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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT

By

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A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

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University Honors

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Abstract

University students are often exposed to two types of police officers: some dedicated solely to campus policing, and others dedicated to the broader community. My goal for this project is to better understand UCR students' perceptions of both types of officers. Additionally, I assess students' comfort interacting with campus police officers who either share or do not share their race/ethnicity and gender. Students first completed a series of surveys assessing their perceptions of campus and community police. Next, they read a series of vignettes describing good deeds the officers performed and rated their perceptions of officers in each vignette. I found that students rated campus police officers moderately positively, and rated campus police more positively than community police officers. However, match between participants' and officers' race/ethnicity or gender was not related to participants' comfort levels. Given that campus police officers were more positively perceived than community police officers, campus police might highlight their role in serving the campus specifically to further improve their relationship with students. Moreover, our findings that officer race/ethnicity and gender were unrelated to participants' comfort level suggests that daily positive interactions with police officers are especially important to students' comfort.

Keywords: Law enforcement, Campus police, Community police, University of California, Riverside

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Introduction

I have worked for the police department at the University of California Riverside for three and a half years, first as a Highlander Student Safety Team Member and later as a Supervisor in the same program. In those roles, I have been entrusted with various responsibilities to ensure campus safety, such as patrolling the campus and providing safety escorts. One day, while I was fulfilling my duties, I was in an elevator with two students. In jest, they asked me not to “shoot them”. This may prompt a few to wonder: why did they think I would shoot them? Do university students think that police officers are inclined to shoot them, or have negative perceptions of police officers in general? Students and police officers must work together for proper law enforcement. When people have a negative perception of police officers, they are less likely to reach out to or work with them (Lee, 2024).

Therefore, to better understand the relationship between campus police officers and students, this project has three main objectives. The first objective is to examine how students perceive campus police officers. The second objective is to see whether the student's perception of campus police officers is better than that of local/municipal police officers. The third and final objective is to see whether students are more comfortable interacting with campus police officers who share their race/ethnicity and gender. This project will provide general information about how students at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), feel about their campus police officers.

In similar research conducted in the past, researchers have argued that students do not want to be policed, but rather they want to be protected (Jacobsen, 2015). This means students expect campus police to intervene when they are in trouble. To elaborate further, students want to have fun and enjoy their newfound adulthood, which may include drinking with friends and

partying. They want officers to aid them by calling for an ambulance or protecting them from violent behavior that may arise in that environment; however, they do not want officers to inhibit their behavior, which might lead to detrimental situations. There is one caveat that people often overlook, though: since universities can be considered small communities themselves, campus police still have to uphold university regulations and rules, and students' expectations to be protected but not policed are difficult to achieve.

Furthermore, compared with local/municipal police departments, students tend to view campus police as illegitimate officers, an assumption that may stem from their working in a small university department. For students, a smaller department means officers may not be skilled enough to handle situations that other local/municipal departments regularly encounter (Wilson & Wilson, 2015). This is also reflected in other studies: in a paper by Wade and colleagues (2010), campus police were perceived to have lower legitimacy than community police, and they assumed this was due to role confusion. Because campus police operate in a hybrid environment alongside campus staff and law enforcement, this can leave students confused about what expectations to place on campus police. The researchers call for clearer communication regarding roles and duties to reduce the role confusion students perceive.

While this previous research shows how students from other universities perceive law enforcement, no specific information is found for the University of California, Riverside. This project will examine students of the University of California, Riverside, in particular, and will not assess other universities' perceptions. Furthermore, this project will examine students' comfort levels with officers of various races, ethnicities, and genders. We will examine whether students are more comfortable with officers who share their race, ethnicity, or gender – a research question that has not been examined in any literature mentioned above.

Methods

Participants

Over the Spring and Summer Quarters at UCR in 2025, data were collected from 250 students. Of these, only 170 participants met our inclusion requirements. The remaining participants were screened out for failing to complete the entire study, incomplete data, and failing attention checks implemented in the study. Since this study is based at the University of California, Riverside, the undergraduate student body was used as the participant population. Participants were recruited through the SONA UCR portal, where the surveys and vignettes relevant to this study were posted. Most participants were students taking introductory psychology courses who participated in studies to earn credits. Each student earned 0.5 credits for participating in this study, which approximately took 30 minutes to complete.

Procedure

To test UCR students' perceptions of campus police and compare them with those of community police departments, participants completed surveys assessing how they feel about law enforcement. The survey was created specifically for this project, and it had 24 attribute pairs (eg. Trustworthy-Honest) to examine officer perceptions. The attribute pairs included both positive attributes (eg. Loyal, Lawful) and negative attributes (eg. Corrupt, Suspicious), reversed items were necessary to make sure participants paid attention to each attribute while answering the survey and to reduce habituation bias. The attributes were also correlated to make sure that they measure the same construct they intend to measure. For each attribute, participants were asked to rate campus police officers on a scale of 1-5. Before analysis, the attribute pairs were averaged together since they were created to examine the same construct. During analysis the negative items were recoded to ensure that higher scores reported more positive evaluations to

align with the scores of the positive attributes. They first completed a survey about community police departments (see Appendix A), then a survey about campus police officers (see Appendix B). After discussions with the faculty mentor, I decided that participants would also be provided with a few open-ended questions at the end to allow them to provide honest feedback on how they perceive law enforcement, to reflect on the study, and share any additional thoughts. This was later used to run exploratory analyses with qualitative data to get a better understanding behind the feelings of participants and what may have shaped their perceptions.

