). In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended every state establish a POST Commission, a goal that was obtained in 1981 by the establishment of POST Commissions in all states (Linkins, 1995). The responsibilities of the various state Post Commissions are defined as follows.

- 1) Establish minimum selection standards relating to the educational, mental, moral and physical fitness to govern the selection of police officers.
- 2) Establish mandatory minimum training standards, both recruit and in-service, with the POST Commission having authority to determine and approve curricula, identify required preparation for instructors and approve facilities acceptable for police training.
- 3) Certify police officers that have acquired different levels of education, training and experience necessary to adequately perform police duties.

Conduct surveys of the administration and operation of police departments and assist governmental units in the implementation of recommendations.
- 4) Conduct studies and make recommendations concerning means by which participating police agencies can consolidate resources.
- 5) Conduct and stimulate research by public and private agencies to improve police administration and law enforcement.
- 6) Make inquiries and inspections as may be necessary to determine whether or not the standards established in the regulations are being adhered to.
- 7) Provide such financial aid as may be authorized by the legislature to participating governmental units (Apa & Jurkanin, 1990).

Historically the job and role of the police have been defined as managing conflict and suppressing crime (1968), traditional police training was designed to train police officers in these two roles. During the 1960s, however, reaction to police brutality led to a public demand for improvement in the quality of law enforcement (Varricchio, 1998).

Police training did not alter until research studies indicated that the role of the police officers was changing from the perspective of traditional law enforcement, to the role of

providing service. In 1983, the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducted research involving police patrol activity, demonstrating that police officers spend only 10 percent of their patrol activity on criminal related matters, while the remaining 90 percent of police patrol activity was spent on service-related calls. In the latest study, Mayhill, Barker & Hunter (1995) found similar results, indicating that law enforcement tasks completed by police officers occupy only a small portion of the police officer's time.

Additionally, the traditional role of police officers was affected by court decisions. Court decisions involving arrests, searches, seizure, interrogation and evidence collection have resulted in changing police procedures in administering these tasks (Traut, Feimer, Emmert & Thom, 2000).

Another factor that altered the traditional police role involved social issues, including domestic violence, juvenile crime, crime prevention and community policing, all of which resulted in police officers' being trained for more diverse functions (Traut, et al., 2000). The role of police officers has changed from relying primarily on their physical ability to realizing intellectual skills, such as communication ability and problem solving is essential. (IADIEST, 1998).

In 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals advocated that every police officer possess a four-year degree as a prerequisite for employment in law enforcement (Varricchio, 1998). This recommendation provided the impetus toward requiring the police officer to have more formal education.

Research Studies of Higher Education for Police

The proposal of higher education degrees for police officers actually originated in 1931 with the Wickersham Commission as an attempt to correct perceived police misconduct (Baro &

Burlingame, 1999). The recommendation of higher education for police officers also involved issues of professionalism and performance (Kappeler, Sapp & Carter, 1992). Bracci (1994) stated police officers should have a broad based education and contended police training should incorporate critical thinking, problem solving skills, and effective verbal and written communication skills. Varricchio (1998) concurred, stating the experience of police departments nationwide has confirmed the advantages of higher education for police.

Studies conducted on police officers with higher education degrees have not completely supported the idea that higher education is relevant for police officers. The need for officers to have higher education degrees is based on the assumption that higher education is an essential feature of police professionalism (Baro & Burglingame, 1999).

For example, Carter, Sapp & Stephens (1988) found a positive relationship between complaints and training, with fewer complaints generated against police officers with two years or more higher education. It should be noted, however, all subjects in this study had at least two years of higher education. Worden (1990) who studied citizen satisfaction with police performance, reported that citizens were slightly less satisfied with the courtesy of officers who possessed a higher education degree. The differences were determined on a small sample population and were not found to be statistically significant.

In 1992, Kappeler, Sapp & Carter conducted a study to examine the relationship between higher education, citizen complaints and departmental rule violations. The study was conducted on 120 full-time sworn police officers employed during a five-year period of a medium-sized municipal police department (Kappeler et al., 1992).

Kappeler et al. (1992) classified complaints, coded by either citizen or departments, unfounded or undetermined. Citizen initiated complaints included improper use of deadly force;

assault; excessive force; brandishing a weapon; discharging firearms; intoxication; illegal searches; misuse of office; failure to take a report; giving false statements or making false report; rudeness; improper operation of vehicles; failure to act; and littering (Kappeler et al., 1992).

Department generated complaints included conduct unbecoming an officer; improper procedures; failure to supervise; inattention to duty; sleeping on duty; intoxication; losing equipment or evidence; insubordination; forgery; misuse of telephone; improper radio procedure; misplacing firearms; officer arrests; improper vehicle operation; and failure to report for duty (Kappeler et al., 1992). During this five-year study there were 423 complaints, 92 (22%) of which were determined as founded. Of the founded complaints, 72 % (66) were citizen-initiated, while 28 % (26) were agency generated (Kappeler et al., 1992).

Kappeler et al. (1992) observed a relationship between founded complaints and level of education. Officers without college degrees generated approximately 42 percent of the total founded complaints, while accounting for approximately 29 percent of the total officer population of this particular department. Kappeler et al. (1992) noted police officers with higher education degrees had significantly fewer founded citizen initiated complaints.

The most common complaint noted by Kappeler et al. (1992) was rudeness. Officers who had college degrees had fewer founded citizen-initiated complaints for rudeness. Although officers with college degrees had fewer citizen-initiated complaints and fewer founded complaints for rudeness, however, they did not have significantly fewer department-generated complaints for violation of agency rules and procedures. The results of the study reported no statistically significant differences regarding the variables of sex, race, age, years of experience, rank and assignment (Kappeler et al., 1991).

Dantzker (1993) examined the relationship between higher education and police job satisfaction. The population of this study was 535 sworn police officers employed from five police agencies in Illinois, Texas, and California. The respondents were asked to identify on a 5-point Likert scale their overall job satisfaction. The scale ranged from 1, “extremely dissatisfied” to 5, “extremely satisfied.”

Dantzker (1993) indicated the results of this study revealed police officers with a higher education degree and up to five years experience had a higher job satisfaction than officers who did not have a post-secondary degree. However, the results reported police officers with college degrees and over five years had the least job satisfaction (Dantzker, 1993).

In 1998, Truxillo & Bennett conducted a ten-year study of police job performance and higher education and investigated 84 police officers over a 10-year period regarding promotion, supervisory ratings of job knowledge and disciplinary action. Statistically significant correlations were found between levels of education and promotions and between education and supervisory rating of job knowledge. However, the results revealed an inconsistent statistical relationship regarding measures of disciplinary actions (Truxillo & Bennett, 1998).

Truxillo & Bennett (1998) concluded that higher education is relevant to many aspects of police work, but should not be assumed to predict all areas of job performance. The authors recommended further studies to determine the value of higher education relative to other predictors of job performance.

Langworthy & Travis (1999) supported the study of Kappeler et al (1992) and reported that police officers with baccalaureate degrees have greater sensitivity to citizens, better communication skills and displayed a more professional demeanor.

Police Training Curricula Studies

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s police-training curricula became an area of study and evaluation. Saunders (1970) and Apa & Jurkanin (1987) commented that police training had not met the needs of police recruits and failed to prepare them for police duty.

While the format, methods and content of police training are important components to the training of police officers, Traut et al. (2000) argue that the key component is the evaluation of the programs' success. The fundamental question regarding evaluation is whether the training has enhanced the individual's ability to carry out the activities demanded by his or her job (Marsh & Gorsskopf, 1991).

During the 1970s and 1980s a job analysis method was developed and tested by the armed forces of the United States and Canada. The Task Inventory Survey System (TISS) is an analytical method which has demonstrated a high degree of validity and utility in analyzing jobs for multiple purposes.

The Illinois Local Government Law Enforcement Officers Training Board (1981) used the TISS method to identify which police tasks were essential to successful performance of entry-level officers and the findings were used to develop a job-related basic police curriculum. The original survey listed 649 tasks and the conclusions of this study identified 305 police job-tasks, which were then divided into twenty-five task training groups.

Talley (1984) suggested the 1970s police training curricula were developed largely through subjective judgment in a piecemeal fashion. The reason for the subjective curricula was the lack of a comprehensive and systematic curriculum evaluation instrument.

Talley (1984) conducted one of the first such systematic curriculum evaluations of the Oakland (Michigan) Police Department. The purpose of the study was to comprehensively

evaluate the basic police-training program by identifying and rank ordering curriculum deficiencies to facilitate a police training program assessment. The results of the study provided evidence that many areas of the Oakland Police Department training program was determined to be positive. The areas of police training program that were rated substandard included crime scene searches, arrest and detention, driving under the influence and crime prevention. In addition, this study resulted in the completion of a task inventory, which was used as a follow-up instrument and was designed to collect task-training ratings to evaluate how effectively the recruit training prepared officers to perform entry-level police tasks.

In 1991, Ness used the TISS method to conduct a study. The population of this study consisted of all graduates of the five certified Illinois training academies i.e., (Police Training Institute, Chicago Police Academy, Cook County Sheriff's Police Academy, Illinois State Police Academy, and Belleville Area College Academy) between January 1, 1986 and June 10, 1987. This ensured that the officers had a minimum of six months of police experience and had passed the certification examination.

A population of 1,036 police officers was eligible for participation in the study. A stratified random sample resulted in a sample size of 317 officers. Of the sample size, 210 returned the surveys for a return rate of 60.6 percent (Ness, 1991).

Ness (1991) reported the Illinois Basic Training Validation Project (1981) developed the 305 job tasks listed in the survey instrument, divided into 25 task-training groups. Ratings were made on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "inadequate" to "extremely adequate." The collected data were analyzed to determine effectiveness in preparing recruits to perform entry-level job task.

