Police Officers' Perception
of the Impact of Higher Education in Policing

By

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We accept this thesis as conforming
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates, from participants' perspectives, to what extent post-secondary education impacts their performance as police officers. The study examines three areas in which education might impact policing; performance, how it may contribute to professionalism, and whether certification, with educational benchmarks, should be instituted. Quantitative and qualitative data was obtained from 250 active Edmonton Police Service officers, from rookies to seasoned officers, who had a wide range of policing experience.

The findings indicate that participants believed education was just one component of becoming a police officer. Recommendations for Police Services include the need to change the entry level educational requirement for policing to a minimum of a 2-year post-secondary program; to develop a continuing education program to make their agency a learning organization; and to work with post-secondary institutions to develop continuing educational programs that would address core competencies.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to K.A.M. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation to you for you coming into my life when you did, for your thoughtful and caring ways, and for believing in me. This special friendship, which blossomed through our journey, has been a most unexpected and cherished gift. Your constant support, encouragement, and love allowed me to experience new transitions. These transitions were not without fear and misgivings, yet you allowed me to strive to be independent and travel my own path. I look forward to sharing many walks with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change.

Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants and the ability to

satisfy them." (Commager, 2005)

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Chapter One: Defining the Issue

The issue of education as it relates to policing is a long-standing one. In fact, it is of longer standing than some might think. The most familiar accounting of the roots of the issue takes us back to the 1960s, to the various blue ribbon commissions established partly in response to the misconduct of some police officers during the urban riots of the time and the consequent need for greater professionalization. The cornerstone recommendation of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, established in 1967, was "that all police personnel with general enforcement powers have baccalaureate degrees." This was, of course, presented as "an ultimate" rather than an immediate, goal (Jacoby, 1979, p. 328). In general, the various national commissions recommended:

- That some years of college be required for appointment;

- That higher requirements be set for promotion;

- That education programs be a matter of formal policy;

- That higher education should be viewed as an occupational necessity. (Carter, Sapp, & Stephens, 1988, p. 2)

The roots of the movement to increase the level of police education actually date back to Sir Robert Peel, who made reference to the need for a professionally trained police force as he attempted to pass the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829.

The first real emphasis on professional training and education for police in North America came in the early 1930s from August Vollmer, the Chief of Police in Berkeley, California. Vollmer used his influence in the criminal justice community to argue the

merits of college-educated police officers. He believed that the complex work of police officers required education and training comparable to that of most skilled professions (Vollmer, 1936). Due largely to Vollmer's work, the University of California at Berkeley began to offer law enforcement-related courses at that time (Eskridge, 1989).

In Canada, this debate has been raised as recently as a few years ago. Mr. Justice Wallace T. Oppal's inquiry into and subsequent report on policing in British Columbia echoed Vollmer's statement:

> While the inquiry recognizes the importance of experience, the need to transform policing is urgent . . . officers must have the problem solving skills, communication skills and tolerance for diversity that a university education can provide. (1995, pp. E55–56)

The debate over the value of higher education to law enforcement still continues. Herman Goldstein (1977) stated the rationale for a college education: "The police must recruit college graduates if they are to acquire their share of able, intelligent young people from each year's addition to the work force" (p. 286).

Today, police officers are asked to prevent and confront crime, think critically, solve unique community problems, enhance the quality of life in neighbourhoods, and compassionately serve an ever-changing multicultural society. Clearly, it appears that communities are seeking intelligent, well-rounded, and flexible men and women to provide public safety in their communities.

Contemporary police leaders and academics believe that a college education will provide police officers of the 21st century with knowledge and reasoning ability to serve a

society that has increased expectations. That is not to say the vocational and practical training associated with police work should not be diminished. Ideally, police officers should be equipped with a comprehensive knowledge base. Through a higher education, police officers should gain a conceptual understanding of why police officers do their job. They should also comprehend the more practical idea of how police officers do their job, commonly learned at a police academy and through on-the-job training.

If police agencies are to maintain their position as society's protectors, they must realize that they have to change the business of policing to become more effective and efficient. To do this will require adaptable and flexible vision, thoughts and actions that address the fluidity of the legal, technological, and governance challenges of today's policing environment.

Among a number of different groups there appears to be a desire for contemporary police officers to have some post-secondary education. There also seems to be a belief that such education will help police officers deal more effectively with the variety of issues that they will confront in today's society. But if this is true, what do police officers themselves believe?

To that end, I asked the following research question: "What are police officers' perceptions of how a higher education will contribute to their becoming more professional police officers?"

A number of sub-questions were explored. They included:

- Should the entry level of education for police officers be, at the minimum, a 2-year college diploma and at best, an applicable undergraduate degree?

- Does having a higher education make one a more professional police officer?

- Does having a higher education enhance a police officer's competencies?

- Should police officers be given educational credit for the training provided and experience attained?

- Should police officers have a certification process linked to educational achievement?

Impact/Significance of the Problem/Opportunity

The external factors impacting policing are diverse. Legal decisions affect the work of police officers daily. Fiscal pressures are increasing and subsequently affecting front-line officers as well as management. Demographic changes are increasing due to immigration patterns. Special interest groups are multiplying. The organized crime groups are becoming more migratory. Technological and white-collar crime is evolving faster than the police services can respond. In addition to this, our communities are demanding more police ability. The level of accountability is increasing at an alarming rate. The community is asking the police to re-examine their position on a number of issues.

Internal changes also impact policing. Training programs need to be expanded to meet increased liability levels. High levels of attrition, which can negatively impact leadership within police agencies, necessitate high levels of recruiting. Movement between police services, virtually unknown previously, is becoming much more common.

In an open letter to the Chiefs of Police dated September 2000, the Police Association for College Education (PACE) stated a number of reasons college education should be a paramount requirement for a police officer:

> The U.S. Federal Courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have ruled on the duties and requirements to be a competent police officer . . . The need for police officers who are intelligent, articulate, mature, and knowledgeable about social and political conditions is apparent. . . . (A) college education develops and imparts the requisite level of knowledge (Davis v. Dallas) 777 F. 2d 205 (6th Cir. 1985, Certiorari denied to Supreme Court May 19, 1986.)

Today, police leaders must have an extensive knowledge base in a variety of areas. First, they need human resources expertise to maintain a healthy and effective organization. Second, these leaders must be politically astute at identifying and addressing the unique needs of their community. While addressing these needs, police executives must have significant understandings of human behaviour and well-established leadership abilities that facilitate partnerships. This is especially difficult among groups and agencies with opposing views and interests. Police executives must be able to understand and harmonize the social and legal changes that routinely influence the way police agencies serve their communities.

Only through this continuous and often complicated analysis will law enforcement leaders be effective in managing the risk of litigation against themselves and their organizations. The final piece of the puzzle that forms current successful police leadership is an understanding of fiscal matters. Across North America, police agencies

are examining business practices hoping to operate with less bureaucracy and more efficiency. The police leader must play an active role in analyzing the financial needs of the organization. This includes identifying alternate sources of funding, preparing comprehensive budgets, and communicating fiscal realities to members of the organization and the community.

Potential Causes of the Problem/Factors Contributing to the Opportunity

As previously mentioned, many efforts, through a variety of commissions and advisory councils, attempted to professionalize policing. The belief was that college graduates would be more professional in the way they performed their policing duties and generally more effective in serving the community (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967).

Progressive law enforcement leaders believed that having police officers with a college education would elevate policing into the status of a profession enjoyed by many other groups. It was felt that a college-educated police officer would have gained a well-balanced base of both practical and intellectual knowledge to call upon (Reppetto, 1980).

If there is a single point upon which police and their critics agree, it is that the reform of the police through professionalization is the principle means by which the police can be made effective, more efficient, and more accountable to the public.

Some police administrators argue that police officers are professionals, but Mayo (1985) counters that the police are not independent professionals such as doctors and lawyers, and there is substantial doubt that they lay claim to a special expertise to

underpin their claims of police professionalism. Brown (1981) also took exception to claims with police professionalism:

> Police work is based on an ideal of service but their autonomy has less to do with acknowledged professional status than with contemporary structure of municipal government. The modern police are closer to Amos Perlmutter's concept of "corporate professionals." Corporate professionalism is based on a "fusion between the professional and the bureaucrat—a fusion between exclusivity and managerial responsibility." (pp. 40–41)

Brown (1981) sees professionalism as being based on three related elements: professionals are experts, they apply the results of theoretical knowledge acquired during an extended period of training to a specialized area of human endeavour, and their actions and decisions are presumably governed by universalistic criteria.

Other writers have also declined to use the term "profession" to describe policing. Etzoni (as cited in Geller, 1985) called law enforcement a "semi-profession" (p. 351). The concept of police professionalism, however, seems particularly appropriate as we seek answers to the problems confronting policing and seek to define the role of policing in the 21st century.

Certain types of behaviour are regarded by the public as unacceptable, and professionalization is then proposed as a means for controlling police conduct so as to preclude unacceptable behaviour through the an independent oversight body.

Professionalization is seen as a solution because it prescribes an externally based code and requires personnel to adhere to that new code rather than internal systems. The

process of imposing those external controls is the process of professionalization, which produces a set of role perceptions such that job-related behaviour is deemed acceptable or unacceptable in reference to the values and constraints inherent in the professional code.

Certification has been identified as one way a profession affirms its authority and legitimacy on its members (Azzaretto, 1992). Professional certification can be a voluntary process regulated by the profession to advance the competencies of the individual practitioners and to enhance the prestige of the profession (Bumgarner, 2002). Certification is accomplished by mastering a body of knowledge and set of competencies identified by the regulating professional association and then submitting to a regulatory mechanism set up by the profession to gauge the proficiency of its practitioners (Azzaretto).

One key aspect in certification has been the application of a higher education component. Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of higher education for police officers. These studies have shown that higher education is associated with greater job satisfaction (Carlan, 1999; Dantzker, 1993); better communication skills (Hooper, 1988; Palumbo, 1995; Vodicka, 1994); better job performance (Cascio, 1977; Finnegan, 1976; Geary, 1979, Murrell, 1982; Saunders, 1970; Smith & Aamodt, 1997); and greater promotion potential (Truxillo, Bennett, & Collins, 1998).

In July 2002, the Solicitor General of Alberta released the final report of the MLA Policing Review Committee that included 35 recommendations on a wide range of issues regarding policing in Alberta. A key recommendation was to establish a "Center of Policing Excellence" (p. 23). The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) saw this as an

opportunity and in partnership with various post-secondary educational institutions, including the University of Alberta and Athabasca University, developed a "Certification Model" for police officers in Alberta. This certification designation could be seen as a key developmental step in the *professionalization* of police agencies within the province.

The certification of policing provincially is tentatively designed to elevate the professional standards and individual performance of police officers in the province of Alberta. Those proposing this certification model believe that individual performance is elevated as a direct result of experience, training, and post-secondary education. They also feel that competency acquisition is facilitated through increased knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired from experience, combined with continuing education and training.

The proposed model of certification would be sustainable, flexible, and consistent in meeting the present needs of police agencies in Alberta and accommodating tomorrow's needs.

The AACP (Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police) is considering dividing this certification into two domains. One domain will encompass the investigative or operational component of police duties. The second domain will look to incorporate the administrative or governance function. A governing committee will determine a provincial standard of learning for each designated course based on agreed-upon core competencies. Each domain of certification will necessitate a minimum requirement of professional and specialized training and post-secondary education (Edmonton Police Service, 2003a).

The Alberta Association of Police Chiefs sees this proposed certification of provincial policing as reflecting the guiding principles of professionalization:

- Incremental development and succession planning

- Promotion of life-long learning

- Increase of knowledge, skills and abilities

- Competency-based (Edmonton Police Service, 2003a).

The key aspect, in my opinion, to this certification model is the enhancement of one's level of post-secondary education and the engagement of police officers into a continuous learning process. The certification model is designed to prepare officers for the complex challenges they face in today's multi-layered society.