To test how comfortable students are interacting with officers and to see whether there is any race/ethnicity congruence, participants were provided with images from the Chicago Face Database (Ma et al., 2015). Images of people with a neutral expression and those with an average attractiveness rating were chosen for this project (See Appendix C). These images were described as depicting UCRPD officers, with their names presented only as initials to mask identity (e.g., “Officer J”). Along with the pictures was a short, fake vignette (a brief description) that the imitation officer participated in, with the intent of doing good for the community (See Appendix D). These short descriptions were created with the help of ChatGPT and modeled to look like news articles to lend them a sense of truth. Participants were then asked to rate these officers, on a scale of 0 to 10, with the question being asked as to how comfortable they would be interacting with each officer. The photos and vignettes were randomized to ensure that different faces had different stories across participants, thereby maintaining internal validity. We also did not want participants to be biased by any particular story, which might affect the results. To examine students' comfort levels, an experiment was deemed necessary to determine how the independent variables of race/ethnicity and gender affect the dependent variable, comfort level, when interacting with officers.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Data from the survey used to collect students' perceptions of campus police were analyzed to determine whether there were any significant positive or negative evaluations of campus police officers. Since we are trying to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the average response and the hypothesized population mean, a one-sample *t*-test was conducted for each attribute index, comparing responses to the midpoint of the scale. Average responses significantly above the midpoint indicate positive evaluations, and those significantly below the midpoint indicate negative evaluations. The results of the one-sample *t*-test revealed a significant relationship, indicating a moderately positive perception of campus police among students (See Table 1).

Table 1

One-Sample t-test Results for Perceptions of Campus Police

Attribute	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (170)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Trustworthy	3.75	0.508	96.23	<.001	7.381
Kind	3.73	0.571	85.15	<.001	6.530
Loyal	3.76	0.493	99.28	<.001	7.614
Brave	3.61	0.542	86.79	<.001	6.656
Lawful	3.74	0.478	102	<.001	7.822
Effective	3.71	0.483	100.3	<.001	7.690
Corrupt	3.76	0.625	78.36	<.001	6.010
Mean	3.67	0.634	75.40	<.001	5.783
Self-serving	3.59	0.606	77.17	<.001	5.919
Cowardly	3.66	0.602	79.27	<.001	6.079

Frauds	3.82	0.605	82.39	<.001	6.319
Weak	3.84	0.645	77.48	<.001	5.943

These findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis that there will be a negative perception of campus police by students.

Hypothesis 2

Data were analyzed to determine whether participants evaluated campus versus community police officers differently. Since we are trying to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between campus and community police, a paired-samples t-test was conducted for each attribute index to compare perceptions of UCR police officers with those of community police officers. The results of the paired-samples t-test revealed a significant difference (See Table 2), indicating that students perceive campus police more positively than community police (See Figure 1).

Table 2

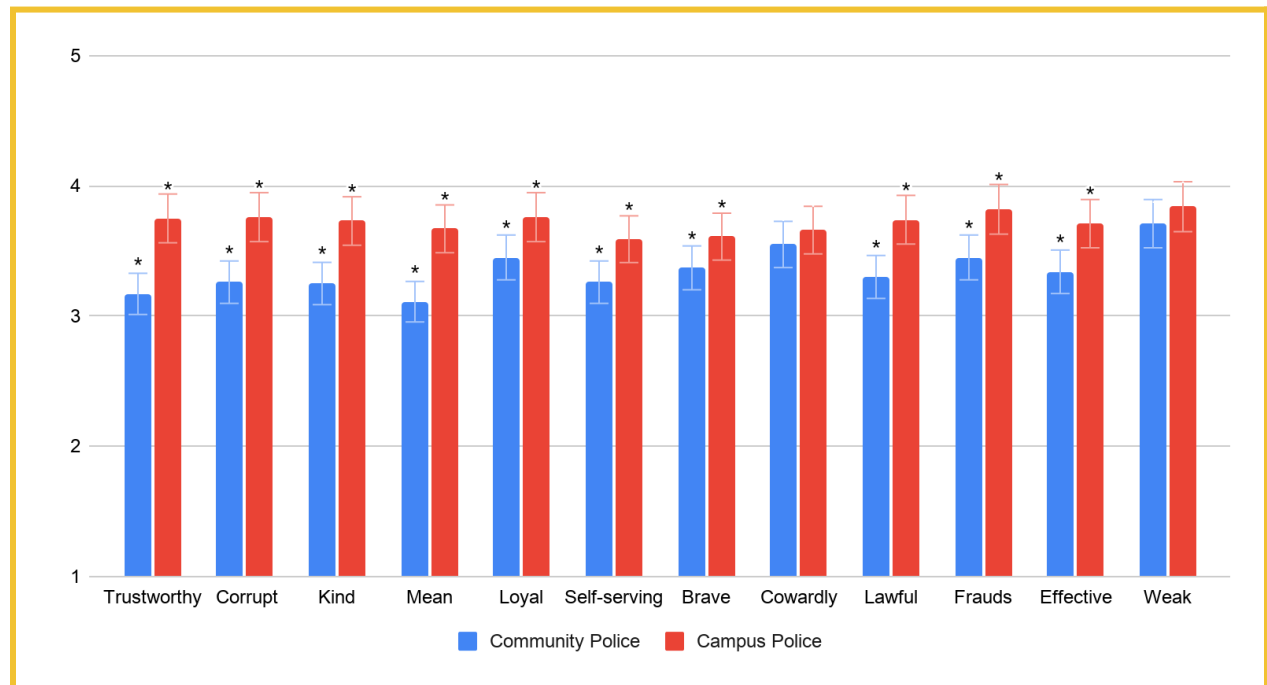
Paired-Sample t-test Results examining Community vs. Campus Police

