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Cultural Competency in Law Enforcement: Assessing Cultural Competence Levels among College Campus Police Departments

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CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT:
ASSESSING CULTURAL COMPETENCE LEVELS AMONG COLLEGE CAMPUS POLICE
DEPARTMENTS

by

Michelle N. Fletcher

B.A., Chicago State University, 2007

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for
Master of Public Administration

Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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MPA RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Public Administration

Approved by:

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Dr. James M. Grant

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 3, 2014

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

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**TITLE: CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT:
ASSESSING CULTURAL COMPETENCE LEVELS AMONG COLLEGE CAMPUS POLICE
DEPARTMENTS**

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Randolph Burnside

The cultural competence levels present in public organizations and agencies are a significant part of serving citizen populations. This area of research has yet to receive adequate attention from professional and academic disciplines like public administration, and law enforcement. This study investigates the existing research in the area of cultural competence and public service. In an effort to determine how culturally competent policies can improve service delivery among law enforcement professionals; three college campus police departments participated in cultural competence assessments. Based on the results of these findings recommendations were developed to guide college campus police departments toward improved cultural competence levels and better service delivery. The conclusions of this study point to the importance of leadership knowledge of cultural competence, the need for culturally competent Human Resource practices, and selecting the proper method of administration when conducting cultural competence assessments.

DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my daughter Mia. She was the inspiration that kept me strong, and persistent throughout the completion of my research and MPA degree. To my husband and family, I thank you all for being my support system. Frederick, you helped me find strength in my weakest moments, and you believed in me despite all the challenges we faced throughout this process. Christine Stewart, thank you for constantly encouraging me to keep moving forward. Finally, I must acknowledge and thank all the faculty members of the MPA program and the members of my paper committee. Dr. Randolph Burnside my mentor, Dr. James M. Grant, and Dr. Stephanie Pink- Harper I am grateful to you all for your support, guidance, and wise advice.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“The deadly encounter was set in motion when a former college football player survived a wreck and went searching for help in the middle of the night. A frightened woman heard him pounding and opened her front door, then called police. Officers found the unarmed man, and one shot him, when a Taser failed to stop him from approaching” – (Huffington Post, 2013 September 15)

The tragic death of Jonathan Ferrell former Florida A&M University football player underscores the tension between culturally diverse citizens and the law enforcement professionals that serve their communities. Throughout, this study the term “culturally diverse” refers to individuals, groups, and communities that represent racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, and sexual orientation based classifications of citizens. The terms “law enforcement” and “police” are both used to refer to agencies, individuals, and organizations that perform policing duties.

According to the Associated Press (2014), “police say that Ferrell wrecked his car and went to a nearby house and banged on the door, apparently for help. The resident called police, and three officers responded. Investigators say Kerrick fired 12 shots, 10 of which hit Ferrell. Kerrick was the only officer who fired his gun.” Many have questioned the actions of police officer Randall W. Kerrick and investigators are trying to determine if race played a role in the incident. Jonathan Ferrell was a young African American male, and Randall W. Kerrick is a Caucasian police officer. The implications behind this incident and similar situations are clear for both police officers and citizens. Police officers are expected to effectively serve communities while engaging in safe interactions with citizens from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Citizens expect to receive fair, equitable, and safe law enforcement services from policing organizations without fear of excessive force, racial discrimination, and brutality.

This is the intersection where cultural competence and law enforcement meet. Law enforcement professionals that possess cultural awareness better understand the needs of citizens and exhibit actions that take into account the cultural context of their interactions with citizens. The Jonathan Ferrell incident illustrates the significance of cultural competency in law enforcement. In this situation it appears that a number of assumptions were made on behalf of the citizens involved in the incident, and on behalf of the officers responding to the scene. First, the citizen who called the police assumed that the young black man banging on her door was attempting to burglarize her home. Second, police responding to a citizens' call for help lead to assumptions about the intent of Jonathan Ferrell and his actions. Last, Jonathan Ferrell assumed that police officers were responding to the scene to assist him in his disoriented state.

Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine if the actions of police officers are racially motivated. However, leadership within police departments can enforce policies that promote culturally competent behaviors, and attitudes. All public service professionals should be trained to respond appropriately in cross-cultural situations, this may frequently involve developing increased cultural awareness and sensitivity when dealing with culturally diverse citizens. Policy development in this area is particularly important on and near college campuses where these incidents are more likely to involve young, naïve student populations.

Public servants in the field of law enforcement play an important role within their communities and often enjoy a significant level of public influence. The literature on fairness in the criminal justice system, ethics in policing, and the constitutionality of laws is extensive. There is not, however, a preponderance of literature on cultural competency in the administration of public services like law enforcement. Researchers have addressed the internal cultures of police agencies; including the development of psychological assessments to measure law

enforcement leadership competencies (Miller, Watkins, and Webb, 2009). The enduring literature enables researchers to develop an understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and expectations that influence the behaviors of law enforcement professionals. This body of work, however, rarely addresses the policies, training, and self-reflection necessary to improve the public service delivery of law enforcement within diverse communities.

Professional standards in administering and managing public policy have focused primarily on attempting to ensure equity in public services to all citizens, but concentrating on equity generally ignores the diversity of needs that exist within many communities. The dominant focus on universality in providing public services ignores the diverse needs of multicultural communities, and diminishes the ability of public servants to respond to those needs. Although universality and equity in services help to reduce discriminatory practices public service delivery in an increasingly diverse society demands that we move beyond superficial tactics to meet citizen needs.

The current paper will identify how law enforcement agencies on college campuses can improve public service delivery through the implementation of culturally competent policies. In addressing this question I will identify human resource policies that can contribute to the development of culturally competent law enforcement professionals, and offer recommendations for assessing the cultural competency levels of law enforcement professionals. The Chief of Police of three college campus police departments were administered cultural competence self-assessment questionnaires, organizational policy assessments, and participated in respondent interviews. This information was then used to assess the current cultural competency level of each college campus police department; policy recommendations were then developed to improve the level of cultural competency within each police department.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Developing the cultural competency of service delivery professionals has existed as a primary emphasis of research in the fields of healthcare, social work, child welfare, and psychology since the 1980's. According to Terry Cross (1988), cultural competency is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or professional and enable that system, agency or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Norman-Major, and Gooden, 2012). In the public sector cultural competency is specifically concerned with an organizations commitment to institutionalizing the policies and practices that lead to culturally competent behaviors, and interactions with the public.

