

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:

HOW COOPERATION BETWEEN
VICTIM ADVOCATES AND POLICE
IMPACT VICTIM SATISFACTION AND
EFFECTIVENESS

Sofia Del Signore, Bachelor of Arts, 2022

Thesis directed by:

Associate Professor, Bianca Bersani,
Department of Criminology and Criminal
Justice

The purpose of this paper is to address a major gap in criminological research by examining the influence of cooperation between victim advocates and the police on victim satisfaction and effectiveness. Previous research has failed to address how these variables interact by examining the perspective of all three groups: victims, victim advocates, and the police. While there is some literature on this topic, the scope of research is rather limited and fails to acknowledge the opinions of all three target groups, which is problematic since it is impossible to gather a full understanding of a relationship if only one population's opinions are being taken into consideration. The research first examines existing research on the interactions between victims and the police, victims and victim advocates, and victim advocates and the police. Second, using prior research, I propose a study that examines all three of these groups simultaneously using existing data from the Effectiveness of Alternative Victim Assistance Service Delivery Models in the San Diego Region study (Rienick, Mulmat, and Pennell 2006). The original study created and used five different surveys to assess their research goals. For the purposes of this study, three of the surveys will be used including the victims of violent crime survey, the law enforcement survey, and the intervention program survey. These three surveys used a convenience sampling technique and were chosen because they provide sufficient data

that accurately measures all three target populations (victims, police officers/law enforcement, and victim advocates). It is hypothesized that if victim advocates and the police have a strong level of cooperation this will be correlated with a high level of victim satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of the criminal justice system. This paper also discusses the limitations of the proposed study which includes the age of the data, the area where the data was gathered, and the expected limitations of quantitative data. While the age of the data may be a little older it is still extremely useful as the research into this topic is so limiting. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a baseline using existing data to understand how these variables have changed overtime and have been impacted by the pandemic. Overall, the implications of this study would be to inform and encourage future research into this field and use this study as a baseline and catalyst which could lead to policy changes in the future.

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SATISFACTION AND EFFECTIVENESS

by

Sofia Del Signore

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	5
Victim’s Interaction with Police.....	5
Victim’s Interaction with Victim Advocate.....	8
Victim Advocate’s Interaction with Police.....	10
Chapter 3: Research Question.....	13
Chapter 4: Sample.....	15
Chapter 5: Measures.....	17
Victim Satisfaction.....	17
Effectiveness.....	17
Cooperation.....	18
Control Variables.....	19
Sociodemographic.....	20
Other Variables.....	21
Chapter 6: Proposed Data Analysis.....	23
Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion.....	27
References.....	31

Chapter 1: Introduction

The structure of the criminal justice system in the United States leaves little room for the victim's voice and opinion to be heard. Although the victim is the one most impacted by a crime, when it comes to the process of the criminal justice system they are often the least involved in their case. In a large amount of violent crime cases, the victim(s), and their account of the crime, is the main form of evidence (Hohl and Conway 2017), which leads to law enforcement typically treating victims more like clues than actual people (McMillan and Thomas 2013). Enforcing this viewpoint of victims as evidence greatly harms the relationship between victims and police, as well as the victim's willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system. Specifically, Elliott, Thomas, and Ogloff (2012), discovered that being seen by the police as actual people outside of their involvement in the criminal justice system was equally as important to victims as the case's outcome. This lack of inclusion, and sometimes respect, of victims, is not just apparent in the police aspect of the criminal justice system, but throughout the entire process (Englebrecht 2011). Even within the basic format of the court system, there is technically no one there to solely represent the interests of the victim. There is the defense attorney, who represents the accused/offender, the judge, who is a neutral, unbiased ruler, and then the prosecutor, who represents the state, not the victim. Ultimately, the structure of the criminal justice system gives insufficient attention and care to the victim.

From an outsider's perspective, the criminal justice system is a complex and confusing structure to navigate on your own. Although there have been many adjustments made to the system in an attempt to include victims in the process, such as allowing the victim to give personal statements in court (Victim Impact Statement), the format of the system was not designed to involve outsiders, and as such, victims are continuously forced to deal with the

consequence (Englebrecht 2011). It is improbable to believe the current structure of the criminal justice system could be shifted or changed in a significant way to educate and include the victim more within the process; that is why an institution/organization with the sole purpose of victim advocacy is necessary.

