A STUDY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN MUNICIPAL POLICE AGENCIES

by

Gail Lynn Everts

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Dr. Lynnette Brouwer,
Research Advisor

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin Stout
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The Graduate College

University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751

<u>ABSTRACT</u>

Everts, Gail L.

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Police administrators have been challenged with problems of personnel turnover for many years. Experts in the field anticipate the ability of police agencies to attract and retain employees will continue to be a major challenge over the next ten years.

Some police managers have suggested implementing career development programs as a way to address these issues. The purpose of this study was to investigate and evaluate the impact of career development programs in Wisconsin accredited municipal police agencies. Limited research has been done in this area, thus, the researcher chose a combination of research methodologies to learn what was happening in agencies utilizing career development programs.

Results of this study offer encouraging words for police administrators considering implementing career development programs in their agency in efforts to enhance employee job satisfaction and reduce voluntary turnover.

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CHAPTER 1

Police administrators have been challenged with the problem of personnel turnover for many years. Turnover has been a topic of attention in law enforcement publications commonly read by police managers. Criminal justice experts generally assert the same negative consequences of turnover. They are (a) increased costs due to recruitment, training and development; (b) lower productivity while new officers learn on the job, including more supervisory coaching; (d) disruption in programs and organizational efficiency; and (e) decreased morale among the officers who remain (Gibbons, 1995; Harris, 1998; Hoffman, 1993; Pliant, 1995).

The extent of turnover is not well documented in Wisconsin. According to Steve Urso, a representative of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association, (WPPA), approximately 9000 of approximately 12,200 Wisconsin law enforcement officers belong to the WPPA. Urso estimates yearly turnover within the WPPA, conservatively, at 7%. Although his organization doesn't keep statistics on turnover, he estimates approximately 25% of those officers who leave, join another department. He estimates the average patrol officer makes two jumps in his/her law enforcement career (Personal communication, June, 2001). A more realistic yearly turnover figure may be near 15-25% according to Urso and other knowledgeable local law enforcement administrators.

Recognizing the challenges that unwanted turnover presents, the purpose of this study is to explore the impact of career development programs on job satisfaction.

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Importance of Study

This study will aid police administrators in evaluating career development programs as a strategy to enhance employee job satisfaction and reduce voluntary turnover. No empirical research has investigated a potential relationship between career development programs and job satisfaction in the police field. Limited research is available discussing the relationship between career development programs and employee job satisfaction in the private sector.

Job satisfaction is an important concept to police organizations given the nature of police work and the ways in which dissatisfied employees could negatively impact the delivery of services. Employees experiencing dissatisfaction may develop disruptive behaviors that negatively impact their performance, as well as those around them. If they're unable to resolve feelings of dissatisfaction, employees may choose to leave the organization or the career entirely. Organizational efficiency is disrupted as a result of turnover. Police departments invest thousands of dollars in each new officer, in addition to thousands more spent on overtime to fill vacant shifts created by turnover.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and evaluate the impact of career development programs on employee job satisfaction in municipal police agencies in Wisconsin. To accomplish this, the researcher conducted a literature review to research the characteristics of career development programs to assess

their usefulness within the police setting. In addition, literature relating to police officer job satisfaction was also reviewed to identify organizational factors that contribute to job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, and voluntary turnover.

Scope of Study

Many human resource professionals in the business industry have advocated the use of career development systems for improving an employee's career motivation and commitment because of the purported link between career management, performance, developmental behavior and participation in developmental activities (London and Mone, 1987; Morrison & Hock, 1986; Noe, 1996).

Although career development programs have been used in the private sector for many years, their existence in police agencies is relatively new. Over the last several years, police managers have proposed the use of career development programs or specific developmental activities to address issues related to job satisfaction and organizational performance (Gibbons, 1995; Johnson, 1994; Marvin, 1998; Ramirez, 1999).

In brief discussions with personnel from other agencies and a review of literature from police publications, the researcher was directed to study career development programs or activities in police agencies. The researcher chose to limit the study to state and nationally accredited municipal police agencies in Wisconsin.

This study examined administrators' and police officer's perceptions of the value of career development activities and programs as those perceptions relate to a) job satisfaction; b) organizational performance and, c) voluntary turnover.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to research the characteristics and benefits of career development programs in organizations. Literature theorizing or researching a connection between career development programs and employee and organizational performance is more prevalent in the private sector than in the police field. It isn't until the mid 1990's that any police related literature emerges addressing this topic. Police literature consists of articles published in professional trade magazines.

The literature review also focused upon identifying organizational factors related with job satisfaction. More specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What activities contribute to career development and why?

2. Why do organizations use career development programs or activities?

3. What are factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover in the police field?

Much of the research on job satisfaction has been accomplished in non-police organizations, and has centered on the relationship between job satisfaction as it relates to turnover, absenteeism, productivity and stress. These factors are also important to police organizations; however, very little research has been done in this area.

Key Concepts

The literature review revealed many terms used by various researchers and authors to describe activities that characterize career development programs. These terms were defined through consultation of various human resource texts.

Career development is a general term used to describe a number of activities aimed at enhancing both individual and organizational performance. Career development may be viewed as an individual responsibility, or as an organizational practice, depending upon the focus of the process (Minor, 1988, p.5). For purposes of this research, the term career development was defined using the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement's, (CALEA), definition.

"Career development is a term used to describe a process utilized by an agency to provide opportunities for individual growth and development at all levels. It is designed to promote productive, efficient and effective job performance and to improve the overall level of individual job satisfaction" (CALEA 33-1).

Career management is a process initiated by the organization which aims to recruit, develop and move people according to its own needs (Schmidt, 1994).

Career planning is a process designed to help employees move to jobs that are more congruent with their personal goals. Employees receive feedback about how the organization views their skills and where they fit into the organization (Mondy & Noe, 1996, p. 300). Career planning may be used as an

element of a comprehensive program, or, it may be established as the only system in place to facilitate employee development.

A career planning system has four common elements. They are a) self-assessment, whereby the employee identifies his/her interests, strengths, weaknesses, behaviors and tendencies; b) reality check, where the employee receives feedback from the employer regarding skills and abilities, and learns about job opportunities within the organization; c) goal setting, where the employee determines short and long term goals, and; d) planning, where the employee identifies how to achieve his or her goals (Mondy & Noe, 1996; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhardt & Wright, 1994, p. 509).

Job rotation is a practice that allows an employee to move laterally between divisions or units within an organization, thereby allowing the employee on-the-job training and experience in a variety of areas, without a change in rank or employment status (Morrison & Hock, 1986, p. 241).

Job enlargement involves increasing the breadth of activities employees are involved in, such as combining tasks previously accomplished by two people. Job enlargement allows opportunities for additional skill development by increasing the range of technical tasks an employee is responsible for completing (Parker, 1998).

Job enrichment in contrast to job enlargement, (which involves expanding a job horizontally), involves expanding a job vertically to make it more challenging, meaningful and interesting. Employees are given responsibilities previously held by a supervisor and are granted more discretion and decision

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making powers, thereby allowing a greater sense of achievement and control over their day to day activities. Employees continually develop while performing these tasks (Mondy & Noe, 1996, p. 282).

What Activities Contribute to Career Development?

In the police field, there are relatively few developmental activities being utilized as compared to the private sector. The most common activities found in the police literature are: job rotation, job enrichment, job enlargement and cross training (Bandics, 1997; Gibbons, 1995; Johnson, 1994).

In the private sector, many organizations provide self-assessment tools such as career planning and pre-retirement workshops. Professional counselors and line supervisors may be responsible for employee career counseling. Some organizations also provide employees with internal labor market information that identify vacancies, the prerequisite skills needed for the position, and other informational resources to assist employees in pursuing open positions. Some organizations also offer assessment processes, such as promotability forecasts, psychological testing and replacement/succession planning as a means of maintaining and enhancing an efficient workforce. Employees may also choose to participate in other developmental programs such as job rotation, seminars and workshops, tuition reimbursement, mentoring and dual career path programs (Campbell & Moses, 1986, p. 280).

