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LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALIZATION:
THE ACCREDITATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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Shelia R. [unclear]

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance.

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A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Accepted for the Graduate Council

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Dean, Graduate Studies

ANGEL D. GEOGHAGAN

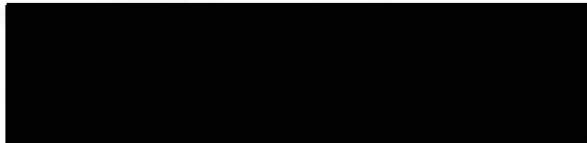
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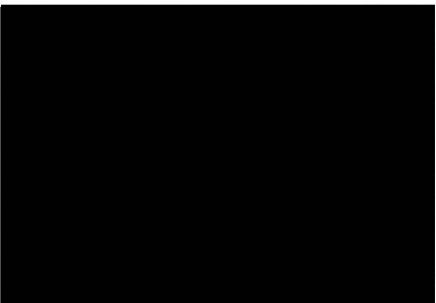
I am submitting a thesis written by Angel Geoghagan entitled "Law Enforcement Professionalization: The Accreditation of Law Enforcement." I have examined the final copy of this thesis and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science with a major in Criminal Justice.

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Shela R. VanNess, Chairperson

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Dean, Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

Rapid social change has led many law enforcement agencies to explore various options that would serve to enhance service delivery, department credibility within communities, and overall professionalism. From a historical perspective, professionalism has been an elusive state for law enforcement agencies ever since the inception of the first police department. A search for such professionalism has taken a turn toward accreditation. Accreditation for law enforcement was studied to determine if the process enhanced the perceived level of credibility and professionalism enjoyed by police departments in the southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Three hundred and seven southeastern law enforcement departments were surveyed; of these, 76 were accredited, 231 were not accredited. Agencies were asked a series of questions to garner opinions on professionalism, credibility, accreditation and the importance of these items for law enforcement. The majority of accredited departments observed a rise in citizen support and a decrease in citizen complaints after accreditation. Accreditation appears have a positive overall impact on law enforcement agencies in the southeastern United States. Reduction in liability insurance cost, lawsuits filed and settled, and an increase in community and federal financial support indicates accreditation benefits outweigh costs associated with the process of departments becoming accredited.

of police officers is expected, not just desired, and the solution lies in the growing world of accreditation.

Created through a need for standardization of police and

Commission on Accreditation for **INTRODUCTION**

specifically for law enforcement by law enforcement executives association

This study was undertaken to investigate the effect law enforcement accreditation has on providing departments with community credibility and the level of perceived professionalism gained by departments. National standards for law enforcement have been lacking for quite some time. Due to this oversight the reputation of police officers in this country has taken a plunge, particularly in minority communities. The public police are sworn to protect and serve in these communities are suspicious of police authority and do not believe police agencies to be credible (Erez, 1983; Kelling and Moore, 1988; Williams and Murphy, 1990). In order to combat a worsening reputation many departments have decided to seek assistance from outside their departments in an effort to correct a seemingly deepening problem.

The purpose of accrediting law enforcement agencies is to "improve the delivery of law enforcement services" (CALEA Accreditation Process Book, 1995, p.3). With the

the first law enforcement agency. This adversarial relationship is due, in part, to police misconduct over the past several decades, which includes gross violations of human rights such as the Rodney King incident in Los Angeles. Incidents of misconduct, abuse of power, and criminal activity have led to mistrust between the public and their police.

Without some form of control and accountability police departments rapidly are falling into further disfavor with their communities. Community leaders across the United States are fighting back against perceived misconduct by police departments and are demanding changes in the way police conduct business. A new level of professionalism

of police officers is expected, not just desired, and the solution appears to be the growing world of accreditation.

Created through a need for standardization of policies and procedures, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was created specifically for law enforcement by four law enforcement executive associations - the International Association of Chiefs of Police (ICAP), the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the National Sheriff's Association (NSA), and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) (CALEA Accreditation Process Book, 1995, p.1). Following the lead of CALEA several states have created state PACs to further assist agencies in the accrediting process and to further the goal of professionalism and achieving community credibility and support. These state PACs (Police Accreditation Committees) were established primarily to provide support for all agencies within their respective states during the accreditation process and to encourage agencies to join the process.

The purpose of accrediting law enforcement agencies is to "improve the delivery of law enforcement services" (CALEA Accreditation Process Book, 1995, p.1). With the goal of improvement in mind, law enforcement agencies attempting accreditation have the ultimate goal of truly achieving acceptance by the community, which they serve. Only through community involvement and support of law enforcement agencies within the community can departments do an effective job in other law enforcement goals and objectives. Accreditation can provide for a level of professionalism long sought by those in law enforcement as well as provide the community with a department that has met the standards recognized nationally as what law enforcement should attain. Through

accreditation, department credibility within the respective community should increase and, therefore, further the ultimate goal of law enforcement - an increase in the quality of community life.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is an elusive term, many definitions exist, but few agree as to what it means to be professional. In the world of policing there has been debate as to whether or not law enforcement officers are professionals; Etzioni (1969) referred to law enforcement as a semi-profession while August Vollmer, a revolutionary law enforcer of the early 1900s, saw law enforcement as being able to achieve professional status (Caiden, 1977). The debate over what it is to be professional or what professionalism actually means is not within the scope of this paper, however some history on professions and professionalism is needed to understand what law enforcement is attempting to achieve through the accreditation process.