According to Mitchell F. Rice (2008), cultural competency is best operationally defined as the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes. In the Jonathan Ferrell case the police officer may have acted based upon the standards, polices, and practices currently accepted within the police department. As illustrated by this incident and numerous others, however, such actions make citizens question why excessive force is disproportionately used against people from culturally diverse groups. Unfortunately, for law enforcement agencies and governments throughout the United States these questions make organizations more susceptible to lawsuits, and accusations of racial discrimination.

This speaks to the importance of developing and institutionalizing culturally competent policies that guide the attitudes and behaviors of police officers interacting with citizens from culturally diverse groups. Institutionalization means that knowledge is formally recognized, documented, and shared in interactive ways with all public service delivery personnel and that

explicit mechanisms and policies are in place that provide for maintaining and expanding on the professional knowledge base about culture, so that the public agency is truly a learning organization (Rice, 2008). In the organizational setting this form of institutionalization is often represented by organization mission statements, human resource policies, organization goals/strategic plans, public communications, and other formally documented policies. Therefore, organization leaders and law enforcement professionals that recognize the importance of cultural competency can begin assessing internal cultural competency levels by identifying and reviewing the documented policies that currently exist within their organizations.

Why Develop Cultural Competency in Public Service Delivery

While defining cultural competency based on the accepted definitions used in the wider body of research is fairly simplistic, addressing this topic through the lens of public administration is more challenging. The consideration of cultural competency in public administration/public service delivery is lacking because the study and practice in the field views cultural differences and cultural variations in public service delivery and public agencies as invisible, illegitimate, and negative (Alder, 1991; and Rice, 2006). The lack of academic interest in the study of cultural competency that exists in the current study of public administration may aid in explaining why public agencies/public service providers have not committed to focusing on this intersection of public service.

Cultural competency was integrated into the field of professional health care because health care providers believed that cultural competency would help improve the quality of care received by racially diverse communities. Their goal was to eliminate disparity of health services among multicultural populations by developing improved cultural competency levels among service providers (Carrizales, 2010). However, this shift in addressing the public service needs of

diverse populations has not translated into congruent headway in the integration of cultural competency training and curriculum in public administration. Similarly, the law enforcement community has also exhibited reluctance to developing comprehensive cultural competency training. Gooden and Norman-Major (2012) argue that cultural competency in public administration falls short in comparison with other public-focused disciplines such as social work, and public health, and our cultural competency focus on race, ethnicity, and gender has not kept pace with the current-day complexities of race and ethnicity.

Despite the glacial pace at which cultural competency standards are accepted across professional and academic communities, advocates are optimistic about the future integration of these skills, values, and principles. Population changes throughout the United States are causing a shift in demographics that cannot be ignored if public service professionals intend to effectively serve citizens. According to Carrizales (2010), and Rice (2007), there are four significant reasons for accepting cultural competency in public administration:

- Cultural competency recognizes the cultural context in which public encounters occur.
- Cultural competency presents an opportunity to address the often inaccurate public service and programs provided to minority populations.
- Cultural competency increases the relevance of a public agencies administration, services, and programs to groups that can best utilize them.
- Service delivery officials are better prepared to do their job.

(Rice, 2007; Carrizales, 2010)

The reasons used to explain why cultural competency should be embraced in the field of public administration are equally relevant for all public service agencies. Specifically, law enforcement professionals encounter individuals living in diverse multicultural communities on a daily basis. As the demographics of these communities increase in culturally diverse populations it becomes significantly important for law enforcement professionals to possess the cultural competency, knowledge, and skills necessary to perform their jobs.

Representative Bureaucracy and Cultural Competency

The literature suggests that law enforcement can improve community relations in culturally diverse communities by implementing policies to increase the diversity of police teams. This argument is supported by the existing literature on representative bureaucracy and active/passive representation. Riccucci and Sidel (1997) state that according to the theory of representative bureaucracy, the demographic composition of the bureaucracy should mirror the demographic composition of the public. Frederick C. Mosher (1982) is credited with distinguishing the two types of representation:

- Passive representation: the bureaucracy has the same demographic origins as the population it serves; and
- Active representation: bureaucrats act on behalf of their counterparts in the general population (Riccucci, and Sidel, 1997).

Based on this theory one can argue that citizen perception of bureaucracies and trust in police officers is greatly improved if public officials are representative of the communities they serve. Representative bureaucracy is an important aspect of cultural competence in the context of law enforcement, because it aids in the development of a more representative workforce to serve the needs of culturally diverse communities.

Human Resource Management (HRM) and Cultural Competency

The development of effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices is an essential element in developing organizational structures that institutionalize and reinforce standards that promote cultural competence. Traditional HRM practices used to develop and sustain cultural competency within organizations may be categorized along the personnel functions of; recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance appraisal (Wyatt-Nichol and Naylor, 2012). Public institutions like law enforcement agencies should have a specific interest in moving toward practices that promote cultural competency throughout

organizations because of the diverse populations that these public officials serve. Human resource professionals are essential in the process of developing culturally competent organizations through their roles as “employee champions, administrative experts, change agents, and strategic partners” (Bailey, 2005).

For example in the health care sector and in some federal agencies organization leaders have worked to establish HRM practices that require culturally and linguistically appropriate standards. These efforts toward a culturally competent HRM model can be seen in federal government job descriptions, recruitment tools, and other hiring initiatives that target multicultural communities. In law enforcement, many police departments face accusations of excessive force and cultural insensitivity while serving racial and culturally diverse communities. According to Shelly L. Peffer (2012) due largely to lawsuits and clashes with various cultural groups, cities have taken the lead on mandating cultural competency training in police and criminal justice services. Mandated changes, however, can be superficial requiring surface level policy changes that do little to impact organizational culture and structure. Incorporating HRM models that develop cultural competency throughout organizational levels, policies encouraging self-reflection, and implementing cultural competency assessments will help improve the interactions between law enforcement professionals and the diverse communities they serve.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

The synthesis of research in the area of cultural competency has identified several barriers that present challenges for service delivery professionals working in cross cultural situations. These barriers often constrict the ability of public service agencies, and professionals to develop culturally competent polices on the organizational level. The challenges presented by these barriers extend to the individual and often limit the development of cultural awareness, culturally competent attitudes, and behaviors. It is for this reason that understanding cultural competency, what it means, and what it looks like is specifically important to the implementation of culturally competent polices in law enforcement. The literature indicates that the process begins when public service agencies and professionals recognize the importance of developing cultural competence and the importance of accepting the differences that exist among citizens and clients.

Barriers in Developing Cultural Competence

Trust in law enforcement.

The literature on culturally diverse communities suggests the importance of integrating cultural competency into the policies of public service agencies. Specifically, improving the cultural competency levels of public servants can potentially increase civic engagement and social trust among young ethnic and minority populations. Dianne Cameron Kelly (2009) describes social trust as “a protective factor against civic disconnectedness, social isolation, and susceptibility to negative community influences”.

