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Is it 10-4 to be a Complaining Cop? Antecedents and Consequences of Complaining at Work Among Police Officers

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IS IT 10-4 TO BE A COMPLAINING COP?
ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF COMPLAINING AT WORK
AMONG POLICE OFFICERS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Applied Psychology

by
Megan E. Morgan
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Previous research has explored complaining in the context of consumer behavior and complaints made against organizations, yet there are gaps in the literature concerning complaining in the workplace among police officers. The present study explored the audiences of complaints expressed by police officers, the topics of dissatisfaction experienced by officers, whether expressed or not, and the organizational antecedents and consequences that may accompany complaining at work. Police officers in a suburban southeastern police department were surveyed to investigate these areas. Results indicated that officers primarily complain around their peers at work, and the correlates of complaining differ by the type of complaining. Additionally, complaints at work are typically associated with work-related hassles. Limitations, as well as practical and theoretical implications, are discussed.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my grandfather, Francis N. Riccio. He dedicated his career to serving as one of Charleston's finest, and inspired his many children and grandchildren to pursue a life of service. Pop-Pop, you are dearly missed.

I also dedicate this thesis to those brothers and sisters in blue who serve their communities with integrity in the face of adversity. I hope that the findings from this thesis can serve as a reminder that your families and friends appreciate your service, even if the job makes you complain.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my thesis committee. I thank my advisor, Dr. Robin Kowalski, for her academic and emotional support throughout my journey as a student. My ideas are sometimes off-the-wall, yet she encourages my creativity and guides me to turn my thoughts into something worthwhile. I truly would not be where I am if she had not recognized my potential so early in my undergraduate career. I also owe my gratitude to Dr. Patrick Rosopa, for his support and patience when I was immersing myself in statistics, albeit through much trial and error on my end. I would also like to thank Dr. Bob Sinclair for pushing me academically, so that I can present my best work and truly call myself an Industrial-Organizational Psychologist.

I would also like to thank the Chief of the sample police department and his officers for their contributions to this research. I would not have gained such insightful information without their willingness to participate.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Current events surrounding law enforcement officers have indicated that the tension between police officers and communities is rising. Discussions regarding race relations and gun control have stemmed from the recent focus on officer-involved shootings in the United States. Regardless of the circumstances of these events or individuals' opinions surrounding the events, police officers have been left to cope with increased emotional demands resulting from such stressors. At the same time, there is not enough empirical understanding of the specific coping processes that police officers typically use to meet such demands. Therefore, officers must resort to their own "best practices" for coping.

Complaining is one way that individuals cope across various life domains. People complain about a variety of situations that they encounter on a daily basis. The workplace is one common environment for complaints and complaining. Statements such as, "the copier is such a piece of junk," "there's no way I can get that report finished by Friday," or, "these weekly staff meetings are such a waste of time," can range from minor attempts to make small talk, to anger-fueled releases of frustration. Behind each complaint is some kind of motivation for it and an intended use for it. Employees may complain because they simply need an outlet for their frustrations. But, sometimes, a worker may complain because he or she believes that doing so will lead to a change in the workplace.

The common thread behind all complaints is a sentiment of dissatisfaction, and this attitude is not new for police personnel. Historically, law enforcement officers have faced a variety of situations that are likely to lead them to complain: they are arguably underpaid, overworked, and under constant public scrutiny. Police officers experience Effort-Reward Imbalance, which contributes to poor mental health (Janzen, Muhajarine, Zhu, & Kelly, 2007). In order to know if complaining is an effective way for police officers to cope, the organizational context needs to be explored. Complaining in the workplace does not occur in a vacuum; policies, individual traits, and the actions of others interact to create shared perceptions that lead to behavioral outcomes (Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996). These factors need to be disentangled in order to understand the relationship between organizational climate and complaining.

Purpose of the Current Study

This study is intended to explore how police officers typically express their dissatisfaction at work. It is meant to begin to establish a framework for complaining internal to police personnel, with a focus on three areas: (a) the audiences of complaints expressed by police officers, (b) the topics of dissatisfaction experienced by officers, whether expressed or not, and (c) the organizational antecedents and consequences that may accompany complaining at work. Being a novel topic, the current study examines research questions to guide future research in these areas. However, it also tests relevant hypotheses that combine extant literature regarding complaining and police.

In published research, the complaining process has not been examined as it pertains to law enforcement agencies. Internationally, there is literature about the

structure of citizens' complaints about the police (e.g., Ede, Homel, & Prenzler, 2002; Goldsmith, 2005; Smith, 2009), yet complaining dynamics within the workplace for police officers have been neglected in the research. The only information regarding the complaining process among officers is anecdotal. Therefore, the present study is intended to focus on the intersection of extant complaining theory and the law enforcement context. This study aims to investigate factors contributing to police officers' complaining propensity, the nature of complaints that are expressed at work, and work-related outcomes of these complaints.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINING

For police officers, inherent characteristics of the workplace can create an environment for complaining to occur. The physical and psychological stressors, which will be discussed, produce dissatisfaction that may increase the likelihood that a police officer may complain about his/her job either on or off the job. Safety risks, psychological pressures, and shift work can all be primary sources of dissatisfaction at work, but this does not automatically guarantee that an officer will complain. A number of variables may intercede to influence whether dissatisfaction is actually expressed or not and to whom the complaint is expressed. To understand the structure of complaining and determine possible antecedents and consequences of complaining for police officers, there should first be a clear definition for complaining.

Definition

Purposes and functions. A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction, whether subjectively experienced or not, for the purpose of venting emotions or achieving intrapsychic goals, interpersonal goals, or both” (Kowalski, 1996, p. 180). Regardless of the context, complaining involves an expression of dissatisfaction, in combination with an underlying goal.

Complaints often serve as icebreakers in awkward or new social settings (Kowalski, 2002). A rookie officer may feel uneasy when first paired with his or her Field Training Officer (FTO). The new cop can find a common ground with the FTO through complaining about how bad the coffee from the local convenience store is, for

instance. Sometimes, people blatantly vent about things that are frustrating or upsetting, often without taking the audience into consideration – complaining is a common social norm.

Types of complaints. Complaints can be classified as either “expressive” or “instrumental” (Kowalski, 1996). Expressive complaints are typically what one would refer to as “venting.” They allow people to express how they feel, without suggesting change. If a police officer states, “I’m so fed up with enforcing the seatbelt law. People would rather just pay the fine than wear their seatbelt anyway,” then he or she is making an expressive complaint. Someone can express dissatisfaction about the organization with the goal of getting the problem off his or her chest. Therefore, an organizational change does not have to come as a result of the complaint, nor does it have to be suggested.

Although expressive complaints do not include suggestions for improvement, they can still be beneficial to the person complaining. This “cathartic” nature of complaining can alleviate one’s frustrations and ultimately improve one’s affect (Kowalski, 1996). This suggests that complaining can be helpful, and that it satisfies the intrapsychic and/or interpersonal goals that the complainer desires. Conversely, instrumental complaints suggest that some change should be made, in addition to expressing dissatisfaction. The aforementioned complaint would be considered instrumental if it were taken one step further to suggest change. An example would be, “I’m so fed up with enforcing the seatbelt law....The fine should be increased to encourage people to buckle up.” Suggesting this change could benefit other officers who feel the same about this law, if

the complaint is made in the presence of someone who could possibly make such a change.

Related constructs. One similar but distinct construct studied in the organizational context is employee voice. Employee voice is when a worker provides information that is intended to improve the organization. It can be valuable for improving an organization if a manager or supervisor perceives the information as useful and the level as appropriate (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013). What sets employee voice apart from complaining is that it is not necessarily an expression of *dissatisfaction*, but rather a neutral sharing of ideas.

Chebat and colleagues incorporated complaining into the Lazarus model (i.e., Lazarus, 1993) to determine if propensity to seek redress relates to complaining to alleviate dissatisfaction. Seeking Redress Propensity, or SRP, assesses consumers' likelihood to "openly and directly stand up for their rights" (Chebat, Davidow, & Cudjovi, 2005, p. 329). SRP includes feelings toward complaining, but also encompasses likelihood to engage in behaviors such as returning a product and avoiding making a complaint. One vehicle for SRP is complaining, because SRP includes behaviors consistent with avoiding complaints as well as engaging in complaining.

Although the behaviors used to measure SRP are identified as "complaint behavior," they are associated with *consumer* complaining, and not the definition used in the present study. This means that there may be items used to measure SRP that also measure complaining propensity. Like SRP, complaining propensity can vary by person, regardless of the situation, and, therefore, people who score low on SRP may also score

low on complaining propensity. The use of SRP as a measure of the likelihood to complain also reveals that the literature is currently limited to consumer complaining, and, therefore, should be expanded to other contexts. Chebat and colleagues found that complaining is an active coping behavior, and that SRP moderates the relationship between emotions experienced (i.e., anger/disgust and resignation/sadness) and complaining behavior (Chebat et al., 2005). This suggests that, if a person has a low dispositional propensity to complain, then his or her dissatisfaction will generally not lead him or her to complain.

However, the situational context should be considered. A person can have a low propensity to complain, yet, when he or she is placed in situations in which he or she experiences heightened dissatisfaction (e.g., at work), he or she may feel that complaining is an appropriate way to cope. This implies that high job satisfaction, combined with low propensity to complain, will not lead to complaining, but low job satisfaction, combined with low propensity to complain, can lead to complaining. The person and the situation both need to be taken in to consideration in determining one's likelihood to complain at work.

Antecedents

Decision-making process. People must choose whether or not to complain. This is a step-by-step evaluative process. First, an individual must compare the current state of the environment to his or her expectations associated with it. If his or her standards are not met, then dissatisfaction occurs (Kowalski, 1996). People seek ways to reduce a discrepancy between an actual situation and a desired situation. Complaining can reduce

this discrepancy if the individual believes that it will be effective. Therefore, he/she must decide whether it is the appropriate time and place to complain, and if the outcomes of complaining will be favorable. In other words, he/she must evaluate the utility of complaining. If the utility is not high, then complaining will not occur; if complaining is perceived as useful, then it will occur (Kowalski, 1996).

