

POLICE OFFICER YEARS OF SERVICE: DOES IT PLAY A ROLE IN OFFICER
DISPLAYS OF EMPATHY?

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of Trooper Houle -1168.

While nearing the end of the writing of this paper my stepfather, Steve Houle, passed away unexpectedly as a result of an avalanche that occurred in the mountains of central Washington. Although Steve was a Washington State Trooper, the badge he wore did not define him as a person. At the age of 51, Steve was an adventurous, outgoing, and all-around great person. He was my biggest role model and we connected through his work and my studies. On the day of February 8, 2021, our family's life changed forever and from that day on, I promised myself to continue pursuing a career in law enforcement and make him proud. This paper is in dedication to him and the legacy he left.

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ABSTRACT

In the 2019 National Crime Victimization Survey, only 52.2% of domestic violence (DV) incidents were reported to the police (Morgan & Truman, 2020). With significantly low reporting rates, policing agencies may be asking themselves what they can do to encourage victims of DV to come forward and report their victimizations. Research on DV victims' perceptions of police response suggests that, when police provide empathy-like responses to victims of DV, there are numerous benefits for the victim and the policing agency (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Johnson, 2007; Stephens & Sinden, 2000). Thus, empathy could be a central component to improving reporting rates of DV and victim relations with police. Unfortunately, however, there is little research assessing what increases an officer's likelihood in displaying empathy.

Using Michael Lipsky's (2010) theory on street-level bureaucracy, it was hypothesized that officers with fewer years of service would engage in more displays of empathy. Through a secondary data analysis of 200 DV police reports (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019), a total of 428 officers were identified and used as the unit of analysis in the present study. Upon calculating descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses, logistic regression models were used to determine predictors of police officer displays of empathy towards victims of DV. Contrary to the original hypothesis and Lipsky's theory (2010), the results indicate that officers' years of service increase their likelihood to display empathy towards victims of DV. This thesis concludes with a discussion of the major findings and their significance for policy and future research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NCVS	National Crime Victimization Survey
DV	Domestic Violence
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
DOB	Date of Birth
CLETA	Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2019 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), only 52.2% of domestic violence (DV) incidents were reported to the police (Morgan & Truman, 2020). These stark findings raise the question of why police are not being called to assist victims who may be suffering at the hands of a perpetrator. In a study analyzing domestic violence victims' perceptions of police response, 17% stated that a barrier to reporting was that the police were not sufficiently understanding or proactive in their handling of domestic violence (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013) and in another study, it was found that DV victims are less likely to call the police in the future if they perceive the police as not being interested in them or the crime that occurred (Johnson, 2007). Despite improvements in police response to DV, such as encouraged mandatory arrest (Daigle & Muftic, 2016), victim centered approaches to DV are still lacking. These findings illustrate that policing agencies need to be more aware of how their officers are treating victims of DV and how they are handling the investigations. Subsequently, greater academic research is needed to understand what influences an officer's interactions with victims of crime.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether years of service in policing impacts an officer's likelihood of displaying empathy in police reports for victims of DV. Michael Lipsky's theory, originally proposed in 1980 and later revised in his 2010 book titled *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, is partially tested to understand the life course of an officer's career and if it has any effect

on their displays of empathy towards victims. At the core of this theory is the assumption that street-level bureaucrats, or officers in this case, enter the workforce wanting to help the community they serve. These individuals are believed to hold altruistic traits, such as empathy, at the beginning of their career. Over time however, street-level bureaucrats are challenged with inadequate resources, conflicting goals, poor relations with clients, and an inability to control the outcomes leading towards negative perceptions and job modifications. In this sense, Lipsky (2010) would argue that police officers who face these challenges develop a client processing mentality throughout the course of their career which distances them from the victim and minimizes the strain between the officer's expectations and the reality of their job. If Lipsky's (2010) theory holds true, then over time, the conditions of an officer's job would affect their pattern of practice and behaviors, ultimately diminishing the importance of altruism that the officer once embodied.

Following this logic, it is hypothesized that officers with more years of service will engage in fewer displays of empathy towards victims when responding to incidents of DV. Currently, no research exists specifically looking at how levels of empathy may change over the course of an officer's career. Empathy, in general, is a vastly understudied concept despite its relative importance in building rapport with victims (Greeson et al., 2011; Patterson, 2011). When empathy is studied, the focus is primarily on victims' subjective perception of an officer's display of empathy (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Greeson et al., 2011; Maddox et al., 2011; Patterson, 2011; Robinson & Strohline, 2005; Stephens & Sinden, 2000). Although this research is valuable, a more

objective assessment of officer displays of empathy is needed as well as a better understanding of who among officers engages in empathetic acts.

In the following section, a baseline of current research regarding street-level bureaucracy, as it pertains to police officers, is presented as well as the role empathy plays in policing today. Additionally, a summary of how officers are impacted by the profession and the length of their career is discussed along with the importance of empathy in responding to victims of crime and more specifically victims of DV. Following this review of literature, the reader will find a detailed methodology section that explains the variables, data, and design for this study as well as the statistical analyses utilized. Lastly, a discussion of the findings and their implications for policy and research are offered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street-level Bureaucracy

Theory Overview

In Michael Lipsky's (2010) book titled *Street-level Bureaucracy*, he points to the dilemmas in public service and their effects on street-level bureaucrats. Street-level bureaucrats, as described by Lipsky (2010), face difficulties in performing their roles due to structural limitations that may include a lack of time or resources needed to assess a situation, large caseloads, and conflicting organizational, personal, and client goals. Commonly recognized street-level bureaucrats are teachers, social workers, and police officers. The theory itself posits that the conditions of these individuals' jobs influence, and are influenced by formal policy, as well as the routine practices of workers. Combined, the work conditions, formal policy and routinization of an individual's pattern of practice influence the street-level bureaucrat's behavior on the job leading to the development of an informal policy within an agency (Lipsky, 2010).

As the name implies, street-level bureaucrats are front line workers in organizations that commonly interact with clients and citizens (Lipsky, 2010). They hold some discretion in decision making, but they still must balance the wishes of their organizations while also considering the desires of the public. Agencies are concerned with rationing services, whereas the clients are concerned with receiving as many resources as possible. When street-level bureaucrats are caught between these conflicting goals, they begin to modify their work objectives to reduce the strain they feel between

their ideal goals of service provision and the reality of what they can provide. Referred to as the client processing mentality, Lipsky (2010) argues that street-level bureaucrats may withdraw from work, operate under their own goals of service provision, and develop perceptions of worthy and unworthy clients. As a result, this negatively influences service provision and creates tensions between organizations, street-level bureaucrats, and clients. Importantly, Lipsky (2010) proposes that this is a process, and street-level bureaucrats do not enter the workforce with this mindset. Rather, new recruits to public service enter with high levels of altruism and aspire to help the individuals and communities they serve. For this reason, Lipsky (2010) contends that as a society we must “keep new professionals new” (p. 204) before they fall into the same pitfalls their predecessors encountered.

Non-Policing Street-level Bureaucrats

Overwhelmingly, the majority of the literature acknowledging street-level bureaucracy as a theory comes from outside the United States and focuses on various street-level bureaucrats’ use of discretion and policy outcomes (de Boer, 2020; Bosma et al., 2018; Ellis, 2011; Jensen, 2018; Shim et al., 2017; Vedung, 2015). For example, Bosma et al. (2018) focused on the referral decision made by correctional professionals to send inmates to treatment within the Dutch prison system. The researchers used Lipsky’s (2010) theory to assess whether the referral decision was simply based on policy or if discretion was used in referring inmates to treatment. Support for Lipsky’s (2010) theory was found, suggesting that street-level bureaucrats create their own informal policies and do not always abide by the formal policies put forth by their agencies. This introduces discretion, a major tenant of street-level bureaucracy. The theory asserts that outcomes of

service provision are impacted by the discretionary decisions of street-level bureaucrats. In the United States, the use of discretion by criminal justice professionals exists at nearly all the stages of the criminal justice system (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988). Maynard-Moody and Musheno's (2012) work in the United States found that when the practices of teachers, police officers, and counselors are analyzed collectively within each of their respective professions, they do in fact shape policy. These street-level bureaucrats, however, did not view themselves as policy implementers despite the researchers' findings. The work of an individual street-level bureaucrat may not appear to be impacting policy, but when other workers within the same agency also undertake similar practices this adds up to be the informal policy of an agency.

An example of how individuals influence policy comes from a study analyzing 173 surveys of social worker and supervisor ratings of job performance. The social workers reported prioritizing services to more motivated clients, and supervisors approved of this technique to ration services, despite going against formal policy standards (Tummers, 2017). This provides support for Lipsky's (2010) assertion that street-level bureaucrats undergo a client processing mentality in which they decide who is more deserving of resources given their limited availability. Additionally, in routinizing this practice of deciding client worthiness, street-level bureaucrats become the gatekeepers of services, rather than relying on agency policy, and these practices become the informal policies of an agency. In another study focusing on three Chicago welfare offices, Brodtkin (2011) assessed how case workers adjust to performance incentives using adaptive strategies. These strategies include creating barriers to clients in obtaining services, simplifying caseloads through categorization and reductionism to increase

efficiency, routinizing their work, and creating cognitive dissonance from the cases in which they worked. These adaptive strategies illustrate the same modifications Lipsky (2010) discusses and therefore provide support for the theory's ability to describe a wide variety of public service providers and their modifications to formal policy. Moving beyond the scope of all public servants, the theory of street-level bureaucracy can also be used to explain the work conditions of policing, and the impacts it has on individual officers.

Police as Street-Level Bureaucrats

Despite the lack of research specifically acknowledging street-level bureaucracy as a theory in criminal justice, researchers have supported various components of Lipsky's (2010) theory. A large area of research exists on how the stressors of the police occupation affect a street-level bureaucrat's job (Bakker & Heuven, 2006; Gershon et al., 2009; Kohan & Mazmanian, 2003; Schaible & Gecas, 2010). Officers who report higher levels of stress and burnout attribute these feelings to the organization's policies and practices rather than their daily duties as an officer (Kohan & Mazmanian, 2003). The stress attributed to organizational policies is just one component of the work culture in policing agencies. Officers have also become frustrated with the additional administrative and peacemaking tasks they must complete at the expense of losing time to perform their law enforcement duties (Huey & Ricciardelli, 2015). This conflict in what police view their role to be magnifies the issues around occupational stressors. When the stressors and emotional demands accumulate, officers become emotionally exhausted and detached from their job (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). These findings support Lipsky's (2010)

argument that street-level bureaucrats can become frustrated with organizational demands and role inconsistencies resulting in a lack of engagement on the part of the bureaucrat.

To illustrate the development of negative consequences in policing, 19% of a sample of 13,000 sworn officers around the United States, reported experiencing severe levels of emotional exhaustion weekly, and 13% were experiencing extreme values of depersonalization two to three times a month (McCarty et al., 2019). Importantly, this sample was drawn from officers across the United States and shows that a portion of them routinely distance themselves from their work. Gershon et al. (2009) sampled 1,072 law enforcement officers on workplace stressors and found that 45% of them reported feeling uncaring about the problems and needs of the public when at work. This is significant because it shows how officers develop cognitive dissonance from their work when under stress. This adaptation serves as a survival mechanism for officers and is one of the many coping mechanisms discussed by Lipsky (2010) in his book. The diminishment of relations with clients acts as an additional coping mechanism for street-level bureaucrats.