Victim advocates are highly knowledgeable of the criminal justice system and use this knowledge to guide the victim through the process and help them feel less alone (Karmen 1995). A victim advocate offers support to victims of a crime and specifically helps them to understand their rights as a victim, helps them navigate the criminal justice system, and provides them with resources to help with both the legal system and their emotional wellbeing (Siegel 2015). Many average American citizens know little about their legal rights and the inner workings of the criminal justice system, so to have to navigate this alone is an impossible feat and yet is what we force victims to have to deal with. In a poll taken by the University of Pennsylvania, it was discovered that about 37% of people surveyed could not recall any of the rights protected by the First Amendment, and only 26% of people were able to name all three branches of government (Cillizza 2017). These statistics highlight the severe lack of knowledge American citizens understand about the most basic aspects of government, let alone their ability to interpret and navigate the complexities of the criminal justice system. That is where a victim's advocate, someone who has a strong understanding of both the legal aspects and needs of the victim, would be helpful.

Victim advocates provide a unique solution to help mitigate and correct a major issue within the criminal justice system. Unlike the police, prosecutor, and defense attorneys, a victim's advocate works solely for the victim and with the victim's best interest at heart; they reconnect the victim to the criminal justice process. With victim advocates offering the perfect

opportunity to correct a gap in the criminal justice system, it is extremely important to investigate whether the current use and implementation of victim advocates are effective and accessible to victims. Victim advocacy organizations have been around since the 1970s (Young and Stein 2004), and while there has been a large amount of research on their effectiveness, few researchers have examined how they function within the criminal justice system and with police officers. This proposed study would address this gap in research by specifically examining how the direct interaction between victim advocates and police has an influence on victim cooperation and satisfaction within the criminal justice system.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following sections will examine the existing research on the relationships between victims and the police, victims and victim advocates, and victim advocates and the police. The intention is to examine the current research on these relationships to help inform further investigation, specifically into how the cooperation between victim advocates and police influences victim satisfaction and perceived effectiveness. This review of literature will demonstrate the tumultuous relationship between victims and police, the positive effects that victim advocates have on victims, and the lack of consistent findings on the relationship between victim advocates and police. It is important to first examine the history on these topics to demonstrate why this proposed study is necessary and how it will fill some of the larger existing gaps in research.

Victim's Interaction with Police

To understand why it is important to examine the cooperation between law enforcement and victim advocates, it is critical to first examine victims' perceptions of police and why victim advocates are necessary to begin with. In a study done by Gekoski, Adler, and Gray (2013) they examined the frequency and severity of secondary victimization that women who have lost someone due to homicide, experience at the hands of police. The researchers interviewed 14 women using a semi-structured design and discovered that many of the victims described police as being insensitive and cold, making them feel judged and uncomfortable when being interviewed (Gekoski et al. 2013). This research highlights a clear issue within the criminal justice system, as victims feel as though they are being re-victimized when reporting crimes, which influences their perception of police and willingness to report in the future. In an article by Tarling and Morris (2010) the authors' examined previous research on victim reporting.

Specifically, Tarling and Morris (2010) discovered that if victims perceived their first interaction with police and reporting a crime, in a positive light they are more likely to report to the police if they are victimized again in the future. However, researchers have also discovered that victims' trust in police does not largely contribute to their initial willingness to report their first victimization (Kääriäinen 2011), but victims' perception of the police while/after reporting influences cooperation and future reporting.

Research on victims' interactions with the criminal justice system note that victims are likely to be more critical of police performance. The victims' opinions of police performance have a great influence on their opinion of the entire criminal justice system (Aviv and Weisburd 2016). In a 2016 study, Aviv and Weisburd examined this concept by researching the evaluations of both victims and non-victims on the legitimacy of the police and the criminal justice system. The researchers discovered that when evaluating the legitimacy of the criminal justice system both victims and non-victims place equal importance on procedural justice, defined in this context as police demonstration of fair treatment and their decision-making skills on how they handle the case, but victims place a much higher emphasis on police performance and on how well they believe police do their job, than non-victims (Aviv and Weisburd 2016). These findings demonstrate an important discovery on the evaluation of legitimacy and specifically highlight how influential the police can be on victims' opinions of the criminal justice system and willingness to participate within it.

Previous research has demonstrated a clear issue with the cooperation between police and victims. A recent study done in Chicago surveyed victims of nonfatal gunshots and discovered that although about half of the victims reported having helpful knowledge about the incident, they refused to cooperate and divulge this information with the police (White, Cool, and Pollack

2021). Some of the reasons given by participants to explain the unwillingness to cooperate were that they did not want to be labeled a “snitch” or “rat”, believed the police could not be trusted, and/or wanted to seek vengeance outside of the legal system (White et al. 2021). Similar findings were also discovered when examining female victims of intimate partner violence (Dichter et al. 2011). In the study Dichter et al (2021) had participants discuss the issues they had when with the criminal justice system, which included a lack of information about police aid offered to them and a failure of the police and prosecution to follow-up on reports. This is highly problematic since victim cooperation has been proven to be positively correlated with case outcome (Kaiser, O’Neal, and Spohn 2015), and if victims are not feeling safe to disclose information to the police (White et al. 2021) or do not trust the police to follow-up (Dichter et al. 2011) then this leads to an increased likelihood in a negative case outcome.