Evaluating whether it is appropriate to complain is especially important when workers deal with several groups of people throughout a typical workday. Employees must understand the expectations set forth by the organization, and then determine the appropriate ways to express their emotions (Grandey, 2000). For example, it may be acceptable for peers to complain to one another in the office. Conversely, it may be unacceptable (and punishable) for an employee to complain about his or her job in front of customers or clients, because it can reflect negatively on the organization.

Impression management. The utility of complaining may be determined in part by impression management concerns. Impression management, or self-presentation, is characterized by a person's efforts to control how others perceive him/her (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Therefore, a police officer would speak to his or her partner in a different way than he or she would speak to a superior, and would take an entirely different approach speaking to a member of the public (e.g., while conducting a traffic stop). Someone would be less likely to complain if his or her perceived utility of complaining is offset by any negative impressions formed by the audience.

Leary and Kowalski's (1990) comprehensive model of impression management follows an expectancy-value approach. Impression management is driven by two

components: impression motivation and impression construction (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). People are motivated by how others currently perceive them, which leads them to do whatever is necessary to maintain that image (i.e., impression motivation). At the same time, people strategically modify their behaviors to suit that desired image (i.e., impression construction). It is important to note that the target's values are incorporated into this decision process.

In the context of a traffic stop, for example, an officer who complains about something work-related could affect the public's perception of police. If an officer complains to a motorist, then that motorist may think that the officer is unprofessional and lazy. As a result, the motorist could see the entire department, as well as any police personnel that the motorist subsequently encounters, as unprofessional and lazy. To maintain the professionalism and work ethic expected of officers, officers should strive to engage in impression management, in this case by withholding complaints.

Impression management also accounts for instances in which someone may complain even when he/she is not dissatisfied. For example, an individual may complain for self-presentational reasons to convey to other people how discerning his/her tastes are. To engage in complaining for self-presentational reasons, however, the complainer must walk a fine line. Because of negative aspersions that may be cast upon a complainer, he/she must be careful not to complain in excess or to the wrong audience. At the same time, he/she needs to complain enough so that impression management goals are achieved.

Before exploring whether impression management has an actual role in complaining among police officers, it must be determined whether complaining manifests in different ways for different audiences. Thus, the following research questions are proposed:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Who do police officers complain to at work?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What do police officers complain about at work?

Organizational citizenship behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are voluntary, extra-role behaviors that benefit the organization and/or its stakeholders. They are typically not formally rewarded, yet are desirable to the organization because they improve organizational effectiveness (Borman, 2004; Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014). When employees take the initiative to push themselves above and beyond basic task requirements, the organization runs smoothly. However, OCBs sometimes have self-serving purposes. Individuals occasionally engage in OCBs to improve their image in the workplace. Thus, OCBs are sometimes driven by impression management (Bolino, 1999). When employees use supervisor-focused impression management tactics, such as complimenting a superior, supervisors rate those employees as more likeable and rate them higher on OCBs. Self-presentation tactics that are self-focused or job-focused do not have this effect (Bolino, Varela, Bande, & Turnley, 2006). This suggests that OCBs are not all created equally, which can lead to a variety of outcomes.

According to the classic taxonomy pioneered by Organ (1988), individuals demonstrate OCBs along five dimensions: altruism, which refers to helping a specific

person in the organization; courtesy, or checking in with others before taking actions that may affect others; sportsmanship, which focuses on tolerating hassles without complaining; generalized compliance, or conscientiousness beyond basic task requirements; and civic virtue, which concerns active involvement within the organization. By definition, complaining is the antithesis of OCB, because individuals who exhibit sportsmanship tolerate their dissatisfactions with work. This assumes that such employees do not complain. Dysfunctional behaviors are undesirable in measurement of OCBs, and may be considered counterproductive. Some measures of OCBs explicitly measure complaining as a dysfunctional behavior (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). This contributes to the argument that *good* employees are those who do not complain at work.

On the other hand, speaking up about one's concerns at work (i.e., voice behavior) is desirable, because it is a form of civic virtue (Grant & Mayer, 2009). If a complaint is instrumental, then the complainer's intention to suggest improvement may overshadow others' negative perceptions of the complaint's "venting" component. This suggests that there are distinct correlates of the two types of complaining. The instrumental function of complaining has not been considered in prior conceptualizations of OCB. This can potentially overshadow the distinct benefits and detriments of the types of complaining. The following research question is intended to determine such differences:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How are the types of complaining (i.e., instrumental and expressive) associated with organizational outcomes?

Complaining propensity. An individual must appraise a situation and determine if complaining would be the most appropriate way to alleviate his/her dissatisfaction. This is similar to the cognitive appraisal process described by Lazarus (1993). In this process, a person determines if he or she has the resources to meet a demand. If resources are insufficient, then he or she uses a coping process to meet that demand. Complaining may be a specific coping mechanism that a person can utilize to narrow the gap between dissatisfaction (i.e., a demand) and the context (i.e., available resources).

However, some people are generally more likely to complain than others, regardless of the situation, meaning that the appraisal process is not uniform from person to person. The consumer satisfaction literature reports that, although customers are often dissatisfied, they typically do not complain (Chebat et al., 2005). This suggests, in this particular context, that one's likelihood to complain is a dispositional trait, rather than entirely dependent on the situation.

Further, Watson and Pennebaker (1989) found that individuals who possessed a negative bias reported more health and stress-related complaints than people who did not have high negative affect (NA). This suggests that people who approach stressful situations with a negative perspective are more likely to complain. Elevated NA can also attenuate the effect of positive events on job satisfaction (Judge, Erez, & Thoresen, 2000).

Although there is a theoretical foundation for identifying the factors that can generally lead a person to complain, there is a clear need to clearly identify the antecedents of complaining in the workplace. Specifically, the unique culture of law

enforcement presents a case for decomposing potential correlates of complaining at work for police officers. Individual traits and situational characteristics interact to create a proclivity to complain, yet there is a need to understand how this occurs.

Consequences

General consequences. Findings have suggested a Catch-22: complaining may have benefits for the individual (i.e., “cathartic” complaining), yet people generally do not like to be around a “complainer.” Venting can have a soothing effect on the individual, but can negatively affect those who witness the complaining. Complaining is generally regarded as an aversive interpersonal behavior that people encounter frequently (Kowalski, Walker, Wilkinson, & Queen, 2003). When it is done excessively, it can annoy others. Complaining seems to make an individual feel better, but at another person’s expense.

Consequences in the workplace. Currently, there is a lack of research indicating consequences of expressing dissatisfaction in the workplace. Outcomes have mainly been studied in the consumer behavior literature (e.g., Chebat et al., 2005). In fact, the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction & Complaining Behavior* is solely devoted to publishing research in this area.

Complaining has a negative stigma associated with it. In organizations, complaining is not usually framed as a positive, self-soothing behavior. Instead, people often label people who constantly whine, gripe, and complain as, “difficult employees” and “complainers” (e.g., Raynes, 2001). People generally do not want to be associated with such individuals at work, nor do coworkers want to be around a person who is

notoriously difficult to work with. This can lead one to avoid making any complaints so that co-workers do not make negative attributions about the complainer. In organizations, one defining characteristic of high-maintenance employees is excessive verbal complaining. These employees can delay productivity within the organization, and can detract from interpersonal relationships among coworkers (Burke & Witt, 2004).

However, the utility in complaining may outweigh the cost, namely when critical incidents can be prevented by speaking up. Instrumental complaining in particular can lead to solving problems, and is effective if it is done in moderation and if it is done strategically (Kowalski, 2002). This suggests that complaining can be useful, and should be acceptable at work, to a certain extent. Framing complaints as a functional tool (if used in moderation) can encourage employees to openly express their dissatisfaction while making suggestions for change, ultimately improving the organization. The role of complaining in organizational outcomes for police officers, such as turnover intentions and burnout, will be discussed in the next section. Drawing from the described framework of complaints and complaining, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Complaining propensity moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and complaining frequency at work.

Additionally, the following hypotheses are proposed to test the work-related outcomes of complaining:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Complaining at work is associated with negative organizational outcomes.

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): Complaining frequency at work is positively correlated with turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Complaining frequency at work is negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2c (H2c): Complaining frequency at work is positively correlated with burnout.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKPLACE

Police officers are responsible for protecting and serving their communities. Although law enforcement encompasses several job titles (e.g., patrol officer, state trooper, public safety officer, law enforcement officer), the basic tasks and necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities are consistent across all types of police officers. Some of their primary tasks are to provide public safety, document incidents and activities, identify and arrest suspects, and respond to calls for assistance (National Center for O*NET Development, 2010). Each state has its own standardized requirements for training and certification, leading to uniformity across departments within each state or region. Police departments typically incorporate a military-like rank structure, with a police officer at the starting rank. If officers have satisfactory performance, they are promoted to higher ranks over time.

Within police departments, there are a number of sources of dissatisfaction that could prompt complaining. Among these are physical safety hazards, psychological hazards, non-standard work schedules (i.e., shift work), and the organizational climate, each of which will be discussed in turn. Officers encounter these sources of dissatisfaction in varying degrees over time. This section provides information regarding the workplace for police officers to provide more context for the research questions in the present study.

Physical Environment

Occupations within law enforcement are physically dangerous. The United States Department of Labor reports that police and sheriff's patrol officers have some of the highest rates of injury and illness among all occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). In 2013, there were 76 line-of-duty deaths in the United States. Of those, 49 were due to accidents (e.g., automobile accidents, drowning, gun-related accidents), and 27 were the result of felonious acts (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014). In addition to these deaths, there were 49,851 line-of-duty assaults reported in the U. S. in 2013 – a more common and likely occurrence. If a police officer is assaulted in the line of duty, his or her shift is disrupted. It can be frustrating to put off work in order to seek medical treatment, fill out additional reports, or complete required psychological debriefing after such an incident. Even more so than the actual injury or illness, the disruption in the normal workday following a critical incident may lead a police officer to complain.