Dual career path programs have become popular due to increasing number of tasks or positions requiring a technology background. Having

specialized knowledge in technical areas, in many instances, is often as important as having managerial skills. A dual career path allows for recognition that technical specialists can contribute to an organization without having to become managers. The dual career path also provides equal compensation as compared to managers (Mondy & Noe, 1996, p. 310).

Why Do Organizations Use Career Development Programs?

Police administrators have implemented career development programs as a means of improving organizational performance. The concept of career development programs in the police field didn't attract attention until a group called the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, (CALEA), formed in 1979. The commission formed to establish a body of standards to provide guidance for law enforcement agencies as a way to improve themselves and provide better services (Daughtry, 1999). Eleven states, including Wisconsin, have also developed state accreditation programs patterned after the CALEA standards.

Career development is a standard included in both the CALEA and Wisconsin Accreditation programs. The CALEA standard for career development emphasizes "career counseling whereby the employee receives guidance to help him/her in choosing, preparing for, entering, or progressing in a job assignment" (CALEA 1987, p. 23).

The Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group (WILEAG) standard for career development establishes a "training requirement for all personnel

assigned by the agency to a supervisory or special assignment position"

(WILEAG 1997, p. 30). The WILEAG program also provides a standard for

performance evaluation and counseling that includes "career counseling relative

to topics such as advancement, specialization or training appropriate for the

employee's position" (WILEAG 1997, p. 33).

Although there are no mandates for providing career development

activities or programs in non-accredited agencies, several police managers have

proposed their use as a strategy to enhance organizational performance through

providing leadership development, individual skill development and increased job

satisfaction (Gibbons, 1995; Johnson, 1994; Marvin, 1998; Ramirez, 1999). At

the time of this study, no empirical research exists in the police field investigating

the relationship between career development programs and leadership

development, individual skill development and job satisfaction.

Theorists and human resource practitioners in the private sector advocate

formal career development programs for similar reasons. They emphasize the

impact on overall organizational performance through improvements in employee

skills, job satisfaction and leadership development (Noe et al. 1994).

Leadership development . Chief positions are appointed by the local

governing body, and may be held by employees who have progressed through

the chain of command within the same department. Chief positions are also

frequently appointed from outside the agency. Qualifications for chief candidates,

as listed in numerous job postings of professional journals, require experience as

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a police officer and several years of experience in positions of progressive responsibility. An educational degree may also be required in some agencies (Wisconsin Law Enforcement Bulletin, November 2001).

Law enforcement experts agree that experience at different levels and divisions within an organization prepare a chief candidate to more effectively manage and coordinate the divisions within the department (Bandics, 1997; Gibbons, 1995; Marvin, 1998).

Most supervisory and middle management positions in police agencies are held by employees who have been promoted from the line position (patrol officer) within the department. Many police agencies employ a promotional process that includes written exams, interviews, and assessment center exercises. Seniority within the agency is frequently given significant weight in the ranking. Some employees do very well in preparing for promotional exams, depending upon their personal motivation. Yet, some are simply in the right place at the right time. This process of selection has met increased criticism not only from officers within many departments, but also from law enforcement experts. More and more emphasis is being placed upon candidate's having exposure to a variety of areas and experiences within the department to help them develop a more broad-based view of the department. Supervisors and middle managers with diversified experiences prove more efficient and better able to recognize, evaluate and direct the need for personnel with specific expertise.

In one of few exploratory studies on the subject, Gaston (1997) found three individual characteristics that significantly separated law enforcement

executives from non-executives: critical thinking, education, and career commitment. He suggests all three characteristics can be developed throughout the employee's personal and professional life. He recommends these employees be identified and developed early enough to meet the eventual needs of the agency.

Organizational practices most commonly mentioned in police literature identify job rotation and cross training as being significant activities promoting leadership development. These activities may not necessarily be included in a formalized career development program, but are nevertheless viewed as key experiences in developing personnel for future management positions.

Experts in the private sector agree that job rotation and cross training are important and effective strategies to facilitate leadership development. By utilizing a formalized career development program, organizations are in a better position to identify employees with management talent and provide opportunities for the employees to develop their skills. Once a prospective candidate is identified, the employee's program may then be tailored to meet the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for future positions (Noe, et al. 1994).

Employees who are identified as potential candidates for higher management positions typically participate in fast-track development programs that involve education, executive mentoring and coaching. Job rotation and special assignments provide on-the-job experiences similar to the career track as the person they will replace. Significant emphasis is placed upon identifying potential managers to prevent a shortage of qualified employees to fill open

positions. Although this strategy is effective, the cost of a career development program is usually considerable due to initial losses in efficiency and errors (Kuhnert, 1994; Noe et al. 1994).

Skill development. The organizational structure of most police agencies provides for employees working in specialized divisions, such as youth services, drug investigations or homicide. While beneficial to have well-trained individuals in specialized units, such specialization can also limit the agency's ability to address changing needs. Bandics (1997) suggests agencies can be more flexible and better equipped to handle a variety of challenges if management would allow employees to study a variety of disciplines while maintaining their own area of expertise.

In a project initiated at the Middlesex County Prosecutors Office in New Brunswick, New Jersey, fifty sworn officers were cross-trained and rotated through six different investigative units, such as narcotics, homicide, arson and sex crimes. The initial project called for six officers to receive six months of training in each discipline. A total of 24 officers over a two-year span would eventually be trained in each discipline. After completion of the first two phases, Bandics (1997) observed a notable change in the work atmosphere. Employees expressed a greater regard for each other and were more willing to share information and investigative techniques. The increase in cooperation proved to be a catalyst toward developing new team-based investigation strategies.

Skill deficiency is a major obstacle to work competence, no matter what rank or position an employee holds. In the police environment, there are all kinds of schools and training available for officers to improve their skills or develop an area of expertise, if given the opportunity by their department. Too often, however, officers are sent to training and return to work without being given the opportunity to practice and apply the skills learned. A lack of practice can lead to skill uncertainty and deficient job performance. Overtime costs or staffing shortages sometimes limit an agency's ability to utilize specially trained line officers. In some cases, the need for special skills doesn't happen very often.

Parker (1998) conducted a study within a private company investigating how organizational practices influence role breadth self-efficacy. Role breadth self-efficacy refers to the extent people feel confident that they're able to carry out a broader role of responsibilities. She proposed that various organizational interventions, such as training, job enlargement, job enrichment and participation in improvement groups, could promote the extent to which employees feel confident. The results of her study suggest that employee's self-efficacy, (people's judgment about their capability to perform particular tasks), can be enhanced through organizational interventions. Job enrichment was the most significant strategy in promoting self-efficacy.

In another study, Noe (1996) investigated the relationship between different aspects of the career management process and employee development behavior and performance. He proposed that employees who are aware of their

skill strengths and weaknesses would be more likely to demonstrate behavior to improve skill weaknesses, and, therefore, participate in developmental activities.

The results of his study found limited support for the relationship between career management and employee performance and developmental behavior. The extent to which employees sought career related information was related to employees' motivation to participate in developmental behavior. Employees may engage in developmental activities because they truly want to better themselves, or they may participate to avoid negative evaluations. He did report, however, that management support was significantly related to developmental behavior. From these results, Noe (1996) suggested that organizations use their resources to train managers in skills needed to support employee development, such as feedback, referral and advising skills.

Job satisfaction. Career theorists and researchers suggest career planning helps employees evaluate their skills so they can move to jobs that are more congruent with their personal goals and plans. In other words, employees are able to find where they "fit" into the organization. They state that placing employees in job levels below their skill levels causes nearly as much discontent as placing them in jobs where they can't perform satisfactorily (Noe et al, 1994; Parker, 1998).

Police managers suggest career development programs have a positive influence on officer job satisfaction, and subsequently improve performance and reduce turnover. Most often, they cite stagnation and burnout as causal factors of

job dissatisfaction resulting in poor performance and turnover (Johnson, 1994; Reiser, 1974). New officers frequently express career advancement as a future goal, however, given the structure of most police agencies, few advancement opportunities are probable. Career development programs can help officers find a niche in the department that provides them with personal challenge while also contributing to the organization without being promoted.

