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Policing Postsecondary Education: University Police Legitimacy and Fear of Crime on Campus

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Policing Postsecondary Education:

University Police Legitimacy and Fear of Crime on Campus

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ABSTRACT

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Assessing the perceptions that students have of the university police officers charged with ensuring student safety is important to maintaining the overall safety of the campus. The current study sought to assess the relationship between student perceptions of university police and the fear of crime felt by students while on campus. Data collection was conducted through a survey methodology using a convenient sample of students in which a self-report survey was sent to the university email addresses of all students enrolled in a southeastern university (n=260). Through the employment of a scale developed to assess the perceptions of university police legitimacy and a similar scale to assess fear of crime, the results of the study demonstrate a relationship exists between the variables. The relationship strengthens when demographics are controlled for. This study was designed to add to the limited amount of research examining perceptions of university law enforcements.

DEDICATION

For my family, and the friends that later became family, who have always inspired me to exceed expectations.

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I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with so many amazing people throughout my pursuit of this graduate degree and the completion of my maters thesis. The experiences I have gained, as well as the knowledge I have been able to obtain, during my tenure at this university have empowered me to push myself and others to achieve, not just reasonable goals, but to strive to change the world. I have been a member of the student body for some time and I will forever be thankful for the tools in which the university has instilled in me as I continue on my journey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Previous research on police legitimacy has largely over looked the perceptions students

possess of the officers employed to serve and protect on academic campuses. In the early twentieth

century, sociologist W.E.B. DuBois sought to judge the perceptions of minority students towards

the police and the criminal justice system (Hurst & Frank, 2000). One of the first to consider this

population, his findings became revolutionary for the fact that they uncovered different perceptions

were possessed by different groups within a population. The students surveyed in DuBois' study

expressed an overall view that the main responsibility of police officers jobs were to arrest people

rather than protect them (Bock, 2013; Hurst & Frank, 2000).

Interest into the crime that occurs on campuses has surged over the past two decades as a

response to several high profile criminal acts that have gained widespread media attention

(Scheider, Rowell, & Bezdikian, 2003). The commission of such horrific acts such as the killing of

thirty-two members of the faculty, staff, and student body of Virginia Tech in 2007, as well as the

six teachers and twenty children killed in a shooting that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary

School in Newtown, Connecticut in 2011, succeeded in shattering the illusion that academic

campuses are always safe environments (Wilcox, Jodan, & Pritchard, 2007). Although crime

occurs significantly less on campuses than in other environments outside of academics, Fisher

(1995) reported findings that approximately one-third of college students will find themselves to

be the victims of a crime within their years spent in school.

Campus law enforcement departments preside over one of the most distinctly unique

constituencies in the nation (Jacobsen, 2014). Perceptions of on-campus law enforcement agencies

and the authority these departments possess are a highly contested issue amongst those same

constituents (Wada, Pattern, & Candela, 2010). Despite the lack of empirical research comparing campus police legitimacy against perceived fear of crime on college and university campuses, the idea of having separate police department completely focused on the safety of individual postsecondary educational institutions is not a recent concept. Over the past fifty years, colleges and universities have seen an increase in student enrollment (Zhao, Scheider, & Thurman, 2002). With the diversity of the student body expanding and increased rates of reported crime on campuses, new approaches to campus law enforcement are imminent. Community oriented policing has become the latest movement by campus police agencies to combat these changes (Griffith, Hueston, Wilson, Moyers, & Hart, 2004).

There is limited research examining the perceptions of legitimacy and level of fear expressed by students toward university campus police. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of students' perceived legitimacy of university campus police on the amount of fear of crime possessed by students while on campus. The goal of the study was to find statistically significant evidence as to what individual characteristics may affect the levels of fear of crime and perceptions of police legitimacy in university students. Furthermore, the study sought to determine if students' fear of crime levels affect the students' perceptions of campus police.

The study utilized a survey instrument to collect data from students enrolled in the Spring 2016 semester at a southeastern university. Survey instruments can have limited internal validity. A limitation presented in the use of survey instruments is the wording of the questions. Administering the survey instrument through an online server restricts the ability for participants to ask questions for clarification purposes. The survey relies on self-reported data on the part of participants; a method that allows for many known fallacies which will be identified and minimized to the greatest ability. The Likert scale that was used to measure two of the main

constructs contained a point in which the respondent could choose a neutral response. This limited the amount of clear responses that could have been used for stronger statistical modeling.

For the purpose of this study and to ensure clarity, the following terms are defined:

Fear: "an emotional reaction characterized by a sense of danger and anxiety" (Garofalo, 1981). For this study, this definition was applied to fear of crime to mean the emotional reaction of fear "about the potential for harm in a criminal victimization" (Garofalo, 1981).

Legitimacy: "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, or definitions" (Suchman, 1995).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past few decades, the victimization of college students has gained widespread media attention as a result of several high profile crimes and shootings, causing lawmakers and university officials to question the efficacy of standing policies and procedures designed to keep the members of university communities safe. While violent crimes committed on college and university campuses remains relatively rare when compared to the rest of the country, the National Center for Victims of Crime (2012) reported an increase in reported crimes on campuses nation wide from 88,000 cases in 2007 to roughly 93,000 reported cases by the year 2010. This increase, however, is largely considered to be in the categories of property crimes and non-violent crimes such as burglary and automobile theft (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012).

Victimization of Students and Fear of Crime on Campus

The victimization of college and university students, the process of being victimized or becoming the victim of a crime, is influenced by both on and off-campus forces (McPheters, 1978). What was once thought of as a relatively trivial issue, the fear of crime and the reduction of that fear was not the traditional goal of law enforcement agencies (Crowl, 2013; Scheider et al., 2003). Studies have revealed the possible influence of individual characteristics on a person's fear of crime. These individual characteristics include demographic information such as age, gender, and race.