Altruism in Street-Level Bureaucracy

By creating the client-processing mentality, street-level bureaucrats effectively distance themselves from clients to reduce the strain they may feel when they cannot provide ideal service or outcomes are not guaranteed (Lipsky, 2010). Caplan (2003) reports that idealistic individuals in policing do not survive. Instead, cynicism becomes an evolutionary career trait that allows individuals to remain in policing. Based on the writing of Caplan (2003) and Lipsky's (2010) theory, officers must develop new perceptions of their job and role if they want to survive. This allows officers to alleviate

the strain they may feel when they cannot carry out their job in their ideal manner. Since police officers are employed by policing agencies, they must put agency goals above the desires of those they serve. As a result of conflicting goals, street-level bureaucrats are believed to distance themselves from their work and their clients (Lipsky, 2010). By prioritizing agency goals, it is thus thought that the street-level bureaucrat's desire to help clients diminishes due to their inability to perform according to their ideals. Lipsky (2010) believes the decrease in altruism is a survival mechanism to reduce the strain a street-level bureaucrat feels when they cannot carry out ideal service provision.

According to Lipsky (2010), new professionals enter into the public sector with optimism and a goal of helping others. Known as altruism, police recruits' commonly report this motivation for joining policing (Lord & Friday, 2003; Ridgeway et al., 2008). So, the question that then arises is whether levels of altruism vary across a police officer's career, as Lipsky (2010) suggests. White et al. (2010) used a follow up study to assess how a class of 2001 New York Police Department recruits' job motivators changed from the beginning of their careers to six years later in their policing careers. As new recruits, these officers ranked the opportunity to help others as the most influential motivator to joining policing, but after six years of working, the opportunity to help others fell to the fifth highest ranked motivator out of sixteen. Motivators that became more highly ranked included job security, job benefits, early retirement, and opportunities for career advancement (White et al., 2010). Although these findings do not indicate whether levels of altruism actually decreased among the officers, it does offer insight into how it became less of a motivator as officers progressed through their career. Following this line of analysis, altruism levels among police officers warrant further analysis.

The other-oriented concept of empathy provides a measurable way to assess motivations of altruism among policing officers. Batson (2014) states that the ultimate goal of an altruistic motivation is to increase someone's welfare and empathy has been recognized as a source of this motivation (Batson et al., 2002). Batson et al. (2002) further suggest that individuals can actively avoid empathetic feelings to suppress their motivation of altruism. Following this line of thought, engagements of empathy by officers suggest a motivation rooted in altruism and, when empathy is not expressed, motivations in altruism may be less likely to be found. This is not to say that altruism would not exist, but it may not be displayed. To date, there has been no research on whether officers early in their careers possess more altruistic traits than more senior officers.

Empathy

Empathy as a Concept

The term *empathy* is somewhat illusive, and it can easily be confused with the similarly situated emotion of sympathy. The social psychology perspective put forth by Wispé (1986) provides an acute understanding of what it means to be empathetic. Empathy is to know what it would be like if one were the other and be self-aware to not make subjective judgements on the situation, whereas *sympathy* is to actually be the other and feel an urge to help alleviate the suffering of another. In layman terms, sympathy requires an emotional response or feeling by the observer in regard to the suffering of another individual. An observer responding with empathy, however, contains an element of distance from the suffering individual, meaning the observer can picture what it would be like to be the one suffering but does not put themselves directly in the shoes of this

individual. Inzunza's (2005) article on understanding empathy from a police work perspective adopted Wispe's (1986) definition of empathy and argued that empathy allows police officers to understand others on an emotional level while also on a conscious level. Conversely, sympathy would require too much emotional investment from officers leading to difficulties in remaining objective in their peace-making role. Inzunza's (2005) adoption of Wispe's (1986) conceptualization of empathy is significant because it lays the groundwork for the study of empathy in future policing research.

The construct of empathy is much more than acknowledging one's situation yet remaining objective. There is great debate on whether empathy is a process someone undergoes, if it is an outcome, or if the observer needs to experience the suffering themselves to gain empathy (Jakobsen, 2019). To encompass all of the central components of empathy, as cited in Jakobsen (2019), Davis (2018) developed a contemporary model that accepts empathy as a multidimensional phenomenon. Illustrated in four components, empathy can be understood by the *antecedents* of a situation (the observer, the target or the situation), the *processes* (referring to how empathetic outcomes are produced), *intrapersonal outcomes* (the cognitive and affective responses produced by the observer), and lastly, the *interpersonal outcomes* (behavioral responses towards the other). Empathy from a social psychology perspective adds great value to the overall understanding of empathy in all disciplines.

Empathy in Non-Policing Street-Level Bureaucrats

Given the fact that Lispy's (2010) theory on street-level bureaucracy is not solely focused on policing, it is important to discuss the role of empathy in other public service careers. Edlins and Dolamore (2018) asked higher education programs associated

with the Network of Schools on Public Policy, Affairs and Administration how important it is for their programs to train students in understanding someone else's feelings. Among the 82 programs surveyed, 91% acknowledged this skill as important or very important. Subsequently, 50% reported they currently offer courses that incorporate the subject of empathy (Edlins & Dolamore, 2018). Notably, these programs are training and preparing a portion of the new recruits to public service that Lipsky (2010) acknowledges as new professionals. Given this emphasis on empathy in education among new professionals, and a lack of experience in organizational demands, Lipsky (2010) proposes that new recruits possess more altruism. In a combined sample of nurses and nursing students from Spain and the United States, it was found that nursing students reported more empathy and reported more distress caused by this empathy than did the more senior nurses (Lopez-Perez et al., 2013). The association between high levels of empathy and higher levels of distress among new nurses partially supports Lipsky's (2010) proposal that decreasing levels of altruism among street-level bureaucrats acts to protect the street-level bureaucrat from strain throughout the course of their career. This possibly explains the decrease in empathy shown by more senior nurses and their lower levels of distress.

The possibility that years of service in a profession decreases a worker's altruistic motivations is concerning given the importance of empathy in public service. DeForest Molina and McKeown (2012) state that, to uphold public service values, empathy is crucial to adequately navigate one's discretion in decision making. The ability to empathize with another allows for objectivity in decision making while acknowledging the position of the other. In social work, Gerdes and Segal (2009) proposed a work model in which social workers could use empathy to drive their interactions with clients. This

model consists of three components starting with an *affective response* that is generated involuntarily by the observer. This is then followed by *cognitive processing* in which the social worker uses self-awareness, mental flexibility and emotion regulation to understand the experiences of another. Lastly, in their model, *conscious decision-making* includes voluntarily choosing to respond to their client with an empathetic action.

Following this study, Gerdes and Segal (2011) found that when social workers do in fact use empathy, they are more effective at providing services to clients, and can balance multiple roles better.

Research in social work and counseling has consistently demonstrated the importance of empathy in positive client outcomes (Bohart et al., 2002; Elliott et al., 2011; Watson, 2002). Forrester et al. (2008) note the central role empathy plays in effective communication within child protection services. The later work of Elliott et al. (2011) on counselors supports these conclusions based on their findings that client-rated empathy was the best predictor of client outcomes. The critical role empathy plays in professions does not stop at social work. Benefits of the use of empathy have also been noted in teaching. In a study validating the Elementary and Middle School Inventory of Classroom Environments (ICE), Sinclair and Fraser (2002) reported positive changes to classroom climates following teacher completion of this empathy-based training. Additionally, in early childhood classrooms, teachers who engaged in more empathy reported more success in understanding childhood behavior and partnering with the parents of their students (Peck et al., 2015). These studies suggest that when teachers engage in empathy and can empathize with their students, they are better equipped to create a positive environment. The other-oriented concept of empathy has proven to be

essential in the work of street-level bureaucrats. Extending empathy beyond the professions of teachers, social workers, and counselors, research on policing has also found significant benefits in the use of empathy.

Use of Empathy in Policing

The study of empathy in policing is relatively new. In the United States, the literature that does exist primarily focuses on the benefits of a trauma informed approach in responding to victims of crime (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Maddox et al., 2011; Rich, 2019; Robinson & Strohline, 2005). Studies looking at how empathy is displayed in policing, however, come from outside of the United States. These studies focus on how empathy can be used or displayed during interviews with offenders (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Holmberg, 2004; Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxburgh et al., 2006). Given the fact that policing in the United States is locally controlled, the findings from research conducted in other countries with federalized policing should be examined with caution. It is likely that findings drawn from a federalized policing system may not apply to the United States' localized policing. Regardless of this caution, the findings from England and Sweden, which appear to be the leaders in research on empathy in policing, still offer great insight into how empathy is used or displayed by officers.

The two foundational pieces of literature on empathy in policing date back to the early 2000s when researchers began to assess empathy as an investigative interview technique with sexual assault offenders and murderers in England (Holmberg, 2004; Holmberg & Christianson, 2002). In both studies, the researchers compared a more dominant style of interviewing to a more humanistic style. Evidence from these studies pointed to the value of a more humanistic approach grounded in empathy because

investigators obtained more admissions or details about the crimes from the offender. It is argued that empathy is foundational for the rapport-building process with offenders (Vanderhallen & Vervake, 2014), but still there is conflicting literature on the value of empathy in investigative techniques with offenders. In another study conducted in Sweden, Oxburgh et al. (2012) found that interviews in which investigators engaged in more empathetic responses resulted in no significant difference in the amount of relevant information obtained in comparison to interviews conducted with less empathy. The study of empathy in policing is still in its infancy, but the exploratory nature of research on empathy has produced a greater knowledge of information on how empathy is used within policing.

In a review of Swedish police transcripts of interviews with suspected sex offenders, Dando and Oxburgh (2016) found four types of empathy displayed by police during interviews. The first, *spontaneous comfort* is empathy displayed without a prior statement from the offender. The second, *continuer comfort*, is a form of empathy that is displayed as a response to the offender. The third, *spontaneous understanding*, refers to the investigator engaging in offering an understanding of the interviewee's situation without a lead in from the offender. Lastly, *continuer understanding* is a response to the interviewee that denotes an understanding for their situation after the offender makes a statement regarding their situation. Interestingly, on average, the suspects provided eight instances where investigators could have engaged in a continuer empathetic opportunity, but on average, the interviewers only engaged in this form of empathy less than twice in an interview. The types of empathy police engage in is important to consider because various displays of empathy result in different outcomes. For instance, Dando and

Oxburgh (2016) discussed how spontaneous empathy may come across unexpectedly or unwelcomed by the offender. To the contrary, when an offender produces an opportunity for an officer to engage in a continuer form of empathy, the empathy is welcomed and desired, making these forms of empathy more effective in the rapport building process. The studies previously discussed investigated the specific ways in which empathy can be expressed by officers during the course of their interactions with offenders. Missing from this literature is the specific ways police use empathy in their interactions with victims.

In addition, little is known about the role empathy plays in the individual characteristics of officers and their likelihood of using it in policing. Notably, the findings that do exist come from within the United States, and to date, the only area of research examining individual officer characteristics and empathy is on officer gender. In a study analyzing empathy among criminal justice university students, men possessed significantly lower levels of empathy than women (Courtright et al., 2005), potentially indicating that women would be more likely to use empathy in policing. Contrary to this indication, however, Rabe-Hemp (2008) demonstrated that women police officers are no more likely than male officers to engage in supporting behaviors during the course of their career. The Courtright et al. (2005) study, analyzing students' levels of empathy also found that, despite women displaying higher levels of empathy than men, women studying criminal justice scored lower than women studying other disciplines suggesting that there may be additional factors that affect empathy in policing more than just an officer's gender.

Police Displays of Empathy to Victims

Research to date primarily focuses on the importance of empathy and empathy like practices used by investigators in sexual assault and rape investigations (Campbell, 2008; Campbell, 2006; Campbell et al., 2001; Logan et al., 2005; Maddox et al., 2011; Patterson, 2011; Patterson & Campbell, 2010; Rich, 2019). In many of these studies, empathy is not outrightly applied to police response, but the processes and practices that are described are tightly aligned with how one would describe empathy. Noted in the research, a significant predictor of arrest and prosecution in rape cases is victim cooperation (Kaiser et al., 2015). As a result, investigators should be aware of practices that may facilitate more victim cooperation in cases and practices that deter victim cooperation. Rich (2019) showed that a trauma-informed response aimed at providing rape victims with a safe and comfortable environment promoted greater victim memory and recollection during the course of interviews, and Patterson (2011) found that when detectives used a gentler tone in questioning victims, victim statements were stronger, which may build a better case for prosecution.

