The efficacy of community policing: a community relations case study of Gloucester County, New Jersey patrol officers and residents

Ian J. Finnimore
Rowan University

Recommended Citation
https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1798
THE EFFICACY OF COMMUNITY POLICING: A COMMUNITY-RELATIONS
CASE STUDY OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
PATROL OFFICERS AND RESIDENTS

by
Ian J. Finnimore

A THESIS
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Public Relations
Graduate Division of Rowan University
1999

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved
June 16, 1999
ABSTRACT

Ian J. Finnimore

The Efficacy of Community Policing: A Community-Relations Case Study of Gloucester County, New Jersey Patrol Officers and Residents. (1999) Dr. Suzanne Sparks-Fitzgerald. Rowan University, Graduate Public Relations Program.

Community Policing has become a driving management strategy in many police departments throughout the United States. Police officers are being asked to form long-lasting relationships with community members so both publics can more easily work together to solve community and crime issues. This study's purpose was to determine the efficacy of community policing as it relates to both patrol officers and residents to determine what public relations skills may assist future community policing initiatives.

A patrol officer survey was designed and distributed to 24 municipal police departments. 394 surveys were delivered with 199 useable respondents. Officers were asked to give their responses on community policing from questions based on the Likert scale. Surveys were also collected from 199 residents throughout Gloucester County, NJ.

The major findings include: Officers in Gloucester County, New Jersey agree with community policing. Half of the community members surveyed thought police were effective communicators and almost no officers had any public relations or community policing training.
MINI-ABSTRACT

Ian J. Finnimore

The Efficacy of Community Policing:
A Community-Relations Case Study of
Gloucester County, New Jersey Patrol
Officers and Residents. (1999) Dr.
Suzanne Sparks-Fitzgerald. Rowan
University, Graduate Public Relations
Program.

Community Policing has become a driving management strategy in many police
departments throughout the United States. Police officers are being asked to form long-
lasting relationships with community members so both publics can more easily work
together to solve community and crime issues. This study's purpose was to determine the
efficacy of community policing as it relates to both patrol officers and residents to
determine what public relations skills may assist future community policing initiatives.
# Table of Contents

List of Tables / I

List of Figures, Figure Charts / II

Dedication / III

Chapter 1 / 1
- 1.1 Importance of the problem / 1
- 1.2 Problem Statement / 4
- 1.3 Delimitations / 6
- 1.4 Purpose / 7
- 1.5 Procedure / 9
- 1.6 Terminology / 10

Chapter 2 / 12
- 2.1 Literature Review / 12
- 2.2 Evaluation of Existing Research / 13
- 2.3 Police Officer Attitude and Education / 17
- 2.4 Community Attitude and Education / 20
- 2.5 Agreement and Disagreement / 21
- 2.6 Demographics / 23
- 2.7 Field Enhancement / 24

Chapter 3 / 25
- 3.1 Study Overview / 25
- 3.2 Sample Selection / 26
- 3.3 Data Collection method / 26
- 3.4 Police Department List / 27
- 3.5 Data Analysis Method / 28
- 3.6 Data Analysis / 29

Chapter 4 / 30
- 4.1 Results / 30
- 4.2 Specific Findings / 30
- 4.3 Description of the Sample and Surveys / 37
List of Tables

Table 1 - Police Educational Levels / 38
Table 2 - Community Educational Levels / 38
Table 3 - Years of Service Compared to Community Policing Agreement / 41
List of Figures

Figure 1 - Percentage of Police Who Feel They Effectively Communicate With the Public / 31
Figure 2 - Percentage of Community Members Who Feel Police Effectively Communicate / 31
Figure 3 - The Number of Officers Who Feel They Have Key Communicators They Can Go To In the Community / 32
Figure 4 - Number of Community Members Who Feel Officers Can Contact The Community When the Police Need Information / 32
Figure 5 - Percentage of Police Officers Who Feel Community Policing Is Effective In Their Town / 33
Figure 6 - Percentage of Community Members Who Feel Community Policing Is Effective / 33
Figure 7 - Percentage of Community Members Who Thought Police Were Effective Problem Solvers / 34
Figure 8 - Number of Police Officers Stating They Had Training In Public Relations or Community Policing / 35
Figure 9 - Police Officer Thoughts On Whether They Have a Good Working Knowledge Of Community Policing / 36
Figure 10- The Number of Community Members Who Feel Police Have a Strong Working Knowledge of Community Policing / 36
Figure 11- Education and Agreement to Community Policing / 37
Figure 12- Police Officer Respondent Race / 39
Figure 13- Community Respondent Race / 39
Figure 14- Number of Police Officers Who Agree With Community Policing / 42

Figure 15- Number of Community Members Who Agree With Community Policing / 42

Figure 16- Police Officer Responses to Whether the Community Wants Community Policing / 43

Figure 17- Community Responses as to Whether The Want Community Policing / 43

Figure 18- The Number of Police Officers Who Enjoy Communicating With the Public / 44

Figure 19- The Number of Community Members Who Feel Police Enjoy Communicating With the Public / 44
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Albert, who instilled in me a strong work ethic, my mother Kathleen, who pushes me to do anything, and my wife Andrea, who showed me support in all my long nights of study.

This work is also dedicated in memory of Chief Michael O’Donnell. His unparalleled vision of community policing will continue to inspire me through life.
Chapter 1

Importance of the Problem

The changes in crime and technology, along with police department use of a quasi-military organizational management structure has separated police from the community members they serve. Community relations may suffer. The advent of the patrol car, two-way radio, and computer technology moved officers away from street corners and into unfamiliar areas. The bonds between the local residents and the police have been broken and need to be repaired. Rather than just enforcing laws, community policing stresses the importance of neighborhood residents and establishing police-community partnerships (Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). Community policing is a collaborative effort between the police, community members, and government to identify crime and reasons for crime. Public relations techniques are often overlooked when studying community policing.

According to Thurman (1996), 80% of police chiefs across the country are practicing or intend to practice community oriented policing in the near future. The ever-changing realm of policing and the constant push for police officers to engage in community policing require constant evaluation of officers and their acceptance of community policing. It is not only important to continually examine the abilities of officers, but also how well the public perceives the police as problem solvers. Public confidence in the police from local residents and the cooperation it inspires
are essential ingredients for effective policing (Thurman, 1996).