Tom R. Tyler (2005) identifies two types of trust in the police; institutional trust, and motive based trust. Intuitional trust involves citizen beliefs about the degree to which the police are honest and care for the members of the communities they police. Motive based trust involves

inferences about the matters and intentions of the police and reflects the concept of fiduciary trust, which is central to discussions among legal scholars (Tyler and Huo, 2002). The findings of this study point to the significance of the decision-making, fairness, and interpersonal respect experienced by citizens as they interact with law enforcement professionals.

Trust in institutions (government, law enforcement, religious institutions, educational institutions, health institutions, etc.) emphasizes an individual's relationships with institutions of democracy, as well as the individual's perception of the stability of democracy in which he or she lives (Delhey, & Newton; Glaeser et al., 2000; Kwak et al., 2004; Newton & Pippa, 2000; Torney-Purts et al., 2004; Kelly, 2009). Developing strategies to improve trust between law enforcement and communities is therefore based on an individual's relationship with law enforcement, and their perception of law enforcement. Thus, cultural competency can be an integral part of improving social trust between law enforcement professionals and their interactions with underserved minority communities.

Neighborhood demographics and socioeconomic status.

The socioeconomic status of the communities served by police agencies and the assumptions of representative bureaucracy can also create barriers for the development of culturally competent organizations and individuals. In his study Weitzer (2000) collected data from three Washington, DC area neighborhoods examining citizen perception of black and white officers and the racial mix of officers that citizens preferred to police their communities. His findings suggest that citizens living in middle-class neighborhoods were more likely than citizens living in lower-class neighborhoods to say that black and white officers behave the same in their communities. These findings support the conception that socio-demographic factors impact individual experience and perception of law enforcement professionals. Furthermore, the

findings within the study suggests that African American citizens show a greater preference for racially mixed teams of police officers, while Caucasians expressed no preference regarding the racial make-up of the police officers serving their communities. These findings, however, do not diminish the importance of promoting a diverse workforce so that marginalized communities have the opportunity to see more “representative” police officers.

Representative bureaucracy and socialization.

The history of law enforcement policies and tactics that extensively target ethnic and minority populations are linked to institutional behaviors like racial profiling, excessive force (police brutality), and violating citizen rights. The existing research has examined the need for bureaucratic and public organizations to develop policies and structures that lead to increased representativeness between public officials and the citizens they serve. Riccucci and Sidel (1997) argue representative bureaucracy “can promote the legitimacy of government bureaucracies in that diverse communities may have a greater sense of enfranchisement when the bureaucracies that serve them (e.g., police, health, social services, etc.) are visibly diverse”. When the public service professionals that represent police agencies are more representative of the communities they serve citizens perceive that the agency is exhibiting a commitment to equality, diversity, and honesty. This further supports findings by Weitzer (2000) that were mentioned earlier in this paper.

Implementing the tenants of representative bureaucracy, however, may present some obstacles for public service organizations if active or passive representations are sought in the wrong institutional setting. Passive representation is concerned with whether the bureaucracy has the same demographic origins-sex, race, income, class, religion-as the population it serves (Mosher, 1982). Active representation is concerned with bureaucrats acting on the behalf of the

general population through policies, decisions, and programs that reflect the values translated from the population of demographic origin (Meier, 1993; Riccucci and Sidel, 1997). Throughout the research on representative bureaucracy researchers have posited that passive representation ultimately leads to active representation. The assumption is that bureaucrats of similar demographic origins to the citizens they serve (passive representativeness); will make decisions, seek policies, and implement programs that are most beneficial for the population they represent (active representativeness). Unfortunately, the existing research has shown that this assumption does not always hold true within the institutional settings of the law enforcement organizations that serve diverse communities.

In a study conducted by Wilkins and Williams (2008) racial profiling and representative bureaucracy within police departments was examined to determine if passive representation transitioned into active representation. They tested the relationship between representative bureaucracy and racial profiling by measuring the racial disparity of law enforcement vehicle stops. “We expected to find that because of the high levels of socialization, the percentage of black police officers in the division would not reduce the racial disparity in the vehicle stops for that division (Wilkins, and Williams, 2008). When socialization was included as a variable in their study they found that socialization reduced the influence of individual values on bureaucratic behavior. Specifically, formal training within police organizations coupled with professional norms, and informal expectations reduced the likelihood that officers from diverse demographic backgrounds would seek positive outcomes for citizens of similar demographic origins. Thus, the socialization of police officers both formal and informal can create pressure to assimilate to organization norms, and conform to the existing standards of behavior within an organization. Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) may help to explain why the institutional

socialization of police officers from diverse backgrounds; reduces their advocacy for favorable outcomes and policies for the diverse citizens they represent. SDO is a personality trait measuring the support that an individual gives to the dominance of certain groups over other groups based on factors such as race, sex, nationality, religion, etc. (Sidanius, and Pratto, 2001). In law enforcement SDO is often demonstrated by police preference for the social status, dominance, and coercive power over subordinate groups within a society. The authoritarian military origins of the role of police officers in society have also lead to increased preferences among law enforcement professionals for institutionalized inequality, and dominance over other citizens considered low on the social hierarchy (diverse groups).

In a study conducted by Teahan (1975a) over an 18 month period researchers studied the racial attitudes of 97 white police officers just entering the police academy, as these officers went through training their attitudes became more hostile toward blacks (Teahan, 1975a; Sidanius & Pratto, and Van Laar, 2004). Other studies have found that the institutional socialization of police officer training, specifically role playing exercises reduced the racial hostility of black officers toward whites (dominants), while increasing the racial hostility exhibited by black and white officers toward blacks and other subordinate groups (Teahan, 1975ab; Sidanius, and Pratto, 1999). This finding may be the result of scenarios that disproportionately depict subordinate groups as criminal offenders in the role playing exercises used to train police officers. In addition, the socialization of police officers that promotes “us against them” attitudes and behaviors; may explain why some culturally diverse officers identify closely with white officers and act hostile toward subordinate groups in society. These examples illustrate the need for police agencies to develop policies and programs that are sensitive to the impact that officer socialization has on police officer behaviors and attitudes toward culturally diverse groups.

Culturally competent policies within police departments, internal culture, and training programs can aid in improving the overall cultural competence levels throughout the organization. The hiring and recruitment, training and development of police officers from diverse demographic backgrounds are an essential aspect in moving toward cultural competency. The leaders of police organizations, however, must seek to develop training programs and forms of institutional socialization that do not reinforce social dominance orientation, or reduce officer identification with the diverse communities they represent. The research suggests that representative bureaucracy is an important aspect in developing a commitment to diversity, fairness, and equality however; it does not guarantee that bureaucrats from diverse origins will seek positive outcomes for citizens of similar demographic backgrounds.