Also, In a study done by Maddox and Barker (2011), researchers examined how rape victims’ perception of the police after their initial interview influenced their opinion on wanting to continue to take legal action. The results of the study demonstrated that police empathy was positively correlated with how the victims’ viewed their cases and the likelihood that the case would be prosecuted and negatively correlated with the level of victim PTSD (Maddox and Barker 2011). Therefore, this study demonstrates the importance of victims’ perception of police and the criminal justice system since it has a great influence on the prosecution of the case. Ultimately, how the victim feels and interacts with the police affects their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement which greatly influences the outcome of a case. This demonstrates a clear issue between victims and the police, and a possible strong solution to this problem is the use of victim advocates. Victim advocates are in the unique position to bridge this gap in communication between victims and police by providing victims with both emotional and

legal support (Siegel 2015). The format of the criminal justice system makes it so officials within the system can only help victims to an extremely limited extent. Specifically, the role of the police is to investigate and apprehend offenders, and the prosecution's first duty is to the state; not the victim. Therefore, outside counsel from victim advocacy organizations is imperative to ensuring the needs of the victims are being met.

Victim's Interaction with Victim Advocates

The concept of victim advocacy was established in the United States in the 1970s, during both the victim's rights movement and the women's liberation movement, in reaction to the lack of aid provided to victims of rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence (Young and Stein 2004). In 1972, the first three victim advocacy centers were established to help mitigate this issue, providing support to victims while also allowing them to be more involved in the process of their case (Underwood and Edmunds 2003). Since then, the number and use of victim advocacy services have grown exponentially in an attempt to better support and represent victims throughout the criminal justice system (Young and Stein 2004). With the increase in victim advocate and victim assistance services came an expansion in research on victim needs and examining the influence that these organizations have on victims.

There has been a plethora of research (Bonomi and Martin 2021; Brooks and Burman 2017; Davies and Lyon 2013; Funk 2015; Jerath, Tompson, and Belur 2020; McCart et al. 2020; Morgan and Coombes 2013; Nichols 2020; Patterson and Tringali 2015; Taylor-Dunn 2016) that details the effects and influences of victim advocates on victims and examines the effects of different types of victim advocacy services on victims. Specifically, Deprince and colleagues (2012) examined the differing effects on community-based victim advocacy programs and the criminal justice system's practice of referral to community-based interventions. Through this

study, researchers discovered that the women who participated in the community-based victim advocacy program described their services as more helpful and demonstrated a higher readiness to leave their abuser (DePrince et al. 2012). These results are significant because they highlight the weakened effect a referral process has on allowing victims to receive the necessary and desired amount of aid.

In another study done by Rivas and Colleagues (2019), researchers examined the multiple different advocacy interventions available to victims of intimate partner violence to determine the factors that make some programs more suitable than others. Researchers discovered some factors that influence the impact of victim advocacy were frequency/length of intervention, setting, and theoretical consideration (knowledge of abuse, understanding of rights/laws, communicating with other organizations, and safety planning) (Rivas et al. 2019). These findings demonstrate both how effective victim advocates are and how impactful they can be. Specifically, Rivas and colleagues' study (2019) again demonstrates the importance of victim advocates' interaction with other organizations, and yet there is minimal research examining the influence of communication between victim advocates and police.

Researchers have also examined the role victim advocates play in other victim assistance organizations including women's shelters. In an article published in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, researchers examined the social and community aspects of violence prevention programs through a psychological framework (Reppucci, Woodlark, and Fried 2005). Within this study, Reppucci and colleagues (2005) reviewed data gathered across multiple studies, including a longitudinal experimental study examining the influence of victim advocacy and community-based intervention in women's shelters. This original study was done by Sullivan et al. (1994), and it discovered that victim advocacy played a significant role in helping victims of domestic

violence understand their trauma, while also providing them with tools to navigate the outside world once they leave the shelter. While a major limitation of this study is that it took place about twenty-seven years ago, the research findings still helped to initiate more in-depth research into victim advocates which established more evidence confirming Sullivan and colleagues' study. For example, another study done by Rivas et al. (2016), did a meta-analysis to examine the impact of victim advocates. Specifically, this study discovered that even a brief period of advocacy intervention can lead to a decrease in depression and that intensive advocacy is linked to potentially improving quality of life (Rivas et al. 2016). However, the study notes clear limitations about the quality of the research gathered and places an emphasis on high levels of bias in this field of research, which is why further examination is needed.