Gender

Patton and Gregory (2014) examined students' perceptions of safety on the campus of a community college in Virginia. The study asked participants the types of crime students fear being victim to most, the level of fear of victimization while on campus, police presence effects on

perceptions, student perceptions based on campus location, and perception variance across different areas of campus. The research found, for the sample used, perception of risk of victimization while on campus was dependent on factors such as student enrollment status and age. Further studies have recognized gender to be a variable effecting fear of crime as well (Patton & Gregory, 2014; Wilcox et al., 2007).

Wilcox et al. (2007), found women have increased levels of fear of crime when compared to male counterparts. This is in contrast to the fact that women are actually found to be less likely to be victimized by all types of crime with the exception of sexual crimes such as rape and assault (Rader, Cossman, & Allison, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2007). With women being statistically less likely to fall victim to a crime on campus, research has largely been devoted to further understanding these gender differences in the elicited fear itself. Fisher, Sloan, and Wilkins (1995) hypothesized that time of day may be an influencing factor in female expression of fear of crime. The study, however, found that female college students express higher levels of fear of crime regardless of time of day in question being a variable.

In a national representative sample of 3,472 undergraduate and graduate students from twelve randomly sampled public universities, Fisher and Sloan (2003), again attempted to study the levels of fear of fear for college students at various times of the day. The study contradicted previous findings. Results found that female students are more fearful of becoming the victim of a crime than male students overall regardless of time of day yet the findings further demonstrated a significant increase in fear for both men and women during nighttime hours compared to daytime hours. This was especially true in regards to females fearing becoming the victim of sexual assault or rape (Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Wilcox et al., 2007).

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Dobbs, Waid, and Shelley (2009) examined the influence that the fear of becoming the victim of a sexual crime, such as rape and assault, on the overall levels of fear for male and female college students. The results showed support for the idea that fear of sexual crimes serves as a significant cause of the overall fear college students have toward other types of crime. The findings again supported the conclusions of earlier studies that women are in fact more fearful of crime, however, once the fear of sexual crimes is controlled for as a variable, the gender gap between male and female fear of crime is lessened. This result suggests further that the fear of rape and sexually motivated assaults is a greater cause of fear for women than men.

Tomisch, Gover, and Jennings (2011) examined the gender difference across multiple factors related to fear of crime. The team of researchers looked at the overall differences in victimization experiences, perceived risk of becoming the victim of a crime, and safety and constrained behavioral practices in accordance with routine activities theory for both male and female undergraduate students. The study collected results of a survey instrument given to 997 students at what was labeled an "urban university." The results found gender to have a significant influence on fear of crime, perceptions of risk of becoming a victim, and behavioral practices. Women were found to be more likely to view university campuses as an unsafe environment. There was no relationship found in the analysis between gender and victimization experiences.

Age

Age is a more difficult variable to examine when looking at factors that affect fear of crime. Several researchers have described an "age related paradox" in the fear of crime (Crowl, 2013). There is a relationship between the factor of age and fear of crime, however it has been found to be mediated by multiple other factors such as gender, geographical location, and socioeconomic status (Joseph, 1997). There is noted inconsistency when comparing the effect of

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age on fear; studies have shown evidence that individuals who are more advanced in age express higher levels of fear of crime despite evidence that younger individuals are victimized more frequently than older individuals (Reid & Konrad, 2004). Several researchers have hypothesized reasons for this inconsistency, Chadee and Ditton (2003), for example, attribute the differences in perception and reality for older individuals to the idea that older individuals who perceive themselves to be at a greater risk and vulnerability of being victimized restrict their lifestyles accordingly to avoid being victimized. Alternatively worded by Crowl (2013), the "heightened perception of susceptibility leads to greater fear of crime levels among the elderly thus leading to self-imposed behavioral restrictions." The change in behaviors is noted by several scholars as a possible explanation why older individuals are victimized less than their more youthful counterparts.

Race

College and university campuses have grown over the past few decades both in student population and in the diversity of the student body. The rising numbers of students increases the need for research about how people of different races view and feel about crime. Parker (1988) examined the effect that certain social factors, such as race and marital status, have on individuals' fear of crime levels. The study included a random sample of 2,830 residents, 402 nonwhites and 1,433 whites, of Mississippi over the age of fifteen. The study found that while age is still one of the most significant predictors of fear levels, it is closely followed by race. Individuals who are nonwhite and not married expressed the highest levels of fear (Parker, 1988). The same finding was reaffirmed by Reid and Konrad (2004) whose findings also indicated that blacks and other racial minorities are more fearful of crime than white members of the same community. These findings were attributed in part to participants' proximity to neighborhood crime.

Attributing the effect that race has on fear of crime to the level of diversity within a persons' residential neighborhood is important to examine as many university campuses can be compared to residential communities (Crowl, 2013). Heightened levels of fear among nonwhite populations may be heavily affected by living conditions in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Reid & Konrad, 2004). Chiricos, Hogan, and Gertz (1997) studied the relationship between the racial composition of neighborhoods and the extent of fear of crime among residents in those neighborhoods. The concern that motivated the study was the assumption that fear of crime could hypothetically increase as the percentage of racial minorities within a certain neighborhood increases. The results supported this assumption by finding racial composition is a significant factor for increasing fear of crime for white individuals but not for those minorities included in the study.

Pickett, Chiricos, Golden, and Gertz (2012) used a survey on two samples of adults to record public opinion of the relationship between racial composition of a community and fear of crime. The results gave further support for the existence of a positive relationship between the two factors (Pickett et al., 2012). Disadvantaged neighborhoods in lower socioeconomic areas often lack the resources and strong social ties to remedy the levels of crime these neighborhoods are associated with (Cobbina & Brunson, 2008).