In the context of college campus police departments located in rural areas the socialization of police officers is specifically important. The student populations of many college campuses located in rural areas are very diverse, especially when compared the towns, municipalities, and counties that surround these institutions. In 2012, the college located in the mid-west participating in this study had a 33 percent minority undergraduate population, and a 17 percent minority graduate student population. While the county that this school is located in had a citizen population that was 76 percent white in 2012. As the citizen populations within these rural areas are mostly Caucasian this population does not contain a large culturally diverse applicant pool for job positions within police departments. Cultural competence is relevant to managing the dynamic interactions between young culturally diverse student population, and white male dominated police forces. The proper training and socialization of these police officers can help improve service delivery and reduce the tension that exists between officers and citizens in college communities.

Cultural Competency in Law Enforcement: Identifying What Works

According to Cross (1989) cultural and linguistic competency is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations (Cross, 1989). The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2002) recognizes the disparity in services received by minorities; they argue that promoting cultural competence among health care professionals will help address barriers such as distrust of the medical community, little or no access to quality health care, and/or cultural stereotyping of patients. Similar to the service delivery barriers experienced by healthcare professionals, law enforcement agencies must discover strategies for integrating culturally competent policies in their professional community. Previous success in this area is well documented in the healthcare industry as the United States government (through various agencies) has pushed for cultural competence in the provision of health related services. These efforts can be successfully integrated into law enforcement policies and practices if organizations are willing to show a commit to strategies that promote improved cultural competence levels.

Based on the existing definitions, cultural competency in law enforcement is best defined as the collective behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in the law enforcement system, agency, and law enforcement professional, enabling each component to communicate and work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Developing and promoting cultural competency in law enforcement requires a commitment to training public service professionals willing to acquire and apply the knowledge they need to effectively serve culturally diverse communities.

The existing literature on cultural competence in the fields of health care, social services, and mental health care accept the five essential elements that contribute to the development of

the culturally competent organization or individual. These elements were identified by Cross et al., (1989) and include the following:

1. The organization or individual must value diversity;
2. The organization or individual must have the capacity for cultural self-assessment;
3. The organization or individual must be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact;
4. The organization or individual must continue to study and promote cultural knowledge; and
5. The organization or individual must develop adaptations of service delivery reflecting and understanding of diversity between and within cultures.

(Cross, et., al., 1989)

Developing cultural competency on the organizational level begins with a leadership team that recognizes the importance of tailoring information, communications, and policies to serve a diverse population. “To make a public program or public agency culturally specific, the design of the program and/or agency integrates the target group’s values, attitudes, and beliefs” (Cheng, 1996; and Rice, 2008). Part of this process involves establishing an organization structure that encourages organizational and individual development of culturally and linguistically competent attitudes and behaviors. Human resources professionals play an integral role in developing the policies and structures necessary to facilitate the recruitment, hiring, training, and development of culturally competent organization members.

According to Wyatt-Nichol and Naylor (2012) prior to establishing specific policies to move an organization toward cultural competence, it is important to conduct individual and organizational assessments to determine the current skill levels and institutional support. Therefore, police agencies interested in improving cultural competence within their organizations must have the capacity to evaluate current cultural competency levels, and demonstrate a commitment to assessing the development of these skills.

Mitchell F. Rice has conducted some of the most prominently recognized research in the area of cultural competency and public service delivery. Rice (2008) argues that public organizations may need to develop not only cultural competency programming, but also cultural competency throughout the organization. “A public agency’s cultural competency is measured by several characteristics including the racial and ethnic diversity of its staff, whether an agency’s mission statement acknowledges and supports the importance of cultural diversity, if staff are expected to receive training in cultural competency, and if the organizational environment is perceived as welcoming by the clients who use it” (Rice, 2008). Thus, developing cultural competence in law enforcement requires police agencies to seek:

- Human resource management strategies that promote diversity;
- Institutionalize and document the agencies commitment to cultural competence;
- Implement training and socialization strategies that promote a high service ethic for diverse populations;
- Commit to organizational policy assessments, and individual assessments to measure the development of cultural competence.

In his work titled “A Primer for Developing a Public Agency Service Ethos of Cultural Competency” Mitchell F. Rice lists several examples of public organizations that have successfully developed culturally competent policies, and actions. For example, the city of Phoenix offered premium pay to employees who gain certification in a second language (Kellar, 2005); The Seattle Police Department informed its officers that in many Latin American societies it is a custom for the person being pulled over for a traffic violation to get out of the vehicle and walk back to the patrol car (Benavides and Hernandez, 2007; Rice 2008). In Jacksonville, Florida the Rainbow Center for Women, Adolescents, Children, and families was recognized for its participation in annual cultural competence training sessions for employee performance measures (DHHS, 2001; Wyatt-Nichol and Naylor, 2012). These examples model culturally competent polices and information that promote cultural awareness. These policies and

actions help improve interactions between law enforcement and culturally diverse groups, ultimately improving outcomes for citizens and police agencies.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The current qualitative study seeks to identify policies that will increase the cultural competency levels of college campus law enforcement agencies. This paper will assess the current policies deployed by three college campus police departments with the following Carnegie Classifications: 1) a high research activity university located in the mid-west; 2) a very high research activity and community engaged university located in the deep-south; and 3) a private liberal arts college located in the southeast. These institutions represent college campuses located in small or rural communities developed around the establishment of the university or college.

Identification of human resources policies, training, and self-assessments that will help improve the cultural competency of college campus law enforcement is accomplished via research synthesis, cultural competency self-assessment, organizational policy assessment, and respondent interviews. The synthesis of the existing research will explore the barriers that currently hinder the ability of law enforcement professionals to develop culturally competent policies. To assess the cultural competency levels of each college campus police departments the same interview protocols and self-assessments were presented to the Chief of Police representing each institution. Based on the cultural competency self-assessment, policy assessments, the respondent interviews conducted as part of this study, and the prevailing literature examined in the research synthesis; policy recommendations will be made to help improve cultural competency throughout college campus police agencies.

Questionnaire Development

The National Center of for Cultural Competence (2006) developed the Cultural Competence and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment (CLCPA) to support community

health centers. Although developed for health administration, and other health and human services organizations the CLCPA is applied in this study as the basis for developing the self-assessment questionnaire used to measure cultural competency levels among campus police departments. The CLCPA was modified and shortened for the purpose of measuring cultural competency in the context of college campus law enforcement agencies.

The Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire developed for this study includes 23 questions measuring knowledge of diverse communities, organizational philosophy, and human resources subscales included in the CLCPA tool. For questions 1-9, and 11-15 two distinct answer response scales are used in the questionnaire. The scored portion of the assessment included 14 questions with 43 measures each worth 3 points for a maximum cultural competence score of 129. The four point response subscale in each section of the questionnaire was coded into two (2) score keys to obtain a cultural competency score for each respondent. The remaining questions included in the cultural competency self-assessment questionnaire obtain yes/ no responses, or consist of open-ended question formatting.

Questions 1-9 Knowledge of Diverse Communities.

This subscale concerns knowledge of the identified cultural groups, how they differ internally and how they differ from the dominant culture. Its central focus is organizational policy that takes into consideration cultural beliefs, strengths, vulnerabilities, community demographics and contextual realities (NCCC, 2006).

Answer Response		Score Key
Not at all	0	No Cultural Capacity
Barely	1	Lacking Cultural Awareness
Fairly well	2	Cultural Awareness
Very well	3	Demonstrates Cultural Competence

Questions 11-15 Organizational Policy and Philosophy.

The subscale involves organizational commitment to the provision of culturally and linguistically competent services and the extent to which it is legitimized in policy. It probes the incorporation of cultural competence into the organization's mission statement, structures, practice models, collaboration with consumers and community members, and advocacy (NCCC, 2006). Follow-up questions in this section ask if the police department has a policy to support each of the concepts measured in each question.

Answer Response		Score Key
Not at all	0	No Services/Policies
Sometimes	1	Limited Services/Policies
Fairly often	2	Basic Services/Policies
Very often	3	Well Established Services/Policies

Respondent Interviews

This qualitative form of data collection was selected to capture information regarding the cross cultural policies, behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of police chiefs and their police agencies. The qualitative research method is utilized in this study to enable me to explore cultural competency and the complexities that exist in adapting the currently accepted research on the topic to the context of law enforcement.

The interview population for this study was selected because of the administrative and leadership roles these professionals play in their respective police departments. The Chief of Police for each police department possesses access to the organization policies necessary to complete the cultural competency self-assessment, knowledge of agency behaviors, and awareness of the attitudes held within their police departments. The police chiefs were also presented questions measuring organizational polices to assess the current cultural competence

of each agency on the institutional level. The respondent interview portion of this study was administered via telephone for two (2) of the respondents beginning on the date of February 3, 2014, concluding on February 18, 2014. The third interview was conducted in-person during a site visit to the office of the respondent on January 31, 2014. The cultural competency self-assessment questionnaire portion of this study was conducted via email with all three (3) participants submitting their responses by February 18, 2014.

The interviewees were presented open-ended questions to further develop their responses to the closed-ended standardized questions presented in the Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire. The interview tool consists of seven questions designed to measure:

- Self-assessment: respondent understanding of cultural competency, and police chief perception of service delivery.
- Organizational policy assessment: the existence of internal hiring and staffing policies that recognize culture and diversity, and department response to cross-cultural situations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Assessing the cultural competence levels of college campus police departments is not a simplistic task when one accounts for the subjective nature of each respondent's perception of what cultural competence is and what it means for their police department. The self-assessment tools and interview questions used during the data collection process for this study were selected because they focused on organizational system structures and structural functions of police departments. According to Rice (2006) this form of self-assessment includes a focus on agency governance, administration, policy development, personnel practices, dealing with culturally biased incidents, cultural diversity and methods of service delivery. The findings of this research indicate that each police department participating in the study has numerous areas in which cultural competence policies require more comprehensive development and integration. The findings also revealed several barriers to the development and implementation of culturally competent personnel practices, and recruitment strategies limiting the representativeness of college campus police departments when compared to the communities they serve.

The self-assessment questions that were scored based upon the scales defined in the methodology section of this paper revealed that most police chiefs were aware of gaps in service delivery and policy development for specific cultural groups. The scored portion of the assessment included 14 questions with 43 measures each worth 3 points for a maximum cultural competence score of 129. Questions 1-9 assessed organization knowledge of identified cultural groups, and the existence of organization policies that consider the cultural needs of these groups. For each question the following cultural groups were identified as part of the assessment:

Table 1: Designated Cultural Groups

Designated Cultural Groups
African American/ Black
Hispanic/ Latino
Asian
Student
LGBTQ

For each question in this section of the self-assessment the respondent received points based on the existence of cultural awareness/policies that consider the needs of each designated cultural group. The self-assessment tool revealed that each college campus police department struggles to identify many of the social strengths, vulnerabilities, and contextual realities that exist among diverse populations. Although the assessment revealed weaknesses among the participants in this area, three respondents stated that their department does have the capacity to identify culturally diverse groups.

When asked: **Is your department able to identify the culturally diverse communities in your service area?** Three respondents selected answer responses Fairly Well or Very well for each designated group, while one respondent selected Not at all for the Hispanic/Latino designation, and Barely for the Asian and LGBTQ designations. These findings indicate that the presence of culturally diverse groups are often identified by police agencies, but more specific knowledge of these cultural groups and policies to address their needs require organizational development and structural integration. The highest cultural competency score received in this section of the assessment was 62/99 illustrated in Figure 1. However, some caveats should be made about the subjective nature of these scores.

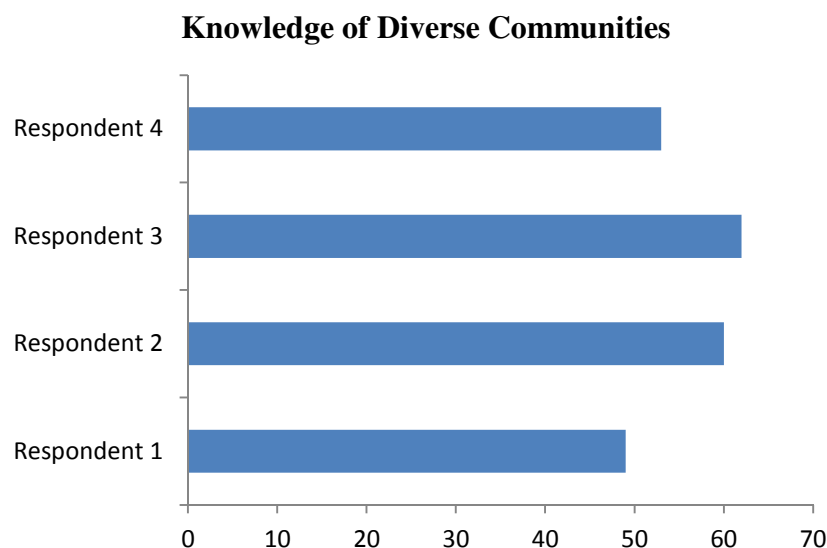


Figure 1: Knowledge of Diverse Communities
Cultural competence scores range from 0-99

First, based on the overall assessment and interview process each educational institution has a campus police department that demonstrates some level of cultural capacity, and cultural competence related policies. However, the cultural competence scores received by each police department were reduced when the specific designated cultural group variable was introduced in the self-assessment. For instance, during the interview session respondent 4 stated: “The University has a cultural diversity center, we annually have our staff receive training on the harms of bias based profiling and discrimination. In addition the Human Resource Management office gives employees diversity and sensitivity training”. This interview response demonstrates the presence of some organizational system structures that address cultural competence related issues, but these efforts may not be specific to each of the designated cultural groups measured as part of the assessment.

