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Broward County Female Officers' Perspective on Job Satisfaction: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Female Officers reported stunning portrayals of high levels of job satisfaction. The four Broward County police officers provided interviews and narrative discussions in which they all spoke about how content they were being police officers. Takedown clips featuring the Police Women of Broward County depict how these women view their jobs and will serve as the data used to develop the study.

Key words: Female police officers, job satisfaction, perspective.

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1.0 Introduction

Broward County female police officers were stars of the reality television show that went off the air after two seasons during 2012. The Women of Broward County Florida reported strong levels of job satisfaction. While, many other female officers often struggle to obtain a perception of equality within their professions, that can lead to unhappiness (Giacopassi & Sparger, 1991). The Broward County Female Officers advise that their professional lives are fulfilled and the perceptions have been organized in three categories: behavioral beliefs, control beliefs, and normative beliefs. Police officer wellness is tied to job satisfaction perception which leads to stronger on the job performance. In most

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surveys, an officer's perception of a high level of job performance tends to be correlated in terms of the number of positive interactions with the community, rather than arrest and conviction records. All police officers chiefly protect and serve the general public and these actions can take several forms.

1.01 Statement of the problem

The problem of this study is stated with a research question: From the perspective of the Broward County female officers, how satisfied are they with their jobs? The prior research in this area focused on the daily lives of female officers (Lanier, 1996). While, other studies of female police officers examined the types of job duties female officers are relegated to, within their respective agencies (Baker, 2007). The purpose of this study is to describe observations about how these female police officers experience high levels of job satisfaction.

1.02 Limitations

The limitations of the study are that the clips of takedowns used are limited to a small sample taken from The Police Women of Broward County TLC cable show. There is not a larger sample taken from other similar cable television shows for comparison.

1.03 Significance of the study

This study is important because job satisfaction levels could correlate with high skills. It is vital for public safety to have a strong police force that is content in their positions and law enforcement roles. This study has not been done before. Prior research has been mixed gender and ethnicity and surveyed officer perceptions of wellness and the perception of effectiveness on the job.

2.0 Methodology

The overall strategy and rationale for this study is to describe the self-reported high levels of job satisfaction that female police officers reported. This is a qualitative study that seeks to explain a phenomenon and will provide the readers with descriptions of events. It focuses on a specific setting, population, and phenomenon. The setting is within the setting of Broward County Florida where all of the police activities are filmed. The population is limited to the actions and behaviors of the Police Women of Broward County, more specifically, Officers Andrea Penoyer, Erika Huerta, and Shelinda Cooper. These Officers are featured in the clips taken from the television show and reviewed. The Sampling People, Behaviors, and Events are all taken from the takedown clips featured on the show, the Police Women of Broward County.

2.01 The type of design used

The ethical issues include problems with consent since the researcher did not obtain permission to discuss the actions of these police officers. The ideas stated about them and the research conducted could be consented to. The researcher can request consent if the Institutional Review Board feels that it is necessary, since these are living people and some statements made might be considered defamatory. The study is not a quantitative study and does not portray mathematical models or formulas. A qualitative study would prove to be the best method to use, in this case, according to (Creswell, 2012), since qualitative research represents our inquiry to develop a picture. And as Chenail (2011) pointed out, developing qualitative research is a reflective process for any researcher (Chenail 2011).

2.02 The role of the researcher

The researcher seeks to gather information and to present in an unbiased and logical manner. The researcher utilizes the sources in this evaluative process by considering the following whether the prior research in the field uses a qualitative or quantitative approach; whether the prior studies use a case study as the research methodology; what the participant demographics are in the particular study; whether the respective studies' findings comport with a timeline or not; the researcher's data collection instrument tool that is used in the study; and finally whether there are relevant and significant findings in the study. Surely, the researcher has an advantage, in this study, since the researcher will not be participating in the research interviews. The study interprets data has already been obtained.

2.03 Data collection procedures

The researcher did not participate in the setting and there is no direct observation. Observations are done secondarily via a review of downloadable film clips from the television show. There were no in-depth interviews conducted for this study. Documents relative to the research question are not reviewed.