Police Legitimacy

Sunshine and Tyler (2003) defined police legitimacy as the property of an authoritative law enforcement body that leads people to believe that the authority within the body is appropriate within some socially accepted norm. The public has an impact on law enforcement officers that is often overlooked. Tyler (2004) argues that police officers require certain components to be viewed as a legitimate force. The first point Tyler makes is that public support and cooperation are needed

in order for police agencies to be effective in the role that police serve. The ability of maintaining

order in the community is most benefited when police have the voluntary support and cooperation

of the public (Mastrofski, Snipes, & Supina, 1996). This voluntary cooperation is directly linked to

the legitimacy of law enforcement agencies (Wada et al., 2010). People cooperate with police

because the people view these officers as legitimate sources of legal authority. The public's

assessment of police and police actions are a central part of how the public views police ability to

combat crime. These points demonstrate the overall need for enhancing police legitimacy (Tyler,

2004).

The aforementioned model of legitimacy argues that "people obey the law because they

view it as legitimate, in that 'law expresses moral and social norms that are widely held by both

dominant and subordinate social groups' (Jacobsen, 2015; Tyler & Fagan, 2008;)." This model

addresses more than just the individual and individual needs to pursue self-interests; the

instrumental focus of this model is the assumption that "people will obey the law, voluntarily defer

to those in authority positions, and cooperate with such figures" because individuals view this type

of obedience as a moral obligation. Citizen perceptions of the authority of law enforcement

agencies is developed, in large part, through the ways in which officers exercise their given

authority and the perceived fairness and justness of police actions (Jacobsen, 2015).

Several studies have allowed for the conclusion that people support the police as a law

enforcement entity because people view the police as a legitimate source of authority (Hinds &

Murphy, 2007). In an examination of Chicago residents, Tyler (1990) examined police legitimacy

to determine why individuals voluntarily comply with law enforcement. The study found that

citizen satisfaction with police and other law enforcement is largely dependent on the perception of

fairness in people's dealings with members of law enforcement. The perceived fairness in the

actions of police officers and law enforcement members is titled procedural justice (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013). Tyler's (1990) study suggested that procedural justice is a more vital component in shaping perceptions of police legitimacy than once hypothesized. This finding was supplemented by Tyler and Huo (2002) in another study using a sample of 804 Chicago residents. The finding furthered the Tyler (1990) finding by alternatively suggesting that by increasing the level of fair treatment employed by police officers, it would be possible to enhance the perceptions of police legitimacy (Tyler & Huo, 2002).

The relationship between citizens' perceptions of police and the procedural justice present in police activities and experiences with police can have implications on future police initiatives and the training of police officers (Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler, 2013). Through a longitudinal panel study of New York residents, Tyler and Fagan (2008), explored perceptions of police before and after experiences with police officers. After a two-wave phone interview, the study results show when individuals' experience interactions with police officers who utilize fair procedures suggesting that police departments and law enforcement agencies have much to gain from increasing the level of fairness present in police procedures during encounters with citizens (Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler, 2013).

Police-Community Relations

Positive relations between the community and law enforcement can foster numerous safety and security benefits for both groups (Crowl, 2013). The public maintains an impact on the effectiveness of policing efforts. Original research into the relations between the two focused on the impact of legal authority on the ability to shape the behavior of the residents within a community. In the 1970s it was thought that the ability of law enforcement agencies to gain compliance from the public with police agendas and the law was a key indicator of the success and

abilities of the department as a whole (Easton, 1975; Tyler, 2004). Studies into policing activities and procedure began to suggest an alternative view on the test of police effectiveness in that "although deference to legal authorities is the norm, disobedience occurs with sufficient frequency that skill in handling the rebellious, the disgruntled and the hard to manage – or those potentially so – have become the street officer's performance litmus test (Mastrofski et al., 1996; Tyler, 2004)." The importance of cooperation and support from the public toward the police raises the question of how such behavior can be elicited and maintained.

Scholars have been attempting to tackle this question decades after the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (1968) recognized the fear of crime as a "salient issue for the American people (Zhao et al., 2002)." Roh and Oliver (2005) conducted a study to examine the factors that exist in the causal relationship between the public's perceptions of community police efforts and the fear of crime among citizens. The study utilized the results of the supplemental data collected in the National Crime Victimization Survey. The study pulled the personal demographic data from respondents as well as each respondent's answer for personal crime and victimization experiences, perceptions of local crime, and experiences with police. The researchers put forth a need to consider "that community policing as a means and reduction of fear of crime as a goal are a part in the cause-effect process (Roh & Oliver, 2005)." What Roh and Oliver were trying to portray was that, in the equation of the cause-effect relationship between the two variables tested, fear of crime is itself the dependent variable to community policing, which is the independent variable. The understanding of the relationship between the two variables found through this study is important for successful implementation of community policing methods.

A review of community police programming allowed Zhao and colleagues (2002) to examine the impact of increased police presence and the effects it has on citizens' satisfaction with

police and the reduction of fear of crime. Reviewing police literature from twenty-six different states the study identified the existence of a positive relationship between police presence and the two variables. This increased presence is one of the main objectives of community policing efforts. Community policing relies heavily on the community's continued voluntary cooperation. The community-policing model is created to "enhance police visibility, identify crime specific problems, improve the overall quality of life for citizens, and allow the police to be more responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens (Zhao et al., 2002)."

Scheider and colleagues contradicted the previously mentioned findings when examining the same relationship. The study used a telephone survey to reach a large sample of residents in twelve cities. The result found evidence to support a positive relationship between perceptions of community policing practices and overall satisfaction with law enforcement. The study, however, found no statistically significant evidence when the fear of crime was included as a variable in the particular model suggesting that citizens' perceptions of police are not significantly related to levels of fear of crime (Scheider et al., 2003).

The fear of crime can increase independently from exposure to crime itself and thus a variety of police initiatives have been adopted by many police departments to aid in decreasing fear of crime and increase satisfaction with police efforts (Torres & Vogel, 2001; Williams & Plate, 1987). It is important to understand community-policing strategies for how such strategies affect the perceptions of police legitimacy because the general community is largely comparable in characteristics to the college and most university campus communities (Wada et al., 2010).

