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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TACTICAL DECISION-MAKING IN
NORTH CAROLINA POLICE OFFICERS

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Factors That Influence Tactical Decision-Making In
North Carolina Police Officers

By

Warren Dukes

A Thesis

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE TACTICAL DECISION-MAKING IN NORTH CAROLINA POLICE OFFICERS

BY

Warren Dukes

This research project was formulated through a research internship through the North Carolina Justice Academy in Salemburg, North Carolina. The purpose of this research was to explore concepts determined influential on decision-making in police officers during tactical response situations. Data for the study was collected via survey instrument to 855 police officers statewide. A total of 52 police agencies were randomly selected for participation in the study.

For the purpose of this study, tactical decision-making was defined to be incidences in which police officers must apply force to resolve a particular situation. It is important to understand the causal factors that motivate police officers to act in tactical response situations. Understanding the causal factors is important because this information will serve useful in determining training requirements for police officers to increase their safety while on calls.

Results from data analyses indicated four of the five main hypotheses were found not significant. More specific, level of commitment to police department, level of identification to police subculture, and political and religious beliefs of police officers

were not significantly related to the dependent variable police officers comfort in tactical training received. The research did however find three independent variables to be significant. The three variables are military experience of police officers, branch of military experience, and tactical response training of police officers. Further research is recommended to determine effects of these significant variables on police officer decision-making.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research project developed from a research internship through the North Carolina Justice Academy in Salemburg, North Carolina. The objective of the project is to explore determinants that could influence the tactical decision-making in North Carolina police officers during tactical response situations. By tactical decision-making, we are referring to incidences in which police officers must apply force to resolve a particular situation. Tactical force used by police officers includes pepper spray application, use of black jack, hand-to-hand combat, or use of a firearm. Police officers receive training in their respective police academy on use of force and when force is necessary to take control of a situation. Police officers also receive training in determination for which type force is applicable for specific situation.

Currently, there is limited research done to explore the various influences that can affect police officers' decision to use force, or their determination of which force application is sufficient for a given situation. This research is the first phases to explore some of the concepts determined important influences to police officer decision-making. The concepts we are measuring in this research are police officer's commitment to their police department, police officer's level of identification to the police subculture, and political and religious beliefs or prejudices of the individual officer.

In recent years, police agencies across the nation have been greatly scrutinized by media reports of police misuse of force and police corruption. The American media has painted a picture for the public of police agencies embedded with racial discriminatory practices on minority groups that are victims of police brutality. As these reports are

generated, police officers across the nation seek to overcome these stigmas to successfully accomplish their agency's objectives. It is easy to understand how the stress on police officers accumulates to the point where their judgement's becomes obscured. Some research examining stress on police officers have explored the effects of role conflict as it relates to police officers performance. What is needed is further research to probe more in depth to examine the decision-making determinates of police officers.

Other media reports that prompted this research initiative are the many reports of police officers across the nation struck down while in the line of duty. In 1998, a total of six law enforcement officers in the state of North Carolina were killed during the performance of their duties. These numbers compare with national figures of police officers killed across the nation both on duty and off. The years of experience of the police officer forms certain instincts that aid in detecting dangerous situations and individuals. These instincts are called on by the police officer for their protection while on duty. At some point in the police officer's career, the officer compromises these instincts and eventually jeopardizes his safety. More research initiatives are needed to determine factors that cause police officers to relax their instincts thus compromising their safety while on duty.

This research initiative is important for several reasons. First, this research will be important in discovering areas in the procedures used by these police officers for corrected improvements. Of additional importance is the potential this research will provide for training assessments at the North Carolina Justice Academy to determine training needs of police officers in North Carolina. Finally, the data obtained through the

survey instruments can be further explored for future research of North Carolina police officers.

Problem Statement

This research will identify the factors that influence tactical decision-making among North Carolina police officers. It is important to understand the causal factors that motivate police officers to act in tactical response situations. Understanding the causal factors is important because this information will serve useful in determining training requirements for police officers to increase their safety while on calls.

For the purpose of this research, tactical decision-making will be defined as the decision of police officers to use force, and the amount of force necessary to effect a desired outcome. More specific, police officer tactical decision-making will involve a police officer's use of a weapon (i.e. pepper spray, firearm, or self-defense) to effect an arrest. Police officers are given the legal right to use force in performing their duties as authorized by police department guidelines. The level of escalation in a particular incident determines the type of force applied by police officers that could result in unarmed self-defense to deadly force.

The significance of this study is to identify factors that contribute to tactical decision-making among police officers, and to explore how these decisions affect issues such as quality of life as it pertains to the individual officer, society, and the police profession as a whole. Understanding decision-making factors of police officers will provide predictors in determining areas of concern for department managers to best provide training to their officers for controlling unlawful tactical responses. Also, these predictors can be used to further study the complexity of police work to assist police

officers in coping with various stressors that could jeopardize their safety during tactical response situations. If nothing were done to explore the dynamics of police officer tactical decision-making, these officers would go unimpeded and continue such acts that may pose a greater risk to society, to the police officer himself, and fellow police officers.

Purpose of the Study

According to Vincent (1979), in his book Policeman, a police officer “must have common sense, good judgement, be able to take charge in crisis situations, and, of course, display courage and bravery when the occasion demands” (Vincent, 1979: 36). As Yarmey (1990) states, “the ideal officer has been described as being mature, emotional, stable, reliable, and self-reliable, and able to take initiative and responsibility; as having personal integrity and being free of disruptive prejudice; as displaying professional traits of knowledge, dedication, and commitment to law enforcement” (Yarmey, 1990: 30). The profession of police officer is one of the most complex, legal organizations within society. As suggested by Yarmey and Vincent, the characteristics of a good police officer require the candidate to possess exceptional personal character. Each new police officer must possess the mental and physical capabilities to be accepted in an organization at times not well received by society as a whole. The ideal police officer is not born but he/she is molded into the professional officer to represent the values and nature of their respective departments. Yarmey (1990) states, “although these characteristics are relevant to some extent, what is left unsaid is that recruits are selected and socialized toward the ‘ideal’ if they can fit into both the formal police organization and the police subculture” (Yarmey, 1990: 30).

Police agencies throughout the nation are subjected to a great deal of criticism primarily resulting from media coverage of incidences of police violence on citizens. Reports of police corruption in isolated areas will impact all police organizations, as well as police officers across the country. Isolated incidences as the March 3, 1991 Rodney King beating at the hands of four Los Angeles police officers perpetrated negative images of the police profession in the general public. A more recent event involving the horrific beating of a Haitian immigrant by four New York City police officers in January 1998, heightened the awareness of problems within the police organization. Social science researchers and interested politicians aware of these situations question the oversight of police officers that allow these incidents to occur. Police use of force in perceived tactical incidences are guided by the interpretations of police policy by the police officer, yet, the ramifications of these acts are far reaching.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the research proposal will explore relevant literature, concepts, and strategies that will help to explain the factors that influence tactical decision-making of police officers. In our discussion of these factors, we will define and critique each factor and strategy as they relate to police officer decision-making. This section will also discuss the independent variables that are used to explain police officer decision-making which are level of commitment to the police organization, level of identification to the police subculture, and common beliefs and prejudices of the individual police officers.

Police Officer Tactical Decision-Making

MacNamara and Riedel (1974) describe three areas they consider as major criticisms of the police. They include (1) their failure or inability to meet their overall responsibility for crime and delinquency prevention and control, (2) to provide for the maintenance of order, (3) and to provide such other controls, protections and public protections which have been traditionally allocated to the police (MacNamara and Riedel, 1974). MacNamara and Riedel (1974), goes on to state, “these three areas of negative police evaluation are frequently related to allegations of police corruption, police brutality, discrimination against minorities and violations of due process” (MacNamara and Ridel, 1974:1).

Jerry Bornstein (1993), in his book Police Brutality: A National Debate, mentions “police brutality is not a new phenomenon in American society” (Bornstein, 1993: 25).

Bornstein continues by stating that while allegations of police brutality are often linked to racial incidences, the problem has not historically been an issue of race, but economics (Bornstein, 1993). According to Bornstein, “the violence that police had to deal with has been prevalent where poor people live” (Bornstein, 1993: 25).

Information provided by McNamara, Riedel, and Bornstein provide a basis to understanding the dynamics of police officer tactical decision-making and relevance of this study. The three criticisms of the police as explained by McNamara and Riedel (1974) indicate criticisms that contribute to public dissatisfaction of police and the potential outcomes of these dissatisfactions which are police corruption, police brutality and violations of due process. Bornstein (1993), in conjunction with McNamara and Riedel (1974) indicate these problems of the police are not necessarily racially oriented but links the problems to economics. Police officers working in low economically developed communities are more prone to allegations of police brutality during incidences of tactical response. Citizens living in these communities will perceive any act of force by police on them as unnecessary force and discriminatory. Thus, police officers should be aware of the potential damage that could erupt from tactical response in these communities. This is not to suggest police officers should create separate treatments in enforcing the law on different economic groups. But, by understanding the sensitive areas in dealing with the various groups in society, police officers should ensure any use of force they apply are in regulations with department policy to eliminate potential legations.

Carl B. Klockars (1985), in his book The Idea of Police, suggests the police cannot be satisfactorily defined in terms of its ends, yet, a proper definition of it must be

based on its means (Klockar, 1985). Klockar continues to say police “must be based on the fundamental tool police use to do their work rather than what they use that tool to do” (Klockar, 1985: 9). In general terms, the objective of effective police work is not measured by the end results of the objectives, but most important is the steps taken in achieving the objective. In terms of tactical police operations, Klockar would suggest that for any tactical situation, the important factor to a successful completion would be the actions taken by the officer. In seeking an exhaustive mean to distinguish police, Klockar (1985) mentions coercive force. Klockar (1985) explains “at no point has there ever existed, nor is it possible to conceive of a genuine police ever existing, that does not claim the right to compel other people forcibly to do something” (Klockar, 1985: 10). With this established, Klockar (1985) defines police in the modern state as “institutions or individuals given the general right to use coercive force by the state within the states domestic territory” (Klockar, 1985: 12).

Police officer’s use of coercive force is most evident during incidences of tactical response. Police management assures the legitimate use of coercive force by their officers through proper tactical training and procedures authorized by department policy. As new officers enter into the police department, they are expected to perform according to the values and beliefs of the police department they serve. Thus, the environment of the police department’s culture is the first social experience the officer will have upon entering the department.

To further explore the factors/concepts that affect police officer tactical decision-making, police department culture, and police subculture will be discussed. It is the premise of this research study that a police officer’s bond with their police department,

i.e. identity to department values, beliefs, and management, will guide the officer's tactical decision-making during incidences of tactical response. Likewise, an officer's level of identification with the police subculture and low organizational commitment to the police department will serve as guiding influences on the officer's tactical decision-making during incidences of tactical responses.

The Police Department Culture

As it was mentioned earlier, the culture of the police department is the first influences a new police officer will experience when first entering the police profession. The new officer will be trained according to the requirements of the police department for which he/she will serve. To better understand the composition of police culture, we will begin by exploring basic concepts to explain the dynamics of this composition.