Previous studies have addressed the influence that victim advocates have had on the victim's cooperation and the impact that police have on victim cooperation, but few have examined how the strength of the actual interaction between victim advocates and police affects the victim. It is known that the involvement between a victim advocate and the victim is a strong predictor of victim cooperation throughout the case (Camacho and Alarid, 2008). However, this knowledge is a reflection only of the interaction between victims and victim advocates and does not examine the influence of the cooperation between victim advocates and police. Therefore, the reason why this study is so important is that it will bridge this gap in research and examine how the direct communication between victim advocates and police influences the cooperation and satisfaction of the victim.

Victim Advocates' Interaction with Police

The scope of research currently available on the effects of the direct interaction between victim advocates and police is limited, however, some researchers have gathered fundamental

information on this topic. In a study established by Gaines and Wells (2017), researchers examined the opinions of investigators and prosecutors on the involvement of victim advocates in sexual assault cases. The study used survey data to assess criminal justice officials' perceptions of victim advocates and discovered that overall, investigators and prosecutors believe that victim advocates have a positive effect on the criminal justice system (Gaines and Wells 2017). Specifically, the researchers listed that criminal justice officials believe that victim advocates make a beneficial contribution by helping victims and their loved ones cope with the victimization and by offering an effective means of communication (Gaines and Wells 2017). These findings are useful to better understand the dynamic between police officers and victim advocates, but it does little to address the impact this relationship has on the victim. Also, this study only focuses on the opinions of criminal justice officials, although victims and victim advocates are discussed and assessed within the study, their opinions are not being measured which limits the scope of the research.

In contrast, a study conducted by Shana Maier (2008) examined the relationship between victim advocates and police through the perspective of rape victim advocates. Maier's study focused more on examining the revictimization of rape victims by police and medical officials by interviewing 47 rape victim advocates on their opinions on the topic. Through this study, the researcher discovered similar themes across all interviews which detail a belief that police do play a great role in the revictimization of victims. (Maier 2008). Specifically, the victim advocates described a common theme of police failing to ask victims questions respectfully and sensitively, leaving victims feeling stressed and uncomfortable (Maier 2008). These findings demonstrate a clear contradiction to Gaines and Wells's (2017) results detailing a belief that

criminal justice officials respect and appreciate victim advocates, as it details many first-hand accounts of victim advocates sharing unfavorable views about the police.

Similarly, studies conducted by Sudderth (2006) and Rich and Seffrin (2013) detail many conflicts and barriers that negatively affect the relationship between victim advocates and police. Through survey data collected directly from officers, Rich and Seffrin (2013) discovered that it was predominately professional factors that determined whether an officer would have a strong collaboration with an advocate. The researchers discovered that an officer's interviewing skills, formal training about rape, and how long an officer has been on the job greatly influence whether they would work well and collaborate with a victim advocate (Rich and Seffrin 2013). The study also discovered that rape victims were more likely to receive better treatment by the police during their initial report if an advocate was involved in the process (Rich and Seffrin 2013). Furthermore, both studies provide useful information to help create better interventions and programs to improve the relationship between victim advocates and police. Specifically, Sudderth (2006) discusses the need to incorporate more efficient training on conflict resolution and more joint training with both organizations so both agencies can gather a better understanding of each other's techniques and strategies.

Overall, it is clear that the research pertaining to the interaction and communication between victim advocates and police is limited and convoluted. Also, few studies work to incorporate and assess the opinions of victims, victim advocates, and police at the same time. This highlights a gap in the existing research on victim advocates and police and demonstrates a need for further investigation into the cooperation of all three populations.

Chapter 3: Research Question

The purpose of this research is to better understand the interaction between police officers and victim advocates to assess how victim advocates influence victim cooperation and satisfaction with police. The primary research question being addressed is, do victim advocates influence victim's cooperation and satisfaction with the police? Specifically, the main focus of this study is to examine the relationship between the victim advocate and the police, rather than solely the relationships between victims and the police and victims and victim advocates. As discussed, there have been many previous studies that have examined the effects of victim advocates and the effects of the police on victims separately, but there is little research on the influence the interaction between both institutions can have on a victim. This proposed study would bridge this gap in research by focusing more on the communication between victim advocates and police officers. It will also use existing data to examine whether strong communication between victim advocates and police leads to an increase in victim cooperation and satisfaction with law enforcement.

Merely adding victim advocates and sharing research on their effectiveness is not enough if the communication between the institution they are most in contact with is not strong. The researcher hypothesizes that victim advocates will have a positive effect on the victim's emotional well-being and involvement in the criminal justice system, which will be indicative of the strength of the relationship between the victim and the victim advocate. However, the researcher also believes that victim advocates will not have as large of an impact on victims' cooperation with police due to an initial lack of cooperation between victim advocates and police themselves. If the proposed findings support this hypothesis it would demonstrate that while victim advocates provide a great amount of support for victims, they are not currently being used

to their full potential because of a lack of communication between them and police officers. Also, reviewing previous research done by Goodson, Garza, and Franklin (2021), researchers found that 71% of police provided domestic violence victims with referrals to advocacy services, the researcher also hypothesizes that this study will demonstrate similar results in the frequency of police referral. However, an important emphasis must be set on the fact that a referral places the responsibility on the victim to contact such advocacy agencies, and it does little to demonstrate the actual communication between the officer and the victim advocate. The proposed study would step beyond the scope of previous studies to specifically examine the interactions between police officers, victim advocates, and actual victims to investigate how the communication and cooperation between victim advocates and police influences victims' perceptions and willingness to cooperate.