Campus Law Enforcement and Fear of Crime on Campus

The safety of the members of college and campus communities is a critical component of the foundation for the higher education learning experience. A student's personal sense of security

and safety can be conducive to positive academic performance (Bennett-Johnson, 1997). For students to feel safe and decrease fear of victimization, there must be a cooperative relationship between students and campus law enforcement agencies. Wada et al. (2010) conducted an empirical study to investigate the perceived legitimacy of campus police at an institution in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States compared to the legitimacy of local municipal police. Two surveys were given to undergraduate students of varying academic majors. Respondents returned a total of 593 usable surveys and using the four constructs of legitimacy developed by Tyler (2004), the study confirmed that "perceived legitimacy is statistically different for municipal police as compared to campus police." Student respondents viewed the local municipal police with greater authority than campus bound police (Wada et al., 2010).

Williams and Nofziger (2003) also examined the attitudes and perceptions of college students concerning the local police. The study compared different variables against the responses of both students and members of the general community surrounding the university. The results found that being a college student is related to having a decreased perception of the police. The same students were also found to be more likely to fear crime than members of the general population included in the sample (Williams & Nofziger, 2003).

The need to further professionalize campus law enforcement agencies in order to increase campus police legitimization is supported by the findings of Wilson and Wilson (2011). The study was designed to determine whether or not "campus and community constituents understood the duties and functions of campus police, levels of training required to perform those functions, and attitudes toward the arming of campus police officers." A survey questionnaire was utilized to elicit information regarding the effect of respondents' gender and race on related topics as well as gain insight into respondents' thoughts toward comparable issues facing campus police and

traditional law enforcement agencies. Questionnaires were administered to 500 faculty, staff, and students at three different state higher education institutions. The questionnaire was then sent to 1500 Rhode Island residents. The questionnaire was returned with a response rate of nineteen percent. The results found that, regardless of the knowledge that campus police officers have undergone the same level of training and are granted the same level of authority as traditional law enforcement officers, students did not view campus police officers to be equal. Respondents were in favor of the arming of campus police officers and the further professionalization of campus police agencies to reach a level of authority and power equal to outside agencies (Griffith et al., 2004; Wilson & Wilson, 2011).

Jacobsen (2014) took a different perspective in examining the true role of campus police departments. The effectiveness and legitimacy of campus police themes arose from a broad investigation of students' safety perceptions on campus. Interviews were conducted with a sample of twenty-four students and staff members, derived from a snowball sampling method, of a public university on the eastern coast of the United States. The results of interviews and focus groups formed with respondents were supplemented with data obtained through observations in the field. Student participants in the study expressed a near consensus of two different, however related, views toward campus law enforcement. The first view is that students expect campus law enforcement to "keep them safe and maintain a visible presence, so long as that presence does not interfere with their lives as college students." The second half of the results indicated that students did not cast the members of the campus police department as being "actual police officers" (Jacobsen, 2015).

Mbuba (2010) examined the perceptions of students toward campus police officers across four constructs: demographic information like race and gender, past experiences with police and

academic major. The researchers asked a series of attitudinal questions that revealed the most important predictors of perceptions toward the police were race and gender. The study found that male students that are also considered to be a racial minority are more likely to have less favorable perceptions of the police on campus. No significant evidence was found to support a relationship with past experiences with the police or academic major.

This Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between students' perceptions of campus law enforcement agencies as legitimate and the fear of crime on campus. The study also sought to examine the effects of certain individual characteristics, race and gender of the respondents, on students' levels of fear of crime. These relationships were analyzed using data obtained from students at a Southeastern public university as detailed in Chapter III. The hypotheses formulated for the present study were:

H1: Students who have an increased perception of university police legitimacy will be less fearful of crime than students who view police with a decreased perception of the university police legitimacy.

H2: Female students are more fearful of crime than male students.

H3: Nonwhite students will have decreased perceptions of university police when compared to white students.

H4: Nonwhite students will be more fearful of crime than white students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The increase in reported crimes on university campuses often accompanies an increase in the levels of fear of crime for students (Fisher, 1995). The current study utilized a survey instrument to assess the attitudes and perceptions of students toward the campus police department and the fear students may or may not experience while on campus. The goal was to assess the affects of perceived campus police legitimacy and other variables on fear of crime felt by students on campus. The use of the survey instrument, modified after a previous survey instrument developed by Crowl (2013), was employed utilizing a 5-point Lickert scale to measure the variables of fear of crime on campus and perceptions of campus law enforcement officers and a questions to measure demographic and academic variables of students (See Appendix A). The goal was to find statistically significant evidence to answer two research questions:

(1) What individual characteristics may affect the levels of fear of crime and perceptions of police legitimacy in university students?

(2) Are students' fear of crime levels affected by individual characteristics?

Data Collection

The population used for the current study includes both male and female students at a Southeastern public university. The sample was a random convenience sample of students currently attending classes during in the Spring 2016 semester. Prior to conducting the study, proper approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The method of instrumentation delivery was used to ensure the greatest sample size possible. Once the IRB's approval was received, the survey was constructed into an online format through SurveyMonkey's online software so that a link to the survey instrument could be developed that would be accessible

to all members of the study population. A request was sent the University Provost requesting permission to self report survey students by gaining access to the server containing all currently enrolled student email addresses. Permission was obtained, and the link granting access to the survey was sent in university student email addresses along with an informed consent. The distribution of the survey to the entirety of student population enrolled resulted in a convenient sample size of 260 respondents.

Dependent Variable

The extent to which an individual fears crime, or fears being victim of a crime, can vary across a number of factors. The research, discussed in great length above, defines fear of crime as the level to which an individual fears becoming the victim of a criminal act. For the purpose of this study, the level to which students fear becoming the victim of a crime while on campus is measured through a series of statements assessed on a five-point Likert scale.

Independent Variables

The aforementioned research hypotheses include the use of several different independent variables: race, gender, and police legitimacy. The most significant independent variable in this study, discussed in length in the Literature Review section, was perception of campus law enforcement legitimacy. For the purpose of this study, campus police legitimacy was defined using the definition by Suchman (1995): "the generalized perception that the actions of an entity are desirable and/or appropriate within a socially accepted norm (p. 574)." The independent variable was measured with a series of statements rated based on agreement or disagreement on a five point Likert scale. These statements dealt with several aspects of police interaction with students. These statements encouraged the respondents to indicate whether or not they agreed that police treat

students fairly, are approachable, provide quality services, care about safety, are receptive, and are efficient in their duties.