The risk alone can place occupational safety hazards at the forefront of police officers' minds. Officers may feel that they are inadequately protected against injury or harm while on duty. They may believe that proper safety precautions are not taken to protect them. If they do not feel that the organization is taking the appropriate measures to keep them safe at work, then they may feel that the organization is unsupportive, which can lead to complaining. For example, an officer may perceive a bulletproof vest as a way to reduce liability for the department, rather than a way to protect the officer from a gunshot. If this is the case, then the officer may believe that the department is only fulfilling the minimum requirements to protect officers. Leaders influence safety

participation through supportive behavior (Clarke & Ward, 2006). Therefore, higher levels of perceived supervisor support can suppress experienced dissatisfaction regarding safety, thus lowering the likelihood of complaining.

Alternatively, police officers may feel that too many safety precautions are taken. Although it is the department's intent to protect its own officers, the officers may perceive the required procedures and protective gear as excessive. For example, many officers are required to carry a baton, pepper spray, a conducted electrical weapon (i.e., a Taser), and one or two handguns. This gear can be cumbersome and heavy. The department requires it to reduce liability, as with the bulletproof vest in the previous example. However, an officer may feel that his or her duty gun is adequate for self-defense if necessary. He or she may perceive these weapons as more protective for the agency than for themselves. In other words, departments equip officers with several forms of self-defense to ensure that deadly force is not the first action taken.

Alternatively, an officer may feel that any situation requiring use of force would be dangerous enough to go beyond trying to use pepper spray or a baton. Dissatisfaction with carrying unnecessary gear, dissatisfaction with the perception of how the department prioritizes risk management over actual safety, or a combination of the two, can possibly lead to complaining.

Psychological Demands

Police officers are exposed to psychological demands more frequently than they encounter physically dangerous situations on the job. Police officers are constantly reminded that there is a threat of being injured or killed while on duty, even if injury or

death is unlikely to occur. This strain is one example of a hassle, a daily event that is harmful or threatening to a person. Hassles can be more harmful than acute, traumatic events (Lazarus, 1984). Although they may not be initially appraised as detrimental to well-being, there can be negative long-term effects across various life domains. For example, police officers must document all contacts that they make with the public, which can be time-consuming and tedious. This can lead to more unpaid time spent at the office, and less time at home. As demands increase, there may not be enough perceived resources to meet them. They may complain to alleviate the distress that results from not being able to meet those demands.

There is a general consensus that traumatic events lead to significant negative outcomes. However, life events have low associations with mental health and well-being, compared to hassles (Chamberlain & Zika, 1990). Daily hassles are also positively correlated with physical symptoms (e.g., backaches, nausea, racing heart), which in turn lead to experiencing more daily hassles (Otis & Pelletier, 2005). Work hassles are also positively related to burnout for police officers (Kohan & Mazmanian, 2003). Burnout consists of emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and cognitive weariness (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006). It is a response to stressors encountered on the job over time (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Although a physical incident can be more sudden and happen without warning, small daily events can slowly pile up and create psychological distress. Such strain is cognitively demanding. Minor events are part of the daily grind for any job, but they can become more distressing, especially if they are ignored. If a person chronically

experiences hassles at work, but does not have an outlet to deal with them, then there can be significant negative health outcomes. Suicidal ideation and depression rates are higher for police officers than for the general population (Violanti, et al., 2008). Although life events can initially be perceived as minor disruptions, complaining can be an appropriate mechanism to meet those cognitive demands. Expressing dissatisfaction about daily hassles can possibly have a buffering effect on the experience of negative outcomes, such as physical symptoms and burnout.

Police work is inherently stressful, so it is difficult to reduce the likelihood that officers will encounter stressors. Additionally, a high volume of stressors can yield a high frequency of complaints. Primary prevention is the most proactive and effective method for reducing stressful situations (LaMontagne, Keegel, Louie, Ostry, & Landsbergis, 2007), but law enforcement organizations have a rigid structure that is intertwined with procedures for dealing with crime. Therefore, officers often must rely on secondary intervention measures. Secondary measures should give workers the resources to help them cope with stressful situations (LaMontagne et al., 2007). However, law enforcement training academies do not emphasize secondary stress prevention, and there is a lack of training for police officers in how to handle occupational stress. The Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies found that 86% of training academies provide training in stress prevention and management, but the median number of hours of required instruction is six. Mediation skills and conflict management are trained by 83% of academies, with 8 hours of instruction as the median (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). Police officers are inadequately prepared to manage inevitable job stress. Therefore, they

must determine their own strategies to handle it. Complaining can begin as an outlet for venting stressful situations, and evolve into a routine coping tactic. However, there is currently insufficient evidence of proximal and distal outcomes of complaining as a coping mechanism.

Turnover intentions. Officers who have turnover intentions at any point in their careers are often driven by the stress they have experienced. This stress is a source of dissatisfaction at work, which can lead them to complain. They may first complain to deal with that stress, rather than simply quitting their jobs. Those who generally have higher complaining propensity might already have a negative disposition, and may feel that complaining can make the situation seem more positive. Violanti and Aron (1995) found that police officers who have been on the job for six to ten years are more stressed out by their work than officers who have worked between one and five years. This may be because rookies experience more idealism when they begin their new careers (Violanti, 1983). New recruits may not feel that changes should be made until they begin to learn about the job and encounter situations that are less than ideal.

Most police officers who voluntarily resign within the first year and a half of their employment do so because of frustrations associated with cognitive dissonance. For example, Haarr (2005) followed recruits for 16 months, through hiring, training at the academy, and the yearlong probationary period. The majority of the recruits who voluntarily resigned cited their reason as stress and conflict brought about by dissonance between what they expected police work to be and what it actually was. The public image of what a police officer is and does differs from what actually happens. This is especially

difficult for new police officers, because they go through a period of adjustment as they begin their careers. A person will often make the decision to leave a job because he or she is dissatisfied with it. If there is stress and dissonance in the job, then dissatisfaction already exists. It may be expressed through complaining. Rookies may feel that changes they suggest when they express dissatisfaction will be implemented, or at least considered by their superiors.

Complaining can increase over time, because officers can experience more cognitive dissonance when they experience occupational socialization (Fielding & Fielding, 1987). Occupational socialization is the process of change in the person because of the work situation (Frese, 1982). A new police recruit may have seemingly unwavering values and beliefs, yet, over time, those opinions can change. The organization and its members can affect that officer's beliefs related to police work. It can be frustrating if a person's opinions are challenged to fit into a job. Law enforcement is notorious for having homogenizing effects on officers' attitudes and behaviors (Worden, 1995). An officer may complain as he or she experiences occupational socialization over time. This is to say that, as an officer realizes that police work is not actually what he or she had imagined, then he or she will have to either change his or her beliefs, or leave police work. Throughout this process, complaining may occur as a result of resisting this change.

The "frustrated cop." As officers experience occupational socialization, they begin to encounter other sources of dissatisfaction, such as "The Frustrated Cop Syndrome." This is characterized by poor interactions among the components of the

criminal justice system (e.g., miscommunication between arresting officers and district attorneys), the public's unwillingness to sympathize with police officers, and society's conflicting attitudes about crime and criminals, ultimately leading to officers' feelings of anger, helplessness, and cynicism. Officers with more job experience are more likely to be "frustrated cops" than new officers (Cebulak, 2001). Over time, officers can become more cynical. Cynical police officers expect the worst in people. This can be problematic because officers are expected to uphold "idealism, truth, and justice," yet they are unable to do so with this negative perception of others (Graves, 1996). They may also feel that nothing can get better in the organization, so it is not worth trying to change it. Cynicism may increase complaining behavior, because it can amplify how dissatisfied someone feels, leading to more expressions of dissatisfaction. Therefore, someone who experiences more cynical attitudes over time may be more likely to complain. The following hypothesis incorporates police cynicism into the conceptualization of chronic complaining at work:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Police cynicism mediates the relationship between years of job experience and complaining at work.

The outcomes of "Frustrated Cop Syndrome" closely resemble manifestations of burnout, such as exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Therefore, "frustrated cops" are more likely to experience burnout. Over time, officers experiencing symptoms of burnout may feel that they are "running on fumes." A constant feeling of anger, exhaustion, and cynicism can be irritating for them. If they are irritated, then they may constantly complain as a way to vent. As pointed out above, an increase in burnout

may lead to complaining behavior. The following hypotheses are intended to explore the relationship between dispositional propensity to complain and burnout:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Complaining propensity is positively correlated with burnout.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Burnout mediates the relationship between years of job experience and frequency of complaining at work.

Non-Standard Work Schedules

There is an early '90s country song that says, "my hours are long, and my pay is low....I'm just a-doin' my job, I'm the Highway Patrol" (Simpson, Rush, & Payne, 1993). Although over twenty years have passed since that song was released, shift work (now called non-standard work schedules) and low pay are still ordinary parts of the job. While adjusting for inflation, the average starting salary for entry-level police officers remained unchanged between 2003 and 2013 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). Nationally, the median salary for all police officers is \$56,810 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). However, the starting salary for officers, on average, ranges from \$38,200 to \$47,000 per year (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Because crime occurs 24/7, police officers must always be on duty. Regardless of the department or assignment, they work with the public around the clock. Working in shifts disrupts regular sleep schedules, potentially leading to Shift Work Sleep Disorder (SWSD). Correlates and outcomes of SWSD can include increased rates of insomnia, ulcers, heart disease, absenteeism, missed social activities, and sleepiness-related accidents (Drake, Roehrs, Richardson, Walsh, & Roth, 2004). Non-standard work schedules can have a stressful perception nearly as strong as physical dangers at work.

Violanti and Aron (1995) found that shift work was reported as a major source of stress, only outranked by killing someone in the line of duty and experiencing another officer being killed on duty (Violanti & Aron, 1995). This speaks to the importance of considering effects of shift work on police officers.

Police shifts can be long and tiresome. Shifts have historically been eight hours long, but it is common for officers to have ten- or twelve-hour shifts (Amendola, et al., 2011). Non-standard work schedules are one example of a daily hassle, which is a possible source of complaints. For traditional, eight-hour shifts, officers who work afternoon and night shifts encounter more stressful events than those who work the day shift (Ma et al., 2015). This leaves non-day shift officers at a disadvantage. Those officers likely do not receive additional support or interventions for handling that stress, or do not seek support. Police-specific Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are available to suit the unique occupational context. However, this resource is likely not utilized because of a lack of trust in such programs (Robinson, Sigman, & Wilson, 1997).

