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The Impact of Participation in the
Johnson City, TN Citizen's Police Academy

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Sociology
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Sociology

by
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December 2005

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Participation in the Johnson City, TN Citizen's Police Academy

by

Angela Elkins

A Citizen's Police Academy allows citizens to attend the police academy to learn more about police departments and police work. While increasing in popularity, very little research has focused on participant impact. This study examines the impact of the Johnson City CPA on participants' attitudes and beliefs about police work. Surveys were analyzed to discover differences in age, education levels, gender, and prior interest in police work concerning satisfaction, importance of training, and behavior change. Older respondents reported the most benefit from participation, while younger respondents were more likely to change their behaviors. Those with mid level educations gained the most insight from the program. Females responded more positively about the academy than did males. Prior interest in police work had no significant impact on participants' opinions. While exploratory in nature, this study lays the groundwork for further examination of the impact of CPAs on participants' attitudes and behaviors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Academy

Citizen's police academies have existed since 1977. The first citizen's police academy, the Police Night School, was created in Britain with the primary purpose of improving police-community relations. The school's founders also hoped to improve relationships with other organizations in the community that might participate in the academy or teach classes with the academy. The successes of this academy led to the development of other academies worldwide, and in 1985 the first U.S. Citizen's Police Academy (CPA) began in Orlando, Florida (Jordan 2000). Since the creation of the Orlando academy, CPAs have been created in every state and in most cities in the US.

As the number of academies has increased, they have expanded their goals to include better informed citizens; pathways to reach citizens who are interested in police departments; creating volunteer pools for police departments; and the elimination of the "us-versus-them" mentality of police against society often held by police officers and the public (Jordan 2000).

A CPA uses the principles of "community policing." Community policing is a newer form of police work that brings the officers into the community. Officers leave their vehicles, walk the streets, meet the people, and create bonds with citizens (Prine, Ballard, and Robinson 2001). The citizen's police academy is an important aspect in the rise of community policing and is designed to give the general public an insider's view of police officers and their work. A CPA helps create a connection between the public and the police officers in a community.

According to the National Evaluation of the COPS Program in 2000, CPAs are the fastest growing community policing program in the United States. Despite the rapid growth of these

programs, little quantitative research has been conducted on their effectiveness. Citizen's police academies are a fairly new development in police work. The academies have many purposes, but few have been researched. Most published information about police academies praises the programs but does not qualify the praise with research. What makes a CPA succeed (or does it)? Does it actually meet the proposed goals? Do citizens become more involved with police departments? Do they become more involved with their own community? Do they trust police more? Is the Citizen's Police Academy just about politics? The focus of this research is to attempt to answer those questions.

Key Terms

Alumni Association – A social and educational group of past academy participants. Activities often include additional education, community events, and volunteer opportunities. The Johnson City Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets once each month with additional volunteer opportunities available.

Aspects of Training – Ten sections of the training involved in the CPA. They are: Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Enforcement, Shoot/Don't Shoot, Crime Scene Investigation (CSI), Radar/Traffic Enforcement, Firing Range, Drug Task Force, K-9, Witness Identification, Swat Team, and Bomb Squad.

Degree of Importance – Respondents were asked to rate the importance levels of the aspects of training. These levels were: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Little Importance, and Not Needed.

Overall Satisfaction – Respondents were asked about their satisfaction of the course using three questions. These questions were: (1) did the academy meet your expectations? (2) have you recommended the academy to anyone else? And (3) are you a member of the alumni association.

Prior Interest – Respondents were asked if they had ever been interested in a career in police work.

Self-Reported Behavior Change – The survey included three questions about respondents' behavior after attending the program. These questions asked whether they were more likely, less likely, or about the same as before attending to be aware of their surroundings, to report suspicious activity, or to report crimes since completing the academy

Focus of Research and Methodology

This research project addresses the impact of participation in the Citizen's Police Academy on participants' opinions and behaviors concerning crime-related issues. The first objective of this study was to assess the overall satisfaction with the CPA. The second objective was to examine the degree of importance placed by participants on the various aspects of training received in the academy. The third and final objective was to measure self-reported behavior change. This study examined the impact of current age, gender, education level, and prior interest on these three areas of interest. These objectives were achieved by gathering and analyzing data from participants' responses to a self-administered questionnaire.

Questionnaires were mailed to alumni of the Johnson City CPA, using the names and addresses provided by the Johnson City Police Department. Data gathered from these questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Specifically, respondent's self-reported current age, gender, educational level, and level of prior interest in police work were examined to gauge the impact of the academy on each of the three objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Bonello and Schafer (2002), very little is known about how Citizen's Police Academies affect the beliefs and perceptions of citizens. Most of the published research covers areas such as the type of people who participate, curriculum, and importance of the program. There are many opinions on why police departments have Citizen's Police Academies and what the value of such academies may be. Jordan (2000) stated that while the number of CPAs has grown considerably, researchers have not kept up with the growth. He wrote that the existing literature on CPAs is "small, narrow and mostly uncritical" (p. 95). More research analyzes the broad concept of community policing. McKee (2001) wrote about the lack of research on community policing in general, noting that many reports were anecdotal and unsystematic and that success stories are told, but few, if any, quantitative research has been conducted on CPAs.