George Herbert Mead (1938), in his book The Philosophy of the Act, mention the term perspectives as being more important than values in the individual in guiding their actions (Mead, 1938). Mead (1938), according to Lauffer (1985), observed that when people face problematic situations, they attempt to develop coordinated views to guide their actions (Lauffer, 1985: 131). Lauffer (1985) also suggests that when people go to work they bring with them different perspectives which are based on earlier experiences, and, to a larger extent, on our identification with others whose opinions we value (Lauffer, 1985). According to this distinction of perspectives, when people are faced with a situation that require a certain action, they consider the response of those whom they respect of whether they would approve or disapprove of the action. In reference to the new officer in the department, after initial training in accordance to police department

policy and regulation, the officer will reflect back to that training and the expectations of his department management of his actions.

These reflections of the officer's before their actions lead to what Lauffer (1985) refers to as short term and long term perspectives. According to Lauffer (1985), there are three branches of short-term perspectives. The first branch is defined as the initial phase when the police officer is determined to learn everything he/she can about being a police officer. In this stage, it can be assumed the officer is more assertive and demanding of himself in doing all that is right to gain the competence of department management.

The second stage of short-term perspective as is the intermediate phase. In this stage, the police officer's main objective is to satisfy his supervisor. In reference to police officers, it is suggested the police officer may have come to the realization that his persistent diligence in trying to do an exceptional job to gain competence of department management does not impact management at all. The officer then focuses his attention on his supervisor in whom his actions will have a direct impact where he can receive immediate gratification.

The third phase of short-term perspectives is the final phase. In this phase, the officer begins to feel he just want to fit in with the organization. Quite possibly, the police officer begins to feel that he is just another officer in the police organization and looks to assimilate into the accepted norms of the organization.

In contrast to the different phases of short-term perspectives, the long-term perspective reveal the police officer has a desire to be the best police officer he/she can possibly become. It can be assumed the police officer is initially satisfied with his/her career choice as police officer and foresees a long career with the organization.

Lauffer (1985) makes the general distinction between values and perspectives when he mentions “whereas values may lead to a general predisposition that we may choose to ignore in a given situation, perspectives contain judgements about specific situations and tend to lead to action” (Lauffer, 1985: 132). Lauffer (1985) continues by stating

The emergence of perspective leads to a body of collective understanding that influence the behavior of people in specific roles. When the perspectives that people hold are related to the position they hold in an organization, we can say that an organizational culture is emerging. As a matter of fact, it may result in two cultures: a “management culture”, and a “worker culture” (Lauffer, 1985: 133).

Lauffer (1985) also suggests agency culture or cultures take on characteristics of their own. Accordingly, the culture informs people subtly about the rights and privileges they possess and the duties and obligations associated with particular positions. Also, it was suggested while the culture may be influenced by the work situation, it also tends to be influenced by external factors: norms, values, and ethics inherent in the profession to which the majority or dominant staff members belong, and the larger societal culture.

Lauffer (1985) continues his discussion of organizations by stating like other professions and occupations, organizations develop their own cultures, complete with taboos, folkways, and mores. According to Lauffer (1985),

The organization or the units within it will develop collective feelings and beliefs about the appropriate way to do things and pass these to group members. Perspectives developed in the past are imposed on those who enter the organization or the unit within it. Thus the culture of each organizational unit provides a frame of reference within which members interpret the appropriateness of certain activities and actions (Lauffer, 1985: 137).

John Kleinig (1996), in his discussion of police culture defines the culture as being separate of any other organizational culture. He referred to the police organization as being a culture in itself that is alienated from society that also has varying differences between “management culture” and “street cop culture”. According to Kleinig (1996), police tend to have diminished social contracts with the community they serve, they become alienated from it and a “us-them” mentality develops (Kleinig, 1996). To compensate for their alienation from society, there are features of the police culture to reinforce the police officer’s identification with each other. As mentioned by Kleinig (1996), whether or not police actually spend a great deal of time in high-risk situations, much in police socialization emphasizes the dangers of police work, and the need for mutual dependence (Kleinig, 1996, 69). Also, police officers quickly learn there is no better friend than another cop, especially a partner, who believes that there is nothing a cop won’t do for his partner. Kleinig (1996) defines the bond of police culture when he writes:

an intense loyalty develops which finds expressions not only in acts of great heroism, even recklessness, on behalf of another cop, but also in the notorious ‘blue wall of silence’ that shields miscreant cops behind the ‘ignorance’, or lies of their fellows (Kleinig, 1996: 69).

Both Lauffer (1989) and Kleinig (1996) assist in defining the dynamic compositions of organizations. From these two authors, we can begin to understand the various networks that operate inside organizations to create bonds among organizational members. Lauffer (1989) first introduced the term perspectives as the initial bonding of an individual to an organization. This is important because the initial commitment of the individual to the organization can be used to determine particular behaviors of the

individual on the job. It can be suggested an individual characterized as having long-term perspectives as it was defined will prove to be more committed to the organization than individuals of short-term perspectives. Therefore, police officers that are hired into the police organization determined on a long-term career are suggested to have greater commitment to the police agency they are employed.

Kleinig (1996) determined the police organization to be a culture itself alienated from the rest of society that has both management and street cop cultures operating within. This view provides us with the first interpretation of a second culture operating within the main organizational culture. Also, we are able to see the bond that is created between police officers when they become apart of the police culture as they identify with the “us-them” mentality.

Goel (1993), in his discussion on ethical policing, states the as police officers are promoted in the police hierarchy, he is evaluated by more officers within the police department along with his becoming more visible to the public. When police officers are promoted, whatever they do has an impact not only on the welfare of the public, but also on the conduct and behavior of subordinate officers. According to Goel (1993) the officer’s example “encourages” or “inspires” subordinate officer to act in a similar way to the way he has in a particular situation (Goel, 1993: 21). For this reason, police officers not only have obligations to the public, but to his subordinate officers as well due to the significant influence he has on the officers serving under him.

The unique characteristic of the police culture was generated in large by the structure of the police organization. The very nature of police work, as the overseer of societal laws puts the police organization in natural opposition to the society they are

sworn to serve. Thus, the police organization has become alienated from society as explained by Kleinig. This alienation of the police organization from society forms the culture of the police organization as a quasi-military structured rank-order unit with higher standards than any organization in society, and well-defined policies and procedures as guidelines for the members of the organization.

The police culture, whether it is found in a small police organization (less than 50 officers), or large organization (more than 50 officers) is predicted to have the same characteristics among its officers. As new officers come into the organization, they will eventually leave the formal training they learned in law enforcement training and take on the informal training of the police organization as to what is accepted as organization behavior.

Police Subculture

Some researchers have referred to the police department and its officers as a police family where the values and ideas of the police family shape the actions of each member. Arthur and Elaine Niederhoffer (1978), in their book Police Family, contend all police families-happy or unhappy-are like one another, patterned by the lathe of the police occupation... they dwell in the shadow of the job (Niederhoffer and Niederhoffer, 1978: 1). The rules and accepted behaviors of members in the police family are outlined in the department's formal ethical codes. These codes establish a family of professional police officers dedicated to the moral and ethical standards of the police family they represent. Even though these codes are widely adopted, there is some question as to their relevance to some police officers (Pollock-Byrne, 1989: 73). Pollock-Byrne continues by

insisting “one of the most resistant to the adoption of and allegiance to a formal code of ethics is the police subculture” (Pollock-Byrne, 1989: 74).

One element to influence police officers likelihood to identify with the police subculture is the relationship shared with department administrators. A strained relationship could occur between police officers and department managers if the officers do not feel support from department managers concerning their careers, or are not objective to their suggestions for job improvements. This perceived lack of support increasing risk the officer will identify with the informal police subculture. Haynes (1978) supports this fact during his discussion of professional demands of police officers when he states,

frequently the patrolman has little or no contact with the decision-making echelon of his department and the consequent lack of communication leads to misunderstanding on both sides... the patrolman feels he has little or no voice in policies which may well affect his survival, while all too often the hierarchy tends to ignore the officer on the street” (Haynes, 1978: 17).

Consequently, the patrolman that is isolated by his situation from the public and his supervisors, often feel he has nowhere to turn (Haynes,1978). Thus the feeling of isolation from the public and department managers encourages the bond of the police officer to the police subculture where he identifies with other officers with similar perspectives as his own.

Additionally, in his discussion of subcultures, Lauffer (1985) suggests within limits, it is possible for a single organization to develop a number of subcultures, so long as they reflect the general norms, and values of the larger system (Lauffer, 1985: 137). Also, subcultures may be influenced by the types of people the organization attracts, it's

work processes, physical layouts, modes of communication, and the exercise of authority within the system (Lauffer, 1985).

As police officers begin to identify with the police subculture, that identity will become the dominant, influential factor for job performance replacing those of the police department. If the police department is unstable, or has weak oversight of the actions of its police officers, the officer will perceive the acts of the police subculture as normal. Police subculture was chosen as an independent variable in order to show the behaviors of police officers are first formed in the police department where these officers work and through the process of socialization the officers accept the values and beliefs of the police subculture which are reinforced by others.

Further insight into the police subculture is provided by Pollock-Byrne (1989) as she suggests some elements of the police value system are inconsistent with the high ideals of the police codes. Some common themes of police attitudes as defined by Pollock-Byrne are first, loyalty to colleagues is essential; and second, the public, or most of all, is the enemy (Pollock-Byrne, 1989). Most important, and relevant to this research, the values of police officers include the use of force, discretion, and a protective use of the truth. While exploring the concept of police officer tactical decision-making, some common themes discovered in various literature are police use of force, police discretion and police officers protective use of the truth. The commitment the police officer has to either the police organization or the police subculture will have significant influences on these factors. This research suggests that police officers that are committed to the police organization will behave differently on issues as use of force, discretion and protective use

of the truth than police officers who identify with the police subculture especially during incidences of tactical response.

Even greater insight into the dynamics of police subculture is provided by Armstrong and Cinnamon (1976) when they state the processes of the police subculture continue to influence a policeman's behavior when he is not in the immediate presence of his peers (Armstrong and Cinnamon, 1976). The values of the police subculture is determined to be a great influence on police officers to impact their actions while performing their duties outside the presence of the other officers. It is this influence on police officers that this researcher has determined to be greater than the influence of the police organization. Thus, during moments of tactical response, police officers that respond to these incidences that are influenced by the subculture and its values will perform their actions in accordance to the values and beliefs of the dominant influence.

Armstrong and Cinnamon (1976) define these influences further when they write:

the creation and reinforcement of these group processes appear to operate more strongly on two occasions; one is during the assembly period at the beginning of each shift; the other occurs during spontaneous gathering of police officers following an incident of an especially dangerous or emotionally arousing nature (Armstrong and Cinnamon, 1976, 108).

This is not to suggest that each tactical response of these officers will result in police misconduct of the responding officers, nor does it suggest that in all cases, police subcultures are inherently bad. The nature of police work creates an environment where police officers must depend on their fellow officers to save their lives in the event of dangerous tactical incidences. It is natural for individuals in such work environment to bond on the pretense of dependency to those they trust for protection. The police subculture then serves as a positive influence to these officers because they will best be

able to perform their tasks with assurance their fellow officers will protect them in the time of danger.