Greenwood (1966) identified five attributes that would assist in distinguishing a profession, that is professions have a systematic body of theory, professional authority, sanction of the community, a regulative code of ethics, and a professional culture. If these are indeed the distinguishing features of a profession then law enforcement's desire for professional status depends largely on the accomplishment of these specific attributes.

The desire for a more professional police force is not new. August Vollmer, upon taking over as Town Marshall in Berkeley, California in 1905, attempted to professionalize the police through education, training, salary, and higher standards of performance (Caiden, 1977). Vollmer felt that professional authority and sanction of the

community went hand in hand, if you want to have the authority and have community respect such authority it had to be earned. In Vollmer's theory of law enforcement authority could only be earned by requiring that officers live up to the highest standards of performance (Caiden, 1977).

The public, Vollmer agreed, was entitled to and should expect to be served by a police force that meets professional standards. Understanding this expectation and wishing to draw in the finest people, good working conditions and competitive rewards were a must. With this realization Vollmer not only established high standards of performance, but also attempted to provide what his officers needed in order to make it happen. These actions can be seen as a precursor to the accreditation process, high standards of performance, accountability to the public, and commensurate awards for performance.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Not unlike accreditation for any other profession, law enforcement accreditation has provided agencies with a process by which accreditation is to be accomplished. The process consists of five general phases: application, self-assessment, on-site assessment, Commission review, and maintaining compliance and reaccreditation. The application phase is just that, the law enforcement agency applies to CALEA for applicant status. The Commission reviews the application to determine department eligibility then the Commission and the agency sign an accreditation agreement identifying expectations.

The final part of the application phase is the completion of the Agency Profile Questionnaire (APQ) by the agency requesting accreditation. The APQ is a detailed questionnaire that garners relevant data that will assist the agency and the Commission in

determining the applicable standards and requirements (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.18). Additionally, the APQ provides the Commission with a snapshot of the agency and assists the Commission in determining how best to provide program related assistance.

The second phase in the accreditation process is the self-assessment. The self-assessment is a thorough examination of a department's own policies and procedures in order to determine compliance with applicable standards (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.18). During this phase the agency prepares documentation known as "proofs of compliance," these proofs are assembled in a manner that aids the Commission in determining agency compliance to the standard. Additionally, agencies develop plans and procedures for accomplishing the next phase of the process, the on-site assessment. Once the agency determines that it has met all applicable standards and is prepared for the on-site visit it notifies the Commission that it is ready to become a candidate for accreditation.

The third phase is the on-site assessment. The Commission prepares a team of assessors to examine every aspect of the agency from files to facilities. In the preparation and training of these assessors the commission ensures that the assessors have no conflict with the agency in question thereby ensuring a nonadversarial relationship (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.18). The Commission assessors' only purpose is to ensure agency compliance with applicable standards.

The assessors arrive at the agency on a Sunday morning and begin with the examination of agency facilities and equipment. This examination includes a static display of department equipment and a walk through of various divisions such as

property, communications, and records. Once this visual examination is complete the assessors conduct a review all agency policy and procedures to ensure compliance with commission standards. The assessors review all findings with the agency head and submit a written report to the Commission (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.18).

The forth phase of the process is the Commission review of the findings from the on-site assessment. This phase includes a hearing in which the agency chief and accreditation manager answer questions about the agency and their efforts towards accreditation. The Commission hears testimony from the assessors as well and determines if accreditation should be awarded. This award is given during one of the three annual meetings and once awarded, accreditation lasts for three years (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.19).

The final phase of the accreditation process is maintaining compliance in order to ensure reaccreditation. During this phase the agency maintains compliance with applicable standards and submits reports to the Commission on an annual basis and relay department activities as it relates to their accreditation status. If the agency continues to comply with the standards at the end of the three-year period, the agency is granted permission to repeat the process and continue their accreditation status (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.18). For a visual overview of the accreditation process see appendix 1.

THE COMMISSION

The Commission is a board consisting of 21 members, 11 from law enforcement and

10 from the public and private sectors. Commissioners are appointed by the Executive Directors of CALEA's founding agencies and serve for a term of three years; each Commissioner may serve for three terms. The 11 law enforcement members of the commission are selected from state, county, and municipal agencies of all sizes to ensure the various types and sizes of departments are adequately represented. The remaining 10 Commissioners are selected from elected and appointed state, county, and municipal government officials as well as elected and appointed members of the judiciary (CALEA Accreditation Process Book, 1995, p.2).

