The Officers' Perspective of Academy Training and Transferability of Knowledge: Comparing the Effectiveness of Pedagogical to an Andragogical Method of Instruction

by

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Abstract

The training for law enforcement officers has a history steeped in a militaristic style method that has not evolved, even though demands have been made for the profession to evolve. There have been numerous calls for change regarding the training officers receive. However, most police academies remain anchored in a teaching methodology rooted in pedagogy. In the past decade there have been a number of high-profile instances of police brutality and some of these incidents led to the death of innocent citizens. The findings of the investigations conducted after these occurrences have reached a similar conclusion – there is a failure to train officers properly. The skills officers use the most, communicating and problem solving, when interacting with the communities they serve, are the skills that get the least amount of focus during academy training. This study was conducted to determine whether the opinions of police officers early in their careers reflect a belief that the academy training they received prepared them to perform their duties effectively during real-world scenarios. A sample was obtained of police officers in the state of Alabama to determine if the opinions differed among various demographics. The demographics were categorized by groups with and without military backgrounds, male and female, those with various levels of education, and by race/ethnicity. For the groups comprised of male and female, and military experience and no military experience, independent-sample t-tests were conducted. For the groups comprised of multiple levels of education and race/ethnicity, re-coding of variables was conducted, and independent-sample t-tests were conducted to obtain statistical data allowing comparisons between the groups. There were no statistically significant differences observed between the groups related to their opinions about academy training. However, this research is the first step in a process to hopefully expand the

study of training on police officers and assist the profession in evolving to provide the quality police service expected and deserved by citizens.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

In recent years, the names Eric Garner, George Floyd, Philando Castile, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, have led to protests and civil unrest across the United States, and raised the question of adequacy pertaining to police training (Subramanian & Arzy, 2021). However, the question regarding the adequacy of training, or lack thereof, in law enforcement has long been at the forefront of discussions related to officers' performance, competence, and public trust (Executive Order, 2020).

Historically, most police training was taught in a uniformed manner with little regard for individual differences in learners (Birzer, 2003). The 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recognized and discussed various issues faced by police related to training (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). While striving to address negative public outcries of police brutality and misconduct during the civil unrest of the 1960s, The Commission determined that police training should expose officers to topics that will prepare them to exercise discretion and understand the full role of what law enforcement professionals could and could not do (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). The focus should be on problem-solving scenarios throughout the training process (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967).

More than five decades later, The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, determined that training for police officers should impart officers with the knowledge and ability to recognize factors that may affect how best to treat members of the community while protecting all stakeholders (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015). The Task

Force's recommendations included training topics such as those that addressed procedural justice, implicit-bias, and de-escalation (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015). The training should also seek to assist officers in better understanding people with mental and physical disabilities; all fused with a portion of the training being delivered through technology (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

In 2020, a Presidential Executive Order on policing mandated that police assess and improve law enforcement practices (Executive Order, 2020). This was a result of the executive order citing several reasons, such as officers misusing their authority, and challenging the trust of the citizenry (Executive Order, 2020). The executive order calls for police to better address the conditions of homelessness, mental health, and addiction (Executive Order, 2020). To address the suggested training requirements and educational needs of police officers, the President's Commission of 1976, the 2015 President's Task Force, and the 2020 Presidential Executive Order all call upon the various States' Police Officer Training and Standards (POST) Commissions to implement solutions for change and improvement (Executive Order, 2020; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015; & President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967).

Every state has a Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, to include the state of Alabama. The Alabama Commission was established by State Legislation in 1982 and codified in Title 36 of the Code of Alabama (Benefield, 2023; Code of Alabama Title 36). This governing body determines what is to be taught to police officers during basic or academy training, for trainees to obtain certification as Police Officers (Code of Alabama, Title 36).

Law Enforcement in a Dynamic World

The intimate interaction between the police and the citizens they serve should not be overstated (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). Police deal with citizens when they are both threatening and vulnerable (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). Most police training focuses on the apprehension and prosecution of criminals, while the legal limitations on street level policing and the proper use of discretion is not so often stressed (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). This underlines the importance of basic recruit training, laying the foundation of knowledge and skills that officers need to perform their duties effectively and safely (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022). However, police recruits continue to be trained more like military recruits in boot camp than like public servants and problem-solvers in a more educationally based setting (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022).

The Traditional Training Paradigm

Traditional lecture-based training has long been the bedrock of police education. Most traditional training required police officers be trained in self-defense, making physical arrests, and firearms use (Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, & Hutter, 2022). The police academies are responsible for teaching basic skills to adults entering the profession of law enforcement (Birzer, 2003). Most of the material is presented pedagogically through a militaristic, rote style that relays to the learner what they must learn (Birzer, 2003). Through the pedagogical model, the student is completely dependent on the teacher, learners have limited experience and are learning what they are told they need to know (Knowles, 1989). As a result, the strict para-military model goes against the principles of adult learning theory and is incompatible with preparing recruits to effectively engage in modern police strategies (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021). In

short, the recruits' training does not focus enough on decision-making, communications, and other critical skills that officers use every day (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021).

The Rise of Adult Learning Principles in Law Enforcement

The theory of adult learning principles or "andragogy" is a teaching methodology designed around the unique learning characteristics of adults (Birzer, 2003; Knowles, 1989). Recognizing that adults come into learning environments with previous experiences, andragogy emphasizes a learner-centered approach (Knowles, 1990). For learners, this means training programs that integrate their real-world experiences, allowing them to draw from past incidents or challenges (Knowles, 1990). Such programs encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and experiential learning—skills that are crucial for officers operating in today's complex environments (Birzer, 2003).

The Imperative for Hands-on, Experience-Based Training

Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, and Hutter, (2022), indicated that for success in police training, the focus on additional skills such as communications, problem-solving, and decision-making are critical for recruits to learn. Given the unpredictability and diversity of situations officers face, experience-based training becomes indispensable (Birzer, 2003). Scenarios and simulations allow officers to hone their skills in controlled environments, preparing them for real-world challenges (Birzer, 2003). This prepares recruits to perform as officers with a "guardian mentality" (Stoughton, 2015). The guardian's performance is rooted in benevolence, and fair-mindedness (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). However, if recruits are constantly exposed to an autocratic, prescriptive, and discipline-oriented environment, they will provide police services in a way that models what is known as the

"warrior mentality" (Stoughton, 2015). The warrior mentality refers to a mindset recruits are encouraged to adopt that views the citizens they serve as dangerous suspects capable of killing them (Stoughton, 2015), which is contrary to the guardian frame of mind.

The shift towards hands-on training would foster adaptability, a trait essential for modern law enforcement personnel (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). However, adaptability and conscientiousness are not cultivated in a traditional para-military police academy (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Research has shown that the combination of lecture and theoretical classroom discussions, along with practical application of theoretical knowledge into simulated training environments has proven effective in improving learning, job performance and officers' capacity to translate what they retain into practice (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019).

In conclusion, while traditional training methods have served law enforcement well for years, the previous state of recruit training demanded that we rethink and restructure the system for how police officers are trained (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021). The culture of police training has gradually shifted to one rooted in academic inquiry and developing recruits' critical-thinking and decision-making skills, as well as their physical fitness and discipline (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

While police training topics have changed dramatically in the past decades, the way in which police recruits are trained has not (Police Executive Research Forum, 2020). Police recruits are still trained more like soldiers in boot-camp than like public servants and problem-solvers (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022). Traditional training methodologies, while

standardized, may not capture the attention or engagement of recruits, and assist them in retaining more of what they are taught (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022). Thus, training may be enhanced by allowing trainees to participate in self-directed group discourse within the context of the classroom (Birzer, 2003). Police officer training should dedicate its focus on acquiring skills and scenarios that officers are most likely to encounter (Council on Criminal Justice, 2021). However, there is a lack of research pertaining to effective police training methods.

The Evolution of Training Programs

In the United States, the profession of policing has existed for more than 150 years, however, most departments did not offer formalized training until the 1960s (White & Escobar, 2008). Effective training is a critical issue and represents the foundation of the professional and effective police department (White, & Escobar, 2008). Over the decades, the approach to training officers has seen numerous shifts, with each era introducing its own techniques and focal points (E.O., 2020; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). However, many police training academies continue to cling to concepts and approaches that are not serving recruits or their agencies well (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022). Most academies continue to be closed, insular environments where discipline, not academic inquiry, or critical thinking, is the focus (Police Executive Research Forum, 2022).

The Shortcomings of Traditional Training

Traditionally, police training has been grounded in a pedagogical methodology (Birzer, 2003). In this method, uniformity and recruits held to a high standard of discipline, deportment and regimentation are the standard (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Although there is a need for discipline and deportment within the academy, this methodology lacks the attention to individual differences in learning styles, personalities, personal skills, and life experience (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019).

Most of the criticism of the traditional training model comes from police officers when asked to reflect on the relevance of their academy training (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Traditional training equipped these officers with a warrior mentality, with little emphasis on a broader development of other skills (Stoughton, 2015). In an environment where officers are expected to be pro-active, traditional training is reactive (Birzer, 2003). Within police training academies, there is a need to shift from the pedagogical approach (White & Escobar, 2008).

With the addition of training topics expected to bring about change in police conduct to enhance public trust, the training style at basic training academies remains pedagogical. Table 1 below (Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission 560 Hour Basic Training Curriculum, 2022) shows the section of the curriculum where the skills mentioned in the previous paragraph are outlined.

Table 1

Alabama Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission Soft Skills Curriculum

Communications and Conflict Resolution Skills	**Number of Hours Taught**
Foundation of Effective Communications	12
Conflict Resolution & De-escalation	8
Mental Health Awareness & Behavioral Health Issues	16
Interview Skills	4
Implicit Bias	4
Recognizing and Managing Stress	2
Call Response & Patrol Strategies	4
Community & Media Relations	1
Preventing Harassment & Discrimination	1
Police Radio Communications	2
Assisting Victims of Crime and Leniency	2
Total Hours	**56**

The complete training curriculum shows that the recruits are exposed to 48 hours of "self-defense skills" compared to a mere 56 total hours of combined on eleven different topics (Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission 560 Hour Basic Training Curriculum, 2022) that comprise the majority of police duties, and these topics are delivered in a pedagogical format.

Adult Learning Principles

Training programs centered around adult learning principles, or andragogy, represent a progressive step in recognizing the unique attributes adult learners bring to the table (Knowles, 1990). This methodology emphasizes collaborative learning, critical thinking, and the application of prior knowledge (Knowles, 1990). In theory, the andragogical approach seems tailor-made for

law enforcement training, given that police officers encounter complex and dynamic incidents, where decision-making, situational awareness, and communication skills might be decisive in the outcome (Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, & Hutter, 2022).

While a shift from the traditional training methodology holds significant promise, the actual impact within the law enforcement context is still a subject of debate. Is andragogy truly more effective in fostering engagement? Does training through an andragogical model translate to better on-the-job performance? These are questions yet to be comprehensively answered.

Purpose of the Study

To refine or determine to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel, we must determine the recruits' perception of the benefit of the different methods in real world application. An observation of how the perception of the andragogical methodology could or has influenced decision-making, responsiveness, and overall competence in the field must be conducted. Only with such a nuanced understanding can we craft training programs that truly resonate with officers and adequately prepare them for the challenges they face daily.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the traditional or pedagogical method of police training—specifically, lecture-based training versus, an andragogical method of training grounded in adult learning principles—and their influence on officer engagement and performance. Further, this research aims to understand how perceived engagement during training translates to officer performance and competence in real-world scenarios. Training in law enforcement is not merely an exercise in imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of

challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. This study, at its core, seeks to discern the perceived impact of these methodologies on recruits' engagement during training and job performance post-training.

Lecture-based training, which has been the mainstay for many institutions, operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, its top-down approach might not always facilitate active participation or deep engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

Contrastingly, training anchored in adult learning principles operates on the premise that adults bring a rich tapestry of experiences to their learning environment (Knowles, 1989). Such training emphasizes collaboration, self-directed learning, and the application of existing knowledge to new scenarios (Purwati, Mardhiah, Nurhasanah, & Ramli, 2022). This approach potentially fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment (Knowles, 1980). However, the question remains: Does this methodology lead to learners' self-perceived engagement, understanding and skill acquisition?

Engagement during training, while crucial, is just one piece of the puzzle. The goal of any police training program is to ensure that officers can effectively translate what they have learned into actionable skills in the field for a particular job (Tovar, 2023). This study, therefore, goes beyond mere engagement metrics. It seeks to draw a through-line from the type of training received to its real-world applications. Which training methodology best prepares officers to perform and respond to high-pressure situations? Which method assists with their decision-

making? Do they demonstrate higher levels of competence and adaptability when exposed to one or the other methodology?

By comparing traditional training to methods grounded in adult learning principles, this study will illuminate the strengths and potential shortcomings of each approach. More importantly, by linking training methodologies to real-world performance, it aims to provide actionable insights that can shape the future of training interventions in law enforcement. This research is not just about understanding what works—it is about crafting a roadmap for training that genuinely empowers recruits to excel in their future roles as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. **Prior Military Experience and Perception of law Enforcement Training Adequacy:** Does prior military experience influence law enforcement officers' perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?
2. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement officers based on Gender:** Do perceptions of adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary between genders, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?
3. **Educational Background and Training Perception in Law Enforcement:** Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background?

4. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement Officers based on Race:** How do perceptions of law enforcement training differ between minority and non-minority officers, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

Significance of the Study

This research has several implications, which are related to operational, pedagogical, and public trust:

Operational Implications: Training is a critically critical issue for the police that represents the foundation of the profession (White & Escobar, 2008). Training plays a pivotal role in shaping efficiency. By discerning which training methodologies resonate most with officers, this research can pave the way for more sophisticated, tailored training programs. The ripple effect of such enhanced programs is profound—better trained officers can navigate the multifaceted challenges of their roles with increased competence, ensuring not only their safety but also the well-being of the communities they serve.

Pedagogical Implications: Every educational setting is unique, and the world of law enforcement provides a distinct backdrop against which adult learning principles can be studied. This research, thus, offers educators and curriculum developers a fresh lens. Observing how adult learning plays out in the high-stakes dynamic environment of policing can offer invaluable insights, potentially requiring the broadening of the current pedagogical strategies used in many police training academies.

Public Trust: Just as including additional training topics in the curriculum to increase new recruits' exposure to various issues they will face during their post-academy careers, the training can also assist them in future interactions with the community (TCR Staff, 2021). This

may have the added benefit of restoring trust in the policing agencies and ensuring officers are accountable for their behavior (TCR Staff, 2021). Trust and legitimacy grow from positive interactions based on more than enforcement (President's Task Force on 21 Century Police, 2015). By attempting to identify the training methodology that best provides officers with the skills that foster public trust, this study indirectly contributes to nurturing the delicate, crucial bond between the police force and the citizenry.

Limitations of the Study

While this study aims to provide insights into training methodologies and their impact, there are several limitations to consider:

Sample Diversity: While every effort is made to ensure the research sample is representative, the inherent limitations of geographical and precinct-specific data collection mean that extrapolating the findings to a broader, global, context should be approached with caution. Different regions or countries might have unique cultural, operational, or regulatory nuances that influence training and performance, potentially limiting the generalizability of the study's conclusions.

Self-reporting Bias: Human beings, by nature, have subjective perceptions of their performance and experiences. Self-reported data are often argued to be unreliable and threatened by reporting bias (Althubaiti, 2016). This study leans on officers' self-reports, which, while valuable, might occasionally skew towards either overconfidence or undue self-criticism. When correctly used, self-reporting data can be valuable in obtaining subjects' perspectives, views, and opinions (Althubaiti, 2016). Since biases can introduce nuances into the data, necessitating a careful interpretation of the findings is imperative.