Officers' schedules may become more standardized as they gain job experience. This indicates that non-standard work schedules are not as present for more experienced officers, and therefore are not a likely source of dissatisfaction for them, compared to their less-experienced counterparts. Also, some police officers prefer to work at non-standard times. Allowing officers to work at preferred times can benefit them. Past research found that shift workers cope better with their schedules when they are satisfied with their schedules (Axelsson, Åkerstedt, Kecklund, & Lowden, 2004).

The workplace is unique for police officers. Regardless of the department or its employees, police officers encounter potential sources of dissatisfaction. The physical environment, psychological demands, and non-standard work schedules, among other components of the job, can lead officers to become dissatisfied, which may ultimately lead them to complain. Identifying the specific demands in this study will provide a foundation for determining the outcomes of complaints made at work among police officers.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To summarize, five hypotheses and three research questions have been proposed to explore complaining at work among police officers. All hypotheses and research questions are listed below.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Who do police officers complain to at work?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What do police officers complain about at work?

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Complaining propensity moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and complaining frequency at work.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Complaining at work is associated with negative organizational outcomes.

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): Complaining frequency at work is positively correlated with turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Complaining frequency at work is negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2c (H2c): Complaining frequency at work is positively correlated with burnout.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How are the types of complaining (i.e., instrumental and expressive) associated with organizational outcomes?

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Police cynicism mediates the relationship between job experience and complaining at work.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Complaining propensity is positively correlated with burnout.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Burnout mediates the relationship between job experience and complaining at work.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHOD

Participants

Twenty-two police officers from a medium-sized southeastern police department participated in this study. The department of interest employs approximately 150 sworn officers, all of which were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. The sample was predominately Caucasian (81.8%) and male (66.7%). The mean age was 36.3 years ($SD = 8.58$). On average, the participants had been certified police officers for 10.14 years ($SD = 8.58$), and had been employed with this police department for 11.22 years ($SD = 8.33$).¹ Officers in this sample worked day shift (68.2%), night shift (9.1%), or rotating shifts (22.7%). The primary job duties reported were: patrol and traffic enforcement (35%), education and community initiatives (10%), crime investigation and analysis (30%), training (15%), administrative duties (25%), and specialized services (30%). Some participants reported more than one primary job duty.

Measures

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of eleven scales. Certain items in the scales were slightly modified to ensure that they were appropriate for the sample population (i.e., police officers) and for consistency in response format. For example, the word “customers” was changed to “members of the public.” Additionally, participants answered seven items to provide descriptive information about demographics and the work context. Finally, to provide context about complaining behavior, participants were given open-ended items regarding the audiences of participants’ complaints.

Questionnaire items, response scales, methods for calculating averages, and calculated alphas are reported below.

Demographics. Seven demographic items were included in the questionnaire. Items assessed participants' age, gender, ethnicity, number of years employed as a police officer and with this particular department, primary job duties, and usual shift worked (see Appendix A).

Affect. Participants were assessed on positive and negative affect that they experience in two contexts: on a typical day at work, and while complaining at work. The 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) measured affect on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Representative items for positive affect (PA) include "Interested" and "Proud," and representative items for negative affect (NA) include "Hostile" and "Scared." Items specific to the positive and negative affect subscales were averaged so that higher numbers indicate greater value of the respective affect subscale (see Appendix B). Internal consistency reliabilities for this measure in the context of a typical day at work were $\alpha = .91$ for PA, and $\alpha = .72$ for NA. The "Guilty" NA item had zero variance when the PANAS was used to measure affect on a typical day at work. Therefore, it was removed from the scale. Reliabilities for the PANAS in the context of complaining at work were $\alpha = .92$ for PA, and $\alpha = .80$ for NA.

Impression management. Bolino and Turnley's (1999) 22-item Impression Management scale (IM) measured impression management behavior in the workplace, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = *never behave this way*, 5 = *often behave this way*).

Representative items include “Stay at work late so people will know you are hard working” and “Act like you need assistance so people will help you out.” Scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher frequency of impression management behavior (see Appendix C). The current study obtained an alpha value of .65. One item, “Act like you need assistance so people will help you out,” was removed from the scale due to zero variance.

Job satisfaction. Six items from Hackman and Oldham’s (1974) Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) were used to indicate the degree to which respondents agreed that their job is satisfying, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 5 = *agree strongly*). Sample items from this scale include “Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job,” “I frequently think of withdrawing from this job” (reverse scored), and “I feel unhappy when I discover that I have performed poorly on this job” (see Appendix D). After reverse scoring particular items, scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of job satisfaction. The current study obtained an alpha value of .65.

Burnout. The 14-item Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM) assessed employees’ levels of burnout in the past 30 workdays (Shirom & Melamed, 2006) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *never or almost never*, 7 = *always or almost always*). Sample items include “I feel physically drained,” “I feel burned out,” and “I feel I am unable to be sensitive to the needs of coworkers and members of the public” (see Appendix E). Scores were averaged across all items, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of burnout. The internal consistency reliability in the current study was .92.

Turnover intentions. Turnover intentions were measured with the “turnover intent” items from Jung and Yoon’s (2013) Role Stress and Turnover Intent Measure. This four-item measure uses a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. Scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of turnover intentions. Representative items include “I will probably look for a new job in the next year” and “I sometimes feel compelled to quit my job in my current workplace” (see Appendix F). The current study obtained an alpha value of .97.

Supervisor support. Supervisor support was measured with the Perceived Supervisor Support Measure – Adapted (Swanberg, McKechnie, Ojha, & James, 2011). This seven-item measure uses a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. Scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of perceived supervisor support. Representative items include “My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem” and “I feel valued as an employee of this police department” (see Appendix G). The current study obtained an alpha value of .94.

Police cynicism. Niederhoffer’s (1967) Police Cynicism Scale was used to measure officers’ cynical attitudes in the workplace. This 20-item measure used a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. Representative items include “Police supervisors are very interested in their subordinates” (reverse scored) and “Police officers have a different view of human nature because of the misery and cruelty of life which they see every day” (see Appendix H). After reverse scoring particular items, scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating

higher levels of police cynicism.² Internal consistency reliability for the current study was .89.

Daily hassles. Campbell's (2005) Daily Hassles Inventory (DHI) was used to assess the experience of daily hassles. Three items were added to make the measure more applicable to the target population, resulting in a revised 24-item measure. Participants were given the definition of a "hassle" and asked to report how frequently each hassle had occurred for them in the past 30 workdays, on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Representative items include "Getting along with coworkers," "Thinking about the public's perception of law enforcement," and "Shift work" (see Appendix I). Scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher frequencies of experiencing daily hassles. The current study obtained an alpha value of .95.

Complaining behavior. Complaining behavior was measured by first providing the definition of complaining, and then asking participants to report their frequency of this behavior in general on a typical workday, on a 12-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 12 = *extremely frequently*). The same process was utilized to measure the frequencies of expressive complaining at work and instrumental complaining at work. The definitions of expressive complaining and instrumental complaining were each provided, and then self-reported on a 12-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 12 = *extremely frequently*). Then, participants were asked how frequently others express their dissatisfaction around or to the participant at work on a typical workday on a 12-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 12 = *extremely frequently*). These 12-point scales were developed for the current study.

Participants were also asked to list the subjects that others typically complain about around or to them (see Appendix J).³

Complaining behavior around specific audiences. Participants were given the descriptions of complaining, expressive complaining, and instrumental complaining, and were then given the following measures of these behaviors around their supervisors, peers, subordinates, and members of the public. First, they were asked to indicate how likely they were to complain around each audience on a 12-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all likely*, 12 = *extremely likely*). Next, they were asked to list the subjects that they typically complained about around each audience. Finally, they were asked to indicate how many of their complaints around each particular audience were expressive complaints, and how many were instrumental complaints.³ This was measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = *none* and 5 = *most* (see Appendix K).

Complaining propensity. Participants completed a 29-item measure of complaining propensity to determine individuals' likelihood to express dissatisfaction. The original measure contained 14 items, on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = *not at all characteristic of me*, and 5 = *extremely characteristic of me* (Cantrell & Kowalski, 1994). In the modified measure used in the current study, participants indicated how characteristic of themselves each item was using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = *not at all characteristic of me* and 7 = *extremely characteristic of me*. Representative items include "Whenever I am dissatisfied, I readily express it to other people" and "I usually vent my dissatisfaction." After reverse scoring particular items, scores were averaged

across items, with higher numbers indicating higher complaining propensity (see Appendix L). The internal consistency reliability in the current study was $\alpha = .80$.

Group voice climate. Group voice climate was measured via the method used by Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, and Kamdar (2010). Participants individually reported the group's (i.e., the department's) beliefs about voice safety and efficacy, using five of the voice behavior items from the LePine and Van Dyne (1998) scale. The group voice safety dimension was assessed by asking participants to report the extent to which the members of the department felt that it was safe to do each behavior. Then, the group voice efficacy dimension was assessed by asking participants to report the extent to which the members of the department felt they were capable of effectively performing each behavior. Items were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. On the lower end of the scale, 1 = *definitely not safe* for voice safety, and 1 = *definitely not capable* for voice efficacy. At the higher end of the scale, 7 = *definitely safe* for voice safety, and 7 = *definitely capable* for voice efficacy. Sample items include "Communicate their opinions about work issues even if others disagree" and "Develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect the department" (see Appendix M). Scores were averaged across items in each subscale, with higher numbers indicating greater perceived group beliefs about voice. In the current study, reliabilities at the individual level of analysis were $\alpha = .98$ for voice efficacy, and $\alpha = .98$ for voice safety.

Seeking redress propensity. Richins's (1983) Seeking Redress Propensity scale (SRP) was utilized to further assess participants' propensity to complain. This five-item measure used a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = *totally agree* and 7 = *totally disagree*.

Representative items include “I am probably more likely to return an unsatisfactory product than most people I know” and “I would attempt to notify store management if I thought service in a store is particularly bad.” After reverse scoring particular items, scores were averaged across items, with higher numbers indicating higher propensity to seek redress (see Appendix N).² The alpha in the current study was .68.

