Assessing the Efficacy of Field Training Officers’ Organizational Maturity and Their Decision to Utilize Communicative Competencies

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Assessing the Efficacy of Field Training Officers’ Organizational Maturity and Their Decision to Utilize Communicative Competencies

A thesis submitted to the Criminal Justice Department of Grand Valley State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Criminal Justice

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By
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ABSTRACT

Title of the Project: Assessing the Efficacy of Police Officers’ Organizational Maturity and the Decision to Utilize Communicative Competencies

Summary of the Project:

The focus of this study was the examination of communication issues in the field of law enforcement in order determine what effect if any, an officers’ organizational maturity has on their decision to utilize verbal and or non-verbal communications when performing their job, especially when interacting with citizens.

The scope of this study is limited, as the research is only concerned with the opinions of patrol officers regarding their ability to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally. In order to obtain patrol officer perspectives regarding this issue, and for convenience sake, a non-probability sample was established in which field training officers were selected to represent the larger population of patrol officers. As a result, field training officers were asked to complete a self directed survey regarding the importance verbal and non-verbal communications plays in doing the job of a patrol officer. The survey was designed to elicit unique insight into various aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication in order to determine if as a field training officer, they feel it would be beneficial to their profession as a whole, to receive training regarding the communicative arts.

In order for law enforcement to continue to professionalize itself, enhanced communicative skill-sets are no longer an option, but rather a must. Thus, the present research attempts to shed light on this issue by surveying field training officers in order to gather information that can perhaps be utilized in designing a larger more specific study at a later time.
Assessing the Efficacy of an Officer’s Organizational Maturity and the Decision to Utilize Communicative Competencies

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction To the Study

One of the major issues concerning the dissatisfaction with law enforcement is in its inability to effectively and professionally communicate. According to Leland, (2005) one of the most documented, discussed and debated components of the law enforcement profession is to what extent the communicative process plays within the profession and how much importance it should receive. Leland (2005) emphasis the point by indicating, "There is, however one task missing in the law enforcement profession as a whole. This is the understanding of interpersonal communications..." (p. 3). Whether an officer is on a traffic stop interviewing a suspect, or engaging in any of the aspects of the force continuum, the officer’s ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally will have a significant bearing on the outcome of the situation and may literally result in life or death consequences for the officer and or other members of the community.

Officers who are either inexperienced or who do not communicate well are prone to move up the force continuum prematurely, further escalating situations that are already stressful, volatile, and explosive. For instance Johnson (1998) points out, “Officers under age 30, with less than 5 years of police experience and only a high school education suffer the greatest risk for receiving a complaint” (p. 2). Additionally, Johnson (1998) points out that “In many instances, when officers do not develop effective
communication skills after five years, administrators might terminate them, or they might voluntarily leave their career in law enforcement” (p. 2).

In terms of the law enforcement mission, criminal justice scholars have for a long time studied a variety of concepts they believe was the mantra that law enforcement should strive towards, especially in terms of the “service” aspect of the police. The Presidents Commission on law Enforcement of 1967 stands out as a prominent catalyst toward this reform movement. It advocated that the criminal justice system, especially law enforcement, take immediate steps toward the professionalization of the occupation. Contained in the 1967 Commission report is a litany of recommendations that Commission staff felt were important social considerations regarding law enforcement’s transformation process from that of a simple blue collar occupation, into a professional service organization. Several recommendations cited centered on an officer’s ability to effectively communicate and interact with the constituents of police service. For instance, “The officer must remember that there is no law against making a policeman angry and that he cannot charge a man for offending him” (United States Government, 1967, p. 102). “Every officer should receive thorough grounding in community relations” (United States Government, 1967, p. 102). “Police departments in all large communities should have community-relations machinery…” (United States Government, 1967, p. 100). Further, “such machinery is a matter of the greatest importance in any community…” (United States Government, 1967, p. 100-101). These mandates, as outlined by the President’s Commission staff of 1967 are all considered significant factors in modernizing and professionalizing law enforcement. Several, if not all of these strategies focus on the ability of the officer on the street to effectively
communicate and interact with the citizens he/she services, especially when considering the demand is for law enforcement to be as much the interest of the citizen, as it is to the police. In order for law enforcement to further cultivate, elevate, and augment the profession and the services it provides, law enforcement leaders must continue to strive to achieve the recommendations and initiatives for its professional development as spearheaded in 1967 by the President’s Commission Staff, one of these being development of strong communicative skills.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major issues concerning law enforcement yet today, is the officer’s inability to effectively communicate in varied, meaningful ways. The question that begs to be answered is: Why does the law enforcement community continue to give such little attention to this issue, resulting in further destructive, adverse relationships with the public it serves? The problem lies at the doorstep of the bureaucracy. Hafner, (2003) indicates that, “The culture inside serves as a mirror effect outside” (p. 7). Developing cutting edge police strategies is all well and good, however; if organizational leaders are unwilling to change and adopt modern leadership philosophies absent the paramilitary structure, than “new” organizational methodologies mean nothing. For instance, if line level officers are supposed to effect change and build partnerships within the community through understanding and communication, it only makes sense that they receive training regarding verbal and non-verbal-communicative arts, prior to implementing the community policing philosophy. In addition, all members of an organization’s leadership team must support this approach internally. Leaders themselves must attend leadership training that meshes with the new organizational philosophy in order for the “new”
methodology to be successful. Leaders that continue to hold onto outdated modes of leadership methodologies such as the strict authoritarian, paramilitary, or even the benevolent dictatorship approach are sending strong messages to line level officers that they are not committed to change and that despite the new organizational approach, it is business as usual. This unwillingness to change on the part of organizational leaders has a devastating effect on the ability of the entire organization to move from that of call takers to police professionals. Thus, the problem regarding the inability of line level officers to effectively communicate rests squarely on the shoulders of an organizational bureaucracy that does not seem to place much emphasis on communicative arts as an important police officer trait. Hodgson (2001), points out “The bureaucratic authority structure is the system in which the organizational agenda operationalizes and the actors within are the emissaries of the organizational agenda regardless of the means utilized” (p. 526). In other words, until organizational leaders declare or understand the importance of communicative arts as a vehicle in which to professionalize its members, this crucial component of law enforcement will continue to receive little attention.

Background Of The Problem

One of the cardinal requirements of any successful police / community interaction is for the members of the police profession to be able to effectively communicate. In order to formulate successful partnerships within the community, de-escalate hostilities, and effectively and professionally represent the best interest of the organization, its vision, mission and goals; the police must fully conceptualize both the science and art of the communicative discipline and thoroughly understand the important role these skills play in terms of primary “tactics” (hard skills), rather than in terms of secondary
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“tactics” (soft skills) that do not require serious consideration or educational development.

According to Ashley and Golles, (2000); and Ross, (2007) law enforcement is concerned with the use of force by and against its officers. Incidents of force involving the police do not occur in a vacuum. According to Ross, (2007); and Petrowski, (2002), force encounters are often instantaneous, rapidly changing, evolving, and occur in a variety of forums under a plethora of circumstances. Thus, communication is the common component separating force from a peaceful solution. In addition, Ross (2007) indicates that it is absolutely crucial that officers participate in legitimate, comprehensive, interpersonal communication courses and related training in order to assure that they have developed additional tools for their “tactical toolboxes” that further helps them in their efforts to effectively and professionally enforce the law and service the community.

The significance of this research is to shed light on the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication while rethinking the various venues in which enhanced communicative skills would serve to better de-escalate hostile encounters, in order that the law enforcement occupation continues to propel itself toward further professionalization regarding use of force encounters when interacting with the community.

Officers, especially impressionable young officers, must realize that utilizing solid communicative tactics is not only wise, it is absolutely critical and every bit as important a “weapon” as an officer’s firearm, taser, baton, spray and/or handcuffs. If used properly and deployed tactically, professional communication skills could mean the difference between life and death and is paramount to the required mandate of law
enforcement to assure that services are provided equitably, fairly and procedurally competent. In addition, communicative skills are essential to forming relationships with the community in terms of trust. For example, "The more a person perceived that he or she had been treated fairly by the police, the more motivated the person was to defer to the law and refrain from illegal behavior" (Johnson, 2004, p. 488). "Citizens also want officers who are polite and friendly, who are well mannered, who have a good temperament, and who treat them well" (Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski & Resig, 2001, p. 35).

The overall theme of the problem focuses on the dissatisfaction of citizens who question the ability of line level officers to professionally interact with them through the vehicle of verbal and non-verbal communicative competencies. What is currently unknown, however; is the perspective of line level officers and their perspective regarding their ability to effectively communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, the purpose of the study will center on the opinions of patrol officers and their unique perspectives regarding this issue.

*Purpose of the Study*

The scope of this study is limited, as the research is only concerned with the opinions of patrol officers regarding their ability to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally. In order to obtain patrol officer perspectives regarding this issue, and for convenience sake, a non-probability sample was established in which field training officers were selected to represent the larger population of patrol officers. As a result, field training officers were asked to complete a self directed survey regarding the importance verbal and non-verbal communications plays in doing the job of a patrol
Assessing the Efficacy of Field Training Officers in Law Enforcement

The survey was designed to elicit unique insight into various aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication in order to determine if as a field training officer, they feel it would be beneficial to their profession as a whole, to receive training regarding the communicative arts. Conducting exploratory research in this subject matter prior to implementing rash training initiatives will benefit the criminal justice community as a whole by providing important insight into an issue that seems to have been overlooked regarding the perspective of line level officers and their viewpoints. In order for law enforcement to continue to professionalize itself, enhanced communicative skill-sets are no longer an option, but rather a must. Thus, the present research sheds light on this issue by surveying field training officers in order to gather information that can be utilized in designing a larger more specific study at a later time.

Conceptual Support for the Study

A significant consideration of this study is the idea that the communication process is so vital to the law enforcement mission that without requiring a proper educational model or training background in the techniques of solid verbal and non-verbal communicative arts and sciences seems absurd. At this time, a legitimate curriculum for teaching and/or training police and prospective police officers the effective techniques of interpersonal communication aspects as it relates to the law enforcement profession is minimal, at best. In fact, the glaring reality and severity of this critically essential educational aspect as an absent component of mandatory law enforcement training and educational requirement within the law enforcement and criminal justice curriculums can be best characterized by Professor Brian R. Johnson of the Criminal Justice Department at Grand Valley State University. When discussing the
aspects of academy students to effectively learn and practice the valuable art and science of communication, Professor Johnson instructs them to “go to the mall, talk to people on the sidewalk, in hallways, on the street, and in other public venues and actively engage them in conversation” (Johnson, 2005). Professor Johnson explained that by encouraging academy cadets to practice communicating in this manner, it would in some way supplant the lack of formal communications training while at the same time highlight its importance as a vital skill component that should not be taken for granted or put off for later development (Johnson, 2005).

A review of the training manual from the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement for 2005 revealed that MCOLES currently requires only 63 hours of mandatory Ethics in Policing and Interpersonal Relations training out of a total of 562 hours of total training time. This section of training is further broken down under specific caveats such as: Ethics, Civil Rights, Cultural Diversity, Victims Rights, and Interpersonal Skills: (Please refer to table 1 on the next page)
Table 1

M.C.O.L.E.S. Soft Skills Training Hour Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Component</th>
<th>Hours Trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Diversity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims Rights</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Training Hours 28

(MCOLES Staff, 2005, p. Index 11-B-4)

Understandably and to the contrary, the traditional “hard skills” training components are allotted substantially more hours of recruit training time, such as: Physical Skills and Firearms Skills: (Please refer to table 2)

Table 2

M.C.O.L.E.S. Hard Skills Training Hour Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Component</th>
<th>Hours Trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Skills</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms Skills</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Training Hours 149

(MCOLES Staff, 2005, p. Index IV-C-1 & IV-B-1)
Further, the investigations component is allotted 115 hours of instruction time. The focus of this study is not to imply that the later areas of training as listed above be reduced, as they are important hard skills and investigative tools for proficient and competent officers. What is disturbing is the 44 hours dedicated to Fitness and Wellness (MCOLES Staff, 2005, p. Index IV-E-1 & IV-E-2). This aspect of education is an important one when considering the benefits of becoming physically fit and staying healthy, but when compared to the 8 hours set aside for interpersonal communication skills, not to mention non-verbal body language, it leads one to question if commission staff thoroughly appreciate and accept the vital influence that communicative skills afford perspective recruits. Womack & Finley (1986) indicate that communication within law enforcement is “The crux of the police effectiveness”. “…is the only means of performing law enforcement functions”. “It is the work of the job”. “Number one in importance. It is a prime requisite. I don’t believe there is a more important aspect as it regards to the safety of life and property”. “It is the basis of all activity in this field” (Womack & Finley, 1986, p. 11). In addition, Womack & Finley (1986) indicate that communications is “The act of communication is both art and science”. Communication is a learned behavior and effective communication can be developed through training”. “The central most important commodity that an officer has at his / her disposal is communication” (Womack & Finley, 1986, p. 14-15). Womack & Finley, (1986) estimate that “…90 percent of the average law enforcement officer’s time is spent in some form of communication” (p. 11).

Assuming that law enforcement organizations are interested in improving the ability of patrol division staff to more effectively communicate with their constituents at
large validates the research as a worthwhile exploration. The research is focused primarily on assessing the importance of verbal and non-verbal, tactical communications from the perspective of the line level patrol officer but from the FTO perspective. Specifically, the study assessed whether or not line level officers felt that the ability to effectively communicate was an essential component of doing their job as community service providers.

The present study encompassed the five largest law enforcement agencies within Kalamazoo County Michigan in terms of number of personnel. A purposive and convenience based sample of field training officers was drawn from the larger population of patrol officers representing each of the five agencies. All field training officers were requested to complete a self-administered survey. Nothing related to the officer’s effectiveness as a communicator was proposed as a component of the research as the present study was only concerned with whether or not an officer’s organizational maturity impacts his or her choice to utilize verbal communications, and if so, what combination of factors regarding the officer’s organizational maturity influenced their decision. In other words, the present study attempted to determine at what stage of an officer’s organizational maturity he or she began to readily utilize verbal communications as a primary tactic for resolving conflict versus the traditional practice of threat and coercion normally associated with the officer, as the conventional accoutrements of power, rather than professionalism.

The officer’s perspective regarding this topic is not very well known or documented. It appears that this particular approach is somewhat new territory, and as such a litany of variables that might influence an officer’s decision to, or not to, rely on
verbal communicative tactics exists. Therefore, the potential for a variety of research approaches regarding this topic is numerous. As such, attempting to encompass all possibilities would most likely result in a confusing collection of data that is disorganized and not directly focused on the specifics of the present research topic. Thus, other research alternatives, outside the scope of the study, were not considered.

Limitations

As is the case with any research design, limitations are unavoidable. The proposed research is no exception. The first limitation concerns law enforcement agencies selected to participate in the research study. One could argue that the agencies selected to participate are not representative of law enforcement agencies as a whole elsewhere within the state of Michigan or within the United States for that matter and as such, do not constitute a representative/generalizable sample.

In addition, the 40 field training officers from the five agencies involved with the study that were chosen to participate on the basis that they were a purposive, nonprobability/convenience sample, representative of the larger sampling frame of patrol officers, is open to scrutiny by the criminal justice society. A purposive/non-probability sample selected absent of statistical or socially accepted scientific methodology is often considered suspect, regarding its relevance to the larger sample population. According to Babbie (2002), "...researchers must take care to acknowledge the limitations of nonprobability sampling, especially regarding accurate and precise representations of populations" (p. 181). In addition, Fitzgerald and Cox (2002), indicate that "...making statements about a population is risky, especially if the sample was not first determined through random statistical analysis" (p. 101). Therefore, it becomes
incumbent upon the reader to allow the researcher some measure of competence that the
purposive sample selected (field training officers) is in fact a strong representation of the
overall population sample, thereby qualifying resulting data as generalizable, meaningful,
and representative.

An additional concern was the relatively small number of respondents expected to
complete the survey. As mentioned previously, there are only 40 total field training
officers currently assigned to road patrol duty within Kalamazoo County. The concerns
lie in the assumption that all 40 field training officers will actually complete and return
the survey as requested. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002), the
response rate must be high enough to argue its representativeness to the larger patrol
officer population, of 219 officers. Although a specific number of responses are not yet
known, 70 % or more is optimal (Babbie, 2002, p. 259), and would provide enough
information for data results to maintain their representatives of the larger population. In
order to enhance return rates, several factors were taken into consideration and are
discussed in more detail in the methods section of this report.

Another limitation concerns the actual survey design itself. The questions must
have relevancy, must be easily understood and the questionnaire must be easy to
complete. The questionnaire must contain enough questions to actively probe the topic to
ensure that resulting data is meaningful. In an effort to overcome as many of the internal
validity concerns regarding this component of the present research, several criminal
justice professionals pre-tested and thoroughly reviewed the questionnaire prior to its
implementation in order to assure that the questions were properly designed to capture
the appropriate internal data.
The final concern / limitation regarding the questionnaire revolves around the respondents and their interest in completing and answering the questions as truthfully and accurately as possible. This concern has been addressed by providing questionnaires that are user friendly, easy to read and take only approximately 15 minutes to complete. In addition, the respondents were provided with appropriate contact information in which they were able to utilize should they had any concerns or questions regarding the research project or questionnaire. Further, additional measures were been taken in an effort to protect the respondents’ identity, maintain their anonymity, and to ensure each respondent that his or her active involvement regarding the questionnaire was strictly voluntary. The importance of the questionnaire was expressed in writing via an attached cover letter in order to emphasize the respondents’ participation as voluntary, outline risks, and highlight the potential impact that resulting data could have in facilitating policy implementation or change as it related to the research project.

Research Design

The overall study design is nomothetic in scope. It does not attempt to specifically identify all the causes of, or determine if, for example, officers have difficulty communicating verbally or non-verbally. Surveys were utilized to collect data regarding the opinions of field training officers as it relates to the importance and value of deploying or utilizing verbal and or / non-verbal communicative tactics when interacting with the public under all level of facets of the position. Thus, the research was a quantitative exploration of the attitudes and beliefs of patrol officers regarding the importance of communications. It is quantitative because the research questions were designed to measure the attitudes and beliefs of field training officers regarding various
components of communicative competencies. In other words, the overall research questions were constructed to determine the relationship between an officer’s decision to utilize communicative competencies compared to their organizational maturity and to what extent a variety of variables such as age of the officer, the officer’s education level and/or the officer’s experience impacts their organizational maturity (Fitzgerald & Cox 2002).