The multifaceted Nature of Performance: An officer's performance on duty is a complex interplay of numerous factors. While training undeniably plays a pivotal role, other elements, ranging from the ethos of the law enforcement agency to personal life experiences come into play. An example was provided by a Police Executive Research Forum survey in which fewer than one third of respondents said that the culture of the training academy aligned with the culture of their agency (PERF, 2021). This study, while comprehensive, does not claim to account for every single variable that impacts officer performance.

In synthesizing these insights, this study carves out a niche in the broader discourse on law enforcement training. While the revelations promise to be transformative, they also serve as a springboard for more nuanced, in-depth explorations in the future, continually refining our understanding of what it takes to train a modern law enforcement officer effectively.

Organization of the Study

This study is structured into five distinct chapters to provide clarity and coherence. Chapter 1 lays the foundational groundwork by presenting an overview, which includes the background information, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance, and study limitations. Chapter 2 delves deeper into the literary context, exploring and explaining the topics that comprise the academy curriculum, the principles of andragogy, engagement, and their relevance to the law enforcement realm. Chapter 3 unveils the methodology for the study, discussing the sample selection, instruments utilized, and the strategic plan for data analysis. Chapter 4 articulates the empirical results emanating from the research process, presenting a systematic account of the findings. Lastly, Chapter 5 engages in a comprehensive discussion, comparing the results from Chapter 4 with pre-existing knowledge, acknowledging study limitations, and extrapolating implications for practitioners. This closing

chapter culminates with valuable insights into future research directions and actionable recommendations for subsequent inquiries in this domain.

Summary

Chapter 1 seeks to provide readers with a clear map of the journey ahead. By articulating the background, problem statement, and research objectives, it frames the study's context and underscores its relevance. It acts as a compass, pointing out the direction and scope of the research, ensuring clarity of purpose and intent from the outset. Chapter 2 will provide a history of law enforcement, including the history of police academy training. Chapter 2 also contains a literature review pertaining to law enforcement training and outlines failures possibly resulting from the teaching methodology used in the academy.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 1 provided the background information of the topic for this study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, some limitations, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 provides a literature review categorized into major components: history of police organizations, police training, andragogy in law enforcement training, and skills learned at the academy. Chapter 2 explores scholarly research pertaining to the listed components to outline and facilitate the current study.

Purpose of the Study

To refine or determine to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel, we must determine the recruits' perception of the benefit of the different methods in real world application. An observation of how the perception of the andragogical methodology could or has influenced decision-making, responsiveness, and overall competence in the field must be conducted. Only with such a nuanced understanding can we craft training programs that truly resonate with officers and adequately prepare them for the challenges they face daily.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the traditional or pedagogical method of police training—specifically, lecture-based training versus, an andragogical method of training grounded in adult learning principles—and their influence on officer engagement and performance. Further, this research aims to understand how perceived engagement during training translates to officer performance and competence in real-world scenarios.

Training in law enforcement is not merely an exercise in imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. This study, at its core, seeks to discern the perceived impact of these methodologies on recruits' engagement during training and job performance post-training.

Lecture-based training, which has been the mainstay for many institutions, operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, its top-down approach might not always facilitate active participation or deep engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

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Engagement during training, while crucial, is just one piece of the puzzle. The goal of any police training program is to ensure that officers can effectively translate what they have learned into actionable skills in the field for a particular job (Tovar, 2023). This study, therefore, goes beyond mere engagement metrics. It seeks to draw a through-line from the type of training received to its real-world applications. Which training methodology best prepares officers to

perform and respond to high-pressure situations? Which method assists with their decision-making? Do they demonstrate higher levels of competence and adaptability when exposed to one or the other methodology?

By comparing traditional training to methods grounded in adult learning principles, this study will illuminate the strengths and potential shortcomings of each approach. More importantly, by linking training methodologies to real-world performance, it aims to provide actionable insights that can shape the future of training interventions in law enforcement. This research is not just about understanding what works—it is about crafting a roadmap for training that genuinely empowers recruits to excel in their future roles as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. **Prior Military Experience and Perception of law Enforcement Training Adequacy:** Does prior military experience influence law enforcement officers' perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?
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3. **Educational Background and Training Perception in Law Enforcement:** Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background?

4. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement Officers based on Race:** How do perceptions of law enforcement training differ between minority and non-minority officers, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

History of Police Organizations

To completely understand the purpose and potential significance of this study, an examination of the history of law enforcement must be conducted. This examination is necessary to inform the reader and future researchers of the original purpose and eventual function of law enforcement organizations in America. Reviewing and understanding the evolution of the profession will assist in the consideration of focusing on the training aspect of law enforcement officers and why an andragogical approach may improve the ability to transfer intended knowledge to graduates of the police academy once they become solo officers providing police services to the communities in which they work.

The history of law enforcement in the United States closely mirrored that of the profession in England. In the early colonies, policing was both informal and communal, known as the "watch system" (Spitzer, 1979). The watch system was composed of community members with the primary responsibility of warning the citizenry of impending danger (Potter, 2013). During the 1630's Boston created a night watch, and within the next half century, New York and Philadelphia copied the model. Many of the watchmen were volunteers with varying reasons for lending their service to the watch. Some watchmen were attempting to evade military service, were forced into service by the community, or performed the duty as a form of punishment (Potter, 2013). This system of policing remained in place until well after the American Revolution.

In 1838, Boston established the first police Department, followed by Albany, New York in 1845, and Chicago, IL, in 1851 (Harring, 1983; Lynch, 1984). The newly created police departments were centralized organizations. The departments were publicly funded, officers were full-time employees, the departments had fixed rules and procedures, and each department was accountable to a central authority (Potter, 2013).

However, the police organizations in Southern states followed a murkier path. While policing in Northern states was evolving into something resembling modern organizations, policing in Southern states was organized around "slave patrols" with the first organized in the Carolina colonies in 1704 (Potter, 2013). The primary function of these organizations was to apprehend and return runaway slaves, provide a form of organized terror to deter slave revolts, and maintain a form of discipline for slave-workers who were subject to summary justice. After the Civil War, these same organizations morphed into modern Southern Police Departments with the purpose of controlling freed slaves during the Jim Crow and segregation era (Potter, 2013). All these early American police departments were corrupt and extremely brutal (Potter, 2013).

As the English model of law enforcement continued to evolve, improvements were implemented through a bill proposed by Sir Robert Peel, Home Secretary of England, The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 (Lyman, 1964). The bill was the result of civil unrest throughout England in the form of riots and protests of the government and those perceived to be in an elevated economic class. The poorly organized police force was unable to address the issues the large-scale social revolts created and in most occurrences the military responded to maintain order. The primary cause of the unrest centered on high unemployment rates, high taxation, an inflated cost of living, and poor living conditions. The ruling class felt threatened by the masses

and the protests they incited (Lyman, 1964). Those in control wanted to restore order and maintain peace, which ensured their status and continued control.

The population in the United States increased during the 1700s and 1800s with an influx of immigrants from various European countries (Uchida, 1997). The increase in the immigrant population led to an increase in the perception of disorder and social tensions. The perception, coupled with the racial conflict in the southern and northern region of the United States created a similar response as that witnessed in England regarding the need of a more organized police force (Gaines, Kappeler, & Vaughn, 1999; Turner, Giacopassi, & Vandiver, 2006). There was a growing need for the development of a local, centralized, bureaucratic police force (Potter, 2013). The need was necessitated by the growth of cities, with urbanization becoming more popular. An anecdotal rationale for the development of an organized police force posited the rise in violence directed at newly arriving immigrants and African Americans by whites was presented as the cause, along with vices such as public intoxication and prostitution (Walker, 1996). However, there is little historical evidence to support these claims.

Beyond crime, the police force in the United States emerged because of "perceived" disorder (Potter, 2013). What constituted social and public disorder depended on those defining the term. In the United States the definers were the mercantile interests, who through taxes and political influence supported the development of an organized police force. The goal of the mercantile was social control, rather than crime control (Potter, 2013). The mercantile needed an organized police force that could ensure a stable and orderly workforce, and a favorable environment in which to conduct business benefitting the "collective good" (Spitzer & Scull, 1977).

Maintaining a stable and orderly workforce for the industrial revolution, along with the safe communities for conducting business, required an organized system of social control. Disbanding the previously ineffective "watch system" and creating an organized police force allowed the mercantile to have their vision become a reality – at taxpayers' expense (Potter, 2013). Social control and crime control was accomplished by providing the illusion of a dangerous class of citizens. Therefore, those engaging in crime, drunkenness, and protesters were labeled uneducated, unskilled, and inferior. This "underclass" was easily recognizable because it primarily consisted of the poor, newly arriving immigrants, and free Black people (Lundman, 1980).

The early history of police departments reveals them to be corrupt and brutal in the force used to control social disorder. This history of policing in the United States can be divided into separate eras; The Political Era, the Reform Era, and the Community Era (Werth, 2009). The Political Era occurred between 1840-1920. During this era formation of what would become a modern-day police force consisted of local as well as state police in most jurisdictions and was under the control of the dominate political party that created the police organization to further their objectives. Police officers systematically took brides and served as facilitators of criminal activity in the neighborhoods they served (Walker, 1996). Community members loyal to controlling political parties or industry were often employed as police officer. They had few qualifications and little to no training, with promotions in rank sold to the highest bidder (Potter, 2013). Toward the end of the 1800s local police agencies were engrained in the politics of most major cities, used to harass, and interfere with the efforts of opposing parties. Political figures and the mercantile controlled criminal activity and vice through the police force. However, officers received no formal training in law enforcement, many lacked formal education, and

operated with no supervisory guidance. The officers would determine how best to interact with the community (Uchida, 2010).

Reform in Training

The need for reform in policing was recognized across multiple jurisdictions. The Reform Era of Policing followed the Political Era and began the transformation that would provide formalized training to officers. The Reform Era occurred between 1920-1970. The progressive upper middle class of society was the greatest proponent of the police reform (Uchida, 2010). Progressive reformers also sought to prevent political control of the police forces by the politicians that held sway over them (Vander Kooi, 2006). The efforts at reform came in the various investigative commissions looking into police corruption. The commissions were convened because of community outrage over police misconduct to include police officers promoting prostitution in Los Angeles, the unlawful use of force in New York City, gambling and racketeering in Philadelphia, and widespread corruption in Louisville, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Atlanta (Potter, 2013). However, the commissions had no lasting impact on local police departments.

Other attempts at reform came from within the law enforcement profession (Schafer & Jarvis, 2017). The suggested reform focused on establishing a selection standard for police officers, placing police officers under civil service, awarding promotions because of testing, operating under a clearly defined chain of command, and training for newly hired recruits (Potter, 2013). The first police training academy in the United States was established in 1908 in Berkeley, CA (Schafer & Jarvis, 2017). This training concept was at the behest of August Vollmer. Vollmer is recognized by many to be the United States equivalent to Sir Robert Peel (Willson, 1953). Vollmer is credited with initiating police technologies such as forensic analysis,

criminal methodology, in car radio systems and structured training for newly hired police officer. Vollmer stressed that at his or her core, a police officer should possess character traits described as wisdom, courage, strength, patience, leadership, kindness, faith, diplomacy, and tolerance (Wilson, 1953).

It took decades before other states established organized training for law enforcement officers. There are a number of law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to include City Police Departments, County Sheriff's Departments, Port Authority Police Departments, and University Police Departments (Simmons, 2007). There are approximately 40,000 separate police agencies in the United States (Matusiak, King, & Maguire, 2017). All the officers employed by these law enforcement agencies require training to adequately perform the duties of a police officer.

In the United States, most police training is taught in a uniformed manner with little regard for individual differences in learners (Birzer, 2003). The United States Bureau of Justice reports that quasi-military or stress-based training involving intense psychological and physical strain are implemented in half of the nation's police academies (Reaves, 2016). The remaining police academies used some form of stress, non-stress environments to train recruits. This military style training is presented in a didactic format that requires formal testing of the recruits as a measure to determine their pass or fail status for each topic or course taught. In this environment, the recruits are held to a high standard of discipline or stress and regimented learning to become police officers (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton & Kaye, 2019).

The 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recognized and discussed various issues faced by police related to training (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). While striving to

address negative public outcries of police brutality and misconduct during the civil unrest of the 1960s, The Commission determined that police training should expose officers to topics that will prepare them to exercise discretion and understand the full role of what law enforcement professionals could and could not do (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967). Field training, which is additional training provided to officers after they complete the academy, is conducted at the individual officer's employing agency, and became popular towards the end of the Reform Era in the 1970s. The Reform Era paved the way for the Community Era which was to follow (Werth, 2009).

The Community Era observed police taking on a problem-solving and proactive approach to policing communities (Uchida, 2010). The primary focus of the Community Era was to assist the police with regaining public trust. The shift from the Political to the Reform Era eroded much of the trust due to officers not having direct and immediate interaction with the citizens they served (Uchida, 2010). To achieve their goals, many law enforcement agencies began to return to earlier police practices, such as foot patrols, which were limited in use as more technical means of policing had been implemented. One major technology that reduced foot patrols was the introduction of the automobile in police work. The officers were able to cover more of their assigned "beat" or work area quicker, but sacrificed personal interaction provided by foot patrols (Uchida, 2010). The separation of the officers from the public, coupled with the still heavy-handed approach by a number of untrained officers intensified mistrust.

Currently, there are more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States. These agencies consist of local, state and Federal Departments, receiving training from approximately 700 training academies (Reaves, 2016). The academies can be dissected into various categories. There are 30 State Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) academies;

41 state police academies; 66 sheriff's academies; 22 county police academies; 132 municipal academies; 43 4-year college or university academies; 221 2-year college academies; 43 technical school academies; 17 special jurisdiction academies; and 49 multi-regional academies (Reaves, 2016). Reaves (2016) cites the number of training hours ranging from 1,075 to 650, with the average amount of training hours equaling 862. The bulk of academy training focuses on technical skills, such as firearms, self-defense, and legal issues, comprising approximately 70 percent of the total training hours (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019; Reaves, 2016).

The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, determined that training for police officers should impart officers with the knowledge and ability to recognize factors that may affect how best to treat members of the community while protecting all stakeholders (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015). The Task Force's recommendations included training topics such as those that addressed procedural justice, implicit-bias, and de-escalation (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015). The training should also seek to assist officers in better understanding people with mental and physical disabilities; all fused with a portion of the training delivered through technology (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

In 2020, a Presidential Executive Order on policing mandated that police assess and improve law enforcement practices (E.O., 2020). This was a result of the executive order citing reasons such as officers misusing their authority, and challenging the trust of the citizenry (E.O., 2020). The executive order calls for police to better address the conditions of homelessness, mental health, and addiction (E.O., 2020). To address the suggested training requirements and educational needs of police officers, the President's Commission of 1976, the 2015 President's

Task Force, and the 2020 Presidential Executive Order all call upon the various states' Police Officer Training and Standards (POST) Commissions to implement solutions for change and improvement (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015; E.O., 2020; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967).

Police Officer Standards and Training

Every state has a Police Officer Standards and Training or POST Commission. The Alabama Commission was established by State Legislation in 1982 and codified in Title 36 of the Code of Alabama (Benefield, 2023; Code of Alabama Title 36). This governing body determines what is taught to police officers during basic or academy training, for trainees to obtain certification as Police Officers (Code of Alabama, Title 36).