Attributes	Community PD <i>M (SD)</i>		Campus PD		<i>t</i> (170)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Trustworthy	3.17 (0.74)	0.74	3.75	0.51	-9.95	<.001	-0.76
Kind	3.25	0.65	3.73	0.57	-9.52	<.001	-0.73
Loyal	3.45	0.63	3.76	0.49	-7.36	<.001	-0.57
Brave	3.37	0.72	3.61	0.54	-4.55	<.001	-0.35
Lawful	3.30	0.64	3.74	0.48	-9.00	<.001	-0.69
Effective	3.34	0.65	3.71	0.48	-6.97	<.001	-0.54

Corrupt	3.26	0.79	3.76	0.63	-9.38	<.001	-0.72
Mean	3.11	0.71	3.67	0.63	-10.21	<.001	-0.78
Self-serving	3.26	0.68	3.59	0.61	-6.20	<.001	-0.48
Cowardly	3.55	0.64	3.66	0.60	-2.59	0.10	-0.20
Frauds	3.45	0.73	3.82	0.61	-7.65	<.001	-0.59
Weak	3.71	0.71	3.84	0.65	-2.64	.009	-0.20

Figure 1

Perceptions of Community and Campus Police



* Indicates comparisons between community and campus police that were significantly different, $p < .05$

These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that there will be a more positive perception of campus police by students when they are compared with community police officers.

Hypothesis 3

Data were analyzed to determine whether participants were more comfortable interacting with officers who shared their race, ethnicity, or gender. Since we are trying to determine whether one group is preferred with statistical significance over others by comparing their means, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was chosen as the best way to analyze the data. In total, six ANOVAs were conducted to examine four different officer races/ethnicities and two officer genders. All ANOVAs provided a non-significant result, meaning that there was no congruence found between participant race/ethnicity and gender to that of officers' race/ethnicity and gender.

Starting with the Race/Ethnicity ANOVAs, the one-way ANOVA with white officers demonstrated that race was not significantly related to participants' comfort level, $F(3, 167) = 0.608, p = .611$. The second one-way ANOVA with Black officers demonstrated that race was not significant for participants' comfort level, $F(3, 167) = 1.308, p = .273$. The third one-way ANOVA with Hispanic/Latino officers demonstrated that race was not significant for participants' comfort level, $F(3, 167) = 0.140, p = .936$. The fourth one-way ANOVA with Asian officers demonstrated that race was not significant for participants' comfort level, $F(3, 167) = 0.433, p = .730$. With this the results indicate that race/ethnicity is not a factor through which participants' comfort level is affected (See Figure 2). Moving on to the Gender ANOVAs, the fifth one-way ANOVA with Male officers demonstrated that gender was not significant for participants' comfort level, $F(1, 169) = 1.690, p = .195$. And finally, the sixth one-way ANOVA with Female officers demonstrated that gender was not significant for participants' comfort level, $F(1, 169) = 0.001, p = .973$. With this the results indicate that gender is not a factor through which participants' comfort level is affected (See Figure 3).