A self-administered survey approach was chosen primarily based on convenience. Other forms of survey research were immediately ruled out based on cost, time and scope. These concerns are fully discussed within the methodology section of this work.

The self-completed survey / questionnaire consisted of 41 questions designed to determine the importance the officer places on his or her ability to effectively and/or tactically communicate with the service constituents of the jurisdiction in which the officer is employed. The survey utilized a standard 5 point Likert scale wherein the respondent/officer was asked to indicate his or her degree of agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. In addition, demographic data regarding each officer/respondent proved especially germane to this assessment. Demographics consisted of age, gender, years of patrol experience, level of education, agency employed by, and whether or not the respondent officer had any previous verbal or non-verbal communications training. The majority of the survey questions were nominal in construction, and some were as simple as providing a yes or no response.

The self-completed survey approach was selected due to the ease in which it can be administered, the anonymity it affords respondents, it does not require a large trained
Assessing the Efficacy

staff to administer, and it is inexpensive and easy to mail (Babbie, 2002; and Fitzgerald and Cox 2002). On the other hand, it is understood that the self-completed survey is not without its limitations. According to (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox 2002) the self-completed survey is only as accurate as the respondents are literate. In other words, if the respondents are unable to understand the questions or the directions, the survey is naturally suspect. In addition, (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox 2002) point out that a poor response rate is always a concern regarding mailed surveys as the respondents may not be motivated or simply unwilling to complete and/or return the survey, causing statistical data gaps which can render the research insignificant.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the responses gleaned from the returned surveys in order to shed light on the efficacy between an officer’s organizational maturity, and his or her decision to utilize verbal communicative competencies.

*Definition of Terms*

The research assessed the value of the dependent variable (professional communications), within the law enforcement occupation, by exploring what impact if any, the independent variables, (an officer’s organizational maturity), has on his or her decision to utilize professional communicative tactics. The officer’s organizational maturity is made up of the following three control variables: (a) number of years of experience the officer has attained as a patrol officer, (b) the officer’s level of education, and (c) the officer’s chronological age in years. For the purpose of the present research, professional communication refers to the officers’ ability to effectively and appropriately utilize the correct measure of verbal and non-verbal competencies, in order to eliminate
the use of, or at very least, mitigate the necessity of force, while interacting with the constituents of police service.

Significance of Study

Leland, (2005) points out “The critical aspect of getting law enforcement officers in the right mind set so they can utilize the skills necessary to read, interpret and make appropriate decisions based on interpersonal communication is training” (p. 8). Thus, this study rested on the hope that data findings would reveal that field training officers believe that a significant concern regarding the lack of competent verbal and non-verbal communications training presently exists and that training in these areas is important, worthwhile, needed and required, in order to enhance their professional pursuit.

Equipping an officer with the tools to help them achieve a more thorough understanding of themselves, others, how others perceive them, and the effects those images have on the interactional human experience, at this time, seems a secondary concern of criminal justice policy makers. However, their thinking should be to the contrary, being able to effectively enhance the clarity of an officer’s view of the world around him or her is nothing less than critical. The law enforcement profession must continue to explore ways in which to further enhance its razor-edged preparedness and tactically sound components to assure survival of its personnel while at the same time mitigating its coercive authority with kindness and compassion. As communities continue to raise the bar on law enforcement performance and actively lobby for police use of force reform, law enforcement must remain vigilant and explore varied avenues that compel them to consider an alternative plan of tactical preparedness. “The public increasingly expects that police accomplish their work by resorting less frequently to the
more physical coercive aspects of their authority” (Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski & Resig, 2001, p. 39).

The ability to effectively communicate and interpret the messages is crucial for properly assessing the intent of the message-sender and would enable the officer to recognize impending danger signs, the result of allotting crucial seconds to actively prepare in advance for confrontation or deflection (LeLand, 2005; Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller, 2004; Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller 2000; Pinizzotto, Davis & Miller 1999). In addition LeLand (2005), indicates that understanding the importance of the communications process and the vital role it plays in the tactical lives of police officers on the street will serve to equip the law enforcement profession with that heightened sense of vigilance that so often is the single most important component of the self-preservation element working quietly and unconsciously behind the scenes of the survival intuition, keeping officers alive and paying homage to that old saying that suggest that “If something doesn’t seem right, it probably isn’t.”

The training an officer or recruit receives regarding the communications process must be thought of in terms of a specific component on the force continuum developed and nurtured as an additional tactical tool for further equipping the officer’s survival toolbox. Convincing law enforcement that use of effective interpersonal communication skills in all law enforcement interactions, especially those involving the use of, or implied use of, force is critical. It is essential that law officers and administrators across the law enforcement community understand the crucial importance of developing a strong core of solid interpersonal communication skills as a means in which to reduce a variety of citizen complaints such as uncaring attitudes, use of profanity, unprofessional demeanor,
and especially claims of excessive use of force that all too often can result in pricey civil lawsuits for the organization.

Recently, the Calibre Press, an organization well-known within the law enforcement community for the past 25 years as a clearing house for tactical and mental preparedness literature and survival seminars, published an internet survey compiled from thousands of its subscribers. The survey addressed issues regarding mental and tactical preparedness and found that officers \( n = 500 \) were concerned about the following issues:

- **#7)** Be aware of body language and non-verbal communication.
- **#8)** Pay attentions to your instincts.
- **#9)** Be professional and courteous.
- **#14)** Practice, practice, practice. Train to react and rely on your training. Practice firearms, defensive tactics, and verbal judo like your life depended on it (Calibre Press Staff, 2005).

As a result, the findings from this study may have significant potential to impact policy decisions. Thus, the point of the present research is to highlight the important role the communicative process plays regarding the job of a patrol officer. Therefore, literature regarding professionalism, police and citizen encounters, education and training, and use of force was reviewed. As a result, the literature highlights the current void that exists regarding legitimate communicative training opportunities for line level officers.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Professionalism

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson convened a criminal justice commission (the "Commission") with others to study law enforcement and related criminal justice components. The findings of this Commission were released in 1967 in a full report entitled *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*. The commission identified the function of law enforcement and determined the main focus of all criminal justice organizations should be toward crime prevention, rather than try to completely remove crime (United States Government, 1967 p. 93). In addition, the Commission determined that law enforcement agencies should concentrate most of their crime prevention efforts through the uniformed divisions as it was determined that the uniformed officer was most readily available to the citizen (United States Government, 1967). The Commission further investigated the role of the uniformed officer regarding his / her interactions with the public and found that at the time, a growing majority of citizen / police interaction was viewed negatively by the general public (United States Government, 1967). For example, the Commission found several civil rights violations occurring at the hands of the police and found that the practice of the "Third Degree" was widely utilized although not permissible while arguing that this tactic was unacceptable in a modern, free society (United States Government, 1967).

In the interest of forming bridges/partnerships within the community, the Commission dedicated Chapter 4 of its report toward its preference that law enforcement become more community service oriented and pursue methodologies more in step with peaceful resolution of incidents rather than always relying on coercive measures as a
means to solve problems within the community (United States Government, 1967). The Commission indicated that law enforcement should seek to professionalize through the development of a set of professional standards that would incorporate education and training and concentrate on such social components as community relations, cultural diversity and citizen complaints (United States Government, 1967).

In an effort to promote professionalization efforts recruitment standards were addressed. For instance, the Commission suggested that law enforcement step up recruitment initiatives regarding minority, female and college-educated officers. The Commission clearly outlines its position regarding the importance of professional salaries and ethical promotional processes, and the need to monitor, control, and prevent excessive force incidents in the hope that law enforcement would operate more smoothly, professionally, and effectively (United States Government, 1967).

The components outlined in the Commission’s report are pioneering. The report clearly brings forth the notion that the police must behave ethically and professionally and that the citizenry expects ethical, judicious, and procedural justice to occur at the hands of all law enforcement officers. The Commission determined that one way in which to better assure the professional development of the nation’s police was to require that a minimum education and combined training curriculum be mandated prior to certification of an officer from any state (United States Government, 1967). The pursuit of professionalism within the law enforcement profession is a rather “hand in glove” relationship with the ability of the police officer to effectively and professionally communicate. In other words, if the mandate for law enforcement is to professionalize
through enhanced education and training efforts, it should be clearly understood that to accomplish this goal, education and training in the communicative arts are imperative.

Other research regarding the professionalization of the police (Hodgson, 2001, Terrill & McCluskey, 2002) cites a variety of reasons that law enforcement is slow to accomplish its professionalization goals. Hodgson (2001) outlines the dysfunctional aspects of law enforcement agencies that continue to exclusively cling to the autocratic paramilitary management style. He explains that this type of leadership causes severe service limitations, increases public conflict, and minimizes and officer’s performance. Hodgson (2001), suggests that “the capacity of public institutions to provide effective, non-violent police services to meet the needs of the communities is determined by the nature of the police institutional and/or organizational models employed” (p. 521). Thus, officers, who work under a leadership typology that adheres to the tight “command and control” bureaucratic paramilitary structure, are more prone toward physically resolving issues on the street, compared to a counterpart who works under a leadership strategy that encourages a more democratic open-style approach where communication, negotiation and de-escalation are the preferred tactics. The latter is free to utilize a less aggressive approach i.e. verbal / non-verbal communications tactics, thus, effectively arriving at a peaceful resolution without resorting to, or at least resorting so quickly to, physical coercion or the threat of physical intervention. Thus, the officer working under the pressure of the autocratic style philosophy, who feels pressure to quickly resolve issues and move on to the next call, limits the effectiveness of the police to peacefully resolve issues by unknowingly falling into a “systems” style policing. The officer who is not pressured by time constraint or ridged “by the book” policing, is in a more favorable
position to utilize sound communicative tactics in order to bring the situation to professional and peaceful closure fulfilling the hope of the findings of the crime Commission of 1967. Hodgson (2001) reinforces this position by indicating that current training models, such as race relations, non-violent conflict resolution, and any other training grounded from the paramilitary authoritarian style is ineffective and harmful to the professionalization of law enforcement. Further, Hodgson (2001) points out that “The paramilitary organizational structure is one in which facilitates the use of violence” (521). In other words, the paramilitary-style management philosophy stifles the officer’s ability to effectively communicate. Hodgson (2001) advises that “… inadequate training in non-violent conflict resolution and/or other capabilities desired to perform their duties effectively is the principal barrier to promoting change and adaptability of using non-violent means within Canadian and U.S. police organizations” (p. 522).

In an effort to professionalize, law enforcement would be wise to explore customer service organizations outside the criminal justice arena in order to uncover important information better serving the constituents it serves and the demand that the public has for quality professional service. “Organizations must develop an approach to customers requiring all employees to treat customers in such a way that the employee understands the customer is a repeat customer only if the customer feels that the interaction was a professional one” (Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry, 1999 p. 218). The authors go on to state that “… when service providers do not expect repeat business from a customer, the self-interested provider will not necessarily give good service” (Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry, 1999 p. 218). In other words, customers demand to be treated equitably and fairly and if they are not, they will certainly take their business
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elsewhere. Customers are treated professionally when they are spoken to in such a way that they feel respected and appreciated. If the contact with the customer is seen only as a single “encounter” rather than a long term “service relationship” the service will not be good service (Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry, 1999). In the law enforcement profession, officers who are unable to effectively communicate often are not concerned with what the citizen wants or needs (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002), “… officers might benefit from developing their ability to leave citizens as satisfied customers” (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002 p. 152). In addition, “… the treatment of citizens as co-producers rather than adversaries, might transform the productive officer into a non-problem officer” (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002, p. 152). Unfortunately all too often the officer does not even seem to care. Thus, the position of authority the officer naturally holds over the citizen is seen as condescending and demeaning. Here, the breakdown in communication begins to erode the encounter, forcing the officer to utilize a more aggressive form of physical control that most probably could have been avoided had the officer been properly trained in the importance of solid professional communication arts.

By utilizing solid verbal and non-verbal communicative tactics through active listening and by showing empathy and concern, the officer has fulfilled his or her mission of servicing the public rather than simply policing the public order, creating a service interaction as opposed to a “police contact”. When thinking in terms of customer service, it does not matter that a customer does not interact with the same customer service provider if the entire organization has been properly trained regarding the customer service aspects of professional service Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry (1999). Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry (1999) use the example of McDonalds Corporation,
that trains and educates all employees in the same manner regarding customer service initiatives to ensure professional service no matter where the customer might visit. Research reveals that good customer service is a product of the line level employee and that good customer service is a must to ensure repeat business (Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink, 2003; and Gutek, Bhappu, Lia-Troth & Cherry, 1999). Further, Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink (2003) report that “As customer-oriented employees fulfill their role as service providers, they offer their customers appropriate service, which is then strongly related to customer satisfaction of service” (p. 186).

Research regarding the use of abusive and offensive language by police has indicated that police significantly fracture relationships with the community when they engage in this type of abusive demeanor. For example, in 2004, Seron, Pereria, & Kovath conducted a study that looked at the influence in relation to the significance of the offensive and abusive language used by the police. According to the researchers, strong language on the part of the police can adversely affect the police-community relationship (Seron, Pereria, & Kovath, 2004). Officers must refrain from insulting and exaggerated comments and be mindful not to meet aggression with aggression (Garner, 2002). Seron, Pereria, and Kovath, (2004); and Garner, (2002) revealed that offensive language is in fact a component of police misconduct and indicates that officers who engage in this type of misconduct should be held accountable. The public will not stand for this type of behavior from their public servants. “... while vulgar language such as calling someone a “fucking wise ass,” may be part of everyday speech, it carries a very different meaning when voiced by police officers” (Seron, Pereria, & Kovath, 2004, p. 702). In addition, researchers point out that “To treat this behavior as low-level ‘noise’ is
to misread the sentiments of the public and hence, to undermine an opportunity to build bridges with the community" (Seron, Pereria, & Kovath, 2004, p. 704). This position directly ties in with what the President’s Commission of 1967 was attempting to point out when suggesting that law enforcement needed to take steps to professionalize itself (United States Government, 1967).

In terms of the importance of education and professionalism, research conducted by Palmiotto (2001) indicates that officers who are well educated and trained will better understand the consequences of their actions and will be scrutinized by the society that they serve. These officers will more readily accept this outcome as a function of an authority position they hold (Palmiotto, 2001).

Mastrofski (1999) points out the following six characteristics identified by the public as important components of professionalism: Attentiveness, reliability, responsive service, competence, proper manners, and fairness are all directly related to the ability of the police to communicate in a professional manner. Garner (2002) suggests the “Golden Rule” of customer service or “how YOU would want to be treated if the roles of the encounter were reversed” (p. 100). Further, Garner (2002) suggests the following rules: Personalize service, be a good listener, respect the other person’s opinion, express appreciation when appropriate, and attempt to build trust” (p.100).

In regards to the police showing or promoting disrespectful behavior toward the public, Mastrofski (1999), found that approximately 9% of all officers engage in this type of disrespectful behavior when interacting with citizens. What is interesting about this finding is that the results agree with the findings from the President’s Crime Commission of 1967 regarding this same topic. This finding highlights the inability of law
enforcement to effectively professionalize despite all the criminal justice reforms that have taken place over the past four decades. This information provides supporting evidence that professionalization is not so much tied to an initiative, as it is the patrol officer on the street effectively engaging the public. The Commission of 1967 articulated this very point when it suggested that the crime prevention efforts and professional reform mandates be implemented primarily through the uniformed division of the organization because, according to the Commission report, the uniformed officer is the one most readily available to the citizens (United States Government, 1967; Mastrofski, 1999). What this suggests is that police must make every effort to identify what causes citizen unrest toward them and, in turn; through self-discovery of this exercise, come to realize that the citizen’s bad attitude might be a result of unprofessional service at the hands of the law enforcement community, either in the past or in the present. This situation is surely rectified through the ability of the police to begin to effectively and professionally communicate on a variety of levels with the citizens they service.

Police / Citizen Encounters

Police / citizen relations is an obvious concern considering that police officers must interact with citizens (service recipients) on a daily basis. In fact, this component of police work is unavoidable and as such, several researchers have studied this aspect of the occupation. For instance, (Resig, McCluskey, Mastrofski & Terrill, 2004; and Skogan & Frydl, 2004; and Resig & McCluskey, 2002; and Reisig, Chandek, 2001; and Garner, 2002; and Palmiotto, 2001; and Baro & Burlingame, 1999) all share the central theme that disrespect toward citizens is a major concern, thus, law enforcement must improve this aspect in order to further professionalize. Thus, training / education
emphasizing positive interactions with the police is crucial. For example, Resig and Chandek, (2001) point out that “In terms of encounter-level citizen satisfaction, the effect of outwardly polite officer demeanor is difficult to overstate” (p. 93).

In regards to the use of force by the police, Resig, McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Terrill (2004) found that elevated levels of police force can induce suspect disrespect, but more subtle forms tend to have the opposite effect. This finding supplements other research. For example, Resig and McCluskey (2002) point out that “disrespectful behavior from the police reduces the citizen’s sense of procedural justice and fair play and that it stimulates resistance, thus making it more difficult for the authorities to fulfill their official responsibilities” (p.520). Furthermore, the researchers point out that “Incivility tends to be reciprocated, and police are not immune to those very human inclinations” (p. 519-520). The overall theme of Garner’s (2002) work is similar as he suggests “to ignore insulting and exaggerated comments and to be mindful not to meet aggression with aggression, as it accomplishes very little” (p. 101). Palmiotto (2001) purports that “…if the officers would employ the “Golden Rule” in their approach to citizens, there would be less need for violence” (p. 86). Skogan and Frydl (2004) claim that “Misunderstandings related to verbal expression and non-verbal behaviors, including use of force, are often the source of conflict between police racial and ethnic minority groups” (p. 69).