What Factors Affect Police Officer Job Satisfaction and Voluntary Turnover?

There have been in excess of 1500 studies conducted on turnover, many identifying job satisfaction as a predictor of turnover (Carrell, Kuzmits & Elbert, 1992). There is also an immense amount of literature in the private sector on job satisfaction, most of which has centered on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover, absenteeism, productivity and stress. Although these problems are also important to police organizations, limited research has been done in this area. Job satisfaction is a complex issue, therefore, for purposes of this study, the researcher focused upon literature addressing organizational practices impacting job satisfaction and turnover.

Grant and Garrison (1990) found that job utilization, (the perception that one's skills and abilities are contributing to the organization), correlates strongly with job satisfaction. They studied policewomen and researched the impact of a variety of assignments on perceived utilization. They found that opportunity for a variety of assignments was just as important as actual assignment. Their findings support other literature that demonstrates that employees who feel they're

contributing their skills and abilities to the job tend to have higher job satisfaction (Dantzker & Surette, 1996).

Fosam, Grimsley and Wisher (1998) conducted a study at the South Yorkshire Police Department in Britain to measure key determinants of employee satisfaction. They found key predictors of job satisfaction were communication with staff, fairness of promotion and selection process, perceived public view of the police department, involvement in quality improvement and staffing resources. They concluded that management culture and organizational practices were vital factors influencing job satisfaction.

Several earlier studies cite similar factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover. Sparger and Giacopassie (1983) found that officers do not resign due to a single dissatisfaction but identify several reasons for leaving voluntarily. Lack of promotional opportunities and dissatisfaction with pay and fringe benefits were identified as primary causes (as cited in Harris, 1998).

Seidel and Courtney (1983) reviewed 56 studies as part of their investigation of factors influencing retention and resignation of police officers in Texas. The results of their study suggested that overall job satisfaction, income level, promotional opportunity and administrative style and structure were factors that significantly influenced officers' decision to resign (as cited in Harris, 1998).

In a more recent study on job satisfaction in the police field, Dantzker and Surrette (1996) examined a sample of 2611officers representing 12 urban police agencies in seven states to study job satisfaction among police officers as a group. The results of their study showed officers were relatively satisfied with

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their jobs overall. However, when responding to specific job items, they found officers were not satisfied with (a) the promotional exam system; (b) the process and selection for interdepartmental transfers/vacancies; (c) supervisor support; (d) educational incentives; (e) the availability of training, and; (f) the educational requirements of new recruits (1996).

Literature focusing on turnover identifies factors associated with stress that also appear in the job satisfaction literature. Reiser, a psychologist with the Los Angeles Police Department, investigated officer burnout from job stress. In addition to commonly mentioned stressors, such as danger and violence, his study included management style as a potential factor in turnover. He discovered that authoritative police management styles contributed to high stress (1974).

In 1997, the National Institute of Justice conducted a large-scale study devoted to reducing police officer stress. Stress management program directors, law enforcement administrators, mental health providers, police officers and their families were interviewed as part of the study. They agreed that the negative effects of stress on the officers harms both the agency as well as the individual officer. They found the effects of stress can often lead to many negative outcomes, including impaired officer performance, reduced morale, and turnover (as cited in Finn, 1997).

In a review of research literature, Finn (1997) states that organizational changes most often targeted to help reduce stress generally affect supervisory style, FTO programs, critical incident counseling, command support following a critical incident, shift work and job assignment. Supervisory skills,

communication, conflict resolution and problem solving skills can help reduce or minimize stress for employees. Support was also found for providing supervisors with training in the area of conducting and presenting employee performance appraisals.

In a study conducted at the Birmingham Alabama Police Department, Harris (1998) surveyed current and former police officers to obtain information regarding satisfaction with a number of items, including position, advancement opportunities, administrative and personnel policies. Administrative policies included guidelines for managing the agency, such as budgeting, planning, and organization coordination. Personnel policies included guidelines for the administration of recruitment, selection, position assignment, transfer, promotions and termination. Harris found significant and direct relationships between administrative and personnel policies and turnover. The results of his study suggested officers satisfied with advancement opportunities were less likely to voluntarily leave the department. Contrary to other studies, Harris found that dissatisfied officers generally remained while satisfied officers sought other employment. These results, he concluded, could be the result of unique factors at the Birmingham Police Department.

Summary of Literature Review

The focus of the literature review was to discover (1) what activities contribute to career development, (2) why organizations use career development

programs, and (3) what organizational factors affect police officer job satisfaction and turnover.

The literature review provided greater awareness of activities most commonly utilized as developmental activities, and those recommended as part of a formalized career development program. The literature review also provided insight as to the reasons why police managers and human resource professionals support using these activities.

A number of activities, such as job rotation, cross training, career planning, and job enhancement may comprise a formal career development program or be implemented as a matter of organizational necessity, as may be the case for cross training practices in smaller agencies (Bandics, 1997; Gaston, 1997).

Police managers and human resource professionals generally agree on the organizational benefits of providing employees with developmental opportunities. Participation in developmental activities or career development programs improve organizational performance through; leadership development, enhanced employee performance; and improved job satisfaction, although no empirical research exists that specifically addresses these relationships.

Although research on police turnover was limited, several studies linked turnover to stress and job dissatisfaction. The most serious source of stress commonly involved the policies and practices of the agencies themselves. The most common organizational practices affecting job satisfaction included; Fairness of promotion and selection (Fosam et al, 1998; Dumont, Morris, Shinn,

1999; Dantzker & Surrette, 1996), supervisor support, and job utilization (Grant & Garrison, 1990). Identified as sources of dissatisfaction were; lack of promotion opportunities, underutilization, poor job fit and supervisory style (Dantzker, 1994; Finn, 1997; Fosam et al., 1998; Grant & Garrison, 1990; Harris, 1998).

In non-police literature, sources of job dissatisfaction were; Under-utilization (Schmidt, 1994; Parker, 1998), poor job fit, (Miner, 1988; Mondy & Noe, 1996; Noe et al, 1994; Schmidt, 1994), and job stressors such as administrative policies and supervisor relations (Minor, 1988). Although research on turnover in the police field is limited, job satisfaction studies by Seidel and Courtney, and Sparger and Giacopassie identify turnover as a result of job dissatisfaction (as cited in Harris, 1998).

Based upon the literature review, several propositions can be made. First, organizational practices in the police field affecting job satisfaction appear to be similar to those identified in the private sector. Second, as evident in articles published in professional trade magazines, police managers have been influenced by employee development practices in the private sector. Third, organizational practices involving job utilization and the promotional system may be modified through implementation of a career development program. The literature review did not reveal information relative to the success of career development programs in the police environment.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Based upon this literature review, interviews of experienced police managers, and researcher experience, it appeared that formal career development programs were not being used significantly in the police field even though they were generally viewed as beneficial to the organization. The researcher now focused on the question of what was happening at agencies using career development programs. To learn more about the impact of these programs, the researcher chose a study design that included both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The researcher believed a combination of methods would produce cross-validation for specific items (Weber, 1985).

The literature review identified organizational factors associated with job satisfaction that could be verified through quantitative measures. Qualitative methods were used to discover what was happening in the study agencies…what has been people's experiences with career development programs, and what did it mean to them. Patton (1985) refers to this design as a summative evaluation approach. Summative evaluation researchers focus on "examining specific programs in order to generalize about the effectiveness of the human action under investigation…their generalizations concern the effectiveness of specific interventions on specific populations" (p. 155). Based upon this research design, the researcher focused upon accomplishing four main objectives.

Four major objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify activities agencies are using as part of a formal career development program.

2. Discover if the opportunity to participate in a career development program influences an employee's decision to stay with the agency.