The recruits attending the academies are subjected to an abundance of training related to firearms, use-of-force tactics, self-defense and first aid, approximately 90 percent of the academy training hours. However, approximately 10 percent of their actual on the job duties will require the use of those skills (Chappell, 2008). Police officers deal with activity requiring skills used to address criminal activity on rare occasions. A void exists between the curricular training cadets receive in academies and the practical experiences arising from everyday police work (Carao, 2011). Officers need to be better prepared for more practical experiences.

When one considers what a police officer does most of the time, it is obvious that the need to use force is an infrequent activity (Woods, Watson, & Fulambarker, 2017). The public's expectations of police officers have shifted to officers needing the ability to be versed in various forms of psychology and problem-solving (Wuschke, Andersen, Brantingham, Rattenbury, & Richards, 2018). Sedevic (2012) indicates that officers graduated from the Oakland Police

Academy reported they were not adequately prepared for more than a third of the tasks they faced once on the job (Bykov, 2014). These officers admittedly lacked the skills to perform to the standards expected. The United States Supreme Court in Canton v. Harris (1989) held that a police department may be liable when a failure to adequately train officers leads to a deliberate indifference to the constitutional rights of those that the police encounter. An officer only trained with the ability to shoot and use force could be the liability warned of in Canton.

Traditional Training

Traditional lecture-based training has long been the bedrock of police education. Most traditional training required police officers be trained in self-defense, making physical arrests, and firearms use (Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, & Hutter, 2022). The police academies are responsible for teaching basic skills to adults entering the profession of law enforcement (Birzer, 2003). Most of the material is presented pedagogically through a militaristic, rote style that relays to the learner what they must learn (Birzer, 2003). Through the pedagogical model, the student is completely dependent on the teacher, learners have limited experience and are learning what they are told they need to know (Knowles, 1989). As a result, the strict para-military model goes against the principles of adult learning theory and is incompatible with preparing recruits to effectively engage in modern police strategies (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021).

In short, the recruits' training does not focus enough on decision-making, communications, and other critical skills that officers use every day (Police Executive Research Forum, 2021). The recruits and police administrators have been the source of criticism related to inadequacies in police training (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Police training in the modern era requires producing officers that can turn every citizen contact

into an opportunity for crisis-management, with the objective of neutralizing the crisis and mitigating any negative long-term social impact (VerPlanck, 2022).

Some research suggests that an integrative format would be more beneficial to learning within the academy environment. An integrated curriculum brings the various topics together, thus combining the content of the disciplines taught, so that the cadets are allowed the ability to recognize how the courses fit together (Beer-Maxwell, Blum, Bonadies, Herbert, & Schaefer, 2023). This concept would replace the outdated militaristic delivery method used in most academies where courses are taught independent of one another and the correlation between the topics is not explored. An integrated approach to academy instruction could enable trainees to develop a deeper understanding by providing them with an opportunity to critically think through scenarios by combining concepts and ideas (Snyder, (2001). Blending content to connect with concepts among topics can develop problem-solving skills (Meadows, 2008). Research suggests that providing the traditional nonintegrated teaching model increases the chance that recruits will not retain learned material by the time they have completed the academy. This indicates that trainees exposed to traditional instruction methods during the academy may not be able to retain most of the training, negatively impacting their abilities to perform after graduation (Beer-Maxwell, Blum, Bonadies, Herbert, & Schaefer, 2023).

Integration in training is accomplished through engagement, selection of topics that integrate smoothly, developing a strategy for integration, creating teams, and training the staff to properly implement the method (Beer-Maxwell, Blum, Bonadies, Herbert, & Schaefer, 2023). Engagement occurs at the stakeholder level, with academy staff members, and agency heads recognizing the benefits of integration and buying into the process. Next, the selection of topics that conform to integration, such as communication skills, decision-making, problem-solving,

and community policing. The strategy is to bring together instructors to discuss and develop a plan to connect or integrate the topics for presentation. Once these steps are complete, the final phase is to train the staff on how to deliver the course (Beer-Maxwell, Blum, Bonadies, Herbert, & Schaefer, 2023).

The focus of training should not rest solely on how to arrest, defensive tactics, defensive driving, and firearms. The focus should be expanded to include job related skills that will equip an officer to manage situations encountered most of the time (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Stated earlier, the practices employed by police academies mirror the traditional pedagogical, rote military style (Harberfeld, Clarke, & Sheeham, 2012). The pedagogical model is lecture based and teacher oriented, promoting dis-association among recruits (Haarr, 2005). Academy training may be more impactful if a shift in the focus was brought to bear on cognitive and decision-making skills. An approach that would lend to a holistic, integrative, and collaborative training model (Harberfeld, Clarke, & Sheeham, 2012). This requires abandoning the procedural-based training model to one that incorporates a divergent thinking model, which considers experiential knowledge (VerPlanck, 2022). This would include the implementation of Cognitive Load Theory. Cognitive Load theory is applicable in professional learning environments for adults. Cognitive Learning Theory is memory categorizations that allow learners to create schemas and increase their capacity for problem-solving (VerPlanck, 2022).

Training Failures

Considering the recognition of the importance of training, real life instances of training related failures continue to plague law enforcement. In August of 2014, a Ferguson, Missouri police officer encountered a young man named Michael Brown. There are mixed versions of

what prompted to contact between the officer and Brown, resulting in Michael Brown being shot multiple times by the officer. Mr. Brown died as a result of the injuries he sustained (Stanford Libraries, 2024). In March of 2015, the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division released the findings of an investigation into the Ferguson Polie Department (FPD) relating to Mr. Brown's death. The report outlines ill practices of FPD, to include findings that they engaged in a pattern of unconstitutional stops and arrests in violation of the Fourth Amendment; engaged in patterns of First Amendment violations and engaged in patterns of excessive force (United States Department of Justice, 2015).

The report went on to say that FPD's practices had a detrimental impact on the minority community, which generated mistrust. Department of Justice findings indicate that officers employed by the FPD were expected to generate revenue through their police efforts and saw minorities as a source of that revenue. The reported determined that officers at FPD demanded compliance from those in the minority communities and mental illness was viewed as belligerence (United States Department of Justice, 2015). To correct the behavior of its officers the City of Ferguson adopted training that addressed the deficiencies and misconduct, through the field training program (Ferguson Police Department General Orders Manual, 2020).

In November of 2014, two police officers employed by the Cleveland, Ohio police department encountered and killed a 12-year-old named Tamir Rice, while responding to a call of a person pointing a gun at citizens in a local park. One of the officers shot and killed Tamir Rice within seconds of arriving on the scene and the patrol car was still in motion. The patrol car was traveling on a wet surface and skidded approximately 40 feet before coming to a complete stop (Department of Justice Officer of Public Affairs, 2020). There was further concerned regarding the police's treatment of Tamir Rice's family when they arrived at the scene of the shooting. His

sister was placed in handcuffs, and his mother was allegedly threatened for yelling at the officers (Stanford Libraries, 2024). In 2018 the Cleveland Police Department implemented changes to the way officers use force, and all were retrained. The new policy provides clearer definitions as to when officers can use force and mandates that officers try to use de-escalation strategies (Metro, 2019).

In July of 2016, Philando Castile, a Black man, was fatally shot by a St. Anthony, Minnesota police officer during a traffic stop. The shooting death occurred during a traffic stop in which the officers are alleged to have "racially profiled" the occupants of the vehicle in which Mr. Castile was traveling (Stanford Libraries, 2024). Mr. Castile's girlfriend and the driver of the vehicle livestreamed the incident in which he was shot five times. The officer, who is also a minority, was eventually fired because of the incident. The St. Anthony Police Department looked at training records and procedures to determine whether reform was needed. They also collaborated with the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to St. Anthony's practices (Department of Justice, 2016). COPS provides an independent and objective review of a law enforcement agency's policies, practices, training, and tactics to assist in improving and enhancing the delivery of police services (Department of Justice, 2016).

In March of 2020, three plainclothes police officers employed by the Louisville, Kentucky Metro Police Department shot and killed Breonna Taylor while executing a search warrant at the wrong residence. At the time the officer entered the home, Ms. Taylor and her boyfriend were asleep inside the residence. No drugs were located, the suspects the drug investigation targeted were in custody and Ms. Taylor was not armed with a weapon (Stanford, 2024). The officers filed an inaccurate police report to conceal their actions.

The Justice Department initiated an investigation of the officers' actions related to Ms. Taylor's death and published the results in March of 2023. In the report the Justice Department outlined Louisville Metro Police Department LMPD) uses excessive force, including unjustified neck restraints and unreasonable use of police K9s and tasers; conducted searches based on invalid warrants; unlawfully stop, search, detain, and arrest people during street enforcement activities; unlawfully discriminate against Black people in its enforcement activities; violate the rights of people engaged in protected free speech; and discriminate against people with behavioral disabilities (Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, 2023). The way some LMPD officers treated minorities was described by the Justice Department as unacceptable and unconstitutional, eroding the trust of the community. The report mentions reforms in training several times.

In May of 2020, Minneapolis, Minnesota, four police officers contacted George Floyd for purportedly purchasing cigarettes with counterfeit currency. Within 20 minutes of the initial contact Mr. Floyd was dead because of one of the officers kneeling on the back of his neck for approximately nine minutes. Body camera footage from the incident showed the way the officer behaved and failed to acknowledge Mr. Floyd's plea for help (Stanford Libraries, 2024).

The Justice Department investigated Mr. Floyd's death and the law enforcement practices of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). The report documenting the findings of the investigation revealed that MPD officers used excessive force, including unjustified deadly force; unlawfully discriminated against Black people and Native Americans in enforcement activities; violated the rights of people engaged in protected speech; and discriminated against people mental health issues (Department of Justice, 2023).

Retraining was a way MPD addressed reform in officers' practices. Every officer employed by MPD was required to receive scenario-based training called ABLE which stands for Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement. The training was developed at Georgetown Law school and requires officers to intervene when excessive force is being used by a fellow officer (Jany, & Furst, 2022).

In January of 2023, Tyre Nichols was contacted by members of the Memphis, Tennessee Police Department for what they alleged was a reckless driving violation. Shortly after the contact with Memphis police officers, Mr. Nichols was taken to an area hospital where he died three days later. The police body camera footage revealed that Mr. Nichols was kicked, punched, tased, and pepper-sprayed by five police officers (Department of Justice, 2023). The autopsy results outlining the injuries Mr. Nichols sustained revealed blunt force injuries to his head, neck, torso, and extremities; multiple cortical contusions; and hemorrhages throughout his body (Franklin, & Wamsley, 2023).

The five Black officers accused of killing Mr. Nichols were indicted for multiple offenses (Franklin, & Wamsley, 2023). The first count of the indictment alleges the officers used unreasonable force and failed to intervene in the unlawful assault. The second count alleges the officers violated his rights to be free from deliberate indifference to serious medical needs and failing to render medical aid. The third count alleges the five officers conspired to cover up their unlawful use of force by providing false information to investigators. The fourth count alleges they filed false reports by omitting that they had assaulted Mr. Nichols (Department of Justice, 2023).

Andragogical Training Theory

The theory of adult learning principles or "andragogy" is a teaching methodology designed around the unique learning characteristics of adults (Birzer, 2003; Knowles, 1989). Learning is a continuous process in which learners assimilate information. Teaching is a method in which learning is the outcome of those lessons. The opposite of pedagogy, "andragogy" views adult learners as a focus on the teaching-learning transaction (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Andragogy is the art of and science of guiding adults in the learning process (Knowles, 1984). Adult education occurs in a learning environment beyond K-12 and has traditionally consisted of learning in colleges and universities, trade schools, or occupations in which an apprenticeship is required (Rose, 1991). This form of learning can take place in traditional courses, correspondence courses, online learning, discussion groups, in-service training, or seminars (Imel, 2005; Rose, 1991).

Recognizing that adults come into learning environments with previous experiences, andragogy emphasizes a learner-centered approach (Knowles, 1990). For learners, this means training programs, such as police academies, integrate their real-world experiences, allowing them to draw from past incidents or challenges (Knowles, 1990). Such programs encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and experiential learning—skills that are crucial for officers operating in today's complex environments (Birzer, 2003).

Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, and Hutter (2022) indicate that for success in police training, the focus on additional skills such as communications, problem-solving, and decision-making are critical for recruits to learn. Given the unpredictability and diversity of situations officers face, experience-based training becomes indispensable (Birzer, 2003). Scenarios and simulations allow officers to hone their skills in controlled environments, preparing them for

real-world challenges (Birzer, 2003). This prepares recruits to perform as officers with a "guardian mentality" (Stoughton, 2015). The guardian's performance is rooted in benevolence, and fair-mindedness (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). However, if recruits are constantly exposed to an autocratic, prescriptive, and discipline-oriented environment, they will provide police services in a way that models what is known as the "warrior mentality" (Stoughton, 2015). The warrior mentality refers to a mindset recruits are encouraged to adopt that views the citizens they serve as dangerous suspects capable of killing them (Stoughton, 2015), which is contrary to the guardian frame of mind.

The shift towards hands-on training would foster adaptability, a trait essential for modern law enforcement personnel (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). However, adaptability and conscientiousness are not cultivated in a traditional para-military police academy (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). Research has shown that the combination of lecture and theoretical classroom discussions, along with practical application of theoretical knowledge into simulated training environments has proven effective in improving learning, job performance and officers' capacity to translate what they retain into practice (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019).

Approximately ten percent of what a recruit learns at the academy is applied after graduation. Instead of spending the bulk of allotted training hours on physical fitness and defensive driving, most of the time should be used to controversial topics such as gender stereotypes and proper use of discretion (Caro, 2011). The objective of the shift from a pedagogical to an andragogical method of training is centered on the need for trainees to retain the knowledge they have been exposed to and learned while attending the academy. Hopefully, the skills and knowledge will transfer once they are in a real work environment and applying the

skills they developed at the academy (Gegenfurtner, & Testers, 2022). The transfer of training results from the learners having a positive perception associated with the training experience. Transfer self-efficacy reflects the trainee's perception associated with their ability to transfer the training and take control of its application (Quesada-Pallares, 2012). This requires engagement on the part of the trainees. Only when the transfer of knowledge to practical circumstances is consistently successful can investments in training methods be deemed beneficial (Tonhauser & Buker, 2016). An andragogical methodology in academy training would provide the engagement required for trainees to have the positive perception needed to make the transfer more likely. The reallocation of time and training will require recruits to focus on skills that will be used in real-world applications (Bykov, 2014).

The rationale as to why the andragogical method would be more successful is based on the concept that pedagogy is a teacher-centered approach, whereas andragogy is a learner-centered approach. The andragogical model is based on the consensus that conceptions lean towards a more learner-centered practice, with the emphasis on conceptual understanding. This model of student learning represents a more sophisticated and effective model for teaching (Akerlind, 2007; Kember, 1997).

Pedagogy versus andragogy may also be described as "surface" learning, compared to "deep" learning. In a study by Marton and Saljo (1976), an examination of students was conducted using reading text which focused on these two approaches to learning. One group of students memorized a list of disjointed facts from the text to be able to recall the details when asked about them later. This is an example of the surface approach to learning. Another group of students did more to interpret the underlying meaning of the text to understand and explain what the author was trying to say. This was described as a deep approach to learning. Various other

studies have shown that deeper approaches to learning are related to higher quality learning outcomes (Biggs, 1999).

There are four (4) definitions of “Adult”, which need to be understood related to Andragogy. The first is the biological, which refers to the age at which an individual is old enough to reproduce (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Next is the legal definition or age of majority, which is set by statute in most States as 18 years old, or the age at which an individual can vote, and marry without parental consent (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Another is the social definition which views an adult as a person performing adult tasks, such as holding a full-time job, providing for a family, being a spouse, and raising children (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). The psychological definition completes the list and is described as one who arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for his or her own life, or being self-directed (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998).