These studies provide further evidence of the conflict that takes place between the public and the police lending support to the notion that a strong educational background in the communicative arts could be an important component in reducing the number of assaults on citizens and police officers, thus solidifying Resig, McCluskey, Mastrofski, &
Terrill’s (2004) findings that highlight the crucial role police play in terms of professionalizing in order to reduce the number of negative citizen / police encounters, in turn reducing the need for physical force or coercion on behalf of the police. McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Terrill (2004) indicate that “Oral tactics reduce the odds of disrespect among emotional suspects” (p. 258). McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Terrill’s (2004) research found that suspects, who “…retaliated against the police use of force, felt they had little to loose by responding in kind” (p. 262). The researchers also points out that, “If officers can be trained to appreciate the dynamics of such encounters, they may feel less offended or threatened by such displays and therefore be less inclined to punish suspects for their bad attitude” (McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Terrill 2004, p. 263).

The presence and appearance of an officer on the scene is often times enough to bring a tense situation to a peaceful close. For example, “When police authority is asserted persistently at lower levels early in the encounter, the prospect for avoiding subsequent disrespect or noncompliance is much improved” (McCluskey, Mastrofski, & Terrill 2004, p. 263). If physical force is then required, the police are now in a much better position to use and justify the appropriate levels of force, simultaneously fulfilling the legal, moral, and professional dictates of the profession while performing their duty in appropriate and acceptable means under the watchful scrutiny of the public.

Other researchers Lersch (1998); Wiley & Hudek (1974); Terill & McCluskey (2002); Johnson (2004); Gallagher & Maguire & Mastrofski & Resig (2001) reveal that the responsibility for a positive encounter rests almost primarily on the shoulders of the officer (Lersch, 1998; and Wiley & Hudek, 1974; and Terill & McCluskey, 2002; and Johnson, 2004; Gallagher & Maguire & Mastrofski & Resig, 2001). For instance, “Those
who view the authority exercised against them as illegitimate are more likely to rebel against authority, or in the case of the police, violate the law” (Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski & Resig, 2001, p. 18). This philosophy is contrary to what the officers are engrained to believe while attending an academy structure that bases its educational model primarily on that of the military ethos. Hodgson (2001) points out that the paramilitary ethos is one that more strongly emphasizes and promotes physical force over verbal interaction. For example, cadets attending a police academy are normally trained within the context of a strict, rigid, paramilitary, command, and control, structure that concentrates its “training” efforts on the “hard” mechanics of police work such as the ability to shoot firearms, physical defensive tactics and the like (Hodgson, 2001).

...reform strategies to professionalize the police resulted in the development of paramilitary organizations in which training to enhance discipline and develop technical skills was viewed as more important than higher education (Baro & Burlingame, 1999, p. 58).

Under this limited yet traditional system of training, cadets are encouraged to “react” decisively rather than “think” through the situation. They are rewarded for how quickly they can physically complete a body take-down or handcuff a subject. Verbal commands are “trained” in such a way that the cadet (without really realizing it) subliminally views the commands in terms of phrases i.e. alpha commands, that are to be shouted in such a manner that by their simple recitation in and of themselves, in some way legitimizes his / her authority and mysteriously bolsters the power they already posses, thus creating justification for their physical intervention. What is unfortunate about this style of training is that the verbal communicative arts are almost completely overlooked as a viable legitimate force option. The paramilitary training ethos continues
to reward the impressionable cadets for their physical prowess rather than their ability to quickly and critically analyze the entire scenario in order that the appropriate level of force is administered. "... these measures are not designed to capture what is traditionally viewed as the benefits of higher education, such as critical thinking, problems solving, and ability to exercises discretion" (Baro & Burlingame, 1999, p. 62). Once these same young cadets become fully sworn officers, they often have difficulty realizing where to draw the line between physical force options and when, if, or how to effectively and tactically negotiate. The goal of the training ethos should be the commingling of appropriate physical force options, coupled with legitimate and acceptable tactical procedures, dispensed through the officer's ability to strongly and professionally communicate, thus eliminating or at least reducing the "systems" style approach to policing that confounds law enforcement's ability to professionalize decade after decade, not to mention expensive civil rights litigation, regarding the perceived claim of, excessive force at the hands of the police, that are unfortunately all to often part and parcel of the law enforcement occupation. "It is possible that the identified problem officers represent two distinct groups. The first could be those who are unable to master the use of persuasion and negotiation and too quickly resort to force" (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002, p. 152). Lersch (1998) points out that "Demeanor may also affect the overall tone of police-citizen contacts" (p. 8). In addition, Lersch (1998), advises that educating officers regarding the important effects of body language, (theirs and the citizen's) is crucial to avoid a violent act by the citizen, or the need to use force to make an arrest, or at least minimizes the need for force and supplements the officer with another tactical option for equipping his or her tactical toolbox. Wiley & Hudek, (1974),
indicate the primary responsibility for minimizing conflict between the citizen and the officer rests with the officer. For instance, “The officer sets the tone for the interaction. A positive relationship can be established by such simple and low cost behaviors as providing explanations.” (Wiley & Hudek, 1974, p. 125). Terrill & McCluskey (2002) believe that “Legitimacy of the police institution is threatened when officers are unable or unwilling to resolve conflict situations in an appropriate manner” (p. 144). “Officers who receive complaints for force or discourtesy may have a tendency to order or threaten citizens more often, rather than negotiate or attempt to persuade” (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002, p. 145). Johnson (2004) indicates that “Complainants often alleged that the officers had “talked down to” the citizen or otherwise acted in an ambiguously “rude” manner referring more to non-verbal communication and voice inflection” (p. 487). “...patrol officers should be educated about how important procedural justice is to achieving citizen support, citizen deference to the law, and avoiding citizen complaints” (Johnson, 2004, p. 496). “Citizens view discourtesy or verbal harassment as evidence of an unjust system, and an unjust system cannot be perceived as producing just outcomes” (Johnson, 2004, p. 496).

Research indicates that the ability of the police to effectively communicate and engage the citizen in professional dialogue provides the officer with the ability to minimize his or her chances of having to use negative means to gain cooperation or compliance (Wiley & Hudek, 1974; and Johnson, 2004; and Terrill & McCluskey, 2002). In addition research conducted by Johnson (1998) indicates that the ability to utilize professional communication is a crucial behavior and that the ability to “effectively” interact and communicate on a professional level within the law enforcement profession...
is one that needs to be perfected and practiced. Johnson, (1998) points out that, “Officers under age 30, with less than 5 years of police experience and only a high school education suffer the greatest risk for receiving a complaint” (p. 2).

_Education / Training_

Education and training attach validity to any occupation and thus, the same can be said about law enforcement. According to Baro & Burlingame, (1999) “The U.S. census Bureau classifies police officers as “service workers not professionals” (p. 60). This is not to say that the academy setting officers must attend is inadequate and that it should be disbanded, to the contrary. It merely suggests that additional collegiate forms of education backed by a liberal education would further propel law enforcement to the next pinnacle of its professional transformational process.

In a well developed system, the collegiate process would feed well prepared individuals into a police training process that capitalizes on their education, thus creating a complementary approach to improving police services (Buerger, 2004, p. 30).

As early as 1967 the President’s Commission report pointed out that law enforcement must strive to better educate its officers in order that the profession evolve into one that would require and place more emphasis on civility rather than force. Other research indicates that for law enforcement to be successful in its future endeavors that the occupation has no choice but to mandate police officers to complete a prescribed cognate of university study (Bittner, 1990; and Baro & Burlingame, 1999; and Buerger, 2004; and Cooper, 1999; and Dunham & Alpert, 2005; and Feltes, 2001; and U.S. Department of Justice, Sept. 2003; and Womack & Finley, 1986). Bittner points out that “... education is an essential component in the effort to professionalize law

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enforcement” (p. 168). In addition, Bittner (1990) states “No occupation can hope to achieve dignity, seriousness, and importance that do not go this route” (p. 206).

The overall theory behind the requirement of formally educating police officers is to not set the police apart from the rest of society as uniformed demigods of great and powerful “Oz”-like status. It is simply to equip them with the ability to properly and judiciously interact with the constituents they serve, in order that civility and common sense override the propensity toward the inappropriate use of force, intimidation, coercion and other capricious methodologies in pursuit of their enforcement of the law. For example, Baro & Burlingame, (1999), indicate that a formal education “... will produce higher levels of civility, and might even encourage more humanistic police professionalism” (p. 70). By requiring police to have a solid liberal educational background empowers them with a broad general knowledge base from which to draw upon when required to critically analyze a variety of tense, rapidly changing situations.

A college education is designed to build within each student the ability to critically assess new situations, undertake new learning as needed and even to question the ‘facts’ and underlying assumptions of existing cannons of knowledge, when necessary (Buerger, 2004, p. 29).

In terms of forming a competent communications background regarding the communicative arts (Womack & Finley, 1986) indicate that “…academy training of the recruit officer should contain a significant block of courses or classes wherein effective communication is taught” (p. 208). They further express the importance of communications competencies by emphasizing that the ability to engage in “Effective communication is the most important ingredient of success in practically every endeavor that mankind undertakes” (p. 5). Womack and Finley (1986) explain that the ability to
effectively communicate as a police officer is so vital to the occupation that attending the
best police academy and obtaining high marks is insignificant if an officer is unable to
communicate effectively with others. For instance they indicate that:

The officer who graduates from the best police academy, who possesses the highest qualities expected for a
policeman and who may work for the best police department in the nation will fall on his/her face as a police
officer unless he/she learns and is willing to take into consideration other’s field of expression. Not until he/she
expands his/her learned behavior of communication to involve or at least understand others’ points of view can
he/she be totally effective in his/her job. (emphasis added) (Womack & Finley, 1986, p. 30).

Dunham & Alpert, (2005) purport that, “Officers who can communicate and use language
better can defuse potential conflicts more easily...” (p. 83). Thus, some officers find out
after they hit the street, that they have been short changed by their academy training and
find themselves in a situation where they must face the sad realization of their obvious
communicative inadequacies. This epiphany underscores the realization that they have
not been adequately prepared for the harsh lessons learned in the real world “street”
encounters of the complicated human interaction component of the law enforcement
profession, wherein reality does not allow any do-over’s. Had the officers been provided
with the adequate level of educational base within the cognate of the communicative arts
and sciences, perhaps he or she would not have to have learned these critical components
of the profession on the street and as a result, valuable time training the new officer might
have been reduced and more importantly, more aggressive forms of force might have
been avoided. “Interpersonal social skills will help an officer interact with disputants in
such a way that the situation does not become worse (e.g. violent)” (Cooper, 1999, p. 2).

In fact, research supports the notion of training and educating new officers regarding a
variety of communicative methodologies which call for professional calm despite verbal attack. Further, officers who receive this type of education are better prepared to de-escalate situations and are able to more aptly maintain a professional deportment, thus circumventing the need for more punitive forms of physical force. Dunham (2005), explains, “Modern training recognizes the importance of communications sophistication in de-escalating conflict ...” (p. 83). In order to further facilitate law enforcements’ professional growth more toward problem-solving methodologies versus “Zero Tolerance” policing strategies, officers must enter the profession with at least an apprentice level of competent communication skills obtained from qualified educators. “Expert skills at negotiating, mediation and conflict resolution are not natural talents that are automatically acquired by each new officer who enters the field of law enforcement” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003, p. 34). Requiring new officers to be formally grounded in the science of the communicative arts post-certification produces candidates who are better prepared to meet the current social and professional demands that are required of modern law enforcement professionals and highlights the important influence that a college educated officer can have on the overall professional development of law enforcement.

Use of Force

Law enforcement must be cognizant that communication is a form of force, and when using force, even when in the form of communication, it should not be utilized as an offensive arbitrary tactic indiscriminately imposed upon the unsuspecting person by the officer on the street as a form of punishment, or retribution under any circumstances. Bittner (1990) explains it in this fashion when he states:
Above all, force may not be used for another purpose but to effect restraint. To use it to teach someone a lesson is not only a violation of trust; it is also silly (p. 207).

Researchers believe that communication, if executed properly and professionally by the police, is actually a low level force option that should not be under estimated or under utilized. For example, Womack & Finley, (1986), Elgin, (1993), Dufresne (2003), and Manning (1988) explain that those within law enforcement should understand that the communication process is such a strong component of the overall humane interaction process, that the use of the communicative arts as a form of non-“physical” tactic, when strategically deployed can be extremely effective in reducing the need for physical force. In addition, Womack & Finley (1986) suggest that “We communicate with others for the express purpose of getting that person to react to you or to do something for you, or to permit you to do something” (p. 37). Elgin (1993) explains that “Verbal self-defense if skillfully used is a nonviolent activity and a way of keeping the peace without resorting to force” (Elgin, 1993, p. 5). At the other end of the continuum is the officer who is unable, whatever the reason to utilize verbal and or non-verbal communicative tactics thus, resorting to force. For example,

Officers who are less certain of their craft often assert their power by means of aggression and insult, thus reducing their effectiveness and sometimes creating new and more serious problems than the one’s originally encountered (Bittner, 1990, p.26).

The igniting factor for the use of physical force can often be set ablaze from the tiny sparks of miscommunication and hostility between the citizen and the police, for no other reason than each group distrusts the other, as pointed out by Lersch (1998). Lersch (1998) explains that “The behavior of the officer and the citizen may become a self-
fulfilling prophecy: both are anticipating an unpleasant encounter and the situation may escalate even though neither party originally intended the situation to deteriorate” (p. 86). For example, a citizen who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or unprofessionally by the police on the street may decide to resist the officer and hold his or her ground while questioning the officer’s motives and legal authority. Johnson (2004) supports this position by indicating that “Citizens who perceive that they were treated in a disrespectful and unfair manner are less likely to comply with the law...” (p. 488). An officer, who feels he or she has been challenged or their “ego” assaulted through the perceived disregard for their “authority”, can easily decide that the citizen has violated the law by resisting the officers “authority”. This is an important point, as it implies that the police, can arbitrarily “…construct accounts that justify their actions...“ (Cancino, 2001, p. 148). Womack & Finley (1986) explain, “We often seek to elevate our own ego needs by gaining control over the actions or lives of those around us” (p. 37). In addition, Engel, Sobol, Worden (2000) point out that:

Nearly every study, however, has found that police behavior toward suspected offenders is influenced by a suspects’ demeanor. Police are more likely to use their authority (by invoking the law or by using force) against suspects who are disrespectful or hostile toward police, or who more generally fail to show deference to the police” (p. 236).

Officers who must have the last word or “final say” in tense situations given their inability to effectively communicate, epitomize officers culturally grounded within a strict organizationally “authoritarian” settings in which the use of force and coercive means are naturally facilitated. For instance, according to Hodgson (2001), “The paramilitary organizational model empowers its justification for the use of violence with
the political apparatus of law” (p. 537). The paramilitary structure actually causes one to
loose themselves to “blind” conformity into a “system” that legitimizes, rewards, and
encourages the use of force (Hodgson 2001). As a result, officers under this “system” are
locked into a particular course of action and thus, must save face and as a result, postures
back with “might makes right”. This position is supported by Cancino, (2001), who
advises that “When placed in an uncontrolled environment e.g. “street encounters”, the
behavior of the offender and the visibility of the encounter to peers and the public emerge
as significant influences on police use of force” (p. 147). Here, the decision to utilize
force is based primarily on the officer’s effort to assert his or her authority for no other
violation than “contempt of cop”. “When officers are not given respect, they compensate
for their perceived loss of authority and rely on their own measures of physical
compliance” (Cancino 2001, p. 147). Thus, officers who have been indoctrinated into an
organizational paramilitary setting that encourages violent behavior, have been
conditioned to “react” rather than critically analyze the entire scenario and thus,
bureaucratically fall into step with the “systems” style of policing.

The previous literature review focused primarily on the expectations citizens have
when interacting with the police regarding the police inability to effectively and
professionally communicate. What seems to be overlooked in the literature is the police
perspective regarding the ability to professionally communicate and the importance
police officers place on this aspect of the profession. Chapter three therefore, outlines the
present research study and how the unique perspectives of police officers were obtained
and evaluated.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Description of Research Design

The previous review of literature highlighted the dissatisfaction among the customers of police service regarding the inability of police officers to effectively communicate both verbally and non-verbally. The literature review primarily examined what citizens thought would reduce police use of force incidents, in order that the occupation transform itself from mere occupation and into a true profession. What was clearly absent in the literature review was the police perspective regarding the communicative aspect of their occupation and the importance they attach to the ability to effectively communicate, either verbally or non-verbally, as for example, compared to the hard skills component of the profession. Thus, the purpose of the present research was to determine whether or not police officers rely more on verbal and non-verbal communications tactics more frequently as they occupationally and or organizationally mature.

In order to shed light on how police officers feel regarding this issue required a descriptive research design grounded primarily from that of a quantitative approach. The choice in deciding to utilize a descriptive research design was based primarily on convenience and the desire to simply “describe”/ reveal the opinions of field training officers regarding the importance of verbal communication via quantifiable means through statistics. Fitzgerald & Cox, (2002), point out “…descriptive research identifies and communicates important properties of a particular group…” (p.69). Thus, the research revealed the statistical importance police officers place on the value of verbal and non-verbal communications as well as the importance an officer places on the ability
to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally. The present research is not interested in determining "why" officers feel the way they do, it was designed to simply report or reveal officers' opinions and perspectives regarding the dependant variable (importance of verbal communication). This approach is supported by Babbie, (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002).