Chapter 4: Sample

The proposed study will use data from the Effectiveness of Alternative Victim Assistance Service Delivery Models in the San Diego Region study (Rienick, Mulmat, and Pennell 2006). In the original study, Rienick and colleagues (2006) used this data to better understand the needs of victims of violent crimes and whether the current systems in place (police officers and advocacy services) meet these needs. The goal of the original study was to gather data on the satisfaction of victims, advocacy services, and police officers with the criminal justice system to make an informed suggestion on how these organizations can better help victims based on their needs. The original study created and used five different surveys to assess their research goals. For the purposes of this study, three of the surveys will be used including the victims of violent crime survey, the law enforcement survey, and the intervention program survey. These three surveys were chosen because they provide sufficient data that accurately measures all three target populations (victims, police officers/law enforcement, and victim advocates).

Each of the surveys used a convenience sampling technique by sending the applicable surveys to every person who fit the criteria in the San Diego area. Since the goal of each of these studies is to assess the overall effect and cooperation between police and victim advocates, the survey was sent to all law enforcement officers and victim advocates in San Diego, including employees at the Crisis intervention Team and the EYE Crisis and Advocacy Team. In the previous study, researchers examined multiple outside agencies that offer aid to victims. However, for this study only the survey data related to victim advocates would be used since data on other intervention programs exceeds the scope of the study. Also, to assess the same variables in police officers a survey was sent to 1,000 law enforcement officers from Escondido, San Diego and Vista Sheriff's Department. To assess the satisfaction of victims an initial survey

was sent to 3,000 violent crime victims over the age of 16 in San Diego, with 718 people responding, and 330 of those victims recontacted six months later for a follow-up survey. Lastly, this sample fits perfectly with the research question, what effect do victim advocates have on how victims cooperate with law enforcement, because it comes from a previous study that contained all three of the target populations.

The previous study by Reinick and colleagues (2006), where the data originated, not only accurately represents the target populations for this study, but also how the data was measured will be extremely useful in examining the measures in this study. Specifically, the researchers used surveys to gather their data which is beneficial for the proposed study since it means the data was gathered directly from participants and reflects their direct opinions on the subject. The applicability of the data for this study can also be attributed to the similarities between Rienick et al. (2006) study and this one. The original study examined the needs of victims, assessed services provided to victims and how frequently they are used, investigated how victims cope with victimization, and researched the factors that influence victims' satisfaction (Rienick et al. 2006). The purpose of this study was to gather more information about the listed topics and to make an informed recommendation about improvements needed to be made to help victims in the criminal justice system (Rienick et al., 2006). While the original study did not focus on the cooperation levels between victims and police when a victim advocate is involved, it did gather data on these variables so that further investigation into this topic can be done in an alternative study. Therefore, it would be advantageous to use this existing dataset in the proposed study because it involves a sample that can be generalizable to all of the proposed study's target populations. The method in which the data itself was gathered provides detailed insight into each of the variables being examined, which is extremely vital.

Chapter 5: Measures

Victim Satisfaction

Victim satisfaction is the victim's perception of the way that police and victim advocates handle their duties. Victim satisfaction was measured through two self-report surveys. In the initial survey, the victims were asked questions about the services provided to them, how many times they were contacted by certain services (during the time of the incident and/or afterward), and what services they needed at the time of the incident/afterward and whether the services they received met these expectations. These survey questions were formatted in two different ways. Some had victims' responses using a Likert scale (Very satisfied (1), Satisfied (2), Neutral (3), Not Satisfied (4), Very Dissatisfied (5)), while others listed potential responses associated with a number for coding (starting with one) to get a more detailed understanding of the victim's satisfaction level. A follow-up survey was then sent out to the victims to further assess their satisfaction. The questions on this survey were structured the same as the previous one and, therefore, coded the same. To measure victim satisfaction through this survey participants were asked directly to rate their satisfaction with the police and advocacy services using the same Likert scale from the previous survey. The victims were then able to further explain the level of satisfaction they chose through questions with multiple choice answers that were each associated/coded with a number.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was measured throughout all of the surveys using the same question format as used to measure cooperation. Specifically, victims' were asked to assess the effectiveness of both the police and victim advocates through questions in the second follow-up survey, which asked the victims to rate the helpfulness of each of the services provided to them (both from the

advocacy services and police officers) and the information about the process and criminal justice system given to them before and after the incident. These questions were asked using a combination of binary and multiple selection questions.