Community Policing

Community policing encompasses many different aspects of police work such as street patrol, bike patrol, and Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) programs. The community policing movement started about 20 years ago and included any activity that placed police officers out in the community working with the public. There is no set definition of community policing and often officers themselves have no idea what is expected or involved with community policing. Researchers have a difficult time researching community policing because it involves so many different aspects that almost any police work can fall under the heading of community policing.

Community policing is a broad category of policing that "evades a precise definition" (Bumphus, Gains, and Blakely 1999:67). Adams, Rohe, and Arcury (2002) wrote that the

“concept of community oriented policing lacks clarity. Almost any type of reform by law enforcement agencies has been defined as community policing” (p. 400). MacDonald (2002) stated that “studying community-oriented policing is difficult because there are no universally accepted definitions on what constitutes community policing” (p. 596). Most researchers agree that community policing is about forming partnerships between officers and the citizens or communities they serve (Adams et al. 2002; Bonello and Schafer 2002; Jordan 2000; Karp, Bazemore, and Chesire 2004; MacDonald 2002; Roth et al. 2000; Zhao, Lovrich, and Thurman, 1999; Zhao and Thurman 1997).

Adams et al. (2002) described three main features that separate community oriented policing from “traditional” policing: (1) shared responsibility – both the community members and the police officers are responsible for their community; (2) prevention – problems should be identified before they become crimes; and (3) increased officer discretion – officers should have the freedom to incorporate flexible decision making when encountering various problems in the community.

Shared Responsibility

Most researchers agree that shared responsibility and interaction with the community are very important in community policing (Bonello and Schafer 2002; Jordan 2000). Roth, et al. (2000) said an important part of community policing is that patrol officers should find ways to interact with the community and identify problems while performing their regular patrol duties. They also stated that one of the main purposes of community policing was for the police officers to get to know the citizens, thus reducing the “social distance between police and the policed” (p. 188).

Prevention

Jordan (2000) also mentioned solving problems before they become crimes as an important aspect of community policing. Adams et al. (2002) suggested that the citizens could help the officers to learn what was happening in the community to prevent crimes. This would make the officers more proactive in their community instead of reactive. In conventional policing, officers find out about a crime and respond. In community policing, officers find out from the citizens about a problem or issue before it becomes a crime.

Increased Officer Discretion

Officers should be able to work with citizens in their communities. The officer needs to be able to make his or her own decisions based on the circumstances and the community context to help citizens rather than strictly follow specific rules and procedures. Not all communities work well with rigid police policies. Officers who are able to be flexible with their community are more likely to be seen as approachable (Jordan 2000).

Benefits of Community Policing

Community policing includes so many different aspects of police work that it is difficult to quantify results. Many police departments argue that community policing reduces crime but cannot pinpoint why. It is hard to say what programs are the causes of positive change in the community (if any) and how long lasting those supposed changes would be. It is clear, however that when citizens have positive interactions with police officers, they will view the police more positively.

Prine et al. (2001) found that community policing benefits citizens and the community by generating greater faith in the police department. They also stated that it is becoming a very popular strategy in all police jurisdictions. Adams, et al. (2002) said that departments are

devoting large amounts of resources to community policing, using it as a tool to improve relationships between communities and police officers, especially with minority groups.

Importance of CPAs

Each department that has a CPA cites many reasons for creating their programs. Bumphus, et al. (1999) and Palmiotto and Unninthan (2002) noted that the main purpose of any citizen's police academy is to educate concerned citizens. Researchers also stated two other goals: to establish positive relations with citizen groups and increase citizen appreciation of police work. Many departments use the Citizen's Police Academy helps to stop the "us-versus-them" mentality of the public (Aryani et al. 2000). Palmiotto and Unninthan (2002) pointed out that CPAs have many alternative purposes, including public relations and giving citizens insight into why police do what they do. They stated that the ultimate goal of any CPA is to "develop a police-community relationship by providing citizens with exposure to police operations and procedures" (p. 101), so that citizens would become more sympathetic towards police officers and departments.

Jordan (2000) organized the main purposes of any citizen's police academy into three parts: education, relationship building, and using information. These three parts ideally create better informed citizens with greater sympathy for police officers and police work, and who might be more likely to help the police in the future. Jordan described the goals of a citizen's police academy as educating the public, working to prevent crime, creating positive interactions with the community, and community policing.

Jordan (2000) argued that Citizen's Police Academies, while they do help build a connection between officers and the community, are more about politics than community

policing. He noted that while Citizen's Police Academy's goals are full of "words like 'partnership,' 'relationship,' 'communication,' 'cooperation,' and 'empowerment,'" (p. 102) they do not actually show how the citizens are supposed to be empowered and have partnerships with police.

Bumpus et al. (1999) stated that the main purpose of the Citizen's Police Academy is to "enhance public image" (1999:78). This goal includes education, positive public relations and increased appreciation for police work. Their random survey of police departments with CPAs showed that the average participant is about 42 years old and most likely to be male. The typical program runs for about 33 hours over 11 weeks and has 24 students. They remain skeptical about the virtues of CPAs, arguing that the most likely outcome of the Citizen's Police Academy is "simply window dressing to enhance the police image" (p. 78).