In comparison, rape victims who report negative experiences with police have described the police as being cold and unsupportive, ultimately inhibiting the reporting process (Logan et al., 2005). These studies illustrate the importance of the use of empathy in investigators' interactions with sexual assault victims to promote greater victim cooperation by engaging in trauma informed responses. Subsequently, agencies and officers must work to promote victim cooperation by displaying empathy to victims. Further supporting the importance of empathy, victims of rape who receive displays of empathy from officers during the course of an investigation report a higher likelihood of

going to court following the incident and are less likely to develop severe PTSD and shame following their victimization (Maddox et al., 2011). Based upon these findings, empathy displayed by policing professionals to victims of sexual assault is beneficial for multiple reasons.

The majority of the research focusing on empathy and DV victims examines the subjective assessments made by victims about police response to the crime and the victim's likelihood of reporting in the future. Johnson's (2007) study highlighted how a lack of empathy or care shown by police is commonly reported among victims of DV who are dissatisfied with police response. This finding suggests that if police were to show more empathy to victims of DV, the victims may be more likely to report greater satisfaction with police response. Correspondingly, victims who report higher satisfaction with police response also report a higher likelihood of seeking police assistance in the future (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013). This cost-benefit analysis victims undergo prior to calling the police is important to consider when trying to gain a victim's trust and cooperation with the investigation.

One study suggests that the response DV victims receive not only affects future reporting rates, but also the victim's likelihood of cooperating further in the criminal justice process (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005). Victim cooperation is a significant factor in case processing and holding DV perpetrators accountable. Given the potential for lethality in DV incidents (Dichter & Gelles, 2012), police need to acknowledge the role victim satisfaction plays in gaining the victim's cooperation. When victims are not satisfied with the original police response, it is less likely victims will view the criminal

justice system favorably. To enhance police relations with victims, it is important officers are up to date on how victims may react to trauma and how to manage the investigation.

In a study conducted with 979 police officers from five of the largest United States cities, it was found that it was common for the police to have misperceptions about how victims respond to trauma (Franklin et al., 2020b). Common misbeliefs held by police include that victims must have physical injuries, report in a timely manner, and express significant distress following the trauma (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013). These misperceptions police hold may lead to issues in how they respond to DV. When police officers expect victims of crime to respond in certain ways, but the victims react differently, officers may begin to question victim credibility. Consequently, it is possible for perpetrator violence to be excused while victims may be blamed for their victimization (Franklin et al., 2020b). Taking into consideration police officer misperceptions surrounding violence, it is necessary to train officers on the importance of victim treatment by police. Poor treatment of a victim by police has been associated with an increase in the likelihood of secondary victimization (Campbell, 2008).

Secondary victimization has been described as “a sense of betrayal that comes from the survivor’s expectation that [they] will be provided with belief, validation, and protection when [they] instead encounter victim-blaming attitudes, or [their] victimization is ignored or minimized (Laing, 2017, p. 1316). Secondary victimization is thus, the development of negative feelings and consequences as a result of a victim’s reporting and the responses they receive from those they disclose the incident to. In a study assessing police demeanor through victim perceptions, nearly all repeat victims of DV described their encounter with police as negative and “psychologically bruising” due

to officer displays of disbelief or lack of care towards the victim, and officer minimization of the situation (Stephens & Sinden, 2000, p. 539). The findings from this study suggest that when victims perceive police response as non-empathetic, the victim can be further damaged in the process of reporting, resulting in secondary victimization. These findings illustrate why policing agencies should be concerned with individual officer training on empathetic responses to victims of traumatic incidents, and their influence on the development of secondary victimization.

Little research however exists, however, on individual officer displays of empathy to victims of crime. One exception is a study from Spain which found that police who expressed more empathetic concern towards victims of DV held fewer sexist views and tended to perceive incidents as more serious (Gracia et al., 2011). As a result, these officers preferred an unconditional policing approach to DV in which they felt a responsibility to protect the victim against further violence regardless of the victim's desire to pursue charges. This finding is significant because research has shown that DV victims commonly retract their original statements to police causing issues with case progression (Robinson & Cook, 2006) and as a result, many cases fail to move forward. The study from Gracia et al. (2011) is important because it suggests that officers with more empathetic concern for DV victims are more likely to hold perpetrators accountable and protect the victims. As a result, it is necessary for officers to be knowledgeable about victim responses to trauma, which may include a victim's lack of desire to pursue charges or recanting their statements. When officers understand why victims may be reluctant to cooperate, the officers will likely be more prepared to handle sensitive cases.

In revisiting Lipsky's (2010) theory, he argues that new professionals enter into the work of public service with a motivation to help people. This altruistic motivation then decreases over the course of a street-level bureaucrat's career to distance themselves from the strain they feel from inadequate service provision. Following Lipsky's (2010) theory, empathy may be influenced by a career in public service, meaning that officer displays of empathy, as a measurement of altruistic motivation, may decrease the longer an officer is in policing. Thus, an alternative explanation for levels of empathy among police officers may exist and must be explored.

Years of Service

Years of Service & Non-Policing Street-Level Bureaucrats

Years of service in *Street-level Bureaucracy* is a central component to Lipsky's (2010) theory, and it is proposed that those in public service who face certain demands develop survival mechanisms, such as a client-processing mentality, to routinize their work. These modifications are developed throughout the course of a street-level bureaucrat's career and it is believed that those starting in a profession of public service do not enter with the idea to create modifications to their work routines. Instead, the modifications are developed to distance the street-level bureaucrat from the strain they feel associated with not being able to perform their job ideally over time. The only studied effects of a street-level bureaucrat's career on the individual worker comes from research focusing on burnout, stress, and job satisfaction.

It is no secret that the job of street-level bureaucrats can be demanding (Lipsky, 2010). Social workers face extreme limitations in resources while trying to adapt to continually changing policies (Collins, 2008) and nurses bear high workloads and

conflicts with other hospital workers regularly (French et al., 2000). For the nursing profession, those who reported low levels of satisfaction in their profession were more likely to report low levels of autonomy in decision making (Han et al., 2015), suggesting a desire to use their own discretion. Job satisfaction among social workers and nurses has been found to decrease the longer an individual has been in the profession (Acker, 2004; Ma et al., 2003). Common reasons for a decrease in job satisfaction over time come from low levels of support, loss of autonomy, and stressful work conditions (Acker, 2004; Collins, 2008; Han et al., 2015).

Empirical evidence suggests burnout is a common consequence among social workers (Anderson, 2000; Kim et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2007). Nearly three-fourths of a sample of 751 social workers reported experiencing burnout during their career (Siebert, 2006) and 27.3% of a sample of nurses were above the clinical cut-off for self-reported levels of anxiety or depression (Mark & Smith, 2012). Due to the continual and chronic workplace stressors faced by individuals in a demanding career, burnout is associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). In a study analyzing emotional exhaustion among hospital workers, Cropanzano et al. (2003) found that there is a predictive relationship between the emotional exhaustion of an individual and their commitment to the organization and their job performance. This finding indicates that emotional exhaustion, fueled by continual stressors, affects the work of street-level bureaucrats. Importantly, this not only raises issues for adequate service provision, but it also indicates that the wellbeing of street-level bureaucrats may be at risk. Moving beyond hospital workers, social workers who experience burnout reportedly have an

increased risk in experiencing psychological distress in the form of depression (Siebert, 2006), leading to increased turnover within the profession (Kim & Stoner, 2008). These findings illustrate a potential concern that managers should be aware of as social workers and other street-level bureaucrats continue in their professions.

Contrary to these findings on years of service and burnout, years of experience has also been shown to act as a protective factor in social workers' development of vicarious trauma (Michalopoulos & Aparicio, 2012; Way et al., 2004). The noted relationship between years of experience and the development of vicarious trauma suggests that inexperienced social workers report higher levels of vicarious trauma than those who are more experienced in the profession. Kadambi and Truscott (2004) provide the explanation that new social workers may still be adjusting to the difficulties associated with the profession and may be at greater risk for developing vicarious trauma. The more senior social workers, however, may have become complacent to the difficulties in social work. This explanation suggests that some new professionals in public service have an adjustment period upon entering into their profession. During this adjustment period, they likely search for a way to perform their job while minimizing distress. This again aligns with Lipsky's (2010) theory which suggests that, over time, the work environment of public service significantly impacts a street-level bureaucrat's perception of their job and behavior.

Beyond the research of job satisfaction and negative consequences in careers such as social work and nursing, relatively no research could be found specifically looking at how individuals change over the course of their career in public service. This is a significant gap in the literature that warrants further analysis to understand how a

demanding career may change an individual. In Lipsky's (2010) book, he points to the collective nature of street-level bureaucrats' patterns of practice and their effect on policy. As a result, managers and organizations should be aware of the experiences and behaviors of their workers. These street-level bureaucrats are the individuals who come into contact with clients routinely and represent the entire agency.

Years of Service & Policing

The recruitment and retention of policing officers and deputies in the United States is one of the most salient challenges facing agencies today (Wilson et al., 2020). Early research suggested that years of service in law enforcement had a negative relationship with an officer's rating of job satisfaction and that the longer an individual was an officer, the less satisfied they were (Zhao et al., 1999). In a more recent study, however, conducted on a sample of 87 officers, the correlation appeared to be U shaped in which newer officers reported higher levels of job satisfaction followed by officers who have been in the policing profession for upwards of 15 years (Miller et al., 2009). It is at the 10-15 year mark in which job satisfaction was found to be significantly lower. Regardless of the shape of the distribution, there is strong evidence from both studies that new police officers are significantly more satisfied with their job and, at some point, this satisfaction decreases indicating a potential for a lack of job interest. The lack of job interest raises concern because of the sensitivity of certain cases and their immediacy to crime victims. When victims perceive officers as having a lack of interest, victim ratings of satisfaction with police response decrease, ultimately affecting victim likelihood of reporting in the future and cooperating with the current investigation (Johnson, 2007).

Performance in the context of policing can be measured based on the quality of a police officer's work or the quantity of duties completed. For this reason, it is difficult for empirical research to assess officer performance, but one study conducted by Holgersson and Knutsson (2012) was able to analyze both the quality and quantity of law enforcement response in Sweden. Although the findings of this study should not be generalized to policing agencies in the United States, it was the only study found that analyzed both the quality and quantity of police response against years of service. Out of a sample of 127 Sweden officers, only 7.4% of officers who had 15 years or more of experience were rated as producing high levels of activity which was measured by the number of fines they handed out, their number of primary reports, their number of arrests, and the number of interventions against drunk driving or drug offenses the officer engaged in. Additionally, 30% of the officers who had 15 years or more of experience did not meet acceptable levels of quality of service. In comparison, 40.4% of officers with three years of service or less were rated as producing high levels of activity and a majority of these officers met acceptable levels of quality of service (Holgersson & Knutsson, 2012). These findings suggest an influence of officer years of service on the quantity and quality of work produced by officers in Sweden.