**Dependent variable / professional verbal communication**

Professional verbal communication is the ability to utilize the correct measure of active listening skills which consists of questioning, paraphrasing, clarifying, and feedback, while displaying a calm commanding presence when engaging in the variety of tense social circumstances that police officers are commonly involved in (Mckay, Davis, & Fanning, 1995; Windle, & Warren 2007). According to Mckay, Davis, and Fanning, (1995) and; Windle, and Warren (2007) questioning is the ability to ask open ended questions, in an effort to facilitate a response from another person for the purpose of engaging in a constructive dialogue. Paraphrasing is the ability to quickly interrupt the basic important themes of a message, by occasionally interjecting short, to the point, verbal phrases back to the sender. Clarifying, is similar to paraphrasing however; clarifying is the ability to ask discrete, timely background questions in order to obtain a better sense of the sender's feelings and or perception of events, in an effort to more fully understand what the sender is relaying. Feedback, is the critical point in the dialogue wherein the message receiver sincerely believes that they have a strong sense of what the message sender is attempting to convey, and as such, is now in a socially acceptable position to provide meaningful verbal response. The response should always be honest, direct, non-confrontational nor condescending (even when required to advise someone
that they are under arrest for example, the officer can and should behave in an ethical, honest manner without resorting to a threatening tone). Feedback is the point of the conversation wherein the listener conveys their thoughts and feelings based on what was relayed to them by the sender

*Dependent variable / professional non-verbal communication*

Non-verbal communication is an extremely important component of the communications process. For instance, McKay, Davis & Fanning (1995), estimate that body language accounts for approximately 55% of the communication process. Womack and Finley (1986), point out that non-verbal communication accounts for between 65 and 90 % of the communicative process. Leland (2005) estimates the importance of non-verbal communication to be around 65 to 80 % of an interaction. Whether or not one places the importance of non-verbal communication at the low or high end of the continuum one cannot escape the reality that non-verbal communication is the most important mode of communicating with others.

Non-verbal communication is that element of the communications process that one uses (often unconsciously) to channel his or her feelings, intentions, actions, or professional commitment, to another without the use of words. For the purpose of this study, non-verbal communication consists of paralanguage, kinesics, and one’s professional appearance. Paralanguage is the sound of a word or phrase or the emphasis one places on the word or phrase (Womack, & Finley, 1986; Pritchett, 1993; Mckay, Davis, & Fanning, 1995; Pinizzotto, Davis, 1999). Kinesics are body movements encompassing gestures, facial expression, gait and posture (Pritchett, 1993; Mckay, Davis, & Fanning 1995). In other words, kinesics is the entire range of motion or
expression one is able to reveal through body and/or facial motion. Professional appearance, according to Carrison and Walsh, (1998); and Johnson, (2001); and Roberts, (2003), is the image one reflects to others through their total physical appearance. Total physical appearance as it relates to this study was specifically concerned with how an officer looks in uniform, the attention the officer gives to their uniform appearance, whether or not the officer’s height is proportionate to their weight, the officer’s personal hygiene, and to what extent the officer, through their appearance in uniform, is able to project a commanding but respectful tone, while maintaining their tactical preparedness, yet congenial attitude toward the public. Pinzzotto and Davis (1999) emphasize the importance of an officer’s professional appearance by pointing out that an officer can actually be singled out for an assault, based simply on the officer’s inability to project a professional image. “... killers and assaulters alike stated that if their victims generally gave the impression that they appeared authoritative (not authoritarian), seemed resolute, or acted professional, then the offenders were reluctant to initiate an assault” (Pinzzotto and Davis, 1999 p. 3). Johnson (2001), points out that:

Interviews with prison inmates who have murdered police officers indicate that the killers often visually “sized-up” the officer before deciding to use violence. If the officer looked or acted “unprofessional” in the assailant’s eyes, then the assailant felt that he was capable of successfully resisting the officer. A dirty or wrinkled uniform or a badly worn duty belt may convey a message to a suspect that the officer has a complacent attitude about his or her job. This complacency can be an invitation to violence (p.23).

Independent variable / organizational maturity.

Organizational maturity is the level in which an officer has grown within his or her organizational life. Organizational maturity, as it is referenced in this research
consists of an officer’s experience, training, education and chronological age in the aggregate. In terms of maturity, The Merriam Webster Dictionary (1994) describes maturity as “the quality or state of being mature. Mature is describes as: 1. slow careful consideration, 2. having attained a finale or desired state, 3. of or relating to a condition of full development” (p. 456). Therefore, the operational definition of maturity, as used in the context of the present research, refers to the ability of a patrol officer / field training officer to utilize careful consideration of all surrounding facts so as not to react irrationally to stressful stimulus, in order that the most peaceful resolutions are attained by means of the least amount of physical force, in order that all involved, including the organizational reputation of the agency, has been satisfied. The patrol officer / field training officer who is able to accomplish these goals by choosing not to utilize any higher level of force on the force continuum, other than the obvious force attributed to the power of the “office” based on mere presence alone, is considered fully developed and is thus deemed occupationally and organizationally mature.

Organizational maturity occurs in the context of law enforcement, when an officer realizes that the occupation of police officer is about people, and is able to understand that his / her role is primarily that of service provider. Thus, organizational maturity is a continuum: On the low end is the gung-ho rookie who relies more often on force, threat, and / or the coercive aspects normally associated with the occupation (Terrill & McCluskey, 2002). At the high end is the seasoned veteran who understands that in order to efficiently and effectively accomplish the order maintenance aspect of the occupation and get the job done, that the emphasis in so doing should be placed primarily on the quality of interaction with those he or she encounters and services (Terrill & McCluskey,
Thus, the organizationally mature officer recognizes that the job is about people, and the quality of the interaction between the officer and citizen, as service provider (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Bumgarner, 2002; Johnson, 1998). At the low end of the continuum is the organizationally immature officer who constantly utilizes physical prowess to gain compliance or control, all the while promoting the “us against them” law enforcement ideology of old and seizing every opportunity to take full advantage of the ability to utilize force. The immature officer intoxicates themselves with the ability to utilize force, and “demands” respect, believing he or she has attained that respect simply by virtue of the identifiable power of the obvious accoutrements associated with the office, i.e. the badge, the gun, and uniform. At the high end of the continuum is the seasoned professional who has learned that verbal empathy and/or stern persuasion are the true measure of the constant professional and only utilizes force when necessary (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). The mature officer dispenses force sparingly and with sober dignity and earns respect based on the power of the sacredness of the office he or she has been entrusted by virtue of the “people” to uphold, and the dictates of the law and constitution.

Hypotheses / Research Questions

The present research attempted to determine if an officer’s decision to use verbal and non-verbal communication is in any way contingent upon an officer’s organizational maturity. The present research is an exploration of the efficacy between an officer’s organizational maturity and their choice to utilize verbal and non-verbal communication competencies when interacting with citizens.
In order to compare the independent variables, against the dependent variable, importance of communication, the following three control variables were identified as important factors: (a) number of years of experience as a patrol officer; (b) the officer’s level of education; and (c) the officer’s chronological age in years. In order to validate the stated hypothesis, (that an officer’s decision to utilize verbal and non-verbal communications competencies is dependent on the officer’s organizational maturity) requires that each one of the three control variables be tested separately against verbal and non-verbal communication competencies. Therefore, the research was broken-down into six sub-categorical hypotheses.

*Efficacy of organizational maturity regarding verbal skills*

H-1-A. As the officer’s experience in years increases, the officer will rely more upon verbal skills.

H-1-B. The higher the officer’s formal education level, the more the officer will rely upon verbal skills.

H-1-C. As the officer’s chronological age increases, the officer will rely more upon verbal skills.

*Efficacy of organizational maturity regarding non-verbal skills*

H-2-A. As the officer’s experience in years increases, the officer will rely more upon non-verbal skills.

H-2-B. The higher the officer’s formal education level, the more the officer will rely upon non-verbal skills.

H-2-C. As the officer’s chronological age increases, the officer will rely more upon non-verbal skills.
Each of the three control variables were subjected to statistical analysis in order to determine the strength of their relationship when compared with that of the dependent variable, importance of communication. The results of the analysis was utilized to conduct additional statistical analysis in order to determine the degree of impact that the independent variable, (organizational maturity) impacted the dependent variable, (professional communication). Thus, the null-hypothesis and the hypothesis were compared, in order to more thoroughly describe the resulting data analysis.

**Target Population**

The target population consists of all field training officers assigned to road patrol duty within Kalamazoo County, Michigan. Field training officers were selected as they are on the front lines every day, interacting with the recipients of direct police service and other patrol officers. This assumption is supported by Mastrofski, (1999) who points out that “Uniform officers are most readily available to the citizen” (United States Government, 1967). For the purpose of this research study, field training officers are defined as fully sworn police officers of any county, city, township, or other legitimately recognized municipality that has the authority under law to operate as a law enforcement agency and commission licensed law enforcement officers who have been granted a license to operate as a police officer, sheriff’s deputy, city or township officer, by the State of Michigan’s Law Enforcement Governing Board (MCOLES). MCOLES is the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and has the authority to grant an individual a license to seek employment as a sworn law enforcement officer within the State of Michigan upon successful completion of a specified number of hours of state mandatory training, generally completed by the end of an accredited police academy.
Field training officers, as they relate to this research study consisted of FTOs from the following 5 police agencies: Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, City of Portage, Kalamazoo Township Police Department, and the Western Michigan University Police Department. All FTOs were duly authorized and sworn law enforcement officers as was previously described and were assigned to work a variety of shifts within any 24-hour period. FTOs in the present study were obligated to respond to dispatch calls for service, which included but was not limited too: traffic code enforcement, traffic accident investigations, resolve conflicts stemming form civil and criminal law violations, conduct crime scene investigations, enforce state and local laws, preserve the peace, all the while having to deal directly with private citizens within their particular jurisdiction of responsibility and or that of an adjoining jurisdiction. In addition, FTOs regarding the present research were responsible for training new officers.

An argument could certainly be made that police officers, patrol officers, and field training officers within Kalamazoo County are not representative of all officers within the State of Michigan, or other states for that matter, when considering much larger or smaller venues. Holmes (1997) points out that there are approximately 15,000 law enforcement agencies across the country and of those, 60% employ ten or fewer officers and only ten percent employ more than 135 officers. The five main police agencies within Kalamazoo County were chosen as part of the research design in an effort to replicate as much variety in terms of type of agency based on population demographics, area of responsibility based on geography, size of agency, and number of calls for service and for convenience sake. Still, caution must be observed when considering the largest
agency involved in the study, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, which has a departmental sworn staff totaling 248 officers. The smallest agency involved in the study, Western Michigan University Police Department, has a sworn staff totaling 28 officers. Based on this, a bias could be raised that the study is not representative of law enforcement agencies and officers from agencies that employee more than 250 officers and less than 25 officers.

Sampling Procedure

In an effort to better understand and more thoroughly describe the target population of each of the five law enforcement agencies selected from within Kalamazoo County to participate in the research (the sampling frame), a brief description consisting of geographic venue, basic demographics, and description of each law enforcement agency regarding each of the five specific municipalities (sampling frame) is pertinent in better understanding the overall research design. It is important to first point out that one of the primary reasons in utilizing the five agencies selected within Kalamazoo County to participate in the study was based on a variety of reasons; the foremost among the reasons was the fact that the venue was convenient.

Table 3 shows demographic information from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau (2007), regarding Kalamazoo County's populace compared to the entire State of Michigan. Census data shows that Kalamazoo County was projected to mirror the state of Michigan in 2005 regarding a variety of demographic variables.
Table 3

Demographic Comparables of the State of Michigan and Kalamazoo County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years old</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over 65 years old</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Persons</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Persons</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino / Hispanic Persons</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a High School Diploma</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Median Income</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons Living Below the Poverty Level</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(U.S. Federal Census Bureau, 2007).

These demographic comparisons are important in terms of understanding Kalamazoo County's reflective persona when compared to the overall State of Michigan.

When considering the demographic components reported in Table 3, it is safe to say that any given person who patrol officers within Kalamazoo County are likely to encounter or interact with on a daily basis is reflective of the demographics of the overall citizenry within the state. Thus, the opinions of patrol officers within Kalamazoo County are reflective of patrol officers across the State of Michigan within similar size and type municipalities. Even so, it is understood that a bias exists in terms of the type of municipality examined. For example, it could be argued that patrol officers within Kalamazoo County are not reflective of patrol officers in the City of Detroit, Grand Rapids, or Jackson based on demographics unique to those cities. It could also be argued that patrol officers within Kalamazoo County do not adequately represent rural Michigan County Sheriff's Departments or other municipal townships with demographics inconsistent with that of Kalamazoo. Thus, it is understood that this concern can never be completely rectified as undoubtedly every municipal law enforcement agency within
the State of Michigan will not share the exact demographics when compared to Kalamazoo County and/or the State of Michigan. In an effort to address this issue, it was decided that the five main police agencies within Kalamazoo County would serve as adequate comparables to other similarly-sized police agencies across the state and as such, would provide a workable cross-section of municipal police agencies representative of all agencies within the State of Michigan.

*Kalamazoo County.*

Kalamazoo County is located in the southwestern section of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, approximately 50 miles south of Grand Rapids, and 50 miles north of the Indiana state line. Kalamazoo County is boarded by Van Buren County to the west, Cass County to the southwest, St. Joseph County to the south, Branch County to the southeast, Calhoun County to the east, Barry County to the northeast and to the north, and Allegan County to the north and northwest. Kalamazoo is exactly half-way between Detroit to the east at 150 miles, and Chicago to the west. In addition, Kalamazoo County is approximately 40 miles west of Lake Michigan at South Haven, which is located in Van Buren County.

Kalamazoo County encompasses 580 square miles. Of those 580 square miles, 562 miles are land-based and 18 miles are water. Two major expressways run through the heart of Kalamazoo, I-94 which runs east and west, and US-131 which runs north and south. In addition, three Michigan routes traverse the county. These include M-43, M-89, and M-96. According to the U.S. Census Bureau of 2000 the population of Kalamazoo County was approximately 208,000, a figure that has remained consistent through 2007 (Federal Census Bureau, 2007). In addition, there are approximately
94,000 families residing in the county. Kalamazoo County is home to two major universities, and one community college: Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

*Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department.*

The Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department is the second largest law enforcement agency within Kalamazoo County, employing approximately 248 sworn deputies. Of the 248 members of the agency, 40 officers are currently assigned to road patrol duties and respond to approximately 35,000 calls for service annually (W. J. Timmerman personal communication, March 12, 2007). The 40-member road patrol division is responsible for approximately 220,000 county residents who live in 14 townships within 500 hundred square miles, on 1,200 miles of county roads and 100 miles of state highways. Of the 40 deputies who make up the Sheriff’s Department road patrol division, 8 officers, or 20% of the road patrol division, are assigned as field training officers (W. J. Timmerman personal communication, March 12, 2007). On average, the Sheriff’s Department inmate population is approximately 340 a year, per day, and the jail division processes a total of 12,300 inmates throughout the course of the year. In addition, the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department is the central depository for all local police agencies within the county when an arrest is made.

*Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.*

The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety is the largest municipal city police agency within Kalamazoo County and holds the distinction of being the largest public safety organization within the United States. The department currently employs approximately 250 sworn law enforcement public safety officers who are responsible for
a wide variety of law enforcement and fire safety prevention-related duties. Of the 250 sworn public safety officers, 96 are assigned to road patrol functions. The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety responds to approximately 85,000 calls for police service annually which includes general law enforcement activities as well as fires and medical calls for assistance. The 96 member road patrol division serves approximately 80,000 residents, within a 27-square mile area. Of the 96 public safety officers who comprise the road patrol division, 15 (16%) are field training officers (M. McCaw, personal communication, March 12, 2007).

Portage Police Department.

The Portage Police Department is the third largest police department within Kalamazoo County. It is located within the southwestern central portion of the county. The department currently employs 58 sworn police officers. The 32-member road patrol division is responsible for just over 48,000 residents within a 35-square mile area and responds to approximately 30,000 calls for service annually. Of the 32 road patrol officers 8 (25%) are assigned as field training officers (D. J. Mills, personal communication, March 12, 2007).

Kalamazoo Township Police Department.

The Kalamazoo Township Police Department is the fourth largest police agency within Kalamazoo County. It is located in the northwest / central portion of the county. The department employs 30 sworn police officers, of whom 25 are assigned to road patrol duties. The 25-member road patrol division is responsible for approximately 20,000 residents within approximately 12-square miles and responds to approximately 15,000 calls for service annually. Of the 25 member road patrol division, 6 officers
(24%) are assigned as field training officers (T. S. Bourgeois, personal communication, March 16, 2007).

Western Michigan University Police Department.

The Western Michigan University Police Department is located on the campus of Western Michigan University. The department employs 28 sworn police officers of whom 21 are assigned to road patrol functions. The 21 officers assigned to road patrol duties are responsible for approximately 20,000 students and 920 faculty members August through April. During the months of May through July the campus population (including faculty and students) drops to approximately 5,000 residents both living and commuting onto and off of campus on a daily basis. The University Police Department is responsible for all four campuses at Western Michigan University which includes West campus, the largest WMU campus and is primarily the main campus area, East campus, Oakland Drive Campus and Parkview Campus, as well as several student housing areas located on University property. Of the 21 officers assigned to the patrol division, 3 (14%) are assigned as field training officers (B. Crandall, personal communication March 12, 2007). The total number of road patrol officers in Kalamazoo County is 214, while the total number of field training officers in the county is 40. Thus, the sample frame of field training officers within the county is approximately 18.6%.

Sample Population

In an effort to determine the opinions of field training officers within Kalamazoo County regarding the importance of verbal communication, all 40 field training officers within Kalamazoo County will be issued a survey. The sample population is drawn from those officers within the County who perform dual roles (road
Field training officers constitute a legitimate non-probability sample of the total number of road patrol officers from the five law enforcement agencies selected to participate in this research. Since field training officers are also road patrol officers themselves, it is reasonable to conclude and thus assert that field training officers are representative of the overall population of road patrol officers within the original sampling frame drawn from the five law enforcement agencies within Kalamazoo County. Field training officers therefore formulate a generalized sample population of all road patrol officers included in the original five agencies that were selected to represent the overall sampling frame.

Field training officers are patrol officers who have the added responsibility of preparing and training newly hired road patrol officers to function in a solo road patrol officer capacity. In order to be designated as a field training officer, an officer must attend and successfully complete a 40-hour field training officer course. Upon successful completion of the FTO course, the patrol officer is certified to officially provide training to newly-hired road patrol officers (Beaver, 2006; Nowicki, 2004; Sokolove, 2003).

The decision to utilize field training officers as a non-probability sample of the larger sampling frame was based on several criteria, most importantly as a matter of convenience. Surveying over 200 hundred patrol officers from five different agencies, all of whom work varied hours, have varied schedules in terms of days off, vacations, training schedules, etc. would have proved to be challenging at best, especially in terms of receiving timely completed surveys. Other considerations were as follows:

1. Field training officers, who are themselves patrol officers were included in the original overall sampling frame regarding all patrol officers within Kalamazoo.
County, thus, field training officers are a legitimate representative sample of patrol officers from the five law enforcement agencies selected to participate in this study.