Figure 2

Participant comfort by Race/Ethnicity

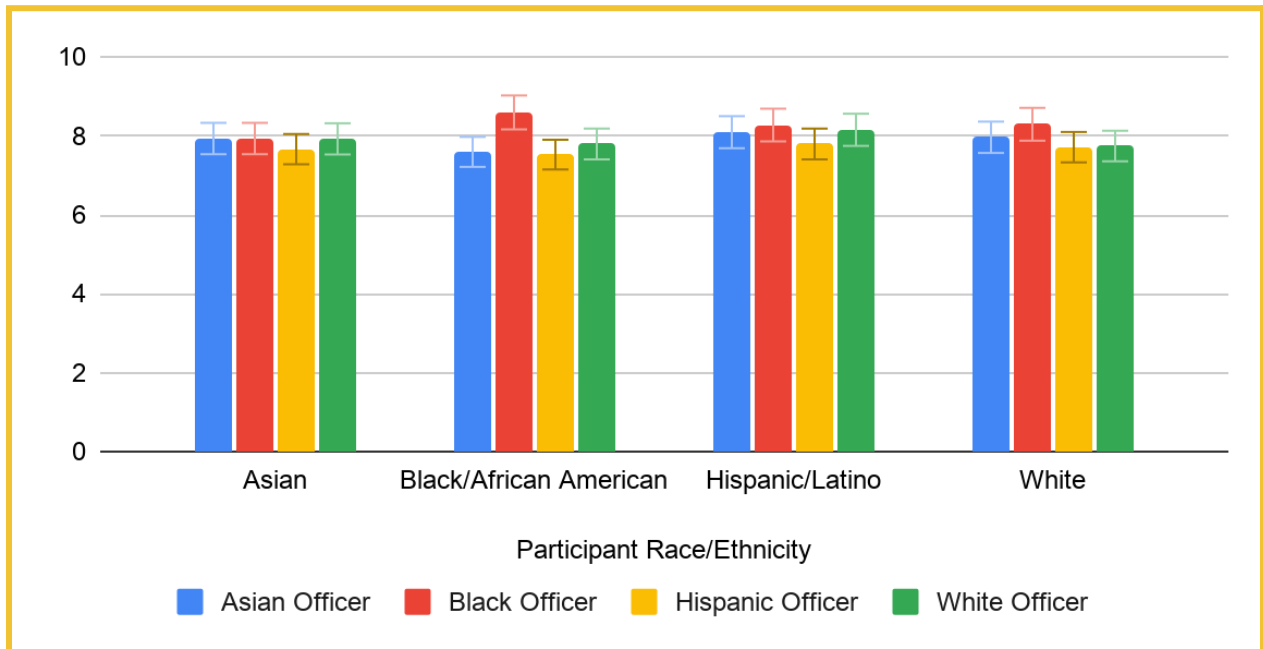
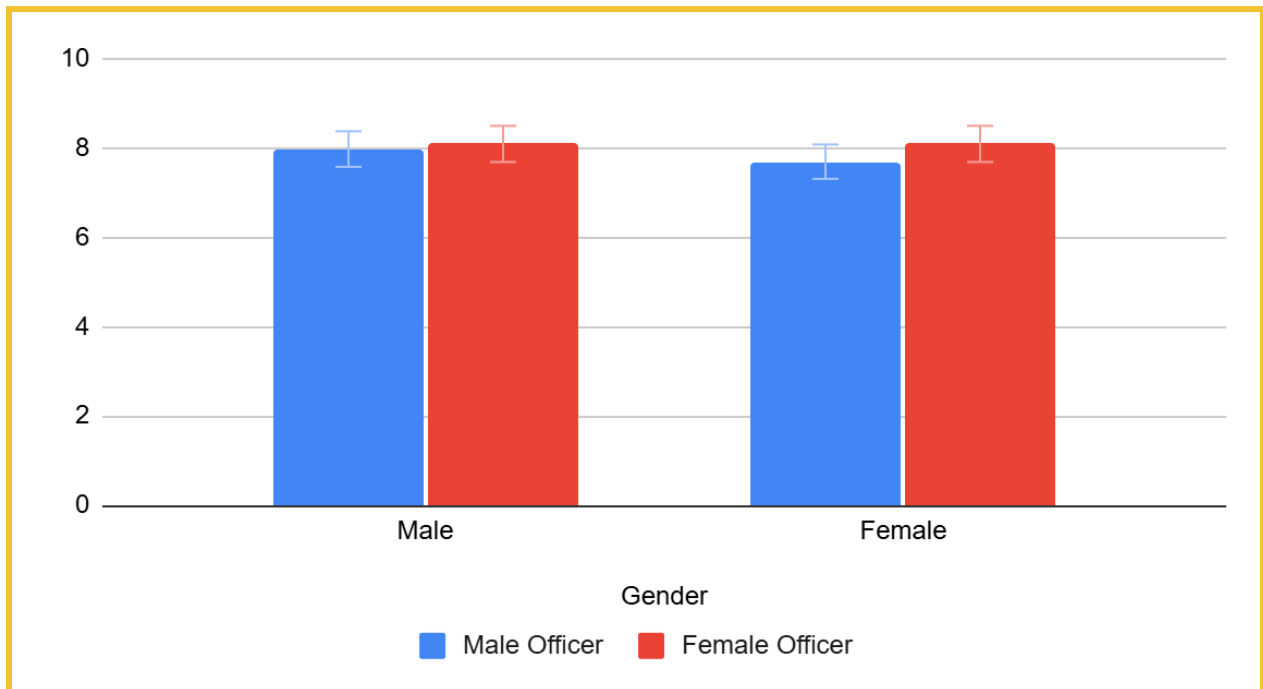


Figure 3

Participant comfort by Gender



The results from these ANOVA indicate that there are no significant differences in students' preferences for officers as a function of race, ethnicity, or gender. These findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis that students are more comfortable with officers from their own race, ethnicity, and/or gender.