3. Identify the reasons an employee would or would not participate in a formal career development program.

4. Determine participant's perceptions on the impact of developmental activities in the promotional process.

Population and Sample

There are approximately 519 municipal police agencies in Wisconsin listed in the 1999 National Law Enforcement Directory. There is no source or reference to identify which agencies have career development programs in place. The researcher chose a purposive sample of agencies from a list of those agencies having either CALEA or WILEAG accreditation status due to both organizations having career development as a required standard. A purposive sample in this situation was appropriate because the researcher was seeking information-rich examples for study. Patton (1990) states that selecting information rich cases for study will "help illuminate the nature of success or failure of the phenomenon under study" (p. 169).

The researcher believed accredited agencies would be more likely to have formal career development programs in place than agencies that were not accredited, based upon an accreditation requirement for the agency to provide career development standards for all sworn employees. The career development standards required by the accreditation organizations were broadly stated to provide employees with guidance in choosing and preparing for future job assignments or opportunities. The standards did not specify how agencies manage this aspect, nor did they limit what activities agencies use to meet the standards. The study was limited to municipal police agencies due to the researcher's interest in this area.

By contacting the WILEAG and CALEA organizations, the researcher learned there were ten accredited municipal police agencies in Wisconsin. (Six of the ten agencies were accredited by both CALEA and WILEAG standards; four agencies were accredited by WILEAG only.) The population of police officers making up this sample amounted to 553 officers. This size population made survey research a preferred data gathering method. Survey research would allow the researcher contact with participants that were otherwise inaccessible. Cassel and Symon (1994) support the use of survey research because it is perceived as more anonymous, and would allow the participant more time to think about the questions. Collecting data at several sites would also provide evidence of external validity (p. 30).

<u>Surveys</u>

Two surveys were developed for this study. The researcher believed a comparison of responses between employees and chiefs would help identify perspectives unique to management versus line level personnel. A definition of career development program was included at the top of each questionnaire.

Each survey contained closed-end and open-end questions. Closed-end questions were used so that information could be quantified and used in marginal tabulation. Marginal tabulation provided the researcher with a description of how the total sample had distributed itself on the response alternatives for each questionnaire item. Responses to individual items were also used to explore possible relationships between two or more variables (Cassell & Symon, 1994, p. 24). The researcher recognized that some agencies may offer developmental activities without having a formal career development program in place. For this reason, survey items were constructed to include participant's opinions regarding developmental activities in general.

Open-end questions were used to obtain more in-depth information that would lead to greater understanding of the "big picture" or total situation. To analyze this data, text was classified into content categories. Weber (1985) states "the central idea in content analysis is that many words of the text are classified into much fewer content categories. Words, phrases, or other units of text that are classified in the same category are presumed to have similar meaning." (p. 12). The coding scheme created for open-end items was based upon recording units along themes.

Examples of participant responses that illustrated common themes were included in the survey results. Key words used in the coding process were defined through consultation with a Webster's Dictionary. Mutually exclusive categories were generally used so responses were coded under only one category. Mutually exclusive categories would provide greater statistical significance while interpreting the data (Weber, 1985). The rationale for including each item in the survey follows. The rationale for some items is self-evident, and, therefore, not included.

Employee survey. The employee survey was offered to all sworn employees beneath the rank of chief. (See Appendix A)

Item 1, "Does your department have a formal career development program?" was designed to obtain data regarding an employee's awareness of a career development program within his/her agency.

Item 2, "If yes, (to item 1), does it influence your decision to stay with the department?" was designed to determine if the Career Development Program at the participant's agency had a significant influence over the participant's decision to stay with the agency.

Item 3, "What types of activities and/or opportunities are available for sworn officers?" This question provided a list of nine activities commonly utilized in career development programs as identified in the literature. Check boxes located next to each item allowed for selection of multiple responses. Brief definitions were provided for each activity to promote similar participant

interpretation. Data from this item would allow the researcher to identify those activities most commonly used in a formal program among the study sample.

Item 4, "Is there existing policy or bargaining language that impacts your opportunity to participate in any of the above activities?" was designed to identify obstacles that influence the participant's opportunity to participate in career development activities. Through researcher experience and conversations with police managers, policy and contractual language appeared to be potential obstacles faced by administrators in implementing career development programs.

Item 5, "Are there any financial incentives associated with participating in any of the above activities?" was designed to obtain data regarding the opportunity to receive financial benefits for participation. This item was included as financial incentives were identified in the literature review as a factor affecting job satisfaction (Dantzker & Surrette, 1996).

Item 6, "What influences your decision to participate in the above activities?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's motivation toward participation in career development activities. This question provided a list of six statements, with corresponding check boxes that represented the most common reasons identified in the literature for participating in career development programs.

Item 7, was "Does the opportunity to work in a variety of work assignments influence your decision to stay employed with a police department?" This

question was worded as such in the event the participant had limited or no opportunities with their current employer.

Items 8 through 12 were alternating closed-end and open-end questions regarding the promotional process. The purpose of these questions was to verify information from the literature review, which suggested the promotional process, was a source of job dissatisfaction (Dantzker & Surrette, 1996; Harris, 1998). Items 9, 11 and 12 were open-end questions designed to obtain written responses articulating the participant's opinion on the subject.

Item 8, "Do you think that career development activities impact the promotional process?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's perception of whether career development activities played a role in the promotional process.

Item 9 was an open-end question; "How do career development activities impact the promotional process?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's perception of what was happening in his/her agency relative to selecting future supervisors.

Item 10, "Do you think participation in career development activities should impact the promotional process?" was designed to obtain data on the participant's opinion toward the use of career development activities in the promotional process.

Item 11 was an open-end question; "Why do you believe participation in career development activities should impact the promotional process?"

Item 12 was an open-end question; "Why do you believe participation in career development activities should not impact the promotional process?"

Item 13, "Have you experienced any professional benefits by participating in career development activities?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's past experience in participating in career development programs or activities.

Items 14 through 18 were demographic questions designed to provide the researcher with a description of the survey sample.

Executive officer survey. This survey was offered to the chief, or top commanding officer of the department. Items included in this survey follow. (See Appendix B)

Item 1, "Does your department have a formal career development program?" was designed to obtain data regarding the number of agencies having formal career development programs.

Item 2, "What are the goals of the career development program?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's perception of the program's purpose. Five statements, with corresponding check boxes, were provided. The choices selected provided information regarding the focus of the program, whether it was employee centered, organization centered, or shared focus. The researcher considered this relevant as the focus of the program may have influenced the types of activities offered.

Item 3 was, "What types of activities and/or opportunities are available for sworn officers?" This question provided a list of nine activities commonly utilized in career development programs. Check boxes located next to each item allowed for selection of multiple responses. This item was designed to obtain data on the activities employed in the participant's agency.

Item 4 was an open-end question; "How many (officers) voluntarily left your department over the last ten years?" This question allowed for the participant to fill in the blank identifying the number of officers who left the department. Data obtained from this question allowed the researcher to compare turnover among departments having formal career development programs and those that don't.

Item 5 was an open-end question; "What is the most significant organizational benefit of providing career development activities for patrol officers?"

Item 6 was an open-end question; "What, if any, organizational drawbacks are there to providing developmental activities to patrol officers?" It was designed to obtain information regarding the participant's perception of what obstacles may exist in providing developmental activities for employees.

Item 7; "Have you experienced any professional benefits by participating in career development activities?" was designed to obtain data regarding the participant's attitude toward career development activities.

Item 8 was an open-end question; "Please explain any professional benefits you've experienced." It was designed to allow the participant an

opportunity to provide personal experiences as examples of professional development.

Item 9 was an open-end question; "Please include any comments regarding your thoughts on career development programs." This item was designed to allow the participant an opportunity to offer additional comments that were not provided for in other questions.

Items 10 through 13 were demographic questions designed to provide a description of the survey sample.

Pretest. Both surveys, (executive officer and employee) were pretested. The proposed surveys were administered at an agency not included in the sample. The surveys were administered in the same manner as intended in the final design. To obtain a high response rate and limit disruptions in operations, the surveys were designed to be completed in 10-15 minutes. Twelve sworn employees and two upper administrative officers completed the surveys. The items, statements and instructions were worded in language commonly used by participants. A space was also provided to allow participants to comment on clarity of instructions and questions. Results of the pretested surveys showed no significant changes were needed.