A primary assertion of this study is the hypothesis that police officers' level of organizational commitment to their respective department will govern their actions during tactical situations. In relative terms, the linkage between the police officer to the police department will serve as the control enforcement to govern the actions of police officers when performing their duties. To make this assertion of police officer-police department linkage a major element of this linkage, commitment, must be explored. The concern here is the types of links the police officers have to police organizations, and the strengths of these links.

The linkage between police officer's and their police department is jeopardized when the officer begins to identify with the police subculture. It is at this moment when the standard operations and procedures guidelines outlined by the department are compromised. Barker and Roebuck (1974) refer to such actions as deviant acts when the formal and informal guidelines of the police department are in conflict with those of the police subculture. According to Barker and Roebuck (1974),

acts proscribed by formal departmental police administrative rules, law, regulations, and policies, as well acts proscribed by informal operating procedures, are also deviant because they transgress norms proscribed by the group to which the law enforcement officer belongs and swears allegiance (Barker and Roebuck, 1974: 5).

It can be assumed that police officers who associate with other officers in the department with deviant intentions will be less likely to conform to those deviant acts if the officer has close attachments to the values of the department. In other terms, police officers attachment to the values, and beliefs of the department defined by department

administrators are unlikely to be influenced by acts of fellow officers that are inconsistent with the values of the department. If, however, police officers have stronger identification with the police subculture, it will be assumed the officer has a weak association with department policies and procedures to guide decision-making. It is the premise of this study that the police officers' attachment to either their police departments' ideals, beliefs, and values, as well as their beliefs in these policies, will cause a weak association of these officers in the police subculture, thus guiding their influence in tactical decisions. Likewise, police officers strong association with the police subculture will weaken the bond police officers have in the police department and influence these police officers in their decision-making.

Employee Job Satisfaction

In their book, Employee-Organization Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism, and Turnover, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) define two categories of employee-organization linkages. The first linkage they define is membership status, which they define as the acts of joining, and staying or leaving an organization (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982). According to the concept of membership status, as further explained by Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) if an individual is fully connected in terms of membership status it would mean that he or she has joined the organization, is not absent, and has not left the organization.

The other category of linkage mentioned reference to the quality of membership that would include such terms as loyalty, attachment, involvement, and commitment. For the purpose of this research, quality of membership as discussed by Mowday, Porter,

and Steers (1982) will be explored in this study. More specific, the concept of employee commitment to the organization will be discussed in detail to determine whether a police officer's commitment to the police organization will influence their tactical decision-making.

Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) begin their discussion by asserting various studies have repeatedly shown commitment to be an important factor in understanding the work behavior of employees (Mowday, Porter, and Steers: 1982). Three reasons are listed to why organization commitment has received much attention. First, the theory underlying commitment suggests that an employee's commitment to the organization could serve as a very reliable predictor of certain behaviors. Further explained, committed people are thought to be more likely to remain with the organization and to work toward organizational goal attainment (Mowday, Porter, and Steers: 1982). Second, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) suggests the concept of organization commitment is appealing to both managers and behavioral scientists where the interest is enhancing employee commitment (1982). Finally, an increased understanding of commitment may help us comprehend the nature of more general psychological processes by which people choose to identify with objects in their environment and to make sense out of this environment (Mowday. Porter, and Steers, 1982).

In their discussion on job choice factors, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) discussed several researches that have attempted to identify those circumstances surrounding the selection of a job that are likely to lead to a high commitment to the choice. They discuss the findings concluded by Salancik (1977) where he identified several important characteristics of behaviors to make people committing to their job.

The first characteristic identified states the decision or behavior must be explicit... the act is unequivocal and observable by others. Second, the choice must be difficult to revoke or change. The final characteristic states the decision or choice must be freely engaged in (Mowday, Porter, and Steers: 1982: 53). Furthermore, freedom of choice is increased when the individual has several alternatives from which to choose and there is limited external pressure to choose one alternative over another (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982). The important point gained from this realization is that when job choices are characterized by these factors, individuals will become behaviorally committed to their decision and will develop more positive attitudes toward their chosen job in an effort to justify their decision.

The information suggests people are more committed to their job when they without outside influence chose the job they are to be affiliated and will work toward attaining the goals and objectives of the job. In contrast, when the people are limited in their job choice and work within a organization they are not able to fully identify they are less committed to the organization and organizational goals. As further explained by Amitai Etzioni (1961), in his book A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations writes, when participants are alienated from the organization they are less likely to identify with its representatives than if they are committed to it (Etzioni, 1961: 83).

In looking more in depth to the subject of employee job satisfaction, Edward E. Lawler III (1973) in his book Motivation in Work Organizations insists that job factors could be classified according to whether the factors contribute primarily to satisfaction, or to dissatisfaction. In his research, Lawler III found that different job factors influence employee feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Factors determined to influence job

satisfaction are achievement recognition, the work itself, and responsibility were mentioned in connection with satisfying experiences. As for influences of job dissatisfaction they include factors as working conditions, interpersonal relations, supervision and company policy (Lawler III, 1973).

The research concluded the only way satisfaction can be increased is by effecting changes in achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, company policy and administration, supervision-technical, salary, interpersonal relations-supervision, and working conditions.

As for police officers job satisfaction, it can be inferred these same factors will be important for increasing job satisfaction in the police organization. Every employee, no matter their profession has the need to feel important in the organization with recognition from their superiors of their contributions and achievements. The structure of the police organization does not always allow for police officers to receive recognition, nor does it allow for rapid advancement within the organization. The extreme nature of police work places a great deal of responsibility on the police officer which in turn gives a sense of self-worth to the organization and the society in as a whole. Thus, the elements for increased job satisfaction as discussed above are readily available in the police organization. Police management must ensure ethical and provincial means for their officers to grow within the organization and feel secure in the organizations commitment to their advancement.

Employer-Employee Relationship

Important to the police organization are the relationships between the police officers to each other, and the relationship they share with department management. The cohesion of these relationships will aid the organization in working towards organizational goals and objectives. As with any organization that is composed of individuals with varying perspectives and beliefs, various forms of organizational strain can occur in the relationships of the police organization. Police managers should be concerned with any problems that may arise between police officers, and problems the officers may have with management.

Police management and subordinate relationships can be defined on three levels, which are (1) management-line officer, (2) supervisor-line officer, and (3) and management-supervisor relationships. The basic structure of the police organization and the nature of their work will create challenges to each level in maintaining positive relationships.

Hirschhorn and Barnett (1993), in their book, The Psychodynamics of Organizations, refer to employer-employee relationship as superior-subordinate relationships, and a managerial couple. They begin their discussion of this relationship by insisting through this primary interpersonal link, the delegation of work along with division of labor, and accountability are all realized (Hirschhorn and Barnett, 1993). Also, together both members of the managerial couple must accomplish a job, but neither can control that job individually... therefore, each must trust each other while coping with feelings of dependence on the other” (Hirschhorn and Barnett, 1993: 3).

According to Hirschhorn and Barnett (1993), every managerial couple shares two features that distinguish it from other kinds of couples which are (1) every managerial couple contains a hierarchical boundary, (2) and a superior's accountability for a subordinate's performance (Hirschhorn and Barnett, 1993). The latter was explained to be simultaneously the curse and blessing of the arrangement. They explain this statement when they write,

on one hand, it enables organizations to adhere to a primary mission and to multiply effort efficiently through successive levels of delegation and accountability. On the other, it ties the subordinate and manager together in an emotionally charged, interdependent bond: they need each other to succeed (Hirschhorn and Barnett, 1993: 6).

One aspect of consideration to affect employer-employee relations is conflict between staff and line personnel. Richard Hall (1982), in his book Organizations: Structure and Process, analyzes staff-line relationships and the conflicts that occur between them. They found that these personnel are in rather constant conflict with management in several particular areas. One of the areas of conflict involved age disparity between staff personnel and management. In this area, age disparity created conflict where the staff personnel tended to be younger. Another area of conflict relates to education level. Conflict occurred where staff personnel tended to have more formal education than management in these instances. Other areas of conflict occurred when staff personnel were found to be more concerned with proper dress and manners, and be more theoretically oriented than the line managers.

These exact factors can operate to produce conflict between younger staff-line police officers and veteran managers of police departments. After formal police training,

the young officer will come into the department with a clean cut professional police mentality that was bestowed upon him while in the academy of the ideal professional police organization. These traits are noticed in all military and quasi-military organizations and their new members. The training regiments stress professionalism at all times including formal etiquette in professional appearance, manner of conduct and job performance. When these new officers are then released into their respective organization they expect every officer and manager in the department to have the similar professional traits they were given during training. Conflict occurs when their expectations are not met and they are dissatisfied with those in the organization that does not exhibit professional qualities.

Within the police organization, staff managers such as the lieutenants and higher echelons who are in conflict with line officer supervisors will create a chain of conflict to include the line officers. As discussed earlier, managerial couples work and interact within a group context and are therefore profoundly influenced by the group's dynamics. Therefore, a variety of systemic and group-level dynamics can cause managers and subordinates to regress rendering the individuals of the managerial couple even more vulnerable to disabling forces (Hirschhorn and Barnett, 1993). A strain in the relationship in any of the three levels of the police organization will effect relations in the entire organization. Thus, conflict between staff and line personnel will affect the quality of decisions by the officers during their performance of duty.

Employee-employer relationship was discussed to explore how the dynamic composition of this relationship can influence job performance of the employee, the employee's level of commitment to the organization, and to relate this dynamic

relationship to police officers experiences within the police organization. This relationship in conjunction with information offered in the sections discussing job satisfaction, police subculture, and department culture correlate with each other in understanding the dynamic composition of organizational cultures and how these cultures can adversely influence employees. Organizational cultures are within themselves extremely complex at every level of the chain of command. A strained relationship between employers and their employees will greatly enhance the web of complexion in the organization thus affecting organization goal attainment. Police department managers should employ open door policy for improved relations within the police organization to decrease sentiments of isolation that are common among police officers. Employer-employee relationships within police departments are the first steps in creating an effectively operating police agency as well as increased departmental accountability of their police officers.

Affects of Community-Policing on this Study:

This study discussed factors considered relevant influences on police officers tactical decision-making. In our discussion, particular concepts were identified as being significant influences on police officers during the performance of their duties. These concepts were used to explore various aspects of the independent variables measured in this study which are police officer level of commitment to the police department, police officer level of identification to the police subculture, and individual political and religious influences of the police officers. The literature obtained for this study that addressed these concepts measuring the independent variables addressed the more

traditional idea of policing. Therefore, it is relevant that we explore the affects of these concepts in terms of community-policing to determine differences and increase the validity of this study.

Community-policing was introduced as a contemporary new approach to policing that employed historical ideas to the nature of police work that suggest police departments must be more responsive and connected to the communities in which they serve. At the core of community-policing is the idea that the nature of policing is a broad problem-solving network that include more than reactive law enforcement that suggest line police officers on the streets and in the community should play a major role in the process (Weisheit, Wells, & Falcone, 1994). Though inherently this is no single defined approach to community policing which is mostly dependent on the type of department it is employed, the ideas are similar. Much of community-policing is derived from concepts of total quality management which concerns reducing layers of bureaucracy within organizations, empowering line employees to made faster decisions, and responsiveness to the customers (Weisheit, Wells, & Falcone, 1994). These components align other purposes of community-policing to include concerns of social order that is most productive where police-citizens cooperation is essential for job effectiveness.