Second, the police chiefs that participated in this study possessed various levels of competence and understanding in the areas of cultural competence and diversity. Participant understanding of cultural competence appeared not to have impacted the cultural competence

scores received on the self-assessment, and organizational policy assessment. During the interview process interviewees are asked:

When you hear the term “cultural competency” what comes to mind?

Respondent 1: *Diversity, representation in the workforce compared to the population.*

Respondent 3: *A fairly convoluted understanding, generally associated with the ability to understand, converse and identify characteristics, information, and issues, and problems confronting various cultures.*

Respondent 4: *The coming together of attitudes, behaviors and norm that help groups work effectively different cultural be it racial, ethnic, religious or social.*

In general, the responses to this interview question generated answers that included a variety of elements respondents thought were related to cultural competency. Respondents exhibiting increased knowledge of cultural competence and organizational cultural awareness obtained similar cultural competency scores on the assessment tool as those with less knowledge of cultural competence. This finding may be a result of the small population size sampled as part of this study, causing only a minor distribution of cultural competence scores obtained by participants. However, when interviewed respondents with increased knowledge of cultural competence exhibited a greater willingness to acknowledge organizational weaknesses. In addition, the interview process revealed that the respondents with the lowest overall cultural competence scores on the assessment tool portion of the evaluation (See Figure 3) demonstrated the highest levels of cultural competence when responding to interview probes. For instance, Respondent 4 received one of the lowest overall cultural competency scores, but when probed during the interview session he gave the response listed below:

In what ways has the department addressed the ethnic and cultural needs of citizens as they receive police services? (Sensitivity to cultural differences, assurance of equitable services, language diversity)

Respondent 4: *As part of our department General Operation Orders 130: This general order establishes the Department’s position regarding the treatment of people based on race, national origin, citizenship, religion, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation. While the University Police Department currently has and enforces a policy of equal*

treatment of all persons with whom we have contact, we recognize the need to clearly define our position on this specific issue for both the community and our own employees. This response demonstrates cultural competence in the area of cultural awareness and

structural functions (service delivery). Furthermore, this interview response proves that the organization has a well-documented policy that is integrated into the organizational system structures. Respondent 3 received the highest overall cultural competence score on the assessment, but his response to the same question sharply contrasted with that of Respondent 4:

Respondent 3: If department personnel believe that ethnic and cultural issues are present and they do not feel competent to handle them, they are comfortable referring the matter to other offices on campus that can assist.

The response given by Respondent 3 does not demonstrate a high level of cultural capacity within the structures and policies of the campus police department. It should be stated that an awareness of the resources and programs available in other departments is an important part of serving the community. Nevertheless, triaging employees and citizens to other offices does not establish the presence of culturally relevant services and policies within the campus police department.

As supported by the previous examples, the interview portion of the cultural competence assessment proved to be an invaluable addition to the research conducted in this study. The implementation of the cultural competence assessment tool captured data based upon quantifiable and reliable measures used in previous cultural competency research. However, as previously stated as part of these findings each campus police chief's individual perspective of what cultural competence is, and what it means for their organization seems to have an impact on respondent answer selection. The interview process allowed respondents to answer more open-ended questions giving them the opportunity to fully convey the cultural capacity of their organization. Respondent interview answers also supplemented the responses given as part of the

cultural competence assessment tool; making it possible to identify possible issues with term conceptualization, and response consistency.

The organizational policy assessment portion of the assessment tool was also scored as part of the cultural competency audit of each police department. Questions 11-15 assess organizational philosophy evaluating the incorporation of cultural competence into the organization's mission statement, structures, practice models, and collaboration with the community. In this section of the assessment, respondents received 0-3 points on each question for a maximum cultural competency score of 30. Figure 2 illustrates the cultural competence scores obtained by each participant in the area of organizational policies and philosophy.

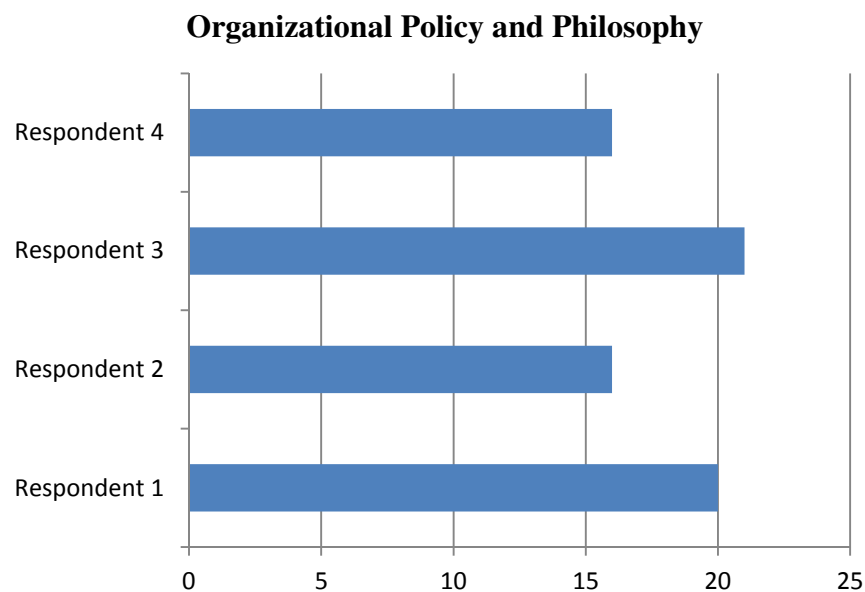


Figure 2: Organizational Policy and Philosophy
Cultural competence scores range from 0-30