Police departments are now attempting many different crime fighting and problem-solving skills. Some police departments begin by attempting to make children aware of the consequences of committing crimes and using drugs through the implementation of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in the local schools. D.A.R.E. is a collaborative effort by specially-certified law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents, and community members to offer an educational program in the classroom to prevent or reduce drug abuse and violence among children (D.A.R.E. America, 1996). Some departments also attempt to bring community members together into a neighborhood watch to help protect their own neighborhoods. Many police departments have senior citizen programs, youth programs, and citizen police academies and review boards. These programs allow officers to build community partnerships. Maintaining and sustaining community partnerships requires communication with various groups in the community (Smith, 1998) All of these lend importance to the notion that officers need to become good communicators.

The simple day-to-day interaction police officers have with the public could be used as public relations opportunities to help develop strong relationships with the public. Good public relations skills with the various clusters of communities may help produce these healthy relationships needed in modern community-oriented policing and effective community relations programs.

Questions have been raised in other studies questioning how much of the community and even the police department actually understands the term “community
policing.” Implications on how police do business effect this lack of understanding (McCoy, 1998).

Current research on community policing has assumed widespread support for community-police partnerships, but these studies failed to focus on police officers (Yates and Pillai, 1996). Yates and Pillai conducted a causal analysis of police officer attitudes toward community policing within the Fort Worth, Texas Police Department. The study assessed the effect frustration, strain, commitment, and support had on police officers’ attitudes toward community policing within the department. Yates and Pillai (1996) then demonstrated the reliability of an attitudinal scale focusing on youth relations. The study indicated that strain effected police attitudes.

There is still a need to study and evaluate other aspects of community police activities. For example, Kocher (1996), recommends future research include public perception of police officers so comparisons could be made between the two groups. Trojaniwicz (1994) noticed the importance of the public when he wrote “The future of community policing is in the hands and hearts of more than just the police.”

Previous research suggests a need for police to seek legitimate citizen input as they attempt to tailor their police work to the particular needs of the community (Cox, 1992). The public asks numerous tasks of the police every day. One obvious request would be that police effectively perform the tasks required of them.

One of Sir Robert Peel’s original principles estimated the need for good public relations skills in 1829:
To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police: the police being only the members of the public that are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence. (Braiden, 1990, p. 17)

The study is important to the field of public relations in that the author will seek to identify and improve relationships between a governmental agency empowered to enforce laws and the community members who live in the agency’s geographic area. The study will define areas where police officers lack communication skills and where the public feels police are not problem solvers. Robert F. Kennedy once spoke on crime, stating:

Every society gets the criminal it deserves - what is equally true, is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on! (Smith, 1998, p. 1)

Additionally, community-oriented police research can provide police departments and other local agencies with a wealth of useful information (Thurman, 1996). The researcher feels this information is vital to police agencies in order for them to evaluate how well officers communicate with the public.

Problem Statement

There are three main purposes for the study.

(1) To measure whether or not police officers in Gloucester County, New
Jersey see themselves as good problem solvers in the community.

(2) The second is to examine what the local residents feel about the officers in their area.

(3) The final portion of the study will examine public relations techniques and how they could improve the relationship between the police and the community.

Many other general studies have been conducted on community policing and the importance of its implementation (McEwen, 1995, Cox, 1992, Trojanowicz, 1990, Kocher, 1996, Rosenbaum, 1994). Other studies have also been completed on citizens perceptions of community policing (Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). Research on officers in small rural areas is limited as is data on officers’ knowledge and use of various public relations techniques in these small towns. Charles Kocher (1996) studied the community policing unit of the Camden City police force. His survey of police officers and managers’ attitudes toward community policing did not include a coinciding view of the public. He also studied officers from a city and included only those officers in a community-policing unit. Many of his findings suggest a need to study what characteristics make officers good communicators. This researcher feels there may be a need to study the impact professional public relations training will have in the area of community policing.

The study will gather information that could be used by many current and future
police administrators in order to evaluate the hiring and training process of officers, understand police officer’s attitudes toward community policing in Gloucester County, and continue or change current management philosophies. Various other management studies have been completed and Kocher (1996) cites a growing concern in the area of hiring and proper candidate selection in the light of community policing.

The 24 municipal police departments were chosen because of their geographic location. They are all small to medium-sized police departments in rural areas of Southern New Jersey. The author is also familiar with the local police departments and many of the departments police chiefs and administrators making identification of local police easy. The author selected the geographic area because of his involvement in community policing there.

**Delimitations**

In this inductive, empirical study the author chose to restrict comparison of officers and their acceptance of the community policing philosophy while also studying what the public thought of their community policing and public relations skills. No information was obtained on other management forms currently used by the local police departments. The author also makes no assumptions on lowering crime rates through the use of community policing. No local crime statistics were studied. The author also restricted his study to those officers in Gloucester County with the rank of Patrol Sergeant and below. This was done because higher ranking officers do not work patrol and have less contact with the public on a day-to-day basis. The author wanted to study officers who work patrol shifts, whether they are currently working in a community
policing unit or not. The author ignored the need for community-oriented management practices cited as important by Eck and Rosenbaum (1994).

The author limited research to residents who live in the same county as the officers studied. This was done to compare the thoughts and expectations of the police to the residents.

**Purpose**

The major objective of the study was to analyze the community policing attitudes of Gloucester County, New Jersey police officers and the community members they serve. Many Gloucester County police departments follow the community policing philosophy and feel it is an important step toward reducing crime. According to Kocher (1996), the selection process of police officers needs to include a dimension of personality. He stresses the importance of good communication skills. Police officers with a college education respond more favorably toward community policing when compared to officers with no college (Kocher, 1996). This raises questions on the implications of teaching officers public relations skills on the college level and whether this will assist in proper community policing.

The author sought to identify how well officers “buy into” the community-policing philosophy as well as the local public. An attempt was made to identify certain attitudes of the police and community members along with what public relations techniques are lacking in police communication.
The author formed three hypotheses:

- **H1**: It is expected that police officers in Gloucester County, New Jersey will view themselves as ineffective communicators which is inconsistent with current community oriented policing needs.

According to William Smith from the Law Enforcement Assistance Network, one of the obstacles to building and maintaining effective partnerships with the community is poor communications. Untimely ill-phased, inappropriate messages do not allow for important citizen feedback (Smith, 1998).

- **H2**: It is expected that the public in Gloucester County, New Jersey will not view local police officers as effective problem solvers in their communities.

Kocher (1996) cited the importance of problem-solving techniques and the importance of communication skills in community-oriented policing. Problem solving needs a high level of community engagement in order to identify problems in a community and develop a proper understanding of the particular circumstances that create these problems (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994).

- **H3**: It is expected that the use of public relations techniques could improve the relationship between police officers and the public they serve.
Past literature has mentioned the importance of additional training for police officers with regard to communication skills (Trojanowicz, 1994). Additional training in communications or public relations techniques may assist officers as they attempt to build bonds with the community.