The results of the study indicated 51% of the graduates evaluated the training as adequate, while 48% evaluated the training as somewhat inadequate. Two tasks received the lowest rating of “inadequate,” and two tasks received the rating of “more than adequate.” No individual task received an “extremely adequate” rating (Ness, 1991).

Of the twenty-five task training groups, Ness (1991) reported only 10 (40 percent) obtained an “adequate” rating, whereas 15 task groups (60 percent) received a “somewhat inadequate” rating. The statistical results concluded no correlation between race and sex regarding the evaluation of the training. Furthermore, the results determined that age was negatively associated with some training items, and trainees with more education gave higher rankings of nearly every task evaluated (Ness, 1991).

In 1995, Brand & Peak conducted a study to examine several questions regarding basic police training in the state of Nevada. The areas addressed were these: Is the academy furnishing proper training to police recruits? How should it be determined whether or not the academy curriculum is adequate for entry-level officers? Is the curriculum comprehensible and useful to new officers?

The sample population for this study consisted of male and female graduates of the four state-certified basic academies of the state of Nevada between July, 1990 and July, 1992. All respondents had a minimum of six months of actual police experience (Brand & Peak, 1995).

Brand & Peak (1995) developed a survey instrument containing 48 questions, which was examined by academy staff members for content validity. The instrument also contained space for written comments for the following questions:

- 1) Did the mandated curriculum effectively prepare the recruits to adequately perform important entry-level responsibilities?

- 2) Which job tasks addressed by the curriculum needed additional attention?
- 3) What recommendations could be suggested by academy graduates for curriculum improvements to increase training program effectiveness?

The survey instrument used a five-point Likert scale to measure usefulness and comprehensiveness of training. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS-X and the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, ANOVA and the Scheffe Test for within group comparisons were calculated. The alpha value was determined to be 0.9591 (Brand & Peak, 1995).

The results of the study indicated that overall, the training programs prepared officers to perform their jobs within a range of “average” to “quite well.” The authors recommended replication of this study (Brand & Peak, 1995), although a search of the literature indicated this study has not been replicated.

In 1998, Marion examined police academy training at University Academy, one of the state-accredited Ohio Peace Officer’s Training Academies. This study was conducted internally as the author attended the academy under the status of recruit. Marion (1995) reported that this academy provided information and skills training required to prepare recruits to be police officers.

Deficiencies in the program included the inability to transmit proper attitudes to the recruits (Marion, 1998), as the author noted an element of sexism and elitism from some of the instructors. Marion (1998) explained instructors made obscene gestures and comments, comments regarding nagging wives and girlfriends, ribald jokes, and boasts of sexual encounters. Self defense instructors did not reprimand recruits for making comments regarding female wrestling or Jell-O wrestling, and Marion further noted male students commented on women in

the class and their inability to do the job, inability to subdue or subject, or shoot a weapon like a man.

Marion (1998) stated the sexism, comments and gestures on part of the instructors needed to be banned from the classroom if police are to be seen as professional. These attitudes will be carried over to the police departments and into the work environment (Marion, 1998).

Traut, Feimer, Emmert & Thom (2000) conducted a study to evaluate the South Dakota law enforcement curriculum. The study investigated whether the state training program provided entry-level law enforcement officers with adequate training to carry out all of the responsibilities of their jobs. The South Dakota training program is an eight-week course and the brevity of the program was reported to exacerbate the difficulty of providing the trainees with all the necessary skills and knowledge. Therefore, one part of the study was to assess satisfaction with the program (Traut, et al., 2000).

The population consisted of 272 graduates of the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training Center from the previous three years. The population was administered a survey containing 144 curriculum items, of which 76 core task items were examined (Traut, et al., 2000).

The surveyed population was asked to whether their training and instruction adequately prepared them to perform necessary tasks in 12 specific areas of law enforcement, which were classified into three broad categories: criminal procedure, traffic control and nontraditional issues. The non-traditional issues were juvenile proceeding, domestic abuse, victims' rights, crime prevention and community service. The five possible responses to the each survey question were strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree that the training is adequate (Traut, et al., 2000). Traut et al. (2000) explained the study results in the criminal

procedures areas indicated the trainees were most satisfied with firearms training and least satisfied with training in interrogation. Regarding traffic training, two-thirds believed training in traffic stops, pursuits and DUI was adequate. In the non-traditional area of training, only 50.5% rated training as adequate.

Contemporary Police Training

To train police officers for the contemporary police role, the format, method and content of subjects must be changed (Traut & Feimer, 2000, Brand & Peak, 1995, Ness, 1991). These changes are necessary for police officers to remain proficient in their job skills, while also being trained for the service aspect of the police role. The advantages of proper training for police officers include lower liability costs, fewer lawsuits and recognition as professionals by the community (Falzarano, 1999).

De la Garde & Arney (1998) reported a contemporary change in the format of police training as well, exemplified by extended training time at academies and the increased time allotted for in-service training. The extended training time is needed to supply officers with the most updated material and to be in compliance with mandatory state regulations regarding length of training.

Traditional police training consisted mostly of the lecture method. Bizer & Tannehill (1999), however, noted the lecture method of police training is not conducive to participation or to the development of decision-making skills, and Gaines, Southerland & Angell (1991) advocated police officers should be actively engaged in training in order for effective learning to occur. Contemporary police training involves role-playing, case studies and technology (Wilson, 1992).

The content of contemporary police training has changed from the traditional curriculum, with the most recent court decisions, technological advances, tactical developments, communication and decision-making skills now included in police training (Birzer & Tannehill, 1999). Child protection, domestic violence and victim assistance are content areas that should also be included in police training. Police training is further enhanced by providing training in written and verbal communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and public relations skills (Birzer & Tannehill, 1999).

Demands on police are escalating and accountability for police methods and the public's concern for the quality of police training are increasing as well. It is important for police training to be assessed to determine the propriety, adequacy, comprehension and the utility of the curriculum (Brand & Peak, 1995).

West Virginia State Police Academy Training

In 1977, the West Virginia State Police Academy, in conjunction with the Community and Technical College of Marshall University, initiated a general education/technical law enforcement officer education program (Young, 1988). The first phase of the program was development of the curriculum. Police executives, members of the judiciary and police science/criminal justice instructors structured the curriculum to be the equivalent of the police science curriculum of the Marshall's community college police science curriculum (Young, 1988).

Marshall University's administration, with the approval of the State board of Regents, approved the number of credit hours to be awarded graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy Cadet Trooper Program (Young, 1988). From 1977-1984, six cadet classes conducted under the Police Science Program received 51 hours of higher education credit hours for 24

weeks of police training. These credit hours could be applied towards meeting requirements for either an associate's degree or the Board of Regents' Bachelor of Arts degree (Young, 1988).

In 1984, the cadet-training program was extended to 30 weeks with the inclusion of general education classes. The additional six weeks allowed for completion of all course work required for the police science associates' degree, excluding the internship, which would be completed during the employee's one-year probationary period (Young, 1988). In May, 1985, Marshall University conferred the first associate of applied science degrees to members of the West Virginia State Police Academy's 36th Cadet Trooper Class (Young, 1988). Since that time, 13 additional cadet classes have graduated earning associate degrees.

In 1995, the academy altered the curriculum to its present format. There has been no evaluation of either the past or present curriculum. This study proposes to evaluate the perceptions of the graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy regarding the relevance of coursework and their degrees of competence regarding the tasks addressed by the curriculum.

Summary

The literature review for this study has identified two basic areas of evaluation for police training. The first area of study involves the relevance of higher education for police. In 1988, Carter, Sapp & Stephens reported a positive relationship between the number of complaints against police officers and the completion of two or more years higher education. This study was biased, however, because all the subjects of the study had completed at least two years of higher education. Another study, conducted by Worden (1990), reported citizens were less satisfied with police performance and the courtesy of officers with higher education.

Kappeler, Sapp & Carter (1992) examined the relationship between higher education, citizen complaints and departmental violations. The results indicated officers with higher

education had significantly fewer citizen complaints that were substantiated, but did have more department-generated complaints.

Dantzker (1993) examined the relationship between higher education and police job satisfaction, which indicated officers with a higher education degree, and fewer than five years experience had a higher job satisfaction. However, officers with higher education degrees and over five years experience had the least job satisfaction.

In 1998, Truxillo & Bennett studied the relationship between higher education and job performance. Statistical correlations were found between education and promotions, and supervisory ratings of job knowledge. Langworthy & Travis (1999) reported police officers with higher education degrees had greater sensitivity to citizens, better communication skills and a more professional demeanor.

Studies examining higher education and police performance have resulted in contradictory findings concerning the assumption that higher education is relevant for police officers. Previous studies focused on the effects of higher education and its relations to job performance, job satisfaction, and complaints in an attempt to empirically justify higher education requirements for police officers. These studies involved participants who either obtained higher education prior to or obtained higher education after employment. This study will have a population in which every participant has at least a two-year degree that was obtained from the academy training.

The second area of study generated by the literature examined police training curricula and how competent the trainees perceived themselves subsequent to their training. The literature revealed that an objective method, the Task Inventory Survey System, to evaluate police training curricula was developed during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1984, Talley conducted one of the first curriculum evaluations. Studying the Oakland (Michigan) Police Department, Talley concluded that many areas of the training program were positive. Ness (1991) used the TISS method to evaluate graduates of five certified Illinois training academies. The results indicated 51% of graduates rated the training as adequate, while 48% rated the training as somewhat inadequate.

Brand & Peak (1995) evaluated the four-state certified academies of the state of Nevada and reported overall the training program prepared officers to perform their jobs within a range of “average” to “quite well.” Traut, Feimer, Emmert & Thom (2000) evaluated the South Dakota law enforcement training. The results indicated trainees were least satisfied with the non-traditional area of training.