Citizen's police academies are an important part of community policing. CPA participants learn about police work, the officers, and the department. They develop a connection (or partnership) with the police officers. Community policing is about sharing information and about forming partnerships with the community. Citizen's police academies do both. Jordan (2000) claimed that one of the important goals of a CPA is to educate the community about police, which is an integral concept in community policing.

CPA Curriculum

Each Citizen's Police Academy has a different curriculum based on their department's activities and programs. The Johnson City Citizen's Police Academy has a diverse curriculum, integrating many aspects of police work. The Bomb Squad shows participants the feel of wearing the protective gear along with the chance to "press the red button" to detonate an object. During radar/traffic enforcement night, participants learn how to work radar guns, how officers

decide whether to give a warning or a ticket, and experience the unpredictability of traffic stops. Weapons safety and firing range day shows participants how to properly handle weapons, fire a variety of weapons, and work on hitting targets. The shoot/don't shoot program is a simulator, like a video game, where the participant becomes the police officer and has to make the decision on whether or not to fire a weapon and at whom. The K-9 units give a demonstration to show their dog's abilities in drug detection, attacking, and training. Other aspects of training include crime scene investigation and witness identification.

These topics provide the participants with insight into the diversity of the police force and how each officer can specialize in different areas. Many of these topics are also selected for the curriculum because they keep participants active and informed through hands-on activities. For instance, how could the bomb squad give a demonstration without indulging in blowing something up? Participants in the program want to learn about what goes on, not listen to lectures.

All CPAs constantly change their curricula. They include new aspects of training while they phase out others based on the department's CPA exit surveys and the officers' ability and desire to participate. Many academies (including the Johnson City CPA) administer surveys of each class to find out what participants liked/disliked and what they felt should be changed about the program. This creates a better organized CPA based on what the community wants, not just what the police officers or department wants.

In general, academies meet once per week for three hours a night. The Johnson City CPA meets on Tuesday nights from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. It also has a Saturday session at the firing range. Each session is taught by police officers trained in the particular topic. These

officers share their real life experiences and bring those into the demonstrations and course work. Participants are also required to complete two ride-a-longs with an officer during an overnight shift (6:30 pm to 7 am).

Many Citizens' Police Academies hold graduation ceremonies for their participants. Most of these are based on the actual police academy graduation ceremony. However, the Johnson City Citizen's Academy holds a humorous graduation ceremony with awards for participants such as "always late" and "most mistakes."

CPA Participants

Mirroring the lack of uniformity in defining "community policing," researchers also disagree about how Citizen's Police Academies should select their participants. Some argue that police should target those who do not hold a good opinion of police officers while others recommend focusing on those who already trust police.

Participant selection for a Citizen's Police Academy varies by department. Most include a criminal background check due to the nature of information disclosed in the program. People with criminal backgrounds are not necessarily rejected as possible participants, but are considered very carefully (Palmiotto and Unninthan 2002). The class instructs participants in many police procedures not known by the general public. Many of the topics covered in the CPA would give too much information to people who are potentially involved in illegal activities. It also introduces them to undercover police officers. Exposing their identity to criminals could seriously endanger officer safety. Other requirements for CPAs include a minimum age of 18, ability to ride with a police officer for a shift and living or working in the community where the academy is held. The Johnson City Citizen's Police Academy has a

minimum age of 21 (except for those required to participate through the Roan Scholar's program at East Tennessee State University).

Bonello and Schafer (2002) examined the participant selection strategy at the Lansing Police Department in Lansing, Michigan, which excluded all people who had been convicted of a crime from participating in the CPA. The researchers wrote that this would exclude the very people who needed to learn to trust the police and would benefit the most from this program. This program, instead, focused on those who already had a good opinion of the police department, thus limiting its effectiveness at increasing positive public sentiment for police officers. Palmiotto and Unninthan (2002) stated that "for reasons of reputation and image, a police agency does not want criminal offenders or individuals who have questionable backgrounds in its CPA" (p. 102). They maintained that those who had been involved in criminal behaviors in the past should not be given access to police information, procedures, and practices. Bonello and Schafer (2002) suggested, however, that if a participant had not been involved with criminal activity for several years or the offenses were minor violations then he or she should not be excluded from the academy. In order for a Citizen's Police Academy to fully meet their goals of reaching out to the community, it needs to reach out to the people in communities who may have a conflict with the police department, not the people who already trust police officers. Jordan (2000) provided support for this position by saying that the screening of possible participants for criminal backgrounds defeated the purpose of the CPA. Palmiotto and Unninthan (2002) also agreed, stating most citizens police academies tended to draw citizens who are already on the side of the police or look favorably on police departments.

The participants often enter into the academy with “an overwhelming positive view of police” (p. 104).

The Johnson City CPA does require a background check for participants. Participants are also asked if they have any mental disorders or physical handicaps that would prevent them from fully participating in the program. The background check does not eliminate those with traffic tickets or other smaller crimes. One reason this academy does this is to keep the identity of the undercover police officers safe and prevent those engaging in criminal activity from learning too much about the department.

One way of targeting participants is through advertising. Citizen’s Police Academies use many different ways of advertising to gain interest in their programs. These can include the internet, fliers, television ads, bumper stickers and newspapers. Such advertising can focus on different groups in the community. Many CPAs advertise only by word of mouth. This is often the most effective and least expensive form of advertising and seems to gain the most participants (Aryani et al. 2000; Bonello and Schafer, 2000).