2. A field training officer typically has at least five years of experience as a police officer before being selected to train other officers; therefore it is reasonable to deduce that if an officer is selected or appointed to train his or her patrol officer colleagues, that he or she must best represent the model in which the organization wishes its patrol officers to strive to replicate (Beaver, 2006; Nowicki, 2004).

3. The field training officer is in the best position to understand what it is that the organization strives for in terms of patrol officer capabilities regarding verbal communicative competencies (Beaver, 2006; Nowicki, 2004).

4. The field training officer is in a unique position in which to model the organizational leadership ethos whether autocratic or democratic and the organizational sub-culture (Beaver, 2006; Nowicki, 2004).

5. Field training officers are in the most favorable position to observe the newest hires and assess their ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally based on academy or collegiate education and/or training (Beaver, 2006; Nowicki, 2004). This is an important consideration as field training officers are able to provide unique insight into the effectiveness of either of these institutions regarding their ability to properly train and/or educate new officers regarding acceptable levels of communicative abilities.

6. It is reasonable to logically assume that field training officers are in the most favorable position within the organization in terms of modeling a professional demeanor representative of what the organization considers important, regarding the
patrol officer’s ability to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally, thus, the field training officer models the organizational norms and culture.

7. The field training officer is in the best position to adequately critique the organizational emphasis placed on enhancing communicative competencies, or lack thereof, regarding the degree in which the organization supports the communicative aspect of policing through its efforts to provide ongoing training and/or education regarding the communicative arts.

Based on these criteria, field training officers constitute an acceptable non-probability “typical-case” or “purposive” sample as they are representative of the original target population and able to provide important information regarding this study. However, since the sample frame was not determined by any random sampling typology or mathematical equation, it is understood that the sample frame is limited in its ability to reflect a generalizable state of all patrol officers.

Instrumentation

After carefully considering and comparing the benefits and disadvantages of the three main measurement instruments, (face-to-face interview, telephone interview, and self-completed questionnaire/self-administered survey), A self-completed survey (herein referred to as the “self-administered survey”) was selected. The choice to utilize the self-administered survey was chosen after first considering the alternatives i.e. the face-to-face interview and telephone interview.

Face to Face Interview

A face-to-face interview, although highly informative, can be difficult and timely to complete. For example, the interviewer/researcher must be willing to meet with the
interviewee at a location that facilitates the interviewee's comfort and which places them at ease enough to provide honest responses. The researcher must be concerned with building and establishing a trusting rapport with the interviewee in order that he or she is open and honest when providing responses to the interviewer's questions (Fitzgerald & Cox 2002). Thus, asking complete strangers to open up regarding their personal opinions as it pertains to their employer, their education level, their prowess as a police officer, questions regarding their colleagues, etc. might have proved overly intrusive, thus, facilitating an uncooperative atmosphere among respondents, not to mention selecting a location that provided the interviewee with enough anonymity to open up, especially when considering the busy nature of most police headquarters.

Overall, this choice was simply not a logistically favorable one, especially when considering the multiple venues regarding the five sample agencies. Attempting to interview 40 field training officers who all work varied shifts and are employed by five different police agencies did not seem to be a practical choice in terms of timely completion of the proposed research project. Utilizing this option would have taken several weeks and required several return trips to each of the five police agencies involved with the research project.

*Telephone Survey*

Telephone surveys/interviews were quickly ruled out as an option as it was just not a practical option from the start. Obtaining the home phone numbers of police officers is next to impossible. Police agencies are not willing to give out personal home numbers of their officers, albeit for good reason I might add. In addition, even if the
names of the field training officers were made available, contacting 40 individuals all working varied schedules would be nothing less than a monumental undertaking.

Telephoning officers at their perspective agencies would be logistically difficult, if not almost impossible; especially when considering that each of the 40 field training officers all work a variety of shifts, at five different police agencies. This would require that the interviewer call the officer just prior to the start of the officer’s shift, sometime during the officer’s shift, or just after the officer goes off duty for the day. This would cause the interviewer to have to make themselves available to call, or receive a call, to or from the officer, 24 hours a day for several weeks maybe even months, in order to accommodate all 40 officers who may have only a short window of time to call, or receive a call, from the interviewer during any one shift the officer is assigned to work. Even if the interviewer was able to establish phone contact with the respondent and develop a trusting rapport, this option is not a realistically feasible consideration given the time it would take to complete all 40 interviews.

In addition, speaking to an anonymous person on the phone makes it more difficult to establish a trusting relationship between the interviewer and the respondent (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox 2002). As a result, the respondent may not chose to be truthful, may intentionally provide vague responses, may not fully understand a question and as such, may provide an inadequate answer (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox 2002). In addition, several unforeseen interruptions are highly likely to occur, especially if the respondent/officer is on duty. The respondent officer may be distracted by a variety of interruptions such as radio calls for service, other officers, paperwork, reports, and as a result, may not be able to fully engage themselves in the interview.
The choice to utilize the self-administered survey in this research application was based on two main premises. First, was the convenience and adaptability to the logistical environment that this option offered to the respondent and the researcher alike, and second, the desire to protect the respondent’s identity and anonymity as much as is absolutely feasible.

*Self Completed Survey*

By administering a self-completed survey to each member of the sample cohort, each respondent/officer has the latitude to complete the survey at his or her own pace, at a time and place that is convenient and conducive to him or her and their own personal schedule, which would include the convenience and anonymity of the respondent’s patrol car. This approach alleviates the necessity for the officer to have to complete the survey during a specified timeframe, or the need to meet with an interviewer. In addition, the ability to complete the survey with no one else around enhances the individual respondent’s anonymous status. This option empowers the respondent/officer to easily stop at any time while working on the survey to accommodate business interruptions of the day, and to easily begin again at a time more conducive to the respondent’s personal schedule, thus facilitating the ability to complete the survey in a timely manner as well as enhance the respondent’s desire to complete the survey, thus better insuring a timely survey return. In addition, the self-completed survey option allows the researcher the ease of depositing all surveys at one pre-specified location within the organization and/or with the appropriate organizational representative from each agency, for dissemination to each respondent. Once the respondents have all completed the survey, the researcher
need only wait for the surveys to be returned via mail (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox 2002).

One concern in utilizing the self-completed survey option is the tendency for respondents to not complete or return the survey. Fitzgerald and Cox, (2002) point out that this is especially prevalent regarding mailed surveys or when the survey is administered by someone other than the researcher. Although this concern was not taken lightly, it was outweighed by the general utility and convenience that the self-completed survey offers concerning the logistical state of the proposed research application.

The self-completed survey is designed around the main research question that asks the field training officer what level of importance they place on the ability to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally. This is consistent with the main hypothesis of the proposed research study that suggests that as an officer organizationally matures, he or she will place more importance on the ability to effectively communicate verbally and/or non-verbally.

Data regarding this study is most conveniently accommodated by use of a five point Likert Scale. Likert scales have been extensively utilized within the sociological research field since it was first designed by Rensis Likert in 1932 (Uebersax, 2007; Babbie, 2002; and Fitzgerald & Cox 2002). The Likert Scale measures a respondent’s subjective or objective agreement of a survey statement. For instance, in the present research, a scoring index (ordinal scale) of 1 through 5 will be utilized. Here, the five point scale will correspond directly to the degree of negative or positive response choices situated on either end of the scale. For example, a 1 will represent the most negative end of the scale in relation to a response that might indicate strongly disagree or never. A 5
will represent the positive end of the scale which may be worded to indicate strongly agree or always. The three remaining response choices will be coded as a 2, 3 or a 4, corresponding in direction from left to right given that the most negative response is rated at the left of the scale and the most positive response is rated to the right end of the scale. Thus, the respondents’ choices can be easily calculated and summated for data collection and analysis that can be used to promote or facilitate current policy implications (Babbie, 2002; and Fitzgerald & Cox, 2002; and McCall, 2001; and Uebersax, 2007).

A section of the survey contained fixed-alternative questions designed to force the respondent to make a choice from a pre-printed list in an effort to gather nominal level data. In this section, respondents will be asked to respond to a variety of questions and/or statements in order to assess their views as they relate to the main research question. A small contingency section will be utilized to determine if respondents have ever attended Verbal Judo Training. Verbal Judo is a two-day tactical communications course designed to teach participants how to stay calm while interacting with hostile individuals, as information related to this training is important to the proposed research in terms of communications training a respondent may have had in the past. The contingency section will be readily identifiable and will be aptly sequestered from the other sections so as not to confuse respondents.

The last section of the questionnaire requested the respondent’s demographic information as it relates to the following: the agency in which the respondent is employed by, the number of years the respondent has been a field training officer, the number of years the respondent has been employed as a patrol officer, the respondent’s highest level of education, age, gender, ethnicity and organizational leadership.
philosophy. In terms of the demographic components regarding the number of years the respondent has been an FTO, the number of years respondent has been a police officer, respondent’s highest level of education and respondent’s age, a grouped interval scale will be provided so as to provide the respondent enough latitude to appropriately respond without revealing specific details of these potentially identifiable demographic characteristics. Prior to completing this section, the respondent will be asked to read a statement highlighting the importance of compiling demographic data as a means for the researcher to more thoroughly understand how the respondent’s unique demographics might statistically influence or impact the research.

Prior to administering the survey, it was pre-tested by a variety of law enforcement officials – (a) a Chief of Police with more than 25 years of police experience, (b) a patrol division lieutenant, (c) three patrol sergeants, (d) three criminal justice PhD professors, two of which have previous police experience, and all are knowledgeable in research methods, (e) a fourth individual pre-testing the questionnaire is a professor from a local community college who holds a M.S. degree, and has over 30 years of experience within the research and development sector.

Pre-testing the survey instrument and accompanying cover letter prior to actually submitting it to the sample cohort provided an opportunity for members of similar background characteristics to thoroughly review all documents involved. This was an important step in the development stage of the research project as it helped to ensure clarity of all written items, that all words and statements were easily understood, that spelling and grammar were correct, and that format content was appropriate for the
cohort audience completing the survey/questionnaire (Babbie, 2002; Fitzgerald & Cox, 2002).

**Data Collection Procedures**

It is the official policy of Grand Valley State University that the proposal, including the application and survey instrument, along with letters of authorization to conduct research by the participating agencies involved is submitted to the GVSU Human Subjects Board of Review prior to conducting research. Regarding the present research project, the respective authorization letters, and other appropriate documents, were submitted to the IRB at GVSU. All approval documents are located in Appendix C of this report.

In preparation to conduct survey research, the appropriate patrol division commander from each of the five agencies was contacted. After explaining the nature and scope of the project, all five patrol commanders were requested to submit a letter of permission written on agency letterhead authorizing their field training officers to participate in the research. Please refer to Appendix B for a review of these letters.

For this project, a survey was submitted to each of the 40 field training officers (N=40). Prior to dissemination of the survey to the respondents, each of the five patrol division commanders from each of the agencies participating in the research were granted a meeting in which they were allowed to review the survey and ask questions regarding the survey construction, format and/or content. This request was accommodated in order to assure the appropriate liaison officer that the survey was not harmful to the organization or its members.
At that time, the appropriate number of surveys for each field training officer representing that particular agency was left with the departmental liaison / command officer for dissemination. The liaison was instructed to leave a survey in each of the field training officers’ departmental mailbox rather than handing them directly to the officer. This request was made in an effort to eliminate a potential coercive bias.

Since the survey is completely voluntary, a command officer who hands a survey directly to a subordinate field training officer, might in some unintentional way provoke the subordinate officer into believing that the survey was mandatory, opposed to the survey being completely voluntary. In addition, this effort helps to ensure that the subordinate officer did not have any preconceived perception or notion of how the superior command officer may expect the subordinate to approach the survey (whether it be negative or positive) prior to or during the time the subordinate field training officer is completing the survey.

An attached cover letter accompanied each survey briefly explaining the importance of the survey, by whom and why the survey was being conducted, directions for completing the survey, an advisement that the survey was voluntary, and an explanation of how and by whom the results of the survey are to be disseminated. In addition to the cover letter, a self-addressed, stamped envelope was attached to the survey in order to provide the respondents an additional measure of security, anonymity, and ease when completing and returning the survey. Once the survey was completed, the respondents were instructed to simply place the completed survey into the enclosed envelope, secure it, and place it in an outgoing mail receptacle of their choosing. This procedure help to assure the voluntariness of participation by the sample cohort, as the
returned survey was an indication that the respondent read and understood that their participation was voluntary and that by completing the survey the respondent agreed to accept all risk involved, albeit minimal. In addition, this procedure enhances the respondents anonymity to the extent that they were not required to return the survey to anyone, or any one location within the department in which they are employed, significantly reducing the risk of the respondent being seen returning a completed survey thus, protecting their decision to participate.

The survey was disseminated to all respondents during the second week of July, 2007. The respondents were allotted three weeks to complete and return the survey from the date that it was officially placed in their mailboxes. The decision to provide the respondents three weeks in which to complete the survey was based on an effort to facilitate the highest return rate possible. The three week time frame was adequate to accommodate the busy schedule of each respondent, and to provide those respondents who might have been on their days off, or on extended vacations, an opportunity to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

Data was coded using SPSS. After the data was entered into SPSS it was examined for accuracy. For statistical purposes, response categories were recoded into dichotomous categories. For example, the category of age was collapsed into two specific categories 41 and under or 42 and older. Educational was collapsed into Associates degree and under or Bachelors degree and above. Years as a patrol officer, meanwhile, was collapsed into 0 to 15 years experience or 16 to 21 years plus experience. Likewise, the number of years of experience as an FTO was collapsed into 0 to 10 years
or 11 plus years while, questions that asked respondents what percentage of a police officer's job requires verbal and non-verbal communications ability were collapsed into less than 85% or more than 85%. In addition, the category strongly disagree was collapsed into disagree. Strongly agree was collapsed into agree and neither agree or disagree was recoded into neutral. As a result, the following three response categories emerged: Disagree, Neutral and Agree.

Statistical Analysis

In order to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between categories, Chi-Square tests of association were used to reveal differences between observed frequencies and expected frequencies. According to Babbie 2002; and Fitzgerald & Cox 2002; and Linton-Connor 2003 Chi Square was chosen because it is a two tail test that has been proven a strong statistical correlation matrix showing relationships among variables. It is the most appropriate statistical test to use because it is designed for categorical or dichotomous data, unlike other statistical measures such as T Tests that are used for continuous data. Thus, Chi Square measures whether or not there is a relationship or difference between the variables under analysis. Put another way, Chi Square tests of independence show whether or not any of the independent variables were significant relative to the dependent variable.

As a result of the statistical design utilized in the present research, the following results, as presented in chapter 4, were observed.
Chapter 4

Findings

Demographics

Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority of respondents were male (n = 33; 89.2%). In the context of age, meanwhile, the majority of respondents reported their ages in the 31-41 age category (n = 25; 67.6%). Table 4 also shows the most common level of education reported was a bachelor’s degree (n = 18; 48.6%).

Table 4 also shows the background characteristics of the respondents. The majority of the respondents report working for a municipal police agency (n = 28; 75.7%) and report being employed as a police officer for less than 10 years (n = 20; 54.1%). They also reported serving as FTOs for 5 years or less (n = 19; 51.3%).

Table 4

Population Demographics (N = 37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Agency</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>Sheriff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>26 – 30</th>
<th>31 – 41</th>
<th>42 – 50</th>
<th>51 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Academy Certified Only</th>
<th>Some College no Degree</th>
<th>Associates Degree</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience as a Patrol Officer</th>
<th>0 – 5</th>
<th>6 – 10</th>
<th>11 – 15</th>
<th>16 – 20</th>
<th>21 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 5 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. In the context of verbal communication, responses were mixed. The majority (n = 22; 59.5%) reported that verbal communications accounted for the majority of their job. To the contrary, respondents’ (n = 14; 37.8%) attitudes towards non-verbal communications were not as favorable.

Table 5

*Attitudes Towards Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications</th>
<th>Percentage of Job Requiring Verbal Communications</th>
<th>0 –</th>
<th>46 –</th>
<th>61 –</th>
<th>76 –</th>
<th>Higher than 85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Job Requiring Non-Verbal Communications</td>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>46 -</td>
<td>61 -</td>
<td>76 -</td>
<td>Higher than 85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training, relative to age. In the context of verbal training as worthwhile training, (n = 26; 70.3%) respondents 41 years of age or younger felt verbal communications training would be worthwhile. Meanwhile, respondents 41 years of age and younger agreed that as an FTO (26; 70.3%) verbal communications was important. The majority of respondents (n = 21; 56.8%) also reported agreement to the statement that verbal communications was an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum.

Table 6

*Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled By Age (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>41 or Younger</th>
<th>42 or Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 26</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 26</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training relative to gender. The majority of males, (n = 31; 83.7%) agreed that verbal communications training would be worthwhile and that it was important to them as a field training officer. Meanwhile, females (n = 3; 75.0%) agreed that verbal communications was both worthwhile and important to them as field training officers. In the context of verbal communications as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the majority of males (n = 21; 56.7%) agreed to this statement. On the other hand, female (n = 2; 50%) respondents were mixed between the responses of disagree and neutral.

Table 7

*Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled by Gender (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 8 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training and level of education. Regardless of education, the majority of respondents (n = 34; 91.8%) agreed that verbal communications training would be worthwhile.

Table 8

*Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled by Level of Education (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Associates Degree or Under</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 shows respondents’ attitudes towards verbal communications training relative to years of experience as a patrol officer. The majority of respondents ($n = 22; 59.4\%$) with 15 years experience or less, agreed that verbal communications training would be worthwhile. The majority of respondents ($n = 23; 62.1\%$) with 15 years experience or less also reported that verbal communications training was important to them as field training officers. In the context of verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, respondents with 15 years or less experience as a patrol officer ($n = 12; 38\%$) agreed to this statement.