Three broad themes can be suggested of community-policing:

1. The police are accountable to the communities as well as the formal police hierarchy.
2. Police will become more connected with and integrated into their communities which means the police will interact with citizens on a personal level, will be familiar with community sentiments and concerns and will work with the community to address these concerns.
3. Police will be oriented to solving general problems rather than only responding to specific crime incidences. (Weisheit, Wells, & Falcone, 551: 1994)

From this information presented on community-policing, we can begin to explore the impact this policing philosophy will have on other topics in this study concerning police officer tactical decision-making. This study explored the dynamics of police officer decision-making and its influences by discussing relative information on the culture of the police department, police subculture, employee job satisfaction, and employer-employee relationship. These concepts were considered relevant in determining influences on police officer decision-making from the traditional policing perspective.

One of the objectives of community-policing is to empower line police officers to make decisions they feel will best resolve social issues in the communities which they serve. By empowering the officers, formal structures within the police department are reduced with less hierarchical demands on job performance. Thus, it can be assumed the police officers within these departments are not experiencing sentiments of isolation from the decision-making hierarchy in the department, nor from the communities they are serving. Some literature presented earlier suggests these sentiments of isolation from department management and the community forms within these officers' feelings of isolation and the formation of subcultures within the larger organization. Community-policing, as it was proscribed to be implemented in police departments reduces feeling of isolation by police officers thus granting them more determination and discretion in performing their duties.

Community-policing can also be suggested to influence tactical decision-making by police officers in issues of use of force during incidences of tactical response. Again, the core philosophy of community-policing suggests police officers will become more

connected with and integrated to the communities they serve forming a co-productive relationship between police and citizens. Through this relationship, police officers will become familiar with residents of the community and best identify trouble areas within the community. One other result of the relationship is the relationship shared between police officers and the citizens will serve as a social control mechanism on police officers in performing their duties to the best interest of the department they serve and the communities they are obligated.

A final point of discussion regarding community-policing to this research study concern the differences between rural and urban departments of this study and the affects community-policing have on each. This study consisted mainly of rural police departments of North Carolina and a small number of urban departments. Many rural police departments are not fully aware of their practices of community-policing and most do not embrace the philosophy entirely. Rural departments are mostly small in the number of officers employed and provide a wide range of services to their communities such as fire, and emergency response. Likewise, the rural police departments are normally viewed by citizens as an integral part of the community. Therefore, the very nature of the composition of rural police departments forms an organization practicing community-policing. It can be assumed the rural police departments of this research study have implemented within their organizational operations particular characteristics of community policing.

Thus, the affects of community-policing on this research are twofold. First, the essence of community-policing empowers the line officers to make judgement decisions regarding social issues in the community they serve. This empowerment of line police

officers should serve to increase these officers level of job satisfaction and improve their relationship with department management. These officers will not feel the strain of a regimented, highly structured police agency more concerned with policy and department politics. Police officers will feel they are a valuable entity in their department giving them greater satisfaction of their job. As police officers are more able to exercise their judgements in making decisions about their job, their satisfaction level increases thus increasing their level of commitment to their job.

Another affect of community policing can suggest the connectedness these police officers have to the communities they serve will govern their actions in the communities. This is to suggest the more connected police officers are to communities, it is less likely that the officers will have sentiments of an “us-them” mentality. This certainly may not be true in all cases. It is very likely the close connections these officers have with the community could also create unconscious feelings of prejudices. These unconscious prejudices can result from working close to people who the officers perceived as different from them with different value systems. Either situation, the connectedness of community-police officers to their community will foster close ties to the citizens of the communities that require officers to consider cooperative means in assisting the citizens improve their quality of life.

These affects of community-policing will impact tactical responses of police officers in the communities. The connectedness with the community will sensitize the officers to the citizens within thus seeking other means of resolving situations that are less threatening.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The concepts outlined in this section were presented to show various influences on tactical decision-making of police officers. These concepts were not determined to be exclusive factors in influencing police officer tactical decision-making, but they were found to be relevant for the scope of this research study. The two independent variables of this research police department culture and police subculture was discussed to emphasize the dynamics of these variables. The police department culture was established to be the initial culture environment the new police officers will enter once they have received formal training in the police academy. It was determined in the discussion on perspectives that in fact these perspectives will guide the officer in decision-making when they reflect back on the training they received as being proper procedure.

Also, the reflections of these officers will change, as they grow accustomed to their role as police officer according to standards of short-term and long-term perspectives. The progressive stage of police officer growth, according to standards of short-term perspectives begin with the enthusiastic police officer wanting to learn everything about being a police officer, to an intermediate stage of satisfying the supervisor, and a final stage of just wanting to fit in the organization.

It was also mentioned that the police culture, as with any organizational culture take on characteristics of it's own. Within this culture, police officer are informed subtly of

the rights and privileges they possess in the organization, and their duties and obligations associated with their position. Additionally, while the police culture may be influenced by the work situation, it also tends to be influenced by external factors as the norms, values, and ethics inherent in the profession. These values, norms and ethics are then passed on to all police officers who come into the organization of what is expected, as well as what is acceptable actions in the organization.

The police subculture, the other independent variable of this research study was discussed in this section also to explore the dynamics of the subculture and its influential effects on the police organization. It was determined the police subculture was as influential on police officers as the department culture. One factor considered relevant in determining police officers identification with the police subculture was the relationship these officers share with department administrators. It was suggested that police officers with little or no contact with the decision-making echelon of the department will lead to misunderstanding on each side leaving the officer feeling isolated from the public, and his supervisors with nowhere to turn. The officers then create bonds one with another in a brother system to have someone that identify with their situation. Literature that describes some common themes in police attitudes as loyalty to colleagues is essential, and the public or most of it is the enemy substantiates this point. Also, it was inferred that the influences of the police subculture continue to influence police officers behaviors even when they are not in the immediate presence of their peers.

The dynamic composition of police subculture establishes this culture as an entity within the larger organization with it's own values, judgements, and accepted behaviors guided by the code of ethics of the "blue shield". It is suggested in this study that the

police subculture will socialize police officers to the accepted norms of the subculture transcending those established by police department management. Some literature offered in this section suggests that police subculture is one of the most resistant to the adoption of and allegiance to a formal code of ethics. The purpose of this research is to explore those factors of the police subculture that increase police officer's level of identification with the subculture.

Employee job satisfaction, and employee-employer relationship were explored in this section to suggest these concepts will have significant impact on police officers level of identification to either police department culture established by department management, or the police subculture. First, it was determined police officers job satisfaction will serve as a systemic social control mechanism to influence the actions and decision-making of police officers. The premise of this determination suggests certain characteristics of job satisfaction such as commitment to the police organization, loyalty, and involvement used to measure quality of membership to organizations, will determine level of commitment to the police organization. As suggested by literature discussing this concept, studies have shown commitment to be an important factor in understanding the work behavior of employees. Police officers level of commitment to the police organization was determined to be a reliable predictor in explaining certain behaviors of police officers.

Employer-employee relationships was discussed to suggest the relationship shared between police officers and management, supervisors and police officers, and management and supervisors will have significant influences on the decision-making of police officers. Organization goals and objectives are channeled through these various

relationships to ensure compliance to the goals and objectives of the organization are accomplished. A strain in one or more of the relationships will create a chain of conflict throughout the organization. Some literature offered on the subject suggest these couples work and interact within a group context and are therefore profoundly influenced by the group dynamics. Also, a variety of systemic and group-level dynamics can cause managers and subordinates to regress, rendering the individuals of the managerial couple even more vulnerable to disabling forces. Thus, the literature suggests level of commitment is influenced by identification to the police department and police subculture.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of this research are to show how police officers tactical decision-making processes are influenced by their level of commitment to the ethical codes, values, and beliefs in their police department. In order for this goal to be accomplished, an extensive study in police decision-making and police subculture was conducted to identify specific concepts that can be measured statistically to view correlation. To get an accurate measure of the problem, a controlled test was used to compare samples of police officers who have received advanced police training at the justice academy, and those who had not received any advanced training.

Another related objective of this research is to determine whether the level of confidence that police officers have in their ability to perform during tactical incidences will influence their decision-making process. It is hypothesized that police officers that

demonstrate high confidence in their ability to react in tactical incidences will react quickly according the tactical training they have received.

To realize that these stated goals have been achieved, a number of steps were accomplished. First, an adequate representation of police officers with advanced police training, and those without advanced training was used to conduct this research. In addition, these officers exhibited a complete range of police officer experience to determine whether years of service is a factor in explaining some of the differences in the sample. Second, a variety of data was collected that reflect individual and organizational dynamics. If it can be shown that the steps taken to conduct this research were error free, then any findings from the research findings that gives support to the stated goals will be valid.

Methods

The following section will outline the research strategy used to carry out the goals and objectives outlined previously. The research design, sample, information about the data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the research study will be included in this section.

Research Design

The design type for this research will be exploratory. The study sought to explore factors that influence police officer decision-making during tactical situations. The data for this study was collected in the form of a survey instrument. The use of the survey instrument allows one to gather adequate information for measurement to determine

correlation between the variables. The proposed study's target population consisted of police officers throughout the state of North Carolina. A random sample of law enforcement offices in North Carolina was conducted to select the departments to participate in this study. The names of the departments were randomly drawn from a computer disc database consisting of all law enforcement offices in North Carolina.

The dependent variable in this study is police officer tactical decision-making and three primary independent variables are as follows: (1) level of commitment to the police department, (2) level of identification with police subculture, (3) political beliefs of police officers, and (4) religious beliefs of individual police officers. Sex, age, police officer experience, and military experience will examine the variables for variations. A factor analysis was conducted on the variables to test for multiple dimensions of influence. The variables are operationalized and conceptualized as follows:

Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable in this study is police officer tactical decision-making.

Police officer tactical decision-making is defined as police officers use of force to effect a desired outcome to include pepper spray application, use of baton, unarmed self-defense, and deadly force. More specific, the dependent variable measured in this study is police officers' comfort in the tactical response training they have received and whether they rely on that training while in the field.

Comfort will be defined as the police officers intuitive reactions based on the training they received during incidences of tactical response.

Independent Variables:

1. Level of commitment to the police department is defined as the police officers beliefs in the ethical codes, and values of the police department as established by department managers. This variable is measured in Section IV on the questionnaire in Appendix A, questions 1 to 16.
2. Level of identification to police subculture is defined as the bond the individual shares with fellow police officers whose views are inconsistent with the high ideals of the police codes. Also, the officer exhibits attitudes as loyalty to colleagues as essential, and the public, or most it, is the enemy, and the values of police officers include the use of force, discretion, and a protective use of the truth. This variable is measured in Section V of the questionnaire in Appendix A, questions 1 to 14.
3. Political beliefs of police officers is defined as the police officer's personal political beliefs that shape their frame of thinking of society and societal issues. This variable is measured in Section VI, and Section VII of the questionnaire in Appendix A.
4. Religious beliefs will be defined as the police officer's personal religious beliefs and understandings that operate to influence the officer's decision-making process. Additionally, the police officer's self-perceived confidence in their ability to perform during spontaneous decision-making incidents will be used to measure this variable. This variable is also measured in Section VI, and Section VII of the questionnaire in Appendix A, questions 1 to 15, and questions 1 to 12 of Section VII.