Once the department has a pool of interested citizens, it must decide which ones will be invited to participate. Should police departments focus on reaching those who do not trust police or have a criminal history? Or should they focus on those who are already favorable to officers? Many departments have chosen to exclude participants who have a criminal history due to the information taught during the sessions. Each department bases its participant selection on their own rules and ideas.

There are many specific groups of people who do not hold favorable opinions of police officers; such opinions can vary from community to community. However, in most communities, minority groups, poorer communities, and younger citizens are more critical of

police, while older white citizens view police more favorably. (Worall, 1999 and Prine et al. 2001). Often these seniors are more likely to be involved in programs such as a CPA or volunteer to work with a department. Worall (1999), Prine et al. (2001) and Jordan (2000) found that often, minorities tended to dislike, distrust, or show contempt for police officers. Such citizens are often not the ones in a citizen's police academy. Palmiotto and Unninthan (2002) stated that those of a lower socioeconomic background were not likely to be participants in programs such as a CPA.

Alumni

Jordan (2000) was one of very few researchers to touch on the alumni of the citizen's police academy. He noted that many agencies offer opportunities for CPA graduates to stay in contact with the department. The most common avenues for continued connection with the agencies are through volunteering in the agency, neighborhood watch programs, and alumni associations. He stated that an alumni association usually coordinates volunteer efforts in the department as a way of keeping ties strong between officers, the department, and the citizens.

Conclusion

Citizen's Police Academies are a fairly new development in police work. These academies have many purposes, but few of these have been researched. Most published information on CPAs praise the program but do not have the research to back their praise up. What makes the CPA so good? Does it actually meet the proposed goals? Do citizens become more involved with police departments? Do they trust police more? Or is the CPA just about politics? Bumphus et al. (1999) stated that it is "not clear whether a CPA makes a sufficient contribution to crime prevention, crime reduction or increased citizen reporting of crime" (p. 76).

But does it change people on the individual level? Whitman (1993) wrote that the “CPA had turned an ordinary citizen into an informed ambassador” for the department (p. 66).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The Johnson City Police Department (JCPD) held its first Citizen's Police Academy in 1988. It was modeled after the CPA in Orlando, FL. The JCPD was interested in reducing the public's suspicion of police officers and the feeling that police officers were only supposed to make arrests or write tickets. There have been 26 Citizen's Police Academies here in Johnson City, TN with 841 participants in the program.

Sample

This project used a mail survey to gather data from the CPA alumni population. The sampling frame, which consists of alumni names and mailing addresses, was provided by the Johnson City Police Department. This availability of names and addresses, the anonymity provided by this method and the relatively low cost associated with mail surveys were factors contributing to the selection of this method. The research population consisted of 841 alumni; due to this relatively small size, the entire population was surveyed.

Questionnaire Construction and Administration

The questionnaire contained 36 items measuring the respondents' opinions and thoughts about their experiences with the Johnson City Citizens Police Academy. As mentioned earlier, this research examines the impact of participation through the following measures: (1) overall satisfaction with the CPA; (2) degree of importance placed on different aspects of training involved in the CPA; and (3) self-reported behavior change.

Overall satisfaction with the CPA is measured using three survey questions. The first question was "Did the Citizen's Police Academy meet your expectations?" The choices were:

exceeded expectations, met expectations, and did not meet expectations. The second question was “Have you recommended the academy to anyone else?” The third question asked “Are you a member of the Alumni Association?”

The second area of interest is the degree of importance placed on different aspects of training involved in the CPA. The survey measured how the respondent felt about the 10 elements of training: DUI Enforcement, Shoot/Don’t Shoot, CSI, Radar/Traffic Enforcement, Firing Range, Drug Task Force, K-9, Witness ID, Swat Team, and Bomb Squad.

The final area of interest was the respondents self-reported behavior change. The respondent was asked if their behavior changed after attending the program regarding likeliness to report crime, awareness of surroundings, and likelihood of reporting suspicious activity. Each survey packet mailed out included the following: (1) a cover letter that explained the importance of this project, guaranteed anonymity, and provided contact information if a participant had any questions about this project (see appendix A); (2) a 36-item questionnaire including demographic information (see appendix B), and (3) a business reply envelope. The survey consisted of one initial mailing and it did not use incentives or reminders due to financial and time constraints.

Survey Nonresponse

Nonresponse, or unreturned surveys due to a variety of reasons including mailing problems, outdated addresses, and respondents not wanting to fill out surveys is a common problem with mail survey methodology. This problem was compounded because the Johnson City Police Department had not maintained its list of alumni addresses and several addresses were over 10 years old. As a result, it was expected that a number of surveys would be returned as undeliverable. The outdated address list did impact response rates as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Nonresponse

<i>Group Size</i>	<i>Completed Surveys</i>	<i>Undeliverable Surveys</i>	<i>Return Rate</i>
841	193		22.9%
841	193	228	31.5%

Table 1 illustrates how the nonresponse rate affected the survey returns. Of the 228 surveys that were returned as undeliverable the majority were from first 10 academies. The lack of updated addresses caused the distribution of the returned surveys to be skewed towards the more recent academies. In over half of the returned surveys (55.5 percent), the respondent indicated he or she had participated in more recent academies (the last 8 academies).