A large amount of research has suggested that a gender difference exists in the level in which an individual perceives the police or fears crime. More specifically, a plethora of research has theorized that women express greater, more positive, perception of law enforcement than men (Wilcox et al., 2007). Research has also further to suggested that individuals who identify as nonwhites/non-Caucasian possess less favorable views of the police as a legitimate authoritative body than those who identify themselves as white/Caucasian (Reid & Konrad, 2004).

Several efforts have been made across the United States to initiate more positive relations between police and citizens. The same can be said for the relations between campus police and students (Roh & Oliver, 2005). Few studies have examined the extent to which this can affect the perceptions an individual has of police.

Analytic Strategy

In addition to descriptive statistical frequencies, a multiple linear regression model was used to study the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This multivariate analyses attempts to model the relationship when two or more independent variables are present. The analysis fits a linear equation to the data obtained through the survey. Each value for the independent variables are associated with a value of the dependent variables. In this case each data point for race, gender, and fear of crime is associated with a level of perceived police legitimacy. The analysis was used for this study because the dependent variable is measured ordinally in the survey.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to examine what effect the variables race, gender, and perceptions of police legitimacy had on the variable of fear of crime in order to test the aforementioned hypotheses. First, distributive statistics were used to examine the results of the self-report survey. Descriptive information was then followed by a multiple linear regression analysis utilized to further explore the relationship between variables. The results are as follows.

Univariate Statistics

Frequency distributions and basic descriptives were applied to the dependent and independent variables in the research. The sample population for this study consisted of 260 valid responses. Respondents' gender within the sample consisted of 33.7% males and 66.3% females. The age of respondents ranges from the age of 18 years to the age of 70 years with the majority 67.3% falling at the age of 25 years or younger. The distribution for race of respondents was 90.7% white and 9.3% nonwhite. Table 1 displays basic demographic frequencies from respondents.

Table 1. Demographics (Gender, Age, and Race)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	83	33.7
Female	163	66.3
Total	246	100.0
Age (in years)		
18-25	163	65.7
26-33	48	19.4
34-41	25	10.1
42-49	6	2.4
50-57	3	1.2
58-65	2	0.8
66-73	1	0.4

Table 1. (Continued)

Total	248	100.0
Race		
White	225	90.7
Non-White	23	9.3
Total	248	100.0

Independent Variable

A Likert scale used to measure the degree to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements being made. Respondents who indicated a strong disagreement with the statement were coded as one, those respondents who indicated strong agreement with the statements were coded with a five. Therefore, higher scores are indicative of more favorable views towards campus police. The Cronbach alpha score of this scale was acceptable (a = .947). The scale additionally produced a mean score of 3.69.

As shown in Table 2, the results of the self-report survey indicate that the students that responded possess an overall favorable opinion of campus police. The agreement with the statements in the survey begins to increase slightly when the statements address the efficiency for which campus police conduct responsibilities of the occupation. The results show an increased rate of "neither" responses indicated that respondents neither disagree nor agree with the statements. This is indicative of the absence of negative perceptions of police. Respondents did not disagree that officers were legitimate sources of authority on campus. There are increased numbers of respondents that agree university campus police officers are equal in authority to police officers in the surrounding community. This contradicts past studies discussed in the literature review that found students in other populations to perceive officers as less legitimate than officers from the surrounding community (Jacobsen, 2014).

Table 2. University Police Legitimacy

Scale Item	SD %(N)	D %(N)	Neither %(N)	A %(N)	SA %(N)	Mean (SD)
Campus police officers treat students fairly.	2.3% (6)	4.6% (12)	32.4% (84)	43.2% (112)	17.4% (45)	3.7 (.89)
Officers are friendly and approachable.	2.7% (7)	7.7% (20)	30.5% (79)	43.6% (113)	15.4% (40)	3.6 (.93)
Officers provide quality services to students.	2.3% (6)	5.8% (15)	29.3% (76)	45.6% (118)	17.0% (44)	3.7 (.90)
Officers care about the safety of students.	3.1% (8)	1.5% (4)	23.2% (60)	44.0% (114)	28.2% (73)	3.9 (.92)
Officers are receptive to the needs of students.	2.3% (6)	5.0% (13)	34.5% (89)	43.4% (112)	14.7% (38)	3.6 (.88)
Officers do an efficient job preventing crime on campus.	3.9% (10)	14.7% (38)	33.6% (87)	35.9% (93)	12.0% (31)	3.4 (1.00)
Officers investigate crimes that occur on campus efficiently.	4.6% (12)	6.2% (16)	42.5% (110)	32.8% (85)	13.9% (36)	3.5 (.96)
Officers efficiently solve crimes that occur on campus.	3.5% (9)	6.6% (17)	48.4% (125)	29.5% (76)	12.0% (31)	3.4 (.90)
Officers enforce university policies in a consistent manner.	4.7% (12)	7.0% (18)	31.8% (82)	41.1% (106)	15.5% (40)	3.6 (.99)
Officers respond to service calls in a timely manner.	4.3% (11)	3.5% (9)	37.4% (96)	38.1% (98)	16.7% (43)	3.6 (.95)
Campus police are real police officers equal in authority to police officers in a surrounding community.	5.1% (13)	15.2% (39)	21.0% (54)	35.8% (92)	23.0% (59)	3.6 (1.15)

Dependent Variables

A five-point Likert scale was also employed to account for the degree to which students fear crime, or becoming the victim of a crime, while on campus. The response choices were: not at all afraid (NA), somewhat not afraid (SNA), neither afraid or unafraid (Neither), somewhat afraid (SA), and very afraid (VA). Higher scores indicate a increased level of fear by the respondent given the statement. Respondents were asked to read each statement carefully and respond with the level of fear they feel on a typical day that each scenario could occur while on campus. Table 3 displays the descriptive statistical frequencies for the statements that referred to fear of crime on the self-report survey. The Cronbach alpha score of this scale was acceptable (a = .919). The scale additionally produced a mean score of 2.76. The mean score shows that the average respondent reported a fear of crime level between neither afraid or unafraid and somewhat afraid.