Cooperation

Cooperation between police officers and victim advocates would be measured using the responses of both surveys and comparing the results. Specifically, cooperation was measured in the surveys sent to victim services agencies through a self-report system where the advocates were tasked with answering questions that addressed their coordination with law enforcement and how problems between agencies are handled. These questions were answered using a combination of binary and multiple selection questions. For example, one question asked was “Coordinate with Criminal Justice Agencies,” where participants could answer either yes (1) or no (2), and a follow-up question was “Likely to coordinate with Criminal Justice when...” where participants could select: prosecution/testify(1), treat perpetrators(2), treat victims(3), victims needs criminal justice information(4), child custody(5), or other(8). To assess the strength of this cooperation, victim service providers were also asked binary questions like, “Have you experienced any problems in coordinating with these agencies,” which were followed by questions with multiple choices to select to further detail this coordination.

Cooperation was also measured using the law enforcement surveys where, similarly to the victim services surveys, police officers responded to questions regarding the communication and coordination with intervention and advocacy services. These responses were asked and coded the same way as the victim services survey, using a combination of binary and multiple selection questions. Cooperation was also measured in this survey through questions about when police officers offer referrals to victims of other services. For example, one question asked was

“When you contact a violent crime victim or witness who needs services, how do you respond?” To which law enforcement officer could choose as many of the following listed options: provide pamphlet/list of referrals (1), contact an agency on behalf of a victim/witness (2), give name to someone else in Department who will contact victim/witness (3), call crisis intervention team (4), and/or other (8).

Control Variables

The proposed datasets to be used in this study have already included questions in the surveys and outside data from legal records to help combat the influence of any confounding variables on the results of the study. Specifically, through the surveys, the researchers controlled for multiple sociodemographic variables including race, sex, level of education, employment status, and marital status. It was important to control for these factors since previous research has found that these variables influence an individual's perception of the criminal justice system and police. For example, in a study done by Johnson and colleagues (2017), researchers randomly assigned participants to watch six different videos stimulating a traffic stop, one positive, one negative, and one neutral, and two others with altered drivers' race (either white or African American). The results of the study detailed that Black participants examined police more harshly than non-Black participants, most notably due to the history of mistreatment of people of color by the police (Johnson et al. 2017). These findings are similar to the results of many other studies as, “race is one of the most salient predictors of attitudes towards the police,” (Warren 2011) therefore, it must be controlled for in the study.

In another study done by Wentz and Schlimgen (2012), researchers examined the multiple factors that influence peoples' view of law enforcement including a person's sociodemographic situation. The researchers discovered that participants who reported earning a

lower income, low/brief academic history, and who rent the place they reside in had a more negative perception of the police (Wentz and Schlimgen 2012). Overall, each of these sociodemographic variables was controlled for because of their connection and influence on the perception of law enforcement and advocacy services.

Also, through a separate section of data gathered through official police records the following potential confounding variables were examined: case outcome, type of crime that occurred, the severity of injury sustained by the victim, and whether the offender in question was arrested. The fact that the data gathered by Rienick and colleagues also controlled for these variables further demonstrates why this dataset is applicable for this study because they address factors that have been proven to influence the main variables being examined. In a 2014 study conducted by Murphy and Barkworth, researchers examined the influence both case outcome and fair treatment have on a victim's satisfaction and cooperation level. The researchers highlighted existing research that demonstrates that case outcome influences victims' perception of the police and their willingness to cooperate (Murphy and Barkworth 2014). Therefore, similarly to the examination of sociodemographic, these confounding variables such as case outcome must be controlled for, given their known impact on citizens' view of the criminal justice system.

Sociodemographic

Race, sex, level of education, and marital status were all measured and coded the same with a list of potential responses listed in association with a number. For example, marital status was listed with the option for the participant to choose any of the following: 1. Married, 2. Separated, 3. Divorced, 4. Widowed, 5. Single/never married, 8. Other, 9. Dk/nr. The same

pattern follows for all of the remaining sociodemographic variables with other and dk/nr coded as eight and nine for each question.

Other Variables

The remaining confounding variables were controlled for through collection and coding official case reports established six months after the criminal offense occurred. These confounding variables include case outcome, type of offense, victim injuries, and offender arrest which were all coded similarly to the sociodemographic, where there was a list of potential choices that were each associated with a number (lowest option 1). It is important to note the consideration of these confounding variables when gathering the proposed data sets because it speaks to the validity and reliability of the data and the results of the initial study.