Demographic Data

Table 2 depicts the demographic breakdown of individuals who responded to the survey, using age, gender, education level, and prior interest in police work.

Table 2. Demographics

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
20-29	19	10.0%
30-39	34	17.9%
40-49	40	21.0%
50-59	52	27.4%
60-69	24	12.6%
70 +	21	11.1%
Total	190	

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	75	39.3%
Female	116	60.7%
Total	191	

Table 2 (continued)

<i>Education</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
High School or Less	17	9.0%
Some College	50	26.5%
Associates Degree	17	9.0%
Bachelor's Degree	61	32.3%
Master's Degree	28	14.8%
Doctoral or Professional Degree	16	8.4%
Total	189	

<i>Prior Interest</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	64	33.7%
No	126	66.3%
Total	190	

As seen in Table 2, respondents were evenly distributed by age. The youngest respondents were age 20 and the oldest was 85. The majority of respondents were in their forties and fifties and most were female. The majority of respondents had received at least a bachelor's degree and most had not been interested in a career in police work before attending the academy.

Hypotheses

Age is an important factor in people's behaviors and experiences. When examining the impact of age, it was expected that older participants will report higher levels of satisfaction with the CPA and will place more importance on the aspects of training because they will be more interested in their own personal safety. However, younger participants will report more behavior change. Younger participants will be more likely to apply what they learned in the program.

Gender affects how people view and experience life. When examining the impact of gender, females will report higher levels of satisfaction and more behavior changes. Females will experience the program differently than males because police work is often considered taboo for females and, therefore, they will learn more from the program and be able to apply that

knowledge. Males will place more importance on the aspects of training. This is because males are more likely to know some things about police work already and be more willing to apply that knowledge.

Education level has an impact on how people learn and experience events in their lives. When examining the impact of education on participants, those with higher education levels will feel less satisfied with the CPA. The higher the education level, the more likely they are to be critical and see the CPA as a public relations program instead of an educational program. Those with lower educational levels will place more importance on the aspects of training and report more behavior change. Those with lower education levels will gain more from the program and apply that knowledge.

Those who have prior interest in a career in police work may be affected differently by the program. Those with prior interest in police work will feel more satisfied with the CPA and will place more importance on the aspects of training, whereas those with no prior interest in police work will report more behavior change. It was believed that those with prior interest will be more satisfied and place more importance on the program because they are already interested in police work and this program is a way to get their foot in the door of the department. Those without prior interest in police work will be more likely to report behavior change because they do not have the interest and/or past knowledge of those interested in the criminal justice field.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to conduct tests of significance including t-tests, ANOVAs, and Cross Tabulations using chi-square.

Chapter 4 presents the specific analysis used and the corresponding results.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical Tests

Several types of statistical tests were used to analyze the respondent's opinions of the CPA and their behavior change after attending the program. Cross tabulations with chi-square were used for categorical variables. ANOVAs were used to analyze the numerical data (age) with questions that had more than two response categories. t-tests were used for the analysis of numerical data with survey questions that had two response categories.

A significant finding includes any statistical test with a p value of .05 or less. For research purposes, findings that are marginally significant (p value of .051 to .069) and moderately significant (p value of .070 to .090) have also been reported; they can direct future research efforts by indicating potential areas of interest.

Impact of Age

The first area of interest was age. It was hypothesized that older participants in the survey would report feeling more satisfied with the CPA based on three questions asked in the survey: did the academy meet their expectations, have they recommended the academy to anyone else, and are they members of the alumni association. After running t-tests and ANOVAs, respondents' age had no significant effect on the answers to these questions.

The second hypothesis in the age category – that older participants will place more importance on the aspects of training was based on 10 elements of training (bomb squad, crime scene investigation, drug task force, DUI enforcement, firing range, K-9 unit, radar/traffic enforcement, shoot/don't shoot, SWAT team, and witness ID). Each question asked if the respondent felt that the element of training was “very important,” “somewhat important,” “little

importance,” or “not needed”. After running ANOVAs, it was discovered that a significant difference occurred with the element of “firing range”; younger respondents felt the firing range was more important than older respondents did (see Table 3). This supports the hypothesis, but no other elements of training showed significant differences.

Table 3. Age and Importance of Aspects of Training

<i>Aspect of Training</i>	<i>Mean Age</i>			<i>p value</i>
	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not important</i>	
Firing Range	47.6 years	54.8 years	58.6 years	p= .013

The third age hypothesis - younger participants will report more behavior change - was tested using three questions asking about their behavior after participating in the program. These questions asked about their awareness of their surroundings, their likeliness of reporting suspicious activity, and their likeliness of reporting crimes. A t-test was used to examine behavior change, which resulted in no significant differences.

In conclusion, age had little impact on the participants’ opinions of the Johnson City CPA and their behaviors after participating in the program.

Impact of Gender

The next category of hypotheses concerned gender. The first gender hypothesis was that females will feel more satisfied with the CPA. This was based on the three satisfaction questions. After running cross tabulations with chi-square, there were no significant findings.

The second hypothesis in the gender category - males will place more importance on the aspects of training - was refuted by the research. An analysis based on the levels of importance questions using crosstabulations with chi-square, it was found that females placed more importance on 6 of the 10 aspects of training than did males (see Table 4 for more information).