Table 9

*Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled by Years of Experience as a Patrol Officer (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>0-15 years</th>
<th>16+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training controlled by years of experience as a field training officer. Regardless of the number of years of experience as an FTO, responses were evenly distributed. The majority of respondents (n = 34; 91.8%) agreed that verbal communications was worthwhile. In the context of verbal communications training considered important as a field training officer, responses were similar. Respondents with 5 years or less experience (n = 18; 48.6%) and 6 + years of experience as an FTO (n = 17; 45.9%) agreed to the statement. Relative to verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, responses were similar. Respondents with 5 years or less experience (n = 10; 27%) as an FTO agreed with respondents with 6 + years experience (n = 11; 29.8%) as an FTO that verbal communications training was an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum.

Table 10

*Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled by Years as an FTO (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years as FTO</th>
<th>0 to 5 years</th>
<th>6+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training, controlled by the percentage of the job requiring verbal communications. The majority of respondents (n = 20; 54%) who felt verbal communications training would be worthwhile, and important as an FTO (n = 21; 56.7%) assessed the value of verbal communications in doing the job of patrol officer at 85% or higher. As an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum (n = 13; 35.1%) the majority of respondents again assessed the value of verbal communications at 85% or higher.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Job Requiring Verbal Communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral  1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree    14 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral  1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree    14 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral  2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree    8 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 12 shows respondents’ attitudes toward verbal communications training, controlled by the percentage of the job requiring non-verbal training. The majority of respondents who felt verbal communications training would be worthwhile (n = 21; 56.8%) also reported that non-verbal communications was an important aspect of doing the job of a patrol officer at levels of 85% or less. Similarly, relative to verbal communications training as important as an FTO, the majority of respondents (n = 22; 59.4%) also reported that the value of non-verbal communications was an important aspect of doing the job of a patrol officer at 85% or less. As an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, responses were similar. Respondents who assessed the importance of non-verbal communications as an important aspect of doing the job of a patrol officer at 85% or less (n = 11; 29.7%) were similar to respondents who assessed the importance of non-verbal communications at 85% or higher (n = 10; 27%).

Table 12

Attitudes toward Verbal Training Controlled by Percentage of Job Requiring Non-Verbal Communications (N=37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>85 % or Less</th>
<th>85 % or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 13 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal training relative to age. In the context of non-verbal training as worthwhile training, regardless of age the majority of respondents \((n = 31; 83.7\%)\) indicated their agreement that verbal communications training would be worthwhile. Meanwhile, regardless of age, the majority of respondents \((n = 21; 56.7\%)\) agreed that non-verbal communications training was important to them as an FTO, yet was an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum.

Table 13

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled By Age \((N=37)\)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>41 or Younger</th>
<th>42 or Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal training relative to gender. The majority of males (n = 29; 78.3%) agreed that non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile. The majority of males also agreed that non-verbal communications training was important to them as an FTO (n = 26; 70.2%). Meanwhile, females (n = 2; 50%) agreed that non-verbal communications was worthwhile. The majority of females (n = 3; 75%) also agreed that non-verbal communications training was important to them as an FTO. In the context of non-verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the majority of males (n = 20; 54%) agreed with this statement. On the other hand, the majority of females (n = 3; 75%) disagreed with this statement.

Table 14

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled by Gender (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal communications training relative to education. The majority of respondents with an Associates Degree or less (n = 16; 43.2%) agreed that non-verbal communications was worthwhile. Respondents with a Bachelors Degree or higher (n = 15; 40.5%) similarly agreed that non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile, and was important to them as an FTO. In the context of non-verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the majority of respondents with an Associates Degree or less (n = 11; 29.7%) agreed to the statement. Regardless of whether the person had a Bachelor’s or Associates degree, the majority of respondents from each category agreed that non-verbal communications training is important.

Table 15

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled by Level of Education (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Associates Degree or Under</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 16 shows respondents' attitudes toward non-verbal training relative to years of experience as a patrol officer. Regardless of years of experience, the majority of officers agreed that non-verbal communications training would be important. The majority of respondents ($n = 20; 54\%$) with 15 years of experience or less, agreed that non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile. Respondents ($n = 21; 56.7\%$) with 15 years experience or less also reported that non-verbal communications training was important to them as an FTO. In the context of non-verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the most common response across all categories was agreement to the statement.

Table 16

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled by Years of Experience as a Patrol Officer ($N=37$)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>0-15 years</th>
<th>16+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td>Disagree 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td>Disagree 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td>Disagree 9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree 14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal communications training controlled by years of experience as a field training officer. Regardless of the number of years of experience respondents had as FTO’S, the majority (n = 31; 83.7%) of respondents agreed that non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile and important (n = 29; 78.3%) to them as an FTO. In the context of non-verbal communications training as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum relative to years of experience (n = 10; 27%) as an FTO, both age categories were in agreement with this statement.

Table 17

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled by Years as an FTO (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>0 to 5 years</th>
<th>6+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal communications training, controlled by the percentage of the job requiring verbal communications. Regardless of whether respondents reported that their job required a high or low degree of verbal communications, the majority (n = 31; 83.7%) indicated that non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile. In the context of non-verbal communications as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, responses were mixed. Respondents (n = 11; 29.7%) who assessed the value of verbal communications at 85% or higher, regarding the importance it plays in doing the job of a patrol officer, were similar to those respondents (n = 9; 24.3%) who reported verbal communications was 85% or less important in terms of its value in doing the job of patrol officer.

Table 18

*Attitudes toward Non-Verbal Training Controlled by Percentage of Job Requiring Verbal Communications (N=37)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>85 % or Less</th>
<th>85 % or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19 shows respondents’ attitudes toward non-verbal communications training controlled by the percentage of the job requiring non-verbal communications. The majority of respondents who felt non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile (n = 19; 51.3%) reported that non-verbal communications was an important aspect of doing the job of a patrol officer (at levels of 85% or less). Relative to non-verbal communications training as important as an FTO, regardless of the 85% category, the majority (n = 29; 78.3%) of respondents indicated agreement. In the context of non-verbal communications as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, responses were mixed. Respondents (n = 12; 32.4%) who assessed the value of non-verbal communications at 85% or less regarding the importance non-verbal communications plays in doing the job of a patrol officer, were better represented than those respondents (n = 8; 21.6%) who reported non-verbal communications was 85% or more important.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Job Requiring Non-Verbal Communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training would be worthwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree 2 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree 19 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree 16 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Verbal communications training is an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree 9 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree 12 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The study found that FTOs feel that verbal and non-verbal communications competencies are worthwhile, important, and are an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum. The resulting data is important as the findings strongly suggest that law enforcement managers and trainers alike, must make a concerted effort to implement training protocols designed to improve an officers' ability to communicate both verbally and non-verbally, in a variety of occupational settings. Therefore, the following chapter is a more thorough discussion of several possible strategies, which if implemented, could significantly improve the line level officers' ability to effectively communicate and as a result, would further professionalize the organization and the law enforcement occupation as a whole.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Summary

This study consisted of FTOs completing a self-administered survey regarding the importance of verbal and non-verbal communications. The primary focus of this study was two-fold, whether or not FTOs felt that competency in verbal and non-verbal communications was beneficial to their profession, and whether or not they lacked training in that area. The study also examined if there was a relationship between a police officer's organizational maturity and his or her decision to utilize verbal and/or non-verbal communications skills.

In the context of defining an officer’s organizational maturity, three variables were identified as important: (a) number of years of experience as a patrol officer; (b) the officers’ level of education; and (c) the officer’s chronological age in years. Since the study was interested in both verbal and non-verbal communication competencies, it logically followed that each of the three control variables be separated into two distinct categories; one category addressing verbal communication, and the other addressing non-verbal communication competencies. Each of the three control variables were separated into two categories (efficacy of organizational maturity regarding verbal skills, and efficacy of organizational maturity regarding non-verbal skills) creating six sub-categorical hypotheses. These hypotheses included:
Efficacy of organizational maturity regarding verbal skills

H-1-A. As the officer’s experience in years increases, the officer will rely more upon verbal skills.

H-1-B. The higher the officer’s formal education level, the more the officer will rely upon verbal skills.

H-1-C. As the officer’s chronological age increases, the officer will rely more upon verbal skills.

Efficacy of organizational maturity regarding non-verbal skills

H-2-A. As the officer’s experience in years increases, the officer will rely more upon non-verbal skills.

H-2-B. The higher the officer’s formal education level, the more the officer will rely upon non-verbal skills.

H-2-C. As the officer’s chronological age increases, the officer will rely more upon non-verbal skills.

Four additional variables (gender, number of years of experience as a field training officer, and the percentage of the job requiring verbal and non-verbal communication) were included in the study. These variables were included in order to determine what, if any, impact they may have had on an officer’s choice to utilize verbal and/or non-verbal communications, relative to communications training as worthwhile, important, and as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum.

Findings

When comparing the control variables verbal and non-verbal communications training as worthwhile, important, and as an overlooked tactical response on the force
continuum relative to each of the six sub-hypothesis (an officer's experience in years as a patrol officer; an officer's formal education level; and an officer's chronological age in years) the majority of respondents supported the proposition that verbal and non-verbal communications training was worthwhile. The majority of respondents also reported that communications training was an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum.

In a collective sense, the findings from this study showed that regardless of age, level of education, or years of experience as a patrol officer, the majority of respondents recognized the importance verbal and non-verbal communications plays in their professional lives as an FTO, as a police officer, and as a tactical element in which to avoid or reduce physical force. As a result, the null-hypothesis was validated. None of the control variables played a significant role in what respondents felt about verbal and non-verbal communications. The findings are consistent with the literature in terms of the overall importance verbal and non-verbal communications plays within the law enforcement profession. For instance Lersch (1998); and Wiley and Hudek (1974); and Terrill and McCluskey (2002); and Johnson, (2004); and Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski and Resig, (2001) wrote about the importance of a positive communications encounter as being the primary responsibility of the law enforcement officer whenever he or she interacts with the public.

In terms of training, the data also showed that the majority of respondents reported that verbal and non-verbal communications should be considered to be an important training issue. This finding is consistent with Hodgson, (2001) who reported that the lack of training regarding the communicative arts as it pertains to law enforcement is a central theme in its inability to professionalize itself through the use of
less violent means. This position is further supported by the landmark findings in *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* United States Government (1967). The Commission called for the professionalization of law enforcement through a variety of formal educational and training methodologies that centered on community relations, cultural diversity, and other non-violent training initiatives. Among these, the Commission determined that verbal communications was key. In addition Dunham and Alpert (2005); and Seron, Pereria, and Kovath (2004); and Garner, (2002); and Cooper, (1999); and Womack and Finley (1986) agree that officers who receive effective communications training and/or education are better prepared to deescalate tense situations and are more apt to use less physical force than officers who have not been educated or trained in the importance of the communicative arts.

In the context of force, despite age, level of education, and years of experience as a patrol officer, the majority of respondents were in agreement that communications competencies were overlooked as a viable tactical response on the force continuum. This finding is important, as it clearly indicates that the current force continuum training inadequately provides officers viable alternative options to physical force. In addition, this finding is consistent with current literature on the subject. For example, Dufresne (2003); and Elgin (1993); and Manning (1988); and Womack and Finley, (1986) all agree that communications, if executed properly and professionally by the police, is actually a low level force option that should not be underestimated. In addition, the researchers indicated that the use of the communications option should be considered a non-“physical” force tactic and when appropriately deployed by law enforcement officers can often defuse or reduce the need for physical force. Hodgson, (2001), indicates that the
lack of training regarding the non-physical force option, such as the communicative alternative can actually legitimize the officer's choice to so quickly resort to physical force. According to Hodgson, and Cancino (2001), whenever officers find themselves in an uncontrolled environment without any communicative skill to fall back on, they are more inclined to revert to what they have been trained to do. If, as a result, the training officers received primarily focused on "physical" modes of peace keeping, then officers are pre-disposed to respond in kind with force. When this happens, according to Hodgson, and Cancino (2001), officers are locked in with only the physical response mechanism to fall back on, and are destined to utilize physical force more readily than non-physical forms of force.

Despite the number of years of experience respondents had as an FTO, relative to verbal and non-verbal communications as worthwhile, important, and as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the majority of respondents agreed with each statement. Although interesting, this finding must be viewed with caution. A strong argument could be made that FTOs constitute a selection bias and therefore threaten the internal as well as the external validity of the study. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) selection bias occurs anytime subjects or groups are chosen for a study that are not representative of the larger population under study. For example, an FTO typically has at least five years of experience as a police officer before being selected to train other officers (Beaver, 2006 and; Nowicki, 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that after five years experience performing the job of a patrol officer, some organizational and personal maturation has occurred on the part of the officer or he or she most likely would not have been selected to train younger, more
impressionable officers. Thus, the very process of maturing personally and occupationally more than likely has fostered the officer's inherent desire to want to improve themselves regarding their communicative abilities. This desire could have certainly prompted the respondents to respond favorably to the survey, creating a biased result regarding the findings. Furthermore, oftentimes FTOs are selected to train other officers based on their ability and willingness to represent positive organizational models (Beaver, 2006 and; Nowicki, 2004). As a result, an argument can be made that FTOs are naturally more amenable to additional training opportunities. In addition, FTOs are often interested in promotional advancement and as such, are more likely to strive to improve their communicative competencies in order to better align themselves for future promotional advancement. Additional threats to the internal validity of the study will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In the context of verbal and non-verbal communications training (controlled by the percentage of the job requiring verbal and/or non-verbal communications training), the majority of respondents reported that verbal and non-verbal communication was worthwhile, important, and an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum. Respondents assessed the value of verbal communications in doing the job of a patrol officer at 85% or higher. Meanwhile, respondents assessed the value of non-verbal communications in doing the job of a patrol officer at 85% or less important. Although the exact difference is not known in terms of how much more important respondents felt verbal communication was compared to non-verbal communication, it is obvious that respondents felt that both communicative components were important factors in performing the job of a patrol officer.
According to Womack & Finley (1986) researchers do not know the exact breakdown between the importance of verbal and non-verbal communications. However, research has indicated that non-verbal communications is of most importance when attempting to interpret messages. For instance, Womack & Finley (1986) indicate that other researchers have estimated that non-verbal communications accounts for between 65% and 90% of the overall communications process. Meanwhile, McKay, Davis, & Fanning (1995), indicate that “... over 50 percent of a messages impact comes from body movements” (p.53). Further, McKay, Davis, & Fanning (1995) breakdown the communicative process into the following percentages, based on their importance in the overall communicative process. “7 percent = verbal (words); 38 percent = vocal (volume, pitch, rhythm); 55 percent = body movements (mostly facial expressions)” (p. 53). Taking this one step further, non-verbal communications accounts for over 90 percent of the overall communications process.

Limitations

As with all research, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. These limitations deal primarily with sample size and gender.

Sample Size

The most obvious limitation regarding the present study centers on sample size. For example, there are 214 patrol officers within the five largest police agencies in Kalamazoo County currently assigned to road patrol duty. Of the 214 road patrol officers, only 40 (all of whom were FTOs) were selected to participate in this study. As a result, FTOs (n = 40) only represent 18.6% of the entire road patrol sample population. This means that approximately 81% (n = 214) of all road patrol officers in Kalamazoo County
were not surveyed. In addition, only \( n = 37; 92.5\% \) out of \( n = 40; 100\% \) FTOs completed the survey. Although the loss of \( n = 3; 7.5\% \) potential respondents at first seems insignificant, it is important in terms of the overall study, as the loss further limits the reliability of the findings. For instance, according to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) a sampling frame must contain a large enough population to adequately conduct data analysis and although a small number can be utilized (usually no less than 30), the results are not usually conducive to a sophisticated statistical analysis. This is important as it suggests that while utilizing a small sampling frame is acceptable, it can result in findings that are often times not representative of the larger group under study. As a result, the data can easily mislead the researcher as to the validity of their findings as it pertains to the larger group.

In terms of future studies, the issue regarding sampling can easily be corrected. Future research should incorporate probability sampling techniques in order to assure that a large enough population has been selected, thus ensuring that resulting findings are representative of the larger group under study. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) utilization of statistical sampling procedures and/or protocols gives validity to research findings as it helps to eliminate conscious and unconscious researcher bias. It also provides a mechanism in which to determine and estimate the degree of expected error. Determining the expected degree of sampling error is important to any study as it accounts for statistical differences between the group sampled and the overall population. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002), statistical means is the best way to precisely determine sampling error. Once the statistical sampling error has been established, researchers are better able to account for
the extent of risk they are willing to accept when they discuss their data/research findings as it relates to the population under study.

*Gender*

In terms of gender, the majority of male and female respondents indicated that they felt verbal and non-verbal communications was worthwhile and important. In the context of verbal and non-verbal communications as an overlooked tactical response on the force continuum, the majority of male respondents agreed with the statement, however; female respondents did not agree. Female respondents were either neutral or disagreed. This is an interesting finding and one that deserves further exploration, however; the total number of female respondents represented in this study (n = 4; 10.8%) was extremely limited and therefore hardly representative of the larger female patrol officer population within Kalamazoo County Michigan, let alone representative of the overall female patrol officer population within the state of Michigan or the country. The small number of female respondents creates an obvious external validity concern. Concerns regarding external validity will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In order to rectify this limitation and better assure that the findings are representative of the larger female patrol officer population, future research should concentrate on including a larger female patrol officer sampling frame. One way to address this issue would be to conduct a study that concerns itself with only female patrol officers within Kalamazoo County. Perhaps future research could determine the total number of female patrol officers within Kalamazoo County and conduct any number of probability studies such as a simple random sampling, systematic sampling, and or stratified random sampling.
Issues regarding External Validity

According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) external validity is concerned with the applicability of data findings being representative of other similar populations. In terms of the present study, the question centers on whether or not the findings are representative of the larger population of patrol officers within Kalamazoo County, the state of Michigan, and the United States. As previously reviewed in this chapter, gender and sample size are both related to external validity concerns. In the context of gender, there were only 4 female officers included in the survey. As such, it is very difficult to make generalizations regarding the larger number of female patrol officers within Kalamazoo County, not to mention the state of Michigan, and of course the entire country.