Chapter 6: Proposed Data Analysis

This research proposal is attempting to better understand how the relationship between victim advocates and police can strengthen or weaken victims' cooperation with the criminal justice system and their perceived effectiveness of the entire process. To best examine this topic the research will focus on three main variables: victim satisfaction, the independent variable, effectiveness, secondary independent variable, and cooperation, the dependent variable. The Effectiveness of Alternative Victim Assistance Service Delivery Models in the San Diego Region (Rienick, Mulmat, and Pennell 2006) survey involves a mix of 5-Point Likert scale (ordinal level of measurement), binary (nominal level of measurement), and multiple selection questions (nominal level of measurement). Therefore, for victim satisfaction, if the mean victim's score is on the higher end, between 4 and 5, that would indicate that the victims surveyed are generally more satisfied with the criminal justice system. However, if the mean scores are on the lower end, between 1 and 2, it would indicate that victims are more dissatisfied with the criminal justice system. Similarly, for the 5-Point Likert scale questions addressing cooperation, if police and victim advocates had scores between 4 and 5, it would demonstrate a high level of cooperation between organizations. Alternatively, if the data reflected scores of 1 and 2, it would mean that the reported level of cooperation between police and victim advocates is dissatisfying and, therefore, low.

The analysis of the survey's binary questions would function differently than the analysis of the 5-Point Likert scale questions. The binary questions are coded as follows: yes (1), no (2). Therefore, if a simple analysis of these questions indicates a higher number of yes questions (if the mean is closer to 1) it would indicate a higher level of cooperation among police and victim advocates. This ultimately means if analysis of these questions demonstrates that most

participants selected no(2), then it would indicate a weaker cooperation level because there is limited interaction among both parties.

The purpose of the multiple selection questions is to allow participants more space to expand upon their answers and provide the researchers with more context into their answer choices. As such, these questions would be analyzed using the simpler methods of examining such as mode and frequency. The intention with the multiple selection questions is more to identify common themes in participants' reasoning for how they answered the Likert scale and binary questions.

This dataset provides questions that address the levels of victim satisfaction, all groups (victims, victim advocates, and police) perceived effectiveness of the system, and cooperation, measured through survey reports from victim advocates and police. However, the dataset was not created to examine a causal relationship, but instead, the intention is to investigate the correlation between variables. Therefore, to examine the relationships between victim satisfaction, effectiveness, and cooperation a mix of ANOVA, Chi-Square, and frequency distribution tests were used. Specifically, the researcher proposes doing a frequency distribution to analyze each individual group's reported survey data to gather a better understanding of the common themes between participants in the same group.

Lastly, the researcher also proposes analyzing all of the Likert scale questions separately and in combination with the other types of questions. To analyze the Likert scale questions the researcher would use either an ANOVA or t-test to analyze the relationship between victim satisfaction and cooperation, and victim satisfaction and effectiveness. Specifically, for Likert scale questions, the researcher would use the t-test to examine victim satisfaction and police reported cooperation and victim satisfaction and victim advocate reported cooperation, and an

ANOVA test to examine the relationship among all three (victim satisfaction, police-reported cooperation, and victim advocate reported cooperation). To examine these relationships (victim satisfaction and police-reported cooperation; victim satisfaction and victim advocate reported cooperation; and victim satisfaction, police reported cooperation, and victim advocate reported cooperation) using a combination of all types of questions a Chi-Square test would be used. For all analyses involving effectiveness and cooperation, a Chi-Square test would be used because the effectiveness variable was not measured using any Likert scale questions.

Overall, given the amount of data gathered through the survey, the researcher proposes doing a mix of multiple different types of analysis. Specifically, the researcher would run the following statistical tests to address the correlation between victim satisfaction and cooperation: frequency distribution, ANOVA, and a Chi-Square test. It is important to reemphasize that the purpose of this study is to investigate a correlational relationship between variables, therefore, the results of this study would not be able to identify a causal relationship between any of the variables being examined.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study's results would be to bridge the gap in research surrounding the relationships between victims, victim advocates, and the police. While previous research has examined the relationships between victims and police (Aviv and Weisburd 2016; Dichter 2011; Gekoski et al. 2013; Maddox and Barker 2011; Tarling and Morris 2010; White et al. 2021), victims and victim advocates (Bonomi and Martin 2021; Camacho and Alarid 2008; Reppucci et al 2005; Rivas et al. 2019), and limited and conflicting research on the interaction between victim advocates and police (Gaines and Wells 2017; Maier 2008; Rich and Seffrin 2013; Sudderth 2006). However, there is little existing research which takes into account the opinions of all three groups, victims, victim advocates, and police, while examining how, specifically, the cooperation between victim advocates and police can influence victim's satisfaction and perceived effectiveness. Therefore, the results of this study will help to better inform future research and help to provide more information about how to best help victims and create an effective process for the police and victim advocates.