By conducting an evaluation of the graduates’ perceptions’ of the higher education curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy, this study will measure their perceptions of the relevance of their coursework and their degrees of competence regarding the tasks addressed by the curriculum. The relevance and degree of competence provided by a higher education curriculum will provide useful data regarding the impact of higher education as part of the police-training curriculum.

Chapter III

Methods

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of four graduating cadet classes of the West Virginia State Police Academy concerning the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum as well as the degree of competence achieved by the students. This study will further determine the statistical significance, if any, of demographic variables on the perceptions of the graduates regarding the relevance of the academy curriculum and their degrees of competence. These variables are identified as level of education upon admission to the academy, prior military experience, prior police experience, age and sex.

This study replicates a similar study completed by Brand and Peak (1995), which examined the usefulness and comprehension of the Nevada Peace Officers Academy Training. This study will adapt the survey instrument used by Brand and Peak (1995) to measure the perceptions of four graduating cadet classes of the Nevada Peace Officers Academy curriculum.

Research Design

The research design utilized in this study is a one-shot case study and is non-experimental. A non-experimental research design is defined by Kerlinger (1986) as a systematic inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because the manifestations of the independent variable have already occurred. Also, there will be no random assignment of participants, as the entire population of the four graduating classes will be surveyed. This method compares the difference in two or more groups, without manipulation of the variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

The demographic characteristics of the survey will include age, sex, level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience. There will also be three open-ended questions addressed on the survey. The specific questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactorily complete your probationary period?
2. What recommendations would you make to improve the Academy curriculum?
3. What recommendations would you make to improve the Academy training?

Population and Sample

The population for this study will be active full-time sworn members of the graduating classes of the 41st, 42nd, 49th and 50th cadet training classes of the West Virginia State Police Academy. The 41st and 42nd cadet training classes will have been trained using the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum, the 49th and 50th cadet training classes will have been trained using the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum. The sample will be a convenient sample as the entire population is current full-time sworn members of the West Virginia State Police.

The population of each class is as follows:

Pre-1995 41st n = 41 42nd n = 45 Total 86

Post-1995 49th n = 30 50th n = 37 Total 67

Total number of potential survey participants is 153.

Instrumentation

This study will utilize an adapted version of a survey instrument originally developed by the Illinois Basic Training Validation Project, Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement Training Board (1981). Talley (1984) adapted and used a similar instrument to survey the

Oakland (Michigan) Training Academy. This instrument was proven reliable in measuring officer perceptions' of the curriculum (Ness, 1988). Ness (1988) employed the Illinois survey instrument to study the Illinois Minimum Standards Basic Law Enforcement Training Course.

Ness (1988) employed the Illinois survey instrument to study the Illinois Minimum Standards Basic Law Enforcement Training Course. This survey instrument was reviewed and approved by the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.

Brand (1995) adapted and used the Talley/Ness questionnaire to compare mandated curricula in Illinois and Nevada and determined performance objectives were different. Brand (1995) adapted the task inventory and limited the survey to the area of training. The survey instrument was utilized to assess the Nevada's POST Commission Academy graduates comprehension and usefulness of the curriculum.

Nevada Academy staff members examined the instrument for face and content validity. A Cronbach alpha test was administered to determine internal consistency to measure the reliability of the survey instrument, which was determined to be 0.9591.

This instrument will be adapted to measure the graduates' perception concerning the relevance of the higher education curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy, as well as their perceived degrees of competence. This instrument will utilize a 5-point Likert scale to be consistent with the previously used survey instruments of Talley (1994), Ness (1988) and Brand (1995). The Likert scale of the survey instrument consists of the following 5-point ranges:

Relevance Scale

1 = No Relevance 2 = Little Relevance 3 = Relevant 4 = Very Relevant

5 = Extremely Relevant

Competence Scale.

1 = Incompetent 2 = Somewhat Competent 3 = Competent

4 = Very Competent 5 = Extremely Competent

The demographic characteristics of the survey will include age, sex, prior military experience, prior police experience and education. There will also be three open-ended questions addressed on the survey. The specific questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactorily complete your probationary period?
2. What recommendations would you make to improve the Academy curriculum?
3. What recommendation would you make to improve the Academy training?

Pilot Test

It is recommended that an author-developed questionnaire be pilot tested to determine its efficacy and appropriateness to the subject matter (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). A pilot test sample size of a minimum of five to ten people is considered to be appropriate (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

The survey instrument adapted from Brand (1995) was pilot tested on the 114th Basic Training Class consisting of 48 residential graduating officers attending the Academy. Immediately preceding graduation, the nature of this study was introduced to the students as part of the research for a doctoral dissertation evaluating the curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy. The survey instrument was explained and the students were asked to respond not only to the survey items, but to make additional comments regarding the training they had received in the interest of enhancing the thoroughness of the investigation.

As the entire class of 48 respondents participated, the simple descriptive statistic of the mean was used to evaluate the respondents' perceptions of the relevance and competence of the

60 individual core classes they had attended during their 15-week residential program. These core classes are identical to the core classes of the cadet classes. No demographic statistical correlations were attempted.

The statistical mean for the relevance of all 60 classes was 3.7 on a 5-point Likert Scale, indicating the respondents perceived their curriculum as relevant. The statistical mean for the competency of all 60 classes was 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale indicating the respondents felt competent in the tasks addressed by the curriculum. Without in-depth statistical analysis, the statistical correlation regarding demographic variables cannot be addressed. The students encountered no problems completing or understanding the survey, which would establish face validity.

The qualitative responses to the three individual questions of the survey instrument reflected primarily on the methodology of the training. Two specific themes that emerged from the survey questions were sleep deprivation and poorly structured physical training.

Data Collection

This study will utilize a self-reported questionnaire survey procedure (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The survey instrument will be mailed in a packet, including a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, the assurance of anonymity, and encouragement of participation. The letter will ask the participants to complete the survey and return to the author in the envelope with return postage and address included. The participants will be asked to return the survey instrument within two weeks for data entry and analysis. The responses will be numbered upon receipt for follow-up purposes and a return rate of 50% plus one will be required. An exemption from the Marshall University Institutional Review Board will be obtained prior to the survey's being mailed to the participants.

Data Analysis

The means for the comparison groups of the pre-1995 and post-1995 Academy curricula will be determined using t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Frequency distributions will be utilized for the demographic variables. Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be utilized for the appropriate statistical procedures to determine the significance of the results. Post hoc analysis will be conducted when appropriate.

Summary

The methods used in this chapter will determine the relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy, as well as the degree of competence regarding the tasks addressed by the curricula. The compiled data will further determine the relationship of age, sex, the level of education upon admission to the academy, prior military experience and prior police experience variables to the perceptions of the graduates.

Chapter IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of selected graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy regarding the higher education police science curriculum. The study will attempt to approve or reject the hypothesis that the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy is relevant and prepares competent graduates, which enables them to perform their duties as law enforcement officers. Additionally, this study attempted to answer two questions regarding the curriculum. First, is the Academy's curriculum relevant to police practice? Second, is the Academy's higher education curriculum preparing competent graduates?

The chapter provides a description and analysis of the data collected in this study. The following sections are included: (a) statistical tools (b) descriptive data (c) statistical analysis, (d) major findings, and (e) summary of findings.

Statistical Tools

The data for this study were collected by the use of a survey instrument adapted from Brand & Peak (1995). The instrument was designed to measure the perceptions of selected graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy regarding the relevance of the curriculum and their perceived degree of competence of the higher education police science curriculum.

The survey consisted of courses placed on a five-point Likert scale with one being the lowest rating and five being the highest rating. Participants were asked to respond to each course and evaluate the course on relevance and its contribution to competence using the following rating scale:

Relevance Scale 1 = No Relevancy 2 = Little Relevancy 3 = Relevant 4 = Very Relevant

5 = Extremely Relevant

Degree of Competency 1 = Incompetent 2 = Somewhat Competent 3 = Competent

4 = Very Competent 5 = Extremely Competent

Additionally, three open-ended questions were addressed on the survey instrument. The first question the participants were asked was whether the curriculum adequately prepared them to perform their duties to satisfactorily complete their probation. The second and third questions asked the participants what recommendations would they make to improve the academy curriculum and training.

Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS), a comprehensive software program for analyzing data, was utilized to analyze the collected data of this study. T-tests were utilized to establish means of the reported data and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to test the hypothesis, which guided this study. An alpha level of 0.05 was selected as the criterion level of significance for the study.

Descriptive Data

The population of this study consisted of four graduating classes of the West Virginia State Police Academy. The 41st and 42nd cadet classes evaluated the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum; the 49th and 50th cadet classes evaluated the post-1995 curriculum. The total graduates of the 41st and 42nd cadet classes surveyed consisted of N = 86 and the total Graduates of the 49th and 50th cadet classes surveyed consisted of N = 67 for a total population of N = 153. The 41st and 42nd cadet classes returned 55 out of 86 surveys for a response rate of 64%. The 49th and 50th cadet classes returned 38 out of 67 surveys for a 57% response rate. The overall response rate was 93 surveys returned out of 153 surveys mailed for a total response rate of 61%. There were no unusable surveys. These data are represented in Table I.

Frequency Distribution

Table I

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Cadet Classes

Class	Sent	Returned	Percent Returned
41-42	86	55	64%
49-50	67	38	57%

Demographic data collected from the participants included (a) age; (b) sex; (c) education; (d) military experience and (e) police experience. The participants supplied a numerical value representing their age in years and these data were categorized into five-year increments. The mean age of the participants for the 41st and 42nd cadet classes was calculated at 32.93. The mean age of the participants for the 49th and 50th cadet classes was calculated at 28.58. These data are represented in Table II. For purposes of SPSS analysis, the age was coded, as 1 equals 30 and younger, 2 equals 31 and older.