Police hassles and expressing dissatisfaction. Participants were asked to report the top three things that they are least satisfied with at work. Then, they rated how frequently they express their dissatisfaction in each of those three areas, on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *rarely*, 7 = *often*). Additional items assessed participants’ beliefs about current events in the media regarding police brutality and race relations between communities and the police. Finally, participants were explicitly asked how frequently they have complained at work in the past 30 workdays, on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *never or almost never*, 7 = *always or almost always*) (see Appendix O).

Procedure

The Chief of the sample police department emailed the study materials (e.g., recruitment message, link to the online questionnaire) to the officers in the department to recruit them to participate. The email indicated that participation was completely voluntary, that all answers would remain anonymous, and that officers who completed the questionnaire would have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for one of two \$50 gift cards. The questionnaire was completed through SurveyMonkey. At the end of this questionnaire was a link to a separate questionnaire in which participants had the opportunity to enter their contact information to be entered into the drawing. This

separate questionnaire ensured that there would be no identifying information included in the original questionnaire, while giving participants the opportunity to enter the gift card giveaway.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS

Prior to analysis, the data were screened for violations of homoscedasticity and normality. Values of Mahalanobis distance, studentized deleted residuals, and Cook's D were examined to identify outliers. One case was identified as an outlier, and was removed from further analyses.

Correlational Analyses

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among the study variables. Complaining frequency was correlated with organizational outcomes in the expected directions, but two of the hypothesized relationships were not significant, $ps > .05$. Complaining was not significantly related to turnover intentions ($r = .48, p = .15$) or burnout ($r = .60, p = .07$), failing to support Hypotheses 2a and 2c, respectively. However, complaining was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = -.68, p = .03$), supporting Hypothesis 1b (see Table 1). Hypothesis 4, which stated that complaining propensity would be positively correlated with burnout, was also not supported ($r = .56, p = .10$).

Test of Moderation

Hypothesis 1 stated that complaining propensity would moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and complaining. For this analysis, job satisfaction and complaining propensity were mean-centered before creating product terms. This procedure was used to reduce the effects of multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991). The main effect for job satisfaction and complaining propensity was marginally significant

($R^2 = .72$, $F(2,6) = 7.51$, $p = .02$). However, the interaction term did not have a significant effect on complaining frequency ($sr^2 = .72$, $F(3,5) = 4.19$, $p = .08$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. A graphical representation of this non-significant interaction can be found in Figure 1.

Tests of Mediation

Hypotheses 3 and 5 were each tested with the Preacher and Hayes (2008) approach. Following these guidelines, bootstrapping (bias corrected) was used to create a sampling distribution of the proposed indirect effect in each hypothesized relationship. Sampling was conducted 5000 times with replacement, resulting in a 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect. Tests were conducted in SPSS with the “PROCESS” script by Hayes (2013).

Hypothesis 3 stated that police cynicism would mediate the relationship between job experience and complaining. Results indicated that job experience, measured as years as a certified police officer, was not a significant predictor of police cynicism, $B = -0.05$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .26$, but police cynicism was a marginally significant predictor of complaining, $B = 1.85$, $SE = 0.71$, $p = .04$. The indirect effect was not significant because the bootstrapped confidence interval included zero [-0.30, 0.09]. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Results for the mediational analysis for Hypothesis 3 are displayed in Figure 2.

Hypothesis 5 stated that burnout would mediate the relationship between job experience and complaining. Results indicated that job experience (in years) was not a significant predictor of burnout, $B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .76$, and burnout was not a

significant predictor of complaining, $B = 1.52$, $SE = 0.76$, $p = .09$. The indirect effect was not significant because the bootstrapped confidence interval included zero [-0.18, 0.13].

Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. Results for the mediational analysis for Hypothesis 5 are displayed in Figure 3.

Analyses for Research Questions

Analysis of group differences. To explore Research Question 1, which questioned which groups of people police officers complain around at work, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The analysis revealed that there was a significant effect of audience on complaining frequency, Wilks' Lambda = .098, $F(3,5) = 15.31$, $p = .006$. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the frequency with which police officers complained in the presence of particular groups of people. Participants reported complaining around peers the most ($M = 6.50$; $SD = 3.59$), followed by supervisors ($M = 4.80$; $SD = 3.33$), and then subordinates, when applicable ($M = 2.88$; $SD = 2.70$). Complaining frequency was lowest when in the presence of members of the public ($M = 1.60$; $SD = 1.26$); on average, participants responded slightly above "not at all likely" for complaining around members of the public.

Content analysis. Research Question 2 was analyzed with the qualitative data from the open-ended questions regarding the topics that officers complain about in the presence of others. Responses were aggregated from individual participants' responses to create a list of all topics, across all contexts. Then, items were grouped into categories, based on similarities. Finally, frequencies were tabulated for all items. The items that were reported most were related to work hours, shift work, and scheduling ($n = 15$), pay

($n = 14$), and supervisors ($n = 10$). A full list of categories and frequencies can be found in Table 2.

Additionally, the top three topics of dissatisfaction that were reported were aggregated and categorized, using the same procedure. Not surprisingly, the three most frequently reported topics of dissatisfaction were the same as the most frequently reported topics of complaints that officers made (see Table 3).

Types of complaining and organizational context. To answer Research Question 3, Pearson product-moment correlations among the two types of complaining (i.e., instrumental and expressive), and other organizationally-related study variables were calculated. These correlations can be found in Table 1.

Instrumental complaining was negatively correlated with impression management ($r = -.67, p = .03$), but was not significantly correlated with any other variables of interest. Conversely, expressive complaining was significantly correlated with a host of variables. There was a strong, negative correlation between expressive complaining and job satisfaction ($r = -.76, p < .01$), and between expressive complaining and group voice safety ($r = -.86, p < .01$). Further, there was a moderately strong, negative correlation between expressive complaining and perceived supervisor support ($r = -.62, p = .04$). Expressive complaining was also positively related to turnover intentions ($r = .68, p = .02$) and police cynicism ($r = .73, p = .01$).

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The present study was designed to explore complaining at work among police officers by examining three areas: (a) the audiences of complaints expressed by police officers, (b) the topics of dissatisfaction experienced by officers, whether expressed or not, and (c) the organizational antecedents and consequences that may accompany complaining at work. This study only begins to scratch the surface at attempting to answer questions in these areas, yet it provides a foundation for discussions and directions for future research in this area that lacks representation in the extant literature.

Regarding the first area, the current study found significant differences among the groups to whom police officers chose to complain. It was not surprising that they reported complaining around peers more than any other audience, because they may feel most comfortable casually expressing their dissatisfaction in this interpersonal context. In contrast, almost all officers in the study reported that they refrain from complaining around members of the public.

Additionally, all participants reported that they generally complain at work, irrespective of audience. This suggests that police officers do express their dissatisfaction while they are at work, rather than holding back their complaints in the workplace. Differences among audiences suggest that impression management motivates the decision to complain, when taking the situation into account.

One of the participant's commentary about complaining around the public is a prime example of the two components of self-presentation (i.e., impression motivation and impression construction), as they apply to this context:

I will admit I do slip at times. However I try not to express my distain [sic] in public as this tends to tarnish our badge and brother hood. I may not like how things are done but no one outside of my coworkers need [sic] to know.

Clearly, police officers are aware that their actions are not private. Therefore, they must be careful to not exhibit behaviors that could adversely impact how people outside of law enforcement view the police department, and possibly the entire police occupation. This also suggests that the officers weigh the cost of expressing their dissatisfaction, even if that requires that they comply with procedures that they do not agree with, or that they conform to dominant beliefs, to avoid conflict.

In terms of the second area, police officers experienced common topics of dissatisfaction, and complained about topics that are consistent with these areas. This suggests that, although the dissatisfaction does not have to be subjectively experienced to qualify as a complaint (e.g., Kowalski, 2002), the most frequently-reported topics of complaints at work are actually experienced by the individual. Additionally, the topics of complaints that police officers in the sample reported were in line with the daily hassles that are also often reported as significant sources of stress, such as scheduling and interpersonal issues (Otis & Pelletier, 2005). This suggests that hassles, regardless of severity, become topics of conversation at work. It was interesting to find that almost all of the dissatisfaction topics were work-related. Complaining can often serve as a "social

lubricant” (Kowalski, 2002). However, these results suggest that complaining among police officers is tied to the job itself. Daily hassles that were not work-related, such as family issues, were not reported as sources of dissatisfaction or topics of complaints in this study. A possible area for future research can focus on work-family conflict for police officers, to determine if complaining about work while at home leads to tension outside the workplace.

Finally, the current study sought to quantify the relationships between negative aspects of the organizational context and complaining behavior, and to attempt to establish the sequence that these variables follow. This objective, as it pertains to each Hypothesis and Research Question, is discussed below.

Hypothesis 1 posited that the relationship between job satisfaction and complaining varies when individuals are at different levels of complaining propensity. Albeit a nonsignificant interaction in the present study, the theoretical rationale behind this hypothesis suggested that one’s likelihood to complain should affect whether he or she expresses dissatisfaction that he or she experiences. In the consumer satisfaction context, for example, Chebat and colleagues’ measure of SRP was a significant moderator (Chebat et al., 2005). Individuals who were dissatisfied, but felt low propensity to seek redress, did not actually complain. In the present study, this relationship was not significant when complaining propensity was tested as the moderator, nor when SRP was tested in place of complaining propensity.

The absence of a significant interaction is likely due to two limitations of the current study. First, the sample size was small, which limited the number of data points

that could be tested in the regression. Second, the rationale behind the hypothesized relationship was based off of studies in *consumer* complaining. Complaining about a product or service is more formal than the interpersonal complaining that occurs in the workplace. Formal complaining requires more effort and time, whereas traditional interpersonal complaining tends to be more freely expressed.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that negative organizational outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions, decreased job satisfaction, and burnout) would be associated with complaining. Hypothesis 2b was supported: there was a significant, moderate, negative correlation between complaining frequency and job satisfaction. This was not surprising, because complaining is, by definition, an expression of dissatisfaction (Kowalski, 1996). It should be expected that employees who are not satisfied will express those feelings.