If the results of this study indicated that when the victim advocate and police reported a strong level of cooperation and communication the victim also reported a high level of satisfaction and effectiveness (a positive correlation) then this would support the researcher's hypothesis. Ultimately, this would indicate the importance of the relationship between victim advocates and police and would demonstrate the need to focus more on building this relationship in training. Alternatively, if the results demonstrate no correlation between these variables it would indicate that the relationship between victim advocates and police has little effect on victim satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of the criminal justice system. These results would also help to inform future directions as it would demonstrate a need to focus resources

more on strengthening victim advocates and police training separately. Also, if the result indicated a negative correlation between cooperation and victim satisfaction, then this would also go against the researcher's hypothesis and demonstrate a large need for further research.

Additionally, if the data highlights a low level of reported satisfaction from victims then it would demonstrate a great need for future research and implementation of different procedures. Also, if the data indicates a disparity between the reported effectiveness from victims, victim advocates, and the police then this would demonstrate an apparent issue with communication and a need to address why this difference in opinions exists. Lastly, the results of the multiple selection questions will be very beneficial to advancing the understanding of what additional factors influence these relationships, which would work to inform future research directions.

Limitations

While this study would provide a strong framework to help expand upon a large gap in research, it is also not without limitations. The largest of these limitations being the age of the data. The Effectiveness of Alternative Victim Assistance Service Delivery Models in the San Diego Region study (Rienick, Mulmat, and Pennell 2006) uses data that was gathered in 1994. This is clearly a large limitation, especially given not only the fact that it is over twenty years old, but also because this data was gathered before the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it is important to note that the research examining these relationships is extremely limited. Therefore, it would be both cost-effective and necessary to start by using existing data. First, it is cost-effective because using existing data does not require as much costly resources to execute this study. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for the proposed study to use older data because it will establish a baseline for future research which attempts to examine how the pandemic has affected

these variables. However, the researcher would be remiss to not note the limitation of the generalizability of the data given its age.

Another limitation from this study is that the data and the participants are all only from the San Diego area, which could limit the generalizability of the data since San Diego is not necessarily representative of the whole country. However, since the data on this topic is already so limited it is still important to start with examining the data we already have since it is both cost-effective and will serve as a good baseline for future research. The researcher would recommend using the results of this study to inform future research which could involve participants from all over the country to expand its generalizability. Additionally, the larger hope is that similar studies will be able to examine as many different regions and departments as possible to help provide information that targets each area's needs and differences.

Lastly, while this survey did a great job of trying to offer room for participants to expand upon their answers it is also limited in its scope for participants to add more explanation behind their choices. Participants were only allowed to answer within the confines of the Likert scale, binary, and multiple selection questions. Therefore, this research serves as a great baseline into identifying the relationship between victims, victim advocates, and police, and the multiple selection questions offer some insight to help guide future research.

Implications and Future Directions

The intentions of this study are to encourage future research and give us a baseline on the needs of victims and how to adequately and effectively provide victims with the necessary assistance to reduce revictimization and encourage future reporting. The results of this study would help to initiate more research and focus on this subject so that not only does it bridge a gap in the research, but it also encourages even more exploration and focus on the victims'

needs. Although the data is older it still has great implications since information on this topic is already so limited it will help to establish a great start point into this research subject. Using this data creates a unique opportunity to help facilitate future research in the wake of the pandemic. Specifically, it provides background on the topic which other researchers can use to help identify how the pandemic has affected this process.

Additionally, the results of this study would be used to establish future research. Specifically, given the context of this study it would be beneficial for future research to examine this topic using a more qualitative framework so participants can be given the opportunity to provide more explanations behind their answers. This could be achieved by incorporating an interview section into a future study so researchers could further investigate the specific factors which influence the relationship between victim advocates and police, and better understand the needs of the victim. Also, this study can be used to help administer similar studies in additional places across the country to gather a more well-rounded understanding of how these relationships function in different regions, and how victims are affected by these differences. Additionally, the inclusion of more areas in future research will also be very helpful in creating policy and training recommendations that are specific to the needs of that region.

The purpose of this study is to establish a more definitive framework on the relationship between victim advocates and the police, and how this affects victims' satisfaction. For too long there has been a failure in this field to fully examine and begin to understand how the relationship between victim advocates and the police functions and impacts the victim. While there is existing research investigating the effectiveness of victim advocates and the police separately, very few studies examine how the relationship between these two parties impacts the victim. This gap in research is extremely problematic because not only does it indicate a failure

to check-in and continually reassess the effectiveness of victim services, but it also impedes practitioners from providing the best form of care to victims due to a lack of knowledge on the subject. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to examine the strength of current communication practices and help police and victim advocates to make informed decisions to best aid the victim. The end intention is not only to fill this gap in research, but also to bridge the gap between research and policy and ensure that victims are being provide with the highest form of care possible.

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