Administering study survey. Each agency included in the sample was first called by the researcher to solicit voluntary participation in the study. One agency administrator was not available for a lengthy period of time. The officer next in

command of this agency declined to participate without his chief's approval. Subsequently, this agency was not included in the sample.

The researcher obtained contact information at each agency, and then mailed the surveys to the contact person. The surveys were disseminated through the agency's normal communication channels and returned to the contact person. The contact person mailed the completed package of surveys to the researcher. Each return envelope was marked with a control number in the event a follow up telephone call was needed to ensure a response. All nine contacts returned a package of completed surveys within the agreed upon time frame.

All surveys included an attachment providing instructions for completing the survey (See Appendix C). All executive officer surveys included a letter to the chief (See Appendix D).

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this research was to investigate and evaluate the impact of career development programs on job satisfaction in municipal police agencies in Wisconsin. Job satisfaction studies in the law enforcement field identify aspects of police work that may be influenced through implementation of a career development program. Those aspects which the researcher focused upon were the promotional process (Fosam et al, 1998), and job utilization (Garrison & Grant, 1990).

This chapter presents descriptive data from both the Executive Officer and Employee Surveys. Of the 553 Employee Surveys mailed, 178 surveys were returned, providing a response rate of 32%. Some participants skipped questions, therefore, response totals are included with the results to each item.

Data from the surveys were evaluated to determine employee's attitudes toward career development programs and developmental activities as they impact officer job satisfaction and the promotional process.

Employee Survey

Item 1 received 173 total responses. Of those responses, 46% checked "yes" indicating their department had a formal career development program.

Item 2; Of those participants who answered yes in item 1, 42% indicated their career development program did have influence on their decision to remain with their department.

Item 3 collected information regarding the types of activities offered. Job rotation, job enlargement and educational incentives were mentioned most frequently as those activities offered at the participant's agency. Career counseling, career planning, self-assessment and job enrichment were used less frequently. Table E1 illustrates the distribution of responses (See Appendix E).

Item 4 received 168 responses. Of those responses, 51% indicated there was existing policy or bargaining language that impacted the participant's opportunity to participate in career development activities. Forty four percent checked "no".

Item 5 collected information regarding financial incentives associated with participating in career development activities. This item received 177 responses. Fifty three percent indicated there were financial incentives available; 46% indicated that there were no financial incentives offered.

Item 6 collected information regarding factors that influenced the participant's decision to participate in developmental activities. A majority of the responses indicate that subjects participated due to finding the experience personally rewarding. Most subjects also indicated they felt the experience would help them improve their current performance and prepare for future advancement. Several authors cited job fit as an important factor facilitating job satisfaction (Mondy & Noe, 1996; Parker, 1998). Results of this item suggest job fit was not a primary consideration to the participants. Table 2E illustrates the distribution of responses to this item (See Appendix E).

Item 7 collected information regarding participant's attitude toward the opportunity to work in a variety of assignments. This item received a total of 165 responses. Of those responses, 63% indicated the opportunity to work in a variety of assignments does have influence on their decision to stay with an agency. A comparison between item 2 and item 7 might suggest employees value the opportunity to work in a variety of assignments more so than the opportunity to participate in a career development program. Although this interpretation may be tenuous given the broad definition of career development programs in the survey.

Item 8 collected information regarding the participant's opinion on whether participation in career development activities has any impact on the promotional process. This item received a total of 151 responses. Of those responses, 60% indicated they felt career development activities did impact the promotional process.

Item 9 was an open-end question; "How do career development activities impact the promotional process?" A total of 94 of 178 subjects responded to the question. Three common themes emerged from this item: Candidates are more well-rounded; participation in a career development program improves the promotional process; and, participation in a career development program improves employee performance. The term "well-rounded" was defined using a Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1988) that stated; "Showing interest or ability in many fields" (p. 1516). Responses to illustrate these themes follow.

Theme 1: Candidates are more well-rounded.

"Exposure to various experiences is good preparation."

"Candidates learn how units work together."

"Officer becomes more well-rounded."

"I believe that the best candidate for any promotion process

has a broad background encompassing a variety of

experiences."

"It makes the officer aware of all aspects of the inner

department workings."

"A variety of experiences make for a well-rounded

supervisor."

"Improves knowledge of the department and policies."

A significant number of the responses, (53), included statements

referring to the candidate being more "well-rounded".

Theme 2: Participation in a career development program improves employee

performance.

"Improves the officer's performance."

"Helps the officer develop skills."

"More competent group of candidates to chose from."

"Improved skills and performance would be an advantage in a promotional

process."

"Improves the officer's skills."

Thirteen participants indicated employee's skills are impacted by participating in career development programs.

Theme 3: Participation in a career development program improves the promotional process.

"Creates a more competitive process."

"Improves credibility of the process."

"Various activities draw out officers strengths and weaknesses."

"More competent group to look at."

Nine participants indicated participation would improve the promotional process.

The remaining responses did not form a common theme. The researcher interpreted these responses as more of a personal commentary on how the participant perceived their agency managed these activities. Examples of these responses follow.

"If you don't, chances of promotion diminish."

"Only provided to those selected for advancement."

"Command staff strongly look at an officer's participation in any additional tasks."

"Much of the career training happens following a promotion, not before."

Item 10 received 161 total responses regarding the participant's opinion of whether career development activities should impact the promotional process. There was significant support for using career development activities, as 72% indicated "yes" to this item.

Item 11 was an open-end question; "Why do you believe career development activities should impact the promotional process?" A total of 86 of 178 subjects responded to the question. Two common themes emerged from this item. Fifty responses were classified under Theme 1. Twenty-five responses were classified under Theme 2.

Theme 1: Participation demonstrates motivation and commitment.

"It shows commitment and dedication to your department."

"It shows motivation on the part of the applicant."

"It helps identify motivated people."

"Career development participation is a commitment to the department and in general to the profession."

"People who stay in patrol doing as little as possible, should not get promoted."

"Some credit and merit should be given to those officers who have shown…that they possess the drive and ambition for a supervisory position."

Theme 2: Candidates become more knowledgeable through the experience.

"An officer who has had a wide variety of experiences/duties makes a more knowledgeable, better prepared supervisor."

"Participation usually helps create more well-rounded, mature individuals that are capable of making decisions."

"Understand other entities responsibilities"

"A person should strive to learn as much as possible."

Responses to this item indicate employees believe these qualities or characteristics are important for supervisory personnel to possess.

The remaining responses did not form a theme. Examples of those responses follow.

"Can prepare a training regimen for the position."

"Individual effort should count for something."

"Way to test if individual is truly interested in promotion."

"If offered evenly, could be used as part of evaluation."

Item 12 was an open-end question: "Why do you believe participation in career development activities should not impact the promotional process?" A total of 23 of 178 subjects responded to the question. Responses were generally distributed among three themes. Six responses were classified under Theme 1. Five responses were classified under Theme 2, and three responses were classified under Theme 3.

Theme 1: Participation in career development activities does not equate to being a good supervisor.

"Participation in different activities does not necessarily mean the person is more qualified for promotions. Collateral assignments may give you more experience but does not in itself mean you would be a good supervisor."

"Because, just because one officer participates does not

necessarily make that officer a better sgt. or detective candidate."

"One has nothing to do with the other…participation in career development should not formally impact the other."

Theme 2: Promotions should be based upon job performance.

"Promotions should be based upon field performance-a reward for doing a good job."

"It should be based upon productivity & knowledge of job."

"Overall knowledge, experience and education should impact."

Theme 3: Candidates would be unfairly penalized if they did not participate.

"Some people might not have the time or $ to participate in career development. Going to school and getting good grades does not make a good cop or supervisor."

"What if the patrol officer does not have the time, because of family obligations and not enough free time as other officers."

"Some may be highly qualified, yet does not participate (for whatever reason) and this would count against them."

The researcher interpreted the remaining responses as critical observations offered by the participant. Examples of these responses follow.