Hypotheses 2a and 2c were rejected, yet the marginal correlational relationships occurred in the expected directions, suggesting that complaining may be a possible outcome or predictor of turnover and burnout. Further, the independent variable in both of these hypothesized relationships was *general* complaining, and not the specific types of complaining. The implications of not making this distinction are presented below in the discussion of the research questions.

Hypotheses 3 and 5 examined the relationship between years of experience and complaining, through police cynicism and burnout, respectively. These mediational hypotheses were not supported. Job experience did not have a significant influence on complaining frequency. This is likely due to the homogenous culture that exists in law enforcement agencies: all officers experience a norming process in which they conform

to the predominant attitudes within the organization (e.g., Fielding, 1987; Frese, 1982; Worden, 1995). As Haar (2005) found, most voluntary turnover in the first year and a half as a police officer was due to frustrations with misaligned values.

Full mediation did not occur in the tests of H3 or H5, because almost all paths between predictors and outcomes were nonsignificant. This could be due to the low power in the study, resulting from small sample size. However, it could potentially also be due to the socialization process described above: a comparison between recent police academy graduates and experienced officers may be a more appropriate test of whether job experience predicts complaining frequency, and if so, how that relationship occurs.

Hypothesis 4 measured the relationship between complaining propensity and burnout. This relationship was not significant, yet further supports suggestions that complaining can alleviate dissatisfaction and improve affect (Kowalski, 1996). Therefore, complaining may be a coping mechanism that buffers the effect of burnout. A caveat of using complaining to cope is that the complaining must be strategic: excessive expressive complaining would be ineffective, because it can lead to interpersonal tension in the workplace. Venting also does not focus on finding a way to correct the problem (i.e., reducing burnout).

Regarding the research questions, the significant correlations among types of complaining and organizational characteristics were not surprising. Expressive complaining, which is solely intended to vent dissatisfaction, is emotionally-based (Kowalski, 1996). In the current study, it was associated with low perceptions of supervisor support. This supports past research that has found a significant negative

relationship between high-maintenance behavior (which includes excessive complaining) and satisfaction with supervisors (Burke & Witt, 2004). Alternatively, instrumental complaining is more meticulous. It resembles employee voice because of the intention of offering suggestions for change, but also involves an expression of dissatisfaction. The complaining component of this type of complaining may overshadow the suggestion for change. This could be an explanation for the negative correlation between impression management and instrumental complaining.

Causal direction cannot be implied from the present study, but the correlates for the two types of complaining are different. This implies that employees have different experiences at work, depending on the type of complaining that they utilize. When police officers reported higher frequency of venting, they also reported lower job satisfaction. This was consistent with the finding in H2b: experiencing dissatisfaction was related to expressing it. Juxtaposed with general complaining in H2a, expressive complaining was significantly correlated with turnover intentions. As officers reported that they were more interested in quitting their jobs, their expressions of dissatisfaction increased. Similarly, expressive complaining was associated with higher police cynicism. Cynical police officers approach situations with a negative attitude. This negative bias is associated with increased complaining in other contexts (e.g., Judge et al., 2000), so this finding was not unexpected. A police officer may not proceed with quitting his or her job, yet expressive complaining may seem like an effective way to cope with his or her dissatisfaction.

Two other variables that were negatively correlated with expressive complaining were perceived supervisor support and group voice safety. Although causality cannot be

implied from these correlations, it is reasonable to speculate that a lack of support from superiors can be dissatisfying, and thus, lead to complaining. It was interesting to find a negative relationship between group voice safety and expressive complaining. Voice safety is based on the perception that it is psychologically safe to speak up in the group, without fear of backlash (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013). However, this finding provides more evidence that complaining and voice are two distinct constructs, because voice behaviors are meant to help improve the organization, but not all complaining behaviors are intended to suggest changes.

Among the variables of interest in RQ3, impression management was the only significant correlate of instrumental complaining. This inverse relationship suggests that officers may value self-presentation over complaining, even if the complaint is intended to suggest improvements in the organization. Therefore, individuals may place more value on maintaining a particular image in the organization, rather than going against the norm. In this particular occupation, it would not be unusual to maintain conformity, because police culture has a much stronger influence than individual motivations. In reality, police officers change their values and beliefs through occupational socialization (Fielding & Fielding, 1987). Fitting the social expectations requires more impression management, and less behavior that would detract from that process (e.g., instrumental complaining).

Implications of Findings

Despite nonsignificant relationships, findings in the present study warrant implications for literature and practice. First, this study combined two areas that have not

been studied together in the extant literature: police officers and complaining. Police officers serve across the country, and are commonly known for working hard for little monetary reward (Janzen et al., 2007). However, prior research has not explored how police officers express their feelings about their circumstances, nor the functional purpose of complaining at work. Police officers, like any other members of an organization, are affected by others' opinions about them. However, there is a lack of understanding about the underlying processes that officers experience.

Second, it is the hope that this paper will shed light on complaining at work, and potentially reframe the perception of complaints in order to help people understand that complaints can be beneficial for the complainer and the audience, if done strategically. Complaining has a negative stigma attached to it, yet its potential benefits have been neglected in empirical research. McGraw and colleagues have researched a phenomenon that they call "humorous complaining," which highlights how complaining can be delivered in a more social-acceptable manner. They argue that complaining can be "witty rather than whiney" (McGraw, Warren, & Kan, 2014, p. 1153). This can lead to rewards for all parties: the complainer can be relieved to express his or her dissatisfaction, while the audience is more accepting of the behavior.

Finally, the present study can potentially inform police supervisors' future decisions. The officers in the sample reported complaining about some topics that supervisors have the power to influence. For example, one of the most common areas reported was lack of supervisor support. Supervisors, and, effectively, their subordinates, could benefit from implementing a training program to reduce negative leader behaviors.

One area that has arguably become increasingly stressful for police officers is the public's perception of police. This is illustrated in the current study through its frequency as a topic of complaints and as a hassle that is frequently experienced. Police departments can implement public relations (PR) campaigns and partnerships with community organizations to improve the public's perception of law enforcement. This can help community members relate to police officers and understand that the police serve to help the community, not harm it. However, improving community relations and media perceptions cannot rely solely on PR campaigns and public information fairs. Police departments must focus on reevaluating policies and procedures, training programs, and performance appraisal systems. Departments must clearly define their values and missions, operationalize them into competencies, and make it their goal to expect measurable, discernable behaviors to represent these expectations. This must be an ongoing process, adapting over time to fit the context. Dissatisfaction arises from a discrepancy between expectations and reality (Kowalski, 2002), yet clear expectations could reduce the potential for dissatisfaction. In sum, a change in police culture would be laborious and would take an unknown amount of time, yet could reduce dissatisfaction, therefore reducing complaints in the workplace.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

The primary limitations of the present study include small sample size, lack of standardized measures of complaining, and cross-sectional design. The police department that was examined in this study employs approximately 150 officers, making it a relatively small department. Additionally, only 22 officers participated in the study,

leading to a lack of power in the statistical analyses. The response rate may have been affected by the method. Police officers were recruited to participate anonymously, with the possibility of receiving a monetary prize, but the recruitment email was sent by the Chief of the department. Therefore, employees may have been concerned about the study results becoming connected with individuals.

In accordance with null hypothesis statistical significance testing, almost all hypothesized relationships were not significant ($p > .05$). Such findings present areas in which measurement and consideration for future analyses should be refined. Further, caution should also be utilized in interpreting the results of the null hypothesis tests in the current study, due to issues in power and effect size. For example, in Hypothesis 4, the correlation between complaining propensity and burnout ($r = .56, p = .10$), approached conventional levels of significance, yet fell short. Such an effect size is large, as it exceeds the $r = .50$ threshold for bivariate relationships (Cohen, 1992). The observed effects in the present study are an estimate of the true effects in the population. The hypotheses in this study logically followed extant literature, further lending support toward the possibility that such relationships truly exist. From a meta-analytic perspective, replications would provide a better estimate of the hypothesized relationships in the present study (Cumming, 2008). Additionally, the small sample size in this study reduced the power of the observations, indicating a need for replication in a larger sample.

Additionally, the study sample was from a police department in a suburban, middle-class area. The median household income in the town is \$76,202 per year, which

is higher than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The sample department also requires its police officers to have an associate's degree or higher from an accredited college or university, yet only 11% of departments in the United States maintain this requirement (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). Therefore, officers' education levels are likely to vary across departments, which can have potential implications for results. Future research should examine differences between police officers who serve in ethnically and geographically diverse areas. A measure of socio-economic status could also be utilized in future research, to determine if higher burnout may be experienced by officers who simply cannot afford to quit their jobs.

Because complaining at work is an underresearched area, there are no standardized scales for measuring complaining propensity. Additionally, complaining in the workplace has not been studied, and, therefore, the measures in the current study had to be created. Constructs similar to complaining, which were examined in this study, include Seeking Redress Propensity and Group Voice Climate. These constructs are distinct from complaining, as it is defined in the present study: SRP is a component of the formal complaint process in consumer complaining, and employee voice does not require an expression of dissatisfaction. Future research should focus on defining complaining as a construct and operationalizing it. There is a need to understand if complaining truly is a stable trait, or if the context has a greater influence on one's propensity to complain. Further, complaining among employees should be expanded to include the nonwork domain. Implications for complaining at home or with non-work-related friends and family, such as work-family conflict, can be examined.

Finally, this study was limited by its cross-sectional design. Measuring organizational outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and burnout) and complaining over time could establish temporal order to better determine if complaining causes these outcomes, or if the outcomes actually lead employees to complain more. In the present study, the questionnaire was distributed after a local police officer was charged with the murder of a civilian who he shot while on duty. It would be reasonable to speculate that history may be a source of error that influenced the results of this study.

Findings may have been slightly different if participants had been given the questionnaire at an earlier time. The response rate may have been higher if law enforcement were not getting media attention as it is now. Participants may have felt more willing to complete the questionnaire if they were not as highly concerned about their responses affecting outsiders' opinions of the police. The variables of interest in the present study would likely have clearer relationships, in the case of a larger sample. The effects would likely remain in the directions observed in the present study, however, as supported by the rationale behind the hypotheses.