Researchers used the term “Andragogy” which is Greek for, “man, not boy” or adult (Knowles, 1980). Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). Andragogy assists educators in developing a framework for providing guidance on choosing the appropriate and contextual teaching-learning activities for adult learners (Purwati, Mardhiah, Nurhasanah, & Ramli, 2022).

Training programs centered around adult learning principles, or andragogy, represent a progressive step in recognizing the unique attributes adult learners bring to the table (Knowles, 1990). This methodology emphasizes collaborative learning, critical thinking, and the application of prior knowledge (Knowles, 1990). In theory, the andragogical approach seems tailor-made for law enforcement training, given that police officers encounter complex and dynamic incidents, where decision-making, situational awareness, and communication skills might be decisive in the

outcome (Kleygrewe, Oudejans, Koedijk, & Hutter, 2022). Recruits trained in an andragogical model are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills, effective communication, and better emotional intelligence (Makin, 2015).

Growing literature postures the importance of police academies transitioning to an adult-learning model (Schlosser, 2013). While a shift from the traditional training methodology holds significant promise, the actual impact within the law enforcement context is still a subject of debate. The quest is to determine whether training through an andragogical model transfers to better on-the-job performance.

To shift the current academy training model to one that is potentially more effective and successful, the focus initially must be on the course design established by subject matter experts, educational organizations, or development teams tasked with constructing such material within the training environment (Mohanasundaram, 2018). The course design is known as a curriculum, which is Latin for "running" or "racecourse." It has come to mean, "a course of study" (Schneiderhan, Guetterman, & Dobson, 2019). A curriculum is the courses and content offered or taught (Mohanasundaram, 2018). The academy curriculum should be designed to provide balanced, well-trained, and well-prepared officers. The curriculum and training should provide the initial training for recruits to disqualify those who are unfit for the law enforcement profession, to serve as a socialization foundation (White, 2008). Properly training recruits is essential to the success of law enforcement agencies (Caro, 2011). While attending the academy, recruits have the opportunity to build technical and interpersonal skills from which they can draw upon for the remainder of their careers. A poorly trained and unqualified police force could result in civil and criminal litigation, and decreased levels of community support and trust (Caro, 2006).

Developing a curriculum is the process of determining the "what" of the educational experience, such as the description of the intended learning outcomes or the document used to describe these (Schneiderhan, Guetterman, & Dobson, 2019). Also, students will learn in a specific course of study, how they will learn, and who will teach them (Mohanasundaram, 2018). Regardless of the definition, a curriculum is organized into three distinct components, objectives, subject matter, or content, and learning experiences (Lunenburg, 2011). The curriculum developers consider what subjects or topics are appropriate for the learning group (Mohanasundaram, Nadu, & Karapakkam, 2019). They determine the details in each subject or topic, setting the learning objectives and goals students will be able to achieve upon completing the course (Mohanasundaram, Nadu, & Karapakkam, 2019).

The objective is the expected outcome, or the specific measurable skill or attitude that the learner will be able to demonstrate at the end of the educational activity (Schneiderhan, Guetterman, & Dobson, 2019). The goals act as a road map to implement the plan of action that arrives at the objective (Lunenburg, 2011). The subject matter or content is the material learners are exposed to (Lunenburg, 2011). The learning experience is the interaction between the learner and the environment to which he or she can react (Tyler, 1949).

This research is limited to police academies within the state of Alabama, and participants who are members of local law enforcement agencies. The training topics expected to bring about change in police conduct to enhance public trust are Conflict Resolution/De-escalation; Mental Health Awareness; Interview Skills; Implicit Bias; Community Relations; Preventing Discrimination; and Assisting Victims of Crime. The Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission 560 Hour Basic Training Curriculum for 2022 outlines the topics to

include the number of training hours allotted for each topic. The complete training curriculum shows that the recruits are exposed to 48 hours of "self-defense skills" compared to the 35 combined hours of training focused on the seven topics listed in this paragraph which are designed to bring about positive change between the police and community.

In law enforcement training academies in the state of Alabama, self-defense is so in-depth that recruits are taught from two separate manuals. The intense course provides the police recruits with a detailed pedagogical-model tutorial on what constitutes a "seizure" of a citizen to restrain him or her, thereby terminating movement and being subjected to police control, how to use intermediate weapons such as police batons, and how to disarm a suspect with weapons (Smith, 2018).

Statistics collected by the United States Department of Justice in 2018 reveal that over 61 million Americans reported some form of interaction with a police officer within the previous 12 months. The statistics show that most of these encounters did not result in any use or escalation in force by the police officer (Herrell & Davis, 2020). In fact, the international Association of Chief's of Police (2001) reported a use of force rate of 3.61 per 10,000 service calls. It is estimated that approximately 98 percent of police work involves verbal communication with the public (Oxholm & Glaser, 2023). When asked about the most important skill a police officer possesses, one respondent stated, "communication." The justification for the response was that communication is essential to the job, and beyond the technical and tactical nature of most skills, such as driving (Oxholm & Glasser, 2023).

Further research indicates that effective communication can build a strong and positive long-term relationship between police and the community (Oxholm & Glasser, 2023). Effective communication is the key to officers and the community's perception of them shifting from one

of a crime-fighter to one of a service-provider and solver of human problems (Engel, McManus & Herold, 2020).

A Call for Change

As the calls for change in police academy training practices continue, the proponents lack prescriptive details on how to achieve the transition from the pedagogical to the andragogical model. Caro (2011) encourages academy training with a focus on less-perishable skills such as high moral standards; unbiased and understanding of diversity; service orientation; team orientation; good oral communication and listening skills; good writing skills; high personal motivation, strong decision-making and problem-solving skills; good human relation skills; self-control and discipline; planning and organization skills; and a performance driven attitude. These skills can be reframed and grouped into four categories, cognitive skills, emotional skills, social skills, and moral skills (California Commission of Peace Officer Standards and Training, 2004).

The psychological or cognitive skills police officers will need to develop through academy training are decision-making, impulse control, conscientiousness, and adaptability (Spilberg, 2014). There is debate as to whether the development of cognitive skills is more readily identifiable in recruits with higher levels of formal education. While research results are inconclusive, the argument is that formal education instills a greater level of mental flexibility in police officers (Cheurprakobkit, 2002). The more formal education officers possess, the less likely they are to use verbal and physical force (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). Therefore, the development of an officer's ability to think and reason will have beneficial consequences. A portion of the development can result from recruits being able to engage in open discussion with their peers during academy course sessions (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019).

Assisting recruits in developing emotional skills during the academy is likely to reduce their levels of burnout (Griffin & Sun, 2018). An officers' emotions impact how they perform on the job. Having to deal with the traumatic experiences encountered through the routines of police work, most officers have a higher expectation of danger and perceive greater threats because of being on the job for longer periods. The anxiety produced by the officers' perception can lead to them using force sooner or making more mistakes (Nieuwenhuys, Savelsbergh & Oudejans, 2012). Emotional skills can improve the officers' ability to manage emotional challenges.

Because officers face significant obstacles coping with the strain the job places on relationships, the development of social skills is critical (Miller, 2007). Officers must be shown how to manage a healthy work-life balance to perform their duties in an expected manner. When an officer experiences trauma and stress on the job and has no way to decompress and cope with that build up, problems may surface in the home and, in turn, create other issues on the job where interactions with the public are critical (Tuttle, Giano & Merten, 2018). Thus, resulting in instances of use of force which, again, are counterproductive.

Police work is challenging and creates moral dilemmas for officers, which can lead to unethical behavior (Spilberg & Corey, 2014). These issues can range for discretion in writing a traffic citation or making an arrest, to officers accepting bribes and committing criminal acts (Crank, Flaherty & Giacomazzi, 2007). Law enforcement executives should not assume that the officers hired by their respective agencies possess the morals required to withstand the temptations the job will expose them to. Recruits need to be informed of and provided skills to avoid these moral hazards while at the academy. Through the adult learning model, recruits should continually be asked what they will do and how they will manage or react to certain situations throughout the academy (Papazoglou, Blumberg, Kamkar, McIntyre-Smith &

Koshelainen, 2020), allowing guided discussion amongst the recruits to be a primary source of education. However, to date, little of the training in police academies involves open discussion, which would create an opportunity for cadets to practice problem-solving and exercising discretion (Bykov, 2014).

De-escalation is another training topic that could lead to better relations between police and the communities they serve. De-escalation encompasses the six other academy training topics previously mentioned. The National Consensus Policy (2017) defines police de-escalation as, taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with reduction in the force necessary. A benefit of de-escalation training is the inclusion of early intervention strategies, through verbal and non-verbal interaction or communication styles (Engel, McManus & Herold, 2020). In traditional training, officers are taught to step into volatile situations and take charge immediately to prevent injury to them and fellow officers (Tich, 2023). Understanding how to step into that role or position is critical.

In the article, The Lost Art of Command Presence in Law, Chief Bill Partridge of the Oxford, Alabama Police Department outlines the process of controlling a scene or situation that has been taught to recruits for decades – Command Presence. Command presence is the ability of an officer to project authority, confidence, and control over a situation (Partridge, 2023). An officer's ability to exude a command presence establishes respect, maintains order, and ensures the safety of the citizenry and officers (Partridge, 2023). In summary, command presence is the symbolic power of the officer appearing in a professional manner with his or her uniform and demeanor conveying an image of confidence. Over time many law enforcement agencies moved

away from projecting a professional image, instead opting for comfort in uniforms and a relaxed appearance. Partridge suggests law enforcement incorporate training and education related to appearance and grooming as a communication technique that will equip officers with a presence that allows the community to view them as professional, authoritative, and in control (Partridge, 2023). This is an example of why it is important to train recruits in a manner that exposes them to the nuances of various topics to fully ensure their understanding and ability to implement a complex strategy such as de-escalation.

While there are widespread calls for des-escalation training from citizens, advocacy groups, politicians, and police leaders, there is little empirical data on de-escalation in policing (White, Mora, Orosco & Hedberg, 2020). However, there are survey outcomes revealing that trainees are reporting favorable perceptions of de-escalation training (Engel, McManus & Herold, 2020). Recent studies indicate that only 44 percent of police officers self-report having been exposed to at least four hours of training in the last year that will assist them in de-escalating and situation and thereby not have to use force (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2017). Engel (2022) was able to determine that after de-escalation training was presented to the Louisville Kentucky Police Department, officer injuries were reduced by 36 percent, while injuries to citizens were reduced by 26 percent. This favorable perception of training and officers' confidence in its application in the field should be the desire of academy staff and agency administrators.

The study will seek to categorize participating demographics by gender, military background, whether they possess a college education, and how they identify racially. As previously stated, most of the academy training is taught in a para-military style. A number of law enforcement agencies prefer to hire officers with military backgrounds based on the belief

that these individuals will make “good police officers” because they possess extensive knowledge of and exposure to handling firearms, discipline, integrity, effectively work with diverse teams, have a strong sense of service, and perform well under stressful situations (Fagan, 2013). The interest in hiring officers with military backgrounds was encouraged by certain groups, such as the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS), offering agencies incentives through grant funding or consideration for hiring veterans. Regardless of motivation, it is accepted by a number of law enforcement agencies that individuals with military experience are suitable applicants for a career in policing. However, several law enforcement agency heads brought to light that a number of these veterans suffered from an array of psychological issues after serving time in combat zones (Fagan, 2013). Issues with PTSD could pose a problem with training presented once these individuals are at the academy and applying that training in real world scenarios once the academy is complete. Despite the belief that veterans possess attributes to be good police officers, there is no empirical data in support of that belief (Fagan, 2013).

The study solicits feedback from the police demographic that has a college degree to determine their perception of police academy training. The 1967 President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice posited the belief that a college education provides substantive knowledge and interpersonal skills that could enable officers to provide an efficient police service (Carter & Sapp, 1992). Other studies revealed that more than half of the police officers in the United States have at least a two-year degree, almost a third have four-year degree, and five percent have graduate degrees (Gardner, 2017; Tovar, 2023). Research indicates that police officers with college degrees are less likely to use force, are better at problem-solving when interacting with citizens, have been exposed to diverse groups, and eventually make better leaders. College educated officers receive more commendations, are safer drivers, have fewer

disciplinary issues, and are better versed in the use of technology than officers lacking a degree. College experience exposes students who become officers to various disciplines, psychology, ethics, political science, and languages (Tovar, 2023). The knowledge gleaned from exposure to these topics in a college setting is employed once the individuals are working in the field of law enforcement. As a result of law enforcement agency heads recognizing a potential benefit to hiring officers with college backgrounds, researchers have witnessed a steady increase in the number of officers with college educations over the decades (Carter & Sapp, 1992).

Having such a diverse background could impact the way the college educated recruits processes and retains the police academy curriculum. Also, a college education related to criminal justice or criminology could impact a recruit's perception due to a number of college programs that offer these courses use experiential learning to teach students (George, Lim, Lucas & Meadows, 2015). Even with favorable research pertaining to the benefits of hiring officers with college education, only two agencies require a four-year degree as an employment requirement, Arlington, Texas police department (arlingtontx.gov/city-hall/department/police/police_recruiting/eligibility), and the Tulsa, Oklahoma police department (jointpd.com/requirements-to-join).

Women are a demographic attending the police academy capable of providing data for the furtherance of this study. Despite the potential benefits of women in local law enforcement, the profession remains predominantly male, and White (Veldman, Meeussen, Van Larr, & Phalet, 2017). According to the United States Census there were approximately 166.6 million females in the United States in 2019, compared to 161.7 males. However, the number of women in law enforcement is approximately 12.5 percent female, and 87.5 percent male. According to the FBI (2024), only 3 percent of females in law enforcement are in a leadership role. Because women

are a minority demographic in law enforcement, they may offer a unique perception of the training they received at the academy and the transferability of that training. Studies have determined that as a result of the dominance of men in law enforcement, women may feel as though their gender make them unvalued, thus creating gender-dissimilarity (Veldman, Meeussen, Van Larr, & Phalet, 2017).

The general attitudes pertaining to race and gender in most police academies are outdated, with special focus being on gender. Circa 1970, only two percent of police officers in the United States were women (Bykov, 2014). Considering most joined law enforcement for the same reasons as their male coworkers, it appears the conflict between genders starts during the academy. The motivations behind career choice are the opportunity to help people, job benefits, the perception of career advancement and retirement benefits (Raganella, & White, 2004). Gender-dissimilarities result from diversity in the team or group. One demographic comprising the work group is disproportionally represented to a degree that members of that minority demographic perceive their difference from the majority. In other words, if the law enforcement profession is predominantly comprised of white males, the prototypical police officer is a white man. This means that a woman in the profession would have some level of anxiety about how others, the majority, views them in terms of gender, thus impacting the work relationship, to include acceptance and opportunities for advancement (Veldman, Meeussen, Van Larr, & Phalet, 2017). In many law enforcement agencies, female officers often face what they describe as discrimination and few opportunities for career advancement (Bykov, 2014).

Through traditional training at most police academies, instructors share negative viewpoints and stereotypes of women with recruits (Harris, 2008). The conflict created by gender-dissimilarity can lead to an environment in which the gender different demographic is

made to feel they are not valued. After graduation from the academy many female officers continue to deal with the stereotypes and misinformation indoctrinated into their peers during training (Bykov, 2008).