"The Chief decides the needs of dept. and trains people to fill them."

"Selection process flawed."

"Process is too political."

"Program don't make officer."

Item 13 collected information regarding whether the participant had experienced any professional benefit from participating in career development activities. Of the 169 subjects who responded, 48% indicated they had experienced professional benefits.

Survey demographics. Data from the employee survey showed a majority, (52%), of those that responded had over 10 years of law enforcement experience. Five percent had two to five years experience, and five percent were 20-25 years of age. Most, (73%), were between the ages of 26 and 45 years old, and 21% were 46 years of age or more.

The participant's education level showed 50% had a bachelors degree, 30% had an associates degree, 16% had a high school diploma, and 4% had a masters degree.

A majority, (53%), of the participants were patrol officers, 20% were sergeants, and 14% were lieutenants or higher-ranking officers.

Summary of employee survey. Of the 553 employee surveys mailed, 178 were returned, equating to a 32% response rate. A majority of those that responded had over 10 years of experience. The researcher considered this meaningful given the purpose of the research was to collect data from those who have had an opportunity or have had experience participating in career development programs or activities in their career. Younger officers, or, those having few years of experience, were deemed by the researcher as having

limited experience utilizing developmental opportunities. The researcher

considered it possible that officers having few years experience may not have

completed the survey because they hadn't given much thought to their long term

goals. This is not uncommon as researchers in career theory have found that

people seldom set long term goals early in their career (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence,

1989).

The researcher recognized a phenomenon of self-selection may have

occurred. Employees who felt strongly, either positively or negatively about

career development programs may have chosen to respond to the survey.

Therefore, data collected may represent extremes of the opinions sought.

The employee survey was designed to collect data regarding employees'

opinions about career development programs and activities, and whether the

existence of these opportunities had any influence over the participant's decision

to stay with the agency. A second objective was to collect data regarding

employees' opinions about the promotional process and whether participation in

career development activities should impact the promotional process.

The survey results show that of those participants who reported having a

formal career development program, 42% indicated the existence of the program

influenced their decision to stay. Most of the participants indicated job rotation,

job enlargement and educational incentives were offered at their department.

From this information, the researcher inferred that job rotation, job enlargement

and educational incentives were significantly important to those officers who

responded. This conclusion is also supported by responses from item 7 where

63% indicated the opportunity to work in a variety of assignments, (such as job rotation and job enlargement opportunities), influenced their decision to stay. The variance in percentages (63% and 42%), may be due to the types of activities or opportunities offered at each agency as some activities may be valued more than others. This information provides greater understanding of the significance of these opportunities in promoting job satisfaction. These statistics are also meaningful given the fact that management has some control over these factors.

The literature review also suggested that job enrichment was a significant factor in promoting confidence and skill development, which subsequently influenced job satisfaction (Parker, 1998). The results of this research show that job enrichment opportunities were not being utilized extensively in the participants' agencies. Even though the term "job enrichment" was defined in the instrument, the researcher could not ensure consistent interpretation. Some participants may have viewed the definition, (giving responsibilities previously held by a supervisor), as a situation where they would experience unwanted added work. Other participants may have considered the added responsibilities as a desired challenge.

Employees were motivated to participate due to their perception that the experience would be personally rewarding and would improve their performance. The researcher inferred that employees who participated in effort to improve their performance intended to utilize these skills in their present job. Therefore, results of this study were informed through the literature suggesting that job utilization is a significant factor influencing officer job satisfaction (Dantzker & Surrette, 1996;

Garrison & Grant, 1990). Although preparation for future advancement was also a motivating factor, statistically it was not the most significant factor.

A significant number of participants, (72%), supported using career development activities as a component of the promotional process. The results suggest candidates who participate are generally perceived as better prepared for supervisory positions. The results also suggest that candidates who participate are demonstrating characteristics and qualities deemed important (by the participants), for a supervisor to possess. Thus, the career development process may be perceived by participants as a better method of identifying candidates with greater management potential; a theme also supported in the literature (Gaston, 1997). A career development component in the promotional process could also enhance support and confidence in the promotional process, an area where many officers reported being dissatisfied (Fosam et al, 1998; Dumont et al, 1999; Dantzker & Surrette, 1996).

While 72% support their use, only 48% of the participants indicated they had experienced personal benefit through participation. Personal benefit was not defined in the instrument and therefore, could have been perceived as a number of different outcomes, including, but not limited to promotion.

Executive Officer Survey

Eight of the nine Executive Officer Surveys mailed were returned, providing for an 88% return rate.

Item 1 results show five of the eight chiefs surveyed stated their department had a formal career development program.

Item 2 sought information regarding the goals of the program from participants who had a formal program. Table E3 illustrates the distribution of responses to this item (See Appendix E). Based upon responses, it appeared administrators commonly viewed the formal program as a cooperative endeavor with their employees. One participant recorded "Personal growth" as a response.

Item 3 collected information regarding the types of activities available at the participant's department. This information is included in Table E4 and illustrates a comparison of activities offered within a formal program versus outside a formal program. The results show more developmental activities or opportunities were available in agencies without formal programs (See Appendix E).

Item 4 collected information regarding the number of officers who voluntarily left the department over the last 10 years. Seven participants answered this question. One participant indicated the "statistic was difficult to obtain due to retirements" and the item was left blank. The intent of the question was to obtain data to determine voluntary turnover rate, however, it appeared that the statistics obtained may include retired officers in addition to those seeking employment with another agency. Therefore, data from this item were not considered meaningful.

Item 5 was an open-end question: "What is the most significant organizational benefit of providing career development activities for patrol

officers?" Eight participants responded to this question. Although this item was intended to identify the participant's perception of a single most important benefit, several participants recorded multiple benefits. Because responses having multiple benefits did not suggest a priority of significance, the researcher chose to codify responses under two theme categories to prevent loss of data. Four theme categories developed from the responses.

Theme 1: Retention.

"To retain them and develop them as officers and future leaders…"

"Officers staying with the department and maintaining good attitudes ."

"Patrol officer retention through job satisfaction."

Theme 2: Performance.

"Increased capability of the officers, Department, increased job performance and credibility."

""Work related competencies of employees will increase as career development (training) occurs."

"Maintaining a sharp thinking work force."

Theme 3: Leadership development.

"Job enrichment, satisfaction and development of future leaders."

"To retain them and develop them as officers and future leaders…"

Theme 4: Job satisfaction.

"Job enrichment, satisfaction and development of future leaders."

"Encourages and gives officers an opportunity to work above normal patrol duties in areas they find personally rewarding."

Item 6 was an open-end question: "What, if any, organizational drawbacks are there to providing career development activities to patrol officers?" Eight participants responded to this question. Four themes emerged from their responses. Three responses were classified under theme 1; the remaining themes each had two responses in their respective categories.

Theme 1: Budget constraints.

"Challenges to staffing and budget having officers attend additional training."

"The cost of developmental activities can become prohibitive."

"We sometime need to refrain from purchasing some luxury equipment to provide money for schooling."

Theme 2: Staffing constraints.

"Street staffing shortages during times of training."

"Challenges to staffing and budget having officers attend additional training."

Theme 3: Unrealistic expectations

"It can lead to expectations or goals the organization has a hard time delivering."

"Unrealistic expectations develop within officers who expect the training or assignment to propel them into new assignments or promotions."

Theme 4: Turnover

"None, other than the fact the employee can always jump ship and take their training and competencies to another agency."

"Officers may want to leave the department to a larger agency to have a greater opportunity to work in an area that has been developed or interest, i.e. detective on full-time basis, evidence technician, etc."

Item 7 collected information regarding whether participants experienced any professional benefits from participating in career development activities. Seven participants responded to the item. All seven indicated they had benefited from participation in career development programs.

Item 8 was an open-end statement; "Please explain any professional benefits you've experienced." Six of eight participants responded to the item. Two participants included multiple benefits that were subsequently classified under the two themes that emerged. Five responses were classified under Theme 1, and two responses were classified under Themes 1 and 2.