The Organization

The Edmonton Police Service

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is a 1,200-member municipal police service that provides policing to the 666,000 residents of the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001a). The city of Edmonton serves as the economic, recreation, and education hub (Census Metropolitan Area) for persons from the surrounding area, which increases the number of citizens served by the Edmonton Police Service to 937,000 (Statistics Canada, 2001b). The mission statement of the Edmonton Police Service is "Policing with the citizens of Edmonton to achieve a safe, healthy and self-reliant community" (Edmonton Police Service, 2003c, p. 1). As this mission statement indicates,

the goal of the Edmonton Police Service is greater involvement of citizens in policing their communities.

To meet that goal and strive to achieve the mission statement, the EPS is organized into four bureaus: Patrol Services, Investigative Services, Corporate Services, and Administrative Services. The Patrol Services Bureau provides the primary policing service to the citizens of Edmonton, provides the initial response to citizen calls for service and investigations, and is the primary provider of problem-solving and community policing initiatives. Investigative Services Bureau furnishes specialized investigation services (such as Robbery Section, Sex Crimes Section, Family Violence Section) as well as specialized investigation support services (intelligence, forensic identification) to Patrol Services and the citizens of Edmonton. Corporate and Administrative Services Bureaus deliver all the administrative and logistic support needed by the Edmonton Police Service. Of the approximately 1,200 sworn (police) members in the Edmonton Police Service, approximately 700 sworn members are assigned to Patrol Services Bureau (Edmonton Police Service, 2003c).

The Patrol Services Bureau is divided into four patrol divisions and a support division. Each patrol division consists of three patrol platoons (ideally, 45 members per platoon) of four squads (ideally one sergeant and 10 constables per squad) and an investigative section of eight detectives. The Policy and Procedures manual of the Edmonton Police Service (2003b) states that the primary responsibilities of Patrol Services Bureau are reaction to, reduction, and prevention of crime; that direction assigns primary responsibility for community policing/problem-solving projects to Patrol

Services Bureau. The units responsible for community policing are the patrol platoons. The following is a list of the responsibilities of the members of Patrol Services Bureau (Edmonton Police Service, 2003b):

- Response to emergent, hazardous, and suspicious circumstances

- Enforcement of municipal, provincial, and federal legislation

- Providing a visible police presence in order to deter crime and instill public confidence in community safety

- The initial investigation of reported and perceived breaches of the public peace or the law

- Increasing traffic safety and ensuring the free flow of traffic

- Accurate presentation of investigative evidence in a court of law

- Working with communities and individuals in order to identify and address recurring problems

- Gathering and sharing of intelligence with appropriate units and agencies, and

- Representing the EPS in a professional and positive manner.

The four patrol divisions provide those services through a variety of means:

- Patrol members operating in vehicles who are tasked to respond to requests for police service anywhere in a division or, if need be, to assist in another division.

- Beat constables who operate on foot or on bicycle and are assigned a specific area of responsibility within a division that is characterized by a high number of calls for service.

- Members assigned to community stations. These store front office locations operate seven days a week for specified hours. The members assigned to community stations are not able to leave the location to assist the public. They provide face-to-face reporting of non-exigent investigations (mischief to property with no suspect, vehicle collisions). They also offer advice and forward requests for services that they cannot provide to the appropriate police unit.

- Division headquarters stations are open to the public 24 hours a day and provide the same services as those at community stations.

The fifth division within Patrol Services Bureau (Support Division) delivers support services to the bureau such as: traffic investigation specialists, communications (call evaluation and radio dispatch), air support (helicopter and fixed wing), and tactical section.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined the desire of the different groups and individuals to include, as a requirement for today's police officer, some level of post-secondary education. An examination of the external and internal impacts of today's changing criminal justice landscape was also conducted.

These issues contributed to the formulation of my research question and the various sub-questions. There were three key aspects that formed the underlying foundation of my research: professionalization, certification, and the application of higher

education in both of these areas. These cornerstones will be looked at, in-depth, in

Chapter 2 as I review the literature on these subjects.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Review of Organizational Documents

A review of several key organizational documents was undertaken in an attempt to understand the sponsoring organization itself as well as the larger system within which the organization operates. Documents included were obtained from the Edmonton Police Service, the Alberta Solicitor General, and the Alberta Association of the Chiefs of Police.

Alberta Solicitor General

In October 2000, the Alberta Solicitor General formed an MLA Policing Review Committee which put forward a paper to provide a framework for the discussion of policing in Alberta. This discussion paper provided background on the current state of policing in the province and outlined a variety of issues both strategic and legislative. This committee chose to solicit public and stakeholder submissions in response to this discussion paper and consulted with experts on issues arising from these submissions.

In July 2002 Alberta Justice released the MLA Policing Review Committee's report. Over the course of two years, they received numerous submissions that eventually resulted in over 35 recommendations specific to the improvement of policing in Alberta. These recommendations were further discussed in the Alberta Solicitor General Business Plan 2002–2005.

The MLA Policing Review Committee was an opportunity to enhance the "profession" of policing in this province. Recommendations were made to develop a

provincial "Centre of Policing Excellence" (recommendation #11) for the professional

development of police officers throughout Alberta. This training centre would also be the

provincial entry point (recommendation #12) for "police officers, deputy constables, and

other law enforcement personnel" creating a pool of highly qualified police graduates for

any police service in Alberta to draw upon.

Edmonton Police Service (EPS)

The MLA Policing Review Committee report provided the opportunity to further

enhance a framework for policing excellence. In November of 2002, Deputy Chief G.

Shimko authored a paper entitled "A New View on Post Secondary Education." In this

document D/C Shimko outlined various factors that are impacting poling on a global

basis and which will require police training to "demonstrate the direct relevance of

classroom theory to everyday management and crime control problems" (Shimko, 2002,

p. 5).

Shimko's (2002) paper led to the development of the Provincial Police

Accreditation and Education Development Sub-committee. In May 2003, as a result of

this committee's work, the Edmonton Police Service, acting as a catalyst within the

framework of the AACP, looked at developing a certification designation for police

officers in Alberta as a key developmental step in the professionalization of police

agencies within the province.

The certification of provincial policing would be designed to elevate the

professional standards and individual performance of police officers in the province of

Alberta. "Individual performance is elevated as a direct result of experience, training and post-secondary education. Competency acquisition is facilitated through increased knowledge, skills and abilities acquired from experience, combined with continuing education and training" (Edmonton Police Service, 2003d).

Alberta Association of the Chiefs of Police (AACP)

A proposal to consider the certification of police officers in Alberta was formally tabled to the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police in November 2003 in a document entitled, *Professional Certification of Police Officers in the Province of Alberta: Business Plan Research Proposal.* This business case had the tentative support of the Alberta Federation of Police Associations (AFPA), the Alberta Association of Police Governance (AAPG), and the Alberta Association of Justice of Education and Training (AAJET).

The business plan would incorporate a literature review of best practices, develop a set of core competencies for each rank segment throughout the province, develop a typology of learning outcomes linking each to a pre-determined set of core competencies, and develop a matrix model that would indicate how each academic program would assist individual officers and police services to achieve the designated core competencies and stages of the certification model.

The Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police saw this proposed certification of provincial policing as reflecting the guiding principles of professionalization:

- Incremental development and succession planning
- Promote life-long learning

- Increase knowledge, skills and abilities

- Competency-based

These key documents laid the foundation of the proposed certification model for police officers in Alberta. They also dealt with the components of post-secondary education, professionalism, and certification which will be looked at in-depth in the following literature review.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of my study is to determine if municipal police officers in Edmonton, Alberta see a post-secondary education as contributing to the idea of professionalism in policing as well as making a police officer more professional. Additionally, would the certification process of municipal police officers contribute to the perception of policing as being a profession?

This literature review will look at the dynamics of the three cornerstones of this research project; these are (1) the differentiation between profession and professionalization and their relationship to the occupation of policing; (2) the response of the policing community to enhance its educational standards to post-secondary levels; and (3) the certification process of police officers specifically within North America.

Professionalization

There has been an ongoing debate regarding whether policing is a craft or a profession (Crank, 1990; Walker, 1978; Wilson, 1968). Wilson (1968) contended that

policing is more like a craft because police officers are generalists, because their work is task-oriented and subordinated in a bureaucratic, quasi-military organization, because they learn their jobs through apprenticeship, and because there is an absence of professional referents to guide the development of values and ideas about practice. Wilson's 50-year-old contention begs the question: How would you define policing today? Is it a craft or a profession? To answer this question, one has to understand the differences between craftsmanship and professionalism.

Stephen Graubard, in the preface to *Professions in America*, made the following observations of Alfred North Whitehead's approach to distinguishing crafts from professions.

The professions are as characteristic of the modern world as the crafts were of the ancient. Alfred North Whitehead, in developing the distinction between the two, recognized the importance of specialization and institutionalization in creating the professions, but he saw these as secondary developments. For him there had been a prior necessity, which was the leap from being satisfied with customary procedures to that of seeing the necessity of organizing and using intelligence in new ways. A craft, he explained, was "an avocation based upon customary activities and modified by the trial and error of individual practice." A profession, in contrast, was "an avocation whose activities are subject to theoretical analysis, and are modified by theoretical conclusions derived from that analysis." An intellectual revolution separated these two activities. Whitehead's concern was to

document it, suggesting its importance for contemporary civilization. (Lynn, 1965, p. v)

Flexner (1915) did the first classic work on professionalism in 1910. He set six criteria to define professions:

- they involve essentially intellectual operations with large individual responsibility;

- they derive their raw material from science and learning;

- this material they work up to a practical and definite end;

- they possess an educationally communicable technique;

- they tend to self-organization;

- they are becoming increasingly altruistic in motivation. (p. 904)

Sixty years later Rose (1974) added six different criteria:

- association with high-status knowledge;

- association with universities;

- association with high social class;

- association with activities that have high value to many people;

- association with beliefs in processes that have acquired a high degree of mystique; and

- association with power bases. (p. 23)

Through the years, these characteristics have evolved and include:

- a service orientation which does not advance the self-interest of the professional at the expense of the client;

- an association with a client based on a dispassionate assessment of the client's needs;

- a specialized and largely theoretical body of knowledge acquired during a period of formal education;

- standards for entry, for professional practice, and for ethical conduct; and

- a strong professional association or other mechanism for maintaining professional standards. (Sagen, 1986, p. 129)

It is important to note that an occupation either is or is not a profession. However it may be plausible that one can act professionally within something that is not a profession. Houle (1981) makes a distinction between professionalism and professionalization, suggesting that the former is a static concept and the latter is more dynamic. The notion of professionalism uses canons (absolute criteria), while a professionalization approach uses the idea of characteristics (dynamic criteria). To clarify this point further, a canon may state that "A profession must have a clearly defined code of ethics." A characteristic might state "A professionalizing occupation should be concerned with the continuing refinement of ethical standards that characterize its work" (Houle, 1981, p. 27). Characteristics, by their dynamic nature, can take the form of goals for a professionalizing occupation.

From the approach that occupations are professionalizing—an ongoing process never fully achieved—we can move away from examining whether occupations meet absolute canons. Cervero (1988) calls this approach the "process approach" (p. 7). The questions about an occupation then move toward, "To what extent does the occupation

possess this characteristic and how is it working toward refinement?" (Houle, 1981, p. 27).

Wilensky (1964) offers the sequence of steps by which an occupation develops into a recognized profession:

1. full time activity at the task

2. establishment of university training

3. national professional association

4. redefinition of the core task

5. conflict between old-timers and the new men who seek to upgrade the job

6. competition between the new occupation and neighbouring ones

7. political agitation to gain legal protection, and

8. development and implementation of a code of ethics. (pp.141–145)

Policing may be considered to be in the midst of professionalizing because most of the focus in law enforcement literature has been on the development of college and university programs with the emphasis by law enforcement leaders on law enforcement training programs.

Houle (1981) considers the professionalizing process complex. He lists 14 characteristics under three categories: conceptual characteristics, performance characteristics, and collective identity characteristics. These characteristics are associated with the professionalizing process, which should be looked at in understanding the goals of pre-service preparation, as well as the active years of practice. He defines these categories as follows:

Conceptual Characteristics

(1) "Defining its function" (Houle, 1981, p. 35): Concerned with clarifying and defining the function of the profession.