Table II

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Age in Years

Class	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	No Response
41-42	0	5	40	9	1
49-50	6	23	8	1	

The participants were asked to supply data regarding their sex. The data were categorized by indicating either male or female and only one participant did not supply this data. The 41st and 42nd participants responded 53 male (98.2%) and 1 female (1.8%). The 49th and 50th participants responded 37 male (97.4%) and 1 female (1.8%). These data are represented in Table III.

Table III
Frequency Distribution of Participants by Sex

Class	Male/Percentage		Female/Percentage		No Response/Percentage	
41-42	53	96.4%	1	1.8%	1	1.8%
49-50	37	97.4%	1	1.8%		

Participants were asked to supply data regarding their educational level upon admission to the academy. These data were categorized into highest level of education obtained, ranging from high school to a higher education degree completion. Twenty-two (41%) of the 41st and 42nd cadet class participants indicated high school as their highest level of education prior to admission to the academy, while 32 participants (58%) reported having a higher education degree prior to admission to the academy. A further analysis of the educational data of the 41st and 42nd cadet class participants indicated six associate’s degrees, 20 bachelor’s degrees and seven unspecified higher education degrees that were either an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. These data are represented in Table IV

Thirteen participants (34%) of the 49th and 50th cadet classes indicated high school as their level of education prior to admission to the academy while 25 participants (65%) responded having a higher education degree prior to admission to the academy. A further analysis of the educational data of the 49th and 50th cadet class participants indicated eight associate's degrees, 12 bachelor's degrees, one master's degree and four unspecified higher education degrees, either associate's or bachelor's degree. These data are represented in Table IV.

Table IV

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Level of Education Prior to Admission

Class	High School	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Unspecified Degree
41-42	22	6	20	0	7
49-50	13	8	12	1	4

Participants were asked to supply data regarding previous military experience. These data were categorized *yes* for previous military experience and *no* indicating absence of military experience. The 41st and 42nd cadet classes reported 18 (37.7%) participants with prior military experience and 34 (61.8%) participants with no prior military experience with three participants failing to report military experience. These data are represented in Table V.

The 49th and 50th cadet classes reported 13 (34.2%) participants with prior military experience and 25 (65.8%) with no prior military experience. These data are represented in Table V.

Table V

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Prior Military Experience

Class	Prior Military	No Military	Did Not Respond
41-42	18 (37%)	34 (61%)	3
49-50	13 (34%)	25 (66%)	

Participants were asked to supply data regarding prior police experience. These data were categorized *yes* for prior police experience and *no* indicating *no* prior police experience upon admission to the academy. The 41st and 42nd cadet class reported seven (12.7%) participants with prior police experience and 45 (81.8%) participants with no prior police experience. Three participants failed to report prior police experience. The 49th and 50th cadet classes reported 15 (39.5%) participants with prior police experience and 23 (60.5%) participants with no police experience. These data are represented in Table VI.

Table VI

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Prior Police Experience

Class	Prior Police Experience	No Prior Police Experience	No Response
41-42	7 (12.7%)	45 (81.8%)	3 (5.5%)
49-50	15 (39.5%)	23 (60.5%)	

Statistical Analysis of Data

The data for this study were collected by use of a survey questionnaire that was adapted from Brand & Peak (1995). The instrument was designed to measure the perceptions of four graduating cadet classes of the West Virginia State Police Academy concerning the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum as well as the degree of competence achieved by the students. This study further determined the statistical significance, if any, of demographic variables on the perceptions of the graduates regarding the relevance of the academy curriculum and their degrees of competence. These variables were defined as age, sex, level of education upon admission to the academy, prior military experience and prior police experience.

The survey questionnaire was designed for each participant to evaluate his/her perception of the curriculum relevance and his/her degree of competency. The survey instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale of the survey instrument consisted of the following 5-point ranges:

Relevance Scale

1 = No Relevance 2 = Little Relevance 3 = Relevant 4 = Very Relevant 5 = Extremely Relevant

Competence Scale

1 = Incompetent 2 = Somewhat Competent 3 = Competent 4 = Very Competent
5 = Extremely Competent.

The SPSS system was used to analyze the collected data from the participants. T-tests and ANOVA were utilized to test the hypothesis that guided this study. An alpha level of 0.05 was selected as the criterion level of significance for the study.

Major Findings

Findings of this study are presented under the hypothesis to which the data pertained. The hypothesis of the study is that the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy is relevant and prepares competent graduates, which enables them to perform their duties as law enforcement officers. The results confirmed the pre-1995 and post-1995 curricula were relevant and prepared competent graduates.

A t-test for each individual course in the curriculum was utilized to establish a mean for relevance. These data are represented in Table VII.

Table VII

T-test for Relevance of Curriculum

Relevance	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communications I	41-42	55	3.7818	.95628	.12895
	49-50	38	3.9211	.94101	.15265
Tech. Comm.	41-42	54	3.5741	.96353	.13112
	49-50	38	4.0263	.71610	.11617
First Responder	41-42	55	4.2364	.85988	.11595
	49-50				
Gen. Psychology	41-42	55	3.1636	.97684	.13172
	49-50	38	3.7368	.72351	.11737
Technical Math	41-42	55	3.0364	.98062	.13223

	49-50	38	3.6053	1.07903	.17504
American St. Govt.	41-42	55	3.1273	.92405	.12460
	49-50				
Deviant Behavior	41-42	55	3.5455	.95874	.12928
	49-50				
Intro to Sociology	41-42	55	3.1273	1.00101	.13498
	49-50				
Computer Tech.	41-42	55	3.6727	1.08959	.14692
	49-50	37	4.2162	.97568	.16040
Law Enfor. Orient.	41-42	55	4.2727	.87039	.11736
	49-50	38	4.8158	.45650	.07405
Police Def. Tactics	41-42	55	4.5636	.78796	.10625
	49-50	38	5.0000	.00000	.00000
Psych.For Law Enf.	41-42	55	3.8545	1.00771	.13588
	49-50	38	4.6316	.58914	.09557
Patrol Operations	41-42	55	4.3636	.84686	.11419
	49-50	38	4.0526	.86828	.14085
Police Ars. & Weap.	41-42	55	4.4909	.71680	.09665
	49-50	38	3.7632	.88330	.14329
Criminal Law	41-42	55	4.6364	.64875	.08748
	49-50	38	4.8158	.45650	.07405
Criminal Litigation	41-42	55	4.1091	.89593	.12081
	49-50	38	4.1316	.84377	.13688

Police Organization	41-42	55	3.8182	.92478	.12470
	49-50	38	4.3158	.66191	.10738
Pol. Crim. & Del.	41-42	55	3.7818	.08946	.10915
	49-50	38	4.5789	.64228	.10419
Intro. to Crim.	41-42	55	4.0000	.88192	.11892
	49-50	38	4.6316	.63335	.10274
Pol. Rec. & Rept.	41-42	55	4.1636	1.04993	.14157
	49-50	38	4.3947	.63635	.10356
Traff. Ad. & Enf.	41-42	55	4.3455	.84367	.11357
	49-50	37	4.5676	.83468	.13722
Internship	41-42	53	4.3585	1.03950	.14279
	49-50	37	4.1081	.73725	.12120

The t-test suggested all courses were evaluated as relevant. However, 14 of the individual courses suggested a statistical difference in the degree of relevance. Courses suggesting a statistical difference in the mean evaluation of relevance were Technical Communications; General Psychology; Technical Math; American State Government; Deviant Behavior; Introduction to Sociology; Computer Technology; Law Enforcement Orientation; Police Defense Tactics: Psychology for Law Enforcement; Police Arsenal and Weapons; Police Organization; Police Role in Crime and Delinquency and Introduction to Criminalistics.

ANOVA was utilized to test the difference of means of the 14 individual courses identified by the t-test as statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance. The 41st and 42nd

cadet class participants evaluated one course, Police Arsenal and Weapons, higher in relevance than the 49th and 50th cadet class. The 49th and 50th cadet class participants evaluated 13 courses higher in relevance than the 49th and 50th cadet class. These data are represented in Table VIII.

Table VIII

ANOVA of 14 Courses Identified as Statistically Significant for Relevance

Course	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Technical Communications	.436	1	.436	.483	.016
General Psychology	7.384	1	7.384	9.478	.003
Technical Math	7.273	1	7.273	6.967	.010
American State Government	26.229	1	26.229	32.615	.000
Deviant Behavior	40.914	1	40.914	69.964	.000
Intro to Sociology	9.855	1	9.855	10.622	.002
Computer Technology	6.534	1	6.534	5.977	.016
Law Enforcement Orientation	6.628	1	6.628	12.405	.001
Police Defense Tactics	4.279	1	4.279	11.615	.001
Psychology for Law Enforcement	13.569	1	13.569	18.245	.000
Police Arsenal and Weapons	11.902	1	11.902	19.131	.000
Police Organization	5.565	1	5.565	8.116	.005
Police Role in Crime and Deliq.	14.280	1	14.280	25.658	.000
Introduction to Criminalistics	8.964	1	8.964	14.351	.000

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether the demographic variables contributed to the difference in statistical significance in the evaluation of the relevance of the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested. ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variable of age in the evaluation of relevance, and age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance in the following four courses: American State Government; Deviant Behavior; Police Role in Crime and Delinquency and Introduction to Criminalistics.

ANOVA was not utilized for the demographic variable of sex in the evaluation of the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested in the evaluation of relevance. Only two female participants were identified in the population.

ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variable level of education for the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested in the evaluation of relevance. Level of education was suggested to be statistically significant in one class, Criminal Law.

ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variable of prior military experience for the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested in the evaluation of relevance. Prior military experience was not identified as statistically significant for any course in the evaluation of relevance.

ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variable of prior police experience of the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested in the evaluation of relevance. Prior police experience was suggested as statistically significant for two courses, Patrol Operations and Police Arsenal and Weapons. These data are represented in Table IX.

Table IX

ANOVA of Demographic Variables of Statistical Significance for Relevance

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Means Square	F	Sig.
Age					
American State Govt.	31.547	15	2.103	2.427	.006
Deviant Behavior	31.115	15	2.074	2.502	.005
Police Role in Cr. & Del.	21.473	15	1.432	2.504	.005
Intro to Criminalistics	26.618	15	1.775	3.588	.000
Education					
Criminal Law	1.395	1	1.395	4.265	.042
Prior Police Experience					
Patrol Operations	2.855	1	2.855	3.883	.052
Police Arsenal & Weapons	3.765	1	3.765	5.227	.025

A t-test for each individual course in the curriculum was utilized to establish the mean of competence for each course. These data are represented in Table X.

Table X

T-test for Competence of Curriculum

Course	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
Communications I	41-42	55	3.56636	.76409	.10303
	49-50	38	4.000	.61512	.09979
Tech. Comm.	41-42	54	3.4444	.83929	.11421
	49-50	38	3.9737	1.05233	.17071
First Responder	41-42	55	3.5818	.78624	.10602
	49-50	38	3.8421	.78933	.12805
General Psych.	41-42	55	3.1455	.93131	.12558
	49-50				
Technical Math	41-42	55	3.1818	.990453	.12197
	49-50	37	4.2162	.82108	.13498
American St. Govt.	41-42	55	3.1455	.89065	.12010
	49-50				
Deviant Behavior	41-42	55	3.5273	.87886	.11851
	49-50				
Intro to Sociology	41-42	55	3.1818	.88382	.11917
	49-50				
Computer Tech	41-42	55	3.2909	1.06585	.14372
	49-50	38	4.4211	.75808	.12298

Law Enfor. Orient.	41-42	55	3.7091	.93636	.12626
	49-50	38	4.3947	.75479	.12244
Police Def. Tactics	41-42	55	3.8364	1.08463	.14625
	49-50	38	4.1316	.77707	.12606
Psych. for Law Enf.	41-42	55	3.3636	.88952	.11994
	49-50	38	3.8684	.81111	.13158
Patrol Operations	41-42	55	4.3636	.84686	.11419
	49-50	38	4.0526	.86828	.14085
Police Ars. & Weap.	41-42	55	3.9818	.87116	.11747
	49-50	38	4.1316	.77707	.12606
Criminal Law	41-42	55	3.9636	.98062	.13223
	49-50	38	4.1053	.76369	.12389
Criminal Litigation	41-42	55	3.3818	1.04511	.14092
	49-50	38	3.7105	.69391	.11257
Police Organization	41-42	55	3.3818	.91269	.12307
	49-50	38	3.9211	.91183	.14792
Pol. Role Cr. & Del.	41-42	55	3.3455	.75076	.10123
	49-50	38	4.0789	.91183	.14792
Intro. to Crim.	41-42	55	3.4182	.93672	.12631
	49-50	38	4.1053	.76369	.12389
Pol. Rec. & Rept.	41-42	55	3.4364	1.10158	.14854
	49-50	36	4.5833	.76997	.12833

Traff. Admin.	41-42	55	3.7818	.91674	.12361
	49-50	37	3.9730	.64492	.10602
Internship	41-42	53	3.9434	1.16710	.16031
	49-50	37	4.5676	.76524	.12580

The t-test results suggested all participants evaluated themselves as competent. However, 14 courses suggested a statistical significance in the degrees of competence. Courses showing a statistical significance in competence were Communications I; Technical Communications; General Psychology; Technical Math; American State Government; Introduction to Sociology; Computer Technology; Law Enforcement Orientation; Psychology for Law Enforcement; Police Organization; Police Role in Crime and Delinquency; Introduction to Criminalistics; Police Records and Reports and Internship. The differences in statistical significance in the competency of the individual courses did not alter the final evaluation of all participants perceiving themselves as competent.

ANOVA was utilized to test the difference of means for statistical significance for the 14 individual courses identified by the t-test as statistically significant in the evaluation of competence. The 49th and 50th cadet class participants evaluated competence higher in all 14 courses than the 41st and 42nd cadet class participants. These data are represented in Table XI.

Table XI

ANOVA of 14 Courses Identified as Statistically Significant for Competence

Course	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Communications I	4.279	1	4.279	8.553	.001
Technical Communications	6.247	1	6.247	7.180	.009
General Psychology	9.321	1	9.321	10.201	.002
Technical Math	23.667	1	23.667	31.118	.000
American State Government	44.500	1	44.500	69.542	.000
Introduction to Sociology	12.915	1	12.915	16.128	.000
Computer Technology	28.703	1	28.703	31.619	.000
Law Enforcement Orientation	10.565	1	10.565	14.051	.000
Psychology for Law Enforcement	5.726	1	5.726	7.769	.006
Police Organization	6.535	1	6.535	7.851	.006
Police Role in Crime & Deliq.	12.091	1	12.091	17.978	.000
Introduction to Criminalistics	10.609	1	10.609	14.000	.000
Police Records & Reports	28.624	1	28.624	29.527	.000
Internship	8.489	1	8.489	8.127	.005

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether any of the demographic variables contributed to the statistical significant difference in the evaluation of the competence of each course.

ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variable of age in the evaluation of competence. Age

was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of competence in the five following courses: General Psychology; Technical Math; American State Government; Computer Technology and Introduction to Criminalistics. These data are represented in Table XII.

ANOVA was not utilized for the demographic variable of sex in the evaluation of competence. Only two female participants were identified in the population. ANOVA was utilized for the demographic variables of levels of education, prior military experience and prior police experience in the evaluation of competence. Level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience were not statistically significant in any course for the evaluation of competence.

Table XII

ANOVA of Demographic Variables of Statistical Significance for Competence

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age					
General Psychology	23.681	15	1.579	1.748	.059
Technical Math	38.151	15	2.543	3.670	.000
American State Government	51.124	15	3.408	5.186	.000
Computer Technology	41.739	15	1.698	2.407	.007
Introduction to Crim.	25.464	15	1.698	2.407	.007

A t-test of the means of both participating cadet classes was conducted for relevance and competence. These data are represented in Table XIII.

Table XIII

T-test of Group Means for Overall Relevance of Curriculum

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
41-42	55	3.8909	.73718	.09940
49-50	38	4.000	.73521	.12120
Overall	93	3.9355	.73435	.07630

T-test of Group Means for Overall Competence of Curriculum

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
41-42	55	3.5636	.73946	.09971
49-50	37	3.9730	.64492	.10602
Overall	92	3.7283	.72783	.07588

The t-test suggests both cadet classes evaluated the overall curriculum as relevant as well as evaluating themselves as competent. ANOVA was utilized to determine statistical significance between the group means and the data are represented in Table XIV.

Table XIV

ANOVA for Overall Evaluation for Curriculum Relevance and Competence

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relevance	.267	1	.267	.493	.484
Competence	3.706	1	3.706	7.496	.007

The significance level between groups for the overall evaluation of relevance was .484, suggesting there is no statistical significance between groups for relevance. The significance level between groups for overall competence was .007, which is statistically significant as being less than 0.05. This statistic suggests the 49th and 50th cadet class participant’s perceived higher competence.

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether any of the demographic variables were statistically significant in the perception of the officer’s overall competence. ANOVA was utilized to determine whether the demographic variable of age was statically significant to the perception of the overall competence of the respondents. Age was not statistically significant in the evaluation of the overall competence arising from the curriculum.

ANOVA was not utilized to determine whether the demographic variable of sex was statistically significant in the overall perception of competence of the curriculum. There are only two female participants in the population.

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether the demographic variables of level of education prior to admission, prior military experience and prior police experience were

statically significant to the perception of the overall competence of the respondents. Education, prior military experience and prior police experience were not statistically significant in the perceptions of the overall competence arising from the curriculum. These data are represented in Table XV.

Table XV

ANOVA of Demographic Variables for Overall Competence

	Sum of Squares	df	Means Square	f	Sig.
Age	5.082	15	.339	.590	.874
Sex (not calculated)					
Level of Education	.561	1	.561	1.060	.808
Prior Military	.003	1	.003	.007	.933
Prior Police	.054	1	.054	.113	.425

The ANOVA suggests no demographic variables were statistically significant in the overall evaluation of the competence of the respondents. This analysis suggests the curriculum for the 49th and 50th cadet classes was perceived better at preparing competent graduates. Additionally, three open-ended questions were addressed on the survey instruments. The first questions the participants were asked addressed whether the curriculum adequately prepared respondents to perform their duties to satisfactory complete their probationary period. The 55 participants of the 41st and 42nd cadet class responded as follows: 36 (65.5%) yes; 11 (20%) no;

four (7.3%) somewhat; one (1.8%) adequate and one (1.8%) responded the field training officer prepared them better than the curriculum.

The 38 participants of the 49th and 50th cadet class responded as follows: 26 (68.4%) yes; three (7.8%) no; three (7.8%) somewhat; one (2.6%) adequate and one (2.6%) responded the field training officer prepared them better than the curriculum.

The second and third questions addressed recommendations participants would make to improve the academy curriculum and training. The two areas of responses were categorized and analyzed signifying the responses as either a curriculum-related response or a training/methods related response.

The 41st and 42nd cadet class participants' suggestion for curriculum improvement was the inclusion of more scenario-bases training, followed by more report writing, more police-oriented classes, better instructors and more criminal investigation. The most reported suggestion for improvement to the academy training was more physical training/defensive tactics, followed in order by more military training, the decrease of idle time, the institution of more discipline, and less humiliation.