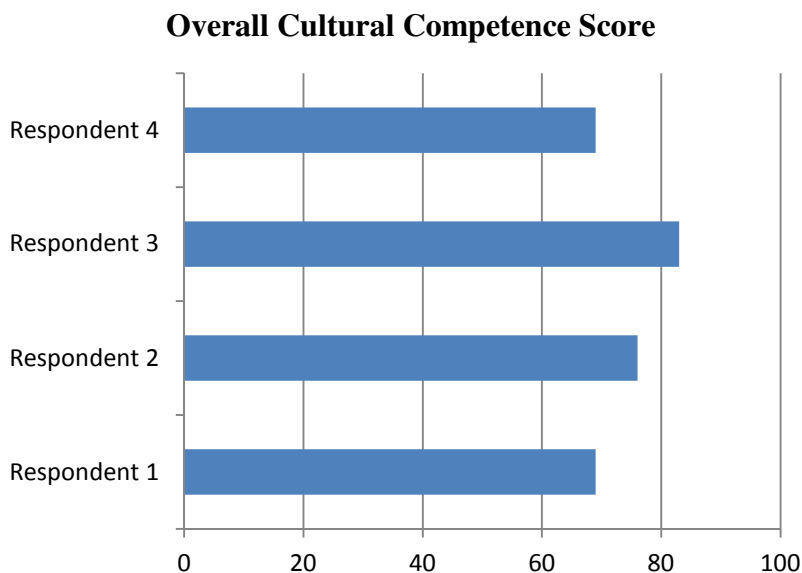


Figure 3: Overall Cultural Competence Score
Cultural competence scores range from 0-129

All respondents indicated that their police department systematically reviews department procedures to ensure that they are relevant to the delivery of culturally competent services. However, these responses were not consistent with the findings of the previous section of the assessment which identified gaps in service for designated cultural groups. Furthermore, the assessment and interview process revealed that each campus police department did not possess well developed structures and policies to ensure that the organization leadership and workforce are representative of the communities they serve.

Respondent 2 was the former chief of police for the college campus police department located in the Mid-West. His response to one of the questions included on the organizational policy assessment indicated that the department had procedures to achieve the goal of a culturally and linguistically competent workforce in the areas of staff recruitment, hiring, and promotion, but not in the area of retention. Respondent 1, the current chief of police for the same educational institution answered similarly when responding to the same question, but he

indicated that the department does have cultural capacity in the area of retention. However, when interviewed Respondent 1 gave the following response:

What if any ethnic/cultural professional programs can be developed and/or instituted at the department to attract culturally competent staff and professionals?

Respondent 1: We can redefine our recruitment policies, but we have to stay in line with state regulations. Per state regulations if I pull a test list for a police officer (applicant) I have to take the top three scores. Generally speaking this comes from people who have taken the test multiple times, and who have prior experience. That's not necessarily what I am looking for; I am looking for a well-rounded individual and someone who can represent the community, has an ethical background, and can meet the goals established by our agency.

This response represents one of the most important findings of this study, and a number of relevant observations can be drawn from the information acquired from this interview response. First, as illustrated by the answer comparison mentioned above the response selections of the former and current chief of police were consistent on the assessment tool questions measuring organizational policies and philosophy. The inconsistency in response selection in the area of retention is the result of new policy developments that occurred after the retirement of the former chief of police. This finding suggests that the respondent answers truthfully represented the policies, procedures, and philosophy of the police department.

Next, and most importantly the interview answer provided by Respondent 1 suggests that in the areas of staffing and hiring many of the culturally competent policies of the department are invalidated by state regulations. As, indicated by Respondent 1, his department seeks applicants that represent the community, but state law stipulates that he can only consider the top three applicants with the highest test scores. Thus, while a police department may possess culturally competent programs, policies, and procedures to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds; state laws may prohibit the department from considering these applicants if they do not have specific test scores. This finding further supports the need to promote cultural competence and

cultural awareness among white officers. It also supports the need to attract applicants that are culturally competent, because applicants from culturally diverse backgrounds may not possess the test scores, previous experience, and training necessary to meet state requirements to become law enforcement professionals.

Finally, this interview response reinforces the previous findings of this study that point to the importance of including open-ended questions and if possible respondent interviews when assessing an organizations cultural competency level. The assessment tool captured data based on standardized measures, and closed-ended questions that could not account for concepts that were previously unaddressed in the existing research on cultural competency. Based on these findings future researchers may want to consider the impact of existing laws and regulations on the hiring practices and representativeness of public organizations that serve diverse communities.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the overall cultural competence scores of each college campus police department suggests that improved internal structures, policy development, and service delivery procedures are necessary to develop the cultural competence levels of these agencies. It also appears that the empirical cultural competence scores captures by the assessment tool do not adequately convey the actual cultural competence level of these police departments. Lastly, the use of cultural competency assessment tools and questionnaires alone may aid in measuring the dimensions of organization behavior known to impact cultural competence. However, these tools cannot successfully expose important concepts and relationships undiscovered in previous research that impact cultural competency levels. The findings of this study reveal that interview protocols and other conversational techniques are more appropriate for extracting information that yields a well-defined picture of organizational cultural competence levels.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted with a small population of three college campus based police departments. As part of this study, four police chiefs participated in cultural competency assessments, and interviews. Respondent 2 served as a police chief for 22 years and was the former chief for one of the police departments included in this study; this respondent did not participate in the interview portion of the study for his former institution. Although his contributions were invaluable to this study not having respondent interview data from this participant limited the data available for analysis in this study. Also, the small population sampled in this study compromises the generalizability of these findings to larger populations. However, the similarity that exists between the institutions represented by the respondents makes these findings more generalizable to educational institutions located in small rural communities.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have identified several weaknesses in cultural competence among college campus police departments. These police departments currently implement policies that present gaps in services for specific designated cultural groups. Furthermore, the cultural competence assessment revealed that these agencies struggle to create an internal organizational culture and workforce that is representative of their communities. The research and literature suggests that moving these agencies toward increased levels of cultural competence will require a commitment to organizational cultural competency audits, policy development in HRM, and improved leadership understanding of cultural competence.

Leadership Knowledge

The leaders of public organizations are responsible for creating the internal culture of their organization, and developing strategies to achieve the current and future goals. As this relates to cultural competence in law enforcement the leadership of the college campus police departments examined in this study need to develop a better understanding of cultural competence. This recommendation is specifically important because without an adequate understanding of cultural competence these leaders cannot develop and enforce effective policies, and evaluate the cultural competence level of the organization and its members. Increased knowledge of cultural competence including what it means to the organization and its constituents; will allow police chiefs, human resource professionals, and other organization leaders to more effectively assess employee behavior, attitudes, and organizational capacity.

This recommendation also has important implications for serving culturally diverse communities. If organization leaders possess the knowledge they need to address cultural issues citizens throughout the community are better served. Also, as indicated in the findings of this

study improved leadership knowledge in the area of cultural competence will enable leaders to obtain an accurate picture of cultural competence levels throughout their organization.