Performance Characteristics

(2) "Mastery of theoretical knowledge" (Houle, 1981, p. 40): Understand the information and theory that comprise the knowledge base of the profession.

(3) "Capacity to solve problems" (Houle, 1981, p. 42): Apply the growing body of academic theory into the development of practical problem solve techniques.

> Knowledge is growing at a far more rapid pace than is the capacity of the human mind to absorb it. As this expansion occurs, new frontiers requiring further study are discovered. "The professional's essential task is not to apply a specific fact or principle to a particular case but to deal with it by the use of a synthesis of all relevant knowledge. As each problem presents itself in its own way (even though it may fit into a similar category), the professional must take account of the total pattern of circumstances presented and treat it in a unique fashion, with an awareness that the outcome is always in doubt" (Houle, 1981, p. 43).

(4) "Use of practical knowledge" (Houle, 1981, p. 45): Practical application of the learned knowledge and techniques.

(5) "Self-enhancement" (Houle, 1981, p. 47): Develop learning into a life long habit.

Collective Identity Characteristics

Those who seek seriously to professionalize an occupation try, in many ways, to establish its collective identity by building systems and structures that foster and maintain conceptual and competency characteristics. "The professionalizing occupations are distinctive from these other vocations because their leaders seek to encourage and regulate standards of practice based on a profound central mission and on advanced and esoteric bodies of knowledge" (Houle, 1981, p. 49).

(6) "Formal training" (Houle, 1981, p. 51): Establish a formal body of knowledge that can be taught to those who wish to enter the profession. "In the modern era the placement of specialized courses of study in universities or other higher education institutions...has become such a dominant method as to be, in the opinion of many people, the hallmark of professionalism itself" (Houle, 1981, p. 52).

(7) "Credentialing" (Houle, 1981, p. 54): Ensure that the members of the profession are performing to the minimum acceptable levels and that they are aware of what those standards are.

(8) "Creation of subculture" (Houle, 1981, p. 57): The continuous development of a distinctive subculture.

(9) "Legal reinforcement" (Houle, 1981, p. 59): The establishment of a legal support or formal administrative body that protects the special rights and privileges of its practitioners.

(10) "Public acceptance" (Houle, 1981, p. 61): Ensure that the community is aware of and understands the nature of the work that is done by the profession.

(11) "Ethical practice" (Houle, 1981, p. 63): Establish ethical codes of conduct.

(12) "Penalties" (Houle, 1981, p. 66): The application of sanctions for those who are incompetent or who fail to act in terms of accepted ethical standards.

(13) "Relations to other vocations" (Houle, 1981, p. 67): Establish and maintain professional and collegial relationships with collaborative professions.

(14) "Relations to Users of Service" (Houle, 1981, p. 70): The understanding of the formal relationship between the profession and their clients is clearly defined.

The Role of Education and Professionalism

It is interesting to note that Houle (1981) does not consider law enforcement to be a professionalizing occupation. In the following passage, he lists law enforcement as non-professionalizing, even though legal restrictions are required for admission.

All occupations are controlled by general laws . . . such as those having to do with

child labor and minimum wages . . . people, who work in many non-

professionalizing vocations such as farm operators, labor leaders, and law

enforcement officers, also receive special support of various kinds or are

governed by legislation that applies only to them. (Houle, p. 59)

How does the role of higher education and training relate to professionalism?

Education, both formal and informal, plays a significant role in defining, selecting, developing, screening, and maintaining professionals and in the professionalizing process of occupations. How much education and training is necessary has always been a controversial issue. This is true within policing.

Abbott (1988) makes the following observations about the role of academic knowledge in the professions. "The academic knowledge system of a profession generally accomplishes three tasks; legitimization, research and instruction and in each it shapes the vulnerability of professional jurisdiction to outside interference" (pp. 56–57). Research allows for the discovery of new practices, which help maintain the profession. Most professions retain the ability to instruct themselves.

The role of continuing professional education is crucial to the refinement and maintenance of competence. Continuing professional education should work hand-in-hand with the basic higher education pre-professional education phase. The higher the education phase, the more it should prepare the individual for continuing professional development. According to Houle (1981), there is little relationship between success in professional training programs and professional competence.

It seems likely that at least part of the discrepancy between basic education and later demonstration of competence is a result of the amount and quality of continuing education undertaken by practitioners. Consequently, it is probable that one way in which a basic professional program might enhance later competence would be by ensuring the fact that, during the years spent in the school's subculture, the student's personal commitment to lifelong learning is firmly established both by curricular changes and by efforts to alter the customs and behavior patterns of the students. (Houle, 1981, p. 84)

One could surmise that the gap between the established body of knowledge of the profession and the attempt to maintain competence in that knowledge is caused by new

professional information. An essential ingredient of professional education has to be a basic education that emphasizes a continuous exploration and search for answers to questions that professionals face as preparation for the continuing education and development process that must be a part of a professional's career. When the basic education is completed, continuing education starts. Lifelong learning is the key to the professionalizing process.

Winston Churchill (as cited in Houle, 1981) had noted that "The most important thing about education is appetite. Education does not begin with the university and it certainly ought not to end there" (p. 129). The role of both pre-service and continuing education has to be to create and encourage either innovators or pace setters to use Houle's terms (1981). Professions should not be guided by the interests of those Houle refers to as the "middle majority" or the "laggards" (p. 153).

It is important to note that not everyone agrees that professionalization is a goal to be sought. Critics of professionalization have seen a shift from the notions of self-sacrifice and service to a pursuit of power and prestige.

> With the pursuit of power and prestige, professions have taken on hierarchies of power; less and less direct contact between professional and client; highly specialized languages; greater monetary expenditures required in preparatory education; an increase in internal talk as contrasted with interaction with the larger community; and an overall exclusivity marked by racism, sexism and classism. (Noddings, 1990, p. 402)

Police and Higher Education Literature

There have been intense discussions about whether a college education makes a better police officer. This debate reached its height in the 1960s and early 1970s as various groups set out to improve law enforcement, respect for which had fallen to an all-time low in the public's eyes. This movement tied in with larger societal issues about the role and efficacy of formal education. The issues are generally met with rhetoric and position taking based upon one's value system.

The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (NACCJSG) in 1973 issued a report entitled *Police* which attempted to establish, as a national goal, a college education for employment in law enforcement by asserting that "Every police agency should, no later than 1982, require as a condition of initial employment the completion of at least four years of education (120 semester units or a baccalaureate degree) at an accredited college or university" (NACCJSG, p. 369). At the same time, similar recommendations were made by several bodies including "Governors' Mutual Assistance Program for Criminal Justice in 1973, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1971, Police Foundation in 1972, American Bar Association in 1972, National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968, and the Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969" (Hoover, 1974, pp. 6–8).

Hoover (1974) made the following three arguments about raising the educational standards for law enforcement. First, the magnitude of crime has risen to the point that more qualified personnel are necessary to cope with it. Second, the nature of the police function involves conflict resolution skills that require the officer to balance crime

fighting with social work. Someone with a college education may handle this conflict resolution role better as education encourages a broader social perspective. Third, and, for Hoover, most important, "the use of police discretionary power within the restraining intent of the Bill of Rights is a delicate and comprehensive intellectual task" (p. 209).

To encourage police officers to achieve a college-level education the NACCJSG (1973) in *Police* recommended that departments provide "financial assistance to defray the expense of books, materials, tuition, and other reasonable expenses" (p. 372). In addition, they recommended that incentive pay should "amount to at least 2.5% of the employee's current salary for each 30 semester units of college work completed" (p. 372). Many departments have adopted a version of this program, although no precise figures of how many have been published. It is also unclear whether this financial motivation has been effective in achieving the stated objective.

Miller and Fry (1976) found that having a college education did not change the perceptions of peace officers about professionalism, work strain, or job satisfaction. Yet, 20 years later Dantzker (1993) and Carlan (1999) found that a higher education was associated with greater job satisfaction. Saunders (1970) argued that a police manpower shortage had risen because of a lack of quality. He believed that law enforcement careers require the same type of foundation as education, medicine, and the law:

> The qualities which law enforcement leaders claim to look for in recruits are the
> very ones which liberal education is believed to nurture: knowledge of changing
> social, economic, and political conditions; understanding of human behavior; and
> the ability to communicate; together with the assumption of certain moral values,

habits of mind, and qualities of self-discipline which are important in sustaining a

commitment to public service. (Saunders, pp. 82–83).

Similar ideas were reflected by the American Bar Association's conclusions in *The*

Urban Police Function (1972).

Police agencies need personnel in their ranks who have the characteristics a

college education seeks to foster: intellectual curiosity, analytical ability, articulateness,

and a capacity to relate the events of the day to the social, political, and historical context

in which they occur (NACCJSG, 1973, p. 368).

Since the late 1960s, there has been debate about the contribution of education to

lowering or raising police cynicism (Lester, 1982; Lester, 1987; Neiderhoffer, 1967;

Regoli, 1976; Regoli, Crank, & Polle, 1987; Wilt & Bannon, 1976). Others focused on

the impact of education on various attitudes that education might affect (Finchenauer,

1975; Lester, 1987; Miller & Fry, 1976; Weiner, 1976; Wycoff & Susmilch, 1979).

One prevailing notion that was common knowledge amongst police managers at

that time arising from the poor handling of civil disorder situations was that police

officers had "a bad attitude." Education, it was hoped, would fix their "attitude problem."

The evidence sought then was to try to discover if attitude difference was based upon

educational level. On the contrary, Wycoff and Susmilch (1979) found that education did

not generally have a strong impact on attitudes.

Cohen and Chaiken's (1972) review of background characteristics of police

officers in New York City examined the departmental records for specific performance

data. Educational levels, at the time of appointment, were found to be significantly

related to promotions and disciplinary actions, but not to awards or other performance measures.

Education after appointment was also researched by Cohen and Chaiken (1972). They found such education to be inversely related to total complaints, trials, substantiated complaints, departmental charges, civilian complaints, times sick, and injury disapprovals. They also found post-secondary education to be positively related to promotions. Cascio (1977) went beyond attitude type indicators in his survey of 940 Dade County officers. He found that college education tended to be "associated with fewer injuries, fewer injuries by assault and battery, fewer disciplinary actions from accidents, fewer preventable accidents (especially for blacks), fewer sick times per year, fewer physical force allegations, and so forth" (p. 90).

Sapp (1988) advocated the need for college degrees for police officers using the following argument:

> It is perhaps too early to tell if law enforcement's failure to meet this target is suggestive of an impossibly high goal or an insufficient commitment by the law enforcement community. However, it may be time for a new initiative to increase the educational requirements for entry into policing. Thomas Amman suggests that by 1995 between one-third and one-half of the adult population will have at least two years of college education. As the educational level of the general public increases, the level for law enforcement must also increase. (p. 9)

Sapp (1988) chastised law enforcement for not doing more than trying to recruit college-educated applicants while maintaining a high school or GED entry-level

requirement: "The only true measure of law enforcement's commitment to education is the establishment of a specific requirement for college education at the entry level" (p. 9).

A thorough review by the Police Executive Research Forum (Carter, Sapp, & Stephens, 1989) was conducted on this whole area of police education. Their monograph provided testimony from many quarters of the need for higher educational standards for police officers. This monograph, *The State of Police Education: Policy Direction for the 21st Century,* summarized many hypothesized advantages of college education for police. (See Chart # 1, "Benefits of College Educated Police Officers," as cited in Coleman, 2002, p. 35.)

CHART #1: BENEFITS OF COLLEGE EDUCATED POLICE OFFICERS
• Provides the police officer with a broader base of information upon which to make decisions
• Improves their communication skills
• Enables increased creativity and innovation
• Improves their problem solving capacity
• Enables increased sensitivity and empathy to minorities
• Reduces their rigidity when making decisions
• Enables police officers to accept and adapt to organizational change more readily
• Equips them to better perform tasks and make continuous policing decisions with little or no supervision
• Tends to make them less authoritarian and cynical
• Makes them more innovative and flexible when dealing with complex policing programs and strategies such as community policing
• Helps them develop overall community relations skills, including the respect and confidence of the community.   • Facilitates their research and reasoning abilities
• Provides tangible evidence of their ability and willingness to learn

This chart was developed from Carter and Sapp (1991), and Oppal (1996) (as cited in Coleman, 2002, p. 35).