The 49th and 50th cadet class participants had two major suggestions for curriculum improvement. These suggestions were the inclusion of more scenario-based training and more report writing, followed by recommending different instructors and more Officer Survival Training. These recommendations were identical to the 41st and 42nd cadet class recommendations for curriculum improvement.

Summary

There were 93 participants in the study who were asked to evaluate their perceptions of the West Virginia State Police Academy's higher education police science curriculum. The

graduates evaluated the curriculum as to the relevance of the courses to police practice and evaluated the curriculum in preparing competent graduates. This study also examined the relationships, if any, of the demographic variables of age, sex, level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience in the perception of the curriculum relevance and perceived competence of the graduates.

This study was accomplished through survey research procedures that utilized one survey instrument to collect data to measure perceptions of the participant's perception of curriculum relevance and degree of competency of the graduates of the higher education police science curriculum. Additionally, the survey instrument collected the participants' demographic data.

T-tests were utilized to establish means and ANOVA was utilized to establish statistical significance to organize and analyze data. The data were analyzed at the 0.05 level of significance using SPSS.

A t-test was utilized to establish a mean for the evaluation of relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 curricula. The t-test suggested both curricula were evaluated as relevant, with 14 of the individual course in the evaluation suggesting a statistical significance. The 49th and 50th cadet classes evaluated 13 of the course higher in relevance than the 41st and 42nd cadet classes.

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether the demographic variables contributed to the statistical significance. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of four courses, sex was not calculated, level of education was suggested to be statistically significant in one course, prior military experience was not suggested to be statistically significant in any course, while prior police experience was suggested to be statistically significant in two courses.

A t-test was utilized to establish a mean for the evaluation of the competence of the pre-1995 and post-1995 graduates. The t-tests suggested the pre-1995 and post-1995 curricula

prepared competent graduates. Fourteen of the individual course in the competence evaluation suggested a statistical significance. The 49th and 50th cadet classes evaluated all 14 courses higher in preparing competent officers than the 41st and 42nd cadet classes.

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether the demographic variables contributed to the statistical significance. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in five courses, sex was not calculated, level of education was not statistically significant, prior military experience was not statistically significant, and prior police experience was not statistically significant in the evaluation of competence.

A t-test was utilized to determine whether a statistical significance existed between the means of the overall curriculum relating to relevance and competence. The statistical difference between the cadet classes in the overall relevance evaluation was .484, suggesting there is no statistical significance between groups for the evaluation of relevance. The significance level between groups for overall competence was .007, which is statistically significant as being less than 0.05. This significance level suggests one group perceived higher levels of competence.

ANOVA was utilized to determine whether any of the demographic variables were statistically significant in the evaluation of overall competence. Age, sex, educational level prior military experience and prior police experience were not statistically significant in the evaluation of the overall competence of the graduates. This analysis suggests the changes in the post-1995 curriculum for the 49th and 50th cadet classes resulted in the perception of more competent graduates.

The survey questionnaire contained three open-ended questions. The first questions the participants were asked was, "Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactory complete your probationary period?" The participants of the 41st and 42nd cadet

class responded as follows: 36 (65%) yes; 11 (20%) no; four (7.3%) somewhat; one (1.8%) adequate; and one (1.8%) field training officer was better.

The participants of the 49th and 50th cadet classes responded as follows: 26 (68.4%) yes; three (7.9%) no; three (7.8%) somewhat; one (2.6%) adequate and one (2.6%) was field training officer was better.

The second question asked the participants, “What recommendations would you make to improve the academy curriculum?” The two areas of response were categorized and analyzed signifying the responses as either a curriculum-related response or a training/methods-related response.

The 41st and 42nd cadet class participants most reported suggestion for curriculum improvement was the inclusion of more scenario-based training, followed by more report writing, more police oriented classes, better instructors and more criminal investigation.

The 49th and 50th cadet class participants had two major suggestions for curriculum improvement. These suggestions were the inclusion of more scenario-based training and more report writing, followed in order by recommending different instructors and more Officer Survival Training. These recommendations were identical to those suggested by the 41st and 42nd cadet class recommendations for curriculum improvement. The most reported suggestion for improvement to academy training by the 49th and 50th cadet class participants was more physical training/defensive tactics, followed by adherence to military/discipline style of training. These recommendations were also identical to the 41st and 42nd cadet class recommendations for academy training.

The third question asked, “What recommendations would you make to improve academy training?” The most reported suggestion for improvement to the academy training by the 41st

and 42nd cadet classes was more physical training/defensive tactics, followed in order by more military training, the decrease of idle time, more discipline, and less humiliation. The most reported suggestion for improvement to academy training by the 49th and 50th cadet class participants was more physical training/defensive tactics followed in order by adherence to military/discipline style of training. These recommendations were also identical to the 41st and 42nd cadet class recommendations for academy training.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains the summary of purpose, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter is divided into the following seven sections: (a) summary of purpose (b) summary of procedures (c) summary of descriptive data (d) summary of findings (e) conclusions, recommendations and (f) implications.

Summary of Purpose

This study was designed to evaluate the perceptions of selected West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum and the graduates' degrees of competence. Participating graduates' scores on a survey questionnaire instrument determined the evaluation and degrees of competence.

The following hypothesis formed the parameters for this study. The hypothesis was that both the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy are relevant and prepare competent graduates, thereby enabling them to perform their duties as law enforcement officers.

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

- 1) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant?
- 2) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance?

- 3) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant?
- 4) To what extent do graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceive the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance?
- 5) Does current age have a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 6) Does sex have a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 7) Does the prior level of education have a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?
- 8) Does prior military experience have a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science

curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?

- 9) Does prior police experience have a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?

Additionally, three open-ended questions were addressed on the survey instrument. The first question the participants were asked concerned the extent to which curriculum adequately prepared them to perform their duties to satisfactorily complete their probationary period. The second and third questions asked the participants what recommendations would they make to improve the academy curriculum and training.

Summary of Procedures

The population of this study was full-time sworn members of the graduating classes of the 41st, 42nd, 49th and 50th cadet training classes of the West Virginia State Police Academy, who were employed as of February 2003. The 41st and 42nd cadet classes were trained using the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum; the 49th and 50th cadet classes were trained using the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum. The sample population was a convenient sample, as the population is current full-time sworn members of the West Virginia State Police. The population of each class is as follows: 41st and 42nd classes N = 86; 49th and 50th cadet classes N = 67 for a total population of N = 153.

This study utilized an adapted version of a survey instrument originally developed by the Illinois Basic Training Validation Project, Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement

Training Board. Talley (1984) adapted and used a similar instrument to survey the Oakland (Michigan) Training Academy. This instrument was proven reliable in measuring the officer's perceptions' of the curriculum (Ness, 1988).

Ness (1988) employed the Illinois survey instrument to study the Illinois Minimum Standards Basic Law Enforcement Training Course. This survey instrument was reviewed and approved by the Carbondale, Illinois Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.

Brand (1995) adapted and used the Talley/Ness questionnaire to compare mandated curricula in Illinois and Nevada, and determined performance objectives were different for each of the respective state curricula. Brand (1995) utilized the survey instrument to assess the Nevada's Peace Officer's Standard Training Commission Academy graduates' comprehension and usefulness of the curriculum.

The instrument used in this study was adapted from Brand (1995) to measure the graduates' perceptions concerning the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy, as well as their perceived degrees of competence. The study was approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board for research involving human subjects.

The demographic characteristics of the survey included age, sex, level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience. Three open-ended questions were addressed on the survey. The questions were as follows:

- 1) Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactorily complete your probationary period?
- 2) What recommendations would you make to improve the Academy curriculum?
- 3) What recommendations would you make to improve the Academy training?

This study utilized a self-reporting questionnaire survey procedure (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The survey instrument, with a curriculum outline, was mailed in a packet containing a self-addressed stamped envelope, and included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, assuring anonymity, and encouraging participation. The packets were mailed to the participant's professional address. The participants were asked to return the survey within ten days.

Within the allotted ten days the 41st and 42nd cadet classes returned 55 of 86 surveys for a response rate of 64%. The 49th and 50th cadet classes returned 38 of 67 surveys for a response rate of 57%. The total response rate was 93 surveys of 153 surveys mailed for a total response rate of 61%. The response rate exceeded the 50% plus one requirement for validation (Kerlinger, 1986).

Data generated by the surveys were assigned codes and transferred to a computer data file. The data file was verified for processing and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. An alpha level of 0.05 was established as the criterion to determine significance of the statistical analysis.

Summary of Descriptive Data

Demographic data collected from the participants included (a) age; (b) sex; (c) education; (d) military experience and (e) police experience. The participants supplied a numerical value representing their age in years. These data were categorized into five-year increments. The mean age of the participants for the 41st and 42nd cadet classes was calculated at 32.93. The mean age of the participants for the 49th and 50th cadet classes was calculated at 28.58.

The participants were asked to supply data regarding their sex. The data was categorized by indicating either male or female. One participant did not supply this data. The 41st and 42nd

participants responded 53 (98.2%) male and one (1.8%) female. The 49th and 50th participants responded 37 (97.4%) male and one (1.8%) female.

Participants were asked to supply data regarding their educational level upon admission to the academy. These data were categorized into highest level of education obtained ranging from high school to a higher education degree completion. Twenty-two (41%) participants of the 41st and 42nd cadet class indicated high school as their highest level of education prior to admission to the academy. Thirty-two (58%) participants responded having a higher education degree prior to admission to the academy. A further analysis of the educational data of the 41st and 42nd cadet class participants indicated six associate's degrees, 20 bachelor's degrees and 7 unspecified higher education degrees, which were either an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate level degree.