The author conducted surveys of both police officers and a sample of community members. Salant and Dillman's (1994) book on conducting surveys was consulted to ensure procedures for low levels of error with appropriate return. A group interview (focus group) was conducted as an additional qualitative instrument. The focus group was conducted with community members.

The author assumed the results from surveying the local police and the community members were completed accurately and honestly. Any partially completed surveys were eliminated.

Other assumptions made by the author coincide with Kocher's (1996) implications that police officers with extended educational levels will be better equipped to implement public relations skills in building positive lasting relationships.

**Procedure**

The author conducted a literature review of various police journals and community relations journals via computerized databases. (*Periodical Abstracts, Infotrac Searchbank, ERIC, Psycinfo, and Lexis-Nexis*)

The author researched various related scholastic publications on policing, community policing, and police/community relations management to gather current
community policing trend information and definitions. Additionally, the author used various related Internet services to gather information from other police agencies and community policing services. The author also attended an intensive eighty-hour Community Policing Certification course at the University of Delaware and conducted an in-depth interview with a leading instructor on community policing from the Aurora Illinois Police Department.

Additional related scholastic texts on public relations techniques were also reviewed to complete the study in order to evaluate police officer techniques.

**Terminology**

**Community Member** - Any resident in the 24 municipalities who is not an active member in the law enforcement realm.

**Community Oriented Policing (COP) or community policing** - a collaborative effort between community members, local officials, and the police to identify various crimes and reasons for crimes. These groups then work together to search for solutions.

**Community Relations** - Communication and building bonds between the police officer and members of the community where both groups work together with respect and trust to accomplish set goals.

**Key Communicators** - Community members police can contact when they need to supply the community with information or gather information from the community. These people can tell officers what the community is thinking.

**Media Relations** - Any contact with journalists in order to provide information to the public.
**Municipality** - Any of the 24 geographic units controlled by its own governing body in Gloucester County, New Jersey.

**Patrol Shift** - When an officer works a schedule where they are out working with the public responding to incoming calls from local residents.

**Police Officer** - Any active law enforcement officer who has not reached a rank higher than Patrol Sergeant.

**Public Relations Techniques** - Any techniques used by communication professionals including print, electronic, and face-to-face communications.

**Quasi-military Organizational Structure** - A management method where rank allows certain benefits and responsibilities. It is a chain of command structure of: Patrolman, Patrolman First Class, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Chief.

**Town Watch** - A community organization where residents in a local area meet as a group with police to discuss crime prevention and neighborhood problems in order to reduce crime in the area.

**Traditional Policing** - Police using arrest as main method of reducing crime without input from community members. No long-term strategic planning is used.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Many studies have been completed on community policing over the past fifteen years. Authors such as Trojanowicz, Moore, Rosenbaum, Roberg, Skogan, Eck, Kocher, and others have completed research on community police officers and community acceptance of the community policing philosophy. Research by the staff of the National Center for Community Policing has verified that community policing officers are received so well they often find themselves handling requests beyond the scope of traditional law enforcement.

With increasing pressure on police from the media, lobby groups, and the community, there may be a need for studies on the importance of traditional public relations skills as they relate to law enforcement. Community policing relies upon organizational decentralization and a reorientation of patrol in order to facilitate two-way communication between police and the public (Rosenbaum, 1994). Little or no effort has been put into the comparison between community policing skills and public relations skills. Community policing is continually growing as a management philosophy especially in light of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act in 1994 endorsed by President Clinton. It is the largest Federal anti-crime legislation in the Nation’s history (Alpert and Travis, 1999).
Evaluation of Existing Research

Past successful programs in community policing have been cited in various studies. Some research included studies ranging from examination of foot patrols in Flint, Michigan, the fear of crime reduction efforts in Houston, and problem oriented policing in Newport News, Virginia (Alpert and Travis, 1999). Continuous studies are important as more and more police agencies attempt to grasp the community policing philosophy. With this new injection of police officers hired under various grants, studies of the municipal police departments and their philosophy on community policing may be needed. Examining what public relations skills are critical in helping officers function better in community policing is needed. At the core of community policing is an organizational commitment to problem solving and customer satisfaction (Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998) and in departments tailoring their police work to the particular needs of the community (Cox, 1992). As reported by Trojanowicz (1990), police officers have difficulty in four areas, (1) Making arrests, (2) Culture shock, (3) Red light and siren syndrome, and (4) Lack of information. Kocher (1996) suggests it may take a different type of officer to succeed in community policing for the 21st century.

Research on the publications of the Community Policing Consortium (1997) revealed twelve steps in its strategic planning process:

1. Decide what to plan.
2. Organize work groups.
3. Define the mission and goals.

4. Create topical subcommittees of police, community, and government representatives.

5. Develop recommendations for work group on issues.

6. Develop strategic and implementation plan.

7. Review and revise.

8. Present the plan to the community.

9. Finalize the plan.

10. Formally adopt a plan as policy and publish.

11. Oversee implementation and re-evaluation of the plan.

12. Review and revise.

These twelve steps can easily be compared to Grunig’s “Behavior Molecule” management steps as seen in the following list found in Hunt and Grunig’s *Public Relations Techniques* (1994):

1. Detecting the problem.

2. Constructing a possible solution.

3. Defining alternatives.

4. Selecting the best course of action.

5. Confirming the choice by pre-testing.

6. Behaving by enacting a program.

7. Detecting whether the program met the desired objectives.
Research indicates a need for comparing public relations techniques to methods of community policing. There are many similarities in the two disciplines. Another similarity can be seen between Marston’s Research, Action, Communication, and Evaluation (RACE) formula (Hunt and Grunig, 1994) and the Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) model as explained by Lieutenant Perkins during the University of Delaware Community Policing Certificate Program (1999). The SARA problem-solving model was developed in 1987 by the Newport News Police Department under the sponsorship of the National Institute of Justice (Fleissner and Heinzelmann, 1996) and has been used by community police departments such as the San Diego Police Department when they initiated community policing approaches to drug problems in the city (Rosenbaum, 1994). In 1988, The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) granted the San Diego Police Department funds for training and development of the plan which focused around the SARA model (Rosenbaum, 1994).

Trojanowics and Bucqueroux (1994) refer to six groups they call the Big Six that must be identified if community policing efforts are going to succeed.

- **The Police Department** – including all personnel, from the chief to the line officer, civilian and sworn.
- **The Community** – including everyone, from formal and informal community leaders such as presidents of civic groups, ministers, and educators; to community organizers and activities; to average citizens on the street.
- **Elected Civic Officials** – including the mayor, city manager, city council, and any county, state, and federal officials whose support can affect community policing’s future.