In regard to the quality of work being produced by officers in the United States, Rich and Seffrin (2013) found that those with more years of experience are more likely to collaborate with victim advocates in response to incidents of rape. This finding is extremely important given the sensitive nature of rape cases and the potential for victims to be retraumatized during the reporting process. In collaborating with victim advocates, officers are increasing the quality of their work through partnerships with outside service

providers. Additionally, incidents involving officers with more years of experience result in less verbal and physical force (Paoline & Terrill, 2007). It is believed that officers develop the necessary skills to de-escalate situations and communicate better as they gain more experience. These two studies are important because they show that there is value to having more seasoned officers responding to sensitive crimes. Conversely, however, years of service in policing has also been found to affect police perceptions of victims. In one sample of 100 patrol officers from a Midwestern policing agency, 35% stated their views towards rape had changed over the course of their career and that they now question the credibility of the victim (Wentz & Archbold, 2012). This is concerning since officers are openly acknowledging their reluctance in believing victims of sexual violence. This likely affects their treatment of victims and the cases. As a result of the mixed findings in years of service and its effects on officer response to victims, more research is needed.

Present Study

A majority of the literature regarding altruism and empathy in criminal justice comes from outside of the United States. The research that does exist uses the subjective judgements from crime victims to assess officer empathy. This makes empathy an ideal subject matter to objectively explore on a sample of officers working in one locale within the United States. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature, specifically looking at officer years of service and its effect on an officer's display of empathy towards victims of DV.

“New street-level bureaucrats exist in the reservoir of young people who would commit themselves to public service if they had effective service models which they

might follow” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 206). Without an effective service model to follow throughout the course of a public servant’s career, Lipsky (2010) believes that levels of altruism will begin to decrease in street-level bureaucrats. This means that officers who once joined policing with high levels of altruism are likely affected by inadequate resources, differing goals, alienation from work, and poor relations with those they serve. As a valid concern, the present study attempts to partially test this theory to understand the impact of years of service on police displays of empathy.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Hypothesis

In Lipsky's (2010, p. 204) subtitle, "Keeping New Professionals New", he describes how individuals entering into the field of public service already possess the necessary characteristics, such as altruism, that are needed in a profession such as policing. Lipsky argues these new professionals have not been tainted by the bureaucratic pit falls that more seasoned workers have faced. As a result, we must work to "keep new professionals new" (2010, p. 204). The research question put forth is aimed at understanding whether officer years of service impacts the odds of an officer displaying empathy towards victims of DV? Using Lipsky's (2010) view that altruism may decrease over the course of a street-level bureaucrat's career, it is hypothesized that officers with fewer years of service will be significantly more likely to display empathy in their response to victims of DV than officers with more years of service.

Data

The researcher was given access to data collected for *The Pre-Test Evaluation Report on the X Police Department's Response to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: An IACP Demonstration Initiative Executive Summary* (heretofore referred to as *Pre-Test Evaluation Report*) (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019). To maintain anonymity, the name of the department is not included, but the data comes from a mid-sized police department serving an urban area in the western part of the United States. A total of 132 sworn police officers work at the policing agency and according to the 2019 U.S. Census

Bureau, the population of this policing agency's jurisdiction was slightly over 99,000 people.

In *The Pre-Test Evaluation Report*, Growette Bostaph et al. (2019) were primarily interested in identifying any potential gender-based bias in police officer response to DV, sexual assault, and stalking incidents. The original study used a random selection of 200 domestic violence incidents and 200 sexual assault incidents occurring between 2016 and 2017, as well as all 141 stalking cases that occurred between 2014 and 2017. Since the present study was solely concerned with police interactions with victims of DV, the only data utilized came from the 200 DV incidents. The sexual assault and stalking incident data were not analyzed.

Included in the *Pre-Test Evaluation Report* were data on officer displays of empathy and the badge numbers of involved officers (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019). Using the badge numbers identified in the original study, the policing agency later provided officer demographics that included their onboarding year, birth year and sex. These data were collected as a follow up with the policing agency in August of 2020 for the purposes of this study.

Sample

The unit of analysis in the present study is police officers and a total of 428 officers are included in the sample. The sample of officers consists of those identified as a responding officer, the responsible officer, or an officer who completed a follow up on any one of the 200 DV reports analyzed in *The Pre-Test Evaluation Report* (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019). It is important to note that some reports noted officer badge numbers who were dispatched, but never arrived on scene, officers who acted as a "cover

officer”, but had no active role in the investigation, and officers who had since left the agency and their badge number was reassigned. These officers were excluded from the sample. Additionally, most cases identified multiple officers and officers typically were connected with multiple cases. As a result, a “new officer” was created for every case in which they were involved, even if these cases occurred in the same year. For instance, the same officer may be involved in four cases in 2016 and three cases in 2017.

Subsequently, the procedure here essentially replicated that officer to create seven “new officers” to include in the sample, one for every case they worked. Limitations to this approach will be discussed in a later section, but this decision was made because an officer’s years of service would not remain the same across the years of 2016 and 2017; therefore, there was a need to account for the change in officer service.

Variables

Dependent Variables

Given the focus of this study, displays of empathy was the dependent variable. In the context of policing, empathy has been conceptualized as an officer’s ability to engage in an affective response, engage in perspective taking, and hold self-other awareness while regulating emotions during an interaction with the other (Inzunza, 2015). Based on this conceptualization, police could display empathy in numerous ways. As a result, an all-inclusive measurement of empathy is extremely difficult to formulate. *The Pre-Test Evaluation Report* (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019) used six measures of empathy to assess whether it was present in any of the officers’ reports associated with a DV case. These six measures consisted of empathy expressed verbally to the victim, by providing physical assistance to the victim, contacting others on the behalf of the victim, securing

victim's location, through other actions, and in multiple ways. If any officer reports referenced one of these empathetic acts occurring, the researchers noted that empathy occurred and what type of empathy it was. It is important to note that empathy was originally not tied to specific officers, but rather entire cases.

Given this fact, for the first dependent variable, empathy displayed, the researcher reviewed all cases originally noted as having empathy to identify which officer or officers displayed this empathy. This also acted as an inter-rater reliability check on the original study. In instances where empathy could be tied to a specific officer, that officer was coded as "yes" (1) to displaying empathy while officers who did not display empathy in their report were coded as "no" (0), making this a dichotomous variable. Additionally, for any cases where empathy was not present in the case, all of the officer's involved received a coding of zero indicating no empathy was displayed.

Using the six measurements of empathy from the original study, the types of empathy were incorporated as additional dependent variables for empathy. To allow for the interpretation of the type of empathy displayed by officers, dichotomous dummy variables had to be created from the six measures of empathy that were originally captured in an ordinal level of measurement. To accomplish this, the three most common types of empathy displayed by policing professionals became three additional dichotomous dependent variables and the least frequent types of empathy were collapsed into the final dichotomous dependent variable. The least frequent types of empathy displayed by officers that were collapsed into all other displays of empathy included officers contacting others on the victim's behalf, securing victim's location, and all other empathetic actions. Thus, four dependent dummy variables were created for type of

empathy: verbally, physical assistance, in multiple ways, and all other types of empathy. Each dummy variable was coded based on the type of empathy of interest. For instance, for the dummy variable of empathy displayed verbally, a 0 was coded for those that displayed empathy verbally and any other display of empathy by an officer was coded as 1. Ultimately, this process created four additional dependent variables that were used to see if any of the independent variables included in the analysis predicted the type of empathy displayed by police professionals.

Independent Variables

To measure years of service among officers, the primary independent variable of interest, the researcher was given the year and month in which each officer onboarded with the policing department. Since the exact date of onboarding with the police department was not provided, all officers were coded to start on the first day of the reported month and year the policing agency provided. For instance, an officer's start date is recorded as May 1, 2010 if the policing agency provides an officer start date of May 2010. Using the date and time wizard in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the year in which an officer started was subtracted from the exact date they were identified in the case. As a result, officer years of service can vary from just over zero years of service upward and is measured at the ratio level. This provides the most exact estimation of years of service.

Numerous variables also need to be accounted for as controls in the models. First, a number of officer characteristics were identified as possible variables of interest. These include an officer's age at the time of incident, their age at onboarding, sex of the officer, and the number of times an officer was represented in the sample. Since the age of

officers is not identified on written reports, the policing agency provided a birth year and month for each officer. The researcher then used a process similar to that used for calculating years of service. Since the policing agency only provided the month and year of birth, all officers were coded as having a birthday on the first day of whatever month was provided by the policing agency. For example, if the policing agency provided a date of birth (DOB) that was June 1995, then the officer's DOB was coded as June 1, 1995. The DOB was then subtracted from the date of the incident which produced officer age at the time of incident, a ratio-level variable.

The same process was used for calculating the officer's age at onboarding with the police department to account for officers who may have transferred into the agency with previous experience in policing. If the data appeared to be skewed with a significant portion of officers joining the policing agency at an older age, which could be indicative of transfers from other agencies, this would signify potential issues in the accuracy of the measurement of independent variable of officer years of service. The officer's DOB was subtracted from the officer's start date to essentially create the officer's starting age. Officer sex is reported as a dichotomous variable, men coded as 0 and women coded as 1. Additionally, the number of times an officer is represented in DV cases in the sample is also be controlled for to determine if one officer is having a significant impact on the findings. This is measured at the ratio level.

Moving beyond officer characteristics are those variables associated with the victim and offender including their sex, age, and race, all of which were collected as a part of the *The Pre-Test Evaluation Report* (Growette Bostaph et al., 2019). Sex (0 = female) is measured dichotomously. Suspect and victim age at the time of the incident are

measured at the ratio-level and three dummy variables were created based on the most frequently reported race in police reports. This includes White, Hispanic, and Black. Although Hispanic is normally representative of ethnicity and not race, the data were ultimately coded according to the police department's reporting of race. At first the category of Hispanic was removed from the race variable to create an ethnicity variable, but this resulted in too many missing cases for analysis. For this study, the researcher was able to use the original reporting of race by the police and created three dummy variables for each race (White, Black, and Hispanic) which were coded as 0 being the race of interest and 1 being all others.

Similar to the creation of the race dummy variables, the victim-offender relationship is accounted for at a nominal-level of measurement after being collapsed into dummy variables. The two most common victim-offender relationships are spouse and dating or engaged resulting in a spousal dummy variable (0 = yes) and a dating or engaged dummy variable (0 = yes). Although other relationships existed between victims and offenders, they were not made into dummy variables since they made up a relatively limited number of cases. These cases were still included in the dummy variables for spousal and dating or engaged, but a third dummy variable was not created for these cases. The current study also includes variables for victim and suspect intoxication, as well as drug use at the time of incident (1 = yes). Additionally, victim expression of fear (1 = yes) and victim cooperation (1 = yes) are included, as well as, victim injury (1 = yes), and victim delayed reporting (1 = yes). These variables are included in the analysis because previous research suggests they impact officer perceptions of DV victims, and

officer treatment of victims (DeJong et al., 2008; Franklin et al., 2020a; Growette Bostaph et al., 2019; Stalans & Finn, 2000)

Three other situational variables that are included in the present study are the presence of children during the incident, the presence of the offender upon police arrival, and whether the case involved sexual violence (all coded as 1= yes). The presence of children at DV incidents is of importance because the odds of arrest has been shown to decrease with the presence of children while the odds of victim-directed interventions and follow up increases (Swerin et al., 2018). Correspondingly, the presence of offenders upon police arrival plays an important role in offender arrest (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2013) and therefore may impact officer treatment of victims as well. Lastly, sexual violence or coercion is commonly included on DV risk assessments of dangerousness and lethality, pointing to its importance in relation to police response to DV incidents (Growette Bostaph et al., 2017; Richards et al., 2020). An inter-rater reliability check was administered on all cases where empathy was displayed, and no differences were found between the original study's coding and the current researcher's coding of empathy. A more detailed description of the coding of the data can be found in Table A.1 located in Appendix A.

Analyses

To begin, a descriptive analysis of the data was performed to provide information about the sample, including measures of central tendency and dispersion. The researcher then conducted bivariate analyses to include independent samples t test and chi-square analyses that identify issues of multicollinearity as well as the variables with the greatest significance to the dependent variables. After running descriptive and correlation

analyses, binary logistic regression analyses were conducted due to the dependent variables' dichotomous measurement.