The results shown in Table 3 show a significant number of respondents experiencing fear of crime while on campus. The decreased number of respondents reporting that they are not afraid or somewhat not afraid of property crime committed at the respondents place of residence is possibly due to the respondents place of residence being off campus. There is a significant increase in fear of crime for statements that included victimization during the nighttime hours. The setting for this study differs during the nighttime hours from the daytime. There are less people present on the campus and some areas are have less lighting than other areas. This is a possible reason for the increase in fear doing the night. There is largest fear response was for the fear that someone will physically harm the respondent during the night while on campus (59.2%). There campus has seen an increase in reported sexual assaults on campus that could be the cause of the second highest reported fear being the respondents fear of someone attempting to sexually assault the respondent

during the night while on campus (52.2%). Low levels of fear were reported for physical attacks

(19.7%) and sexual assaults (17.6%) during the day while on campus.

Table 3. Fear of Crime

Scale Item	NA %(N)	SNA %(N)	Neither %(N)	SA %(N)	VA %(N)	Mean (SD)
Someone breaking into your current place of residence without your consent or knowledge.	27.6% (69)	24.8% (62)	14.0% (35)	28.4% (71)	5.3% (13)	2.6 (1.3)
Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property from your place of residence without your consent.	29.2% (73)	21.2% (53)	16.8% (42)	27.6% (69)	5.2% (13)	2.6 (1.3)
Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property from your vehicle while it is present on campus without your consent.	14.1% (35)	23.3% (58)	14.9% (37)	38.6% (96)	9.2% (23)	3.1 (1.2)
Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property off of your person without your consent.	29.6% (74)	22.0% (55)	13.2% (33)	26.0% (65)	9.2% (23)	2.6 (1.4)
Something physically attacking you during the day while on campus.	40.6% (101)	25.7% (64)	14.1% (35)	13.3% (33)	6.4% (16)	2.2 (1.3)
Someone physically attacking you during the night while one campus.	14.8% (37)	16.4% (41)	9.6% (24)	36.4% (91)	22.8% (57)	3.4 (1.2)
Someone attempting to sexually assault you during the day while on campus.	45.2% (113)	24.0% (60)	13.2% (33)	11.6% (29)	6.0% (15)	2.1 (1.3)
Someone attempting to sexually assault you during the night while on campus.	28.5% (71)	10.4% (26)	8.8% (22)	30.9% (77)	21.3% (53)	3.1 (1.6)

Multivariate Statistics

Multiple linear regression models are employed when predicting the values of one variable

from the values of two or more other variables. The modeling technique is appropriate for the

studying the relationship between student perceptions of university police legitimacy and the level

of fear of crime felt by students because of the model explains relationships when one continuous dependent variable is being tested against multiple independent variables. A multiple linear regression was conducted in the current study to analyze the results of the first hypothesis. The confidence interval for the test was set to 95% meaning that there is a 95% chance that the range of mean values will fall within the true population mean. Table 4 displays the R Squared value, which demonstrates the proportion of variance between the fears of crime that can be explained by variation in perceptions of university police legitimacy (R Squared= 20.8%). The standard error (SE) estimates the margin of error for prediction. The results show that the data can be generalized to the population of the students with 96.5% accuracy (Fox, Levin, & Forde, 2014).

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to measure the relationship between discrete independent variables, in this case the perceptions of police legitimacy, and the dependent variable of fear. It is appropriate to use in this study to examine the correlates between the variables. The significance level (Sig.) demonstrates the presence of a significant linear regression between the perceptions of university police officers and the reported fear levels of students. The yielded F ratio compares the variation between groups and the variance within groups. The F ratio demonstrates that at the .05 level of significance, fear of crime is affected by gender, race, and perceptions of legitimacy (Cronk, 2012).

Table 4 is the final step of confirming the relationship hypothesized to exist between legitimacy and fear while also controlling for gender and race of respondents. The theoretical equation for determining multiple regression is $Y'=B_0+B_1X_1+B_2X_2+B_3X_3+B_ZX_Z+E$. In this equation the Y' expresses the dependent variable, Xs are the independent variable, and Z is the number of independent variables (z=3). Gender is the largest predictor of fear of crime levels.

There exists a negative, yet weak, relationship between the variables ($Y=4.03-0.180X_1-0.972X_2-0.391X_3$).

To a small but significant degree, the research supports the findings for the hypotheses in the current study. However, the variance in race within the sample was not significant enough for addition testing for the effects of the variable. The university from which the sample population was drawn has a total student population comparable to most midsized universities ($N=13,727$). According to university wide demographic information, approximately 81% of the student population identifies as being White or Caucasian. As displayed in Table 1, the sample of Non-White students was not large enough to run through statistical models with any significance.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients Predicting Fear of Crime

Item	B	SE
Gender	-0.428	.000
Race	-0.105	.075
Legitimacy	-0.130	.028
Constant	4.030	.377
R^2	0.208	.965
F	20.430	.000

Hypotheses three and four hypothesized relationships specific to the effect of race on other variables. There was a lack of diversity in the responses for race due to the homogeneity of the sample. The university from which the sample was drawn has a population that identifies as mostly white or Caucasian. For the Spring 2016 semester, 81.5% of the enrolled student population was white. Within the sample, 90.7% of the population was white. The results of the race variable was not diverse enough for the hypothesized relationships to be tested with statistical significance.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to add to the limited amount of literature about the perceptions that students possess towards the law enforcement officers specifically charged with the duty of protecting students. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the perceived legitimacy of university police officers and fear of crime. Statistical analyses also analyzed the effect of other demographic variables.