- **The Business Community** – including the full range of businesses, from major corporations to the “Mom & Pop” store on the corner.

- **Other Agencies** – including public agencies (code enforcement, social services, public health, etc.) and non-profit agencies, ranging from Boys & Girls Clubs to volunteer and charitable groups.

- **The Media** – both electronic and print media.

The media have worked as gatekeepers of information and without proper training in media techniques, many messages could be lost.

*No specific studies have been completed in the Gloucester County, New Jersey area. Many studies have been completed in other areas of the country such as: Santa Barbara, Las Vegas, Savannah, Newport News, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, San Diego, Flint, Baltimore County, Houston, Newark, New York, Aurora, and Madison. Through review of the different studies and community policing initiatives of the various police agencies it is easily noticed that all have different methods, styles, and titles of their programs. Philadelphia has Community Oriented Police Education, known as COPE, a community relations program which began in 1980 stemming from a grant from the Ford Foundation (Rosenbaum, 1994). The study indicated after the COPE Project, officers*
were less satisfied with their police career and direct assignments. Madison assigned officers to an Experimental Police District (EPD). Aurora initiated Neighborhood-Oriented-Policing and the Problem-Solving Project. New York introduced the Community Patrol Officer Program (CPOP) model. Baltimore County’s community policing program, known as Citizen Oriented Police Enforcement (COPE) project and Houston and Newark called their endeavor the Fear Reduction Project (Rosenbaum). These, along with the many other community policing projects, were studied at length. In New York, McElroy, Cosgrove, and Sadd (1993) interviewed officers in the Community Patrol Officer Program at two points in time (T₁ and T₂) over a six month data collection period in order to study, among other information, opinions officers had on being a police officer. Most of the respondents reported no attitudinal changes. When changes were reported, their attitudes toward the community and being a cop became more positive and their attitudes toward the police department became more negative (McElroy et al, 1993).

**Police Officer Attitude and Education:**

It is well documented how police work occurs in a unique environment and engenders a culture of its own (Kurke, 1995).

Oettmeier (1997) listed eight *Critical Attitudes Associated With Community Policing* from the Houston Police Department. These eight attitudes differ from the early examinations of public attitude suggesting police officers mold public attitudes (Wirth, 1958). Bercal (1970) found two different types of community/police interaction. One
would be voluntary (calls for service) and the other involuntary (traffic citations).

Researchers have found these different contacts are different in character and will generate different consequences for public attitudes.

Critical Attitudes Associated With Community Policing (Oettmeier, 1997)

1. A sense of personal responsibility for an area and its people.
   - A feeling of ownership for what happens.

2. Belief in importance of attempting to improve conditions within an area.
   - A desire to assess what you have control over and act responsibly as it relates to crime and disorder.

3. Belief that concerns of neighborhood residents matter.
   - Recognizing police do not always know what citizens want and are not afraid to ask.

4. Belief that citizens possess information necessary for police to do their jobs well.
   - An understanding police are heavily dependent on assistance from citizens to be successful.

5. Commitment to educating and empowering citizens to act.
   - A desire to teach citizens how to help themselves.

6. Belief in working with citizens to solve problems.
   - Recognizing limitations and a willingness to pursue alternative courses of action.

7. Belief in working with other government or community agencies to solve problems.
   - Understands the importance and is capable of working in teams to accomplish results.

8. Willingness to make “extra efforts.”
   - Is willing to go above and beyond what is normally expected.

Burdua and Tifft (1971) recorded results from citizen interviews and reported officers who responded to a citizen complaint and were thorough, listened carefully, and gave advice were perceived significantly more positively than were officers who were brief
and lacked compassion. Thurman and Reisig (1996) suggest prior research shows community members have negative perceptions of police when they have had a negative contact with officers and positive encounters have little impact on enhancing attitudes toward police.

A study of 25 officers assigned to community-oriented policing at the Camden City Police Department by Kocher (1996) indicated that community-oriented police officers possess attitudes that promote communication, a desire to assist the elderly, and serve as role models for children. Kocher (1996) found approximately 62% of the officers involved in the community policing felt it was working and 76% agreed no skills were required of them before being assigned to community policing. The author limited the scope of the study by not including all of the officers in the police department. The study poses questions regarding the importance of higher education and the need for future studies. This city-based study was completed in a county bordering Gloucester County, showing some geographical relevance to the current survey.

With the increasing responsibilities of the modern community policing officer, there is a need for skills in the areas of problem conceptualization, data collection (primarily through surveys) and analysis, development of action plans, program evaluation, and the communication of these results (Rosenbaum, 1994). One national study indicated that only 14% of police departments required any education beyond a high school diploma and 22.6% of surveyed officers had received a college degree (Carter, Sapp, & Stephens, 1989). Cardarelli, McDevitt, and Baum (1998) reported nearly 90% of police chiefs surveyed listed special training as the second most important
factor in the success of community policing. In focus group interviews, police chiefs noted that the skills needed for community policing are substantially different than those of the traditional law enforcement officer, and that community policing entails significant training for all levels of police personnel. Police chiefs also noted that not all officers presently on the force are appropriate for community policing (Cardarelli et al., 1998). A comparison may be needed between the educational level of officers in the 1989 study and the officers in Gloucester County, New Jersey in 1999, to see if there are any geographical differences or longitudinal changes. Kocher (1996) also suggests police departments select individuals with good communication skills when hiring new officers. Selecting qualified applicants for police officer positions is critical and the department’s commitment to community policing can result in necessary modifications to that process (Oettmeier, 1997). Some police departments require that applicants take writing proficiency and reading comprehension tests and even use assessment centers to measure applicants’ communication, leadership, planning, and organizational skills (Oettmeier, 1997).

**Community Attitude and Education:**

Some research done specifically on the attitudes of community members indicates the need for better communication between police and the community members. When the community was asked in one study where they had heard about community policing, 46% responded from the local media and only 6.5% claimed they gathered the information from police (McCoy, 1998). The study also suggested a need for police to work with the media to build community relationships so that community policing can
continue to mature and flourish (McCoy, 1998). Police-community relations programs designed to improve public perception of the police have been found to be relatively ineffective (Kelly, 1975). The community’s input has been cited as valuable and it is important to involve them in the planning stages so they feel their voice is heard (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1994). Many bridges exist between the police and the community. These bridges create obstacles that may inhibit the success of community policing and community relations. According to Pace (1989), until economic, educational, cultural, and social parity exists among members of communities, necessary cohesiveness to create a unified community is unlikely. Previous studies demonstrate how public attitudes toward the police can vary significantly by residential setting (Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). Oliver and Bartgis (1998) cite economics as playing a major role in the influence of all societal relations to include its influences on crime and social environment.