In my review of the literature regarding the relationship between police performance and higher education, I have found evidence of a somewhat positive

relationship between the two. Conversely, there is no evidence of a negative relationship

(Hart, Scane, Burnaby, & Thomas, as cited in Coleman, 2002).

Certification

If there is a single point on which police and their critics agree, it is that reform of

the police through professionalization is the principle means by which the police can be

made more effective, more efficient, and more accountable to the public.

> Lack of professionalism contributes to the extensive misinformation and
>
> information voids that permeate and impede police administration today. In every
>
> usage, professionalism means "professional quality and status," professional
>
> means, "characterized by or conforming to the technical and ethical standards of a
>
> profession," and profession means "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and
>
> often long and intensive academic training. (Mayo, 1985, p. 397)

> Some police administrators argue that their police officers are professionals, but

Mayo (1985) counters that the police are not independent professionals like doctors and

lawyers, and that there is substantial doubt that they can lay claim to a special expertise to

underpin their claims of police professionalism. Brown (1981) also took exception to

claims of police professionalism:

> Police work is based on an ideal of service, but their autonomy has less to do with
>
> acknowledged professional status than with contemporary structure of municipal
>
> government. The modern police are closer to Amos Perlmutter's concept of
>
> "corporate professionals." Corporate professionalism is based on a "fusion

between the professional and the bureaucrat – a fusion between group exclusivity

and managerial responsibility. (Brown, 1981, pp. 40–41)

Brown (1981) sees professionalism as based on three related elements:

professionals are experts, they apply the results of theoretical knowledge acquired during

an extended period of training to a specialized area of human endeavour, and their actions

and decisions are presumably governed by universalistic criteria.

Certain types of behaviour are regarded by the public, or some segment of the

public, as unacceptable. Professionalization is then proposed as the means of controlling

police conduct so as to preclude unacceptable behaviour. This solution is chosen because

apparently the reformers are aware of the phenomenon of police solidarity, which

underlies what James Q. Wilson (1963) calls the "code of the system."

The process of imposing those external controls is the process of

professionalization, which produces a set of role perceptions such that job-related

behaviour is deemed acceptable or unacceptable in reference to the values and constraints

inherent in the professional code.

Certification has been identified as one way a profession can affirm its authority

and legitimacy on its members (Azzaretto, 1992). Professional certification can be a

voluntary process regulated by the profession to advance the competencies of the

individual practitioners and to enhance the prestige of the profession (Bumgarner, 2002).

Certification is accomplished by mastering a body of knowledge and set of competencies

identified by the regulating professional association and then submitting to a regulatory

mechanism set up by the profession to gauge the proficiency of its practitioners

(Azzaretto,1992).

One key aspect in certification has been the application of a higher education

component. These studies have shown that higher education is associated with greater job

satisfaction (Carlan, 1999; Dantzker, 1993); better communication skills (Hooper, 1988;

Palumbo, 1995; Vodicka, 1994;); better job performance (Cascio, 1977; Finnegan, 1976;

Geary, 1979; Murrell, 1982; Saunders, 1970; Smith & Aamodt, 1997); and greater

promotional potential (Truxillo, Bennett, & Collins, 1998) among other benefits.

> Human capital is the primary component of police organizations. Over 80% of
>
> most police budgets are spent on their biggest asset, their people. In order to
>
> ensure that this resource is utilized to its full capacity, lifelong learning is
>
> necessary to maintain and ensure that human capital grows to meet the demands
>
> of an ever-changing, highly sophisticated, and better-educated society. In order to
>
> meet these demands, law enforcement's own competitive edge will increasingly
>
> depend on the way it acquires, creates, manages, and transfers its own knowledge.
>
> (Wardlaw, 2000)

Basic Certification Requirements: United States, Britain, and Australia

Dr. Curtis Clarke (2004) prepared a report outlining the various basic certification

requirements that captured both the initial requirements for employment with a police

service as well as the initial training that is given, either before or within the first two

years of an individual being hired. Tables1 through 3 outline these certification

requirements.

Table 1

United States (Data obtained from State Police Associations and POST Boards)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Alabama	480 hours basic law enforcement training	12 hours annually of continuing education	
Arkansas	The Basic Certificate is awarded after completing the Basic Police Training Course and a minimum twelve-month probationary period.		
Arizona	585 hours of mandated training		
Colorado (Boulder)	Two year associate degree or 60 college semester hours		

Table 1

United States (Data obtained from State Police Associations and POST Boards)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Connecticut	Allowed one year to complete training. Officer probationary period		
Indiana	40 hours pre-basic training, 50 hours of home study and 480 hours basic training at the State academy		
Kansas	320 hours of accredited instruction at State or Local Academy	Prior to start of second year 40hrs of law enforcement related course work.	
Massachusetts	800 hours	Focused professional development (3 weeks)	
Nevada	480 hours basic law enforcement training		

Table 1

United States (Data obtained from State Police Associations and POST Boards)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
North Carolina	9 week training	40 continuing law enforcement education hours in a 3-year period	
North Dakota		60 hours of certified training or criminal justice courses every three years	May fill the In-service requirements by taking equivalent college credits.
South Carolina	9 week training	40 continuing law enforcement education hours in a 3-year period	
Texas	560 hours of basic training	40 hours of continuing education once every 24 months	

Table 1

United States (Data obtained from State Police Associations and POST Boards)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Wisconsin	400 hours of basic law enforcement training	Minimum of 20 hrs annually	Must complete 60 college credits or associate degree within five years of initial employment

Table 2

Australia (Data obtained from Australasian Police Professional Standards Council)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Australian Federal Police	19 weeks basic training, followed by course modules over a 12 month probationary period		

Table 2

Australia (Data obtained from Australasian Police Professional Standards Council)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Queensland	After meeting employment criteria (see chart below *) Recruits must complete basic training, which includes a six-month full time program.		
South Australia	28 weeks training program which includes 7 courses transferable to the certificate in Justice studies. 18-month probationary period.		7 courses that transfer The justice System, Policing and the community, Psychology, Police Practice 1, legal studies, Communications, Intro to Criminal Investigations

Table 2

Australia (Data obtained from Australasian Police Professional Standards Council)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Western *Australia*	Basic training 26 weeks		
New South Wales	Diploma of Policing practice prior to employment. Followed by 14 weeks at NSW Police College. 12 month probationary and a second year of distance courses.		Bachelor of Justice Studies, Bachelor of Policing. 3yr program followed by 14 weeks at NSW Police College. 12-month probationary period.

Table 2

Australia (Data obtained from Australasian Police Professional Standards Council)

State	Training Hours	Basic In-service Training	External Education
Victoria	124 weeks of training completed over two and a half years. Phase one–20 week recruit training. Phase two–on the job training. Phase three–3 weeks of additional training at the academy.		After successful completion of the three phases, a Diploma of Public Safety (Policing) is granted.

Table 3

Queensland Employment requirements

Full time Employment Experience	Required Study
Less than 3 years	3 or more semesters within a Bachelor degree or an accredited diploma
Between 3 and 5 years	400 hours of Diploma-level study or 8 subjects of a Bachelor degree
More than 5 years	200 hours of Diploma-level study or 4 subjects of a Bachelor degree

Advanced Certification Requirements: United States

For the purpose of this analysis, a number of U.S. states utilize a system of certification that builds on several levels of certification. These certificates can be achieved through a combination of experience, training, and college education. Tables 4 through 15 highlight both similar components and variations in certification criteria. As in the case of previously noted Basic Certification requirements, the examples cited have transferable value to the AACP certification model.

Table 4

Alaska: Requirements for intermediate certificate

Years experience	2	4	4	5	6	7	8
Training hours			900	750	600	460	300
Education Degree or Credit	BA or BS	AA or AS	45	38	30	23	15

Table 5

Alaska: Requirements for advanced certificate

Years experience	4	6	9	9	10	11	12
Training hours				900	800	700	600
Education Degree or credit	Masters	BA/BS	AA/AS or 45	45	40	35	30

Oregon also has a similar structure for intermediate and advanced certification. The difference is found in the training hour requirements: 760 hours training at the five-year level (Intermediate) and 1,200 hours training at the eight-year level (Advanced).

Table 6

California: Regular or Specialized Intermediate Certificate requirements

Years Experience	2	4	4	6	8
Training Points			45	30	15
Education	BA or BS	AS	45	30	15

Table 7

California: Regular or Specialized Advanced Certificate requirements

Years Experience	4	6	9	9	12
Training Points				45	30
Education	Masters	BA/BS	AS/AA	45	30

(20 training hours = 1 point)

California also offers several other levels of certification.

- The Supervisory Certificate is awarded to officers who have an Intermediate Certificate, have earned a minimum of 60 semester hours at an accredited college, served two years as a first-level supervisor, and have completed the 80 hour Supervisory Course.

- The Management Certificate is awarded to officers who have an Advanced Certificate, have earned a minimum of 60 semester units at an accredited college, served two years as a middle manager and who have completed the 104 hour Management Course.

- The Executive Certificate is awarded to officers who have an Advanced

  Certificate, have earned a minimum of 60 semester units at an accredited

  college, served two years as the department head and who have completed the

  Executive Development Course.

Table 8

Arkansas: General Certificate requirements

Education (college credits)	15	23	30	38
Experience (years)	5	4	3	2

Table 9

Arkansas: Intermediate Certificate requirements

6 hours of College English and one of the following combinations:

Education (college credits)	30	45	60	75	AA/AS
Experience (years)	8	7	6	5	4

Table 10

Arkansas: Advanced Certificate requirements

Education	6	15	30	45	AA/AS	BA/AS
Training (hours)	420	360	300	240	210	210
Experience	16	14	12	10	8	6

Table 11

Arkansas: Senior Certificate requirements

Education	30	45	AA/AS	BA/BS	Masters
Training	720	600	480	360	240
Experience	18	15	12	9	6

Arkansas also requires several courses for particular rank and Professional responsibility (these courses satisfy required training hours as set out in the certificate criteria).

- Supervisory Course consists of a minimum of thirty-two (32) classroom hours completed before or within twelve (12) months after initial promotion, appointment, or transfer to a first level supervisory position.

- The 80-hour Middle Management Course including Organization and Management, Motivation, and Implementation should be completed within twelve (12) months of promotion beyond first-line supervisor.

- Executive Course consisting of training in technical knowledge, personal skills, and community relations.

Table 12

Nevada: Certification requirements

	Intermediate	Advanced	Management	Executive
Training Hours	200	400	600	800 including 200 in advanced management
College	6 credits including 3 English composition	12 credits including 3 public speaking & Instructor Development	18 credits	
Experience (years)	3	6	6 including 1 as supervisor	6 including 1 at command level

Table 13

New Mexico: Certification requirements

	Training (hours)	Experience (years)
Intermediate I	100	1 year
Intermediate II	200	2 year
Advanced	300	3 year
Advanced II	400	4 year
First Line Supervisor	436 to 472 including 36 to 72 hour First Line Supervisor Course	1 year as Corporal or Sergeant
Command	496 to 532 including 60 hours Supervisory or Management	1 year as Lieutenant
Executive	696 to 732 including 200 hours Management or Administrative	1 year as Chief, Assistant Chief, Sheriff, Under-Sheriff, Director or Deputy Director, Major or Captain

Table 14

Oklahoma: Intermediate Certificate requirements

Experience (years)	8+	7	6	5	4	4	2
Training Points	37	53	67	83	97	AA/AS & 22	BA/BS & 21

Table 15

Oklahoma: Advanced Certificate requirements

Experience (years)	12+	11	10	9	9	6	4
Training Points	67	77	87	97	AA/AS & 31	BA/BS &25	Grad Degree & 21

- One semester hour of college credit or twenty classroom hours of job-related training equals one training point.