Current events regarding police brutality may have contributed to a heightened awareness that police officers are watched closely by community members and the media. For example, the "Guilty" item in the Negative Affect scale used in this study did not have any variance across participants when it was placed in the context of a typical day at work. However, when participants were presented with the same item, but in the context of complaining at work, variance existed. The heightened awareness described above could be a potential source of error: police officers do not want to feel guilty when

they are just doing their jobs. Future research should direct attention to seemingly minor changes in attitudes and affect, such as this example, because it can provide additional explanation for changes in context for the police occupation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature and practice by providing a stronger foundation for understanding complaining at work among police officers. Specifically, this study provided qualitative data regarding what police officers complain about and to whom they complain while at work. Future research should attempt to establish directional, causal relationships between complaining and organizational outcomes, which may be utilized by supervisors to decrease sources of dissatisfaction, and improve the work context for police officers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Demographic Items

1. Age: _____
2. Gender (select one):
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. Ethnicity (select all that apply):
 - a. African American
 - b. American Indian
 - c. Arab or Arab American
 - d. Asian or Asian American
 - e. Hispanic Origin
 - f. Hispanic or Latino
 - g. Other (please specify): _____
4. How many years have you been a certified police officer? _____
5. How many years have you been employed with this department? _____
6. Please select your primary job duties (select all that apply):
 - a. Patrol and traffic enforcement
 - b. Education and community initiatives
 - c. Crime prevention
 - d. Crime investigation and analysis
 - e. Training
 - f. Administrative duties
 - g. Specialized services (please specify): _____
7. Which shifts do you typically work? _____

APPENDIX B

Positive and Negative Affect

1. Interested
2. Distressed
3. Excited
4. Upset
5. Strong
6. Guilty [removed in analysis for PANAS at Work]
7. Scared
8. Hostile
9. Enthusiastic
10. Proud
11. Irritable
12. Alert
13. Ashamed
14. Inspired
15. Nervous
16. Determined
17. Attentive
18. Jittery
19. Active
20. Afraid

APPENDIX C

Impression Management

1. Talk proudly about your experience or education.
2. Make people aware of your talents or qualifications.
3. Let others know that you are valuable to the organization.
4. Make people aware of your accomplishments.
5. Compliment your colleagues so they will see you as likable.
6. Take an interest in your colleagues' personal lives to show them that you are friendly.
7. Praise your colleagues for their accomplishments so they will consider you a nice person.
8. Do personal favors for your colleagues to show them that you are friendly.
9. Stay at work late so people will know you are hard working.
10. Try to appear busy, even at times when things are slower.
11. Arrive at work early to look dedicated.
12. Come to the office at night or on weekends to show that you are dedicated.
13. Be intimidating with coworkers when it will help you get your job done.
14. Let others know you can make things difficult for them if they push you too far.
15. Deal forcefully with colleagues when they hamper your ability to get your job done.
16. Deal strongly or aggressively with coworkers who interfere in your business.
17. Use intimidation to get colleagues to behave appropriately.
18. Act like you know less than you do so people will help you out.
19. Try to gain assistance or sympathy from people by appearing needy in some areas.
20. Pretend not to understand something to gain someone's help.
21. Act like you need assistance so people will help you out. [removed in analysis]
22. Pretend to know less than you do so you can avoid an unpleasant assignment.

APPENDIX D

Job Satisfaction

1. My opinion of myself goes up when I do well in this job.
2. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.
3. I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I am performing well in this job.
4. I frequently think of withdrawing from this job. [reverse scored]
5. I feel unhappy when I discover that I have performed poorly on this job.
6. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.
7. My own feelings are not affected much one way or the other by how well I perform in this job.

APPENDIX E

Burnout

1. I feel tired.
2. I have no energy for going to work in the morning.
3. I feel physically drained.
4. I feel fed up.
5. I feel like my “batteries” are “dead.”
6. I feel burned out.
7. My thinking process is slow.
8. I have difficulty concentrating.
9. I feel I'm not thinking clearly.
10. I feel I'm not focused in my thinking.
11. I have difficulty thinking about complex things.
12. I feel I am unable to be sensitive to the needs of coworkers and members of the public.
13. I feel I am not capable of investing emotionally in coworkers and members of the public.
14. I feel I am not capable of being sympathetic to co-workers and members of the public.

APPENDIX F

Turnover Intentions

1. I sometimes feel compelled to quit my job in my current workplace.
2. I am currently seriously considering leaving my current job to work at another company.
3. I will quit this company if the given condition gets even a little worse than now.
4. I will probably look for a new job in the next year.

APPENDIX G

Supervisor Support

1. My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem.
2. My supervisor really cares about the effect that work demands have on my personal and family life.
3. I am recognized when I do good work.
4. I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.
5. I am allowed to make the decisions necessary to do my job well.
6. I understand how my performance is evaluated.
7. I feel valued as an employee of this police department.

APPENDIX H

Police Cynicism

1. Police supervisors are very interested in their subordinates. [reverse scored]
2. Disciplinary action is a result of pressure on supervisors from command staff to give out discipline.
3. Arrests are made because the police officer is dedicated to performing his/her duty. [reverse scored]
4. The best arrests are made as a result of hard work and dedication to duty. [reverse scored]
5. A college degree requirement for appointment to the police department would result in a more efficient and effective police department. [reverse scored]
6. When you get to know the department from the inside, you begin to think that it is a wonder that it does one-half as well as it does.
7. Police academy recruit training should be cut in half.
8. Professionalization of police work is already here for some groups of officers. [reverse scored]
9. When a police officer appears before the Office of Professional Standards, the officer will probably be found guilty even when he/she has a good defense.
10. Police officers are dedicated to the high ideals of police service and would not hesitate to perform police duty even though he/she may have to work overtime without extra pay. [reverse scored]
11. The rules and regulations dealing with officer conduct off duty are fair and sensible. [reverse scored]
12. The public is more likely to obstruct police work than cooperate.
13. Getting special assignments in the police department depends on who you know, not on merit.
14. When testifying in court, police officers are treated like criminals when they take the witness stand.
15. Police department citations for summary offenses are issued by police officers as part of a sensible pattern of law enforcement. [reverse scored]
16. The public shows a lot of respect for the police. [reverse scored]
17. Youth problems are best handled by officers who are trained as juvenile officers. [reverse scored]
18. Police officers have a different view of human nature because of the misery and cruelty of life when they see every day.
19. The media generally try to help police departments by giving prominent coverage to items favorable to the police. [reverse scored]
20. Detectives have special qualifications and are superior to patrol officers. [reverse scored]

APPENDIX I

Daily Hassles

1. Getting along with coworkers
2. Having deadlines
3. Doing badly on a task
4. Doing work assignments
5. Uncertainty about marital/dating relationships
6. Relating with my supervisor(s)
7. Thinking about the public's perception of law enforcement
8. Attending training classes I don't like
9. Being embarrassed
10. Knowing people are talking about me
11. Looking my best
12. Not doing well on work assignments
13. Not achieving my personal goals
14. Thinking about my future
15. Questioning the meaning of life
16. Not knowing what to expect in the future
17. Family living arrangements
18. Not finishing things I start
19. Relations with members of my family
20. Completing paperwork
21. Not being given enough responsibility
22. Carrying/wearing unnecessary safety gear [new item]
23. Shift work [new item]
24. The threat of being injured at work [new item]

APPENDIX J

Complaining Behavior

The questions below are about expressing dissatisfaction, whether that dissatisfaction is actually experienced or not, to vent emotions or achieve intrapsychic and/or interpersonal goals.

1. On a typical day at work, how frequently do you engage in this behavior?
 2. On a typical day at work, how frequently do others engage in this behavior around or to you?
 3. When others express dissatisfaction around you at work, what topics do they usually talk about? Please list as many examples as possible.
-

The question below is about expressing dissatisfaction while suggesting that some change should be made.

1. On a typical day at work, how frequently do you engage in this behavior?

The question below is about expressing dissatisfaction, strictly in order to express how one feels, without suggesting change. This behavior is typically what one would refer to as “venting.”

1. On a typical day at work, how frequently do you engage in this behavior?

APPENDIX K

Complaining Behavior around Specific Audiences

Think about times that you may express dissatisfaction, whether that dissatisfaction is actually experienced or not, to vent emotions or achieve intrapsychic and/or interpersonal goals around [specified audience].

1. How likely are you to engage in this behavior around [specified audience] at work?
2. When you express dissatisfaction around [specified audience], what topics do you usually talk about? Please list as many examples as possible.
3. When you express dissatisfaction around [specified audience], how many of those comments are strictly made in order to express how you feel, without suggesting change (i.e., “venting”)?
4. When you express dissatisfaction around [specified audience], how many of those comments are made in order to express dissatisfaction while suggesting that some change should be made?

APPENDIX L

Complaining Propensity

1. Whenever I am dissatisfied, I readily express it to other people.
2. I frequently express dissatisfaction with the behavior of others.
3. I don't usually vent my frustrations or dissatisfactions. [reverse scored]
4. When people annoy me, I tell them.
5. I seldom inform others that I am dissatisfied. [reverse scored]
6. I usually keep my discontent a secret. [reverse scored]
7. When someone does something to make me feel bad, I am likely to inform that person of my displeasure.
8. I tend to complain a great deal.
9. I seldom state my dissatisfaction with the behavior of others. [reverse scored]
10. I generally don't say much when I am dissatisfied. [reverse scored]
11. I usually vent my dissatisfaction.
12. I keep my dissatisfactions to myself. [reverse scored]
13. When I am unhappy or upset, I usually keep it to myself. [reverse scored]
14. When people or events don't meet my expectations, I usually communicate my dissatisfaction.
15. I complain even when I am not dissatisfied. [new item]
16. I complain even when it may make a negative impression. [new item]
17. I express my dissatisfaction if it seems appropriate to do so. [new item]
18. Others call me a "complainer." [new item]
19. I tend to express my dissatisfaction a great deal. [new item]
20. It is inappropriate for me to express my dissatisfaction around certain audiences. [reverse scored] [new item]
21. If others around me are complaining, I will complain too. [new item]
22. When people do annoying or stupid things, I openly vent about it. [new item]
23. I like to focus on the positive aspects of a situation, even if the situation is bad. [reverse scored] [new item]
24. It is not worth it to complain. [reverse scored] [new item]
25. Others think that I don't speak up enough. [reverse scored] [new item]
26. I express my dissatisfaction with something if I think there's a better way to do it. [new item]
27. I try to get others to agree with me if I'm dissatisfied with something. [new item]
28. It is worthless to complain about something that can't be changed anyway. [reverse scored] [new item]
29. It makes me feel better to get frustrations off my chest. [new item]

APPENDIX M

Group Voice Climate

1. Express solutions to problems with the cooperative motive of benefiting the department.
2. Develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect the department.
3. Communicate their opinions about work issues even if others disagree.
4. Speak up with ideas for new projects that might benefit the department.
5. Suggest ideas for change, based on constructive concern for the department.