Exploratory Analyses

To better understand students' perceptions, this study used a few open-ended questions to determine how many people had something positive to say about police officers, how many were neutral, and how many had negative things to say about them. For this analysis, raw data from all 250 participants were used, ignoring any previously incomplete data that had been left out in previous analyses. In total, 57 participants reported positive perceptions, 24 reported negative ones, and 33 remained neutral. Positive comments included things like, "I believe that some police officers consistently strive to do what is right for the community". Another participant said, "Police officers have a very important job in keeping our community safe, they are brave and courageous. They wake up every morning choosing to take care of others!". One reported, "I feel like police officers are definitely seen in a bad light due to social media but I feel like the media does not shed light when it comes to them doing something positive." And finally one said, "Their job is to serve and protect. You shouldn't feel unsafe around them unless they give you reason to be." These comments resonated more with what police officers are ideally expected to be: they wake up in the morning and fight crime to protect civilians. Some comments highlight how negative news stories become more viral, and people often overlook the good cops. Few take the perspective that only people who commit a crime should be afraid of police officers.

Negative comments included things like, “I am afraid of police”. A participant said, “I honestly want to trust them but as a young African American woman who lives in America, it's getting harder to day by day”. Reported personal experience included things like, “I had a bad experience when I was a kid with police officers. I believe this contributes to my reason for being wary of them whenever I see them, even if they are there to help. Seeing them always makes me nervous, even though I haven't done anything wrong”. Lastly one wrote, “Well as a minority when it comes to the police I don't feel like they will keep me safe if anything I feel like they'll do more harm than good based on how I've seen them respond to other minorities in the media. I do think it's important to have police officers but when they're not equipped to handle certain situations it's rough and can be fatal”. In the negative comments, a more fear-based feeling can be noticed coming from the participants, mainly from people belonging to minority communities who have experienced negative interactions with police officers or have seen people have negative interactions through social media or news portals. These comments often seem more grounded in reality and readily use available information on the internet as examples for their feelings of unease.

Neutral comments include things like, “I feel indifferent about police offers. I'm respectful towards them if I see them in person but other than that, I don't particularly have an opinion about their line of work”. One decided to compare them with the public, “I don't think that cops are "bad" it's just a certain group of people that give cops a bad reputation, at the end of the day most are just people like us”. A few individuals reported a lack of knowledge, “I have no opinion because I never interacted with them”. Lastly one person decided to report their personal beliefs/thoughts, “As a person of Hispanic descent, I am aware of the negative connotations officers are faced with. I myself have not been in trouble with the law, but I have heard of cruelty

that others have experienced. My personal belief is to trust that officers will uphold the law, preserve peace, and that they are here to protect us”. These comments reflect a lack of interaction with police officers and indifference towards their role in society; being a police officer is maybe seen as just another occupation. A few comments acknowledge both the negative and positive news around them, but do not seem to draw any conclusions from it. These comments also tend to view officers as part of society, and just like there are bad apples in society, there are bad apples in the department.

Several comments drew a sharp description between campus and community police officers, they often commend campus police officers for doing a better job than community police officers, there are a few examples for this, one reported “I generally feel neutral, but I feel the ones on campus are doing a good job”. A few participants drew distinctions between both their roles and said, “Generally negative due to news stories about officers shooting black people and hiding from school shooters; UCRPD was not noted as incompetent, though, since the job of policing UCR is an easier task than policing more crime-ridden areas”. Another participant said, “I think that while police officers can be corrupt and mean, the police officers at UCR can, for the most part, be trusted”. Some cited their personal experiences like this one, “Had an interaction with campus police once, when we accidentally met them on a hill. We all wanted to watch the rocket launch”.

These comments range from all three perspectives, positive, negative, and neutral. Campus police are seen in a more positive light due to experiences participants had interacting with them and they are also seen to be handling easier jurisdictions compared to community police officers, which allows them to be less strict. This is in line with the results of our study, campus police officers are often viewed positively, and maybe even more positively than

community police officers. Students also often portray more trust and seem more comfortable with campus police officers due to the interactions they have had with them.