In Canada, we have begun to see a movement towards this certification model. Quebec's Bill-31 and Ontario's Police Service's Act Regulation 3/99 Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services (as cited in Clark, 2004) are examples of how performance standards and specific status are linked to education and training. The following extracts from Quebec's Bill-31 and Ontario's Regulation 3/99 illustrate the regulatory direction specific to educational requirements, status of ongoing education, etc.:

> To be hired by a police force, a person will be required to hold a diploma in police patrolling awarded by the school (Ecole Nationale de Police du Quebec), and additional requirements may be imposed by the Government for the exercise of investigative and management functions within a police force. (Bill-31 Explanatory Notes, Quebec National Assembly, 2000)

Sec. 33. Every police force must have a skills development and learning plan that

addresses

    a) the plan's objectives

    b) the implementation of a program to coach and mentor new officers

    c) the development and maintenance of the knowledge, skills and

        abilities of members of the police force, including

            i)   the police forces criminal investigators

            ii)   members of the police force who provide investigative

                      support functions

            iii)   members of the public order unit and

            iv)   members of the police force who provide any

                      emergency response service referred to in sections 21

                      and 22. (Ontario Reg. 3/99). (Dr. Curtis Clark, 2004, pp.

                      5–6)

Summary of Findings

In this section I have reviewed the literature on the differences between a

profession and the concept of professionalization, the impact of higher education on

police performance, and the current certification practices of police officers within North

America. I have determined the key aspects of this literature to be the following:

(1) There is a distinction between the static concept of professionalism and the

dynamic aspects of professionalization;

(2) Professionalization is an ongoing process that is never fully achieved;

(3) In the review of the concepts of professionalization, post-secondary education and certification, policing may be aptly identified as a professionalizing occupation, one that is concerned with continued refinement;

(4) There has been a determined effort to raise the educational standard of police officers to a post secondary-level, preferably to a level of an undergraduate degree;

(5) There has been considerable research regarding the impact of a post-secondary education on police performance;

(6) Research into the connection between police performance and higher education found evidence a somewhat positive impact;

(7) Certification is accomplished by mastering a body of knowledge and a set of competencies identified by the regulating professional association and submitting to a regulatory mechanism set up by the profession to gauge the proficiency of its practitioners;

(8) The current certification practices within North America are akin to licensing an individual so that they may be hired as a police officer.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the research methods and data gathering tools utilized in this research project, as well as how the survey was conducted and the options that were considered prior to selecting the methods employed in this study.

Research Methods

"Methodology is the gathering of data and the making sense of it in an orderly way, as well as the study of methods" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 63). Stringer (1999) describes research as a "systematic and rigorous inquiry or investigation that enables people to understand the nature of problematic events or phenomena" (p. 5). Kirby and McKenna add, "the selection of the method is a critical aspect of researching and is usually based on what kind of information is sought, from whom and under what circumstances" (p. 63). The information sought for this project was both objective and subjective, and the participants were municipal police officers within the province of Alberta.

After careful consideration of qualitative and quantitative research methods, I decided to utilize a combination of both. A quantitative approach is defined as "research methods that emphasize numerical precision; a detached, aloof stance on the researcher's part (i.e., the avoidance of over identification)" (Palys, 1997, p. 423). The "ideal of detachment is also consistent with the quantitative preference for aggregated data, which compile responses from many persons so that general trends or patterns across people are made visual" (Palys, p. 15). With this in mind, a statistical response to half of the survey

questions was deemed best to gather a portion of the data for the project, and thus the decision to use a quantitative approach. Because I am a member of the group that I was researching I felt that this approach would enable me to maintain the appropriate researcher detachment and eliminate any opportunity for my own opinion and thought to colour the responses.

At the same time, Stringer (1999) points out "In recent decades, new research paradigms, variously labeled qualitative, naturalistic, constructivist, and interpretivist have sought to provide researchers with new ways to understand the nature of the social world . . . that seeks to describe the historic, cultural, and interactional complexity of social life . . . [and] to develop accounts that more fully represent people's lived experiences" (pp. 6–7). Due to the variety of experience of the policing careers of the participants I collected information from, and the complexity of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, I believed it imperative to include qualitative data in this project as well. Although most of the survey questions were quantitative in nature, I provided participants with an opportunity to expand their quantitative answers with as much or little explanation as they wished.

Data Gathering Tools

A short questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to gather the necessary information from the respondents, all of whom were active police officers. The survey contained a demographics section to determine trends in gender, age, years of service as police officers, as well as their current promotional status within their service.

Participants were asked questions concerning their level of education prior to joining a police service and if that level had changed or was currently changing while they carried on their career as well as if their service supported them in this endeavour.

The remainder of the survey was broken into three themes. The first theme attempted to determine their opinions as to what initial educational level was appropriate for entry level policing and if they felt their own level of education was appropriate when they joined.

An example of this first theme is shown with question 2 of my survey:

2. Has your level of education changed since you first entered police training?

    YES   **NO**   **(Please circle one)**

    If you answered "Yes", what is your current level of education?

    1. □ High school diploma   4. □ 2-year diploma

    2. □ Some post secondary   5. □ Undergraduate Degree

    3. □ Certificate Program   6. □ Graduate/Professional degree

The second theme looked at whether one should be given educational credit for the various training and experience gained while a police officer. This is demonstrated by question 8 of my survey:

8. Educational credit should be given to police officers based on the training and experience gained in various assignments during their career?

    Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

    Please explain your answer:

The third theme attempted to determine the importance of education to developing more professional police officers, whether education was pivotal to enhancing one's competencies for promotion, and if participants believed police officers should need a higher level of education to be eligible for promotion.

One question that prompted a very heavy discussion was question 6 of the survey, which attempted to tie professionalism in policing with education:

6. Education makes you a more professional police officer.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

The questions provided an opportunity to collect quantitative data and the opportunity for statistical analysis, while open-ended questions allowed the participants to explain or give a specific example to illustrate their multiple choice answers more fully.

The manner in which the survey was designed was crucial. Participants were provided with the opportunity to review the survey and quickly select a response. They were then allowed to provide a fuller explanation as to why they responded as they did. For example, members were asked to provide their opinion as to why one should have an applicable degree to be promoted and explain why they did or did not support this statement.

11. To hold a promoted rank one should be required to have an applicable

undergraduate degree.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

Study Conduct

The steps involved in administering the survey worked to ensure the accuracy and

content of the survey. The survey underwent more than a dozen variations before the

final version was developed and provided to the participants. Each variation of the survey

was reviewed by both police officers and non-police members to ensure the clarity and

understanding of my questions and to determine the length of time required to complete

the questionnaire. I was surprised on several occasions when I realized that people had

many different interpretations of a question or a portion of a question.

One example of this was in the development of a simple question in my survey:

"Should additional educational credit be given according to the rank one achieves?" I had

intended to discover if members were agreeable to having a higher level of educational

credit being given to them as they moved up the promotional ladder. It was brought to my

attention that constables, at least within the Edmonton Police Service, have a graduated

ranking within the constable rank. I hadn't taken this into account.

As well, I was able to determine if the explanation was clear regarding how to

access the online survey in the letter of invitation emailed to participants and whether the

online survey was easy to complete. I also obtained feedback on the questionnaire from

another learner in my MALT cohort as well as from my faculty supervisor. The feedback I received from each of these sources assisted me in refining the questions and editing for minor grammatical changes.

The participants' involvement was requested in one way. I contacted the Technical Security Supervisor for the Edmonton Police Service and indicated my involvement in a research project sponsored by the Service and my wish to have an email sent to all sworn members. Once I received permission, I then emailed a letter of invitation which briefly outlined the research project and included the survey link with instructions detailing how to complete the survey and submit the response. I clearly stated that each participant's involvement was strictly voluntary and, should they participate, that their responses would be anonymous. A consent form was replaced by a survey preamble which fulfilled the same purpose as a letter of consent. By replying to the survey with preamble, the research participants gave their informed consent. The preamble also included a brief summary of the research project, along with instructions detailing how to complete the online survey.

Finally, the results of the surveys were compiled and analyzed (see Appendix B for survey results). The participants selected were sworn members of the Edmonton Police Service. Overall, 250 out of 1,200 (21%) participants completed the surveys.

Options Considered

Various options were considered to select the best method of conducting the research surveys. I knew the majority of participants would be actively involved with

their work and family and therefore would have limited extra time to complete a questionnaire.

I considered sending and receiving the questionnaires through Canada Post. However, I believed that printing paper copies of the surveys and addressing and posting of envelopes and self-addressed return envelopes via regular mail would have been time consuming and costly. As well, responses would have been hand-written, which would have added to the response time required by participants in most cases. Participants also would have been required to mail the questionnaires back. I believe this would have resulted in fewer surveys being completed and returned. Finally, the online survey site reduced the amount of time required to compile the results.

A further benefit of using the electronic, web-based survey instrument, SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey.com), is that it provided full security and confidentiality and allowed for anonymity of the participants' responses. The security of the survey data is protected by servers maintained by Berbee Networks (www.berbee.com) and owned and maintained by SurveyMonkey staff. The following technology ensured security:

Physical Security

Servers kept in locked cage

Entry requires a pass card and biometric recognition

Digital surveillance equipment

Controls for temperature, humidity, and smoke/fire detection

Network Security

Multiple independent connections to Tier 1 Internet access providers

Fully redundant OC-48 SONET Rings

Uptime monitored every 5 minutes, with escalation to SurveyMonkey staff

Firewall restricts access to all ports except 80 (http) and 443 (https)

Hardware Security

Servers have redundant internal power supplies

Data is on RAID 10, operating system on RAID 1

Servers are mirrored and can fail over in less than one hour

Software Security

Code in ASP, running on SQL Server 2000 and Windows 2000 Server

Latest patches applied to all operating system and application files

Data backed up every hour internally

Data is backed up every night to centralized backup system, with offsite backups

in the event of catastrophe. A key aspect to participant involvement was having the

survey on an outside provider. This indicated to respondents that their opinions would not

be accessible by the Service and protected their anonymity.

I also considered other data gathering tools and whether to expand the scope of

the project. My thoughts and reasons for not proceeding with other methods are

summarized below.

To obtain more anecdotal and qualitative data, initially I considered conducting

focus groups following the completion of surveys. However, as I began to investigate this

research possibility, I discovered that focus groups had already been initiated by another

research group that was doing parallel research. I researched questionnaires as a

methodology and discovered the SurveyMonkey site; I realized that this focus would allow me to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

In the process of analyzing these options, I discussed the project with professional colleagues who were familiar with my project, as well as with the project sponsor and my faculty supervisor. Through these discussions I determined that the survey was the most efficient instrument to obtain information from a wider range of participants, particularly because I was able to include open-ended questions that would allow for a range of responses and provide the participants an opportunity to expand qualitatively on their quantitative responses.

Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the research methods and data gathering tools utilized in this research project, as well as how the survey was conducted and what options were considered prior to selecting the methods employed in this study.

In the following chapter the results of the survey will be discussed and the opinions of police officers regarding the various selected themes will be explored.

Chapter Four: Research Study Results

Study Findings

This study looked at police officers' perceptions of how a higher education will

contribute to their becoming a more professional police officer. The findings include data

predominately from 250 active police officers of the Edmonton Police Service, as well as

close to 40 other Alberta municipal police officers from the Calgary, Camrose, Taber,

and Lethbridge Regional Police Services.

In analyzing the data I attempted to group the responses into three main sections

which corresponded to the five research sub-questions outlined in Chapter One of this

project. The first section discusses initial entry into the program; it sought to determine

police officers' opinions as to what initial educational level was appropriate for entry

level policing and if they felt their own level of education was appropriate when they

joined. The second section attempted to determine how police officers understood the

importance and impact of education and asked specifically whether police officers

believed education helped them become more professional. The third section looked at

the nature of education on the job; it sought to discover whether police officers believed

educational credit should be given for the training and experience gained while a police

officer, whether education was pivotal to enhancing one's competencies for promotion,

and if participants believed police officers needed a higher level of education to be

eligible for promotion. Finally, the limitations of the study are summarized to ensure

resulting discussions and recommendations were realistic, with consideration given to the

chosen methodology and the population.