Black and other minority demographics are suitable for inclusion as respondents in this study. As previously stated, law enforcement is a white male dominated profession. Minorities have been traditionally underrepresented in law enforcement. Research links the underrepresentation to the long history of conflict between the police and minority communities, the negative perception of police by minorities, and the research that suggests discrimination in the police selection process (Raganella, & White, 204). Data from the United States Department of Justice (2022) indicates that approximately 69 percent of local law enforcement officers are white, and 30 percent were Black, Hispanic, or another race. Of the 30 percent minority, 11.6 percent are Black, and 14 percent are Hispanic, 6 percent are other or unknown. This minority demographic may provide insightful to their police academy training.

A major objective of the civil rights movement was to increase the number of minority police officers. Two goals were to end discrimination in law enforcement and reduce police brutality in the Black community (Carbado, & Richarson, 2018). From the time Black people were allowed to enter the profession of law enforcement, they were subjected to separate and unequal facilities and treatment. An example would be the limits on the areas they could patrol, which were predominantly Black neighborhoods, and they could not exercise any law enforcement actions against White citizens (Carbado, & Richardson, 2014). The hope of the civil rights movement was that integrating police departments would ensure fair treatment of Black people by having minority officers providing law enforcement services.

However, research shows that having minority officers on local police forces did little to alleviate the mistreatment Black community members received at the hands of law enforcement (Correll, Hudson, Guillermo, & Ma, 2014). Minority officers had a similar propensity as White officers when dealing with people of color, displaying similar biases and being equally heavy-handed. Research reveals that approximately 40 percent of Black people have same-race bias against members of their own race (Jost, Banji, & Nosek, 2004). Jost, Banji, and Nosek (2004) cite research that determined a large number of Black people generally perceive other minorities as lazy, irresponsible, and violent, which is a form of same-race bias (Carbado, & Richarson, 2018). These beliefs were more strongly held than within the sampling of White respondents to the research questionnaire.

There are several threat factors that could account for Black officers showing increased aggression towards other Black people. These factors include social dominance threat, stereotype threat, masculinity threat, and racial solidarity threat (Carbado, & Richardson, 2018). Social dominance orientation is when one views his or her in-group as being superior to an out-group. Black and minority officers identify with the in-group of law enforcement. Social dominance policing occurs when police are in charge or dominate encounters with citizens. Stereotype threats occur when an officer feels anxiety about being viewed as conforming to stereotypes related to his or her race. Masculinity threat would occur if a male officer perceived his masculinity was challenged or threatened by a citizen. Masculinity threat also affects White officers. Racial solidarity threat could occur when a Black officer is fearful that he will be perceived as not identifying as Black, or they are a sellout or Uncle Tom (Carbado, & Richardson, 2018). There is no direct link indicating that an officer's gender or race can significantly influence the outcome of an encounter with a citizen (Gonzalez, Simon, & Rogers

2022). However, some research shows that the presence of minority officers can influence public trust and willingness to cooperate with police (Peyton, Weiss, & Vaughn, 2022).

In paramilitary structures and organizations such as the police academy, the socialization can strip individuals of their identity so that they can embrace and exude the character of the group they are associated with (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). This is what is expected of recruits entering the police academy. Paramilitary organizations expect recruits to submit to the rules and structure that characterize the cultural characteristics of the organization. In this case the academy and the law enforcement profession. Police academies across the United States now include training topics that reflect what modern police recruits are to be exposed to and trained to perform, although the core delivery continues to be militaristic (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). The goal of the change from the traditional method of training was to provide recruits with the skills that will allow them to effectively employ problem-solving and community engagement techniques after completing academy training (Peak & Glensor, 2004).

The design of integrating various topics, such as problem-solving, community policing, and officer safety was done to connect courses in a broader delivery form to show interconnectivity, paired with a discussion, recruits should be able to reflect and further learn from each other, which is an important component of adult learning (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).

Implications

The methods of delivering police training have seen slight change since the inception of the police academy. Since the first academy established in Berkley, CA the training models have been extensively focused on classroom-based rote instruction, with groups of officers convening at the same place and time to receive a lecture on a specific topic (Schafer & Jarvis, 2017). A century later, most academy training is still delivered in a comparable manner, with recruits being exposed to the same content at the same time, with little expectation for a better job transfer of skills and knowledge. As the environment and expectations of police continue to evolve, so must the way future officers are trained (VerPlanck, 2022).

Self-directed learning environments require learners to have a role in creating their learning goals and activities within the course objective (Hanna, Glaswacki-Dudka & Conceicao-Runlee, 2000). This entails the instructors allowing the bulk of control of the course to be in the hands of the learner in a joint manner with the teacher/facilitator acting as a guide (Conrad & Donaldson, 2012; Knowles, 1980). A shift to an andragogical model in police academies could result in evolutionary change envisioned since the birth of the profession. The impact on law enforcement and the communities they serve would be immeasurable.

Summary

Contemporary policing will require contemporary training, which should incorporate an andragogical teaching model. Academies must shift from an authoritarian, militaristic style of training to an adult-learning format centered on the recruits (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019). This will ensure that the important psychological skills essential for today's effective police officers and infused in training. To accomplish this shift, academy instructors must embrace this change, and organizations using the academies must desire and

want to change the culture in which these future officers will apply their skills (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazolou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2019).

Traditional policing must transition from the authoritative relationships currently espoused, where officers have control, and adopt community involved partnership. Success in this transition will depend on training that teaches recruits how to share power and responsibility, and how to work through conflict in the communities they serve (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). A recent study finds that 65 percent of police officers self-report that today in policing it is important for departments to require officers to show respect, concern and fairness during contact with citizens, but less than half of these officers say their belief is supported by department leadership (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2017).

However, a greater challenge may be altering the culture at the academies to ensure instructors are versed in, and capable of delivering a police curriculum that incorporates community themes, emphasizing collaboration with the public (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). This can be accomplished by having more civilian instructors teaching and interacting with the recruits, which should counteract the paramilitary approach. Second, by incorporating a community policing experience within the topics and allowing the recruits to talk through and learn by way of problem-solving and not through force. Finally, us vs. them mentality has to be changed to reflect a community policing mindset (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).

Pollice training should evolve as our knowledge of how individuals learn. Studies show that training designs, and cognitive exercises after a new skill session increases performance and longer retention of skills. The practices that do not improve performance outcomes and skills should be replaced or curriculums associated with them reassessed. Academy instructors should be civilian subject matter experts and take a coaching and educator approach to teaching (Police

1, 2021). Academy training design is crucial for how recruits process and retain knowledge. There is research indicating that sports performance and motor skills learning relates to decision-making and performance in a policing context. However, these methodologies are unused in law enforcement training. This results in a number of officers who have completed academy training lacking the ability to communicate what they want or need a citizen to do, resulting in nonsensical directions and potential conflict (Police 1, 2021). While some officers may use elevated levels of force to compensate for a lack of confidence and policing skills, the remedy may be found in academy courses that offer progressively complex training exercises for recruits that facilitate learning.

The goal is to prepare police officers who are capable of creative thinking in de-escalation to keep citizens and law enforcement personnel safe. Unless a new approach is developed, the limited training methods lack the ingenuity to deal with increasingly difficult encounters (VerPlanck, 2022). The shift in training methods requires a cognitive process that pushes the recruits towards creating solutions during encounters. The emphasis on creative thinking in curriculum design is at the core of modern education accomplishing the transition toward enhanced law enforcement training that can favorably change the way in which police officers are trained in the future (VerPlanck, 2022).

Chapter Three: Methods

Introduction

Chapter One provides the background regarding the questionable adequacy of police training and the need for change in the various academies' processes of developing recruits' skills in what is still considered a para-military environment. Chapter Two provides a brief history of law enforcement, a literature review that frames the delivery of academy training in its current pedagogical format, the need for a shift in the training paradigm, and the benefits of an andragogical approach in recruit training. Chapter Three provides the research methods used to conduct this study and address the research questions.

The goal of the chapter is to provide a scientific methodology to compare the officers' perception of academy training and how it impacts their ability to perform in real world scenarios. Through an explanation of the methodology, a description of the study's sample population, the instrumentation used to measure differences in the study variables, and the reliability of measurements, the research will serve as a catalyst for change in law enforcement training.

Purpose of the Study

Understanding to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel, we must determine the officers' perception of the benefit of different training methods in real world applications. An observation of how the perception of the andragogical methodology could or has influenced decision-making, responsiveness, and overall competence in the field must be conducted. Only with such a

nuanced understanding can we craft training programs that truly resonate with officers and adequately prepares them for the challenges they face daily.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the traditional or pedagogical method of police training—specifically, lecture-based training versus, an andragogical method of training grounded in adult learning principles—and their influence on officer engagement and performance. Further, this research aims to understand how perceived engagement during training translates to officer performance and competence in real-world scenarios.

Training in law enforcement is not merely an exercise in imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. This study, at its core, seeks to discern the perceived impact of these methodologies on recruits' engagement during training and job performance post-training.

Lecture-based training, which has been the mainstay for many institutions, operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, its top-down approach might not always facilitate active participation or deep engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

In contrast, training anchored in adult learning principles operates on the premise that adults bring a rich tapestry of experiences to their learning environment (Knowles, 1989). Such training emphasizes collaboration, self-directed learning, and the application of existing

knowledge to new scenarios (Purwati, Mardhiah, Nurhasanah, & Ramli, 2022). This approach potentially fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment (Knowles, 1980). However, the question remains: Does this methodology lead to learners' self-perceived engagement, understanding and skill acquisition?

Engagement during training, while crucial, is just one piece of the puzzle. The goal of any police training program is to ensure that officers can effectively translate what they have learned into actionable skills in the field for a particular job (Tovar, 2023). This study, therefore, goes beyond mere engagement metrics. It seeks to draw a through-line from the type of training received to its real-world applications. Which training methodology best prepares officers to perform and respond to high-pressure situations? Which method assists with their decision-making? Do they demonstrate higher levels of competence and adaptability when exposed to one or the other methodology?

By comparing traditional training to methods grounded in adult learning principles, this study will illuminate the strengths and potential shortcomings of each approach. More importantly, by linking training methodologies to real-world performance, it aims to provide actionable insights that can shape the future of training interventions in law enforcement. This research is not just about understanding what works—it is about crafting a roadmap for training that genuinely empowers recruits to excel in their future roles as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. **Prior Military Experience and Perception of law Enforcement Training Adequacy:** Does prior military experience influence law enforcement officers' perceptions of the

adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?

2. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement officers based on Gender:** Do perceptions of adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary between genders, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

3. **Educational Background and Training Perception in Law Enforcement:** Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background?

4. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement Officers based on Race:** How do perceptions of law enforcement training differ between minority and non-minority officers, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

Academies

The participants in this study are a convenience sample consisting of Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training (APOST)-certified law enforcement officers that attended a state approved police academy, were not currently on a probationary status, and were employed at their agency for less than three years. There are nine (9) APOST-approved law enforcement training facilities/police academies in Alabama. The academies are:

Wiregrass Law Enforcement Academy, Dothan, AL

Law Enforcement Academy – Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa, AL

Law Enforcement Academy – Baldwin County, AL

Birmingham Police Academy, Birmingham, AL

Huntsville Police Academy, Huntsville, AL

Jefferson County Law Enforcement Academy, Fultondale, AL

Mobile Police Academy, Mobile, AL

Montgomery Police Academy, Montgomery, AL

Northeast Alabama Law Enforcement Academy, Anniston, AL.

The inclusion criteria for participants in this study was that they be academy graduates with less than three years of uninterrupted police service in the law enforcement profession with the same agency. Participants included males and females from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. The participants were expected to have varying levels of education, from GEDs to Graduate Degrees from higher education institutions. The researcher identified the sample by reviewing the submitted survey and determining which met the previously stated criteria based on the completeness of the instrument (Fowler, 2014).

The first portion of the survey used in the study was designed to obtain specific but non-identifying information about each participant, including gender, race, age range, employing agency, prior military experience, and education level (Fowler, 2014). The research survey identified which academy participating officers attended and whether the participant is off probationary status and working as a solo officer tasked with performing police services within their community.

The primary portion of the survey focused on the officers' satisfaction with training and the participants' perception of how the training transfers, properly preparing them to perform their duties post-academy. This section centered on the soft skills to which recruits received the

least amount of academy exposure, but requires most of their time through citizen interactions, such as verbal communication, de-escalation, and problem-solving. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the manner or method used to deliver this training, to what degree they participate and provide feedback, work through scenarios, and were instructed to present information about the topic based on personal experience or research the topics themselves.

To ensure an adequate sample size, the survey was electronically shared with the following law enforcement agencies:

Table 2

Police Departments and Number of Officers

Agency	Number of Sworn Officers	Population Served
Montgomery Pollice Department	515	205,000
Birmingham Police Department	904	231,000
Mobile Police Department	529	246,976
Tuscaloosa Police Department	289	88,000
Hoover Police Department	178	92,000
Auburn Police Department	148	78,000
Dothan Police Department	191	65,000
Madison Police Department	96	57,000
Decatur Police Department	137	68,000
Opelika Police Department	92	31,000
Montgomery County Sheriff	145	225,791
Lee County Sheriff	101	174,456
Oxford Police Department	30	22,000
Tallapoosa County Sheriff	21	41,616
Elmore County Sheriff	61	92,000
Barbour County Sheriff	22	27,941

Jefferson County Sheriff	575	600,000
Mobile County sheriff	200	404,406
Limestone County Sheriff	55	107,517
Lauderdale County Sheriff	57	93,000
Bessemer Police Department	100	30,000
Clayton Police Department	6	1,600
Alabama State University Police	25	7,500
Alabama A&M University Police	35	5,000
Wetumpka Police Department	4	7,220

The law enforcement agencies selected for this research are all contemporary organizations with electronic resources available to employees, with potential participants who have access to computers and can read/comprehend at an appropriate level necessary for completing the survey (Fowler, 2014). The survey consists of closed questions because it is designed to be self-administered, requiring the respondents to click or check a box related to a set of pre-selected responses (Fowler, 2014).

The sample for this study consisted of 94 adults between the ages of 21 and 62, with Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification. The respondent sample was comprised of 94 full-time police officers, with 74 being non-probationary, or 79%. There were 21 with prior military experience, or 31%.

Table 3

Frequencies for Demographics

Category	Demographic	*n*	%
Military	Prior Military	21	31
	Non-Military	46	69
Education	With a Degree	34	55
	Without a Degree	28	45
Gender	Male	57	92
	Female	5	8
Race	White/Caucasian	55	81
	Non-white	13	19

The educational levels varied from one or less than 1% possessing a GED, 15 or approximately 22% with a high school diploma, 14 or approximately 21% with some college, 32 or approximately 48% with a college degree, and 5 or approximately 7% with a graduate degree or more.

The gender of the respondents was overwhelmingly male (90%), females comprised 9%, and gender neutral accounted for the remaining 1%.

Regarding race and ethnicity, 7 or approximately 10% identified as African American, 54 or 81% identified as Caucasian, 1 or less than 15% as Native American, 3 or approximately 4% as more than one race, and the remainder either self-described or preferred not to identify as a race.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting this research, approval was requested and granted from Auburn University's Institutional Research Board (IRB). Every effort was made to protect the identity of the participants, the law enforcement agencies they work for, and the academy they attend. Nothing related to this research was intended to mentally or physically harm any of the participants. Every effort was made to ensure they were treated with dignity and respect. No compensation was offered. The request to participate came from the individual agencies' department heads after receiving a written request from the researcher for the officers to complete the survey.

Participants were included in the research after their Department Heads received and reviewed the permissions letter. The department heads willing to allow their agency personnel to participate in the study forwarded the survey questionnaire to them for completion. Each Department Head was encouraged to review the survey questionnaire before making it available to participating law enforcement officers.