Discussion

This study aimed to analyze how students perceive law enforcement, with emphasis on UCRPD. Students reported how they felt about campus police officers, if they preferred campus police officers over community police officers, and how comfortable they would be interacting with officers and if it would show any congruence between race/ethnicity or gender. The first hypothesis was built on previous research that people do not like police officers; it seemed reasonable to test if the same applied to UCR campus police officers in particular. However, the results showed that this was not the case; UCR campus police officers were perceived as moderately positive, contradicting the hypothesis that they would be perceived negatively. Descriptively, participants rated UCR officers as most dedicated and least self-serving. Students were expected to dislike campus police officers, as the officers might act as a deterrent to fun and likely intrude on students while they are trying to find something to do away from home. This aligns with research conducted by Jacobsen (2015). There might, however, be an alternative reason why students looked favorably upon campus police officers, which could be explained by Wilson and Wilson (2015). The apparent illegitimacy of campus police officers may have led to a distinction between them and community police officers, thereby fostering a positive perception. The possibility of campus police officers engaging in more community outreach may also help students to get to know them better. Campuses, which are often smaller in size, also give students opportunities to come into contact with officers, even if it is just seeing them while en route to class, which might be unlikely on a city-wide scale. Regardless, a positive outlook toward campus police officers can be important for students away from home, as it may help them feel

secure while living on campus or while on campus. Having a positive attitude towards campus police officers may also increase the likelihood that students will ask for help, assist, and cooperate with them.

While campus police were found to be regarded positively, we wanted to see whether community police officers were also regarded in a manner. Results showed a significant difference in how community officers were viewed compared to campus police officers, with campus police officers viewed more favorably than community officers. This is in line with our hypothesis that campus police officers will be looked upon more favorably than community police officers. Attributes such as Brave, Meek, Weak, and Useless did not show significant differences in distinguishing between campus and community police officers. This could be due to standards or stereotypes that push the idea that people are supposed to be Brave and Strong to become police officers, and that their role exists to keep their jurisdictions safe; therefore, officers may not be perceived as useless. This could also be due to the fact that community outreach is less common among community police officers, as they serve larger jurisdictions and have busier daily schedules than campus police officers. The different expectations students may hold of police officers could also have influenced these results. Campus police officers are expected to be more friendly when interacting with students; therefore, students may perceive campus police officers as “friendly,” which increases favorability for campus police officers. Community police officers are often perceived as more strict or serious, which may have led to a more unfavorable opinion of them. To possibly improve their positive perception, community police officers could focus more on community outreach and interaction, which could foster a more personal connection with citizens. In addition, high condemnation and punishment for officers who engage in harmful behaviors against citizens in a bigoted, racist, or prejudiced way

could show zero tolerance for bad officers in departments, improving trust and respect among citizens.

The final hypothesis examining participants' comfort level with officers who shared the same race/ethnicity and gender found no significant relationships in its results. This result could be interpreted as participants not really showing any interest in the physical characteristics of the police officers. This is not in line with the third hypothesis, making it unsupported. Although nothing significant was found, descriptively, there were signs of race and gender preference. For example, Black participants reported that they were more comfortable with Black officers, and female participants reported they were more comfortable with female officers. The results of this study goes against the results from research like that of Riccucci and colleagues (2018), where participants showed a preference for officers sharing the same race, which in turn increased trust, although we did not use trust as a construct here; comfort, which could be considered a similar one, failed to replicate results like that of this study. However, it is more strongly supported by past research, which found that a few participants preferred officers of the same race but called for greater diversity in the officer population (Weitzer, 2000). In our experiment, we focused on showing an equal number of diverse officers, which may have led to a similar result. One reason this might have occurred is that participants care more about the acts officers might have performed in their line of duty than how they look. Participants in this study were told that the images they were viewing were of campus police officers; the previously found positive perception of campus police could have influenced their judgment, making them more comfortable with all officers. A new study with community police officers could yield different results, where race/ethnicity and gender could be related to the comfort level of participants interacting with different officers.

Limitations

Despite efforts to leave as few loopholes or arguments open to critique, there are a few limitations to consider with this project. First, by recruiting only undergraduates most likely to be in introductory psychology courses through SONA, my project loses some of its external validity, which determines the experiment's generalizability. However, this should not have a large effect on the results, since SONA recruiting is also practiced by various faculty members in the psychology department. The second limitation is the database used for faces: only four races/ethnicities (White, Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino) and two genders (Male, Female) are included in this project, which does not reflect the university's diverse population. The third limitation is that this project is specific to University of California, Riverside students and, therefore, may not reflect how other students from different universities perceive law enforcement. This could potentially mean limited applicability for future research. The fourth limitation in the vignettes we used was that only positive stories were used to describe officers, which could have led to a more positive perception of campus police officers; having negative vignettes showing mistakes officers have made could yield a different result.

Conclusion

To conclude, students from the University of California, Riverside, reported moderately positive perception of campus police officers, which could be attributed to positive evaluations given by participants due to positive interactions which were previously established during their time on campus. Participants also preferred campus police officers over community police officers, they reported higher scores for campus police and lower scores for community police officers when looking at those same attributes. For negative attributes the reactions were reversed, community police officers scored higher while campus police officers scored lower.