In terms of sample size, the external validity issue centers on whether or not the findings from this study adequately represent patrol officers else where in the state of Michigan and/or the United States. According to “INFO MI” (2006), there are 83 counties in Michigan. According to Steele (2007), there are 3,141 counties in the U.S. Holmes, (1997) indicates that there are over 15, 000 law enforcement agencies within the U.S. that employ over 800,000 police officers. Thus, to suggest that the data findings from 37 FTOs from Kalamazoo County, Michigan is representative of all patrol officers within the State of Michigan, let alone the United States, would be inappropriate. Therefore, any generalizations made as a result of the present study can only be applied to the population studied. In order to correct this issue, future researchers interested in what other patrol officers in other parts of the state or country might think about
communications competencies must conduct independent surveys specific to each police agency and/or local in which the researcher is interested in.

*Issues Regarding Internal Validity*

Internal validity is defined by Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) as any variable or combination of variables, other than those identified by the researcher, that may have caused or been responsible for the observed effect. In terms of the present study, it is difficult to know what, if any, issues or variables were present, and to what extent, if any, they may have impacted the study. However, like all research projects, this study too was vulnerable to a variety of internal validity issues.

The most obvious internal validity issue regarding the present study concerns selection bias. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) selection bias could cause an internal validity issue anytime subjects or groups are chosen for a study and are not representative of the larger population under study. This issue centers on an FTO's aspirations to achieve a higher rank (compared to other line level officers) within the organization, and an FTO's desire to positively support a perceived organizational emphasis on improving communications competencies within the patrol ranks. For instance (as was pointed out earlier in the chapter), FTOs are likely more amenable to additional training opportunities, as they are more likely interested in promotional advancement. As a result, FTOs are more likely to strive to improve their communicative competencies (compared to regular line level officers) in order to better align themselves for future promotional advancement. Thus, respondent FTOs may have had a tendency to over-inflate the positive aspects of communications competencies when responding to the survey questions. This is to suggest that within the context of internal validity issues,
respondents may have purposely answered the survey in a positive light, despite their true feelings about communicative issues in hopes of being seen as positive supporters regarding assumed positive organizational emphasis on communications training.

Another concern regarding selection bias centers on the fact that at least 3 participants/respondents chose not to complete the survey, potentially affecting, to at least some degree, the overall conclusions and statistical comparisons. Although there is no way of knowing exactly why the respondents did not participate in the study there are, however, several explanations. Obviously, one or all of the respondents may simply have exercised their free will and decided not to participate in the study. The responses may have been lost in the return mail. The respondents may not have received the survey for a variety of reasons. It is possible, perhaps, that the respondents were victims to the concept of demoralization. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) demoralization occurs when respondents/participants give up or feel as though they cannot continue with the study. This suggests that perhaps one or all of the 3 remaining respondents suffered some kind of demoralizing affect as a result of the survey. For example, maybe the respondents who did not complete the survey had difficulty reading and were afraid that they would not understand the survey. Perhaps the respondents felt that should they complete the survey, their inability to communicate verbally or non-verbally would be revealed, and as a result, they would lose their FTO position, or even worse, their job. Nevertheless, not receiving 3 responses accounted for less than 10% of the sample population – not too bad in research terms.

Despite the reasons why or how these 3 surveys were not included or accounted for, it remains a point in fact that they were not. In other words, something was different
about the 3 respondents who did not complete the survey. The important consideration of note centers on the fact that had they been included, the findings would have been impacted in some way. This is not to suggest that the inclusion of the 3 additional surveys would have significantly changed the results. However, it does establish that with the loss of the 3 surveys, the chance for additional data was also lost, especially if the 3 lost responses were female FTOs.

A second concern regarding internal validity centers on a historical perspective. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) history is any event that took place before or during the present research that may have influenced respondents’ answers. In other words, respondents may have answered the survey based on events that occurred in their lives prior to or during the time they were exposed to the survey. For example, at sometime prior to or during the survey, a respondent may have received negative feedback in the context of a reprimand regarding their communicative abilities, resulting in any number of disciplinary sanctions. As such, the respondent may have answered the survey questions in a more negative posture based on their current emotional state at the time they were exposed to the survey. To the contrary, a respondent who received positive feedback for their communicative efforts may have been tempted to answer survey questions in a more positive light. In addition, the designated contact person at each of the five agencies responsible for distributing the survey may have intentionally or unintentionally placed undue pressure (positive or negative) on respondents when disseminating the survey. This is to suggest that the inherent demeanor of the contact person (whether positive or negative) may have in some way consciously or unconsciously biased the respondents into answering survey
questions positively or negatively. Also, the current political climate within the organization and/or community regarding the inability of officers to effectively communicate with citizens might have impacted how the respondents answered survey questions. If for example, citizens were currently happy with the current state of law enforcement interaction, the respondents might feel as though they are already able to adequately communicate and answer the survey in kind. If on the other hand, relations with citizens and the police were currently negative, respondents might be inclined to answer survey questions in such a way that indicates a need for communications training. These considerations are important, as it is difficult within the confines of the current study, to know and account for each individual political climate of each of the five agencies selected to participate in the research.

A third concern regarding internal validity revolves around the aspect of social desirability. According to Karp & Brockington, (2005) social desirability is the desire of the respondents to answer survey questions in a context most favorable to them, in an effort to save face, despite their true feelings regarding the issue. With regard to the present study, respondents might have answered survey questions in a way they felt might best accommodate the organization and/or a supervisor, regardless of their true feelings regarding communications training. Social desirability also suggests that FTO respondents may provide false responses to survey questions in order to align themselves with their FTO peers. The concern is that respondents may be unduly influenced (either positively or negatively) by other FTOs to the extent they were willing to sway the results of the survey by providing overly positive or negative responses to questions in order to maintain their good standing or to show solidarity within the peer group. Social
desirability also occurs when the respondents attempt to accommodate the researcher. In this context, it is possible that since the study was conducted in the researcher’s home area, and the fact that the researcher is a police officer who personally knows several of the respondents, the respondents may have felt obliged to participate in the survey. In addition, respondents might have known that the researcher valued communications and therefore answered the survey in a “socially desirable” manner.

A fourth issue regarding internal validity concerns the survey itself. This issue concerns the readability of the survey. Stated simply, can the respondent read and understand the question. The fear is that a respondent might interrupt a question very differently than it was intended thus, skewing the respondents answer to the question and the resulting data. Since the survey was self direct in order to assure each respondents anonymity, the ability for respondents to ask clarification questions was eliminated. As such, each respondent was left to interrupt the question entirely on their own. An additional concern regarding the questionnaire is that it was constructed utilizing fixed-alternative questions. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) a fixed-alternative question forces the respondent to chose an answer from a printed list of choices. Such questions usually consist of true / false and multiple choice regarding a series of degrees. For instance, Likert Scale questioning like the questions in the present survey that ask the respondent to chose between strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree and strongly agree are a classic example of the fixed-alternative method of questioning. Although these types of questions make it easy for a respondent to complete the survey, they do have a down side. For example, according to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) fixed-alternative questions may make respondents
feel as though they have to select a response even when none of the listed responses accurately expresses their position. A third concern regarding fixed-alternative questioning is making certain that the questions are both mutually exclusive and exhaustive. According to Babbie (2002); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002) a mutually exclusive question is one that has only one response category that best represents each individual respondent. A survey question is both mutually exclusive and exhaustive if it includes a range of all possible answers to a question Babbie (200); and Fitzgerald and Cox (2002). If for example, a survey question did not adequately provide the respondent with enough choices in which to best indicate their specific number of years of experience as a police officer, it would then be considered a non-mutually exclusive nor exhaustive question. Thus, responses to questions that are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, results in impudent data.

In an effort to control and rectify issues regarding the survey, its design, and prevent internal validity issues stemming from the construction of the survey, it was first administered to a control group. The control group consisted of several individuals who themselves were Social Science Researchers with extensive experience designing survey questionnaires. In addition, the survey was pre-tested among several law enforcement officers who’s number of years of experience ranged from 1 year experience to over 30 years experience. In addition, the pre-testers drawn from within the law enforcement community ranged in rank from patrol officer, patrol sergeant, patrol lieutenant, and a chief of police. Finally the law enforcement pre-testers ranged in age from early twenties to early fifties. Pre-testing the survey prior to administering it to respondents, provided the researcher an opportunity to be certain that spelling and grammar were appropriate
and that the questions were easy to read and understand. Thus, addressing the overall readability of the survey. In addition, pre-testing the survey better assured the questions utilized appropriate age, gender, and education neutral language better assuring the surveys representative appeal to a variety of respondents despite age, gender, rank, experience, or background. Finally, pre-testing the survey prior to its dissemination to respondents afforded the researcher the ability to assure that all questions were mutually exclusive and exhaustive. This important step in the survey design process helped to alleviate internal validity issues concerning the survey instrument, and as a result, further enhanced the validity of resulting data.

Implications

Future Implications for Managers

The research findings suggest that law enforcement officers are interested in the communicative aspects of their profession and that they understand the need for additional training. Law enforcement managers would be wise to explore communicative training opportunities as a relatively low cost means in which to equip organizational members with additional professional skills in which to better perform their jobs. By providing organizational members the opportunity to enhance their communication competencies, law enforcement managers are not only investing in the continued professional growth of their own organizations, but facilitating the continued professional growth of the entire criminal justice profession as well as reducing potential liability claims. Therefore, training must be continuous and encompass a variety of communicative disciplines and competencies. Managers are encouraged to begin to think of communications training in similar terms as firearms, defensive tactics and the like,
regarding the necessity of such training as a required aspect of any well-rounded law enforcement training regiment. Further, managers are encouraged to explore innovative ways in which to incorporate legitimate forms of communications training into all other forms of organizational training. For example, law enforcement managers interested in improving organizational communicative standards could easily supplement training from outside the criminal justice atmosphere. A simple check of the World Wide Web reveals several applicable communicative training opportunities in areas such as, conflict negotiation, public speaking, linguistics, kinesics, paralanguage, active listening, paraphrasing, interviewing, questioning, and verbal deflection techniques. Managers must be willing to utilize the many private and public institutions/organizations in which to enhance communicative competencies and professional demeanor within their organizations such as, local colleges and universities, Dale Carnegie Seminars, Toastmasters, and other consulting firms specializing in professional development through communications. Law enforcement managers could incorporate a low cost approach to professional development in order that organizational members are interested in improving their communicative abilities by sponsoring a professional reading program. For instance, law enforcement managers could compile a suggested reading list comprised of books and articles they feel are important in one's professional development. As organizational members completed a book or article they could take a simple written test to prove their comprehension of the material. Perhaps then, a note indicating successful completion could be placed in the employees personnel file. In addition, each completed reading could attach a pre-determined number of points toward one's status in a promotional process and/or preferred training assignment. For those organizational
members not interested in promotion or preferred training assignments, perhaps some other benefit could be attached to the successful completion of the reading list, such as additional time off, pension contribution, or differential pay increase, to name but a few options. By incorporating and mandating communications training into the organizational fiber and subculture through the vehicle of required training, law enforcement managers are sure to communicate a strong message to organizational members and the community that they are seriously committed to improving their professional image.

One way to accomplish these goals is through recruitment and selection. Through the recruitment process managers can actively seek out and create a qualified pool of pre-qualified applicants who have previously demonstrated their ability to effectively communicate. Through the selection process managers can draw upon the most qualified applicants from the applicant list, in order to fulfill organizational staffing levels as needed. Law enforcement managers must make every effort to hire officers who are not only ethically sound, but who have the capacity to communicate well within a variety of situations and with a variety of individuals across multiple ethnic backgrounds. For instance, these qualities are important concerns for a background investigator to uncover.

Background investigators must make every effort to not only determine that a candidate meets and possess the basic requirements of the organization and mandatory state certification, but that the candidate can appropriately communicate with others under a variety of stressful conditions, paramount in the mission of civilian law enforcement peace keeping efforts. In order to accomplish this goal, it may require that background investigators receive additional training in areas of the background investigation that would reveal a candidate’s communicative competencies. In addition, prior to hiring a
Assessing the Efficacy

candidate, it should be mandatory that any perspective employee submit to assessment center testing, wherein the assessment center is responsible for administering a battery of communicative test, in order to determine a candidate's communicative aptitude. According to Hughes (2006) assessment center testing is considered the most reliable, as it places candidates in real life situations. Hughes (2006) explains that this is important because performance under simulated stress is the best predictor of future performance when on the job. For example, in the case of assessing one's communicative ability, assessment center testing might place the perspective candidate in a variety of simulated situations, each increasing in intensity. Obviously the point of such testing is to determine / asses a potential candidates ability to utilize appropriate communicative competencies under terse often confusing situations. By assessing the candidate prior to an offer of employment, the organization is able to gain valuable insight into the candidates ability and willingness to professionally and effectively communicate under stressful and tense conditions, common in law enforcement. These pre-employment requirements will better ensure that a candidates ability to communicate is in line with current organizational mandates and professional requirements. Thus, a perspective candidate who is unable to pass muster in terms of their assessment center evaluations may save law enforcement mangers considerable time and money hiring and training candidates, who although may appear as though they are capable in the physical sense, are not capable in the communicative/professional sense regarding an organizational ethos that emphasizes professionalism over size and strength. As a result, every effort must be made to recruit and hire only those individuals who are willing, capable, and
committed to conflict resolution and who are opposed to coercive means and physical force unless absolutely necessary.

Another way to accomplish these goals is through the FTO program. First, law enforcement managers must take every precaution when promoting FTOs. Only those officers that have demonstrated that they are themselves consonant professionals should only ever be considered as a training officer. Second, prospective FTOs must not only be willing to train other officers, they must consistently demonstrate their capability to operate at or above required organizational standards for professional demeanor. This includes their ability to effectively communicate on a variety of levels under a multitude of tense circumstances. After all, it is the example set by the organizations FTOs that new recruits will emulate. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that FTOs receive additional communications training. FTOs must themselves be excellent communicators, in order that they effectively model professional organizational ethos that emphasizes peaceful resolutions through communication versus physical force.

*Future Implications for Trainers*

The findings suggest that officers recognize the need for effective communication. Therefore, future training programs could be created to enhance verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Trainers, regardless if they are FTOs, defensive tactics instructors, firearms instructors, patrol tactics instructors, etc., must incorporate legitimate communication aspects into their particular area of responsibility. This is important, as the findings suggest that line level officers, not law enforcement managers, feel that communications aspects of training is worthwhile, important and often times overlooked especially in the context of the force continuum. In addition, the
findings indicate that the majority of line level officers want to improve their ability to communicate both verbally and non-verbally. This suggests that those members of the organization responsible for training take seriously the desire of their fellow officers to improve themselves professionally. Training officers and law enforcement managers should look for opportunities to incorporate the communicative aspects of training regardless of the discipline being trained. In addition, trainers and managers should look outside the organization to local police academies, community colleges, and universities as well as other non-traditional law enforcement professional settings, such as private corporations, Toastmasters, Dale Carnegie, (as was previously suggested in this chapter) to name but a few, for additional communications training opportunities for organizational members.

Conclusion

This study has shown the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in law enforcement. Although none of the variables revealed any statistical significance in any category due to the small sample size, the findings should not be discounted. The study is important as it found that FTOs in select police agencies within the state of Michigan (Kalamazoo County Sheriffs Dep., Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, Portage Police Dep., Kalamazoo Township Police Dep. And Western Michigan University Police Dep.) agreed that both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are important components to training. To ignore the findings of this study would be to ignore important insight into the opinions of police officers who have identified communications training as important, worthwhile, yet as an overlooked training component. Thus, in order to facilitate professional communications development within
the criminal justice community, law enforcement must continue to serve as its own advocate when promoting the desire of its officers to receive additional communications training.
References


Calibre Press Staff. (2005). 'TOP 25 THINGS OFFICERS TODAY SHOULD KNOW' (A list of survey results from police officers’ around the country indicating the most important aspects of mental and tactical preparedness). Retrieved 04/19/05, from Calibre Press: [www.calibrepress.com](http://www.calibrepress.com)


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Interpersonal Communication and Officer Survival: How Understanding the Boyd Cycle and Non-Verbal Communication Can Save a Law Enforcement officers Life! (Article Regarding Non-Verbal Communication).


Appendix A

Endnotes

1 The key to all continuums is that they are based on two criteria: the suspect’s level of resistance and the officer’s level of control. . . . continuums provide officers guidance on the particular levels of control they can use, based on lower levels of resistance (passive resistance, for example) all the way up to deadly force. These continuums are basically guidelines. They are not step-by-step procedures that must be followed. For more information see (Johnson, 2005, p. 17)

2 For further reading regarding the President’s Commission of 1967 please refer to (United States Government, 1967), entitled *The Challenge Of Crime In A Free Society* specifically Chapter 4, *The Police.*

3 The “Third Degree” is a physically and mentally coercive interview tactic in order to force a confession.

4 Attentiveness: Americans want their service providers to pay attention to them. Reliability: People expect a degree of predictability in what the police do. Responsive Service: People expect “client-centered” service. Competence: Service providers who can get the job done. Proper Manners: The most powerful predictor of citizen satisfaction with the police has more to do with how the police treat the citizen, rather than what the police have accomplished. Fairness: Treating citizens with dignity and respect, a sense of decision-maker neutrality and providing citizens with an opportunity to participate in the decision for information please refer to (Mastrofski, 1999, p.3-4).

Definition of "Under Color of State law:" Action under color of state law refers to the misuse of power, possessed by virtue of state law and made possible only because the wrongdoer is clothed with the authority of state law. An officer acts under the color of state law when the officer:

a. Oversteps his or her legal authority while acting in the line of duty, or

b. Misuses his or her legal authority to engage in private wrongdoing, please refer to (Klotter, Kanovitz, Konovitz, 2002, p.439).
Appendix B

Organizational Letters of Authorization to Conduct Research

Appendix B-1

Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Office
1500 Lamont Ave.
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048
(269) 385-6173

Dr. Brian Johnson
Grand Valley State University
Criminal Justice Department
Grand Rapids, MI

March 28, 2007

Dear Dr. Johnson:

I’ve had a conversation with Mr. White and understand that he is surveying law enforcement field training officers as part of his studies and partial fulfillment of his thesis requirements with GVSU. The Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Office has agreed to allow our FTO’s to participate with Mr. White’s survey. I understand that there is little or no risk to our employees by way of their participation with this voluntary survey.