According to the goals of this study, the following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- H1:* There is no significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and level of commitment to the police department.
- Ha:* There is a significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and level of commitment to the police department.

H2: There is no significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and their level of identification with the police subculture.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and their level of identification with the police subculture.

H3: There is no significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and political beliefs police officer.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between police officers tactical decision-making and political beliefs of the police officer.

H4: There is no significant relationship between police officers religious beliefs and tactical decision-making of police officers.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between police officers religious beliefs and tactical decision-making of police officers.

Sample

The sample that was used in this research study was collected from a study population of law enforcement officers in the state of North Carolina. More specifically, municipal and rural police departments statewide comprise the sample population. The sampling frame used in this research to obtain a study population was derived from the 1997 computer database listing of all police departments in North Carolina. This research study was conducted using an over sample of 724 law enforcement offices in North Carolina.

Each police officer in North Carolina had an equal chance of being selected for this study. The police chief's of these departments was called to ascertain the total number of sworn, full-time officers they have on force. In cases of small departments (under 30 officers), each police officers received a survey in these departments. In the incidences of larger departments (50 or more officers), a list of all police officers in the department was solicited by the researcher to produce a systematic random sample of

police officers to participate in the research study. To ensure a representative systematic random sample, each department, according to size was sampled on separate sampling intervals. The sampling interval for departments of 50 police officers consists of every fourth officer from that department to be chosen as an element in the research study. Likewise, the sampling interval for departments greater than 50 (most departments greater than 50 are more than 100 police officers) consist of every seventh officer from that department chosen as an element in the research study.

Data Collection

Data for this research was collected through mail questionnaire surveys that will be mail to the police departments in care of the Police Chief. Those police officers chosen through systematic random sampling in the larger departments had their questionnaires mailed directly to them. Each survey packet included a self-addressed envelope for the officers to mail the survey questionnaire back to the justice academy once they had completed. A pilot study was conducted in three police departments that are representative of the target population to pretest the survey instrument in order to ensure reliability.

Empirical measures concur with the individual mental images about police officers tactical decision-making and the three independent variables outlined as being factors contributing to improper tactical decision-making. These measures were considered necessary to obtain validity of the survey instrument. The questions formulated for this research instrument were designed to cover the range of meanings included within the concepts. Respondents were presented with questions designed to

measure attachments to their police departments. These questions examined attitudes regarding beliefs in department policies and procedures, trust in supervisors and management, and overall compassion for being a police officer. Police culture was addressed to examine the level of identification officers have in identifying with the views and beliefs of a particular police network. Police personal perceptions were measured to indicate whether police officers are guided by personal political, religious, or cultural beliefs in forming decisions. Tactical training was also measure to indicate self-confidence of officers during incidences of tactical situations.

A Likert scale was be used in some portions of the survey instrument to measure the intensity of the responses from 1 to 4. The respondent was given a statement and asked if they “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or, “strongly disagree”.

Data Analysis

The data are analyzed using these tests. Chi-square was be used to determine if there are associations between the dependent and independent variables f the study. A .05 level of significance will be used to determine if the null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected. Phi coefficient (Φ) was used to determine the strength in the relationship of the dependent and independent variables. Pearson’s product-moment correlation (r) will measure differences between the dependent and independent variables. Prior to running any test, a factor analysis was be run to test the strengths of the variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The study population for this research consisted of all sworn police officers and auxiliary officers in the state of North Carolina. The respondents included all ranks from patrol officer to police chief. In total, eight hundred fifty-five questionnaires were mailed to fifty-two police departments statewide. The study population included both rural and metropolitan police agencies throughout the state of North Carolina. Rural police departments account for the majority police agencies in this study. The study yielded a sample of 301 officers from the 855 total sample population responding to the questionnaire. These figures equate to a return rate of 35%. The research staff at the North Carolina Justice Academy determined a 30% return rate would be sufficient to make adequate generalizations of the overall police population in North Carolina.

Respondents were asked if they had received additional tactical training since their completion of Basic Law Enforcement Training. Tactical training for these police officers consisted of a wide range to include such training as weapons training, defensive driving, verbal judo, surveillance, hand-to-hand combat, etc. There were two hundred ninety-three valid responses and eight no responses treated as system missing. Two hundred sixty-nine (92%) of the officers indicated they had received and twenty-four (8%) indicated they had not received additional tactical training. Frequency distributions for these statistics are provided in Appendix D. Descriptive characteristics for all 301 respondents are presented in Table 1 in the next section.

Also, respondents were asked to describe a recent tactical response they were involved and to rate the tactical performance of the back-up officer on the scene. The

question asked the officers if they felt the officer or officers who assisted them were well trained in tactical decision-making. This information was used to receive first hand insight of police officers perception of their fellow officers. There were 247 (82%) respondents responding to this question. Of these 247 respondents, 45 (18%) indicated the assisting officers were well trained in tactical decision-making. Remarkably, 202 officers (82%) indicated the assisting officers were not well trained in tactical decision-making. These opinions by police officers were expressed for both young and veteran offices alike. These percentages attest to the relevance of this study to explore training needs assessment for the North Carolina Justice Academy on police officer tactical response training.

Respondents Characteristics

There were a total of 268 males in the study accounting for 90.8% of the study population. Female respondents totaled 27 accounting for 9.2% of the study population. These percentages are consistent with national figures that indicate female officers are less than 10% of all police officers (Martin, 1990). The demographics of these officers are presented in Table 1.

Race of the police officers is not represented in the demographics of this study. It was determined that race of the officer would not be a significant factor in exploring tactical responses in North Carolina police officers. It was determined that tactical training of police officers is not categorized on the basis of race. Race of the officer will not be useful in determining tactical influences of police officers.

Police officer years of service were explored to determine whether differences in tactical response occurred between younger and veteran officers. Years of service were divided into five-year intervals to view any influences of tactical response in small increments. Police officers of 0-5 years experience account for the largest percent of respondents with 42%. Other police officers years of experience is noted in Table 1.

Military experience of police officers was explored to determine whether significant difference are evident in tactical police response of police officers possessing military experience to those officers with no military background. For those officers indicating some military experience, branch of military was also explored for significance in police officers tactical training response. There were 88 respondents (29%) of the total sample population indicating military experience. Of the 88 respondents, 46% (40 respondents) indicated they possess U.S. Army background experience. Police officers with some Navy experience claim the second largest population with 22% followed by Marine Corps with 15% respondents. These demographics and frequencies are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographics of North Carolina Police Officers

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Number of cases
<u>Gender</u>			
Female	27	9.2	Valid cases = 295
Male	268	90.8	Missing cases = 6
<u>Rank</u>			
Patrol Officer	145	50.5	Valid cases = 287 Missing cases = 14
Master Patrol Officer	20	7.0	
Detective	21	7.3	
Corporal	7	2.4	
Sergeant	60	19.9	
Lieutenant	19	6.6	
Captain	9	3.2	
Major	1	.3	
Dep. Chief	1	.3	
Chief	3	1.0	
Watch Commander	1	.3	
<u>Years as Police Officer</u>			
0-5 years	126	42.4	Valid cases = 297 Missing cases = 4
6-10 years	65	21.9	
11-15 years	38	12.8	
16-20.5 years	35	11.8	
21+ years	33	11.1	
<u>Education</u>			
High School	165	55.6	Valid cases = 297 Missing cases = 4
Assoc. Degree(2yr.)	65	21.9	
Bachelor's Degree	44	14.8	
Graduate/Professional Degree	4	1.3	
<u>Age</u>			
20-29	106	36.2	Valid cases = 293 Missing cases = 8
30-39	111	36.9	
40-49	56	19.1	
50+	20	6.8	

The study population comprised of a wide range of police officer ranks and years of police service experience. Patrol officers accounted for 67% (patrol officer, master patrol officer, detective, corporal) of the sample and supervisors (sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, deputy chief, chief, watch commander) 32% of the sample. It was predicted patrol officers would provide the greatest amount of information on decision-making factors of police officers. Patrol officers' daily face a variety of situations that require them to use their judgements while on patrol. The ninety-four supervisors responding to this study are able to provide a diverse range in opinions regarding the contents of this research.

The education levels of North Carolina police officers are also given in Table 1 that reveal the majority of police officers (55.6%) possessing a high school education. Education levels of police officers was examined to determine whether police officers possessing greater than high school education would show differences in tactical decision-making.

Testing the Hypotheses

Results of Ordinary Least Squares regression computed on data relating to the stated hypotheses examining influences on tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers were analyzed and checked for significance. A list of all the hypotheses of this study is listed in Table 2 below. For convenience, each hypothesis and associated null hypothesis is restated prior to presentation of the data for the hypothesis.

The initial step in testing these hypotheses required a significance test of the independent variables for use in the data analysis. A factor analysis test was performed to examine the scalability of the independent variables to determine whether these variables were adequate for measurement of the stated hypotheses. Several variables were computed in the factor test for each independent variable to check the distribution of components these variables created. The variables that loaded highly on a construct (i.e., .5 or higher) was used to create the construct. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the strength of the variables in explaining the specified independent variable. It was determined for an independent variable to be used in this study a Cronbach alpha level equal to or greater than 0.6 would be sufficient. Descriptive characteristics of each independent variable along the individual variables that were combined to create the independent variable are listed in Table 3 of the next section.

Results from the factor analysis test revealed political beliefs and religious beliefs of police officers were not significant in determining influences of tactical decision-making and was rendered inconclusive. The Cronbach's alpha statistic for variable reliability in measuring the concepts of political and religious influences were less than

0.6 indicating these variables could not be measured with the available data in this research.

Bivariate data analyses were computed for the dependent variable to each independent variable to determine the strength of relationship between the variables. Pearson's chi square statistic was used to measure differences between the dependent and independent variables at the .05 significance level. Phi (Φ) and Cramer's V statistics were also computed to estimate the strength of the relationship among the variables. Results of the bivariate analyses are presented in the sections discussing each dependent and independent variable relationship.

Multivariate data analyses were also computed to view significant relationships among the dependent variable and multiple independent variables. Pearson's chi square was also used to measure difference in the interaction of the dependent variable to each independent variable. Results from the multivariate analyses indicated the independent variables when loaded onto the dependent variable were not significant. Therefore, multivariate analyses will not be presented in this study.

Once bivariate and multivariate data analyses were completed and significant relationships were determined, an Ordinary Least Squares Regression model was computed to quantify significant influences of each independent variable on the police officers tactical decision-making. These significant influences are presented in the discussion of each dependent and independent variable computation below.