Theme 1: Promotions

"Promotion."

"My career long training and education has prepared me for the challenges I face daily."

"…promotions"

"I have been able to advance in my profession and had the ability to see other young officers grow over the years into very good officers."

"The program trained me to become a police CEO."

"Promotion…"

Theme 2: Greater job satisfaction

"Greater job satisfaction, feeling of pride, promotions."

"Job satisfaction."

Item 9 was also an open-end statement; "Please include any comments regarding your thoughts on career development programs." Seven participants responded to this item. The coding scheme for this item consisted of classifying entire sentences under three pre-determined categories. Each individual sentence was coded for its positive, negative or neutral reference.

Positive reference:

"Excellent program, dependent upon the first line supervisor for success. Patrol and investigation assignments are more interesting now."

"…it should be purposely pursued by officers with nurturing from the department."

"Can be lots of work, but the work is justified."

"Feel these are good programs and would go along way in helping with some work-related stress."

"They need to have a specific objective that is achievable."

"In order to retain competent employees in the 21st century, and give those employees a sense of self-worth, and be able to deal with complex problems facing police agencies, career development programs are of paramount importance."

Negative reference.

"What top command may view as developmental may be transparent to the line officer. This means it may not be as effective as it could be…"

"Only negative is that as people grow, they sometimes change direction after a large amount of funding has been spent on their training."

Neutral reference.

"Employees need to address the job satisfaction component with in all ranks of the agency."

Survey demographics. All participants in the executive officer survey had been in law enforcement 16 years or longer and were at least 46 years of age. Four participants had a master's degree; three had a bachelor's degree and one had an associate's degree. Three participants represented smaller agencies of 10-30 officers. Two participants represented agencies of 51-80 officers; two represented agencies of 81 or more officers. One participant represented an agency of 31-50 officers.

Summary of executive officer survey. Participants are generally supportive of using career development programs or activities and cite similar benefits to the organization as those identified in the literature. Career development programs or activities benefit the organization through employee job satisfaction, performance improvement and leadership development. Although participants assert

developmental opportunities may also contribute to employee retention, they also expressed concern that some employees may choose to leave the department after they've been trained and are now more marketable. Additionally, employees who obtain additional skills may develop an expectation of either advancement or assignment to a specialty position that may not be available.

Results of both surveys suggest administrators and employees have common perceptions of the value of career development programs or activities. Both administrators and employees agree the experience is beneficial in developing supervisory staff candidates and in enhancing employee job satisfaction.

Limitations

One limitation of this study involved the sample selection. There are perhaps many non-accredited agencies utilizing some type of career development program or developmental activities that were not included in the study. Generalizations regarding the results of this study across non-accredited agencies are somewhat limited.

The study design also failed to provide for follow-up contact with employees to solicit a higher response rate. The researcher was dependent upon the contact person for collecting the survey from the participants. Once the package of completed surveys were returned to the researcher, a follow-up mailing was not practical. Direct contact with these agencies would likely have produced a higher response rate.

Lastly, data obtained through content analysis is subject to the researcher's consistency of text classification as reliability problems usually grow out of the ambiguity of word meanings (Weber, 1985). Classifications of themes included in responses were dependent upon the researcher's interpretation of the participant's intent. However, the researcher's background in municipal police work provided confidence in interpreting open-end responses.

CHAPTER 5

Conclussion

This study was limited to investigating the impact of career development programs or activities on job satisfaction. The researcher recognized that factors affecting job satisfaction are complex, thus, two facets of job satisfaction were specifically targeted in this study: satisfaction with the promotional process and job utilization. Since limited information and research were available on police agencies utilizing career development programs, the researcher chose a purposive sample of accredited municipal agencies in which to study.

To learn more about what was happening and why, the researcher developed four main objectives to focus on. The first objective was to identify activities agencies were using as part of a formal career development program. Results of the study showed that agencies having formal programs were utilizing job rotation, job enlargement, self-assessment and educational incentives for the most part. Less often used were job enrichment, career counseling and career planning activities.

The second objective was to discover if the opportunity to participate in a career development program influenced an employee's decision to stay with the agency. The opportunity to participate appeared to have significant influence over employees' decision to stay with the agency. There was even greater influence over this decision if employees had an opportunity to work in a variety of areas within the department.

The third objective was to identify the reasons an employee would or would not participate in a career development program. Employees chose to participate because they found it personally rewarding and they desired to improve their performance. Contractual language and department policy was identified as a factor that limited employees' opportunities, however. Family obligations and financial issues were identified as additional factors that influenced employees' decision to participate.

The fourth objective was to determine participants' perceptions on the impact of developmental activities in the promotional process. Results show significant support, from administrators and employees, for utilizing developmental activities as part of the promotional process.

Although the study sample included agencies of varying sizes and organizational structure, the researcher considered the sample a common representation of police officers in Wisconsin. The researcher concluded data obtained in this study could be generalized across the population of other police officers in Wisconsin.

Results of this study offer encouraging words for police administrators considering implementing career development activities in their agency. A significant number of participants in this study reported the existence of a career development program, or the opportunity to participate in a variety of career development activities, influenced their decision to remain with the agency. Thus, providing developmental activities appears to be a viable strategy to help enhance job satisfaction and reduce voluntary turnover.

A career development program can't guarantee advancement opportunities. However, an individual's capacity to perform in a supervisory role can be explored and enhanced through participation in a career development program or developmental activities. A carefully designed program can provide opportunities for employees to demonstrate skills and aptitudes desireable in supervisory personnel, where as those opportunities may be significantly limited while performing patrol duties. A promotional process that incorporates a career development program can also instill more faith and confidence among employees and administrators by utilizing a process that is based more on demonstrated performance and ability rather than on written test scores and seniority.

Implications of Study

One of the strengths of this study was the design that permitted the researcher to compare and contrast employees' perceptions with those of administrators. Both employees and administrators agree on the value of developmental activities as they impact job satisfaction. The significance of this finding suggests that administrators and employees, working together, could facilitate the development of a program tailored to address the promotional process and job utilization. A joint effort in developing a program will promote greater support among department members as those who are invoved often feel a sense of ownership and work harder toward success. Experts in the private sector caution against creating programs without specific goals and objectives.

Without a clear understanding of what a career development program is intended to accomplish, the program is likely to fail (London & Mone 1988).

Research in the private sector suggests organizational support can have a positive influence on turnover intentions (Noe et al, 1994). Therefore, a joint effort between management and the police union in creating a career development program may prove to be rewarding for employees and the organization.

Participation in developmental activities not only provides rewarding challenges for the individual, but may help to reduce stress created from a mismatch between the employee and job assignment (Parker, 1998). A career development program that incorporates employee skill assessment and performance feedback will help facilitate greater job fit.

Recommendations

Exit interviews of employees who leave voluntarily may lead to greater understanding of factors affecting job satisfaction that may be unique to that agency. Employees who left an agency may provide additional insight regarding the impact of developmental activities. In addition, future study may also identify specific developmental activities perceived as more valuable to the employee and organization, as this study did not explore the significance of individual activities.

The nature of law enforcement is constantly changing. Hiring employees who will remain with an agency has become a significant challenge. To remain effective, police agencies will need to consider new ways to retain employees,

and develop, enhance and maintain their skills. Budget constraints and staffing issues undoubtedly limit any agency's ability to provide a variety of learning opportunities; those challenges will always exist. More research is needed in the area of recruitment and selection practices as a preventive measure to help reduce turnover and to ensure that agencies are attracting people who desire continuous learning.

APPENDIX A

Career Development in Police Agencies

<u>Employee Survey</u>

For purpose of this survey, "Career Development Program" is defined as: A formal approach taken by the organization to provide employees with opportunities to participate in a variety of developmental experiences.

1. Does your department have a formal career development program?

☐ No

☐ Yes

> 2. If yes, does it influence your decision to stay with the department?
>
> ☐ Yes
>
> ☐ No

3. What types of activities and/or opportunities are available for sworn officers? (Check all that apply)

☐ Job Rotation: Moving to a specialized division/position for a set amount of time.