As previously stated, criminological research suggests the existing impact that an individuals view of law enforcement can have on the individuals' feeling of emotions such as fear. Interest into the crime that occurs on campuses specifically has surged over the past few decades in response to high profile criminal acts (Scheider et al., 2003). Highly concentrated areas of greatly diverse populations such as college campus leave campus law enforcement departments in a unique situation when it comes to efficiently providing safety programming for all members of the university community.

The assumption that student perceptions and demographics would impact student fear of crime was quantitatively analyzed against multiple hypotheses. The current study employed a multiple linear regression model to test for the relationships between the variables. Wilson and Wilson (2011) suggested college students attribute the same respect and perceive the level of authority to university campus police as students show towards city or state police in the surrounding community although others studies found opposite results (Jacobsen, 2014; Wilson, 2011). The results of the current study suggest that for the population studied, this assumption is not likely. Results show a higher percent of respondents reporting agreement with the statement that campus police are equal in authority to other officers. Overall results of the study revealed that

students who perceive campus police as being more legitimate are less fearful of crime however, the results have illustrated that legitimacy is not as strong predictor as gender. The relationship, while there is evidence of its existence in the results, is weak. In fact, according to the results, legitimacy was consistently the second strongest variable while controlling for other additional constructs. This result suggests that citizen perceptions of police do effect fear of crime regardless of strength of its effect.

A logical possible explanation for the findings relates to the location for which the respondent population was drawn from. The university of interest maintains a relatively safe environment. The city in which the university is located sees relatively less crime when compared to most cities for which universities are located. Crime generally less on college campuses nationwide (Crowl, 2013; Roh & Oliver, 2005). Students may exhibit lower levels of fear then the remainder of the community.

Several individual demographic characteristics were included in the current study as possible correlates for predicting students' levels of fear of crime on campus. Gender emerged as a significant predictor of fear of crime. The results indicated that female respondents report a higher level of fear of crime during routine activities of a typical day on campus. Other factors were examined through the survey which further indicated that student respondents fear becoming involved in crime during night time hours when compared to the daytime hours. The university that served as the location for this study does not have as diverse of a population as many universities in the United States. The lack of influence or face on the levels of fear of crime is likely due to the lack of racial diversity within the sample population.

Limitations of the Study

Quality research is not without limitations. The current study cannot be used to make significant causal inferences. The study did not employ any form of temporal ordering and therefore does not utilize the components necessary for statistical causal inferences using the present variables. The primary focus however was the examination of certain constructs and their effects on fear of crime.

Current foreseeable limitations are largely due to the time constraints placed on the data collection process. These time constraints could lead to certain restrictions to sampling size. The email that was sent to university email addresses was sent on the same day as multiple other survey bearing emails. The oversaturation of the sample population is a possible limitation. The strict time constraints did not permit for additional measures to be taken in order to obtain a larger sample size. The sample population was large enough for statistical analysis however, when compared to the total number of possible respondents within the population, the response rate is very low, approximately 2.1% response rate. This makes results difficult to generalize to the entirety of the population of the university. Accordingly, the unique demographics of the university, the limited diversity and female majority, indicate that the results are not fully representative of student populations at other universities across the United States. The homogeneity of the sample is a strong concern.

There was a general lack of knowledge reported by respondents about the authority granted to university law enforcement officers. The officers employed by the university in the study achieve the same police training as police officers in the outside community. Students being unaware of this may effect the overall legitimacy of the officers from the student perspective. Respondents seem to shift in their perceptions of officers when asked about the efficiency of

officers when conducting the duties of their position. The university immediately reports the commission of a reported crime to the student population but does not follow up with the results of the investigation or the actions taken by police. This could be a cause for students viewing campus police as inefficient.

Implications

Crime and safety are important concerns on university campuses. Ensuring the safety of the entire university campus can prove to be difficult for university law enforcement entities due to the growing and fast changing environments. The responsibility of the university campus officers to man such small departments yet consistently ensure safety of not just students but faculty and staff as well is certainly not an easy responsibility to bear. The focus of university police departments to embrace ongoing efforts to ensure safety for the entire campus can help lower the extent to which students fear crime.

The results of this study suggest that there are some improvements that could be made to strengthen the relationship between university campus police officers and students. This strengthening process should start with ensuring that all students are made aware of the efforts toward ensuring their safety. The university in this study takes several efforts to ensure safety from an automated system that sends texts messages and emails to students when there is an immediate threat to their safety to the presence of several emergency towers placed randomly throughout the campus and parking lots that sound an alarm and immediately notifies campus law enforcement when the emergency panic button is pressed.

The university is in a more rural area. The perceptions of police in such areas differ than those of officers in larger cities. This research can help to inform university police of the factors that help to influence the fear students have that they will become victim of a crime. Some findings

suggest that an increase in police presence during nighttime hours may make a difference in ensuring the safety of students. The safety efforts taken have most likely gone unnoticed on the campus due to the increase in reported sexual assaults over the past five years on the campus. This has increased attention to safety issues and heightened students sensitivity to crime and safety issues.

There needs to be a greater effort to education students of safety programming on campus. Increasing students knowledge of the opportunities such as students abilities to call university campus police for a ride to their car from any campus building could decrease fear of crime. This added education, that could be implemented during freshman orientation, should include focus on female students. Maps that indicate the location of university campus police offices and emergency alert towers could prove beneficial if placed in visible locations of added to the cellular application the university maintains for student access. The university could also increase encouragement that students sign up for emergency alert text messages that is offered through the university system so that students can be made aware of potential threats as soon as the threats are reported to university campus police. Safety and security efforts will be more effective if students know the options to them.

<div align="center">**Conclusion**</div>

Campus law enforcement officers reside over one of the most distinctly unique constituencies in the nation (Jacobsen, 2015). Perceptions of on-campus law enforcement agencies and the authority which they possess is a highly contested issue and the university in this study is no exception. Fear of crime amongst students is a significant social issue that impacts the entire population. The continuation of research into the area of fear of crime to further the development of safety initiatives and programming is of vital importance.