Since this study has a large number of control variables, multiple preliminary regression models were run for each dependent variable. The control variables were broken up into categories that included officer characteristics, victim characteristics, and in some circumstances, a second victim characteristics model, as well as a suspect model and case characteristics model. Through this process, the researcher was better able to adhere to the rule that for every 10 cases included in an analysis, one variable can be included in the model (Harrell et al., 1996). These preliminary logistic regression models were then run for every dependent variable. Finally, for each dependent variable, the most parsimonious final logistic regression model was run based on the variables that were significant in the preliminary analyses. Importantly, an officer's years of service was always included in the final logistic regression model regardless of its significance in relation to the dependent variable. By conducting a more parsimonious regression model that only accounts for the significant variables from the preliminary models, a greater R^2 can be achieved. The Nagelkerke statistic was then used to interpret how well the variables included in the model reduced the prediction error for the dependent variable. All analyses were conducted using SPSS.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analyses were conducted on all of the variables included in this study. As illustrated in Table 1, officer years of service at time of incident ranged from less than a year (.22) to slightly over 29 years (29.06) with a standard deviation of 6.21 and an average of 9.07 years of service. The average number of officer years of service is consistent with the median (9.56) and mode (9.56) indicating the data were normally distributed and not skewed. Empathy was shown by 17.6% of the sample and when empathy was displayed it was primarily displayed through a verbal comment (29.7%) or a physical action (29.7%). The third most common display of empathy was other forms of empathy to include, but not limited to, officer securing victim location, officer comforting children, or officers contacting others on the victim's behalf (23%). Slightly over 17% of the officers that engaged in empathy displayed empathy in multiple ways during their interaction with a victim.

Among the 428 officers included in the sample, 372 were male (86.9%) and the average officer age at the time of incident was 39.47 years old. Officer age at incident ranged from 21.96 to 50.8 years old with a standard deviation of 7.48. On average, officers started with the policing agency at 30.4 years old and the standard deviation from the mean was 5.43. The age at onboarding with the policing agency was slightly skewed (1.19) due to a starting age range of 19 to 51 years old, but not enough to indicate any major issues with the data that would suggest a large number of officers transferring in at

an older age with years of service elsewhere. On average, individual officers were represented in the sample of officers 6.66 times with some officers only being represented 1 time and one officer being represented 16 times. There is very little skewness in the data with the median and mode of the number of times an officer is represented in the sample being 6, which is slightly less than the mean.

As for victim characteristics, most of the victims were female (87.7%) and white (71.3%). Additional races included Black (3.4%), Hispanic (22.9%), and all others (2.4%). The age of victims ranged from 17 years old to 73 years old with a standard deviation of 10.57, but on average, victims were approximately 32 years old. Victims expressed fear of the suspect in just under half of all incidents (49%), and almost always cooperated with officers at the incident (94.1%). Within the sample, only 35 victims were intoxicated at the time of the incident and two were high at the time of the incident. The majority of the suspects in the sample were male (86.3%) and white (71.3%). Other suspect races included Black (5.8%), Hispanic (24.8%), and all others (1.1%). On average suspects were 33 years old, and the age range for suspects ranged from 18-74 years old with a standard deviation of 10.39. In comparison to the low numbers of victim intoxication at the time of incident, 26.4% of the suspect sample was intoxicated at the time of the incident and 7.4% were high at the time of the incident.

The most common type of victim-offender relationship in the sample was currently dating or engaged (45.3%) followed by currently married (30.3%). All other victim-offender relationships made up the final 24.4% of the sample. According to the data, a total of 305 victims were injured (74.8%). A small portion (7.9%) of the domestic violence cases included in the sample involved sexual violence within the case, and the

victim delayed reporting in only 18% of the sample. In just over half of the cases, the offender was present upon police arrival (56.4%) and children were present during the incident (60.1%).

Table 1 **Sample Characteristics**

Variables	N	Valid %	Mean	SD
Independent measures				
Officer years of service			9.07	6.21
Dependent measures				
Officer displayed empathy	75	17.6		
Type of empathy displayed- verbal comment	22	29.7		
Type of empathy displayed- physical assistance	22	29.7		
Type of empathy displayed- multiple ways	13	17.6		
Type of empathy displayed- another way	17	23		
Control measures				
Officer sex (male)	372	86.9		
Officer's age at time of incident			39.47	7.48
Officer's age at time of start with department			30.4	5.43
Number of times officer appears in sample			6.66	3.29
Victim Characteristics				
Victim age			32.16	10.57
Victim sex (female)	372	87.7		
Victim race (white)	293	71.3		
Victim race (black)	14	3.4		
Victim race (Hispanic)	106	22.9		
Victim race (All others)	10	2.4		
Victim expressed fear of the suspect (yes)	203	49		
Victim cooperated with officers (yes)	402	94.1		
Victim intoxicated at time of incident (yes)	35	8.4		
Victim high at time of incident (yes)	2	.5		
Suspect Characteristics				
Suspect age			33.05	10.39
Suspect sex (male)	364	86.3		
Suspect race (white)	269	66.4		
Suspect race (black)	25	6.2		
Suspect race (Hispanic)	106	26.2		
Suspect race (All others)	5	1.1		
Suspect intoxicated at time of incident (yes)	100	26.4		
Suspect high at time of incident (yes)	28	7.4		
Case Characteristics				
V-O Relationship (currently dating/engaged)	193	45.3		
V-O Relationship (current spouse)	129	30.3		
V-O Relationship (all other)	104	24.4		
Victim injured	305	74.8		
Case involved sexual violence	34	7.9		

Offender present upon arrival	241	56.4
Children present during incident	249	60.1
Victim delayed reporting the incident	77	18

Bivariate Analyses

A bivariate correlation matrix was conducted to determine if there were any potential multicollinearity issues and identify significant associations among the continuous independent and five dependent variables. All continuous variables with a significant association to a dependent variable can be seen in Table 2. Table 3 then reports the results of the chi-square analyses that were conducted to identify significant relationships among the nominal level independent variables and five dependent variables.

Officer Displayed Empathy

Based on the independent sample t test and chi-square analyses, multiple variables have a statistically significant association to the dependent variable of officer displayed empathy. Illustrated in Table 2, officer years of service was the only continuous variable to have a statistically significant difference in group means between those that displayed and did not display empathy ($t=-2.779$, $p<.01$). This demonstrates that a relationship does exist between officer years of service and officer displays of empathy towards DV victims. The association also points to the importance of further analysis to understand the directionality of the relationship.

Table 2 Independent Sample t test Results: Significant Mean Differences

Independent Variables	Group Means		Obtained t value
	No-Empathy Displayed	Yes-Empathy Displayed	
Officer Years of Service	8.5884	11.5246	-3.779**
Age of suspect	Yes-Multiple Types	No-Multiple Types	2.036*
	38.31	31.80	
Officer Years of Service	Yes-Another Type	No-Another Type	-2.143**
	9.0243	12.5295	

*p < .05

** p < .01

From the chi-square analyses as seen in Table 3, eight variables have a statistically significant association to the dependent variable of officer displayed empathy. Among the variables with the strongest relationships to officer displays of empathy are sex of the victim and victim delayed reporting. Sex of victim is associated with officer displays of empathy ($\phi = -.188$, $p < .01$) such that when males are victims of domestic violence, displays of empathy by officers are not as common as when the victim is female. For the victim delayed reporting ($\phi = .123$, $p < .01$), this relationship suggests that when victims delayed reporting, it was more common for officers to display empathy than when victims did not delay reporting.

Table 3 Chi-Square Results: Significant Relationships

Dependent Variables	Variables with significance	Phi
Officer displayed empathy	Sex of victim	-.118*
	Sex of suspect	.149**
	Victim injury	.169**
	Offender present upon arrival	-.151**
	Children present at incident	-.174**
	Victim expressed fear of suspect	.202**
	Victim delayed reporting	.123*
	Case involved sexual violence	.139**
Type of empathy displayed- verbal comment	Sex of Officer	-.310**
	Type of Empathy displayed- physical	-.423**
	Type of Empathy displayed- multiple	-.300**
	Type of emp. displayed another way	-.355**
Type of empathy displayed- physical assistance	Sex of suspect	.264*
	Victim delayed reporting	.247*
	Suspect high at time of incident	.258*
	Type of empathy displayed- multiple	-.300**
	Type of empathy displayed- another way	-.355**
Types of empathy displayed- multiple ways	Type of empathy displayed- another way	-.252*
Type of empathy displayed- another way	Sex of Officer	.228*

*p < .05

** p < .01

Six additional variables have statistically significant relationships to officer displays of empathy. These include sex of the suspect ($\phi = .149$, $p < .05$), victim injury ($\phi = .169$, $p < .05$), offender present upon police arrival ($\phi = -.151$, $p < .05$), children present at incident ($\phi = -.174$, $p < .05$), victim expressed fear of suspect ($\phi = .202$, $p < .05$), and the case involved sexual violence ($\phi = .139$, $p < .05$). When the suspect was male, officers engaged in displays of empathy more commonly than when the suspect was female. Additionally, when the victim was injured, the victim expressed fear of the

suspect, or the case involved sexual violence, officers were more likely to display empathy compared to when these case characteristics were not present. On the other hand, officer displays of empathy were less likely to occur when the offender or children were present. Although the strength of all the relationships are relatively weak, they are still important to consider when trying to understand why officers display empathy towards victims in certain DV cases.

Types of Empathy Displayed

Verbal Comment

From the independent samples t test, no continuous variables, which included officer years of service ($t=1.110$, $p=.271$), have a statistically significant difference in group means. Significant relationships were found between verbal displays of empathy and empathy displayed by providing physical assistance ($\phi=-.423$, $p<.01$), in multiple ways ($\phi=-.300$, $p<.01$), and in another way ($\phi=-.355$, $p<.01$). Sex of the officer was the only other variable that held a statistically significant relationship to officer display of verbal empathy. This relationship is a weak association, but it is statistically significant ($\phi = -.310$, $p<.01$). It was more likely the officer was female, rather than male, if the officer engaged in a verbal display of empathy.

Physical Assistance

Again, no continuous variables have a statistically significant difference in group means that would suggest a relationship exists between the variables and the dependent variable. This includes the independent variable, officer years of service ($t=1.194$, $p=.236$). Similar to the previous dependent variable, an officer display of physical assistance has a significant association with empathy displayed in multiple ways ($\phi=-$

.300, $p < .01$) and other types of empathy displayed ($\phi = -.355$, $p < .01$). Three additional variables that have a statistically significant relationship to an officer display of physical empathy include the sex of the suspect ($\phi = .264$, $p < .05$), the victim delayed reporting ($\phi = .247$, $p < .05$), and the suspect was high at time of the incident ($\phi = .258$, $p < .05$). When the suspect was female or was *not* high at the time of the incident, it was more common for officers who displayed empathy to provide physical assistance. Lastly, when the victim did *not* delay reporting, it was more likely an officer provides physical assistance than if the victim delayed in reporting.

Multiple Ways

Group mean differences for an officer's years of service and displays of empathy were not significantly different ($t = -.446$, $p = .657$) suggesting that a relationship does not exist between these variables. One continuous variable that does have a statistically significant difference in group means is age of the suspect ($t = 2.036$, $p < .05$). Empathy displayed in multiply ways has a significant association to an officer displaying empathy in other ways ($\phi = -.252$, $p < .05$). None of the other variables included in the study have a significant association to an officer displaying multiple forms of empathy in their interaction with DV victims.