**Agreement and Disagreement:**

There is continued debate among academic researchers as to whether the shift from traditional policing to community policing is simply rhetorical (Greene & Mastrofski, 1988; Moore, 1992; Zhao, Thurman, & Lovrich, 1995). The National Institute of Justice (McEwen, 1995) found over 80% of the police chiefs surveyed indicated they were using community policing methods or planned to do so in the near future. In the initial stages of community policing, the academic community was skeptical stating the concept was being used to build the reputations of police chiefs and departments and to obscure operations at the departments (Rosenbaum, 1994). The
critics of community policing claim community policing is rhetoric and communities are simply informed about the programs they are being asked to pay for (Rosenbaum, 1994). Moore (1990) argues that this rhetoric has assisted police chiefs in establishing terms of accountability and expectations from officers. Little information was found on the development of a key communicator program or media plan in the reviewed literature. Thurman and Reisig (1996) suggest interviewing key informants or other elites (mayors, city council members, city managers, police chiefs) as a method for getting an initial sense of an issues salience and context, but does not indicate any extensive use of any key communicator program. Key communicators are people in the community who have the ability of passing on important information to police and other community members (Gallagher, Bagin, & Kindred, 1997).

Studies also reveal no set format police departments use when implementing community policing and none describe pertinent public relations skills. No indication is made toward the proper communication of community policing to the public. The education and training of residents with regard to their role in community policing is almost non-existent and this may inhibit an agency’s full community policing potential (Rosenbaum, 1994). Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) see police departments as the last remaining social service agency open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that still makes house calls, and are asked to solve problems professionally and expediently.

Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) cite community policing and community relations (public relations) as two separate entities with community relations improvement as only a welcome by-product of community policing. No additional information is given on the possibility of public relations education improving upon
current community policing efforts.

Rosenbaum (1994) raises questions about long term evaluation (critical problem analysis) of problems and not simply moving from problem to problem with no evaluation. It is important for officers to learn methods of tracking community trends in order to better solve crimes and community issues.

**Demographics:**

Demographics of community members have been widely studied. These demographics include race, age, gender, and socioeconomic status. They revealed that whites are more positive than non-whites toward community policing, and older people are mildly more satisfied with police compared to younger people (Thurman and Reisig, 1996). Educational factors and personality traits (Kocher, 1996) have also been used as variables when studying police officers and community policing. Kocher (1996) gives some of the most relevant and important information on the attitudes of officers specifically assigned to a community-policing unit. Research done by Kocher (1996) is directed toward officer attitudes as they relate to current theoretical perspectives on community policing in his attempt to determine personality character traits associated with the practice.

The researcher is not examining the management’s view of community relations or community policing. Some police departments may not promote the community-oriented policing philosophy, but officers may still have the public relations skills that will enhance their abilities to carry out community policing.
Field Enhancement:

This researcher plans to enhance the field of community policing and public relations through the study of municipal policing in Gloucester County, New Jersey and examining previous nationwide research. The management method of community policing sees the community officer as the key professional because he or she serves as the vanguard and informal leader of community-based problem solvers and volunteers (Rosenbaum, 1994).

This researcher will study Gloucester County, New Jersey police officers’ attitudes toward community policing while congruently studying the attitude of residents in the same county. Two separate surveys will be used to study the groups. The surveys were written with easy-to-understand questions following guidelines from various scholastic texts. The police survey will be used to elicit responses on officers’ acceptance of community policing, whether they enjoy communicating with the public, if they use evaluation skills and key communicators, and if they feel public relations skills are an important component of the police department. Additional topics include education, opinion on management acceptance of community policing, and biographical information.

Rosenbaum (1994) cites that the field of community policing is not gaining enough experience in order for researchers to evaluate what works. And Kocher (1996) calls for the development of more data on the attributes of community policing.
Chapter 3

Study Overview

The primary objectives of this research were to determine how Gloucester County, New Jersey police officers see themselves as community problem solvers, how local residents feel about the officers, and how public relations techniques could improve relationships between the two groups. Data was collected through surveys and a focus panel. Active patrol officers from the 24 municipal police departments (see departmental list for complete list of police departments) were asked to complete a community police survey (see Appendix for the police survey). Local residents throughout Gloucester County were also asked to complete a similar survey (see Appendix for community survey). A focus panel of six community members was also conducted.

The police surveys were delivered directly to each police department in Gloucester County while the community surveys were conducted at local libraries and various shopping areas throughout the county. All data received were analyzed to determine what relationships exist between the two groups. Examination of the data determined an officer’s knowledge of public relations techniques and if any techniques were used. This researcher then related the application of public relations techniques to improved relationships between the police and the public.
Sample Selection

All police participants surveyed worked as full-time patrol officers up to and including the rank of Sergeant. Any officers who performed solely administrative duties and were not involved in actively patrolling communities were not included in the study.

Gloucester County is geographically divided into 24 municipalities, each having its own police force. A total of 394 surveys were delivered to police officers from 24 municipal police departments in Gloucester County, New Jersey with 199 returned and completed in their entirety. This sample was completed for a more detailed representation of all of the patrol officers in the county. This will also allow for more complete information of the patrol officers.

The researcher also surveyed 199 community members throughout the county. The surveyor stopped when reaching the identical number of surveys returned from the officers. The researcher then conducted one focus panel comprised of eight members of the Franklin Township community to gather more in-depth information on how the local public felt about current community policing methods. The group was selected from community members where a current “Town Watch” organization was currently in place.

Data Collection Method

The researcher obtained written consent from each of the police chiefs in all 24 municipalities. No police chiefs were surveyed in the study. The questionnaires developed for the patrol officers were delivered to each police department in the County. A cover letter as well as a consent statement preceded the surveys. The letter included
all instructional information for completing the survey. The surveys were categorized into 24 clusters and numbered 1 to 24. This was done to allow the researcher to determine which group of surveys were returned from each department. The following list indicates the police departments studied and the number they were issued:

**Police Department List**

Franklin Township (1)  
Clayton (2)  
East Greenwich Township (3)  
Elk Township (4)  
Glassboro (5)  
Greenwich Township (6)  
Harrison Township (7)  
Logan Township (8)  
Mantua Township (9)  
National Park (10)  
Pitman (11)  
Paulsboro (12)  
South Harrison Township (13)  
Swedeboro (14)  
Washington Township (15)  
Wenonah (16)  
Woodbury (17)  
West Deptford Township (18)  
Woodbury Heights (19)  
Woolwich Township (20)  
Westville (21)  
Deptford Township (22)  
Monroe Township (23)  
Newfield (24)

Various questions were presented on community policing and communicating with the public. Questions were also presented on educational level, experience, and training. Questions were also asked to gather personal information from officers and community members such as age, race, sex, etc. Completed surveys were picked up
from the respected police departments to analyze. The consent forms were removed from the questionnaires prior to compiling any data in order to maintain anonymity of all respondents involved in the research project.