There was no significant difference between males and females regarding the remaining four aspects of training.

Table 4. Gender and Importance of Aspects of Training

Aspect of Training	Gender	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little Importance	p value
Crime Scene Investigation	Males	73.3%	22.7%	4.0%	p=.086 (moderately significant)
	Females	85.2%	51.5%	0.9%	
Driving Under the Influence Enforcement	Males	74.0%	24.7%	1.4%	p=.035
	Females	87.8%	12.2%	0.0%	
Firing Range	Males	69.9%	24.7%	2.7%	p=.029
	Females	85.2%	12.2%	2.6%	
K-9	Males	52.7%	44.6%	2.7%	p=.011
	Females	73.9%	24.3%	1.7%	
Radar/Traffic Enforcement	Males	43.8%	47.9%	8.2%	p=.037
	Females	61.4%	36.0%	2.6%	
Witness Identification	Males	74.7%	21.3%	4.0%	p=.015
	Females	88.5%	11.5%	0.0%	

The amount of behavior change for males and females was the third area of study involving gender. It was expected that females will report more behavior change. After analyzing the data, the statistical tests (t-tests) showed that females report being more aware of their surroundings after participating in the program than males (see Table 5). Gender did not have a significant impact on the two other questions in this category.

Table 5. Gender and Behavior Change

Behavior	Males	females	p value
Aware of surroundings	39%	61%	p=.081 (moderately significant)

In conclusion, females placed more importance on the aspects of training and were more aware of their surroundings. This could be because the females are less informed about police work in general and, therefore, were able to get more out of the program.

Impact of Education Levels

The third category of interest is education levels. The first education hypothesis is that those with higher education levels will feel less satisfied with the CPA. The responses were analyzed using crosstabulations with chi-square. There were no significant differences in this category.

The second hypothesis in the education category is that those with lower education levels will place more importance on the aspects of training. After running a crosstabulation with chi-square there were two significant findings, involving the DUI training and Crime Scene Investigation (see Table 6). In both aspects of training, it was found that those with a high school education or less, some college, or a bachelor's degree were more likely to consider the training elements more important than those with an associate's degree, master's degree, or a doctoral or professional degree. Those with the low and middle levels of education were more likely to place more importance on the levels of training.

Table 6. Education and Importance of Aspects of Training

Aspect of Training	Education	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little Importance	p value
Driving Under the Influence Enforcement	High School or less	100%	0.0%	0.0%	P=.035
	Some College	89.9%	10.2%	0.0%	
	Associates Degree	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	
	Bachelor's Degree	81.7%	18.3%	0.0%	
	Master's Degree	79.3%	17.2%	3.4%	
	Doctoral Degree	56.3%	43.8%	0.0%	
Crime Scene Investigation	High School or less	88.2%	11.8%	0.0%	p=.059 (marginally significant)
	Some College	83.7%	10.2%	6.1%	
	Associates Degree	70.6%	29.4%	0.0%	
	Bachelor's Degree	83.6%	16.4%	0.0%	
	Master's Degree	82.8%	13.8%	3.4%	
	Doctoral Degree	56.3%	43.8%	0.0%	

The third hypothesis in the area of education was that those with lower education levels will report more behavior change. Using crosstabulation with chi-square statistical tests, there were two marginally significant and one significant finding in this category (see Table 7).

Table 7. Education and Behavior Change

Behavior Change	Education	More Likely to	About the Same	p value
Be Aware of Surroundings	High School or less	94.1%	5.9%	p=.062 (marginally significant)
	Some College	96.0%	4.0%	
	Associates Degree	100.0%	0.0%	
	Bachelor's Degree	93.3%	6.7%	
	Master's Degree	86.2%	13.8%	
	Doctoral Degree	75.0%	25.0%	
Report Suspicious Activity	High School or less	88.2%	11.8%	p=.074 (moderately significant)
	Some College	96.0%	4.0%	
	Associates Degree	88.2%	11.8%	
	Bachelor's Degree	75.0%	25.0%	
	Master's Degree	86.2%	13.8%	
	Doctoral Degree	81.3%	18.8%	
Report Crimes	High School or less	88.2%	11.8%	p=.031
	Some College	96.0%	4.0%	
	Associates Degree	82.4%	17.6%	
	Bachelor's Degree	73.3%	26.7%	
	Master's Degree	82.8%	17.2%	
	Doctoral Degree	68.8%	31.3%	

Those with a high school education or less, some college, or an associates degree report being more aware of their surroundings, more likely to report suspicious activity, and more likely to report crimes after participating in the Johnson City CPA than those with a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctoral degree.

In conclusion, those with lower education levels were more likely to rate the aspects of training very important and reported more behavior change than the other categories. This could be because those with higher education levels (masters or doctoral degree) may feel that they are above the level of the officers.

Impact of Prior Interest

The fourth category of interest was prior interest in police work. The first hypothesis in this category predicted that those with prior interest in police work will feel more satisfied with

the CPA, based on the three satisfaction questions in the survey. The analysis (Crosstabulations with chi-square and t-tests) yielded no significant findings.

The second hypothesis in the prior interest category was that those with prior interest in police work will place more importance on the aspects of training. After analyzing each of the 10 aspects of training researched using both crosstabulations with chi-square and t-tests, prior interest in police work was determined to have no significant effect on the importance levels of the aspects of training.