Another Way

There is a statistically significant difference in officer years of service group means between officers who did and did not display empathy ($t = -2.143$, $p < .01$), but none of the other continuous variable group means are significant. This indicates that a relationship does exist between officer years of service and officers displaying empathy towards DV victims. Additionally, officer sex also has a significant association with an

officer engaging in the last dependent variable, all other forms of empathy ($\phi=.228$, $p<.05$), meaning that male officers more frequently engaged in other types of empathy.

Multicollinearity of Variables

Another purpose for conducting a bivariate correlation was to identify issues of multicollinearity among the variables. An assumption of the regression analysis is that all variables have an independent relationship from one another allowing for the variables to be held constant; thus, multicollinearity would violate that assumption. As expected, the bivariate correlation illustrated a strong association between officer's years of service and their age at the time of the incident ($r=.700$, $p<.01$). This strong association suggests that officer years of service and officer age would not be isolated from one another in a regression model. Since officer years of service is the independent variable of interest in this study, the decision was made to exclude officer age at time of the incident from further analyses.

Not surprisingly, multiple control variables also have issues of multicollinearity that were highlighted in the bivariate analyses. First and foremost, a strong and statistically significant relationship was found between the sex of the victim and the sex of the offender ($r=-.897$, $p<.01$), as well as the age of the victim and the age of the offender ($r=.826$, $p<.01$). In acknowledging these issues of multicollinearity, victim and suspect variables were subsequently used in two different models for each dependent variable. This decision was made because, for some dependent variables, both victim and suspect variables have a statistically significant relationship to the dependent variable. As a result, both victim and suspect variables deserve to be further analyzed to potentially predict officer displays of empathy and types of empathy.

There were also issues with multicollinearity between the dummy victim race variables: race of the victim being white and the race of the victim being Hispanic ($r = -.858, p < .01$). The same significant and strong relationship was found between both dummy suspect race variables: the race of suspect being white and the race of the suspect being Hispanic ($r = -.837, p < .01$). As a result, the suspect race was Black variable was always included in the models and either Hispanic or White were included, depending on which had the most significant bivariate relationship to the dependent variable. In most instances, the race and ethnicity of the victim or suspect did not have a statistically significant association to the dependent variables, as illustrated in the bivariate and chi-square analyses. For this reason, it was not necessary to run multiple models accounting for each race, but rather choosing the race with the most statistical significance. For the first dependent variable, victim and suspect race of black and Hispanic were included in the regression. The second dependent variable's regression model, verbal display of empathy, included victim race as white and black as well as black and Hispanic for suspect race. The same race variables were included for the third dependent variable, physical assistance displays of empathy. The race variables included in the regression models for the final two dependent variables included the race of white and black for both victims and suspects.

Binary Logistic Regression Analyses

For the first dependent variable that captured if any empathy was displayed, three preliminary regression models were run for victim, suspect, and case characteristics. In each of these models, officer characteristics were included. Due to the limited sample size for the dependent variables that looked at the type of empathy displayed, the number

of variables in these preliminary models had to be further reduced in an attempt to more closely follow the rule of one variable in a model per 10 cases in the sample (Harrell et al., 1996). As a result, for the dependent variables looking at types of empathy displayed, a total of five preliminary models were tested, including one model for officer characteristics, two models for victim characteristics, one model for suspect characteristics, and one model with case characteristics. All preliminary models and their results can be seen in Tables A.1 through A.6 in the Appendix A. This process of conducting preliminary analyses allowed the researcher to create the most parsimonious or well fit model to predict an officer's likelihood of displaying empathy and the types of empathy displayed. Table 3 includes the final logistic regression models for each dependent variable. These final models were produced based on variables that were found to have a significant predicative ability for the various dependent variables in the preliminary regression models.

Officer Displayed Empathy

In the final regression model for officer displays of empathy, shown in Table 4, a total of 361 officers were included in the analysis due to missing information in some of the variables, and a total of six variables comprised the model. Again, variables included in this final model are those found to be significant in the four preliminary analyses. These variables include an officer's years of service, sex of suspect, suspect's race is Hispanic, victim injury, victim expressed fear of the suspect at the incident, and presence of children at the incident. Importantly, an officer's years of service is one of the significant predictors in this final model ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.101$; $p < .01$). Contrary to what the theory of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 2010) would suggest, this relationship is

positive. This means that as an officer's years of service increases, so does their likelihood in displaying empathy. More specifically, for every unit increase ($B = .096$) in an officer's years of service, there is 10.1% greater odds that the officer will display empathy towards DV victims.

Additional variables that have a significant predicative ability in the likelihood of empathy being displayed by an officer are victim injury, the presence of children at the incident, and the sex of the suspect. The results suggest that when a victim was injured during the incident, the odds of an officer displaying empathy increased by 249.5% ($B = 1.251$; $\text{Exp}(B) = 3.495$; $p < .01$). Surprisingly, when children were present at the incident, the likelihood of the officer displaying empathy actually decreased by 62.1% ($B = -.971$; $\text{Exp}(B) = .379$; $p < .01$). The last variable with a significant predictive effect was the suspect sex, indicating that, when the suspect is male, the odds of an officer displaying empathy towards the victim increases by 360.7% ($B = 1.528$; $\text{Exp}(B) = 4.607$ $p < .05$). Lastly, victim expression of fear and the suspect's race have no significant predictive effect on officer displays of empathy when included in the final regression model. With a Nagelkerke R^2 value of .23 this means that the inclusion of the independent variables in the regression model reduces the prediction error for the dependent variable by 22.6% ($p < .01$).

Table 4 Final Regression Models

Final Binary Logistic Regressions	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
<u>Any Empathy Displayed</u>				
Officer's years of service	.096	.025	14.397	1.101**
Victim injury	1.251	.463	7.298	3.495**
Children Present at incident	-.971	.312	9.702	.379**
Victim expressed fear of suspect	.551	.323	2.916	1.736
Suspect's race is Hispanic	.405	.366	1.224	1.499
Sex of suspect	1.528	.780	3.840	4.607*
<u>Type of Empathy – Verbal Comment</u>				
Officer's years of service	-1.700	.888	3.660	.183
Officer's sex	-2.647	1.039	6.484	.071*
Officer's starting age	-.097	.054	3.163	.908
Suspect's race is Hispanic	.383	.809	.224	1.467
Victim delayed reporting	-1.700	.888	3.660	.183
Cases involved sexual violence	2.424	1.126	4.630	11.289*
<u>Type of Empathy – Physical Assistance</u>				
Officer's years of service	-.065	.046	2.1044	.937
Victim delayed reporting	1.703	.813	4.595	3.748*
<u>Type of Empathy – Multiple Types</u>				
*no significant variables				
<u>Type of Empathy – Another Way</u>				
Officer's years of service	.127	.051	6.149	1.136*
Officer's starting age	.122	.068	3.209	1.130
*p < .05				
**p < .01				

Types of Empathy Displayed

Among the sample of officers who did display empathy, regression models were run to see what predicted an officer's likelihood in displaying a specific type of empathy. Since there was such a small sample size in the total number of officers who did display empathy (n = 75), a total of five preliminary regression models were estimated for each type of empathy displayed. There are no significant predictors for one dependent variable

(displays of empathy in multiple ways) across any of the preliminary models and so no final regression model was produced.

Verbal Comment

Five independent variables have a significant predictive effect on verbal displays of empathy in the preliminary regression models and are included in the final model along with officer years of service: officer sex, officer starting age, suspect race, whether the case involved sexual violence and the victim delayed reporting (n=68). Among the six variables included in the final regression model, officer years of service is not significant, but officer sex and sexual violence in the case are predictive. Sex of the officer is significant ($p < .05$) and negative ($B = -2.647$), which indicates that male officers decrease the odds of verbal empathy by 92.9% ($\text{Exp}(B) = .071$). Interestingly, the likelihood of a verbal empathy increased by 1028.8% when the case did *not* involve sexual violence ($B = 2.424$; $\text{Exp}(B) = 11.289$; $p < .05$). None of the other variables included in the analysis reach a statistically significant threshold in predicting verbal displays of empathy by policing professionals. The Nagelkerke statistic ($R^2 = .342$; $p < .01$) suggests that the variables in this model reduce the prediction error for the dependent variable by 34.2%.

Physical Assistance

In the preliminary analyses, only one variable is a significant predictor of empathy by providing physical assistance. As a result, this final regression model includes whether victim delayed in reporting and an officer's year of service (n = 74). Not surprisingly due to its insignificance in the preliminary models, an officer's years of service does not predict providing physical assistance to the victim. However, there is a 247.8% increase in the odds of an officer providing physical assistance when there is no

delay in reporting ($B = 1.703$; $\text{Exp}(B) = 3.748$; $p < .05$). The prediction error for the dependent variable is reduced by 13% according to the Nagelkerke statistic ($R^2 = .134$; $p < .05$).

Another Way

For the final dependent variable, all other types of displays of empathy, two variables from the preliminary regression models are significant: officer's years of service and the officer's starting age. These variables were included in the final regression model for all other types of displays of empathy and a total of 74 cases were included in the analysis. In the final regression model, officer's starting age becomes insignificant. Officer's years of service on the other hand has a significant and positive predictive ability on other types of empathy and suggests that officers with fewer years of experience increase the odds of these other types of empathy being displayed by 13.6% ($B = .127$; $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.136$; $p < .05$). With a Nagelkerke R^2 value of .166, this means that the inclusion of the independent variables in the regression model reduces the prediction error for the dependent variable by approximately 17% ($p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

This is the first study to objectively measure empathy displayed by police towards victims of DV, and the results uncovered that only 17.6% of the officers were found to display empathy. This means that for every 100 officers who came into contact with victims of DV, there were only about 18 who displayed some form of empathy towards DV victims. To improve victim reporting rates and victim ratings of satisfaction with police response, a number of studies have pointed to the importance of police displaying empathetic responses to victims of not only DV, but also sexual assault (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013, Johnson, 2007; Rich, 2019). Moving beyond this finding which suggests empathy is an uncommon occurrence in policing, this study also showed for the first time that officer years of service is important to consider when trying to predict the odds of officers displaying empathy in their response to victims of DV

Using Michael Lipsky's (2010) Street-Level Bureaucracy theory as grounds for a hypothesis, it was presumed that officers with fewer years of service would be more likely to display empathy towards victims of DV. This would follow Lipsky's argument that new street-level bureaucrats, or officers in this case, would not experience a decrease in altruistic motivations yet as a result of a career in public service. Contrary to what the theory of Street-Level Bureaucracy would suggest, a positive relationship was found between an officer's years of service and their likelihood in displaying empathy. More specifically, for every unit increase in an officer's years of service there was 10.1% higher odds in empathy being displayed. This positive relationship suggests that officers with

more years of service show more displays of empathy towards victims of DV while responding to and investigating these crimes.

There are a few potential explanations for this positive relationship between an officer's years of service and displays of empathy. When officers have more years of experience in policing, they report more familiarity with how to interact with victims of crime, specifically DV victims (Gover et al., 2011). It is also possible that more officer displays of empathy are occurring during a follow up interview with a detective or an investigator, which is a role most commonly filled by officers with more years of service. These follow up interviews are oftentimes conducted to elicit more information and encourage victims to move forward with a case, which could explain the increase in displays of empathy by officers with more years of service.

Other variables having a predictive ability for officer displays of empathy included suspect and case characteristics. When suspects are male, the likelihood of an officer displaying empathy towards victims of DV increases. Hamby and Jackson (2010) suggest that sex-related stereotypes of violence exist within society that view male perpetrated violence as more serious than female perpetrated violence. Yet, sex differences in DV are also supported by research that illustrates the most serious form of DV, known as intimate terrorism, is most commonly perpetrated by males and the less serious form of DV, known as violent resistance, is most commonly perpetrated by females (Johnson, 2006). In addition, Johnson (2006) states that intimate partner terrorism is the DV type most frequently reported to police. It is therefore possible that officers see male perpetrated violence as more alarming than violence perpetrated by females due to a combination of gender stereotypes and fact-based differences in DV.