**Data Analysis Method**

Results from the questionnaires were tabulated by computer through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Two separate clusters of information were gathered. One set of information was based on the police surveys and the other on the community member surveys. Through the use of a Likert scale style questionnaire, the researcher was able to assign numerical values to all possible answers. The answer strongly agree was issued the numerical score 5; agree was scored 4; neutral was scored 3; disagree was scored 2 and strongly disagree was scored 1. This enabled the researcher to measure the intensity of each response. Cross tabulation was then used to examine different correlations between certain findings. Frequencies were then determined for each variable and compared.

The author was able to identify community policing skills and interests through the police surveys. Through evaluation and analysis of the community surveys, the researcher was able to determine whether or not community members were satisfied with police services and if they thought police officers were good communicators.

After collection, all data were analyzed. The results were then examined and interpreted in graph and chart form.
Data Analysis

The survey assessed officers' knowledge of community policing, how important they feel public relations is in policing and how effective they feel they are at community policing. The researcher also assessed the information gathered on personal and background information on the respondents. Formulated charts and numerical values were then compared. For example, partial correlations were calculated to determine whether education or time on the job affect how police officers view themselves in the area of public relations. Various other testing methods were used to compare officers' responses. These data are presented in the following chapter.
Chapter 4

Results

The data for this research were collected by use of two questionnaires distributed to each of 24 municipal police departments in Gloucester County, New Jersey. The survey was targeted at police officers with the rank of patrol sergeant or below. Three hundred ninety-four surveys were delivered to the police departments with 199 useable, complete surveys returned for an approximate 51% return rate. One hundred ninety-nine surveys were collected from community members through out Gloucester County through face to face contact at various shopping centers, libraries, and community meetings. The community surveys were collected to match the number of police surveys.

Specific Findings

All surveys were entered into the Windows™ based program SPSS® 6.1 and then all data were analyzed to evaluate the following hypothesis's:

Hypothesis I

- H1: It is expected that police officers in Gloucester County, New Jersey will view themselves as ineffective communicators which is inconsistent with current community oriented policing needs.
Research in reference to this hypothesis was not supportive. Police officer responses revealed that 93.5% of all officers feel they effectively communicate with the public. When compared to how the public feels about the communication skills of the police, the researcher found only 49.3% of community members either agree or strongly agree that officers communicate effectively.

**Percentage of Police Who Feel They Effectively Communicate With the Public**

*Figure 1*

**Percentage of Community Members Who Feel Police Effectively Communicate**

*Figure 2*
Approximately 63% of respondent officers feel they have identified important communicators in the town.

**The Number of Officers Who Feel They Have Key Communicators They Can Go To In the Community**

*Question #18*

![Figure 3](image1.png)

1 = strongly disagree  
2 = disagree  
3 = neutral  
4 = agree  
5 = strongly agree

**Number of Community Members Who Feel Officers Can Contact The Community When the Police Need Information**

*Question #18*

![Figure 4](image2.png)

1 = strongly disagree  
2 = disagree  
3 = neutral  
4 = agree  
5 = strongly agree
The community members (61.3%) feel officers can go to community members for information. This shows a close correlation between the two groups. Over 59% of officers thought community policing was effective in their town. Only 38.7% of the community respondents felt the police department effectively used community policing.

**Percentage of Police Officers Who Feel Community Policing Is Effective In Their Town**

*Figure 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage of Community Members Who Feel Community Policing Is Effective**

*Figure 6*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis II

- H2: It is expected that the community in Gloucester County, New Jersey will not view local police officers as effective problem solvers in their communities.

As stated in evaluating hypothesis number one, 49.3% of the community members feel police officers effectively communicate with community members. Just over half (53.7%) of the respondent public agreed or strongly agreed that police were effective problem solvers.

Percentage of Community Members Who Thought Police Were Effective Problem Solvers

Only 38.7% of the community respondents felt the police department effectively used community policing. Focus panel information from community members also suggested officers should become better problem solvers to become better communicators. In contrast, panel members also mentioned that by becoming better
communicators, police officers would be better problem solvers. The focus panel members felt police need to make more long term plans when attempting to solve community problems; they were not interested in quick-fix ideas.

Hypothesis III

- H3: It is expected that the use of public relations techniques could improve the relationship between police officers and the public they serve.

Officers reported low levels of community policing training indicating no knowledge of public relations techniques.

Number of Police Officers Stating They Had Training In Public Relations or Community Policing:

*QUESTION #27*

![Bar Chart](image)
A focus panel study of community members supported the hypothesis by stating officers should become better at communicating, formulating plans, and in contacting the public on a regular basis.

**Police Officer Thoughts On Whether They Have A Good Working Knowledge Of Community Policing**

*Question #24*

![Figure 9](image)

**The Number of Community Members Who Feel Police Have a Strong Working Knowledge of Community Policing**

*Question #24*

![Figure 10](image)
The following chart represents a breakdown of officers’ educational levels and their response to being adequately trained in community policing.

The following is a detailed narrative of general survey findings from the police officers and the community members along with supporting graphs and charts detailing frequency and cross tabulations of some acquired data.

**Description of the Sample and Surveys**

Limited demographic information was collected from both samples. Police were requested to give information on their age range, gender, race, education level, and how long they have served as a police officer. They were also asked to list any training they have had in public relations or community-oriented-policing.

Community members were asked their age range, their gender, race, and education level. They were also asked to list the town they live in to ensure that all
respondents resided in Gloucester County, New Jersey. They were also asked what training they feel officers should receive in the future. No respondents from the public gave any response to the additional training question. The following charts indicate the educational levels of the police and then the community.

**TABLE 1**

**Police Educational Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Education</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree / Study</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**

**Community Educational Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Education</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree / Study</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*note: the tables indicate the number of officers not percentages.

Approximately 32% from both groups indicated they had some college experience.

In the survey 58.8% of the police officers studied had earned an Associate’s Degree or higher compared to only 25.1% of the surveyed community. Both groups reported identical numbers with “some college” (see shaded area of above chart).