Table 2: List of all Hypotheses and Associated Null Hypotheses

- H1: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and their commitment to department culture.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and their commitment to department culture.
- H2: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and their identification with the police subculture.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and their identification to the police subculture.
- H3: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and tactical training received by police officers.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and tactical training received by police officers.
- H4: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and Military background experience of police officers.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and military background experience of police officers.
- H5: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and branch of military experience.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and branch of military experience.
- H6: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and years of police experience.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and years of police experience.
- H7: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and age of police officers.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and age of police officers.
- H8: There is no significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and gender of police officers.
 Ha: There is a significant relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and gender of police officers.

Table 3: Scales Used as Variables

Department Culture (7 items)	<u>Factor Score</u>
1. The line supervisors and management of this department are competent and reliable.	.8744
2. Both management and supervisors enforce compliance to the department's policies on all rules and regulations.	.8740
3. This department's standard operating procedures manual is a good guide in addressing any situation I may encounter.	.8856
4. This department stresses legal tactical decision-making	.8897
5. I firmly believe in this department's policies.	.8800
6. Overall I feel I can trust all line officer supervisors and management in this department.	.8727
7. I strongly believe in the values defined by management of this department.	.8644

Reliability Analysis:

Cronbach's Alpha = .89

Table 4: Scales Used as Variables (cont'd)

Police subculture (6 items)	<u>Factor Score</u>
1. Often I feel department management is more concerned with public image of the department than fighting crime.	.8417
2. At times my line officer supervisor and management are not very reliable.	.8449
3. The values of this department do not necessarily represent the sentiments of all officers of this department and are perhaps outdated.	.8289
4. The department management rarely expresses concerns of my experiences in these neighborhoods.	.8346
5. Very often I feel I can trust my fellow officers before I can department management.	.8433
6. Many police officers in this department have the same I have regarding problems in this department.	.8625

Reliability Analysis

Crombach's Alpha = .87

Table 5: Scales Used as Variables (cont'd)

Tactical Training (13 items)	<u>Factor Score</u>
1. There is nothing wrong with profiling certain crimes to certain members in society because of their race if they are known to be violators of such crimes.	.5891
2. When decisions are to be made quickly I feel confident in my ability to make fast and adequate decisions.	.5910
3. Police officers should be given greater discretion in issues on use of force.	.5736
4. When I arrest some violent offenders I sometimes find myself having to control my natural instincts to harm the individual.	.5885
5. I feel confident I my ability to react quickly in hostile situations.	.5710
6. Repetition in tactical training exercises has helped increase my motor skills in tactical situations.	.5822
7. When I am forced to make a tactical decision such as use of force safety of the offender is a consideration.	.5541
8. The rank of an officer is important in making tactical decisions	.5693
9. During moments of tactical incidences, I consider possible reactions of my supervisor of my actions.	.5677
10. There are times when gut instincts for defense are used instead of tactical techniques during incidences that happen very suddenly.	.5774
11. Much of the tactical training I received in BLET or other police training facilities are encouraged by my department.	.5611
12. I rely more on hand-to-hand tactical defense measures than use of force when the offender is unarmed.	.5505
13. After incidences of use of force in tactical confrontations, recommendations by supervisors are always helpful.	.5743

Reliability Analysis

Crombach's Alpha = .63

Null Hypothesis 1. Tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and their commitment to department culture are independent events.

Research Hypothesis 1. Tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and commitment to department culture are not independent events.

The dependent variable testing this hypothesis asked police officers if they were comfortable with the tactical training they have received and rely on that training in the field. Findings of the 279 respondents indicate 34.4% (N = 96) of police officers that are committed to the department culture are not likely to be comfortable with their tactical training and do not rely on the training in the field. Conversely, 65.6% (N = 183) of police officers indicated they are very likely to be comfortable with their tactical training and are very likely to rely on the training in the field. Table 6 below provides a breakdown to the 279 respondents regarding their level of commitment to the department and their comfort in tactical response training. Also, the value for chi-square given in Table 6 is 14.083 with three degrees of freedom. This value is shown to be significant with a significance level of .003 that is less than the designated .05 critical level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states there is no relationship between tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and commitment to department culture is rejected. It is then concluded level of commitment to police department does influence comfort in tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers.

Table 6 also report strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Phi (Φ) coefficient is used to determine amount of variance

in comfort in tactical decision-making explained by level of commitment with the police department. The Phi value given for commitment to department culture is .225 with a approximate significance level .003. This Phi (Φ) value indicates a weak relationship between the two variables.

Results of Weighted Least-Squares regression analysis (see Table 11) that measure the effects of the independent variables of the study on the dependent variable conclude the fact that police officers commitment to department culture has no effect on tactical decision-making of police officers. Referring to the Table 11, a t-value of -.154 was reported for commitment to department culture. The observed significance level associated with this t-value was .880. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers' and police officers' commitment to department culture are independent events is rejected. These figures conclude police officers commitment to department culture has no effect on tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers.

Table 6: Statistical analyses for research hypothesis (1) and the associated null hypothesis.

Total Sample- Department Culture on Comfort						
Commitment to Department	%Very Likely	%Not Likely	Chi Sq.	df	Φ	Sig.
Strongly Disagree	45.5 <N=10>	54.5 <N=12>	14.083	3	.225	.003
Disagree	56.0 <N=47>	44.0 <N=37>				
Agree	69.3 <N=88>	30.7 <N=39>				
Strongly Agree	82.6 <N=38>	17.4 <N=8>				

Department culture was operationalized in this study to define environmental elements within police agencies that operate to influence conformity and adherence to the value system of the police agency. A list of the combined variables used to form the independent variable for police culture was outlined on page 48 above. For the purposes of this study, referring to the findings in data analyses tests, the combined variables are not factors of influence on tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers.

Null Hypothesis 2. Tactical decision-making of North Carolina police Officers and identification to police subculture are independent events.

Research Hypothesis 2. Tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers and identification to police subculture are not independent events.

Results from crosstabulation comparison of police officer comfort with tactical training to police officer identification with police subculture indicate of the 276 respondents, 34.8% (N =96) of police officers identifying with the police subculture are

not likely to be comfortable with the tactical training they have received. In contrast, 65.2% (N =180) of the same police officers indicated they are very likely to be comfortable with their tactical training and relying on the training in the field. Table 7 below provides a breakdown to these responses regarding the level of identification with the police subculture. These figures were further analyzed for significance and strength of association. These results are also reported in table 7 below.

Table 7: Statistical analyses for research hypothesis (2) and associated null hypothesis.

Total Sample-Police Subculture on Comfort						
Identify with Police Subculture Sig.	%Very Likely	%Not Likely	Chi. Sq.	df	Φ	
Strongly Disagree	91.7 <N=11>	8.3 <N=1>	8.967	3	.180	.030
Disagree	71.8 <N=51>	28.2 <N=20>				
Agree	65.1 <N=82>	34.9 <N=44>				
Strongly Agree	53.7 <N=36>	46.3 <N=31>				

Referring to Table 7 above, the chi-square value 8.967 was calculated with three degrees of freedom. The corresponding significance level for the chi-square value is .030. Thus, the null hypothesis that states no significant relationship exists between identification with the police subculture and tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers is rejected.

Table 7 also provides additional information to the association between the variables with the Phi (Φ) coefficient. The value of Phi is .180. This value indicates a weak relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

Referring to Table 11 of the Weighted Least Squares Regression model, a t-value of .734 was calculated for identification with police subculture. The observed significance level associated with this t-value was .473. The significance level is greater than the .05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected concluding there is a statistical relationship between identification with police subculture and comfort in tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers.

Null Hypothesis 3. Tactical response training of North Carolina police officers and police officers comfort in tactical training and relying on the training in the field are independent events.

Research Hypothesis 3. Tactical response training of North Carolina police officers and police officers comfort in tactical training and relying on the training in the field are not independent events.

Results from crosstabulation comparison indicated of the 279 total respondents, 66.7% (N =186) of police officer respondents are very likely to be comfortable with the tactical training they received and relying on the training in the field. Comparatively, 33.3% (N =93) of police respondents indicated they are not very likely to be comfortable with the tactical training they received and are not likely to rely on the training in the field. These percentages are further analyzed in Table 8 below.

Table 8 below provides the chi-square value testing the associated hypothesis. The obtained value for chi-square in Table 6 is 95.568 with 3 degrees of freedom. The associated significance level for the value for a 2-tailed test is .000. Therefore, it can be determined there is a relationship between tactical response training of North Carolina

police officers and their comfort in the tactical training while relying on the training in the field.

Table 8: Statistical analyses for research hypothesis (3) and associated null hypothesis.

Total Sample-Tactical response training and Comfort						
Tactical Response Training	%Very likely	%Not Likely	Chi Sq.	df	Φ	Sig.
Strongly Disagree	100 <N=3>	0	95.586	1	.585	.000
Disagree	18.2 <N=6>	81.8 <N=27>				
Agree	52.9 <N=64>	47.1 <N=57>				
Strongly Agree	95.1 <N=116>	4.9 <N=6>				

Referring to Table 8, the Phi (Φ) value for tactical response training of police officers is .586. This value suggests a strong relationship between the dependent and independent variable.

Referring to Table 11 of the Weighted Least Squares Regression model, a t-value of 5.540 was computed for police officers tactical response training. A significance value of .000 was also computed indicating significance at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating police officers tactical response training and their comfort in the tactical training they received are independent events is rejected. Thus, it is concluded there is a statistical relationship between tactical response training of police officers and police officers comfort in the training they receive.

Null Hypothesis 4. Military experience of police officers and comfort in tactical training are independent events.

Research Hypothesis 4. Military experience of police officers and comfort in tactical training are not independent events.

Statistical analyses for military experience and comfort in tactical training indicated no relationship between the variables. Of the 301 total respondents, 28.6% (N = 81) indicated they were previously enlisted in the armed forces. When asked if they were comfortable with the tactical training they received, 70.4% (N =57) of officers with prior military experience responded they were very likely to be comfortable with the training while 29.6% (N =24) indicated they were not likely to be comfortable with the tactical training.

The obtained chi square value reported for military experience is 1.617. Thus, the data indicates there is no relationship exists between military experience of police officers and their comfort level in tactical decision-making.

Table 9 below report a Phi (Φ) value of -.076 the relationship between military experience and comfort in tactical training. The value indicates a negative association between the variables.

Table 9: Statistical analyses for research hypothesis 4 and associated Null Hypothesis.

Total Sample-Military Experience and Comfort						
Military Exp.	%Very Likely	%Not Likely	Chi Sq.	df	Φ	Sig.
Yes	70.4 <N=57>	29.6 <N=24>	1.617	1	-0.76	.204
No	62.4 <N=126>	37.6 <N=76>				

Referring to Table 11 of the Weighted Least Squares model, an obtained t-value of 1.471 with a significance level of .159 is provided for this relationship indicating the null hypothesis is accepted

Null Hypothesis 5. Branch of military service and comfort in tactical training are independent events.

Research hypothesis 5. Branch of military service and comfort in tactical training are not independent events.

Statistical analyses for branch of military service and comfort in tactical training are reported in Table 10 below. The analyses are reported for 81 respondents who indicated they have military experience. A chi-square value of 12.785 was obtained with 5 degrees of freedom. Thus, a relationship exists between branch of military experience of police officers and their comfort in police tactical response training.

Table 10: Statistical analyses for research hypothesis 5 and associated null hypothesis.