☐ Job Enlargement: Taking on additional tasks.

☐ Job Enrichment: Giving responsibilities previously held by a superior.

☐ Career Counseling: Providing feedback regarding individual strengths and weaknesses.

☐ Career Planning: Setting individual goals and strategies to meet them.

☐ Self-Assessment: Identifying individual interests.

☐ Educational Incentives: Receiving tuition reimbursement/compensation for attendance.

☐ Training Incentives: Receiving extra compensation for training attended.

☐ Other: Please list_____

4. Is there existing policy or bargaining language that impacts your opportunity to participate in any of the above activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Are there any financial incentives associated with participating in any of the above activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. What influences your decision to participate in the above activities? (Check all that apply)

☐ I find it personally rewarding

☐ I feel it would improve my overall performance

☐ I feel it would help develop my skills for future advancement

☐ I feel it will help me find the most appropriate job for me

☐ I feel the financial rewards are worthwhile

☐   I do not participate

7. Does the opportunity to work in a variety of work assignments influence your

decision to stay employed with a police department?

☐   Yes

☐   No

☐   I don't know

8. Do you think that career development activities impact the promotional

process?

☐   Yes (go to # 9)

☐   No (go to # 10)

☐   I don't know (go to # 10)

9. How do career development activities impact the promotional process?

10. Do you think participation in career development activities should impact the

promotional process?

☐   Yes (go to # 11)

☐   No (go to # 12)

11. Why do you believe participation in career development activities should

impact the promotional process?

12. Why do you believe participation in career development activities should not impact the promotional process?

13. Have you experienced any professional benefits by participating in career development activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. How long have you been in law enforcement?

☐ Under 2 years

☐ 2-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ over 15 years

15. What is your age?

☐ 20-25 years

☐ 26-35 years

☐ 36-45 years

☐ Over 45 years

16. What is your highest level of education?

☐ High School Diploma

☐ Associates Degree

☐ Bachelors Degree

☐ Other:_____

17. How many sworn officers are employed at your department?

☐ 10-30

☐ 31-50

☐ 51-80

☐ Over 80

18. What is your rank?

☐ Patrol Officer

☐ Sergeant

☐ Lieutenant

☐ Captain

☐ Deputy Chief

☐ Other:_____

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. By returning this survey, you are providing informed consent as a participating volunteer. Questions or concerns about participation in the research should be addressed first to the researcher or research advisor, and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair of the UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, telephone (715) 232-1126.

APPENDIX B

Career Development in Police Agencies

Executive Officer Survey

For purpose of this survey, "Career Development Program" is defined as: A formal approach taken by the organization to provide employees with opportunities to participate in a variety of developmental experiences.

1. Does your department have a formal career development program?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No (go to #3)

2. What are the goals of the career development program? (Check all that apply)

    ☐ Leadership development, (improve the pool of future candidates)

    ☐ Improve employee job satisfaction

    ☐ Improve organizational effectiveness

    ☐ Improve organization/individual job fit

    ☐ Other, please list:_____

3. What types of activities and/or opportunities are available for sworn officers?

    (Check all that apply)

☐ Job Rotation: Moving to a specialized division/position for a set amount of time.

☐ Job Enlargement: Taking on additional tasks.

☐ Job Enrichment: Giving responsibilities previously held by a superior.

☐ Career Counseling: Providing feedback regarding individual strengths and weaknesses.

☐ Career Planning: Setting individual goals and strategies to meet them.

☐ Self-Assessment: Identifying individual interests.

☐ Educational Incentives: Receiving tuition reimbursement/compensation for attendance.

☐ Training Incentives: Receiving extra compensation for training attended.

☐ Other: Please list_____

4. How many voluntarily left your department over the last 10 years?_____officers.

5. What is the most significant organizational benefit of providing career development activities for patrol officers?

6. What, if any, organizational drawbacks are there to providing developmental activities to patrol officers?

7. Have you experienced any professional benefits by participating in career development

   activities?

        ☐   Yes (go to # 8)

        ☐   No (go to # 9)

8. Please explain any professional benefits you've experienced.

9. Please include any comments regarding your thoughts on career development programs.

10. How long have you been in law enforcement?

        ☐   Under 2 years

        ☐   2-5 years

        ☐   6-10 years

        ☐   11-15 years

        ☐   over 15 years

11. What is your age?

        ☐   20-25 years

        ☐   26-35 years

        ☐
           36-45 years

        ☐
           Over 45 years

12. What is your highest level of education?

☐ High School Diploma

☐ Associates Degree

☐ Bachelors Degree

☐ Other:_____

13. How many sworn officers are employed at your department?

☐ 10-30

☐ 31-50

☐ 51-80

☐ Over 80

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. By returning this survey, you are providing informed consent as a participating volunteer. Questions or concerns about participation in the research should be addressed first to the researcher or research advisor, and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair of the UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, telephone (715) 232-1126.

APPENDIX C

<u>Information Regarding Survey: Career Development in Police Agencies</u>

1. You are being requested by Lt. Gail Everts, Menomonie Police Department, to participate in this survey.

2. Chief _____ has authorized your voluntary participation in this research project.

3. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the impact of career development activities, or programs, in municipal police agencies. The survey will specifically seek information regarding your department's promotional process and officer job satisfaction.

4. Your assistance is needed to ensure that a significant number and variety of officers are participating in this project.

5. Your answers will be anonymous. Do not put your name or any identifying marks on the questionnaire. Only the summary of the survey will be given upon request.

6. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Once completed, please place it in the envelope provided by_____.

7. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. By returning this questionnaire, you are providing informed consent as a participating volunteer.

APPENDIX D

Date

Chief's Name
Address of Agency

Dear Chief:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the Career Development Survey. The information you provide will be used to better understand the impact of career development activities and/or programs in Wisconsin police agencies.

The enclosed survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. There are no correct or incorrect responses, only your much needed opinions. All responses will be treated confidentially and will in no way be traceable to individual participants once the survey process has been concluded.

As agreed upon in our telephone conversation, I have included the *Executive Officer Survey*, the *Employee Survey,* and survey instructions in this package for distribution within your department. Please place your survey, along with completed employee surveys, in the postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope and mail by May 7, 2001.

I will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lt. Gail Everts
Menomonie Police Department
UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI
(715) 235-9424

Table E1

Activities Available

Activities	Checked Frequency	Checked Percentage	Not Checked Frequency	Not Checked Percentage
Job Enlargement	114	64	64	36
Education Incentive	110	62	68	38
Job Rotation	104	58	74	41
Career Counseling	67	38	111	62
Career Planning	61	34	117	66
Self Assessment	54	30	124	70
Job Enrichment	36	20	142	79
Training Incentive	30	17	148	83
Other	5	3	173	97

Note. N=178

Table E2

Decision to Participate

	Checked		Not Checked	
What influences your decision to participate in the above activities? (check all that apply)	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
I find it personally rewarding	128	72	50	28
I feel it would improve my overall performance	120	62	58	32
I feel it would help develop my skills for future advancement	106	60	72	40
I feel it will help me find the most appropriate job for me	48	27	130	73
I feel the financial rewards are worthwhile	48	27	130	27
I do not participate	20	11	158	89

Note. N=178

Table E3

Goals of Program

What are the goals of the career development program?	Checked		Not Checked	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Leadership development	3	37.5	2	25.5
Improve employee job satisfaction	3	37.5	2	25.5
Improve organizational effectiveness	3	37.5	2	25.5
Improve organization / individual job fit	3	37.5	2	25.5
Other: "Personal Growth"	1	13	4	50

Note. N=5

APPENDIX E

Table E4

Activities or Opportunities Offered

	Have Career Development Program	Do Not Have Career Development Program
Activities Or Opportunities Offered	Checked	Checked
Job Rotation	3	5
Job Enlargement	2	5
Self Assessment	2	3
Educational Incentives	2	4
Job Enrichment	1	3
Career Counseling	1	4
Career Planning	1	3
Training Incentives		1

Note. N=8

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