The number of male police officer respondents was 94% compared to 6% female officer respondents. Fifty-three percent of the female community members
responded to the survey with 47% male respondents.

In both studies the majority respondent race was Caucasian. Police officer respondents with regard to race are reported in the following table:

**Police Officer Respondent Race**

![Graph showing the distribution of police officer respondents by race.](image)

**RACE CODES**
- aa = African American
- asian = Asian
- cauc = Caucasian
- his = Hispanic
- other = Other

Community respondents with regard to race are reported in the following table:

**Community Respondent Race**

![Graph showing the distribution of community respondents by race.](image)
Approximately 60% of officer respondents agree or strongly agree they have a strong working knowledge of community policing and 46.7% feel they have been adequately trained in community policing. A comparison between the training variable and officers reporting they have been adequately trained in community-oriented-policing was made. Officer were given a “y” if they had reported any public relations or community policing school under training and “n” if no additional training was listed. Additional training was awarded for officers listing D.A.R.E. training, bicycle training, community policing seminars, academy instruction on community policing, or any other college or related course. Seventy-one percent of police respondents reported no training in community policing or public relations. Twenty-nine percent reported they had some additional training. This training was reported as Drug Abuse Resistance Education training, bicycle police training and other community based training. But 51.2% of community respondents agree or strongly agree that officers in their town have a strong working knowledge of community policing.

A correlation was completed between the number of years an officer has worked (y-axis) and the respondent’s agreement with community policing (x-axis). The results are given in table 3.
### Table 3
**Years of Service Compared to Community Policing Agreement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-5 years of service</th>
<th>6-10 years of service</th>
<th>11-15 years of service</th>
<th>16 or more years of service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*note: numbers indicate number of responses not percentages.*

From the chart it can be determined that the largest group (51 out of 199 surveyed or approximately 25%) who agree with community oriented policing have between one and five years experience as a police officer.

The charts and graphs on the following pages indicate more general findings from the study. The Likert scale measures a range from one to five with “strongly agree” being a “five” and “strongly disagree” being a one.

Only 29.1% of the police respondents reported having any training specific to public relations and community policing. This training came from community policing schools, seminars, academy training, Drug Abuse Resistance Education certification, bicycle policing school, and college level courses. Only .06% of the officers reported they had gone to a specific community policing school and another .02% reported
they had taken a community policing course in college. An additional .015% reported having some media or community-relations courses. This finding was significant due to the lack of public relations training by officers involved in community policing.

**Number of Police Officers Who Agree With Community Policing**

*Question #1*

![Graph showing the distribution of agreement levels among police officers.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree  
2=disagree  
3=neutral  
4=agree  
5=strongly agree

**Number of Community Members Who Agree With Community Policing**

*Question #1*

![Graph showing the distribution of agreement levels among community members.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree  
2=disagree  
3=neutral  
4=agree  
5=strongly agree

VAR00001
More community members agree with community policing when compared to police officers. The majority of both groups agree with community policing.

**Police Officer Responses to Whether the Community Wants Community Policing**

*Figure 16*

**Community Responses as to Whether They Want Community Policing**

*Figure 17*
Comparing these two charts reveals that both police and community want community policing in communities. Community members agreed (85%) that they desire community policing while 80% of officers agreed.
The community respondents reported they thought only 62% of police officers enjoy 
communicating with the public while 91% of the police respondents stated they enjoyed 
communicating with the public.

Many comparisons can be made between police responses and the 
community responses. One of the most significant findings was the lack of training 
officers receive in community policing and public relations. Implications of the findings 
including interpretation of some data will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

Summary and Discussion

The discussion of the results of the study will be presented with inclusion of information from a focus group conducted with community members. Results will be presented as they relate to each research question, how police administrators and management can use the information, and any implications for future research in the public relations and community policing fields of study. The two separate respondent groups, police officers and community members, formed two categories and were compared.

Demographic Information

Approximately 52% of all police respondents listed they had an associates or bachelors degree. Only 7.5% stated they had either courses or a degree at the graduate level, and 32% stated they had some college. This left only 9.5% of the officers with only a high school education compared to the community respondents who reported 37% having only a high school diploma and 5.5% not completing high school. Kocher’s (1996) study of the Camden Community Police Unit revealed approximately 19% of the patrol officers had a college degree and 56% of the Sergeants and administrators had college degrees. The current study does not include administrators or desk Sergeants as respondents. It is a requirement for police officers to minimally have a high school diploma and many departments now require a college degree before hiring. Even more
departments require a bachelors’ degree to be promoted from a patrol-level position to a supervisory level.

Inconsistencies were apparent in the number of police officers who reported they had training in community policing (29%) and the number who thought they had been adequately trained in community policing (47%). This information was compared to Kocher’s (1996) question in his study: Community Policing Requires No Skills or Knowledge Prior to Being Assigned to Operations. He found 87% of patrol officers felt no training was necessary. A study of informal training or community relations knowledge could prove very helpful in future research.

There was an interesting finding when comparing police officers’ thoughts on how well they felt they communicate with the public compared to how the community felt officers communicate. Approximately 94% of the officers surveyed reported they effectively communicate with the public. But only 49% of the community members thought the police were effective communicators. This indicates police officers think they are better communicators than they are.

Sixty-three percent of the officers surveyed indicated they had key communicators in the community they could contact for information. These relationships with community members could also improve through public relations training.

Community members involved in a focus panel added information with their thoughts on the abilities of officers when attempting to solve problems. Some of the subjects felt officers in general were not creative in their methods of solving community problems. All agreed that the police communicate with the public in a
historically new time in policing. Current poor media coverage of police officer actions may hamper attempts to form solid bonds with the community. All of the focus panel members supported the community policing initiatives and would like to see all officers working with the public. When asked if the police department should have a specific group of officers the group agreed a separate unit would be needed for coordination efforts and as a “thinking tank,” but still felt all police officers should be involved or instructed in community policing.

**Practical Influence In the Field**

Police supervisors and chiefs of police who support a community policing philosophy in Gloucester County, New Jersey need to supply officers with appropriate training in community policing and communication techniques. Public relations skills instruction for all officers may increase problem solving ability by informing them on developing plans, handling crisis situations, and practicing public speaking skills. Training in communication skills and public relations schooling may benefit police departments in the future. The leaders in police departments need to be able to speak freely with chiefs of police to better the internal communication of departments. A good leader uses the skills and information from those they depend on.

"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

(Maxwell, 1998)
Unfortunately, only .06% of the police officers surveyed reported education or training in community policing. Only three of the 199 officers surveyed reported having media or community-relations training. This represents only .015% of the officers surveyed. This leaves administrators very little room to gather assistance from patrol officers in the midst of any crisis issue.