Total Sample for Branch of Military and Comfort						
Branch	%Very Likely	%Not Likely	Chi Sq.	Φ	df	Sig.
Army	86.1 <N=31>	13.9 <N=5>	12.785	.397	5	.025
Navy	66.7 <N=12>	33.3 <N=6>				
Air Force	83.3 <N=5>	16.7 <N=1>				
Marine	53.8 <N=7>	46.2 <N=6>				
Coast Guard	0	100 <N=2>				
National Guard	50.0 <N=3>	50.0 <N=3>				

Referring to Table 11 of the Weighted Least Squares regression model, the obtained t-value for military branch is -3.258 . The significance value for t is .004, which is significant at .005. These figures further support the relationship between branch of military experience of police officers and their comfort in police tactical response training.

To receive a clear understanding regarding significance between branch of military service to comfort in tactical training, each military branch was separated into different variables. The objective is to determine the level of significance each military branch has on comfort in tactical training independent of the others. It was estimated both Army and Marine military experience due to their combat nature would prove to be more significant than other military experiences of police officers. Thus, police officers with Marine Corps and Army backgrounds were computed into one variable and measured against the other branches.

Results of the Weighted Least Squares regression model in Table 11 indicate police officers with other military experience was more significant than police officers of Marine Corps and Army background. A t-value of -3.258 was obtained for other branches with a significance level of .004. Therefore, it is concluded police officers of other branches of the military has a significant relationship to comfort in tactical training than police officers of Marine Corps and Army background.

Other branches of the military were examined further to identify the branches within this group having greater significance. Each branch was compared individually with the other stated independent variables on comfort in tactical training. Results indicate police officers of Air Force and National Guard background explained 100%

($r^2 = 1.00$) of the variation of the variables. Neither a t-value nor significance level was computed because there was a small number of respondents in these categories. Given the r-square value obtained for these two branches, it can be determined police officers of Air Force and National Guard background are more comfortable with the tactical training they have received.

One element not controlled in this analysis is time between military service and their joining the police agency. The time span between organizational entry and training would serve as indicator to account for the 100% explained variance. Time between military service and police training could offer significant limitations to these findings.

Table 11 presents the findings of a weighted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. The model explains 78 percent of the variation in police officers comfort in tactical training they received and relying on the training in the field. The model suggests four of the model's 8 variables are related significantly to police officers comfort in tactical training received. Branch of military service and other military branches than Marine Corps and Army explain the greatest amount of variance. The indicate the regression coefficient for other branches of service is the model's strongest prediction of police officer's comfort in tactical training ($\beta = 3.336$); the coefficient for branch of service is the second strongest predictor ($\beta = -3.258$). Branch of service has an inverse relationship to police officers comfort in tactical training and relying on the training in the field to indicate as officer's military experience changes across the various branches, comfort in tactical training changes accordingly. This finding further supports findings in bivariate analyses that indicated police officers of Air Force and National Guard background explained 100 percent of variation between the variables.

Table 11: Weighted Regression Estimates and Standard Errors for predictor variables

Regressed on comfort in tactical training and relying on the training in the field

Variable	OLS Estimate	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Commitment to Department	-.00267	.174	-.024	-.154	.880
Identification with Police Subculture	-.115	.157	-.106	-.734	.473
Age	-.301	.239	-.395	-1.262	.223
Branch of Service	-2.018	.619	-3.731	-3.258	.004*
Other Branches	2.732	.819	3.763	3.336	.004*
Military Exp.	.815	.579	.193	.14741	.159
Years as Police	.173	.167	.337	1.038	.313
Tactical Training	.983	.177	.738	5.540	.000*

NOTE: * $p > .05$; $R = .882$; $R^2 = .778$; $F = 7.886$; ** $p > .001$; *** $p > .0001$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications of the Findings

A discussion of the implications related to this study's findings requires a review of the problem statement and stated hypotheses. The problem statement will be revisited first for discussion. Afterwards, each significant hypothesis and its associated null hypothesis will be explained according to the research findings.

The Problem Statement Revisited

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that influence tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers. This research was important to understand the causal factors that motivate police officers to act in tactical response situations to determine training requirements at the North Carolina Justice Academy and to improve overall police safety in the field.

The literature review section provided basic concepts that was determined to be important in assessing police officer decision-making. From the literature, evidence was gathered to suggest concepts as police officer tactical decision-making, the culture of the police department, the police subculture, employee-employer relationships, and job satisfaction were influential factors in on behaviors of police officers. These factors were transformed into four independent variables to determine their significance on decision-making in police officers. Research findings did not support concepts measuring police department culture, police subculture, political or religious beliefs of officers as significant influences on tactical decision-making of police officers. Research findings

did however find tactical training of police officers to be significant influences when determining police officers comfort in the tactical training they have received.

The following section will discuss those hypotheses found not to be significant in the study. Also, possible explanations to their insignificance will be considered.

The Hypotheses Revisited

Hypothesis 1 (level of commitment to the police department) was developed on the rationale that as police officers are found to be more committed to the value system of their respective department they will be more likely to exercise rules and regulations outlined by department management during tactical response situations. The finding suggests police officers that are committed to the values established by management of the department will conduct themselves according to established rules and regulations of the police agency during tactical response situations.

Hypothesis 2 (police officers identification with police subculture) was formed on the rationale that as police officers become to accept the ideals, values and beliefs of the police subculture, the values and beliefs of the department less influence them. Police subculture was found to be significant influences on police officers comfort in tactical response training of police officers and their relying on the training in the field. Therefore, it is determined aspects of the police subculture operate to influence police officers beyond that of the department culture.

Hypothesis 3 (political belief of police officers) was developed through the rationale that police officers political identity will form certain prejudices in the way officers perceive societal conditions and citizens within these communities. Political

belief was not measured in this study for lack of variables representing this concept. Thus, political beliefs of police officers as a factor in influencing decision-making are rendered inconclusive.

Hypothesis 4 (religious belief of police officers) was formulated through the rationale that religious affirmations of police officers would influence the police officers decision-making when in the field. The hypothesis suggests police officers of devout religious affirmations would be more compassionate towards citizens and their conditions. Religious beliefs were not measure in the study due to lack of variables representing this concept.

In reference to the tested hypotheses on page 48, the following hypotheses were found not to be significant. A brief explanation as to why these hypotheses were not found to be significant is offered in the discussion.

Hypothesis 6 (years of police experience) was thought to be relevant in decision-making of police officers. The rationale for the formation of this hypothesis suggests veteran police officers are capable of making decisions faster with greater self-confidence. Police officer years of police experience were not found to be relevant for the purpose of this study. Perhaps the best explanation to explain this finding is that each category of years of police experience had a large number of respondents indicating they are comfortable with their tactical training and rely on the training in the field.

Hypothesis 7 (age of police officer) was considered to be a relevant influence in decision-making of police officers. The hypothesis suggests there is obvious differences between junior and veteran police officers in decision-making processes. Age of police officer was not found to be significant in this study. One explanation offered is the

variable was measured categorically in five years increment. Larger increments of the age variable may have produce different results.

Hypothesis 8 (gender) was also thought to be relevant influences on police officer decision-making but was found not to be significant. This could be explained by the small number in female respondents compared to male respondents in the study in the study.

Limitations of the Study

One obvious limitation to this study is the fact that the information was gathered strictly from police agencies in North Carolina. Information was not solicited from Sheriff offices, Highway Patrol, or State Police agencies that have various tactical training programs. This information could have been used for a comparative analysis of specialized tactical training units to gain a clear understanding of decision-making levels in these units.

A second delimitation to this research study is found in the dependent variable. Comfort in tactical response training can be interpreted differently police officers which can affect the meaning in which the question is answered. The concept comfort was not defined in the research questionnaire to give each officer a predetermined definition of comfort in tactical response training. Therefore, varying interpretations to this question by officers is suggested.

Another limitation to this study is honesty of police officers responses when completing the research questionnaire. Although honesty in survey responses is assumed, possibilities do exist that some responses were not true sentiments of the

officers. Though the researcher tried to be clear in presenting questions in the questionnaire, it's extremely possible many police officers could have interpreted the same question differently.

A final limitation to the study is the large number of unanswered questions by police officers to limit the results in data analysis. Though confidentiality was expressed to the respondents of the research, some officers may have felt vulnerable to being identified by their responses and chose not to answer.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research initiative is the frontier of larger research studies to explore tactical decision-making in North Carolina police officers. The research produced an extensive amount of data that can be transformed to various research projects. To increase the knowledge base of tactical decision-making in North Carolina law officers, similar information should be solicited from the various law enforcement agencies to compare tactical training programs. A comparative analysis between the different agencies would render valuable information on training regiments that are dependable. This information can then be used to identify training programs that are affective and mandatory for all officers. One objective of this project is to identify areas in police officer decision-making that need improvement for overall protection of police officers. By identifying these problem areas, we would hope to see a decrease in police officers deaths by providing safer training at the Justice Academy.

Another advantage for further research will be to ensure that all police officers regardless of their agency receive the same tactical response training. This will ensure

confidence and safety to each officer assisting in the tactical situation. As was indicated earlier, this research found a large percentage of police officers felt the responding officers were not well-trained in tactical response. In incidences as these, each officer has endangered their own life as well as the other officer's if their actions are miscalculated.

Conclusion

This research has presented an exploratory study of influences in tactical decision-making of North Carolina police officers. Fifty-two police agencies and 301 police officers throughout North Carolina are represented in this study.

Overall, the data indicated many statistically significant relationships in several of the research hypotheses. With regard to police officers comfort level in the tactical training they have received and their relying on that training in the field, the following independent variables were found to be statistically significant: (1) level of commitment to police department, (2) level of identification to police subculture and (3) tactical response training of police officers. Tactical response training of police officers was also found to be statistically significant. This finding suggests there are particular elements in tactical response training received by North Carolina police officers that increase their comfort level in the tactical training. Understanding there are various forms of police officer tactical response training available to police officers, further research is needed to examine these tactical responses comparatively to determine whether differences exists in police officers comfort level.

Other independent variables found to be statistically significant are military experience and branch of military. In regards to military experience of police officers,

the research found a significant relationship exists between comfort in tactical response training and relying on the training in the field and whether the police officers had military experience. Military experience was then transformed into two separate variables (yes and no) to determine if one was more statistically significant. These variables were unable to compute analyses due to a significant loss in cases when transformed. Therefore, what can be concluded is a significant relationship does exist between the variables, but it can not be determined whether military experience or no military experience of police officers is more significant.

In reference to branch of military service, the research found a significant relationship exists between branch of military service of police officers and their comfort in tactical training. Branch of military was transformed into separate variables to view each military branch separately of each other for significance. The researcher estimated police officers with Marine Corps and Army background would prove more significant than the other military branches. Yet, data analyses results indicated when National Guard and Air Force variables were computed separately, each variable explained 100% ($r\text{-square} = 1.00$) of all the variance between the variables. Significance levels could not be computed due to a significant loss in cases when the variables were transformed. Thus, it can be concluded that both Air Force and National Guard experiences of police officers are more influential in decreasing the variance in police officer comfort in tactical response training and relying on the training in the field.