Thirteen (34%) participants of the 49th and 50th cadet classes indicated high school as their level of education prior to admission to the academy. Twenty-five (65%) participants responded as having a higher education degree prior to admission to the academy. A further analysis of the educational data of the 49th and 50th cadet class participants indicated eight associate's degrees, 12 bachelor's degrees, one master's degree and four unspecified higher education degrees, which were either an associate's, bachelor's or graduate degree.

Participants were asked to supply data regarding previous military experience. These data were categorized *yes* for previous military experience and *no* indicating absence of military experience. The 41st and 42nd cadet class reported 18 (37.7%) participants with prior military experience and 34 (61.8%) with no previous military experience. Three participants failed to report military experience. The 49th and 50th cadet classes reported 13 (34.2%) participants prior military experience and 25 (65.8%) participants with no previous military experience.

Participants were asked to supply data regarding previous police experience. These data were categorized *yes* for previous police experience and *no* indicating absence of police experience. The 41st and 42nd cadet class participants reported seven (12.7%) with prior police experience and 45 (81. *) reported no police experience. Three participants failed to report police experience. The 49th and 50th cadet class participants reported 15 (39.5) with prior police experience and 23 (60.5%) with no prior police experience.

Summary of Findings

An analysis of the data collected indicated several findings. Findings of this study are presented under the hypothesis to which the data pertained. The hypothesis of the study is that pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy is relevant and prepares competent graduates enabling them to perform their duties as law enforcement officers. T-tests were utilized to establish means and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to establish statistical significance and to organize and analyze data. The data were analyzed at the 0.05 level of significance using the SPSS system. The hypothesis was tested and approved. The results confirmed that the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curricula were relevant and prepared competent graduates.

Relevance

A t-test for each individual course in the curriculum was utilized to establish a mean for relevance. The t-test suggested all courses were evaluated as relevant. Fourteen of the individual courses suggested a statistical difference in the evaluation of relevance. ANOVA was utilized to test the difference of means of the 14 individual courses identified by the t-test as statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance. The 49th and 50th cadet class participants

evaluated 13 of 14 courses higher in relevance. The 41st and 42nd cadet class participants evaluated only one course, Police Arsenal and Weapons, higher than the 49th and 50th cadet class.

ANOVA was utilized to determine if the demographic variables contributed to the statistical difference in the evaluation of the relevance of the 14 courses where a statistical significance was suggested. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of four courses. Sex was not calculated as a demographic variable as only two female participants were identified. Level of education was identified as being statistically significant in only one course. Prior military experience was not identified as statistically significant for any course in the evaluation of relevance. Prior police experience was identified as statistically significant for two courses. The demographic variables accounted for statistical significance in seven courses in the perception of relevance. The 49th and 50th cadet classes evaluated six of these seven courses higher in relevance. The 41st and 42nd as well as the 49th and 50th cadet classes perceived all courses as relevant.

Competence

A t-test for each individual course in the curriculum was utilized to establish the mean of competence resulting from each course. The t-test results suggested all participants evaluated themselves as competent. Fourteen courses suggested a statistical significance in the evaluation of competence.

ANOVA was utilized to examine the difference of means for statistical significance for the 14 individual courses identified by the t-test as statistically significant in the evaluation of competence. The 49th and 50th cadet class participants evaluated acquired competence higher from all 14 courses than the 41st and 42nd class participants.

ANOVA was utilized to determine if any of the demographic variables contributed to the statistical significant difference in the evaluation of the acquired competence from each course. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of five courses. Sex was not calculated as only two female participants were identified. Level of education, prior military experience and prior police experience were not statistically significant in any course for the evaluation of competence. The demographic variables accounted for a statistical significance in five course courses.

A t-test of the means of both participating cadet classes was utilized for the overall evaluation of relevance and competence. The significance level between groups for the overall evaluation of relevance was .484, suggesting there is no statistical significance between groups for relevance. The significance level between groups for overall competence, however, was .007, which is statistically significant as being less than 0.05. This statistic suggests the 49th and 50th cadet classes perceived higher competence.

ANOVA was utilized to determine if any of the demographic variables were statistically significant in the evaluation of overall competence. Age, sex, educational level, prior military experience and prior police experience were not statistically significant in perceptions of the officers' overall competence arising from the curriculum. This analysis suggests the curriculum for the 49th and 50th cadet classes perceived higher degrees of competence.

Research question one concerned the extent to which graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceived the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant. The statistical mean of the 41st and 42nd cadet class graduates' overall evaluation of relevance of the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum was 3.8909, suggesting the pre-1995 curriculum was perceived as relevant.

Research question two addressed the extent to which graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceived the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance. The statistical mean of the 41st and 42nd cadet class graduates' overall evaluation of competence in relationship to the pre-1995 higher education police science curriculum was 3.5636, suggesting the pre-1995 curriculum prepared competent graduates.

Research question three concerned the extent to which graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceived the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as relevant. The statistical mean of the 41st and 42nd cadet class graduates' overall evaluation of relevance of the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum was 4.000, suggesting the pre-1995 curriculum was very relevant.

Research question four addressed the extent to which graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy perceived the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy as providing them with training leading to competent performance. The statistical mean of the 41st and 42nd cadet class graduates' overall evaluation of competence of the post-1995 higher education police science curriculum was 3.7283, suggesting the pre-1995 curriculum prepared competent graduates.

The data suggested the 49th and 50th cadet classes perceived a statistically higher perception of overall competence. No demographic variable, however, was identified as statistically significant in the evaluation of overall competence. This analysis suggests the post-1995 curriculum produced higher levels of competence.

Research question five asked whether current age had a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance

of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance in four courses. Age was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of competence in five courses.

Research question six asked whether sex had a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence. The demographic variable of sex was not calculated as having an effect on the evaluation of relevance or competence as only two female participants were identified in the population.

Research question seven asked whether the prior level of education had a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?" Prior level of education was suggested to be statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance for one course, but was not statistically significant in any courses for the evaluation of competence.

Research question eight asked whether prior military experience had a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?" Prior military experience was not statistically significant in the evaluation of either relevance or competence related to any course.

Research question nine asked whether prior police experience had a significant effect upon the perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy graduates regarding the perceived relevance of the pre-1995 and post-1995 higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy and their subsequent competence?" Prior police experience was identified in two courses as statistically significant in the evaluation of relevance. Prior police experience was not identified as statistically significant to any course in the evaluation of competence.

Conclusions

The findings generated by the analysis of data collected in this study resulted in the following conclusions. First, it may be concluded that the pre-1995 and post-1995 West Virginia State Police Academy higher education police science curriculum was perceived as relevant to police practice. This conclusion concurs with previous assertions in the literature that higher education is relevant for police work. Carter, Sapp & Stephens (1988) concluded police officers with higher education received fewer complaints from citizens, used fewer sick days, were less likely to be assaulted on the job and presented fewer discipline problems. Dantzker (1993) concluded the higher the education level of the police officer, the higher the job satisfaction. Bracci (1994) stated police officers must have a broad based education to maintain professionalism in law enforcement. Varricchio (1998) stated police departments nationwide have seen the advantages of higher education for police. Truxillo & Bennet (1998) found a statistical relationship between higher educated officers regarding promotion and supervisory ratings of job knowledge. Langworthy & Travis (1999) found police officers with a higher education background would be expected to have a better job perspective and perform more effectively.

Second, it may be concluded that the pre-1995 and post-1995 West Virginia State Police Academy higher education police science curriculum was perceived by graduates as preparing competent graduates. This concurs with the literature. Marsh & Grosskop (1991) stated the fundamental question regarding evaluation is whether the training has enhanced the individual's ability to carry out the activities demanded by his or her job.

Third, it may be concluded that the evaluation of the Academy's curriculum concurs with the literature. Brand & Peak (1995) advised it is important for police training to be assessed to determine the propriety, adequacy, comprehension and the utility of the curriculum. Ness (1991) advised that police training curricula during the 1970s and 1980s, were designed by subjective judgment as opposed to empirical studies. Tally (1994) reported one reason for the subjective police curriculum was the absence of an objective systematic curriculum evaluation instrument. Traut, Feimer, Emmert & Thom (2000) argued the key component of training is the evaluation of the training program. The curriculum should be updated and evaluated at least every five years (IADLEST, 2002).

Fourth, it may be concluded the Academy's curriculum adequately prepared graduates to satisfactorily complete their one-year probationary period. This concurs with the literature, as the purpose of police training has been to prepare police officers to perform their jobs (Ness, 1991).

Fifth, it may be concluded that the Academy's curriculum in which associate's degree are awarded concurs with the literature. In 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals advocated that by 1978 every police officer possess at least two years of college. Reaves & Smith (1995) report that 86% of state police agencies have educational qualifications below an associate's degree.

Sixth, it may be concluded that the Academy's stress training environment produced competent graduates. Less stress was not mentioned as a suggested improvement in the academy training. This conclusion does not concur with the literature. Earle (1973) concluded non-stress trained police recruits displayed a higher level of performance proficiency. Violatnti (1993) suggested stress-training environments lead to maladaptive coping strategies.

Seventh, it may be concluded the graduate's recommendations for more hands-on scenario-based training concurs with the literature. Gaines, Souterhland & Angell (1991) advocated police officers should be actively engaged in training in order for effective learning to occur. Wilson (1992) reported contemporary police training should involve role-playing, case studies and technology.

Recommendations

An analysis of the data generated as a result of this study has formed the basis for the following recommendations. First, it is recommended that replication of this study be conducted for other police academies. This replication will provided for broader generalization.

Second, it is recommended that further studies using other survey methods be conducted to assess the quality and educational levels of the instructors. Third, it is recommended that further studies evaluate in-service training. Fourth, it is recommended that further studies gather data from supervisors and field training officers in determining student needs. Fifth, it is recommended that further studies be conducted with cadets as soon as practical after they complete the academy training program.