Police administrators also need to attempt to more closely match identity and image. Police departments need to "feel" internally the same way the public views them. It has been reported that the community does not feel the officers effectively communicate with the public. Only approximately 32% of the community stated they have been adequately informed about community policing. Part of this communication needs to be what goals the police department has and how the department will achieve these goals. Community involvement may be critical when developing goals and working toward them.

It will be interesting to follow future research on community policing and how successful police officers and community members find the philosophy after years pass. The police and the community want community policing. The big question that remains is if police officers are capable of interacting with the public on effective levels and how better trained community-relations officers will perform and succeed.

**Future Research**

Future research could include a study of how much time officers spend communicating with the public on a daily basis. Along with this information, data could be collected to determine how these officers communicate with the public. Do they use
face-to-face, print, or electronic? These channels could be evaluated to further information on public relations training and where the department may need to focus training efforts.

The information obtained on demographics could be more extensive in order to determine if demographics drive officers toward effective community policing. Additional training questions could include what training the officers feel would help them increase their effectiveness in public relations and community policing. With only 39% of the community finding police departments in Gloucester County, New Jersey effectively use community policing and only 43% finding community policing is effective, the need for evaluation or increasing these numbers is apparent.

In Gloucester County, New Jersey, the police and the community agree with community policing. Police officers feel they communicate effectively with the public while only half of the public feel police are effective communicators. Approximately half of the community members feel police officers are effective problem solvers. Public relations skills could improve officers’ abilities in communicating and evaluating how well they communicate. Public relations skills would also give them appropriate information on how to develop a key communicator program and how to develop an effective strategic plan. Police officers need to become better communicators in order to enact better community policing.
Bibliography


APPENDIX
Gloucester County
Community Policing Survey

Dear Participant,

I am a Graduate student at Rowan University completing my thesis on community policing. As a fellow patrol officer, your opinion is critical to my research.

I need your help. Would you please give me your opinions on community-oriented-policing by completing the attached survey? The questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There are no correct or incorrect answers. At no time will you be identified personally from this survey and your participation is purely voluntary.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the Franklin Township Police Department (694-1414).

Thank-you,

Ofc. Ian J. Finnimore
18.) You feel police can go to community members in your town when they need information in the community.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
19.) You feel you can go to the police to voice your opinions and concerns.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
20.) Your police department administrators support officers when they initiate community policing projects.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
21.) Helping community members with personal problems is best handled by a social service agency.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
22.) You feel your police department effectively works with the media (TV, Newspapers, etc...).
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
23.) You feel officers enjoy working with children in the community.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
24.) You feel officers in your town have a strong working knowledge of community-oriented policing.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)
25.) Public relations is an important component of a police department.
   (Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree)

Please answer the following:

26.) Please list the town in which you live. (only the town, NOT your mailing address.)

__________________________

27.) List any training you feel officers should receive in the future.

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

28.) You are:
   _____ 19-25 years of age
   _____ 26-35 years of age
   _____ 36-45 years of age
   _____ 46 or more years of age

29.) Sex:
   _____ Female
   _____ Male

29.) Race:
   _____ Caucasian-Hisp.
   _____ Asian
   _____ African Am.
   _____ Hispanic
   _____ Other

30.) Education level completed:
   _____ Some high school
   _____ High school diploma
   _____ Some college
   _____ Associate college degree
   _____ Bachelors college degree
   _____ Some graduate study or degree

Thank you for your assistance in completing this questionnaire.
Gloucester County
Community Police Survey

Please Circle the Appropriate Response

1.) You agree with community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

2.) You have been adequately informed about community-oriented-policing by your police department.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

3.) Your police department supports community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

4.) There is no need for community policing in your town.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

5.) Other residents in your town agree with community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

6.) You feel community-oriented-policing is personally rewarding for officers.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

7.) Community policing should be a separate unit within the police department.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

8.) You feel community members want community policing in your community.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

9.) Your police department effectively uses the community-oriented-policing philosophy.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

10.) Police officers in your department willingly participate in community activities.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

11.) Community-oriented-policing is effective in your town.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

12.) You feel police in your town enjoy communicating with the public.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

13.) You feel police officers in your town are problem solvers.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

14.) You feel it is important for officers to be involved in other events in the town after work.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

15.) Neighborhood watch programs are important to you.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

16.) You feel it is important for police to evaluate how they handle public calls for assistance.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

17.) You feel police officers in your town communicate effectively with the public.
     Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Please Complete the Reverse Side
18.) You have identified the important communicators in your town when you need information in the community.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

19.) You feel community members can come to the police to voice their opinions and concerns.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

20.) Your police department supports officers when they initiate community policing projects.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

21.) Helping community members with personal problems is best handled by a social service agency.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

22.) Your police department has a written media relations policy.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

23.) You enjoy working with children in the community.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

24.) You feel you have a strong working knowledge of community-oriented policing.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

25.) Public relations is an important component of your police department.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Please answer the following:

26.) You have been a police officer for:
   ______ 1-5 years
   ______ 6-10 years
   ______ 11-15 years
   ______ 16 or more years

27.) List any training you have received in public relations or community-oriented policing.

28.) You are:
   ______ 19-25 years of age
   ______ 26-35 years of age
   ______ 36-45 years of age
   ______ 46 or more years of age

29.) Sex:
   ______ Female  ______ Male

30.) Education level completed:
   ______ High school diploma
   ______ Some College
   ______ Associate college degree
   ______ Bachelors college degree
   ______ Some graduate study or degree

Thank you for your assistance in completing this questionnaire.
Gloucester County
Community Police Survey

Please Circle the Appropriate Response

1.) You agree with community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2.) You have been adequately trained in the community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3.) Your police department supports the community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4.) There is no need for community policing in your town.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5.) Other officers in your jurisdiction agree with community-oriented-policing.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6.) You find community-oriented-policing personally rewarding.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7.) Community policing should be a separate unit within the police department.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8.) You feel community members want community policing in your community.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

9.) Your police department effectively uses the community-oriented-policing philosophy.
   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

10.) Police officers in your department willingly participate in community-oriented-policing activities.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

11.) Community-oriented-policing is effective in your town.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

12.) You enjoy communicating with the public.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

13.) You form a plan when attempting to solve a continuing problem when working patrol.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

14.) After work, you feel it is important to be involved in other events in the town.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

15.) Neighborhood watch programs are important to your police department.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

16.) You feel it is important to evaluate situations/calls when you complete them.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

17.) You feel you effectively communicate with community members when called by them for assistance.
     Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Please Complete the Reverse Side