The third hypothesis in this category is behavior change. That those with no prior interest in police work will report more behavior change was refuted by this research. Those with prior interest in police work were more likely to report crimes after attending the citizen’s police academy (see Table 8). Crosstabulations with chi-square and t-tests were used to analyze the data. However, prior interest in police work had no significant impact on the other two behavior change questions.

Table 8. Prior Interest in Police Work and Behavior Change

<i>Behavior Change</i>	<i>Prior Interest in Police Work?</i>	<i>More likely to</i>	<i>About the same</i>	<i>p value</i>
Report Crimes	Yes	90.6%	9.4%	p=.047
	No	79.2%	20.8%	

In conclusion, prior interest in police work has little impact on the participant’s opinions of the Johnson City CPA and their behaviors after participating in the program.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Findings from this exploratory research project provide insight into the Johnson City Citizen's Police Academy and offer suggestions about future research on CPAs. This is an important exploratory study in regards to CPAs but there is much more work to be done. Are there other indicators not in this study that could impact a person's ability to benefit from this program?

The effects of gender on participation and experiences of the CPA programs is an important area of research. This study discovered several interesting finding regarding gender and future research on this would be beneficial to CPA programs. Females reported benefiting more from the program than males; those with low to mid level educations also reported benefiting more from the program. Age and prior interest in police work were not significant factors in the participants' opinions about the CPA and their behaviors after attending the program. Females probably benefit more from the program because of the lack of exposure to police officers and the thrill of being a part of something that is traditionally forbidden to women. It is possible that those with lower education levels may be more willing to believe everything the department or officers tell them and, therefore, they report benefiting more from the program while those with higher education levels are more likely to be critical of the information given. Age may not have been a factor in this study because the program is geared to interest everyone and all age groups receive the same treatment. However, this study was based on current age and not the age the respondent went through the program and the results

may be different if age at time of attendance was analyzed. While prior interest in police work seemed to have no effect on behavior change or opinions of the program, it is possible that these respondents already had high opinions of the department and its CPA program and, therefore, would not change after the program.

The findings of this study cannot be generalized to all CPA programs because it only involved the Johnson City CPA. Due to the missing and outdated contact information of many of the alumni of this program, it is difficult to generalize this study even to the program studied. However, due to the more recent classes responding more than the past classes, this study can be generalized to the past 10 classes.

What Does This Mean to the Department?

The findings of this study will be presented to the Johnson City Police Department to help improve their program. Information about the differences between how women and men view the program and which aspects are more important to the participants will help the officers improve their program to better fit the needs of the community. Suggestions as to how to improve the program and reach more citizens (or those citizens who may benefit most from the program) will be discussed. These suggestions include trying to cater the program to fit all education levels, advertising the program more, and revamping some of the elements of training to encourage the participants to be more interested in them.

If the police department wishes to continue researching its CPA program, then alumni addresses should be kept current. While it would be difficult to update the addresses that are already out of date, keeping track of the current addresses could be simplified by sending annual mailings asking alumni to update their contact information. This would also encourage more alumni to be active in the alumni association and to participate in more department volunteer

opportunities. Also, accessing phone numbers of alumni would be beneficial to future research. If the researcher had access to current telephone numbers, then a reminder phone call could generate higher response rates.

Another suggestion is that the alumni association be expanded so that all alumni could be kept actively informed of any updates and what the police department is doing with regard to its public relations and public education plans instead of just those who pay dues to the alumni association. Those who pay their dues would be eligible to participate in continued training activities, while those who do not wish to do so would still be kept informed of the department's activities. In effect, this would allow the Johnson City CPA to achieve two goals: it would be able to maintain a more accurate database of past participants and it would achieve stronger community relations through continuing contact with alumni.

Nonresponse Rate

One limitation of this research is the nonresponse problem. Nonresponse is defined as surveys not returned. There are two main reasons for nonresponse in this study: undeliverable surveys and not using reminders or incentives to encourage respondents to complete and return their questionnaires. The response rate for the deliverable surveys was 31 percent. This is lower than desired, but is high for a survey with no reminders or incentives. If it had been possible to send out reminders, the response rate could have been much higher.

Some important questions to ask when looking at the nonresponse rate are: What happened with those whose surveys were undeliverable? What about those who were not returned (those that were deliverable)? Did the academy affect those participants differently from others in the study? Additional research involving CPA alumni must address nonresponse

and attempt to minimize it, either through seeking additional funding to support reminders and incentives or perhaps employing a mixed mode approach to data collection (such as attempting a phone or face-to-face interview with those who initially do not respond).

Future Research

This is an important exploratory study with regard to CPAs, but there is much more work to be done. In order to fully understand the CPA programs and what effect they have on participants, this study should be repeated through a random sample of CPA participants and alumni. Also, more in-depth questions about the program and its effects should be used. Perhaps other indicators could be found that will influence whether participants report any benefits from attending CPAs. Other suggestions would be to do a before and after survey of participants in an academy followed by a survey one year after participation to measure information retention and the levels of behavior change reported. To learn more about the officers who participate and the departments involved, surveys should be sent to all participating officers and departments to better understand their type and level of involvement.