Organization leaders should be able to properly represent their organization on cultural assessments delivered through various modes of administration. An awareness of current organization philosophy, policies, programs, and procedures will aid organization leaders in assessing current cultural competency levels. Thereby, empowering these leaders with the information they need to develop strategies to implement culturally competent policies, and administer culturally competent programs to serve culturally diverse groups throughout the community.

Organizational Cultural Competency Audits

The process of moving an organization toward becoming more culturally competent begins with an appraisal of the current conditions that exist within the organization. Organization leaders should perform an audit of organization policies, programs, printed materials, and communications. Once leaders have an understanding of the existing cultural capacity of their organization they can begin the process of assessing cultural competence. If the organization is unfamiliar with the cultural groups that are present in the community, leaders may want to perform a needs assessment to determine what cultural groups are present in the population. This approach may be important for adapting programs and services to the culture of the service population being targeted to ensure that programs and services are effective, culturally accessible, and culturally appropriate (Gorman, 1996; Malley-Morrison, and Hines, 2004; Rice, 2008). Organization leaders should be willing to work with community leaders, and other concerned constituents to determine how the organization can improve its policies, services, and procedures. After organizational cultural competency audits are performed agency leaders can

begin updating policies, programs, and procedures to cover gaps in service for identified culturally diverse groups.

Human Resources Management (HRM) Policy Development

The findings of this study point to a need for law enforcement agencies to make better use of the HRM mechanisms available within their organizations to improve organizational cultural competence. For law enforcement professionals the ability to assess the cultural competence levels of subordinates and work with HRM to develop plans to increase cultural awareness is an essential part of this process. Organization leaders must focus on developing well defined programs and policies that address the dichotomy between the internal HRM goals of recruitment, hiring, and selection verses employee training and development.

As discussed in the research synthesis recruitment and hiring for law enforcement agencies is an important phase in the employer subordinate relationship. This phase of the HRM process establishes expectations and standards, beginning the socialization of police officers and department employees. Organization leaders should work with human resource professionals to develop hiring and staffing policies that promote culturally competent attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Position announcements, job descriptions, education, and background requirements can all be adapted to help law enforcement professionals hire and select more culturally competent employees. The recruitment process is also a critical point in the staffing process where organizations can develop policies that attract more diverse applicants. Police departments can dedicate more time and resources toward community outreach to attract diverse candidates. They can also develop internship and mentoring programs that encourage people from diverse backgrounds to pursue a career in law enforcement, and help prepare these candidates for the testing process. Recruitment programs that invest in the success of diverse applicants on required

tests and examinations can increase representativeness between police departments and diverse populations.

The other side of the dichotomy that exists in the HRM process in developing cultural competence in law enforcement agencies involves training and development. The leadership of police departments must work with human resource professionals to develop policies, and training procedures that help improve the cultural competency levels of current employees. This process must also involve incorporating new employees into the organizations culture. This process will require leaders to assess the behaviors, and attitudes of current employees toward culturally diverse groups. According to Kimberly D. Hassell and Steven G. Brandl (2009) to create and maintain a diverse workforce that is hospitable, it is necessary to first be aware of officers' workplace experiences, and problems. With this understanding interventions may be developed to address these issues (Hassell, and Brandl, 2009). Leaders will need to establish new policies, and internal expectations to re-socialize individuals with low cultural competence levels.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The limited population sampled as part of this study produced data that allowed me to compare leadership knowledge of cultural competence and how it possibly impacts participant response selections. Although some comparisons between respondent answers were used within the data analysis of this study, these comparisons were not used to attribute a positive/negative appraisal of the current cultural competence levels that exist within participating police departments. It is important to remember that cultural competence levels are based on a continuum, and while an individual or organization may have low cultural competence in one area, higher levels of cultural competence can be present in other areas. Cultural competence levels are dynamic and do not remain static based upon policy shifts, and training. Organization leaders, and members must maintain a commitment to continual assessment, self-appraisal, and cultural awareness.

The recommendations included as part of this study were designed to give police departments and public service organizations a general roadmap to improving cultural competence within the organizational setting. This study did not conduct an in-depth analysis of best practices to increase cultural competence, however, based on the existing literature the recommendations are consistent with practices currently accepted within the academic community. The focus on human resource practices included throughout this study is specifically grounded in well-established theory, policies, and practices recognized throughout the literature on Human Resource Management (HRM).

Future researchers may want to focus on identifying additional barriers that inhibit the development of culturally competent policies, and programs in law enforcement. The finding within this study recognizing state mandated testing as a barrier is an example that may merit

future investigation. Unveiling barriers that obstruct the development of cultural competence is an integral aspect in moving organizations and individuals toward culturally competent public service. The methods used to investigate current cultural capacity, internal organizational culture, and the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of public servants impact the information acquired during the assessment process. This study has identified the possible need to employ mixed methods of administration to fully assess the cultural competency level of college campus police departments. This aspect of measuring cultural competency levels was shown to have an impact on the cultural competency score received by the police departments included in this study.

The findings of this study and the previous literature suggest that college campus law enforcement agencies can use cultural competence to improve public service delivery through: hiring and selecting culturally competent employees, developing policies, and programs that promote cultural and linguistic competence, and by properly socializing employees. Cultural competency assessments are useful for determining the beliefs, attitudes, and cultural capacity that exists within college campus police agencies. However, well-developed leadership knowledge of cultural competence, and a willingness to participate in conversational methods of assessing cultural competence aid in obtaining a clearly defined picture of organizational cultural competence.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX-A

Law Enforcement Cultural Competency Interview Questions

1. When you hear the term “cultural competency” what comes to mind?
2. What services and programs are available to department staff regarding ethnic/cultural related issues? (handling interactions with diverse groups of citizens/students) Can you give specific examples?
3. What, if any ethnic/cultural professional programs can be developed and/or instituted at the department to attract culturally competent staff and professionals?

Are internships targeted toward ethnic professionals?

Mentoring programs?

What are the challenges in developing and delivering these programs?

4. In what ways has the department addressed the ethnic and cultural needs of citizens as they receive police services? (sensitivity to cultural differences, assurance of equitable services, language diversity)
5. What are the greatest strengths of the department in regard to the delivery of police services and interactions with the multi-ethnic/cultural populations of this community?
6. What are the biggest concerns of the department in regard to the delivery of police services and interactions with the multi-ethnic/cultural populations of this community?
7. Do have any additional information you would like to share that you feel may be pertinent to the research I am conducting?

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Research Paper Title:

Cultural Competency in Law Enforcement: Assessing Cultural Competence Levels
among College Campus Police Departments

Major Professor: Dr. Randolph Burnside