

# Women in policing assignment

Law



In order to achieve this goal, it is important for law enforcement agencies to identify and address the adverse effects of disparate treatment of women in law enforcement. Research on the problem of disparate treatment of women officers in law enforcement follows a specific plan. The research begins with problem formation and a topic outline. The research design is explained in the introduction thesis and the outline defines the research question. The research divides the problem into sub-problems.

A cause and effect analysis was chosen to identify the social causes and effects of how the occurrence of disparate treatment of women officers correlates with the subtopics of discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems. Research objectives were guided by the cause and effect analysis of the problem by utilizing the analysis to formulate research question and hypothesis. The research objectives were guided by a literature review. A hypothesis is advanced about what is expected to happen in the research.

The research is designed to look at the relationship between disparate treatment of women police officers and discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems. This research is designed to assess the hypothesis, “ Women police officers experience disparate treatment. This research accepts certain critical assumptions. The assumptions as the foundation of the research is as follows, “ This research is designed to assess the hypothesis that women police officers experience disparate treatment. To understand the implications of these critical assumptions for theory and research, experiences and attitudes of sample groups of male and women officers were explored. A method and content

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analysis of survey data revealed conclusions which supported the hypothesis. Implications of the research of disparate treatment of women police officers will be discussed in the report findings ND discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW This discussion incorporates other researcher's views with a dialogue of how the literature review relates to the research being conducted.

The research methodology will conceptualize the disparate treatment of women officers in law enforcement. Specific research procedures, such as survey questions, were developed which resulted in empirical observations representing those concepts in the real world. The literature review provides a detailed identification of the overall relevance to existing research as it relates to empirical research of the adverse affects associated tit disparate treatment of women officers in law enforcement.

The harms of under representation of women in policing include discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits, retention problems, damaged community relations, ineffective response to violence against women, and the excessive force complaints that accompany a void of women in policing. In order to discuss the current status of women in law enforcement, it is important to review the history of women in the profession. Law enforcement has traditionally been a male dominated field ever since the mid-19th century and has been slow to accept women into its ranks.

Women in policing make up less than 15 percent of all police officers in the United States (Harrington 2001). Women face many obstacles, and yet have

brought about changes in policing. The Jobs available to policewomen were limited until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (Essen 1999). In the early sass's, law enforcement agencies only hired men as police officers. This was a result of society's view that women were not fit to be police officers (Harrington and Lindsay 2006). In 1971 women accounted for only 1. 4 percent of all police officers. Today women in policing make up more than 13 recent of police officers.

Women have made progress in their numbers in recent years but women are still underrepresented in all ranks in policing and women face many obstacles. The Supreme Court applied Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to law enforcement in 1972. Agencies could be sued for discriminating against qualified women. In some cases, the courts issued consent decrees which forced agencies to hire qualified women. Many law enforcement agencies used height and weight limits to prevent women from meeting the qualifications until the courts struck down this practice in 1977 in Dotard vs.. Rawlins.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (ICP) conducted a survey and found that women in policing are both underused and undervalued in law enforcement. While they said that the number of women in policing is growing and progressing through the ranks, it also revealed that there are too few women in law enforcement, woman police officers still face recruiting women, woman police officers face advancement limits, sexual harassment still occurs in many departments, there are few mentoring programs for female officers and women make valuable contributions to community policing.

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In 2001 the National Center for Women and Policing did a survey of police agencies with more than 100 officers. They found that women make up only 12.7 percent of police officers. Even these numbers do not paint an accurate picture because only the nation's largest police agencies were surveyed and these agencies have the highest percentages of women in policing. The Bi's Uniform Crime Report (CUR), which surveyed most of the U. S. Police agencies, including agencies with less than 100 officers, said that in 2003, only 11.4 percent of the police officers were women. FBI, Crime in the United States, 2003). The I-JAR data showed that the majority of the police agencies FBI did not employ any women in policing whatsoever in 2003. In 2001 the National Center for Women and Policing (NCSC) said that a survey of police agencies with more than 100 officers found that women make up only 9.6 percent of supervisory positions (sergeants and lieutenants) and just 7.3 percent of top command spots (captains and above). Women make up about 1 percent (about 200 or so) of this nation's police chiefs and sheriffs (Dorothy Schultz 2004).

The hiring and selection practices of police agencies create obstacles for women in policing. The selection processes can favor men because they place greater emphasis on an applicant's physical strength (Harrington 2001). In the scope of the essential functions of a police officer, research has shown that the current standards, hiring and selection practices in connection with recruitment of police officers, that verbal and mediation skills have more bearing on performance as a police officer than physical ability (Spiller 2000).