One explanation offered for this finding relates to the nature of each military branch. Both Marine Corps and Army personnel are combat oriented organizations. These personnel are give high levels of combat training than other military personnel.

Thus, when these military personnel leave the military to pursue careers in law enforcement, they take with them the advance combat training offered them in the military training they received. The repetitive nature of military training engrains within these personnel tactical responses that become second nature. Therefore, these personnel become more comfortable with the military training they received regarding the training superior to any offered in police agencies. Conversely, Air Force and National Guard personnel are less combat structured than Marine and Army personnel's and they would regard the tactical training in police agencies as sufficient for their needs.

A delimitation to this finding is the time element between military personnel actually leaving the military and receiving tactical training in police agencies. It is estimated this time element could offer significant differences in police officers comfort with their tactical training and relying on that training in the field.

Future research is recommended to further explore the significant findings in this research study. Much information can be gained by further exploring the relationship between branch of military service and their affects on these personnel entering police agencies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Research Survey Instrument

Thank you for your time and consideration in completing this research survey. We understand that as a law enforcement officer your time is extremely limited. It is our hope that with your response to this research initiative we will be able to offer effective training needs for law enforcement officers throughout the state. Thank you again for your compliance.

Section I.

For this section of the survey, please indicate your last involvement in a tactical procedure where you had to react quickly to the situation. Describe in detail the situation as it occurred, and whether force was used to accomplish your objective. If force was used, indicate the type of force applied. Also, indicate whether you were alone at the time of the incident, or if other officers were present to assist. Include also whether you feel you successfully obtained your objective in this incident, or whether unfortunate circumstances prohibited a successful resolution to the incident.

For the following question, please answer whether you “*strongly agree*”(SA), “*agree*”(A), “*disagree*”(D), or “*strongly disagree*”(SD) with the content of the question.

	SA	A	D	SD
Q: For the officer, or officers who were present to assist you in this incident, would you agree they were well trained, and knowledgeable in tactical decision-making.	[]	[]	[]	[]

Section II.

Q1. Does your department offer After-Action Briefings for incidents of tactical response where use of force was applied?

Q2. If your department does offer After-Action Briefings, describe the briefings to the incident mentioned in Section I. Also, if alternative resolutions were offered for future, similar situations explain the recommendations offered?

Q3. If you were faced with the same incident, would you handle it differently? How?

Section III.

This section of the survey will seek to ascertain the amount, and extent of tactical training the respondent has received. For the following questions, please answer each as they pertain to you.

1. Within the past five years, have you received additional tactical training such as officers' survival training, firearms training, etc., since completion of basic law enforcement training? Yes [] No []

1a. if you answered yes, in the spaces provided below, please list the training you have received.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 14. _____ |

Section IV.

The following statements seek general information about the individual respondents. For each of the statements below, answer each as they pertain to you.

1. In the space provided, indicate the total amount of time in years you have served as a police officer. _____
2. As a patrol officer, my patrols mainly consist of:
A. ☐ foot patrol B. ☐ car patrol C. ☐ motorcycle patrol D. ☐ horse mount
E. ☐ both foot and car patrol F. ☐ desk officer, no patrol
3. In the space provided, please indicate your current rank in the police department you serve. _____

Section V. The Police Department

This section of the survey seek to ascertain information on the police department which the respondent is employed. For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The department in which I serve is committed to excellence in fighting crime. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The departments mission statement clearly defines the departments commitment to fighting crime. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The line supervisors, and management in this department are all competent, and reliable. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Both management and supervisors enforce compliance to the departments policies on all rules and regulations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I look forward to reporting to work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. This department's standard operating procedures manual is a good guide for addressing any situation I may encounter. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. My assigned shift is satisfactory with me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I am aware of the values and beliefs of this police department. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. This department stresses legal tactical decision-making. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. I look forward to advancing my career in this department. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. While executing my daily duties, I am always cautious to follow policies and regulations outlined by this department. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. I firmly believe in this department's policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Overall, I feel I can trust all line officer supervisors and management in this department. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 15. I strongly believe in the values defined by management of this department. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 16. When I think about it, I am excited about being a police officer in this department. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

Section VI. The Police Culture

This section of the survey will seek to ascertain information of the respondent's personal assessment of their police department. For each of the statements below, please indicate whether you strongly agree(SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. In my opinion, the police officer position is a unique, and demanding job. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2. At times, my assigned routes are hostile and deteriorated by crime. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3. Good instinct is an asset to police officers. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4. In general, I have a great deal of trust in my fellow officers. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 5. Often I feel department management is more concerned with public image of the department than fighting crime. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 6. There are only a few police officers in this department that I consider close friends. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 7. At times, my line officer supervisors and department managers are not very reliable. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 8. The values of this department do not necessarily represent the sentiments of all officers of this department and are perhaps outdated. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 9. Many days it appears the people in the communities are not supportive to the police, and are often against assisting police efforts. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 10. The department management rarely express concerns for my experiences in these communities. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 11. Very often, I feel I can trust my fellow officers before I can trust department management. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 12. All things considered, being a police officer, there is definitely a need for each officer to look out for his brother officers no matter what the circumstances. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 13. Many police officers in this department have the same opinions as I have regarding problems in this department. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 14. Overall, I am satisfied with my career choice of police officer. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

Section VII. Personal Perceptions

This section of the survey is concerned with the personal perceptions of the individual respondent. For each of the following statements, please answer whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Lately, it appears crime in society has gotten progressively worse. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2. I do an exceptional job in keeping problems in my personal life from effecting my job. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3. Currently, I am content with my present rank in the department. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4. It seems unfair for criminals to do as they please while police officers have to follow strict rules and regulations. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 5. I always value the opinions of supervisors and department managers when critiquing my work performance. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 6. Any problem I may have with a fellow police officer does not effect my job performance. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 7. There is nothing wrong with profiling certain crimes to particular members in society because of their race if they are known to be violators of such crimes. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 8. Sometimes, my own religious beliefs guide me when making decisions while on duty. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 9. I believe social disadvantages is one of the main causes why some people commit crime. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 10. There are some officers in this department who don't agree with the way I perform my duties. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

- | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 11. When decisions are to be made quickly, I feel confident in my ability to make fast and adequate decisions. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 12. Police officers should be given greater discretion on issues on use of force. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 13. Sometimes my political beliefs influence my decisions while on duty. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 14. When I arrest some violent offenders, I sometimes find myself having to control my natural instincts to harm the individual. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 15. The opinions of fellow officers never influence my decisions. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

Section VIII. Tactical Training

The section below presents statements regarding police officer tactical decision-making. For each of the statements below, please indicate whether you respond “Always”, “Most of the time”, “Sometimes”, or “never” to the criteria of each statement.

- | | Always | Most of the Time | Sometimes | Never |
|--|--------|------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. I feel confident in my ability to react quickly in hostile situations. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2. Repetition in tactical training exercises has helped increase my motor skills in tactical situations. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3. When I am forced to make a tactical decision such as use of force, safety of the offender is a consideration. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4. The rank of the officer is important for making tactical decisions. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 5. During moments of tactical incidences, I consider possible reactions of my supervisor for my actions. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 6. I am familiar with the technique of escalation/de-escalation during hostile confrontations and feel confident in my ability to use the technique. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

	Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Never
7. An experienced and knowledgeable police officer is one who has at least 5 years of experience.	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. There are times when gut-instincts for defense are used instead of tactical techniques during incidents that happen very suddenly.	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. During incidences of hostile, tactical confrontations, the race of the offender is not a consideration on type of force applied.	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. I am comfortable with the tactical training I have received and rely on that training in the field.	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Much of the tactical training I received in BLET or other police training facilities is encouraged for use by my department.	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. I rely more on hand-to-hand tactical defense measures than use of a weapon when the offender is unarmed.	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. After incidences of use of force in tactical confrontations, recommendations offered by supervisors are always helpful.	[]	[]	[]	[]

Section IX.

This section seeks to ascertain further personal characteristics of the respondent. Please answer each of the following questions as they pertain to you.

1. Respondent's age _____
2. Please indicate your highest level of education completed.
 - A. ☐ high school graduate B. ☐ associate degree (2 year college) C. ☐ bachelors degree D. ☐ graduate/professional degree
3. Were you ever enlisted in the armed forces?
 - ☐ yes ☐ no
 - a. if yes, indicate branch of service and number of years served.
Branch _____ Number of years served _____
4. Have you previously served with another police department?
 - ☐ yes ☐ no
5. Sex of respondent:
 - ☐ Male ☐ Female

APPENDIX B
Regression Analyses

Regression

Notes

Output Created		25 Apr 99 16:33:15
Comments		
Input	Data	A:\tactical.sav
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	301
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on cases with no missing values for any variable used.
Syntax		REGRESSION /MISSING LISTWISE /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10) /NOORIGIN /DEPENDENT comfort /METHOD=ENTER decultur resub2 age2 branch2 others military2 years2 retactic .
Resources	Memory Required	5100 bytes
	Additional Memory Required for Residual Plots	0 bytes
	Elapsed Time	0:00:00.71

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	RETACTIC tactical response training of officers, RESUB2 identify with police subculture, YEARS2 number of years in ranges served as police officer, MILITARY2, OTHERS other military experience, DECULTUR commitment to department, AGE2 interval age range, BRANCH2 branch of military service		Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent Variable: COMFORT I am comfortable with the tactical training I have received and rely on the training in the field.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.882 ^a	.778	.679	.4798

a. Predictors: (Constant), RETACTIC tactical response training of officers, RESUB2 identify with police subculture, YEARS2 number of years in ranges served as police officer, MILITARY2, OTHERS other military experience, DECULTUR commitment to department, AGE2 interval age range, BRANCH2 branch of military service

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.523	8	1.815	7.886	.000 ^a
	Residual	4.144	18	.230		
	Total	18.667	26			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), RETACTIC tactical response training of officers, RESUB2 identify with police subculture, YEARS2 number of years in ranges served as police officer, MILITARY2, OTHERS other military experience, DECULTUR commitment to department, AGE2 interval age range, BRANCH2 brach of military service
- b. Dependent Variable: COMFORT I am comfortable with the tactical training I have received and rely on the training in the field.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
		B	Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	.250	1.184	
	DECULTUR commitment to department	2.674E-02	.174	-.024
	RESUB2 identify with police subculture	-.115	.157	-.106
	AGE2 interval age range	-.301	.239	-.395
	BRANCH2 brach of military service	-2.018	.619	-3.731
	OTHERS other military experience	2.732	.819	3.763
	MILITARY2	.851	.579	.193
	YEARS2 number of years in ranges served as police officer	.173	.167	.337
	RETACTIC tactical response training of officers	.983	.177	.738

Coefficients^a

Model	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	.212	.835
DECULTUR commitment to department	-.154	.880
RESUB2 identify with police subculture	-.734	.473
AGE2 interval age range	-1.262	.223
BRANCH2 brach of military service	-3.258	.004
OTHERS other military experience	3.336	.004
MILITARY2	1.471	.159
YEARS2 number of years in ranges served as police officer	1.038	.313
RETACTIC tactical response training of officers	5.540	.000

a. Dependent Variable: COMFORT I am comfortable with the tactical training I have received and rely on the training in the field.

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