Demographics

Demographic data from the survey included, among other items, gender and number of years of policing service. The findings showed that 84% of those who completed the survey were male and 16% were female. The range of policing experience of the respondents was fairly equal with 40.4% having less than 10 years of service, 25% between 10 and 20 years of policing and 35% having over 20 years of service. Members of promoted rank accounted for 36.5% of the respondents, with just over 52% of those surveyed indicating they would be anticipating or seeking further promotion. Just over 98% of those who answered the survey were aware that their service provided monies for educational training but 60.5% of the respondents were not aware of the dollar amount provided by the service for continuing education.

Section One: Police Entry Educational Levels

Questions 1 through 6 of the survey attempted to determine what the respondents' level of education was when they first joined a police service, if their level of education had changed since they first joined and, if so, to what education level, and, finally, asked if knowing what they do now about the demands of policing, they felt that the level of education they had when they first joined was appropriate and would that level be appropriate today.

Although the minimum current level of education required for admission into the police service is currently a high school diploma, 3.5% of respondents had received a graduate degree, 31% of those surveyed had completed an undergraduate degree program

when they entered policing, 27% had finished a 2-year diploma program in a community college, and 17.2 % had done some post-secondary education. While close to 79% of the respondents had post-secondary educational experience prior to entering policing, 58% of the respondents had completed between two and four years of post-secondary education prior to joining a police service. Only 18.3% applied to the police service with just a high school diploma as their educational level.

Close to 67% of the respondents indicated they were not in the process of changing their level of education. This meant that they were not currently involved in any educational program, including a certificate or a diploma program, at the moment they responded to the survey. Of the 33% who stated they were changing their education level, one third of that number were moving towards a graduate degree, while 27% indicated they were raising their level of education to that of an undergraduate degree.

When asked if they believed the current level of education should be the minimum standard for policing entry level, the respondents were almost evenly divided between believing that some post-secondary education was needed (31.7%) or that a 2-year diploma program (29.6%) would be sufficient. Another 7% felt an undergraduate degree should be the benchmark while another 6% indicated a certificate program would be appropriate. Close to 25% felt that a high school education would be sufficient. Thus close to 75% believed that post-secondary education was required for entry into policing.

When asked to recall the educational level they had when they were hired as police officers, 82% felt that they had just the right amount of education when they entered policing, 15% felt they had too much, and 3% felt they had too little.

When respondents were provided an opportunity to further expand their answers to the previously mentioned question, themes emerged. First, education, although felt to be a contributor, was seen as only one aspect in the making of a police officer. Many indicated that common sense, maturity, life experience, work ethic, and attitude were all parts of the criteria needed in a good police officer.

These ideas are reflected in the respondents' comments such as, "I felt maturity coupled with the education allowed me to do the job well from the beginning. I think education alone, without the maturity, wouldn't make a difference." "The information that is needed to become a police officer is learned while in training. I believe that common sense, life experience, fitness, and ethics make a good police officer." "Policing requires life skills more than a formal education. Formal education supplements life skills, but in no way replaces it." "While I believe that education is important, I also believe that life experience and common sense are just as, if not more, important to possess to do the work of a police officer." Another respondent stated, "Policing requires continual learning and at a young age you aren't always sure where you want your education to take you. Policing is adaptable enough to allow your education to grow with you." Another respondent mused, "I find the education level has very little to do with the job as a constable. Life experience, maturity, education, and work experience should be the priority. Education may play a larger part for promotion."

Second, a vast majority of the respondents felt that they had the right amount of education when they entered policing and that their recruit training provided the basic knowledge foundation to do the job. Many respondents indicated, "Police training

provided the tools necessary to do this job along with the common sense I learned at home." Others felt they "attained the required education with on-the-job training and experience." "The information that is needed to become a police officer is learned while in training." "Recruit training provides officers with the basic knowledge for street work. You don't need a degree to understand the things that are taught to you."

One senior member reminisced, "Twenty-five years ago, three out of my class of 33 had post secondary . . . now it is the other way around . . . I found police training very easy . . . direct learning . . . they told me everything I had to know." Again the common theme was, "The EPS trains the members with what they need to know that can't be taught in a school. Practical experience is the best teacher. You can't learn everything you need to know from a book."

Section Two: Education and Professionalism

The question "Does education make you a more professional police officer?" was put forward. Just over 48% felt that education contributed to making one a more professional police officer; 22% offered no opinion; and 29% indicated that they felt education did not contribute to professionalism.

As in the previous section, respondents expressed two main views: (1) education has nothing to do with professionalism, and (2) education broadens one's perspective and allows one to think beyond certain parameters.

In regard to the link between education and professionalism, some respondents bluntly stated, "Professionalism has nothing to do with education." "Education does not

guarantee professionalism." This appeared to be the dominant opinion and it is further reflected in these respondents' opinions: "Professionalism is reflected in attitude and work ethic, not education." "Professionalism cannot be taught in school. It is, in part, common sense, intelligence, and ethics. An agricultural degree hardly would help someone become a police officer." "I feel that being a professional police officer has a lot more to do with your established morals and ethics, along with your experience on the job than post-secondary education."

Yet other officers believed education was important to being a professional. "Much of police work can be repetitive. Education keeps the mind challenged and the individual interested in performing his duties, thus resulting in a more professional police officer." "In order for police officers to be recognized as professional education is essential." "It allows one to develop in a number of ways professionally and academically." I believe that education promotes a strong base for professionalism in the work place and working with clients."

A second strand of thought revolved around the perception that education allowed one to think with a wider world focus. Members felt "Education gives you a more informed view of everything in the world, not just policing." "Education provides or should provide the ability to have a global whole world view and not a narrow focus on issues faced daily in policing." Respondents felt "The argument for education is a strong one. An undergraduate/liberal arts education should teach students to think critically, consider new perspectives, and provide a more rounded experienced officer." They also commented that, in regard to problem-solving, "Education in any form can help in

broadening understanding and increase one's ability to cope with complex situations."

"Provides you with a greater appreciation and understanding of the complexities that

surround disorder and crime problems."

Section Three: Educational and Credit for Experience, Promotion

More than 60% of respondents reported that education was important in the

development of skills and competencies for promotion. Fewer than 20% (17.5%) of the

participants stated that they thought education was not a factor, and 21.5% of participants

offered no opinion.

A summary review of the participants' responses to this question suggested that

three premises can be developed from the responses:

(1) Education assists in building a skill set and lays a foundation for the

individual in developing the competencies needed for future tasks.

(2) Education is important because management indicates that it is a criteria for

the promotional process.

(3) Education alone does not make a leader, manager, or supervisor.

Many respondents appreciated the importance of education as an aspect

of skill and competency development. Respondents stated, "Education CAN help develop

or improve your skills/competencies with respect to promotion." Others recognized that

policing is impacted from a variety of sources: "The face of policing is constantly

changing. Education is one way of keeping up with these changes. If one is expected to

'climb the ladder,' it is my belief that they must reflect these changes." Yet others noted

that there is commitment and discipline demonstrated in achieving a higher level of education: "Education will improve your skills in your career and will enhance your abilities as you ascend through an organization." "Measuring competencies is a difficult job; education is an important part of that assessment." "Education reflects a willingness to learn and advance your personal skills. This kind of commitment should be taken into consideration during the promotional process." "Education, continuing education shows a dedication to a discipline, but should only be one of the factors when considered in promotion." "A member's ability to handle complex situations (especially supervisory situations) is enhanced by education and training." "Higher education shows that you have the capacity to learn. In order to achieve at a higher level, a basic premise is that you should have the capacity to learn."

My review of the data revealed an underlying feeling that too much of a focus was being placed on education within the promotional process. "Only because the management have created and profess to demand such in promotion!" "There is presently too much weight placed on education and not enough on skills and natural talent." "I feel it is a political requirement in today's workplace. If you are the best at your job but are undereducated you will be overlooked." Others seemed to hold that opinion but realized they too accept the focus on education and reluctantly move towards continuing education; "I think it has become a necessary part of the promotion process. I am not saying I like it, but I see that if I want to get promoted one day I shall have to jump through the hoops."

Another theme that emerged from studying the respondents' data was that education may be a small component of leadership, but it is not its total foundation. "Education does not equal leadership." "Some of the worst supervisors I have had were highly educated." "A couple of the best supervisors I have had were not educated men; they were capable leaders." "I have seen educated officers who lack judgement and common sense. Education should not simply be a means to an end." "Leadership is as important as education in promotion. I have seen many educated people that are horrible managers and have no people skills."

Educational Credit

Participants' responses in this study agreed that education is important in the development of a police officer. One focus of many police services is to ensure that their officers are trained to react with competence to the changing landscape of policing. Bearing that in mind, the question was asked: "Should educational credit be given based on training and experience?"

Most respondents (75.3%) felt some educational credit should be given for the various training they receive. Only 9.6% disagreed with this concept, and 15% did not proffer an opinion. As with the previous questions, members offered expanded explanations as to why they responded as they did. In analyzing their answers, two areas of thought emerged. First as police officers go through their careers they develop levels of expertise in areas that can complement "book learning," and second, hands-on training is invaluable and educational credit should be given to reflect this.

A majority of responses indicated that experience was equal to, or in some cases, surpassed formal education for the learning provided: "As a police officer goes through their career they may become experts in their field and as such I feel they should be given educational credit to reflect this." Some members noted that they have developed such specialized knowledge that they have been called upon to provide instruction in academic circles; "With my high school education I have instructed at classes at the University level." "The exposure and experience some officers receive, based on their assignments, can not be matched or taught by some courses. Their equivalency, if assessed properly, would likely match up to some course."

The experience gained during a policing career does complement academic learning and, in the opinion of many of the respondents, surpasses it. "Hands-on training/learning are invaluable and complement book learning; learning by doing is the most valuable educator in my opinion and credit should be given for it." "Special placements/assignments require officers to make a personal commitment to learn specialized skills that provide a broader range of performance capabilities." "Experience is just as good as education sometimes." "I think that after a certain period of time, a good police officer will have practical experiences in many of the theoretical things one learns in university." "This job is a profession, in modern day academic spheres, university credit can and should be granted for such training."

Education & Rank

A variation of the previous question was posed to the respondents. Many had

indicated that as one moved up the promotional ladder, education could become more of a factor. The question was asked if additional educational credit should be given according to rank.

The responses were interesting. Close to 47% of the respondents disagreed that those promoted should be eligible for additional educational credit (it should be noted that one-third of the respondents were promoted). There were 21% who agreed with this premise. However, close to one-third (32%) of those answering the survey decided not to respond to this specific question.

I gained two distinct impressions from reading the respondents' replies to this question:

(1) Rank has nothing to do with education

(2) Promotion requires leadership abilities rather than academic honours.

All through the free flow text provided by the respondents, there was the underlying suggestion that rank and education were not linked: "I don't see any correlation between rank and educational levels." "Rank does not make leaders nor does education. It can assist in developing one, but will do nothing for those who are not." "Rank is not always based on merit and one must meet certain criterion to be given educational credit." "Rank is not an indication of one's ability to learn." One member was willing to at least explore the establishment of criteria: "There needs to be standards attached to the amount of credit awarded. Rank does not by itself indicate the required competencies for additional credit." However, many felt that "Rank is not a true measure of knowledge or ability."

When the responses were reviewed, it was clear that many of the respondents felt that if one were looking for promotion, there had to be demonstrated ability: "Promotions may require more leadership abilities than academic achievements." "Education is important but high education does not make a great leader." "Education does not mean you are a good leader or meant for the job." "You gain experience and a wider appreciation for the various aspects of policing and the business of policing that demand more from you as you rise through the ranks."

A spin off of the previous question was placed before these police officers. It asked whether a higher level of education should be required for each rank. There were 51% who disagreed with that notion, 23% agreed that you need to have higher level education as you climb the promotional ladder, and 26% chose not to offer an opinion.

Another over-riding theme can be drawn from a synthesis of the respondents' comments. Respondents felt that, depending on the rank, certain specific types of education could be seen as an asset, but the important factor in a promotion should be one's ability and competence to do the job. Respondents also indicated that, in their view, the effectiveness of a leader was not determined by the leaders' education level.