This could be attributed to negative news often associated with community police officers in mainstream media. When examining comfort levels of participants when rating police officers to see if there are any congruences between participant race/ethnicity or gender, it was found that there were no significant effects and participants did not care about the race/ethnicity or the gender of the officers. This could be due to the fact that actions matter more than how officers look at the end of the day. For future directions, if this study could be replicated with fewer limitations, and if there is a congruence found that was not found in this study, it could inform hiring practices to reflect officers that represent the diversity of a jurisdiction. In addition, since only positive stories were used in this study we could potentially examine how huge of a role mainstream media plays by comparing negative and positive stories to see if there is a significant difference in how officers are rated.

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Appendix A

Survey For Perceptions of Community Police

The following survey was used to observe how students perceived Local/Municipal police officers, for each attribute they rated how they feel this reflects on the officers on a scale of 1-5 (See Table 3). Attributes are paired to examine the same construct, (eg. Trustworthy-Honest, Corrupt-Suspicious).

Table 3

Perceptions of Community Police

Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are trustworthy					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are honest					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are corrupt					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are suspicious					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are kind					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are compassionate					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are mean					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are harsh					
I feel like Local/Municipal police officers are loyal					
I feel like Local/Municipal					

police officers are dedicated

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are self-serving

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are scheming

If you are reading carefully,
choose "Strongly Agree" for
this question

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are brave

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are heroic

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are cowardly

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are meek

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are lawful

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are fair

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are frauds

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are unjust

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are effective

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are competent

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are weak

I feel like Local/Municipal
police officers are useless

Appendix B

Survey For Perceptions of Campus Police

The following survey was used to observe how students perceived campus police officers (UCRPD), for each attribute they rated how they feel this reflects on the officers on a scale of 1-5 (See Table 4). Attributes are paired to examine the same construct, (eg. Trustworthy-Honest, Corrupt-Suspicious).

Table 4

Perceptions of Campus Police

Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel like Campus police officers are trustworthy					
I feel like Campus police officers are honest					
I feel like Campus police officers are corrupt					
I feel like Campus police officers are suspicious					
I feel like Campus police officers are kind					
I feel like Campus police officers are compassionate					
I feel like Campus police officers are mean					
I feel like Campus police officers are harsh					
I feel like Campus police officers are loyal					
I feel like Campus police officers are dedicated					

I feel like Campus police
officers are self-serving

I feel like Campus police
officers are scheming

If you are reading carefully,
choose "Neutral" for this
question

I feel like Campus police
officers are brave

I feel like Campus police
officers are heroic

I feel like Campus police
officers are cowardly

I feel like Campus police
officers are meek

I feel like Campus police
officers are lawful

I feel like Campus police
officers are fair

I feel like Campus police
officers are frauds

I feel like Campus police
officers are unjust

I feel like Campus police
officers are effective

I feel like Campus police
officers are competent

I feel like Campus police
officers are weak

I feel like Campus police
officers are useless

Appendix C

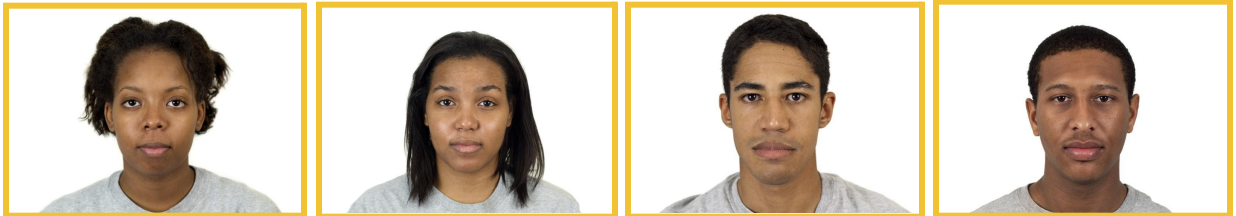
Faces from the Chicago Face Database

These were the faces that were used from the Chicago Face Database. (Ma et al., 2015)

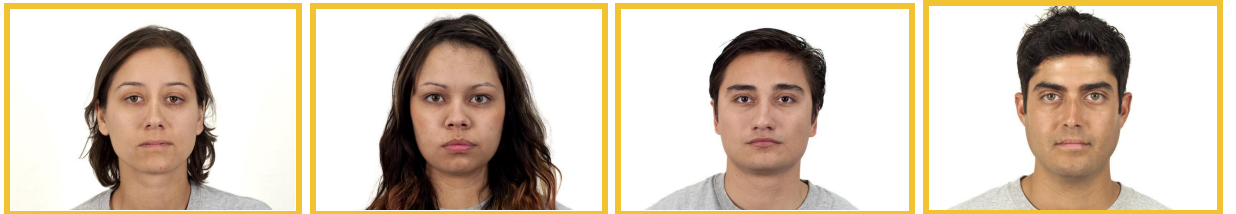
White Officers:



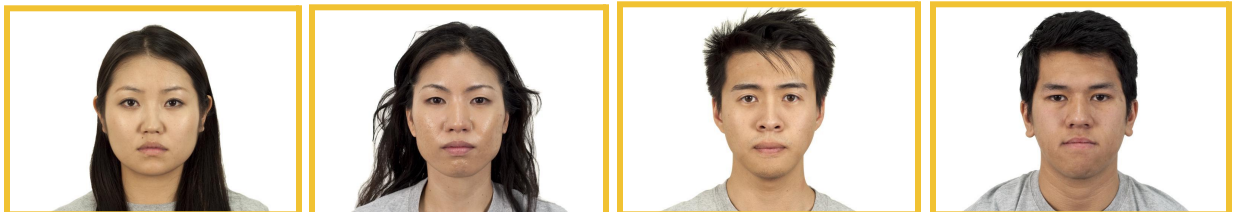
Black Officers:



Hispanic Officers:



Asian Officers:



Appendix D

Generated Vignettes

Short stories that accompanied the images from the Chicago Face Database that were generated through ChatGPT. Each vignette was followed by a question asking “How comfortable would you be interacting with this officer?” Participants were able to respond with a likert scale from 0-10 (See Table 5).

Table 5

Vignettes

Vignettes Used For Experiment

Earlier today, an UCRPD officer stopped in a quiet neighborhood to assist a young child whose bicycle chain had slipped off. Witnesses say the officer patiently guided the child on how to fix his bike, turning the moment into a hands-on lesson. “I just saw him struggling and knew I could help,” Officer M said. “It’s important for kids to know that we’re here for them, no matter how small the issue.”

Dozens of families received much-needed groceries today, thanks to a local food drive supported by officers from University of California Riverside Police Department. Officer Q assisted in loading boxes of canned goods and fresh produce into cars, working alongside volunteers to provide relief to struggling households. “It’s an honor to serve in more ways than one,” said Officer Q.

With trash bags and gloves, UCRPD police officers worked alongside community volunteers today to clean a neighborhood park. “We don’t just patrol the streets—we’re part of this

community,” said Officer W. A volunteer added, “Seeing officers get their hands dirty with us makes a real impact.”

A moment of panic turned into relief today as UCRPD Officer E helped reunite a lost child with their parents at Highlander Day. “We’re just glad everything turned out okay,” said the mother.

Dozens of students gathered in front of the UCR police department today to chat with officers over coffee. The informal event allowed community members to ask questions, share concerns, and build stronger relationships with local law enforcement. “It’s important for people to know we’re here to listen,” said Officer R. An attendee commented, “This was a great way to get to know the officers who serve our community.”

During a minor medical emergency at Oban family housing, UCRPD Officer T stepped in to keep a toddler entertained while paramedics assisted the child’s parent. One bystander noted, “the officer went above and beyond.”

Students at a local Elementary participated in an interactive anti-bullying workshop led by UCRPD Officer S today. The presentation encouraged students to stand up for one another and foster a culture of inclusivity. “It’s about standing up for each other,” said Officer S.

UCRPD Officer A responded to a call about an elderly woman who had fallen in her home. When the officer arrived, they carefully assisted her and called for medical help. Officer A said, “Sometimes it’s about being there for someone who needs help. We just wanted to make sure she was okay”.

After a robbery took place at a small business, UCRPD Officer F responded quickly, ensuring the safety of the employees and gathering crucial evidence. But their support didn't stop there. They helped organize a local fundraiser to assist the business in recovering from the loss. "It's a tough time for small businesses right now, but we want to do everything we can to make sure people are supported," said the officer.

UCRPD Officer H, who, along with several colleagues, donated blood to a local hospital in desperate need of supplies. The officers organized a blood drive as part of their community outreach program to give back in a meaningful way. "It's a simple act, but it could save a life," said the officer.

A game of basketball at the Student Recreation Center took an unexpected turn when UCRPD Officer K joined in with the students to a friendly match. A student said, "I never thought I'd have fun playing against cops—but they're actually pretty good!".

A group of women gathered at the Student Recreation Center today for a free self-defense class led by UCRPD Officer L. "It's about empowerment," said the officer.

After a young boy's bicycle was stolen, UCRPD Officer D helped pool money through their department to buy him a new one. "We wanted to show him that good people outweigh the bad," said Officer D.

Seeing a local elementary school's library in need of new books, UCRPD Officer N gathered donations and delivered boxes of them. "Reading is the foundation for everything," Officer N said.

When UCRPD Officer V saw a veteran struggling with a broken wheelchair, they later organized an event where used wheelchairs could be donated. They later fixed them and donated them to the Veterans Center. “They served our country—helping them was an honor,” Officer V said.

When UCRPD Officer C learned that a student’s bike was stolen, which was the only way he got to work, the officer bought him a new one. “We wanted to make sure he didn’t miss a shift,” Officer C said.