Because men have an advantage in terms of upper body strength, the small percentage of women in the police profession can partly be attributed to the biased recruiting practices that place a high value on these factors. Studies have found that 60-70% of women officers experienced sexual harassment but only about 4-6% ever reported it (Harrington 2001). The lack of reporting could be attributed to retaliation that occurs when women report it (Harrington 2001).

This is a form of discrimination that has the result of low retention rates for women officers, and results in a low advancement rate of women police officers (Harrington 2001). Sexual harassment and the stress resulting from it are the two main reasons women most often give for leaving their law enforcement careers (Lindsay 2006). The high incidence of sexual and gender harassment is an indicator of how men are less than accepting of women as police officers.

The term "glass ceiling" refers to the inability of women to easily advance beyond entry level positions within a police department. Traditionally, white males have had access to advancement over females. Women in law enforcement face discrimination based on preconceived beliefs that women are not cut out to be police officers. Women have to work harder to get into specialty assignment positions such as SWAT or to promote to supervisory positions. This can lead to frustration, giving up and quitting the profession altogether.

Women police officers are proven to be capable, women officers are less likely to use excessive force, women officers have proven effective in

community-oriented policing, women officers provide an effective response to violence against women and increasing the (Harrington 2001). Women police officers are effective in responding to female victims of violence. Violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual assault, requires an effective and sensitive response from law enforcement. The ICP has estimated that more than 40 percent of all calls for police service are related to domestic violence.

It has been suggested that women police officers enhance an agency's ability to respond effectively to violence against women. Research has indicated that women are better at defusing and De-escalating potentially violent confrontations (Lindsay 2006). Female victims of domestic violence are sometimes reluctant to call the police because they believe that the officers will side with the male half of the domestic incident. WAC Los Angeles: October 1993), Studies have shown that female police officers are more likely to show sympathy and understanding to successfully handle domestic violence incidents.

A 1985 study showed that woman officers were more involved in domestic violence calls and more convinced of the importance of responding to family fights as a critical police duty (Woman & Kennedy 1985). Increasing the number of women in policing could encourage female victims of violence to report incidents to the police. Community relations problems require a trend toward a more communicative and cooperative immunity oriented policing model. Community policing is a policing approach that promotes community, government, and police partnerships.

It utilizes proactive problem solving to address crime, social disorder and neighborhood problems. It shifts the focus of police work from a reactive approach to solving ongoing community problems. The emphasis on community policing requires police officers with problem-solving and communication skills so they can interact effectively with all segments of the public. Several researchers have concluded that women tend to be effective communicators, and good problem solvers. Hiring more women in policing, retaining them, and promoting them will help police departments succeed in community policing.

Regarding violence, it is important to point out that research has shown that women officers use on a policing style that uses less physical force and is less confrontational than that used by male officers. Women officers are less likely to use excessive violence or police brutality. The Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department (1991) concluded that gender bias contributed substantially to excessive-force problems on the LAP. Women in policing face rudder in connection with organizational and social obstacles that are difficult to overcome.

One obstacle for women is the biased attitude from males who resist accepting women in policing. This is evident in the high incidence of discrimination, sexual harassment, retention problems and limited advancement of qualified applicants (Harrington 2001). Associations have come up to support woman police officers. The organizations include, the International Association of Women Police (PAW), the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NEWLY), the National Center for



Women and Policing (NCSC), and Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFE), to name a few.

These organizations provide information, guidance, and support to female officers and those considering entering the profession. These four associations have gone out to educate police administrators, politicians, the media, and the public about the benefits of increasing the number of communities they serve and women should be equally represented to deal with the community challenges that face law enforcement today. Woman officers have positive traits and proven law enforcement capability which is why it is important to provide an equal playing field for women in law enforcement.

METHODOLOGY Surveys were administered to a sample group of male and women police officers identifying a relationship between variables, examining multiple factors such as, discrimination, sexual harassment, retention and advancement limits. The results will incorporate facts, predictions and hypotheses. A strategy to collect data with procedures for giving out the survey included selecting male and women officers, providing instructions to participants, establishing data collection procedures and a sampling method. The subjects were contacted by email with a single, unrepeated revue, administered by the researcher.

A proportionate number of male and women officers to the total percentage of male and women officers were sampled to examine relationships between the gender based groups. Data was collected and interpreted in an attempt to resolve the problem that initiated the research: the adverse affects of the

disparate treatment of women officers in law enforcement. Data, in the form of numbers and statistics, was collected, prepared, processed and analyzed using quantitative analysis. Data, in the form of numbers and statistics, was analyzed using quantitative analysis. The data was interpreted to test hypotheses and conclusions made about the data.

Conclusions were made based upon what the data revealed. The final report addresses conclusions related to future theory and research formation.