The purpose and procedure for this study were detailed through written instructions and responses. The protocol for conducting the study, an information letter, and the survey instrument were reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee, and Auburn University's IRB, before receiving approval. An information letter was provided to participants, which served as a waiver of consent. The information letter to the participants in this study provided the purpose of the study and the assurance of the anonymity of respondents. Participants were not required to divulge their names, or any identifiers that would reveal their identity or employer. The participants were not allowed to respond to the survey questions without first indicating that they understood and agreed with the privacy protocol.

The study sought to determine whether an officer's perception of the training received in the police academy was adequate to provide a sense of self-efficacy when performing post-academy duties. Auburn University IRB (see Appendix 1) will be presented with the research request. Following IRB approval, the study attempted to answer research questions regarding academy training methodologies and whether they lead to officer satisfaction. The research attempted determine which demographic was or was not satisfied with their training as it is applied to real-world performance. Permission to participate in the research was obtained from the department heads of the various agencies, with officers participating in the study.

Research Design

The research design is intended to provide and ensure that the collected data allows researchers to address a research problem effectively. The design should:

1. Identify the research problem.
2. Validate its selection.
3. Review previously published literature related to the topic.
4. Specify the research questions.
5. Describe the data that is being requested.
6. Explain how the data will be collected.
7. Describe the analysis method applied to the data (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006).

Selecting the appropriate research design is important as the method chosen will direct the experiment by orchestrating data collection, defining the statistical analysis of the resultant data, and guiding the interpretation of the results (Knight, 2010).

Correlational or non-experimental research designs are the opposite of experimental research designs and are the most heterogeneous of the designs compared to experimental and quasi-experimental (Thompson & Panacek, 2007) and will be used in this study. A condition that may require a researcher to rely on a non-experimental design is when he or she wants to determine if a relationship exists between two variables. However, there is no expectation of a causal relationship, or she suspects that a causal relationship exists between two variables (Gapira, Chironda, Ndahayo, Theos, Tuyisenge & Rajeswaran, 2020). Unlike experimental and quasi-experimental designs, non-experimental research designs are purely observational, and the results are intended to be purely descriptive (Thompson & Panacek, 2007).

Finally, non-experimental research design, specifically correlational research, is a form of descriptive research, and is used to assess the relationship between two variables. Variables can be measured through various data collection methods, including surveys (Hung, Bounsanga, & Voss, 2017). Correlation methods are concerned with association, looking at any measured concepts and comparing the relationships (i.e., the relationship between X and Y) (Hung, Bounsanga, & Voss, 2017). Correlation research can allow researchers to determine if a relationship exists between two variables, but cannot establish causality (Stewart, 2021).

Procedure

A non-experimental correlation design was selected to answer this study's research questions. This methodology was selected to determine whether statistically significant relationships exist between the variables of training methodology, officer engagement, and post-training performance. The independent variables consist of (1) the officers' perceptions of the training methodology or teaching approach most commonly used by instructors in the academies – pedagogical or andragogical, and (2) the officers' perceptions of their level of engagement

during the training. The dependent variable represents the officers' perception of their post-academy training performance once they are assigned to work as solo officers.

To assess training methodology (e.g., pedagogical or andragogical), the officer's perception of whether the topic presented during each training session occurred with learners participating or with the instructor primarily lecturing throughout the course, will be measured on a scale of 1 to 5. The officers' perception of how engaged they were during training sessions will be measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5; 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). Self-efficacy is one's perceived capability for learning or performing actions at designated levels (Bandura, 1977). The research has shown that self-efficacy influences learning, motivation, achievement, and self-regulation (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Personal engagement in the workplace is defined as the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance (Kahn, 1990).

Finally, the officers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness or adequacy of the training once they were tasked with the responsibilities of being a solo officer was measured on a 5-point Likert scale; 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 *(neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). In addition to the 5-point scale, respondents were allowed to answer some survey questions by replying with a "Yes" or "No". Numeric values were assigned to the item responses, allowing the use of a quantitative methodology to examine if a relationship exists between variables. The data representing the variables was computed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 28.0.11(14).

Data Collection

This study employed quantitative measures and used convenience sampling comprised of adult learners to obtain data. The survey instrument, based on Countryman's (2006) Adult Needs Survey, was shared electronically via the online survey platform, Qualtrics, with collaborating law enforcement agencies. Once participants completed the survey, the responses were stored on the Qualtrics platform for the researcher to retrieve. The survey responses were assessed to ensure that all questions were answered thoroughly. Incomplete surveys were not discarded; however, the data they contain was not used for the research analysis. Independent-sample t-tests were used to analyze the obtained data, which is a suitable analysis option when attempting to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between two groups. For the *independent-sample t-test* to be suitable, the independent variable must identify two independent groups and a continuous dependent variable. The variable dynamics will be explained in more detail in Chapter Four.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three consisted of the introduction, design of study, protection of participants, sample selection, the data collection process, instrument development, and data collection and analysis. The methodology in this study considered responses from police officers with POST certifications, that were off probationary status and employed with their respective agency for less than three years. Chapter Three provided a description of the instrument used to conduct the study, as well as the procedure for data analysis. The next chapter will present the results of the statistical analysis conducted during the study.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Chapter One provides the background regarding the questionable adequacy of police training and the need for change in the various academies' processes of developing recruits' skills in what is still considered a para-military environment. Chapter Two provides a brief history of law enforcement, a literature review that frames the delivery of academy training in its current pedagogical format, the need for a shift in the training paradigm, and the outlined benefits of an andragogical approach in recruit training. Chapter Three provides the research method used to conduct this study and address the research questions.

The goal of Chapter 4 is to lay the groundwork to provide a scientific methodology to answer the hypothesis, which will be stated shortly. Through an explanation of the specific methodology, a description of the study's sample population, the instrumentation used to measure differences in the study variables, and the reliability of measurements, the research will serve as a catalyst for change in law enforcement training.

Purpose of the Study

Understanding to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel, we must determine the recruits' perception of the benefit of the different training methods in real world application. An observation of how the perception of the andragogical methodology could or has influenced decision-making, responsiveness, and overall competence in the field must be conducted. Only with such a nuanced understanding can we craft training programs that truly resonate with officers and adequately prepares them for the challenges they face daily.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the police training methods—specifically, traditional lecture-based (pedagogical) methods and (andragogical methods grounded in adult learning principles—and their influence on officer engagement and performance. Further, this research aims to understand how perceived engagement during training translates to officer performance and competence in real-world scenarios.

Training in law enforcement is not merely an exercise in imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. This study, at its core, seeks to discern the perceived impact of these methodologies on recruits' engagement during training and job performance post-training. Lecture-based training, which has been the mainstay for many institutions, operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, its top-down approach might not always facilitate active participation or deep engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

In contrast, training anchored in adult learning principles operates on the premise that adults bring a rich tapestry of experiences to their learning environment (Knowles, 1989). Such training emphasizes collaboration, self-directed learning, and the application of existing knowledge to new scenarios (Purwati, Mardhiah, Nurhasanah, & Ramli, 2022). This approach potentially fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment (Knowles, 1980). However, the question remains: Does this methodology lead to learners' self-perceived engagement, understanding and skill acquisition?

Engagement during training, while crucial, is just one piece of the puzzle. The goal of any police training program is to ensure that officers can effectively translate what they have learned into actionable skills in the field for a particular job (Tovar, 2023). This study, therefore, goes beyond mere engagement metrics. It seeks to draw a through-line from the type of training received to its real-world applications. Which training methodology best prepares officers to perform and respond to high-pressure situations? Which method assists with their decision-making? Do they demonstrate higher levels of competence and adaptability when exposed to one or the other methodology?

By comparing perceptions of traditional training to methods grounded in adult learning principles, this study will illuminate the strengths and potential shortcomings of each approach. More importantly, by linking training methodologies to real-world performance, it aims to provide actionable insights that can shape the future of training interventions in law enforcement. This research is not just about understanding what works—it is about crafting a roadmap for training that genuinely empowers recruits to excel in their future roles as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. **Prior Military Experience and Perception of law Enforcement Training Adequacy:** Does prior military experience influence law enforcement officers' perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?

2. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement officers based on Gender:** Do perceptions of adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary between genders, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?
3. **Educational Background and Training Perception in Law Enforcement:** Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background?
4. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement Officers based on Race:** How do perceptions of law enforcement training differ between minority and non-minority officers, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it seeks to determine whether a relationship existed in the perceptions of POST certified police officers of the methodology used to train them, and whether the level of engagement during training carried over to real-world applications. The study sought to determine if the current methodology was better received and employed by officers with military training, and with college education, compared to those without. In addition, the study sought to determine if officers perceived the training as adequate to assist them in performing their daily duties. Currently, there is a lack of initiative to implement academy training that is based in an andragogical methodology focused on adult learners. The results of this study could influence that initiative and provide a foundation to support change in the academy training paradigm.

This study focused on (1) the relationship between officers' perceptions of individual training modules (e.g., such as firearms, defensive driving, defensive tactics, de-escalation, problem-solving, and communications skills), and their adequacy. The second focus is on the

officers' desire for additional training in these areas and whether the amount of presentation time of each course was sufficient to prepare them for post academy work in the field. The study will add to the body of knowledge and research that currently exists regarding the effectiveness of police academy training, with a focus on implementing a methodology that is more conducive to adult learners.

Sample Description

The respondents for this study consisted of 94 adults between the ages of 21 and 62 years of age, with a POST certification. The respondent sample was comprised of 94 full-time police officers, with 74 being non-probationary, or 79%. There were 21 with prior military experience, or 31%. The educational levels varied from one or less than 1% possessing a GED, 15 or approximately 22% with a high school diploma, 14 approximately 21% with some college, 32 or approximately 48% with a college degree, and 5 or approximately 7% with a graduate degree or more. The gender of the respondents was overwhelmingly male (90%), females comprised 9%, and gender neutral accounted for the remaining 1%. Regarding race and ethnicity, 7 or approximately 10% identified as African American, 54 or 81% identified as Caucasian, 1 or less than 15 as Native American, 3 or approximately 4% as more than one race, and the remainder either self-described or preferred not to identify as a race.

Sample

There were 94 officers from various law enforcement agencies in the state of Alabama that responded to the research survey questionnaire. Of the number of respondents, 67 comprised the survey sample; N = 67. The sample are the officers that completed the survey questionnaire and were self-described as non-probationary status employees with three years or less at their

agency. One goal of the study is to determine the relationship between officers with a military background versus those without. Another goal of the study is to determine the relationship between the perceptions of officers based on their level of education. The survey questionnaire also captured the gender of the sample. Table 1 visually illustrates this sample pertaining to military experience. Table 2 illustrates the sample pertaining to educational levels. Table 3 illustrates the sample's age range and offers evidence that all respondents are adults. Table 4 illustrates the sample pertaining to gender. Finally, Table 5 illustrates Race.

Quantitative Findings

This section discusses the results of the quantitative data pertaining to the research questions presented earlier in this chapter. An *independent sample t-test* was used to determine if there was a significant difference between two independent groups on the same continuous variable.

Prior Military Experience

One research question sought to determine if prior military experience influenced law enforcement officers' perceptions of the academy and the relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands. An *independent-sample t-test* was conducted to evaluate whether the respondents felt their training prepared them to perform their duties after completing the academy. The independent variable was prior military experience, grouped as "Yes" or "No" in relation to whether they had prior military experience. The dependent variable was the opinion about the academy relating to applicability after completion of the training. The *independent-sample t-test* was tested at the .05 significance level. Those with prior military experience (M = 3.65, SD = 1.58) and those without prior military experience (M =

3.18, *SD* = 1.53), had similar mean scores. However, results indicated there were no statistically significant differences between groups, t (60) = 1.07, p = .675. Therefore, prior military experience alone is not related to the impact of officers' opinions regarding the effectiveness of academy training.

Table 4

Independent-Sample T-Test for Military

Prior Military	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(*df*)	*Sig.*
Yes	17	3.65	1.57	1.07(60)	.675
No	45	3.18	1.52		

Note. N = 62

Gender Differences

A second research question sought to determine how perceptions of law enforcement training differ between gender groups, in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness. Do men or women perceive academy training as being effective, and does it adequately prepare them to perform their roles in real-world scenarios upon completion of the academy?

An *independent sample t-test* was used to compare perceptions of the effectiveness of academy training between males and females. The groups were categorized as "Male" and "Female", the independent variable. The perception of the effectiveness of the academy training is the dependent variable. The *independent sample t-test* was conducted at the .05 significance level. While the Male Group (*M* = 3.35, *SD* = 1.54) and Female Group (*M* = 2.80, *SD* = 1.64) had similar means, the *independent sample t-test* results revealed no statistically significant difference between groups related to the effectiveness of the academy training and whether it

prepared them to perform the duties after graduating, $t\ (60) = 0.76$, $p = .452$. Therefore, gender difference of academy attendees is not related to the impact of officers' opinion regarding the effectiveness of the academy training.

Table 5

Independent-Sample T-Test for Gender

Gender	*n*	Mean	*SD*	*t(df)*	Sig.
Male	57	3.35	1.54	0.76(60)	.452
Female	5	2.80	1.64		

Note. N = 62

Given the number of female respondents, this test was likely underpowered to detect a difference between genders. Descriptively, males were .55 points higher than females. As mentioned in previous chapters, males comprise the majority of the officers employed in law enforcement. Therefore, the female sample size may be insufficient when compared to the male sample.

Educational Differences

The study compared the responses between officers with various levels of education to determine if there was a significant difference in their feelings related to academy training. The educational groups for the officers consisted of those with a GED, High School Diploma, Some College, College Degree, and Graduate Degree. There was only one respondent possessing a GED and four possessing a graduate degree or more. Therefore, the variables were re-coded to reflect the respondents not possessing a college degree as "Without a Degree" and those possessing a degree as "With a Degree". Since there were two groups as a result of the re-coding,

the study used an *independent sample t-test* to understand whether officers' perception of their academy training differed based on their educational level. The independent variable was the officers' educational level with GED, High School Diploma, and Some College representing the "Without a Degree" group. Those possessing a College Degree, a Graduate Degree, or more advanced degree represented the "With a Degree" group. The dependent variable was officers' perceived effectiveness of academy training. The Without a Degree Group (M = 3.50, SD = 1.37) and the With a Degree Group (M = 3.15, SD = 1.67) had similar mean scores. The results of the *independent-sample t-test* indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between groups, t (60) = 0.76, p = .374. Therefore, differences in respondents' educational levels are not related to their opinions regarding the effectiveness of academy training.

Table 6

Independent Sample T-Test for Education

Education Level	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t(df)*	*Sig.*
Without a Degree	28	3.50	1.37	0.76(60)	.374
With a Degree	34	3.41	1.67		

Note. N = 62. The Without a Degree Group is comprised of those possessing a GED, High School Diploma, or Some College. The With a Degree Group is comprised of those possessing a College Degree, a Graduate Degree, or more advanced degree.

Race/Ethnicity Difference

The study examined officers' perception of academy training based on officers' race to determine whether there were statistically significant differences using an *independent-sample t-test* to compare two groups. Eight original racial groups were intended to serve as the independent variable and were to be separated into categories of African American, Asian, White/Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American, More than One Race, Self-describe, and Prefer

Not to Say. However, the majority of the respondents, 80 percent, identified as White/Caucasian. The other racial groups were comprised of seven African Americans, one respondent identifying as Native American, one identifying as Self-Described, one Prefer Not to Say, and none identified as Asian. It was determined that too few respondents identified as another individual race or ethnicity to conduct a viable comparison of independent groups. Therefore, the race/ethnicity variables were recoded to form two groups, one White and the other Non-white. These two groups comprised the independent variable. The creation of two groups, White and Non-white, required the implementation of an independent-sample t-test.