3.0 Results

Taped episodes of the television show revealed that all four officers advised the public, in their words, on more than one occasion, that they were extremely happy with their jobs. The female officers advised the viewing public that they could not imagine themselves doing any other job. The taped statements made by female police officers provided the evidence for these results as discussed further below. Select statements were taken from: "Munchie Mart," "Why are you running," "Guns and snakes," and "Domestic Disturbance" as viewed on the website in the public domain before the show ended and the website was dismantled (*The Police Women of Broward County, 2011*).

4.0 Discussion

The findings are presented according to the analytical types (i) behavioral beliefs, (ii) control beliefs, and (iii) normative beliefs: Behavioral beliefs include what study participants were aware of in terms of what constituted job satisfaction. Detective Andrea Pennoyer lamented, "Our job is to target and suppress street level crime throughout Broward County Florida. It is a constant, constant, constant stream of adrenaline and I do this job because I absolutely love it." Detective Pennoyer's observations depict positive statements the officers all made regarding their own job satisfaction levels, a recurring theme in the interviews. A range of perceived benefits such as the adrenaline rush from law enforcement work, for example, were elicited. Control beliefs include the perceived internal and external barriers to job satisfaction as perceived by study participants. Job satisfaction may depend on the type of partner that the officer has. Detective Pennoyer asserted, "my partner is Ronnie Miller and he is my best buddy, where he has weaknesses, I have strengths and where I have weaknesses...he has strengths...and we just make the best team possible." And Officer Erika Huerta, stated, "in this job, depending on situations, sometimes you have to be aggressive, sometimes you have to pull out your gun, run after someone, but hey, that is what I signed up for." Here, Officer Huerta relays her views about her job duties further revealing her level of satisfaction as she readily accepts each duty. Normative beliefs "This arrest was personal.. I started this case from the very beginning...when I see defeat on a bad guy's face...its moments like this...that make months of an investigation really worth it." Deputy Shelunda Cooper advised, I work the night shift... I see it all... but I love my job and I would not trade it for the world." These sentiments echoed the positive feelings that these female police officers experience and appear to be a commonality among them.

5.0 Summary

This article explores views and experiences of job level satisfaction among the Broward County Female Police Officers. The researcher has considered whether these women could see themselves engaging in another career. Most other domestic and international prior research studies focus on peripheral issues relative to a career in law enforcement. For example, according to Law Enforcement expert Olivia Johnson, in a 2016 police officer wellness evaluation survey, there is general agreement among police officers that agency administrators tend to be concerned with dysfunction and deviance rather than placing too much emphasis on police officer resilience (Johnson, 2016). Also, there tend to be trust issues between law enforcement officials and agency officials because an officer would not want to be perceived as less resilient than anyone else, under any circumstance, even after an officer-involved shooting, for instance (Cross & Ashley, 2004). These views and experiences should be taken into account when designing recruiting programs to promote increased female participation in law enforcement. Also, it is important to consider the harmful effects of favoritism in the recruitment process which includes using power to hire or promote officers based on personal reasons regardless of that officer's skills or abilities. In fact, Tekiner and Aydin of the Turkish Police Academy and the International University of Sarajevo advised that officer motivation plays a key role in success on the job and it is well established that favoritism or nepotism reduces the motivation of the force (Tekiner & Aydin, 2016). In developed nations such as the United States and Turkey, issues with nepotism and favoritism tends to be less of a problem due to the strong role that human resources departments tend to play in order to screen and to qualify law enforcement candidates.

6.0 Conclusion

Here, in interpreting the findings of this study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations in connection with any research. The sample size is small and derived from women who had not participated in a study of job satisfaction levels among female law enforcement personnel. The study participants are essentially relatively well educated and well trained with an assortment of skills. The findings may therefore not be generalizable to other settings. In order to strive for objectivity and neutrality in research it is important to reflect on how bias may creep into the qualitative research and thus threaten validity. In short, this researcher reports and chronicles the job satisfaction level of these female police officers. It is important to consider overall job satisfaction and whether these women report that they could not imagine doing any other job. Overall, these jobs are dangerous and stress levels tend to be high for law enforcement personnel.

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