Information gained from research may open new avenues of research to find additional answers to assess the hypothesis that disparate treatment of women officers in law enforcement results in discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems. The selection of the survey respondents, the target population and the sample size was based upon a preventative sample of police officers from a single law enforcement agency with over 100 officers.

The decision about the sample size was based on factors such as: time available, budget and necessary degree of precision. Quantitative questions were assigned to each study participant for each variable. Methods of observation involved reliability and validity as tests to establish the credibility of the observations. Survey questions were designed to be reliable and valid measures. Questions were reliable, providing consistent measures, and valid, answers correspond to what they were intended to measure.

There were basically three steps to the improvement of validity of subjective measures: the questions were made as reliable as possible by dealing with ambiguity of wording, standardized presentation, and vagueness in response

form, and everything possible was done to get questions that will mean the same thing to all respondents. After preparing the survey, it was given it to a sample group of police officers who were asked to pre-test it and provide feedback. Changes were made to refine it based upon feedback, ensuring consistent meaning to all respondents. Survey questions were designed to obtain ordinal data.

The distribution of people choosing a particular label or category was based upon a five- to understand the research the data was measured with the Liker scale. The Liker scale measured a group of 12 questions that were designed to measure a single concept; “ Women police officers experience disparate treatment. ” The questions were designed to gauge attitudes toward whether the respondents believe that women police officers experience disparate treatment in the subcategories of discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems. There were three questions from each of the categories.

In the analysis of survey data, relationships between specific subtopics were looked at by ransacking the data. Identifying these relationships between specific topics and the gender characteristics of respondents for an evaluation helped identify which segments changed the most. This process enabled the researcher to identify patterns among the items showing significant relationships. A cover letter was included with the survey clearly stating the intentions of the research. A brief statement explaining why the information was being collected and the respondents were reassured that the information is anonymous.

The only specific information collected was the gender of the respondent at the end of the questionnaire. To ensure that valid survey results were collected, instructions were included on how to answer the survey questionnaire. This research was conducted from January 2008 to May 2008 and surveyed a single law enforcement agency of 230 officers. To avoid the reality and appearance of bias, all contact with the agency was designed to be both persistent and consistent. In order to meet these two goals, the following implementation plan was followed. A cover letter and survey questionnaire was given to the Chief of Police of the Police

Department in March 2008. Approval was obtained from the Chief of Police for buy in and to conduct the survey. The surveys were distributed through interoffice mail and returned directly to the researcher. The demographics of the agency consists of 200 male officers and 30 female officers with 87 percent of the officers are male and 13 percent of the officers are female. . 8 percent of the officers are supervisors (sergeants) and there are no female command level officers or supervisors above the rank of sergeant. There were 83 responses which included 72 male survey responses and 11 female survey responses.

The percentage of male and female responses was consistent with the ratio of male to female officers. SURVEY FINDINGS A theoretical relationship exists between disparate treatment of women officers and women officer discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems. Women police officers experience disparate treatment. The research will address and identify the social causes and effects of how the occurrence of disparate treatment of women officers correlates with <https://assignbuster.com/women-in-policing-assignment/>

discrimination, sexual harassment, advancement limits and retention problems.

The statement is a hypothesis which established causal connections between concepts by testing the data gathered through natural observation (surveys).

**KEY FINDINGS Discrimination** The majority of both men and women feel the idea that force and strength are required; reinforce a belief that women are unable physically to do the Job as well as face discrimination based on preconceived notions that women are not “ cut out” to be police officers but the majority of male respondents do not feel that women in law enforcement face discrimination because of preconceived beliefs. About 1/3 of male respondents believed strongly that women officers are on an equal playing field with men in all categories and also believed strongly that force and strength are required and that women are physically unable to do the Job as well as men. This is indicative of the evidence that woman police officers still face discriminatory attitudes from male officers. While most male respondents agreed that force and strength are required and that women are physically unable to do the Job as well as men, most male respondents did not believe that women officers are on an equal playing field with men in all categories.

**Sexual Harassment** The majority of both male and female respondents believe that men in law enforcement experience a workplace environment that is less intimidating than women are likely to experience. ; The majority of female respondents believe that women in law enforcement face discrimination based on preconceived notions that women are not “ cut out”

to be police officers while the majority of male respondents do not believe this discrimination exists.

**Advancement Limits** The majority of female respondents believe that women in law enforcement have to work harder than their male counterparts to advance beyond entry-level positions within a department while the majority of male respondents believe it is a level playing field. ; One hundred percent of the female respondents believe that women need to work harder to prove them capable of doing their job as well as their male counterparts while the majority of male respondents do not believe that women have to work harder to prove themselves.