Additionally, and not surprisingly, when a victim was injured, the likelihood of empathy being displayed also increased. Research has demonstrated that police commonly perceive risk of future domestic violence based on key factors such as victim fear, threats made by the offender, and the presence of victim injury (Robinson et al., 2018). With these findings in mind, it is logical that the presence of an injury increases the odds of empathy being displayed because officers perceive the situation as more dangerous for the victim.

Lastly, the presence of children has a significant predictive effect on officer displays of empathy towards DV victims. Importantly, when children are present at a DV incident, the likelihood of an officer displaying empathy decreases. This decrease is surprising due to a significant body of literature that illustrates the increased likelihood of children developing negative consequences after witnessing DV (Anderson & Bang, 2012; Arai et al., 2019; Bauer et al., 2006; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015). To begin to explain a decrease in empathetic displays by officers when children are present, Richardson-Foster et al. (2012) reported officers commonly state they lack confidence in addressing the needs of children who witness DV incidents due to a lack of training, and as a result officers are hesitant to engage with children while on scene. Further supporting a lack of officer engagement with children are the findings from Swerin et al. (2018) that suggest less than 33% of children present at a DV incident are spoken to directly by the police.

When an officer engages in empathy, the type of empathy they display is influenced by a few key variables. For instance, officer sex is a significant predictor of verbal forms of empathy. When the officer is female, the likelihood of verbal forms of

empathy increases. This includes comments such as an officer telling the victim they did not deserve the violence they experienced or reassuring the victim that officers will help them. Although research suggests no overall difference in the frequency of displays of empathy by male and female officers (Rabe-Hemp, 2008), it is believed that female officers have superior communication skills allowing them to deescalate situations or provide comfort to victims more frequently than male officers (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). It is this emphasis on the use of communication by female officers that lends support to the finding that when the officer is female, there are greater odds of that officer displaying verbal empathy.

Additionally, when DV cases involve sexual violence, verbal forms of empathy are less likely to occur. No studies could be located that quantify how often verbal displays of empathy are utilized in DV cases in comparison to other types of empathy. Despite this void in research, sexual assault literature has pointed to the importance of investigators using empathetic actions such as displaying concern for the safety of victims (Patterson, 2011) or providing victims with safe and comfortable environments (Rich, 2019). As a result, it may be more likely that officers are concerned with providing a safe environment such as securing a victim's location, driving the victim somewhere safe or contacting others on behalf of the victim. Additionally, when the officers were male the likelihood of empathy being displayed through a verbal comment decreased which possibly suggests that male officers are not as comfortable with verbal displays of empathy as they are with the other types of empathy.

A victim delay in reporting a DV incident is also a significant predictor in the type of empathy displayed by an officer. When victims delay reporting, it is less likely

that empathy will be displayed by providing physical assistance. This finding is consistent with what one might expect since the incident has already passed. An empathetic response after the incident occurred likely will not include providing any form of physical assistance such as transporting the victim to a relative's house, but it could include the officer providing verbal empathy, multiple types of empathy, or an entirely other form of empathy.

No variables included in this study were able to predict why an officer would display multiple types of empathy towards a victim of DV. However, and importantly, years of service was a significant predictor of all other forms of empathy such as comforting children or requesting additional patrol for a victim. Officers with more years of experience were less likely to display these types of empathy and more likely to display empathy through verbal comments, physical assistance or multiple types.

Limitations

As is the case with most social science research, the current study has its limitations. First and foremost, although the current study utilized a comprehensive measurement of empathy that included four types of empathy, this list is not exhaustive. Empathy can be expressed through behaviors or thoughts, both conscious and unconsciously (Inzunza, 2015), resulting in difficulty capturing all types of empathy. Additionally, officers may display empathy outside of the limited time frame in which the data were collected or may display empathy towards victims of other crimes, but not crimes of DV. If the latter were true, this could potentially be an indicator of adherence to common myths about DV incidents and victims. Lastly, it is possible that some officers

engaged in empathy while on scene but did not include it in their report. As a result, the current study likely undercounts officer displays of empathy.

Despite these limitations, Oxburgh et al. (2006) used a similar methodology analyzing interview transcripts for the purpose of identifying officer displays of empathy during the interview process with offenders. In the case of DV, officer reports act as the primary form of documentation therefore they offer great insight into how an officer responds to a situation and what the officer views as important to include in the report. Gregory et al. (2011) note the accuracy of police reports, but also point to the use of discretion by officers in what they include in their reports. Accordingly, it is possible that officers who discuss their displays of empathy in their report view it as an important component in their investigation or interaction with the victim while others do not. In recognizing this limitation, this study benefits research by providing objective assessment of officer displays of empathy. This is significant because previous literature relies on the subjectivity of a victim's recollection of officer displays of empathy (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Johnson, 2007).

Secondly, officers had to be duplicated in the study to account for the change in their years of service across all DV incidents in 2016 and 2017. This methodology has the possibility of certain officers being disproportionately represented in the sample, but this possibility was not supported in the analyses. The number of times an officer is represented the sample does not influence officer displays of empathy in a meaningful way. The benefits to duplicating officers are increasing the sample size from 93 to 428 officers and decreasing the likelihood of making a type II statistical error which would accept a null hypothesis when in fact it is actually false.

Content validity is also weakened by the researcher's inability to account for officers who transferred into the policing agency with years of experience from a former agency. Since the policing agency did not have records of officers who transferred into their agency from a former policing agency, the current study calculated the age at which officers onboarded with the policing agency. If the data appeared to be skewed, meaning a significant number of individuals onboarded with the policing agency at an older age, it would be indicative of a large portion of officers potentially transferring into the agency with previous policing experience, making the current study's measurement of years of service inaccurate. This was not the case, however. The data did not appear to be skewed and this variable did not show significance in relation to officer displays of empathy.

Importantly, the findings from this study only show the relationship between officer years of service and an officer's likelihood in displaying empathy towards DV victims. Due to using a one-shot case study design, the necessary criteria to assert causation between years of service and officer displays of empathy were not met. No pre-test evaluation on empathy took place and there is no control group used to compare officer displays of empathy. Additionally, officer years of service is something developed through the course of an officer's career, which makes it impossible to create random assignment of the independent variable across the sample. Lastly, the evidence obtained from this study cannot be generalized to all police officers. Data were solely collected from one jurisdiction and is not necessarily representative of all policing agencies, therefore, findings must be interpreted cautiously. Regardless of this study's limited generalizability, it fills a current gap in the literature by assessing the relationship between officer years of service and displays of empathy towards victims of DV.

Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations put forth in this section stem from the major findings from this study which examines police officer displays of empathy towards victims of DV. These recommendations are likely useful for most policing agencies to consider given the low reporting rates of DV (Morgan & Truman, 2020) and well-documented victim dissatisfaction with police response related to a lack of care or empathy shown by police (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Johnson, 2007). As such, the treatment of DV victims by policing professionals is an important area of policy that needs to receive more attention.

The main finding from the current study suggests that officers with fewer years of service display empathy less frequently towards victims of DV. Interestingly, in a study published on officer attitudes about DV training, officers with fewer years of service were more likely to agree with the statement that more training would help in assessing DV incidents (Gover et al., 2011). Putting these findings together, it is recommended that additional training be provided on DV investigations, victim response, victim services, and victim treatment be implemented at training academies. In a quick descriptive analysis of the most recent Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies (CLETA) provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018), policing recruits, on average, only receive about five hours of training regarding victim response, and that is not specific to DV victims. By implementing more instruction that focuses on DV victims and officer treatment of victims, academies can point to the importance of responding to DV victims with a trauma-informed approach. A trauma-informed approach “helps clients access services in a way that avoids exacerbating existing trauma, prevents creating additional

trauma, reduces dropout rates, increases cooperation, supports service providers to do their best work, and reduces staff burnout” (Rich, 2019, p. 466). New recruits could then enter the workforce with a better understanding of what trauma looks like, how to respond to it, and the benefits of a trauma-informed approach.

Similarly, policing academies should instruct officers on how common it is for children to be present at DV incidents, the negative consequences of witnessing this violence, and how officers can respond to minimize these consequences. In just over 58% of this study’s sample, children were present during the DV incident, suggesting that officers were coming into regular contact with children while investigating DV incidents. Interestingly however, the presence of children had a negative impact on an officer’s likelihood in displaying empathy. This finding is significant to consider when trying to improve relations with children or adolescents who may begin to develop antisocial behaviors as a result of witnessing and experiencing DV (Sousa et al., 2011). Providing further support for this recommendation is the finding that children are not commonly given the opportunity to talk with officers about DV incidents (Swerin et al., 2018), despite their desires to be included in the investigation and voice their concerns (Richardson-Foster et al., 2012).

Moving beyond the academy, policing agencies should emphasize the benefits of using empathy in their officers’ interactions with DV victims. This emphasis should not only be geared towards new recruits, but all officers. Empathy is an important component of policing because it is a way for officers to show altruistic inclinations that may improve their relationship with victims. Yet, this study found that of the 428 officers included in analysis, only 75 displayed empathy towards a victim of DV. This is

approximately 17.6% of the sample of officers which indicates only a small portion of officers are displaying empathy in their response to victims of DV or documenting this response in their reports. To encourage the use of empathy within agencies it would be beneficial to stress the importance of procedural justice policing. In procedural justice policing, emphasis is being placed on making the public feel respected and able to voice their concerns to the police, as well as feeling that the police are trustworthy and conducting a neutral investigation (Murphy & Tyler, 2017). Subsequently, it is recommended that policing agencies continually educate their officers on what empathy is, how empathy can increase public satisfaction with police, and how to use it while operating under a procedural justice policing model.

Lastly, in this study, officers with more years of service display more empathy, possibly indicating an increased perceived importance in responding to DV incidents. This finding appears contrary to Gover et al. (2011) where officers with more years of experience were more likely to agree with the statement that DV incidents took too much time and effort and that too many DV calls are for verbal comments. Yet, it may be that more experienced officers, who are more likely to display empathy towards DV victims, are experiencing compassion fatigue or burnout (Horwitz et al., 2011; Papazoglou et al., 2019), resulting in their belief that DV incidents take too much time and effort. Unaddressed compassion fatigue or burnout negatively impact job satisfaction and service provision (Martinussen et al., 2007). It is therefore recommended that agencies implement continual assessment of officers' wellbeing and job perceptions.

Future Research

The lack of research attention given to empathy in policing is a cause for concern and, as such, any research that expands on the way empathy is understood or studied would be beneficial in criminal justice research. It would be prudent to study additional crime types which could provide additional information about why empathy is or is not displayed to crime victims. Additionally, a limitation to this study was the measurement of empathy through officer reports because it is likely that empathy is undercounted. Future research would benefit from expanding data collection methods through direct observation of police interactions with victims or watching body camera footage. Regardless of the type of data available, future research is needed to understand police displays of empathy towards victims of crime.

In carrying out this study, a number of control variables were tested in relation to officer displays of empathy that included officer, victim, suspect, and case characteristics. Further research should test these same variables since the data for this study came from one policing agency and generalizations cannot be made. Additionally, future research should attempt to gather a larger sample size to provide a deeper understanding of the specific types of empathy displayed by officers. This study was limited in its ability to draw conclusions about what influences the type of empathy displayed by an officer since only 75 of the 428 officers displayed empathy. As a result, the conclusions from this study are limited.

Beyond the officer characteristics included in this study (officer's years of service, the sex of officers, and the officer's starting age), future studies should include other variables that may influence displays of empathy, such as an officer's relationship

status, whether or not they have children, level of education, their acceptance of DV myths, officer rank, and assignment. All individuals carry with them their own personal biases and perspectives; therefore, we need to attempt to understand more about how policing professionals' lives and experiences shape the way in which they carry out their job.