Comments from respondents affirm that ability should be the key criterion in promotion: "Depending on the rank, certain specific types of education should be seen as an asset, but the most important factor in a promotion should be one's ability and competence to do the job first and foremost." "Again I believe that good leadership qualities cannot be achieved through post-secondary education. Again on-the-job training, morality and ethics (natural ability) play a far more important role." "More merit

should be placed on work ethic, job productivity, and personality suited for the job."

"Knowledge on how to do the job, experience in similar positions, and capabilities are what is required. If a person has higher education fine, but it does not automatically qualify a person for the job." Another respondent felt that the promotional focus on education alone should be narrowed: "Historically some of the most astute leaders had little or no education. Limiting the talent pool to academics is detrimental to organizational health."

Education & Promotion

A variation of the previous question asked if those who held promoted ranks should have applicable undergraduate degrees. Over three-quarters of the respondents (78%) disagreed with this notion. Only a very small percentage (6.3%) agreed that you needed to have an undergraduate degree for promotion whereas 15.6% did not respond.

The majority of those surveyed felt that merit and ability, honed through experience, should overshadow the educational level of a candidate and that leadership skills and competencies can be acquired over time.

Many respondents indicated "I don't believe an undergraduate degree is necessary to advance in rank, nor does it guarantee you would be good in a promoted rank just simply because you have an undergraduate degree," "to obtain and hold a promoted rank one should be required to have the applicable intelligence, skills, and competencies. A degree may enhance the person's 'smarts' but does not guarantee it." Others felt that experience developed over time was just as important as education. This belief is

reflected in the following comments; "There should be minimum requirements, but again there should be a pattern of continual growth to supplement the degree that may have been achieved early on in a career or before joining the Service." "Education and learning can occur through a variety of medium. For education to be valuable and effective it does not have to involve formal post-secondary education or an undergraduate degree." "Police skills, common sense, and proven performance are more important." "To make it mandatory would eliminate good, hard-working, competent people. Education does not guarantee leadership."

Conclusions

The following conclusions result from an analysis of the findings of this study's survey. These findings are corroborated by information gained from a literature review on professionalism, certification of police officers, and, most importantly, the impact of a police officer achieving some level of post-secondary education. The research question this study attempted to answer was: what are police officers' perceptions of how a higher education will impact their becoming a more professional police officer?

From these findings several conclusions can be drawn. These are outlined below. It is important to note that both the themes that emerged in the findings and the conclusions drawn from the findings interconnect and integrate with one another.

Conclusion # 1: Education Entry Level of Police Officers

The officers who took part in this survey felt they had the right amount of education when they entered policing. Although the minimum level of education required for admission into the police service is currently a high school diploma, a majority of the respondents felt that some post-secondary education should be the accepted minimum for entry level policing. When asked if the current level of education should be the minimum standard for policing entry level, respondents were torn between believing that some post-secondary education was needed or that a 2-year diploma program would be sufficient.

This finding appears to be supported by an Edmonton Police Service review of past recruitment practices. The review focused on the years between 1992 and 2002. It was determined that 90% of the successful recruits had attended some Canadian university or college and that future recruiting strategy should focus on Canadian colleges and universities.

Conclusion # 2: Education and Professionalism

Does education make one a more professional police officer? This query was put forward for the respondents' opinion. As previously mentioned, just over 48% felt that education contributed to making one a more professional police officer. Yet, when they were asked to expand on that opinion, the majority of the opinions noted that education was but a component of professionalism.

This debate has raged for decades. As noted before, studies have shown that higher education is associated with greater job satisfaction (Carlan, 1999; Dantzker, 1993); better communication skills (Hooper, 1988; Palumbo, 1995; Vodicka, 1994); better job performance (Cascio, 1977; Finnegan, 1976; Geary, 1979; Murell, 1982; Saunders, 1970; Smith & Aamodt, 1997); and greater promotional potential (Truxillo, Bennett, & Collins, 1998). All these educational impacts contribute to making a police officer more professional.

Conclusion # 3: The Impact of Education

Education, although seen as being a contributor, is only one aspect in the making of a police officer. Many respondents indicated that common sense, maturity, life experience, work ethic, and attitude were all parts of the criteria needed in a good police officer. The demands of policing have also increased the learning curve regarding the job knowledge. Policing requires a broader view/knowledge base about how decisions are going to be made and what factors are to be included.

These two major impacts of education as seen by the respondents echo those findings of Carter and Sapp (1991), and Oppal (1996). Coleman (2002) listed benefits of a college-educated police officer (see chart in Chapter Two). They included, among other things, improved problem-solving capacity and being more innovative and flexible when dealing with complex problems and strategies. This appears to corroborate the opinions of the respondents who feel that system thinking, how an idea can affect internal and external factors, is a by-product of post-secondary education.

Conclusion # 4: Educational Credit

Over the course of a career, police officers are provided a variety of internal educational opportunities to assist in understanding new methods of conducting policing be it as a result of a legislative, administrative, or technological change.

In this survey, over three-quarters of the respondents felt that their training and experience was invaluable and more than complemented academic learning. As a result, they felt that some post-secondary educational credit should be granted. Members felt that they had and could move the academic theory into real-life implementation and thus could better evaluate the ideas and theories that impact policing.

When asked if additional educational credit should be given as one rose through the ranks via promotion, just under half of the respondents disagreed. It was felt that rank had nothing to do with education. Promotion should be based on demonstrated leadership abilities and proven ability, not academic honours.

A complementary question asked if a higher educational level should be required for promotion. As one respondent stated: "With each rank there is a learning curve that increases one's understanding of what is required for your position. As well, promotion requires one to develop a broader knowledge base in which to determine what factors should be considered in the decision making process."

They noted that the effectiveness of a leader is not determined by one's educational achievement. The respondents indicated that leadership can be found at all levels of a police organization. Having said that, some saw certain types of education as

being an asset but the important factor remains one's ability and competence to do the job, not how well they perform in the classroom.

When I asked if one needed an applicable degree to hold a promoted rank, only 6% of the respondents were in agreement. The majority again felt that the education level of the candidate should not overshadow merit and skill in the position. The point was raised that the skills and competencies acquired over time were of a greater value than the level of the post-secondary education as they demonstrated proven ability.

These results seemed to confirm information gathered during my review of the research literature. This literature suggested a positive relationship, to some extent, between police performance and higher education. Those who took the survey indicated that education was one component in making a good police officer, not the determining factor.

Scope and Limitations

This research project provided some insight as to how modern police officers view the impact of a post-secondary education on their ability to conduct their duties as a police officer. However, as with any research study, it is also important to recognize the scope and limitations of the study to prevent making out-of-context generalizations. Following are the noted limitations for this research project.

One limitation of this study is that the questionnaire, although informally reviewed, was untested and therefore the findings cannot be reliably compared to similar research studies. A further limitation is that many of the questions asked for the

participants' own perceptions of such things as their past educational and policing experiences, which affects their reliability and is another limitation of this study. However, Palys (1997) states that

> Any science of human behaviour is destined to be trivial and/or incomplete unless it takes people's perceptions into account. Any approach that defines itself as phenomelogical makes understanding human perceptions its major focus; if perceptions are real in their consequences, and a major determinant of what we do, then clearly we must understand them and their origins. (p. 17)

The sample size of the survey limits generalizations of the findings beyond the study's population. The majority of the participants (80%) were municipal police officers of a single police agency within the province of Alberta and did not take into account those police officers associated with federal police agencies, therefore limiting the applicability of the findings to other police populations. As well, given the voluntary nature of their participation, they are not a single representative sample.

A further limitation is that the responses from the participants may have been influenced by the very nature in which this survey was conducted. An email, which contained the link to the survey, may have been misconstrued as a "spam" message and deleted or they may have viewed this survey as being conducted by their own agency. Despite the efforts taken to ensure that participants understood both the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation, an outside researcher may have obtained different responses.

So where do we go from here?

Chapter Five: Study Recommendations

Policing has undergone a series of evolutionary steps in the past half century. Police officers have gone from minimally trained and equipped to highly trained and provided with advanced technologies. The professional model of policing continues to exert influence over this evolutionary process. The public has come to expect better educated, more professional police officers.

Communities are looking to their policing agencies to be community problem solvers and community partners. Municipal government is beginning to view police leaders as an integral part of the local government management team.

This progression has prompted a rethinking of the need for higher education in policing. Until recently being a good police officer and of sufficient tenure was all that was required to advance through the ranks. The police officers of today face issues that exceed the intellectual bounds of being a tenured member of a police service and being capable of competently doing police work.

Society has begun to look at problem solving as a responsibility of policing. Police Services now have to engage in strategies that exceed those competencies required for reactive service. Many agencies are looking to programs such as Compstat as a platform to attack crime problems effectively. Police officers must be able to take command of complex incident scenes, understand the complexities involved, and respond effectively. The acceleration of technology in policing, the changing and challenging legal landscape, and the emerging complex social issues such as bias-free policing all confront today's police officer.

Being a competent police officer and understanding basic police operations may not be sufficient to meet the current challenges and address the evolving expectations of the communities we serve. Many police officers are aware of this evolution in policing and understand the need for higher education. This brings us to an interesting dilemma: do we educate the recruited or recruit the educated? This study has not addressed this dilemma fully; however, it has provided some answers to the questions police agencies are facing. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that police officers understand the need to engage in post-secondary education to fully prepare themselves for their roles as police officers in today's society. The following recommendations have emerged from this study.

Recommendation One

The entry level for policing within today's changing legal, investigative, and technological landscape should be a minimum of a 2-year post-secondary program. The factors that impact policing are dynamic and, as such, police officers need to enhance their skills and abilities, through higher education, to properly understand and address these issues.

During this project it became clear from the review of the literature and from current police officers who were the survey participants that you need to develop a systems thinking approach to policing to understand and react properly to those factors that impact policing. Engaging in an applicable post-secondary course of study allows you to develop or enhance these skills.

Recommendation Two

Police services should look at the importance of developing a continuing education program to make their organization a learning organization. Many police services do support their officers in a continuing educational process by offering a set amount of money to cover the cost of a single course and only after the successful completion of that course.

Many police services have no strategy in place to look at the development of specialized skills for officers. In today's policing environment, we are faced with increased computer and economic crimes as well as new threats based on world events. Police agencies need to allow officers the opportunity to develop or enhance their competencies.

Recommendation Three

Police services should work with post-secondary educational institutions to develop continuing educational programs that would address the core competencies such as those outlined by the Edmonton Police Service.

During the past four years the EPS has instituted a new multi-faceted promotional system that attempts to balance the skills learned within policing with key competencies that promote organizational leaders. One example of this is the development of the Police Management Certificate offered by the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. It attempts to take the knowledge officers have developed from their policing experience

and enhance it with exposure to various management theories and meld the two in such a way so as to promote further development.

Organizational Implementation Suggestions

The literature review, coupled with the systematically-collected opinions of the survey participants, strongly suggest that police services focus their recruiting efforts on those with a post-secondary education. The Edmonton Police Service appears to have established this as a current recruiting practice. However, one dynamic that will influence this practice is the fact that by 2007 close to half of all municipal police officers in Canada may be eligible for retirement. Consequently, many police agencies are vying for the same pool of recruits and perhaps a different strategy needs to be developed to ensure that manpower levels are maintained with properly-trained individuals. The Edmonton Police Service recognizes that the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through job enrichment, assignment rotation, training, and education contribute to job satisfaction as well as commitment to community-based policing initiatives.

With respect to financial assistance, EPS members are encouraged to participate in self-development courses that will complement their academic or technical qualifications. Where such training or education is consistent with the needs of the Service, and depending on the availability of resources, financial assistance is offered. A large majority of business organizations reimburse tuition for approved business and technical university and college courses. In addition many organizations offer tuition reimbursement for graduate studies.

Proper strategic planning must take place to ensure that the Edmonton Police Service identifies which areas of the Service require staff with specialized and advanced education and supports these units in a reasonable fashion. Part-time studies, distance education, and online learning are all common in today's educational environment.

One aspect of that strategic planning is to look at partnerships with post-secondary educations to assist in the development of courses of study that will address training and education consistent with the needs of the Service. The recent trend in policing in Alberta has been the development of provincial policing standards in various areas of policing such as the use of force continuum and qualification with side arms. An opportunity exists here to work with other police agencies as well as colleges and universities to develop those courses of studies or programs that would address those service needs of police agencies.