Many alumni of CPAs reported that they decided to become police officers after attending the program. Another area of research that could be studied is to examine if the CPA is actually a way to recruit officers in addition to serving as a community policing program; if so, how does this impact participant satisfaction and behavior change.

Is there discrepancy between CPA training and actual police work? Why do the departments focus on some aspects of the job and completely leave out other aspects? This could be another area of interest for future research.

One of the main concerns noted in the literature is that CPAs have not been the object of many research projects and the literature on CPAs has not kept up with the growth of the

programs. This project analyzed what affects the CPA has on participants and how those affects vary by gender, education level, age, and having a prior interest in police work. It is hoped that this project will generate more interest in CPA programs and more research will be done. CPAs can be a valuable tool to communities, and it is worthwhile to continue examining and improving them to maximize the benefits they can provide citizens and police departments alike.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cover Letter

My name is Angie Elkins and I am a sociology graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am conducting a study of the Johnson City Citizen's Police Academy for my master's thesis. It is my desire to learn about your participation in the Citizen's Police Academy and your beliefs about police officers and police work. Your information will help me gain an in-depth understanding of the Academy, its impact on you, the participant, and its value to the community.

While your participation is voluntary, the information you provide is extremely important and I appreciate you taking a few moments to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. Completion and return of the questionnaire will be seen as evidence of your willingness to participate in the study and your consent to have the information used for the purpose of this study. I would like participants to remain anonymous; please do not place your name or any other identifying information on this questionnaire. It is not coded in any way that would permit your responses to be identified with you.

Again, I greatly appreciate your assistance in providing information for this study. When you have completed your survey, please mail it back to me using the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. If you have any questions about this survey, you can contact me, Angie Elkins, at (423) 483-2586, or my advisor, Dr. Leslie McCallister at (423) 439-4998.

Appendix B: Survey

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY ALUMNI SURVEY

Please take a few moments to complete and return this questionnaire. Mark only one answer to each question unless otherwise specified. If a question does not apply to you, please leave it blank.

1. Which Citizen's Police Academy did you attend? (number/year) _____

2. How did you first hear about the academy?

¹ Newspaper

³ Television

² Police officer

⁴ Friend/family member

⁵ Other (please specify): _____

3. Have you ever been interested in a career in police work? . . . ¹ Yes (Go to Q4) ² No (Go To Q5)

4. Did this interest influence your decision to attend the academy?

¹ Yes, strongly influenced

² Yes, somewhat influenced

³ No, attended for other reasons

5. What led you to participate in the academy?

6. Did you complete the academy? ¹ Yes (Go to Q7) ² No (Go to Q6a)

6a. Why did you not complete the course? _____

7. Did the Citizen's Police Academy meet your expectations?

¹ Exceeded expectations

² Met expectations

³ Did not meet expectations (Go to Q7a)

7a. In what ways were your expectations not met? _____

8. Please rate the following elements of training based on importance.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little Importance	Not Needed
DUI enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Shoot/Don't Shoot	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Crime Scene Investigation	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Radar/Traffic Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Firing Range	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Drug Task Force	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
K-9	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Witness Identification	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Swat Team	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
Bomb Squad	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

9. Please list two things you liked about the academy.

10. Please list two things you liked least about the academy.

11. How would you rate your ride-a-long experience(s)?

- 1 beneficial 3 exciting 5 educational 7 uninteresting
2 time consuming 4 enjoyable 6 dangerous 8 helpful
9 Other (please specify): _____

12. How would you rate the officers that you've ridden with? Check all that apply.

- 1 helpful 4 appeared uninterested 7 a show off
2 took time to explain things 5 friendly
3 caring 6 rude
8 Other (please specify): _____

13. How many ride-a-longs have you participated in/completed since FINISHING the program?

- 1 none 2 one 3 2-3 4 4-5 5 more than 5

14. Since completing the academy, how likely are you to do the following?

- Be aware of your surroundings 1 More 2 Less 3 About the same
Report suspicious activity 1 More 2 Less 3 About the same
Report crimes 1 More 2 Less 3 About the same

15. Did participating in the academy influence your thoughts about a career in police

work? 1 Yes 2 No

16. Have you participated in any of the following volunteer opportunities with the police department?

- 1 Fish-Out 3 VIPS (record taking)
2 July 4th activities 4 Monitoring stop lights
5 Other (please specify): _____

17. Have you recommended the academy to anyone else? 1 Yes 2 No

18. Are you a member of the Alumni Association? 1 Yes 2 No

19. Have you helped with any Citizen's Police Academies since your class?

- 1 Yes (go to Q19a) 2 No (go to Q 20)

19a. In what ways have you helped?

Finally, we have some questions about you to ensure that we have heard from all types of groups. Please remember that no information will be used to identify you--your answers will be reported in group form only.

20. Gender 1 male 2 female

21. What year were you born? _____

22. Please indicate the highest grade of schooling you have completed.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Associate's (2 year) degree | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Doctoral or Professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Bachelor's (4 year) degree | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Some college | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Master's degree | |

23. Are you currently attending college?

- 1 Yes, part-time 2 Yes, full-time 3 No

24. Please indicate your racial/ethnic group:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Caucasian (white) | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Native American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Asian-American | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Hispanic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Other (please specify): _____ | | |

That was our last question--thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire! Please use the enclosed envelope to return the survey, and thanks again!