Mr. White has my permission to conduct survey research at the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Office. If you or any member of the Internal Review Board has any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact me at (269) 383-8751.

Sincerely,

William J. Timmerman, Captain
Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Office
Law Enforcement Division
March 26, 2007

Dr. Brian Johnson
G.V.S.U. Criminal Justice Dept.
401 Fulton Street West
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Re: Michael White, Masters Research

Dear Dr. Johnson,

It is my understanding that Mr. Michael White is conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Grand Valley State University. As part of his research, Mr. White has requested permission to survey some Kalamazoo Public Safety officers.

It is my understanding that some of our field training officers will be asked to complete a voluntary self-survey, wherein anonymity is assured, and there are no consequences for participation. Once completed, the surveys will be returned to Mr. White.

Kalamazoo Public Safety has no objection to Mr. White's survey of our personnel.

Sincerely,

Michael McCaw, Deputy Chief
Kalamazoo Public Safety
March 16, 2007

Dr. Brian Johnson
Grand Valley State University – Criminal Justice Degree Program
1 Campus Drive
Allendale, MI 49401

Dear Dr. Johnson:

Officer Mike White, Township of Kalamazoo Police Department, has permission from the Portage Police Department executive command staff to conduct a field training officer survey at the Portage Police Department in cooperation and support of Officer White’s efforts to complete his master’s degree. Thank you for allowing the Portage Police Department to participate in this research thesis project.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Mills
Deputy Chief of Police – Operations
Portage Police Department
March 16, 2007

Dr. Brian Johnson
Grand Valley State University
Criminal Justice Department
401 W. Fulton Street
Grand Rapids, MI 49504-6431

RE: Mr. Michael White

Dear Dr. Johnson:

I have been contacted by Mr. Michael White, a Masters Degree candidate at GVSU. He has expressed the desire to survey police officers assigned as field training officers in our agency as a part of his academic research. I understand that this would take the form of a self-completed written survey. I also understand that Mr. White has taken the appropriate precautions to ensure the participants' anonymity and that it is not anticipated that there will be any adverse consequences related to an officer's participation. Mr. White has my permission to conduct this survey among members of our Department.

Should you or the Institutional Review Board have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 269-567-3752.

Sincerely,

Timothy S. Bourgeois
Chief of Police

"A Quality Township Striving to Meet the Needs of Its Citizens"
Charter Township of Kalamazoo Police Department
March 22, 2007

Dr. Brian Johnson  
Grand Valley State University  
Criminal Justice Department  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504-6431

Dear Dr. Johnson,

I have been contacted by Mr. Michael White, a Master’s Degree candidate at GVSU. Mr. White has contacted me in regards to conducting a self completed survey with some of the employees at Western Michigan University DPS on the topic of field training. It is my understanding that Mr. White will take all the necessary precautions in assuring the participants confidentiality and their anonymity. In addition, I understand that as a result or Mr. White’s research the members of this department will not be subject to any type of adverse effect or harm regarding their choice to participate in research or in their decision to decline participation. Mr. White has my permission to conduct this survey among members of our department.

Should you or the Institutional Review Board have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (269) 387-5577.

Respectfully,

Brian Crandall  
Administrative Lieutenant, WMU DPS  
Dept. Training Coordinator
Appendix C

HRRC Application

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE

Principal Investigator(s): Michael White

Contact email address: eeeaa@ sbcglobal.net

Address and Telephone: 7101 Standiford St. Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49009 / 269-353-3145

Number of Principal Investigator(s): 1

GVSU Department or School: School of Public Service Criminal Justice Department

Title of the Project: Assessing the Efficacy of Police Officers’ Organizational Maturity and the Decision to Utilize Communicative Competencies

Date(s) and Location(s) of Subject Enrollment:

A target date for the survey is tentatively scheduled for the latter part of May, 2007 pending approval by the HRRC committee.

Survey research will take place at five separate Law Enforcement Agencies within Kalamazoo County, Michigan:

(a) Kalamazoo County Sheriffs Department, 1500 Lamont Ave. Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048
(b) Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, 150 E. Crosstown, Suite A Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001
(c) Portage Police Department, 7810 Shaver Rd. Portage, Michigan 49002
(d) Kalamazoo Township Police Department, 1720 Riverview Dr. Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004
(e) Western Michigan University Police Department, 1903 W Michigan Av. Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

Summary of the Project: ‘see attached’ is not acceptable

The focus of this study is to examine communication issues in the field of law enforcement. Five agencies were selected for this project. From these five agencies, a total of 40 surveys will be disseminated to field training officers (FTOs) employed by these agencies. Filed training officers were selected as the sample population out of
convenience. These individuals have the time, knowledge, and experience to accurately answer the questions in the survey.

The 40 FTOs will be asked to complete a short survey while on duty. This survey is confidential but not anonymous. Respondents will receive the surveys in their departmental mailboxes and will be asked to complete it during their spare time while on duty. Respondents will be instructed to enclose the completed survey in a self addressed return envelope upon completion and then mail it. Respondents will be advised through the survey cover letter that written permission has been granted by their agency allowing their participation in this study.

There is minimal risk to participants that their employer may be able to determine a respondent’s specific identity. Respondents will be advised in writing of all potential risks regarding participation. In addition, in an effort to further protect the individual identity of all participants regarding employment concerns, participants will be advised in writing that should their employer request data findings as a result of this survey; the employer will receive only summary data. No specific information (i.e. gender, race, etc.) will be disaggregated at the agency level in this study. Instead, all summary data/statistics will only be disaggregated to the type of agency (Sheriff's Agency vs. Municipal Agency) in order to protect the identity of the FTOs who complete this survey.

Additionally, the following procedural safe guards will be taken in an effort to further maintain confidentiality and to protect respondent identity:

- All risks to respondents will be made clear in written format.
- Once information from the survey is entered into the computer, all individual responses will be destroyed.
- Implied consent will be established and satisfied upon the return of a completed survey.

**In what capacity does this project involve human subject? (E.g., surveys, interviews, clinical trial, use of medical records, etc.)**

Field Training Officers from each of the five police agencies identified above will be asked to complete a self administered survey consisting of approximately 40 questions. Some questions ask that the respondent provide general demographic information such as age via one of five categories, numbers of years of police experience, sex, and type of agency employed with. All other questions are ordinal in nature requiring the respondent to choose between a five point Likert Scale.

**Check one:**

- This is a request for exemption from HRRC approval requirements as specified by 46.101 of the Federal Register
- 4616:8336, January 26, 1981. (Refer to instructions on the reverse of this form.)
This is a request for expedited review as described in 46.110 of the Federal Register 46(16):8336, January 26, 1981. (Refer to instructions on the reverse of this form.)

This is a request for full review. (Refer to instructions on the reverse of this form.)

Principal Investigator (s)  Signature of Unit Head/Department Chair
(Original must be signed in ink)  (I have reviewed the attached protocol and determined that the principal investigator is competent to conduct the study as described. To the best of my knowledge adequate subject protections have been provided).

Date Signed

Signature of Advisor  Date Signed and E-mail Address of Advisor
(I have reviewed the attached protocol and determined that the principal investigator is competent to conduct the study as described. To the best of my knowledge adequate subject protections have been provided).

Phone number of Advisor

This research proposal 07-246-H has been approved by the Human Research Review Committee at GVSU. Expiration Date: June 23, 2008
Dear Mr. White,

Grand Valley State University, Human Research Review Committee (HRRC), has completed its review of the revisions and clarifications submitted for this proposal. The HRRC serves as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Grand Valley State University. The rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Your project has been APPROVED as EXPEDITED. Please include your proposal number in all future correspondence. The first principal investigator will be sent all correspondence from the University unless otherwise requested.

Revisions: The HRRC must review and approve any change in protocol procedures involving human subjects, prior to the initiation of the change. To revise an approved protocol including a protocol that was initially exempt from the federal regulations, send a written request along with both the original and revised protocols including the protocol consent form, to the Chair of HRRC. When requesting approval of revisions both the project’s HRRC number and title must be referenced.

Problems/Changes: The HRRC must be informed promptly if any of the following arises during the course of your project: 1) Problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving the subjects. 2) Changes in the research environment or new information that indicates greater risk to the subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved. 3) Changes in personnel listed on the initial protocol, e.g. principal investigator, co-investigator(s) or secondary personnel.

Renewals: The HRRC approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. For this project to continue beyond the expiration date listed above a Continuing Review form must be submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the protocol expiration date listed above. You can find this document at http://www.gvsu.edu/forms/research_dev/FORMS. A maximum of 4 renewals are possible. If you need to continue a proposal beyond that time, you are required to submit a new application for a complete review.

Closed: When the project is closed to further enrollment and all data analysis has been completed, a close protocol form must be submitted to the HRRC. You can find this document at http://www.gvsu.edu/forms/research_dev/FORMS.

If you need additional assistance, please contact me at 616-331-3197 or via e-mail: retemej@gvsu.edu. You can also contact the Graduate Assistant in Faculty Research and Development Office at 616-331-3197.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul J. Retemej, Ph.D.
Human Research Review Committee Chair
301C DeVos Center
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: (616) 331-2281
Appendix E

Cover Letter Attached to Survey Questions

July 9, 2007

Dear Officer / Criminal Justice Colleague,

My name is Michael White and I am a graduate student attending Grand Valley State University. I am conducting a survey, as part of my thesis, in partial fulfillment of my Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice. The focus of this study is to examine communication issues in the field of law enforcement. The survey and subsequent study have been approved by the Human Research Review Committee at GVSU.

The survey contains 41 questions that should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your agency has given its permission for me to conduct this study, however; your individual participation is strictly voluntary. Some of the questions in the survey include general demographic information which is important to the overall study. The overall study presents minimal risk to the respondent that he or she might be individually identified, however; once the information is entered into the computer, all individual responses will be destroyed. Only summary form data will be provided to your employer should they request output findings from the survey. Individual responses will be confidential and your privacy will be maintained throughout the study.

Once you receive the survey please complete it as soon as possible, during your spare time while at work. Please read each statement or question carefully, and answer all of the questions. The number that appears in the right hand corner of the survey is a control number that is used to coordinate follow-up mailings, if necessary. The number will not be used in the final coding stages of the research.

Your completed survey will be viewed as your express informed consent to participate in this research knowingly and voluntarily. When you have completed the survey, please place the answer sheet in the attached addressed envelope without folding it. Please return the envelope containing the survey by mail.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to contact me by phone at, 269-266-2781, by e-mail at eeeaa@sbcglobal.net, or in writing in care of, Mr. Michael White 7101 Standiford St., Kalamazoo MI., 49009. In addition, you may contact Dr. Brian Johnson of Grand Valley State University School of Criminal Justice by phone at, 616-331-7155, by e-mail at johnsonb@gvsu.edu, or by mail by writing in care of Dr. Brian Johnson Grand Valley State University School of Criminal Justice, 257–C DeVos Center, 401 West Fulton St., Grand Rapids MI., 49504. In addition, you may contact Dr. Paul Reitemeyer, Chair of the Human Research Review Committee at Grand Valley State University by phone at 616-331-3417, by e-mail at rietemep@gvsu.edu, or by mail by writing in care of Dr. Paul Reitemeyer, HRRC Dept., Grand Valley State University, 362-C DeVos Center, Grand Rapids MI., 49504.
If you would like a final copy of the findings, please indicate this by enclosing a business card or a note on a separate piece of paper.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation with this study.

Respectfully,

Mr. Michael White
Section 1 Training
Choose the level of agreement that most clearly represents your feelings or opinion. Mark your answer clearly, on the answer sheet, by selecting one of the following responses. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

**Professional Verbal Communication:** The ability to use the correct measure of active listening skills consisting of questioning, paraphrasing, clarifying and feedback, while maintaining a calm commanding presence when interacting with citizens.

Based on your position / opinion as a field training officer.

(1) The ability to use active listening skills is just as important to me as qualifying with my firearm:

(2) The ability to use active listening skills is just as an important survival tactic to me as is my department’s physical defensive tactics training:

(3) Verbal communications training would benefit the majority of patrol officers at my agency:

(4) Verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer:

(5) Verbal communications training will reduce claims of excessive force in my agency:

(6) I would like to improve my verbal communications skills:

(7) Verbal communications training is an over-looked tactical response on the force continuum:

(8) Verbal communications training should occur at regular intervals at my agency:

**Professional Non-Verbal Communications:** The process one uses to channel feelings, intentions, actions, and professional commitment, to another, without use of words.

(9) The ability to communicate non-verbally is just as important to me as qualifying with my firearm:
(10) The ability to communicate non-verbally is just as an important survival tactic to me as is my department’s physical defensive tactics training:

(11) Non-verbal communications training would benefit the majority of patrol officers at my agency:

(12) Non-verbal communications training is important to me as a field training officer:

(13) Non-verbal communications training will reduce claims of excessive force in my agency:

(14) I would like to improve my non-verbal communications skills:

(15) Non-verbal communications training is an over looked tactical response on the force continuum:

(16) Non-verbal communications training should occur at regular intervals at my agency:

Section 2 Independent Variable
Choose the level of agreement that most clearly represents your feelings or opinion. Mark your answer clearly on the answer sheet only by selecting one of the following responses. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

Based on your position / opinion as a field training officer.

(17) Does the number of years of experience an officer has as a patrol officer, positively impact their choice to use verbal communications tactics?

(18) Does the number of years experience an officer has attained as a patrol officer, positively impact their decision to use non-verbal communications tactics?

(19) Does an officer’s higher level education positively impact their choice to use verbal communications tactics?

(20) Does an officer’s higher level education positively impact their choice to use non-verbal communications tactics?

(21) Is an officer’s choice to use verbal communication tactics positively impacted as the officer’s age increases chronologically?

(22) Is an officer’s choice to use non-verbal communications tactics positively impacted as the officer’s age increases chronologically?
Section 3 Communications / Dependent Variable
Choose the level of agreement that most clearly represents your feelings or opinion. Mark your answer clearly on the answer sheet only by selecting one of the following responses. 1=Unimportant, 2=Some what Important, 3= Important, 4=Very Important, 5=Extremely Important

**Professional Verbal Communication:** The ability to use the correct measure of active listening skills consisting of questioning, paraphrasing, clarifying and feedback, while maintaining a calm commanding presence when interacting with citizens.

**Questioning:** The ability to ask open ended questions, in order to get someone to feel comfortable talking.

**Paraphrasing:** The ability to quickly determine the overall basic theme of a verbal message by occasionally interjecting short, to the point, verbal phrases.

**Clarifying:** The ability to ask short, timely background questions in order to better understand what the sender of a verbal message is trying to say.

**Feedback:** The point in the conversation that the listener (officer) feels they have a strong sense of what the verbal message is, and as such, is now able to provide a meaningful verbal response.

As an FTO:

(23) I believe the ability to question people properly is:

(24) I believe the ability to paraphrase is:

(25) I believe the ability to clarify a verbal statement is:

(26) I believe the ability to provide meaningful feedback is:

(27) I feel verbal communications training would be worthwhile:
   1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

**Professional Non-Verbal Communications:** The ability to communicate feelings, intentions, actions, and professional commitment, to another without use of words by use of the appropriate use of paralanguage, kinesics, and one’s professional appearance.

**Paralanguage:** Is the sound of a word, phrase, and or emphasis one places on the word or phrase.
**Kinesics:** The movements of the body which include, gestures, facial expressions, gait and posture. The entire range of motion / expression one is able to reveal through body / facial motion.

**Professional Appearance:** The image reflected to others through physical appearance. Refers to the way an officer looks in uniform, i.e. officer’s height is proportionate to their weight, officers personal hygiene, and to what extent the officer is able to project a commanding / respectful tone, while maintaining a tactical preparedness and congenial attitude toward the public.

Please answer by indicating: 1=Unimportant, 2=Some what Important, 3= Important, 4=Very Important, 5=Extremely Important

As an FTO:

(28) I believe the ability to effectively utilize paralanguage is:

(29) I believe the ability to effectively utilize kinesics is:

(30) I believe displaying a professional appearance is:

(31) I feel non-verbal communications training would be worthwhile:
    1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

**Section 4 Demographics**
Indicate the choice that most represents your group, or most closely corresponds to your opinion. Mark your answer clearly on the answer sheet only.

(32) What is your age?
   (a). 21 to 25 = 1
   (b). 26 to 30 = 2
   (c). 31 to 41 = 3
   (d). 42 to 50 = 4
   (e). 51 plus = 5

(33) The highest level of formal education that you have obtained?
   (a). Academy certified only = 1
   (b). Some college / no degree = 2
   (c). Associates degree = 3
   (d). Bachelors degree = 4
   (e). Graduate level degree = 5

(34) Are you?
    M = 1
    F = 2
(35) What type of agency do you work for?
   (a). Sheriffs Department
   (b). Municipal Police Agency

(36) Total number of years as a patrol officer?
   (a). 0 to 5 years = 1
   (b). 6 to 10 years = 2
   (c). 11 to 15 years = 3
   (d). 16 to 20 years = 4
   (e). 21 plus years = 5

(37) Total number of years as a field training officer?
   (a). 0 to 5 years = 1
   (b). 6 to 10 years = 2
   (c). 11 to 15 years = 3
   (d). 16 to 20 years = 4
   (e). 21 plus years = 5

(38) What percentage of a police officer's job requires verbal communications abilities?
   (a). 0% to 45% = 1
   (b). 46% to 60% = 2
   (c). 61% to 75% = 3
   (d). 76% to 85% = 4
   (e). Higher than 85% = 5

(39) What percentage of a police officer's job requires non-verbal communications abilities?
   (a). 0% to 45% = 1
   (b). 46% to 60% = 2
   (c). 61% to 75% = 3
   (d). 76% to 85% = 4
   (e). Higher than 85% = 5

(40) I have attended Verbal Judo Training in the past?
   (a). Yes = 1
   (b). No = 2

(41) Other than Verbal Judo Training, I have attended some form of communications training within the past 5 years:
   (a). Yes = 1
   (b). No = 2

Completion Instructions
This concludes the questionnaire. Place the completed answer sheet in the addressed stamped envelope and mail it. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance regarding this research project.