Another focus of this opportunity would look at the current courses and training provided by police services and link them to academic credentials. By linking police training with academic credentialing, one could tie existing learning outcomes to the competencies focused on by the service for leadership and promotional development.

Future Research

Although this research project provided some insight as to the possible impacts of post-secondary education within policing, it was a small and limited study which also raised additional questions for future research. These possible questions include:

- Do police officers across Canada view post-secondary education in the same manner as those who participated in this survey?

- How do police officers view policing? Is it a profession or is it a craft?

- Has policing, because of legislative, technological, and investigative changes, developed a specific body of knowledge to be deemed a profession in the same manner as those traditional professions?

- What should be the educational level for the entry level for policing?

The opportunity now exists for an in-depth look at the various factors that impact policing, with higher education being one of those factors. Police officers are looking for ways to further develop their skills as well as enhance their abilities. By allowing officers the opportunity, and supporting them in a post-secondary program that would develop or enhance basic skills that are directly applicable to their duties, police agencies are furthering the competencies of their officers and preparing them for these new challenges.

Chapter Six: Lessons Learned

This major project resulted in numerous learning opportunities as I have

attempted to meet the personal and educational goals for this degree. The following

chapter discusses this learning and the resulting learning needs which remain ongoing.

Ethics

The process of receiving ethical approval initially appeared more daunting than it

was in reality. I perceived the ethical review paperwork as overwhelming and

intimidating, having never been previously involved in such a process. In reality, the

forms, once explained, were straightforward. In addition, the Edmonton Police Service

(EPS) indicated that they would abide by the ethical research standards set by Royal

Roads University (RRU) so no additional paperwork was required.

The process of obtaining ethical approval was interesting and correlated with the

idea of further entrenching ethical principles in policing. Given the developments within

our police service over the past several months, discussing and practising ethical

principles with our members is a priority.

Communication Skills

The area of communication skills proved to be the area where I believe I have

made large strides in improving both my listening and written communication skills.

However, I realize there is still room for developing these skills further.

As a result of my learning that has occurred in the last two years, I have sincerely attempted to enhance my listening skills. As a police officer, listening skills are extremely important because a word or phrase provided during an interview can supply key information to an investigation. At times, I have not practised "active listening," as I believed I knew what the person was about to say. As a result of the variety of feedback I received during this program and in relation to my project, I have enhanced my ability to listen for understanding.

My written communication is improving, but I continue to struggle with clarity and brevity. In my role as an investigator, it is important to focus on the many minute details of a case to ensure that all aspects pertaining to the investigation are covered in my report, however meaningless they may appear at that time. These details may become pertinent as the investigation moves forward. As a result, I had to adjust my writing to the academic style required in this report. This area continues to be a challenge for me.

As I entered into the main research phase of my project, the majority of my communication was through email. I attempted to pose questions as concisely and clearly as possible since people are not prone to reading long emails. This will continue to be a facet of my ongoing learning.

Research and Inquiry

The aspect of this project that I revelled in was the researching of the various themes that were the pillars of my project. The hurdle I faced was that, at times, I lost sight of the intent of my study and became sidetracked in my writing.

The literature review, although a struggle to write, was a high point in the project. I enjoyed searching for the articles and books that provided the necessary information to support the points I was attempting to make. However, during this process I became aware of other articles and books on policing that provided interesting viewpoints of my profession and into which I wanted to delve more thoroughly. I found I allowed myself to be consistently diverted from the task at hand. One solution was to develop a database of articles and books which I could later refer to at my leisure. Developing the database was a successful strategy; however, it did interfere with the timelines of the project.

Another aspect of the project that I struggled with was the development of the questionnaire. I went through over a dozen variations of the survey before developing the final version provided to the participants. Each variation of the survey was provided to police officers and non-police members to ensure the questions were clear and understandable.

As I developed the questionnaire, I looked for an opportunity to include free flow text to allow respondents to provide their personal opinions on several key questions. It was my understanding that individuals would be able to provide their full thoughts and opinions with this selected option. However, as I began to review submitted surveys, I realized that some responses stopped in mid-sentence. When I probed further, I discovered that the free flow text option was limited to only 250 words. The correct selection should have been the essay selection that would have allowed respondents to insert their full opinion. Although this was frustrating for me, I was still able to perceive the general idea of their response.

Current knowledge and practice with statistical analysis would have made my results more meaningful. The readings and course material did not prepare me for this aspect of my research. Having the questionnaire operated through an online service, which tabulated certain aspects of the survey, was both helpful and time saving. However, it did not contribute to my learning as to how to complete this type of data analysis. Certainly, I would have learned more about my work and the insights from it if I had analyzed the responses by hand.

Organizational Change

Adversarial relationships can bring about healthy change in an organization. During my tenure with the Edmonton Police Service I have seen this occur on many different levels.

Organizations that encourage individuals to ask "what if?" adapt to change more easily than those that discourage this type of dialogue. Every idea, no matter how odd to some people, may be of use even if only one aspect of it can bear the germ of a good idea for positive change. This is also a key pillar of community-based policing to which the Edmonton Police subscribes and with which I am very familiar.

My underlying theme certainly generated a great deal of dialogue for me as I have had many officers approach me to debate the project. The diverse views proffered during this debate allowed me to view from many different lenses the variations of my project theme.

Personal Growth—Leadership

There is no doubt that during the time it has taken me to complete this course of study I have undergone a great deal of personal growth and profound change both as a student and as a leader within my own organization. I believe that, as a result of completing this research project, as well as the various residencies and courses of study, I am better able to fulfill my responsibilities as a supervisor.

The greatest stride I have taken with this program is to truly understand the idea of "systems thinking." When approached by members with new ideas for projects or ways to enhance their current duties, I can better relate how their idea could impact the system internally or externally.

During my lifetime I have attempted to step forward into leadership roles to demonstrate to myself that I could come to terms with the various challenges these leadership situations provided. In the understanding gained from my experiences with Royal Roads University, as well as with the newly defined promotional process of the Edmonton Police Service, I came to fully comprehend that leadership is not defined by a person's position or title.

During the MALT Program I opened myself to receiving various forms of feedback and took risks I normally would not have taken. As well, I was experiencing the trials and tribulations of the newly instituted promotional process within the Edmonton Police Service. I was examined and tested in new ways, which pushed my learning to new levels. As frustrating as it was at times to understand these processes, I soon came to learn more about my leadership capabilities and myself.

Time Management

The largest hurdle I faced during this project was to further enhance my time management skills. As I was preparing to enter into the survey design questionnaire phase of my major project, I was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant. I now had the responsibility of overseeing 10 different sections with supervisory responsibility for 35 people. This was a goal I had been working towards for the previous two years and was elated to have been honoured in this manner. Unfortunately, I began to devote more time to my new responsibilities than to my project. These areas were active in developing new ideas and programs for the Service and I relished my role in assisting, nurturing and the developing of these projects. This opportunity allowed me to put into practice many concepts and ideas acquired during the various courses and residency periods within the MALT Program (Masters of Arts in Leadership Training). This refocusing of energy from my project to my new responsibilities eventually led me to request three extensions so as to be able to complete this project. As a result I have learned to establish priorities in a more thoughtful manner and to develop a better understanding of how to manage time more effectively. As a wise person explained to me, perhaps leadership involves a wise measuring of organizational responsibilities versus personal goals.

Conclusion

The journey to this point has been long, frustrating, enlightening, and exhilarating. In my mind I felt that the completion of my major project would be an

ending of an interesting phase of my life. Instead it has opened up many new avenues of

learning which I want to further investigate. What I thought was an ending is in reality a

new beginning. As I move forward I shall take the lessons learned and continue to apply

them in my new position.

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Appendix A

SURVEY INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This survey is a component of a research project, which is part of the requirement

for a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University.

The student concerned is **Richard Stewart.** Mr. Stewart's credentials with Royal

Roads University can be verified by telephoning either Dr. Jim Parsons, Faculty Advisor,

or Dr. Gerry Nixon, Dean of Organizational Leadership and Learning, Royal Roads

University or Ms. Angella Wilson, Administrative Manager, MALT.

Completion of this questionnaire assumes that you give consent to take part in

the research project, the objective of which is to determine police officers

perceptions of the proposed Alberta certification of policing model.

The questions on the survey will look at the level of education as well as the

importance of continuing education within policing. The survey results are anonymous

and results cannot be traced to any single person. The time commitment is estimated to be

approximately 20 - 30 minutes.

You are not compelled to take this survey. If you do elect to take part, you are

free to withdraw at any time. As the survey is anonymous, no one will know if you

decided to take part or not. Any subject who wishes to withdraw their participation can

do so at any point in the survey by simply shutting down the survey.

A copy of the final report will be available and housed at Royal Roads University and be

publicly accessible.

If you require further clarification or have any questions, please feel free to ask Richard Stewart.

Appendix B

Survey

POLICING & EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **What was your level of education when you first entered police training?**

   1. ☐ High school diploma   4. ☐ 2 year diploma

   2. ☐ Some post secondary   5. ☐ Undergraduate Degree

   3. ☐ Certificate Program   6. ☐ Graduate/Professional degree

2. **Has your level of education changed since you first entered police training?**

   YES   NO   (Please circle one)

   If you answered "Yes", what is your current level of education?

   1. ☐ High school diploma   4. ☐ 2 year diploma

   2. ☐ Some post secondary   5. ☐ Undergraduate Degree

   3. ☐ Certificate Program   6. ☐ Graduate/Professional degree

3. **Are you currently involved in changing your level of education?**

   YES   NO   (Please circle one)

   If you answered "Yes", what level of education are you moving towards?

   1. ☐ High school diploma   4. ☐ 2 year diploma

   2. ☐ Some post secondary   5. ☐ Undergraduate Degree

   3. ☐ Certificate Program   6. ☐ Graduate/Professional degree

4. **What do you feel is the most appropriate level of education that should be required to enter police training?**

      1. ☐ High school diploma   4. ☐ 2 year Diploma

      2. ☐ Some post secondary   5. ☐ Undergraduate Degree

      3. ☐ Certificate Program   6. ☐ Graduate/Professional degree

5. **Based on your level of education when you were hired do you think that you had too much, too little or just enough education to do the work required of a police officer? (Circle one of the following.)**

      Too Much   Too Little   Just Enough

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

6. **Education makes you a more professional police officer.**

    Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

7. **Education is important in developing your skills or competencies for promotion?**

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

   Please explain your answer.

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. **Educational credit should be given to police officers based on the training and experience gained in various assignments during their career.**

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

   Please explain your answer:

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. **Should additional educational credit be given according to the rank one achieves?**

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

10. **There should be a different level of educational standard required for each promoted rank.**

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

11. To hold a promoted rank one should be required to have an applicable undergraduate degree.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

12. Does your Police Service currently provide financial assistance to members who wish to further their education?

        YES   NO   (Please circle one)

13. If you responded "Yes", were you aware of the amount of the financial assistance available to you and if so what would that amount be?

1. ☐ Not Aware of Amount   4. ☐ Up to $1,500

2. ☐ Up to $500   5. ☐ Up to $2,000

3. ☐ Up to $1,000   6. ☐ Over $2,000

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. What was your age in years when you were hired as a police officer? _____

2. Circle your gender: **Male**   or   **Female**

3. How long have you been a police officer?

1. ☐ 1 to 5 years   4. ☐ 16 to 20 years

2. ☐ 6 to 10 years   5. ☐ 21 to 25 years

3. ☐ 11 to 15 years   6. ☐ Over 25 years

4. Do you currently hold a promoted position? Circle one of the following:

YES   **NO**

5. Are anticipating promotion or seeking further promotion? Circle one of the following:

YES   **NO**

6. Which Police Service are you associated with?

1. ☐ Calgary   5. ☐ Camrose

2. ☐ Edmonton   6. ☐ Lacombe

3. ☐ Lethbridge Regional   7. ☐ Medicine Hat

4. ☐ Taber   8. ☐ RCMP