Implications

Studies involving higher education and police have focused on two basic areas of evaluation for police training. The first area of study involves the relevance of higher education

for police. Studies examining higher education and police performance have resulted in contradictory findings concerning the assumption that higher education is relevant for police officers. These studies involved participants who either obtained higher education prior to or after employment as a police officer. This study evaluated the relevance of higher education to training police officers. The implications of these findings support the expansion of cooperative programs with four-year universities allowing officers to obtain baccalaureate degrees.

Second, the data suggest institutions of higher education currently offering police certification have data that support the assertion that higher education is relevant to police training. Additionally, the data suggest the incorporating of a two-year degree program into police training as an effective method of obtaining relevant police training while simultaneously obtain higher education credit hours.

Another implication would be the potential implementation of an abbreviated academy for recruits that possess a degree prior to admission to the academy. A total of 57 (61.3%) of the surveyed population of these four cadet classes obtained a degree prior to admission resulting in these graduates receiving a duplicate degree.

The second area of study generated by the literature examines police training curricula and how competent the trainees perceived themselves subsequent to training. This study is the first evaluation of the West Virginia State Police Academy's higher education police science curriculum. The literature recommends the curriculum be updated and evaluated at least every five years (IADLEST, 2002). Brand & Peak advised it is important for police training to be assessed to determine the propriety, adequacy, comprehension and the utility of the curriculum. The data suggest periodic evaluations be completed on a regular basis. The evaluation is even more important as the Academy is also responsible for training each municipal and county police

officer in the state. The implication of an effective curriculum affects every police officer in the state.

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APPENDIX A

Request for Institutional Review Board Exemption

Graduate College
School of Education & Professional Development
Office of Doctoral Programs

Trula J. Stanley
IRB Coordinator
Marshall University Office of Research Integrity
Coal Exchange Bldg., Floor 13
4th Ave. & 11th St.
Huntington, WV 15701

Dear Ms. Stanley,

Enclosed is the Request for Approval on Human Investigation. I am requesting exemption from the IRB.

Thank you,

Walter E. Stroupe

APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board Exemption

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board

February 3, 2003

**Walter E. Stroupe
135 Cessna Street
Beckley, West Virginia 25801**

Re: Student Study IRB Exempt No. EX03-0051 - A Study of the Perceptions of West Virginia State Police Academy Graduates of the Usefulness and Necessity of the Marshall University Community and Technical College Police Science Curriculum

Dear Mr. Stroupe:

Thank you for the submission of the above proposed non-risk study. The purpose of the study is to examine the perceptions of the graduates of the West Virginia State Police Academy as to whether the higher education police science curriculum is useful and necessary in providing officers with the training to perform duties as uniformed West Virginia State Police Troopers.

An anonymous survey will be sent to the participants (a mailing list will be provided to the investigator by the West Virginia Police Superintendent) and will have a self addressed stamped envelopes for the participants to mail their responses back to the investigator. The investigator will not be able to coordinate the completed surveys to the participants.

The study as submitted would be exempt from IRB review and approval in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101b.

Sincerely yours,

**Henry K. Driscoll, M.D.
Marshall University IRB #1 Chairperson**

HKD/tjs

EX03-0051stroupefeb03

APPENDIX C

Request to Survey West Virginia State Troopers

Graduate College
School of Education & Professional Development
Office of Doctoral Programs

Colonel Howard H. Hill Jr.
Superintendent
West Virginia State Police
725 Jefferson Road
South Charleston, West Virginia, 25309-1698

Dear Sir,

I am currently a Doctorate student at Marshall University Graduate College. To fulfill the requirements for the Doctorate Degree of Education in Leadership Studies requires the completion of a dissertation.

The topic of my dissertation research is the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy. To complete this study I will need to conduct a survey of the current members of the 41st, 42nd, 49th, and 50th cadet classes.

I am requesting permission to conduct a mail survey regarding the member's perceptions of the usefulness and necessity of the Academy curriculum. I would further request a mailing list of the current members work addresses. The results of this survey will be anonymous.

Respectfully submitted,

1/Sgt. W. E. Stroupe
Troop "O", Academy

APPENDIX D

Approval to Survey West Virginia Troopers



West Virginia State Police
725 Jefferson Road
South Charleston, West Virginia 25309-1698
Executive Office

Bob Wise
Governor

November 7, 2002

Colonel H. E. Hill, Jr.
Superintendent

First Sergeant W. E. Stroupe
West Virginia State Police
Box 459
Institute, West Virginia 25112-0459

Dear First Sergeant Stroupe:

I am in receipt of your correspondence requesting permission to conduct a survey of the current members of the 41st, 42nd, 49th and 50th Cadet Classes.

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct this survey in order to complete your dissertation research on the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy.

Sincerely,

COLONEL H. E. HILL, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT

HEHJR/keb

CC: Lieutenant Colonel C. G. White

Equal Opportunity Employer

APPENDIX E

Cover Letter to West Virginia Troopers

Graduate College
School of Education & Professional Development
Office of Doctoral Programs

Dear Trooper:

As a graduate of the West Virginia State Police Academy you are in a position to provide evaluative information on the adequacy of the academy training you received. I am asking your assistance as a participant in a research study. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree awarded by Marshall University, and is designed to investigate the perceptions of Academy graduates concerning the relevance of the higher education police science curriculum as well as its contribution to graduates' perceptions of competence.

This packet contains a survey instrument and the directions for its completion. Enclosed with the survey is a list of the courses taken in each block of instruction, with content descriptions of each. Your help is essential to the adequacy of the findings. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. When you have finished completing the survey, please return it in the envelope which is provided, or fax it to me at 304-766-2603. I would request that you return the survey no later than 10 days after receipt.

Your name will appear only on the mailing envelope in which you receive the survey. It is not requested on the survey itself, nor will it be part of the final report. This is to ensure that your responses to the survey will be anonymous and confidential. If you are interested in the results of this study, please contact me and I will share the entirety of the results.

I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you are contributing to this study.

Thanking you in advance,

1/Sgt. W. E. Stroupe
Troop "O", Academy

APPENDIX F

Curriculum Survey for 41st and 42nd Cadet Class

CURRICULUM SURVEY 41st & 42nd Cadet Classes

The following survey is conducted to evaluate the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy. The survey will consist of you evaluating each class for relevance and your degree of competency. Relevance is defined as pertinent, fitting, closely akin to the subject as to reinforce it. Competence is defined as the quality or condition of being qualified. The information received from you will determine the adequacy of the curriculum.

The rating is a five-point Likert scale consisting of the following:

Relevance Scale

1 = No Relevance 2 = Little Relevance 3 = Relevant 4 = Very Relevant
5 = Extremely Relevant

Degree of Competency

1= Incompetent 2= Somewhat Competent 3= Competent 4= Very Competent
5 = Extremely Competent

	Relevance		Degree of Competence	
Communications I	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Technical Communications	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
First Responder	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
General Psychology	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Technical Math	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
American State Government	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Deviant Behavior	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Introduction to Sociology	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Computer Technology	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Law Enforcement Orientation	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Police Defense Tactics	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Psychology for Law Enforcement	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	
Patrol Operations	. 1 2 3 4 5		. 1 2 3 4 5	

	Relevance	Degree of Competence
Police Arsenal & Weapons	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Criminal Law	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Criminal Litigation	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Police Organization	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Police Role in Crime & Delinquency	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Introduction to Criminalistics	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Police Records & Reports	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Traffic Administration & Enforcement	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Internship	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5
Overall Curriculum Rating	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5	. . . . . 1 2 3 4 5

Demographic Survey

Age _____ Sex _____

Level of Education (upon admission to the academy) HS _____
 College hours _____ Degrees _____

Military Experience _____

Prior Police Experience _____

4. Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactorily complete your probationary period?

5. What recommendations would you make to improve the academy curriculum?

3. What recommendation would you make to improve the academy training?

APPENDIX G

Curriculum Survey for the 49th and 50th Cadet Classes

CURRICULUM SURVEY 49th & 50th Cadet Classes

The following survey is conducted to evaluate the higher education police science curriculum of the West Virginia State Police Academy. The survey will consist of you evaluating each class for relevance and your degree of competency. Relevance is defined as pertinent, fitting, closely akin to the subject as to reinforce it. Competence is defined as the quality or condition of being qualified. The information received from you will determine the adequacy of the curriculum.

The rating is a five-point Likert scale consisting of the following:

Relevance Scale

1 = No Relevance **2** = Little Relevance **3** = Relevant **4** = Very Relevant
5 = Extremely Relevant

Degree of Competency

1= Incompetent **2**= Somewhat Competent **3**= Competent **4**= Very Competent
5 = Extremely Competent

	Relevance	Degree of Competence
Communications I	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Technical Communications	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
First Responder	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Mathematics for Police Science	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Fundamentals of Computers	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Law Enforcement Orientation	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Police Defense Tactics	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Psychology for Law Enforcement	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Patrol Operations	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Police Arsenal & Weapons	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Criminal Law	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Police Organization	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5

	Relevance	Degree of Competence
Police Role in Delinquency	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Criminal Evidence & Procedure	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Police/Community Relations	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Introduction to Criminalistics	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Police Records & Reports	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Traffic Administration & Enforcement	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Criminal Law Litigation	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Internship	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5
Overall Curriculum Rating	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5	<u> </u> 1 2 3 4 5

Demographic Survey

Age _____ Sex _____

Level of Education (upon admission to the academy) HS _____
College hours _____ Degrees _____

Military Experience _____

Prior Police Experience _____

1. Did the curriculum adequately prepare you to perform your duties to satisfactorily complete your probationary period?

2. What recommendations would you make to improve the academy curriculum?

3. What recommendation would you make to improve the academy training?