The findings in the current study demonstrate statistical support for the impact that multiple correlates have on the levels of fear of crime. The results suggest that gender and perceptions of campus police legitimacy are statistically significant predictors of fear of crime. Fostering a relationship of trust between officers and students is a difficult task. These university campus police officers are responsible for the safety of students but a lack of trust between the members of the campus community and the officers could hinder safety efforts. University law enforcement should consider addressing key factors that affect the perceived authority they possess and the fear of crime students feel while on campus such as the time of day and the gender of students.

Researching fear amongst students is not an easy task. Over the past fifty years, colleges and universities have seen an increase in student enrollments expanding the duties and responsibilities placed on the university campus officers (Zhao et al., 2002). With the diversity of student populations expanding and increased rates of reported crime on campus, new approaches to campus law enforcement are necessary. As nationwide efforts toward guaranteeing a right to free or reasonable education continues, there needs to be further research into the areas addressed in this study.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

The following survey is designed to measure students' views of university police and campus life. For this study, university police should be only considered as those police officers that are employed by the university.

Directions: Please mark the appropriate response for each question included in this survey. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher for assistance. The survey should take about fifteen minutes to complete.

Section 1: Perceptions of Campus Police

This section is designed to measure your views of the campus law enforcement department. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.) Campus police officers treat students fairly.					
2.) Officers are friendly and approachable.					
3.) Officers provide quality services to students.					
4.) Officers care about the safety of students.					
5.) Officers are receptive to the needs of students.					
6.) Officers do an efficient job preventing crime on campus.					
7.) Officers investigate crimes that occur on campus efficiently.					
8.) Officers efficiently solve crimes that occur on campus.					
9.) Officers enforce university policies in a consistent manner.					
10.) Officers respond to service calls in a timely manner.					

Section 2: Fear of Crime

This section contains points to assess your fears and concerns about crime. Please respond as truthfully as possible. Please indicate the extent to which you fear or do not fear the following actions.

How afraid are you that the following actions could happen to you?

Statement	Not Afraid at all	Somewhat Not Afraid	Neither Afraid or Unafraid	Somewhat Afraid	Very Afraid
11.) Someone breaking into your current place of residence without your consent or knowledge.					
12.) Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property from your place of residence without your consent.					
13.) Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property from your vehicle while it is present on campus without your consent.					
14.) Someone taking, or attempting to take, your personal property off of your person without your consent.					
15.) Someone physically attacking you *during the day*.					
16.) Someone physically attacking you *during the night*.					
17.) Someone attempting to sexually assault you *during the day*.					
18.) Someone attempting to sexually assault you *during the night*.					

Section 3: Background Information

The following section includes several questions relating to your personal background. Please answer each question carefully and as honestly as possible.

19.) What is your current age? _____

20.) What gender do you identify as?

_____ Male
_____ Female

21.) What race do you most identify with?

_____ White / Caucasian
_____ Black / African-American
_____ Asian / Pacific Islander
_____ Hispanic / Latino / Latina
_____ Other – *Please Specify* _____

22.) Which of the following best describes your *current* living arrangement

_____ Live alone on campus.
_____ Live with roommate(s) on campus
_____ Live alone off campus
_____ Live with a relative (i.e. parent or family member) off campus
_____ Live with roommate(s) off campus

23.) What is your current major or degree field? _____

24.) What is your current class standing?

_____ Freshman (0-29 credits)
_____ Sophomore (30-59 credits)
_____ Junior (60-89 credits)
_____ Senior (90 credits and above)
_____ Graduate Student

<u>Appendix B: Informed Consent</u>

Research Project: Student views of the campus police and its impact on fear of crime.

Name of Study: Policing Postsecondary Education: University Police Legitimacy and Fear of Crime on Campus

You are invited to participate in a research study on fear of crime and its relationship with perceptions of university police. The following information is provided in order to assist you to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate in the current study. You are eligible to participate in this study if you are currently enrolled as a student for the Spring 2016 term at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) and currently the age eighteen years or older.

For data collection purposes, you will be asked to complete a self-report survey that will take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The information obtained from this study may assist scholars and criminal justice practitioners in their efforts to understand crime and the dynamic factors that contribute to fear of crime among individuals, specifically college students.

Participation in this study is strictly **voluntary**. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will not affect your current status or relations with the university. Your refusal to participate in this study will not result in a loss of benefits to which you are entitled, nor will it provide you with any further benefits to which you may or may not be entitled. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time by submitting an incomplete or blank survey. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be considered in combination with the responses provided by other participants.

The information obtained from this study may later be published in a journal and/or presented at an academic conference, but any information that would make it possible to reveal your identity will remain confidential. By completing this survey, you are giving the researchers named below consent to use your responses.

The survey may be accessed by copying and pasting the following link into the address bar of your web browser:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNFJT8H

You are free to ask questions that you may have regarding this research at any time. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the individuals below:

Christina Barker
Criminal Justice, MA Student
Department of Criminal Justice
Email: barkerc@goldmail.etsu.edu

Dr. Larry Miller, Ph.D.
Department of Criminal Justice
East Tennessee State University
Rogers-Stout Hall, Room 201
Email: millers@etsu.edu

VITA

CHRISTINA NOELLE BARKER

Personal Data:

Date of birth: December 15, 1989

Place of birth: Atlanta, GA

Education:

Winter Haven High School, Winter Haven, FL 2008

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN:

B.S. Psychology and Political Science, May 2013

M.A. Criminal Justice and Criminology, August 2016

Professional Experience:

Graduate Assistant

Vice President for Health Affairs and Chief Operating

Officer

Research Projects:

"Policing Postsecondary Education: University Police Legitimacy

and Fear of Crime on Campus" Masters Thesis

Honors and Awards

East Tennessee State University Student Government Association

Senator of the Year, 2013

East Tennessee State University "The One to Watch," 2012

American Legion Medal of Leadership, 2008

Military Officers Association of America Leadership Award, 2008