The dependent variable is the academy training completed by each of the respondents. The *independent-sample t-test* revealed no statistically significant difference between the two racial groups based on their feelings about academy training after graduation. *The independent-sample t-test* was tested at .05 significance level. The White Group (M = 3.31, SD = 1.58) and the Non-white Group (M = 2.92, SD = 1.44), had similar means. However, the results indicate that officers' race/ethnicity did not significantly impact their perceptions of the academy training preparing them to perform their duties as solo beat officers, t (66) = 0.80, p = .694.

Table 7

Independent-Sample T-Test for Race

Race/Ethnicity	*n*	M	*SD*	*t*(*df*)	*Sig.*
White	55	3.31	1.58	0.80(66)	.694
Non-white	13	2.92	1.44		

Note. N = 68. The White group was comprised of participants who identified as White/Caucasian. The Non-white group was comprised of participants who identified as African American, Native American, Self-Described, or Prefer Not to Say.

The majority, more than 80 percent, of respondents identified as White/Caucasian. The sample size of the remaining four groups combined comprised approximately 19 percent of the total respondents. Some disparity in Race/Ethnicity groups size was expected by the researcher, but not to this degree.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 explored the results of the statistical analysis from the collection of respondent data associated with this study. *Independent-sample t-tests* were conducted to determine if there was a statistical significance in the responses to the question: Does prior military experience relate to law enforcement officers' perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?

A second *independent-sample t-test* was conducted to answer the question: Does gender relate to officer's perception of the adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them to perform in real-world scenarios after completion of the academy? The results determined no relationships between the respondents related to either question.

A third *independent-sample t-test* was conducted to determine if there was a statistical significance in responses to the research question: Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background? The variables related to educational levels were recoded, resulting in two groups – White and Non-white due to the low number of respondents possessing a GED or graduate level degrees.

The final *independent-sample t-test* was conducted to answer the research question: Does the perception of adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based

on their racial/ethnic identity? Analysis of the *t-test* results determined that there is no relationship between the respondents' perception of academy training based on educational level or racial identity. The racial group variables were re-coded due to more than 80 percent of the respondents identifying as White. The other racial groups combined comprised approximately 19 percent of total respondents applicable to the research questions. Chapter Five will discuss the findings of this study and implications for future studies related to law enforcement training.

Chapter 5. Summary, Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter One of this dissertation provided the background regarding the adequacy of police training and the need to consider changes in the various academies' processes of developing recruits' skills in what is still considered a para-military environment. Chapter Two provided a literature review that frames the delivery of academy training in its current pedagogical format, the need for a shift in the training paradigm, and the outlined benefits of an andragogical approach in recruit training. Chapter Three provided the research method used to conduct this study and address the research questions. The goal of the chapter was to lay the groundwork to provide a scientific methodology to test the adequacy of academy training. Through an explanation of the specific methodology, a description of the study's sample population, the instrumentation used to measure differences in the study variables, and the reliability of measurements, the research served as a catalyst for change in law enforcement training. Chapter Four offers the findings of this nonexperimental quantitative study based on instruments used to survey a sample population. Chapter Five is the conclusion and summarization of the findings of the study. The chapter will describe how the findings can be implemented, the study's perceived limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

Purpose of the Study

To refine or determine to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel, we determined the recruits' perception of the benefit of the different methods in real world application. An observation of how the perception of andragogical methodology could or has influenced decision-making, responsiveness, and overall competence in the field was conducted. Only with such a nuanced understanding can we

craft training programs that truly resonate with officers and adequately prepare them for the challenges they face daily.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the traditional or pedagogical method of police training—specifically, lecture-based training versus, an andragogical method of training grounded in adult learning principles—and their influence on officer engagement and performance. Further, this research aims to understand how perceived engagement during training translates to officer performance and competence in real-world scenarios.

Training in law enforcement is not merely an exercise in imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. This study, at its core, seeks to discern the perceived impact of these methodologies on recruits' engagement during training and job performance post-training.

Lecture-based training, which has been the mainstay for many institutions, operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, its top-down approach might not always facilitate active participation or deep engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

In contrast, training anchored in adult learning principles operates on the premise that adults bring a rich tapestry of experiences to their learning environment (Knowles, 1989). Such training emphasizes collaboration, self-directed learning, and the application of existing

knowledge to new scenarios (Purwati, Mardhiah, Nurhasanah, & Ramli, 2022). This approach potentially fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment (Knowles, 1980). However, the question remains: Does this methodology lead to learners' self-perceived engagement, understanding and skill acquisition?

Engagement during training, while crucial, is just one piece of the puzzle. The goal of any police training program is to ensure that officers can effectively translate what they have learned into actionable skills in the field for a particular job (Tovar, 2023). This study, therefore, goes beyond mere engagement metrics. It seeks to draw a through-line from the type of training received to its real-world applications. Which training methodology best prepares officers to perform and respond to high-pressure situations? Which method assists with their decision-making? Do they demonstrate higher levels of competence and adaptability when exposed to one or the other methodology?

By comparing traditional training to methods grounded in adult learning principles, this study will illuminate the strengths and potential shortcomings of each approach. More importantly, by linking training methodologies to real-world performance, it aims to provide actionable insights that can shape the future of training interventions in law enforcement. This research is not just about understanding what works—it is about crafting a roadmap for training that genuinely empowers recruits to excel in their future roles as law enforcement officers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. **Prior Military Experience and Perception of law Enforcement Training Adequacy:** Does prior military experience influence law enforcement officers' perceptions of the

adequacy and relevance of academy training in preparing them for post-academy performance demands?

2. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement officers based on Gender:** Do perceptions of adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary between genders, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

3. **Educational Background and Training Perception in Law Enforcement:** Does the perception of the adequacy and relevance of law enforcement training vary among officers based on their educational background?

4. **Diversity in Training Perception among Law Enforcement Officers based on Race:** How do perceptions of law enforcement training differ between minority and non-minority officers, particularly in terms of engagement, relevance, and effectiveness?

Summary of Study

The goal of this study was to examine the relationships between various demographics in a sample population and perceived effectiveness of police academy training in practice. In the study, a sample population of 94 certified law enforcement officers employed in the state of Alabama were classified by gender; ethnicity/race; age; college and non-college educated; prior military experience; and the academy they attended. The sample population completed a self-report style questionnaire on the Qualtrics platform.

The analysis did not definitely suggest that the perceptions of the training at the academy by the various respondents were affected as it relates to their overall effectiveness in real world

practice. Research question 1 was answered by conducting an *independent-sample t-test*. The results indicate that there was no significant statistical difference in the perception of the training by those possessing a military background versus those without prior military exposure. An *independent-sample t-test* was used to answer Research Question 2, which focused on the difference in opinion of academy training based on gender. The results indicated that there was no significant statistical difference in perception between male and female respondents. An independent-sample t-test was conducted to answer Research Question 3, which sought to determine if there was a difference in perception between respondents based on their differing educational levels. The results indicate that there is no significant statistical difference between those with various educational levels. An independent-sample t-test was used to answer Research Question 4, which focused on the difference in perception based on race and ethnicity. The results determined that there was no significant statistical difference in perception between the demographics. As noted in the previous chapter, the variables for educational levels and race and ethnicity were re-coded.

However, there was evidence that some respondents expressed perceptions that indicate the current methodology used in academy training is not conducive to adult learning which suggests that trainees could benefit from training that incorporates an andragogical methodology. This determination is a result of the respondents stating that more time needed to be allocated to communication skills and problem solving. This was gathered by way of the survey question asking the respondents to express which topics they felt required more class time. An example is survey question 19 which asked, “Which skill learned at the academy do you use the most as a solo officer?” The majority of the respondents, 32 (48%), stated that communication skills were used the most. Survey question 21 asked, “In your opinion, which skill learned at the academy

should have been covered more thoroughly?" The respondents listed de-escalation, problem-solving, and communication skills as the desired topics.

Implications

The purpose of the study was to refine or determine to what degree refinement is beneficial in reference to training methodologies for law enforcement personnel. We determine the officers' perception of the benefit of the different methods in real world application by surveying respondents' perception of the pedagogical methodology currently being used in academy training. The aim was to understand how officers' perceived engagement during training, how it translated to performance and competence in real-world scenarios.

Law enforcement training is more than imparting knowledge; it is about equipping officers with the tools and understanding required to manage a wide array of challenging situations. As such, the methodology employed plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of such training. While the study did not definitively determine a significant difference in the perception of training, it was solely based on the respondents' view of the pedagogical method of teaching.

As stated, lecture-based training operates on a model where information flows primarily from the instructor to the learners (Knowles, 1989). The instructor recites collectively the key points related to each topic. Its strength lies in its structured format, ensuring that each participant receives the same foundational knowledge (Knowles, 1980). However, it might not always facilitate student participation or engagement, especially if the content does not resonate with the learners' prior experiences (Knowles, 1989).

The goal of law enforcement training is to produce officers capable of applying what they learned upon completion of the academy (Tovar, 2023). This study seeks to determine which training methodology is perceived to best prepare officers to be successful. With a recent increase in the number of "use of force" incidents causing the law enforcement profession to be viewed more negatively by the public, academy training should be considered at the forefront of needed reform (Arnold, 2014). Assisting officers to develop soft-skills, and stress management at the start of their careers has a favorable impact on their conduct and problem-solving abilities which should be one of the primary goals of academy training (Gutshall, Hampton, Sebetan, Stein, and Broxtermann, 2017).

The intent of this study was to provide future researchers insight regarding the impact of the current training model, and the post training impact of the pedagogical method of training. It provides a glimpse that can assist in shaping the future of police academy training. By using the data related to this study, law enforcement administrators may better determine which training methodology is best suited for the profession and express their desire to APOST for personnel sent to the academy to be trained using the most effective method.

Limitations

There are limitations related to this study. First, it is not representative of a national nor regional law enforcement population. The respondents are a sample of law enforcement officers contained within the state of Alabama. Therefore, caution should be used when comparing the results of this study to any law enforcement population outside of Alabama. Second, a correlation design does not determine causation. In short, factors other than academy training may cause respondents to perceive the training in the manner in which they do. In this instance, the perception may be skewed due to respondents not having a comprehensive understanding of

pedagogical or andragogical methodologies. Also, officers' exposure to an andragogical method of training is lacking. Since the inception of academy training, the same method, pedagogical, has been employed to teach each successive generation of law enforcement professionals.

Recommendations

To better understand the impact of academy training on recruits, a longitudinal study should be conducted. The study could begin prior to the recruits attending the academy, using a survey to obtain data about perceptions and the respondent's ability. A second survey could be conducted upon completion of the academy to determine the perception level. A tertiary survey could be considered several years after the officers are beyond field training.

Another recommendation is a study of administrative officers at the various law enforcement agencies in the state of Alabama. Preferably the same agencies as the respondents to this study's survey. The administrative officers, such as the Chiefs, and training officers could provide their perception of the recently trained officers' abilities once they return from the academy and after they have been through the field training program. The goal of such a study would be to determine if the administrative staff members' perception of the academy training indicates whether officers are capable of performing the job in a way that indicates skill acquisition suitable for solo performance. A basis for the administrative officers' perception could be related to the number of disciplinary actions taken, the number of complaints received from citizens, or the number of lawsuits filed against their agency as a result of training failures. Data to support this study could also be gleaned from insuring entities, such as the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC) which provides insurance coverage to municipalities and their various departments.

Future consideration could be given to a longitudinal study that compares academy classes in which one is exposed to a pedagogical method of training and another in which recruits are exposed to an andragogical method. Conducting this study would require an academy to conduct a complete course in one then the other method of teaching. The result could negate the need to speculate the impact of a training method conducted completely using an andragogical model. The results of such a study could have a far-reaching impact on the future of law enforcement training, and lead to the development of an andragogical training curriculum that could change the way recruits are taught, but ensures they are learning and obtaining the knowledge they need to become successful law enforcement professionals.

Finally, consideration could be given to conducting a qualitative study. The respondents in the current study were provided with a brief explanation of andragogy. However, having the ability to explain adult learning in more detail could garner responses with a deeper understanding in the mind of the respondents. A qualitative study would also give the respondents the opportunity to explain in detail what they perceive as important topics related to their ability to perform effectively on the job. This recommendation is supported by the fact that a third of the respondents in this current study stated that topics other than those currently taught should be included in the curriculum.

Summary

This chapter summarized the study conducted to determine the opinion of law enforcement officers regarding the effectiveness of the academy training they received at the start of their careers. The goal was to discern whether to replace the current training model, which is based on a pedagogical model, with a training model that is aligned with an andragogical model better suited for adult learners. The study did not determine that the opinions

were varied among the demographics composing the sample. However, it is recognized that the law enforcement officers were only exposed to the pedagogical training model and therefore have no point of reference to decide or determine if another method of training would be more favorably impactful in real world scenarios. There should be additional studies and research conducted on this topic to determine the best course of action as those in the profession seek innovative ways to improve and evolve the law enforcement vocation. Continuing to research and study ways to improve the adequacy of police academy training will eventually provide the answer to the questions at the core of this study by bringing the discussion related to officers' performance, competence, and public trust to the forefront of the profession (Executive Order, 2020).

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Revised 09/13/2023

1

AUBURN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM (HRPP)

EXEMPT REVIEW APPLICATION

For assistance, contact: **The Office of Research Compliance (ORC)**
Phone: **334-844-5966** E-Mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs
Submit completed form and supporting materials as one PDF through the IRB Submission Page
Hand written forms are not accepted. Where links are found hold down the control button (Ctrl) then click the link..

1. Project Identification **Today's Date: June 10, 2024**

Anticipated start date of the project: June 28, 2024 Anticipated duration of project: 1 Year

a. **Project Title: The Recruits' Perception of Police Academy Training and the Transferability of Knowledge: Comparing the Effectiveness of Pedagogical to an Andragogical Method of Instruction**

b. **Principal Investigator (PI): Cedric Anderson** Degree(s): B.S., M.S.
Rank/Title: PhD Candidate Department/School: Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
Role/responsibilities in this project: **Cedric Anderson will be the Principal Investigator, responsible for the majority of any writing associated or created as a result of this study.**
Preferred Phone Number: **334-321-1914** AU Email: cra0004@auburn.edu

Faculty Advisor Principal Investigator (if applicable): Maria Witte
Rank/Title: Associate Dean Department/School: Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
Role/responsibilities in this project: **Dr. Witte is the Faculty Advisor of Principal Investigator**
Preferred Phone Number: **334-844-0299** AU Email: wittemm@auburn.edu

Department Head: William Murrah Department/School: Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
Preferred Phone Number: **334-844-3806** AU Email: wmm0017@auburn.edu
Role/responsibilities in this project: Dr. Murrah will oversee the project and research team.

c. **Project Key Personnel** – Identify all key personnel who will be involved with the conduct of the research and describe their role in the project. Role may include design, recruitment, consent process, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. (To determine key personnel, see decision tree). *Exempt determinations are made by individual institutions; reliance on other institutions for exempt determination is not feasible. Non-AU personnel conducting exempt research activities must obtain approval from the IRB at their home institution.*

Key personnel are required to maintain human subjects training through CITI. Please provide documentation of completed CITI training, with course title(s) and expiration date(s) shown. As a reminder, both IRB and RCR modules are required for all key study personnel.