APPENDIX N

Seeking Redress Propensity

1. If a defective product is inexpensive, I usually keep it rather than put up a fuss or complain. [reverse scored]
2. I'd rather do almost anything rather than return a product to the store. [reverse scored]
3. I am probably more likely to return an unsatisfactory product than most people I know.
4. I often procrastinate when I know I should return a defective product to the store. [reverse scored]
5. I would attempt to notify store management if I thought service in a store is particularly bad.

APPENDIX O

Police Hassles and Expressing Dissatisfaction

1. Please list the top three things that you are least satisfied with at work.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. Thinking of these items, please indicate how frequently you express your dissatisfaction about each of those topics while at work.
3. How have recent events surrounding the perception of law enforcement affected your level of dissatisfaction at work?
4. Please indicate to what degree the following topics negatively affect your job satisfaction:
 - a. Race relations between police and civilians
 - b. The increase in women in policing
 - c. Current changes in legislation affecting police officers (e.g., required body cameras)
5. How likely are you to express your dissatisfaction at work, compared to before the officer-involved shootings in Ferguson, New York City, and North Charleston, that have gotten attention in the national media?
6. Please indicate how frequently you have complained at work in the past 30 workdays.
7. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experiences in what is dissatisfying when working as a police officer, and/or how you deal with it? Any additional comments? _____

FOOTNOTES

¹Pursuant to state law, individuals employed as law enforcement officers must receive state certification within one year of the date of hire, with the exception of delay in certification due to military leave (S.C. Code Ann. § 23-23-40). Therefore, it is possible for a respondent's tenure with the department to exceed his or her years as a certified police officer.

²In the original measures of cynicism and SRP, higher scores indicated lower levels of the measured constructs (Niederhoffer, 1967; Richins, 1983). For the purpose of this study, the items that were intended to be reverse scored retained their original values, whereas the items that were intended to retain their values were reverse scored. Therefore, higher scores in the current study signify higher levels of the construct of interest.

³The terms "complaining," "expressive complaining," and "instrumental complaining" were not explicitly used in these measures. Complaining, expressive complaining, and instrumental complaining were each described using their operational definitions used in the study (see Appendices J and K).

Table 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations among Study Variables.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Job Experience (in Years)	10.00	8.76	–								
2. Job Satisfaction	3.44	0.62	.26	–							
3. Turnover Intentions	3.18	2.03	-.52	-.62*	–						
4. Burnout	2.53	0.97	.04	-.76**	.46	–					
5. Police Cynicism	3.73	0.97	-.30	-.82**	.58*	.87**	–				
6. Complaining Propensity	4.01	0.91	.25	-.30	.33	.56	.55	–			
7. General Complaining	3.90	2.73	-.01	-.67*	.48	.60	.65*	.80**	–		
8. Expressive Complaining	5.73	2.97	-.32	-.76**	.68*	.56	.73*	.55	.78**	–	
9. Instrumental Complaining	5.55	2.98	.27	-.37	.36	.41	.27	.76*	.64*	.57	–
10. Impression Management	2.06	0.31	-.53*	.37	-.02	-.43	-.34	-.73*	-.65*	-.50	-.67*
11. Supervisor Support	4.08	1.89	.18	.72**	-.73**	-.83**	-.81**	-.44	-.57	-.62*	-.28
12. Daily Hassles	3.01	1.37	-.19	-.68**	.61*	.76**	.63*	.11	.37	.51	.25
13. Group Voice Efficacy	4.98	1.75	.20	.22	-.16	-.32	-.03	.47	.38	.26	.22
14. Group Voice Safety	4.10	2.04	.57	.86**	-.92**	-.74*	-.81**	-.42	-.61	-.86**	-.45
15. Seeking Redress Propensity	3.26	1.34	-.24	-.22	.00	.15	.40	.09	.17	-.02	-.36

Table 1 (continued).

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15
9. Instrumental Complaining	5.55	2.98						
10. Impression Management	2.06	0.31	–					
11. Supervisor Support	4.08	1.89	.28	–				
12. Daily Hassles	3.01	1.37	-.09	-.83**	–			
13. Group Voice Efficacy	4.98	1.75	-.43	.34	-.66*	–		
14. Group Voice Safety	4.10	2.04	.25	.91**	-.80**	.23	–	
15. Seeking Redress Propensity	3.26	1.34	.17	-.11	-.01	.20	.02	–

Note. Correlations are pairwise, *ns* range between 10 and 21.

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 2. Topics of Officers' Complaints and Frequencies.

Topic	Frequency
Hours/Schedule/Shift Work	15
Pay	14
Supervisors (e.g., lack of support)	10
Attitudes about Coworkers	8
Public & Media Perception (e.g., feelings of distrust)	8
Relationships among Coworkers (e.g., lack of teamwork)	5
Policy	5
Benefits (e.g., insurance)	3
Calls for Service (e.g., "dumb" calls)	3
Staffing	3
Performance (of coworkers/subordinates)	3
Equipment	2
Underqualified Employees	2

Note. Other categories, each reported one time: Promotions, Vacation/Leave Time, Recognition, Weather, Traffic, Preferential Treatment, Improvements Needed in Team, Workload.

Table 3. Topics of Officers' Dissatisfaction and Frequencies.

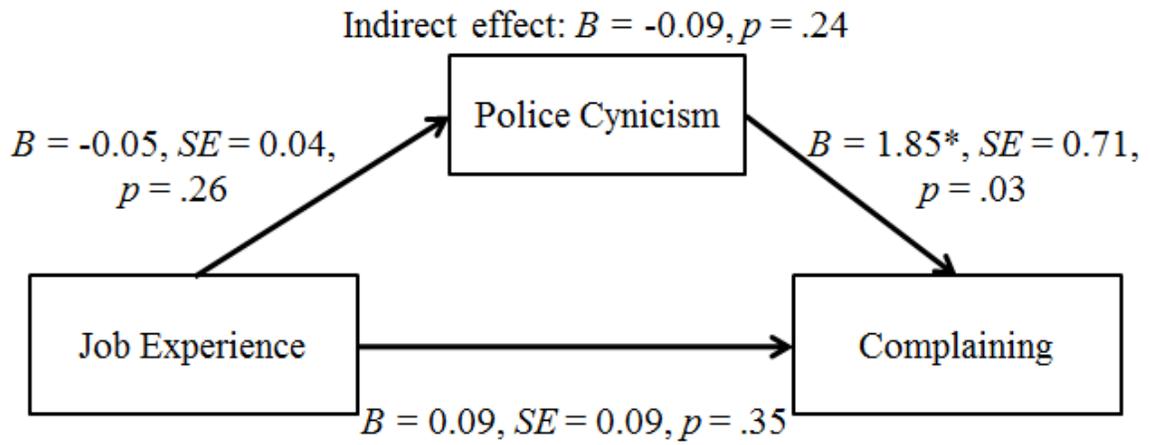
Topic	Frequency
Hours/Schedule/Shift Work	5
Pay	5
Supervisors (e.g., lack of support)	2
Attitudes about Coworkers	2

Note. Other categories, each reported one time: Public/Media Perception, Relationships among Coworkers, Policy, Benefits, Staffing, Underqualified Employees, Recognition, Preferential Treatment, Workload.

Figure 1. Satisfaction and Complaining Depending on Complaining Propensity. This figure illustrates the relationship between job satisfaction and complaining frequency depending on complaining propensity.

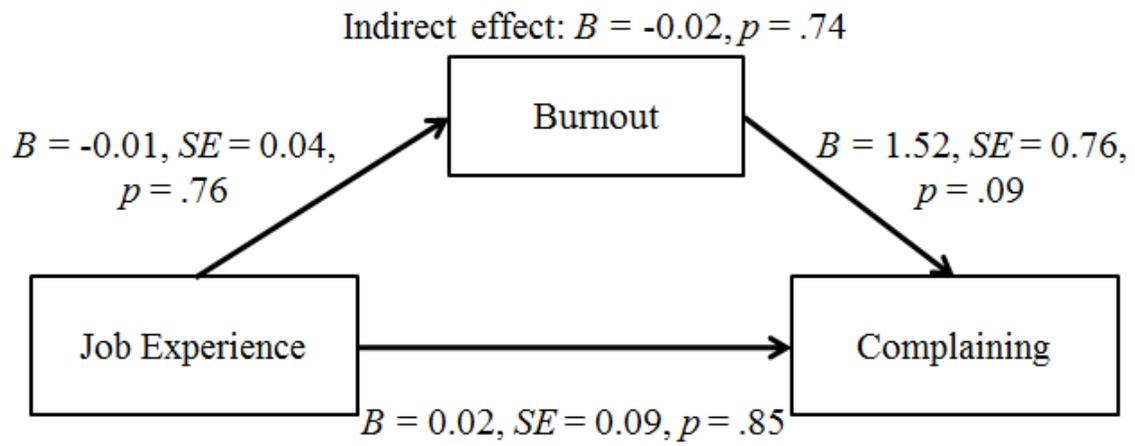


Figure 2. Mediated Model of Job Experience to Complaining through Police Cynicism.



* $p < .05$.

Figure 3. Mediated Model of Job Experience to Complaining through Burnout.



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