Additionally, a significant body of literature exists looking at the negative consequences children develop as a result of witnessing and experiencing DV within the household (Herrenkohl et al., 2008; Holt et al., 2008; Sternberg et al., 2006), illustrating the importance of officers responding in a way to minimize these consequences. Future research should expand on our knowledge of police response to the presence of children while on scene and children's perception of police response. Based on the results of the current study, research should continue to explore this relationship between officer displays of empathy and the presence of children while on scene.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this study do not support Lipsky's (2010) theory that altruism declines as the number of years in street-level work increases. While displays of empathy towards DV victims occur infrequently, as officers gained experience, they were more likely to display empathy than less experienced officers. When empathy was displayed, the most common forms of empathy included officers making a verbal comment to the victim or providing some form of physical assistance.

Given the numerous benefits of displaying empathy towards victims of crime (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Greeson et al., 2014; Johnson, 2007; Maddox et al., 2011; Patterson, 2011; Stephens & Sinden, 2000; Rich, 2019), policing agencies should begin to emphasize the use of empathy in responding to crimes such as DV. Additionally, policing academies, in general, should provide more training on police response to DV from a trauma-informed approach grounded in empathy. Finally, future research needs to expand on the study of police displays of empathy by introducing new data collection methods and crime types, as well as incorporating additional control variables focused on officer characteristics and case characteristics.

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APPENDIX

Table A.1 Coded Data

Variables	Data Coding
Officer displayed empathy	0 = No 1 = Yes
Type of empathy displayed was verbal	0 = Yes 1 = No
Type of empathy displayed was physical assistance	0 = Yes 1 = No
Type of empathy displayed was in multiple ways	0 = Yes 1 = No
Type of empathy displayed was in other way	0 = Yes 1 = No
Officer years of service	Years
Officer sex	0 = Male 1 = Female
Officer's age at time of incident	Years
Officer's age at time of onboarding with department	Years
Number of times officer is represented in sample	Count
Victim age	Years
Victim sex	0 = Female 1 = Male
Victim race (white)	0 = White 1 = All other races
Victim race (black)	0 = Black 1 = All other races
Victim race (Hispanic)	0 = Hispanic 1 = All other races
Victim expressed fear of the suspect	0 = No 1 = Yes
Victim cooperated with officers at incident	0 = No 1 = Yes
Victim intoxicated at time of incident	0 = No 1 = Yes
Victim high at time of incident	0 = No 1 = Yes
Suspect age	Years
Suspect sex	0 = Female 1 = Male
Suspect race (white)	0 = White 1 = All other races
Suspect race (black)	0 = Black 1 = All other races
Suspect race (Hispanic)	0 = Hispanic 1 = All other races
Suspect intoxicated at time of incident	0 = No

Suspect high at time of incident	1 = Yes 0 = No
Victim-offender relationship (currently dating/engaged)	1 = Yes 0 = Dating/Engaged
Victim-offender relationship (current spouse)	1 = All other 0 = Current Spouse
Victim injured	1 = All other 0 = No
Case involved sexual violence	1 = Yes 0 = No
Offender present upon arrival	1 = Yes 0 = No
Children present during incident	1 = Yes 0 = No
Victim delayed reporting the incident	1 = Yes 0 = No

Preliminary Regression Analyses

Table A.2 Any Empathy Displayed Preliminary Regression Models

Preliminary Regression Models	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Victim Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	.103	.029	12.451	1.109**
Officer's sex	-.354	.451	.616	.702
Number of cases officer involved in	.042	.056	.558	1.043
Officer's starting age	-.014	.028	.242	.986
Sex of victim	-.574	.651	.778	.563
Age of victim	.012	.013	.870	1.012
Victim race is black	-.490	.658	.555	.612
Victim race is Hispanic	.581	.395	2.170	1.788
Victim expressed fear of suspect	.924	.320	8.357	2.519**
Victim cooperated with officers	.764	.812	.886	2.148
Victim intoxicated at incident	-.719	.660	1.188	.487
Victim high at incident	3.197	1.799	3.158	24.461
Suspect Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	.113	.031	13.547	1.120**
Officer's sex	-.563	.534	1.111	.569
Number of cases officer involved in	.056	.062	.812	1.057
Officer's starting age	-.035	.033	1.119	.965
Sex of suspect	1.679	.752	4.989	5.362*
Age of suspect	.005	.014	.150	1.006
Suspect race is black	-.757	.552	1.879	.469
Suspect race is Hispanic	.886	.440	4.060	2.424*
Suspect intoxicated at incident	-.127	.384	.109	.881
Suspect high at incident	.508	.573	.787	1.662
Case Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	.094	.027	12.094	1.098**
Officer's sex	-.394	.437	.815	.674
Number of cases officer involved in	.052	.055	.880	1.053
Officer's starting age	-.034	.030	1.297	.967
Victim injured	1.177	.436	7.290	3.243**
V-O Relationship Spouse	.462	.347	1.774	1.587
Offender present upon arrival	-.467	.308	2.292	.627
Children present during incident	-.801	.297	7.254	.449**
Victim delayed reporting	.464	.389	1.420	1.590
Case involved sexual violence	.409	.457	.802	1.506

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table A.3 Type of Empathy Displayed- Verbal Comment Preliminary Regression Models

Preliminary Regression Models	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Officer Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	-.048	.063	.590	.953
Officer's sex	-1.999	.776	6.642	.135**
Number of cases officer involved in	.041	.106	.149	1.042
Officer's starting age	-.112	.053	4.433	.894*
Victim Characteristics				
Sex of victim	20.574	23203.043	.000	861153243
Age of victim	.032	.030	1.125	1.033
Victim race is white	-.214	.721	.088	.808
Victim race is black	.373	1.132	.108	1.452
Victim Characteristics 2				
Victim injured	-1.128	1.117	1.019	.324
Victim expressed fear of suspect	-.267	.619	.186	.766
Victim cooperated with officers	21.092	24740.326	.000	1.446E+9
Victim intoxicated at incident	40.465	34988.105	.000	3.746E+17
Victim high at incident	1.237	47197.018	.000	3.447
Suspect Characteristics				
Sex of suspect	-20.112	28313.220	.000	.000
Age of suspect	.001	.032	.001	1.001
Suspect race is black	1.309	1.019	1.652	3.703
Suspect race is Hispanic	1.761	.881	3.998	5.818*
Suspect intoxicated at incident	-.412	.863	.228	.662
Suspect high at incident	-.064	1.114	.003	.938
Case Characteristics				
V-O Relationship Spouse	.347	.626	.307	1.415
Offender present upon arrival	-.333	.609	.299	.717
Children present during incident	-.334	.598	.312	.716
Victim delayed reporting	-1.889	.818	5.340	.151*
Case involved sexual violence	2.093	1.024	4.179	8.113*

*p < .05

**p < .01

**Table A.4 Type of Empathy Displayed- Provided Physical Assistance
Preliminary Regression Models**

Preliminary Regression Models	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Officer Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	-.082	.058	.590	.922
Officer's sex	1.107	.881	1.579	.3.025
Number of cases officer involved in	-.047	.096	.242	.954
Officer's starting age	.001	.049	.001	1.001
Victim Characteristics				
Sex of victim	-1.766	1.280	1.905	.171
Age of victim	-.010	.026	.143	.990
Victim race is white	-.281	.722	.151	.755
Victim race is black	.386	1.125	.118	1.471
Victim Characteristics 2				
Victim injured	.695	.840	.685	2.004
Victim expressed fear of suspect	.965	.593	2.646	2.625
Victim cooperated with officers	-.121	1.741	.005	.886
Victim intoxicated at incident	-.844	1.688	.250	.430
Victim high at incident	-21.746	40192.970	.000	.000
Suspect Characteristics				
Sex of suspect	22.134	27937.212	.000	4.100E+9
Age of suspect	.021	.031	.452	1.021
Suspect race is black	-.532	1.020	.272	.587
Suspect race is Hispanic	-20.369	13340.615	.000	.000
Suspect intoxicated at incident	1.265	1.172	1.165	3.542
Suspect high at incident	20.006	16176.937	.000	488038039
Case Characteristics				
V-O Relationship Spouse	.745	.663	1.264	2.106
Offender present upon arrival	-.362	.562	.415	.696
Children present during incident	.766	.584	1.718	2.151
Victim delayed reporting	2.274	.997	5.206	9.721*
Case involved sexual violence	-.703	.890	.624	.495

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table A.5 Type of Empathy Displayed- Multiple Ways Preliminary Regression Models

Preliminary Regression Models	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Officer Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	.013	.067	.040	1.013
Officer's sex	-.091	9.04	.010	.913
Number of cases officer involved in	-.035	.106	.106	.966
Officer's starting age	.001	.057	.000	1.001
Victim Characteristics				
Sex of victim	19.737	22865.744	.000	373067578
Age of victim	-.037	.027	1.878	.964
Victim race is white	-.656	.800	.673	.519
Victim race is black	-20.453	17937.013	.000	.000
Victim Characteristics 2				
Victim injured	-.276	1.154	.057	.759
Victim expressed fear of suspect	-1.582	.1090	2.105	.206
Victim cooperated with officers	-17.511	25805.178	.000	.000
Victim intoxicated at incident	19.092	125805.182	.000	.195767444
Victim high at incident	-16.625	54288.944	.000	.000
Suspect Characteristics				
Sex of suspect	-19.282	28307.219	.000	.000
Age of suspect	-.042	.033	1.608	.959
Suspect race is white	.317	1.218	.068	1.373
Suspect race is black	-18.828	16401.401	.000	.000
Suspect intoxicated at incident	-.046	.957	.002	.955
Suspect high at incident	-.693	1.302	.284	7.844E+17
Case Characteristics				
V-O Relationship Dating/Engaged	.820	.686	1.428	2.270
Offender present upon arrival	.534	.686	.605	1.705
Children present during incident	.097	.685	.020	2.151
Victim delayed reporting	.352	.797	.195	1.422
Case involved sexual violence	-1.058	.824	1.649	.347

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table A.6 Type of Empathy Displayed- Another Way Preliminary Regression Models

Preliminary Regression Models	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Officer Characteristics				
Officer's years of service	.128	.064	4.006	1.137*
Officer's sex	19.967	11926.815	.000	469468328
Number of cases officer involved in	.054	.098	.302	1.055
Officer's starting age	.138	.070	3.888	1.148*
Victim Characteristics				
Sex of victim	-.609	1.346	.205	.544
Age of victim	.015	.030	.272	1.016
Victim race is white	1.515	1.105	1.881	4.551
Victim race is black	1.176	1.550	.576	3.243
Victim Characteristics 2				
Victim injured	.493	.902	.298	1.637
Victim expressed fear of suspect	.134	.680	.039	1.144
Victim cooperated with officers	-40.475	33917.490	.000	.000
Victim intoxicated at incident	-21.618	23983.294	.000	.000
Victim high at incident	.898	46084.628	.000	2.456
Suspect Characteristics				
Sex of suspect	20.397	28111.459	.000	721974149
Age of suspect	.015	.033	.193	1.015
Suspect race is white	-.205	.958	.046	.814
Suspect race is black	-.309	1.428	.047	.734
Suspect intoxicated at incident	.560	.847	.436	1.750
Suspect high at incident	.683	1.056	.419	1.981
Case Characteristics				
V-O Relationship Dating/Engaged	-.329	.622	.279	.720
Offender present upon arrival	.024	.636	.001	1.024
Children present during incident	-.731	.655	1.245	.481
Victim delayed reporting	-.229	.818	.078	.795
Case involved sexual violence	-.295	.853	.120	.745

*p < .05

**p < .01