Name: Cedric Anderson Degree(s): **B.S., M.S.**
Rank/Title: PhD Candidate Department/School: Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology
Role/responsibilities in this project: **He is the Principal Investigator, responsible for the majority of any writing associated or created as a result of this study.**
- AU affiliated? ☒ Yes ☐ No If no, name of home institution: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Completed required CITI training? ☒ Yes ☐ No If NO, complete the appropriate CITI basic course and update

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the revised Exempt Application form.

- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: **Human Sciences Basic Course** 9/11/2025
  Choose a course Expiration Date

Name: Maria Witte Degree(s): **B.S., M.S., and PhD**

Rank/Title: Associate Dean Department/School: Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology

Role/responsibilities in this project: **Dr. Witte is the Faculty Advisor of Principal Investigator**

- AU affiliated? ☒ Yes ☐ No If no, name of home institution: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Completed required CITI training? ☒ Yes ☐ No If NO, complete the appropriate CITI basic course and update the revised EXEMPT application form.
- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: **Human Sciences Basic Course** Expiration Date
  Choose a course Expiration Date

Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Degree(s): Click or tap here to enter text.

Rank/Title: Choose Rank/Title Department/School: Choose Department/School

Role/responsibilities in this project: Click or tap here to enter text.

- AU affiliated? ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, name of home institution: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? Click or tap here to enter text.
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Completed required CITI training? ☐ Yes ☐ No If NO, complete the appropriate CITI basic course and update the revised EXEMPT application form.
- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: Choose a course Expiration Date
  Choose a course Expiration Date

d. Funding Source – Is this project funded by the investigator(s)? Yes ☒ No ☐

Is this project funded by AU? Yes ☐ No ☒ If YES, identify source Click or tap here to enter text.

Is this project funded by an external sponsor? Yes ☐ No ☒ If YES, provide name of sponsor, type of sponsor (governmental, non-profit, corporate, other), and an identification number for the award.

Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Type: Click or tap here to enter text. Grant #: Click or tap here to enter text.

e. List other AU IRB-approved research projects and/or IRB approvals from other institutions that are associated with this project. Describe the association between this project and the listed project(s):
Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Project Summary

a. Does the study *TARGET* any special populations? Answer YES or NO to all.

Minors (under 18 years of age; if minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors)	Yes ☐ No ☒
Auburn University Students	Yes ☐ No ☒
Pregnant women, fetuses, or any products of conception	Yes ☐ No ☒

Prisoners or wards (unless incidental, not allowed for Exempt research) Yes ☐ No ☒

Temporarily or permanently impaired Yes ☐ No ☒

b. Does the research pose more than minimal risk to participants? Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, to question 2.b, then the research activity is NOT eligible for EXEMPT review. Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or test. 42 CFR 46.102(i)

c. Does the study involve any of the following? *If YES to any of the questions in item 2.c, then the research activity is NOT eligible for EXEMPT review.*

Procedures subject to FDA regulations (drugs, devices, etc.) Yes ☐ No ☒

Use of school records of identifiable students or information from instructors about specific students. Yes ☐ No ☒

Protected health or medical information when there is a direct or indirect link which could identify the participant. Yes ☐ No ☒

Collection of sensitive aspects of the participant's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or alcohol use. Yes ☐ No ☒

d. Does the study include deception? Requires limited review by the IRB* Yes ☐ No ☒

3. MARK the category or categories below that describe the proposed research. Note the IRB Reviewer will make the final determination of the eligible category or categories.

☐ **1.** Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices. The research is not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn or assessment of educators providing instruction. 104(d)(1)

☒ **2.** Research only includes interactions involving educational tests, surveys, interviews, public observation if at least ONE of the following criteria. (The research includes data collection only; may include visual or auditory recording; may NOT include intervention and only includes interactions). **Mark the applicable sub-category below (I, ii, or iii). 104(d)(2)**

☒ **(i)** Recorded information cannot readily identify the participant (directly or indirectly/ linked); **OR**
- surveys and interviews: no children;
- educational tests or observation of public behavior: can only include children when investigators do not participate in activities being observed.

☒ **(ii)** Any disclosures of responses outside would not reasonably place participant at risk; **OR**

☒ **(iii)** Information is recorded with identifiers or code linked to identifiers and IRB conducts limited review; no children. **Requires limited review by the IRB.***

☐ **3.** Research involving Benign Behavioral Interventions (BBI)** through verbal, written responses including data entry or audiovisual recording from adult subjects who prospectively agree and ONE of the following criteria is met. (This research does not include children and does not include medical interventions. Research cannot have deception unless the participant prospectively agrees that they will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature and purpose of the research) **Mark the applicable sub-category below (A, B, or C).** 104(d)(3)(i)

☐ **(A)** Recorded information cannot readily identify the subject (directly or indirectly/ linked); **OR**

☐ **(B)** Any disclosure of responses outside of the research would not reasonably place subject at risk; **OR**

☐ **(C)** Information is recorded with identifies and cannot have deception unless participants prospectively agree. **Requires limited review by the IRB.***

☐ **4.** Secondary research for which consent is not required: use of identifiable information or identifiable bio-specimen that have been or will be collected for some other 'primary' or 'initial' activity, if one of the following criteria is met. Allows retrospective and prospective secondary use. **Mark the applicable sub-category below (i, ii, iii, or iv).** 104 (d)(4)

☐ **(i)** Bio-specimens or information are publicly available;

☐ **(ii)** Information recorded so subject cannot readily be identified, directly or indirectly/linked investigator does not contact subjects and will not re-identify the subjects; **OR**

☐ **(iii)** Collection and analysis involving investigators use of identifiable health information when us is regulated by HIPAA "health care operations" or "research" or "public health activities and purposes" (does not include bio-specimens (only PHI and requires federal guidance on how to apply); **OR**

☐ **(iv)** Research information collected by or on behalf of federal government using government generated or collected information obtained for non-research activities.

☐ **5.** Research and demonstration projects which are supported by a federal agency/department AND designed to study and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i)public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or service under those programs. (must be posted on a federal web site). 104.5(d)(5) (must be posted on a federal web site)

☐ **6.** Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives and consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The research does not involve prisoners as participants. 104(d)(6)

**Limited IRB review – the IRB Chair or designated IRB reviewer reviews the protocol to ensure adequate provisions are in place to protect privacy and confidentiality.*

***Category 3 – Benign Behavioral Interventions (BBI) must be brief in duration, painless/harmless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on participants, and it is unlikely participants will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing.*

**** Exemption categories 7 and 8 require broad consent. The AU IRB has determined the regulatory requirements for legally effective broad consent are not feasible within the current institutional infrastructure. EXEMPT categories 7 and 8 will not be implemented at this time.*

4. Describe the proposed research including who does what, when, where, how, and for how long, etc.

Revised 09/13/2023

a. Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to examine the perception of police academy graduates regarding the training they received and transferability of that training to real world application. I will use the attached electronic survey which will be delivered to participants through Qualtrics and consists of Likert-type questions to collect responses. The survey will be sent to law enforcement agencies in the state of Alabama. The survey will be available for approximately one month, or until a sufficient sample size is obtained (the goal is approximately 300 respondents). The students will be able to access the survey through a link in a disseminated email. A follow-up email will be sent approximately ten days after the initial request.

b. Participant population, including the number of participants and the rationale for determining number of participants to recruit and enroll. Note if the study enrolls minor participants, describe the process to ensure more than 1 adult is present during all research procedures which include the minor.

The participant population is police academy graduates with less than three years of law enforcement experience, all being over the age of 18. Per Cohen (1970), the goal is approximately 300 respondents. I have the support of the various agency heads to distribute the survey to their officers.

c. Recruitment process. Address whether recruitment includes communications/interactions between study staff and potential participants either in person or online. *Submit a copy of all recruitment materials.*

Recruitment will be accomplished through email distributed by the agency head. An information letter will accompany the email containing the survey link to Qualtrics.

d. Consent process including how information is presented to participants, etc.

The attached email message will be sent with information contained within, which contains consent information.

e. Research procedures and methodology

I will forward the initial email to law enforcement agency heads, to distribute to officers in their organization, inviting officers to participate in the study by completing the survey in Qualtrics. I will send the agency heads the reminder email to distribute to officers approximately ten days later. Approximately one month (depending on the number of responses) later I will close the survey. I will not have access to respondents' email data. I will import the data to a password-protected excel document in the AU BOX which requires login access. I will import and statistically analyze them.

f. Anticipated time per study exercise/activity and total time if participants complete all study activities.

The anticipated time for participants is approximately 15 minutes.

g. Location of the research activities.

Research activities are located at Auburn University. The survey can be completed on participants' electronic devices.

h. Costs to and compensation for participants? If participants will be compensated describe the amount, type, and process to distribute.

There is no cost to the participants. Compensation includes a raffle for twenty $10 dollar Amazon Gift cards. I will purchase one digital card per 10 returned surveys, making the chances of receiving a gift card 1 in 10 or 10%. I will use my money to purchase the gift cards. Participants desiring to enter the raffle will have a place at the end of the survey to include their email address, which will not be connected to their responses. I will input the emails of those wanting to participate in the raffle into a wheelofnames.com or similar format to randomly select email address. I will email the selected winners the gift cards.

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i. Non-AU locations, site, institutions. *Submit a copy of agreements/IRB approvals.*
N/A

j. Describe how results of this study will be used (presentation? publication? thesis? dissertation?)
The results of this study will be used in my dissertation as partial fulfillment of the PhD requirements. The results may be used for future research studies, presentations at academic conferences, publication in academic journals, or distribution to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subject or legally authorized representative.

k. Additional relevant information.
Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Waivers
Check applicable waivers and describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

☐ Waiver of Consent (Including existing de-identified data)

☒ Waiver of Documentation of Consent (Use of Information Letter, rather than consent form requiring signatures)

☐ Waiver of Parental Permission (in Alabama, 18 years-olds may be considered adults for research purposes)
https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/orc/irb/IRB 1 Exempt and Expedited/11-113 MR 1104 Hinton Renewal 2021-1.pdf

a. Provide the rationale for the waiver request.
Due to the study procedure occurring online, it is not practical to obtain signatures from participants, therefore a waiver of documentation is requested.

6. Describe the process to select participants/data/specimens. If applicable, include gender, race, and ethnicity of the participant population.

The process for selecting participants will be convenience sampling, primarily targeting the ten largest law enforcement agencies in the state of Alabama, along with three agencies not included in that group to ensure an adequate sample size can be obtained. All participants will have to confirm they possess POST certification in law enforcement within the state of Alabama. The certifications have to be obtained within three years of the completion of the survey. Academy participants are male and female, black, white, Asian, Native American, military veterans, college graduates and various other demographics.

7. Risks and Benefits

7a. Risks - Describe why none of the research procedures would cause a participant either physical or psychological discomfort or be perceived as discomfort above and beyond what the person would experience in daily life (minimal risk).

None of the research procedures in this study would cause a participant physical or psychological harm or discomfort beyond daily life since the survey is voluntary and they are free to exit the survey whenever they choose. The questions ask the participants to share their perceptions about their experience in the academy related to knowledge obtained in different topics and their application in real world scenarios. All information obtained from the surveys will remain anonymous and the decision to participate or not will jeopardize the participants' future relations with their employers or with Auburn University.

7b. Benefits – Describe whether participants will benefit directly from participating in the study. If yes, describe the benefit. And, describe generalizable benefits resulting from the study.

There is no direct benefit to the participants in this study. The generalizable benefits will include contributing to a working body of knowledge about the effectiveness of academy training and whether an andragogical method would be more favorable.

8. Describe the provisions to maintain confidentiality of data, including collection, transmission, and storage. Identify platforms used to collect and store study data. *For EXEMPT research, the AU IRB recommends AU BOX or using an AU issued and encrypted device. If a data collection form will be used, submit a copy.*

Confidentiality of data will be maintained using Qualtrics, with a private login. AU BOX will be used to collect and store data, with a private login as well. The excel sheet used to download data from Qualtrics will be password protected. My dissertation committee and I will be the only researchers with access to the data. There will be no identifying participant information linked to responses. Emails collected for the raffle will be annotated separately and will not be included in the results.

a. If applicable, submit a copy of the data management plan or data use agreement.

9. Describe the provisions included in the research to protect the privacy interests of participants (e.g., others will not overhear conversations with potential participants, individuals will not be publicly identified or embarrassed).

Participants will enter responses directly into Qualtrics from their personal electronic devices. This data is protected in Qualtrics under my login. I will store data in AU BOX with a password, only accessible by my committee and myself. There are no interviews with individuals, and any discussion about data will be geared towards analysis or responses, which have no identifiable private information associated with them.

10. Does this research include purchase(s) that involve technology hardware, software or online services?

☐ **YES** ☒ **NO**

If YES:

A. Provide the name of the product Click or tap here to enter text.
and the manufacturer of the product Click or tap here to enter text.

B. Briefly describe use of the product in the proposed human subject's research.
Click or tap here to enter text.

C. To ensure compliance with AU's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy, contact AU IT Vendor Vetting team at vetting@auburn.edu to learn the vendor registration process (prior to completing the purchase).

D. Include a copy of the documentation of the approval from AU Vetting with the revised submission.

Revised 09/13/2023

11. Additional Information and/or attachments.

In the space below, provide any additional information you believe may help the IRB review of the proposed research. If attachments are included, list the attachments below. Attachments may include recruitment materials, consent documents, site permissions, IRB approvals from other institutions, data use agreements, data collection form, CITI training documentation, etc.

Attachments include: recruitment materials, consent documents, CITI documentation

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Required Signatures *(If a student PI is identified in item 1.a, the EXEMPT application must be re-signed and updated at every revision by the student PI and faculty advisor. The signature of the department head is required only on the initial submission of the EXEMPT application, regardless of PI. Staff and faculty PI submissions require the PI signature on all version, the department head signature on the original submission)*

Signature of Principal Investigator: Cedric Anderson **Date:** 6/10/2024

Signature of Faculty Advisor (If applicable): Maria M. Witte **Date:** 6/10/2024

Signature of Dept. Head: [illegible] **Date:** 06/10/2024

Version Date: 6/10/2024

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 12-Sep-2022
Expiration Date 11-Sep-2025
Record ID 51395569

This is to certify that:

Cedric Anderson

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

IRB Additional Modules
(Curriculum Group)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Generated on 13-Feb-2024. Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w21eb5eef-4346-4bc3-9641-f8cbf28eb8d4-51395569

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 13-Jan-2023
Expiration Date 13-Jan-2026
Record ID 50278701

This is to certify that:

Maria Witte

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Responsible Conduct of Research
(Curriculum Group)
AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students
(Course Learner Group)
1 - RCR
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w2aaea431-c11b-46bf-8098-eb7e79cc2132-50278701

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 19-Apr-2024
Expiration Date 19-Apr-2027
Record ID 57166413

This is to certify that:

Maria Witte

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Generated on 19-Apr-2024. Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wd9c282bc-1418-48ac-a0ca-7b89d0b02b4e-57166413

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 11-Jun-2024
Expiration Date 11-Jun-2027
Record ID 63254478

This is to certify that:

Cedric Anderson

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Responsible Conduct of Research
(Curriculum Group)
AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students
(Course Learner Group)
1 - RCR
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Generated on 11-Jun-2024. Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w5ea97d79-5660-4bef-afbf-c93ce5b42bf6-63254478

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 12-Sep-2022
Expiration Date 11-Sep-2025
Record ID 51395568

This is to certify that:

Cedric Anderson

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Generated on 11-Jun-2024. Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w6df00d4d-f865-4f83-a960-7f8fe0f36c95-51395568