STANDARDS

The original creation of standards revolved around 48 topic areas that the Commission determined to be relevant and significant based upon research conducted by committees within the Commission. The standards created for the accreditation process were reviewed by the Commission using field testing, among other methods, to ensure their applicability to law enforcement agencies (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.14). This review resulted in several changes since the original set of standards was published in 1983. Currently, there are 439 standards covering everything from administration to victim/witness assistance.

The standards, although inclusive of most law enforcement functions, were designed to allow departments to determine their own policies and procedures by providing a guideline rather than a set of rules. That is, the standards provided a description of 'what' must be accomplished, but allowed wide latitude in determining 'how' compliance was achieved (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.14). By allowing such wide latitude the

Commission guaranteed that the standards would fit a wide variety of situations presented by different agencies and jurisdictions across the country, while maintaining the spirit of the standard.

The Commission determined that not every standard must be met by every agency. The level of compliance to the standards therefore, was based on agency size either mandatory, other than mandatory, or not applicable (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.14). Additionally, standards themselves were divided into several types: written directive, itemized, conditional, linking, observational, and asterisked. The written directive type of standard was the most prevalent and required an agency to establish a written directive that described agency actions that would meet the standard.

An itemized standard was a standard created that had within it several additional requirements, sometimes referred to as bullets. Conditional, or "if," standards enabled departments that did not perform certain functions, court security for example, to be excused from complying with those standards. A linking standard tied together two related standards, while an observational standard required only observation as a proof of compliance. Lastly, an asterisked standard was marked as such to draw attention to a standard that dealt with issues of life, health, and safety (CALEA Standards Manual, 1995, p.17).

By dividing standards into categories, such as the ones, listed above it reduced the total number of standards with which an agency must comply to reflect only those applicable to that agency. The structure of the standards allowed the agency to make the process its own, a process that reflects the nature of that department and its jurisdiction.

By doing so the standards reflected the individual agency while it provided a set of nationally accepted standards.

The standards assured the departments undertaking the process several things. First, the standards were drawn through a long review process that included a field test before final approval. Various criminal justice professionals were consulted, which resulted in standards that reflected a wide variety of views. Secondly, because of the process that created the standards, there has been wide acceptance at the federal level of these national standards, as such federal money may soon be given to accredited agencies as opposed to those who are not.

Third, as is reflected further in this paper, accreditation has resulted in fewer lawsuits, lessened payoffs due to lawsuits, and reduced liability costs (Marino, 1998). Fourth, accreditation requires a review of policies and procedures on a regular basis thereby requiring agencies to keep up with societal changes. Lastly, in addition to updating policy and procedure, accreditation requires training to be updated, this acts a way to enhance officers skills and knowledge.

HISTORICAL/THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The criminal justice system and law enforcement in particular has been stuck in reactive slump. Law enforcement agencies respond to what has happened and rarely conduct activities that would be considered proactive or preventative. The system has been entrenched in the positivistic "bad people, bad choices" paradigm, that is criminals are perceived as bad people who need to be arrested and taken away from society. This is the way it has always been, but change happens. In order to deal with changes in

population and realities of a global society law enforcement must change. We live in a time of rapid social change, which has created what Durkhiem would refer to as a condition of anomie, or a state of normlessness. This rapid social change has required alteration in the way society operates. Due to rapid changes more people are left without options; the economy has placed a wider gap between the haves and have-nots; immigration rates have increased, changing societal make-up; multiculturalism and diversity are reality, not just buzzwords; we have become dependant on increased technology; and ordinary problems are no longer ordinary (Montavalli, 1996; Morgenthau, 1997; Schley, 1997; Sivy, 1997). Societal changes require changed responses.

Society can no longer treat new problems with old ideas. The paradigm of positivism is beginning to shift to recognition of rapid social change and need for the reinvention of the system. Society wants prevention not reaction this is evident from polls that express crime as society's chief concern (Erez, 1983; Williams and Murphy, 1990). Movements towards prevention, like community oriented policing, youth activities, and victim assistant services have become more prevalent and the benefits of such programs have been seen.

Accreditation has a history of ensuring professional standing in a variety of fields, but more importantly accreditation serves as a vehicle for change (Baker, 1996).

Accreditation ensures constant upgrade by requiring increased training and education of officers based on changing societal needs. Law enforcement accreditation is no different, it requires departments to change. The process forces agencies to look outside department walls and take into consideration the ever changing landscape that officers patrol. The

world around us changes at an ever-quickening rate law enforcement efforts to change should at the very least keep up with shifting attitudes and demands of the public.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used in this research:

Accreditation - The process by which an outside body determines whether an agency has met set standards, once standards have been met that outside body vouches for the agency.

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) – The Commission assembled to create standards by which law enforcement agencies can be accessed for professionalization.

Credibility – Credibility is the belief or perceived level of public trust an agency enjoys within its community.

Police Accreditation Committee (PAC) – A PAC is a coalition of all law enforcement agencies within a state that have received or are working towards accreditation with CALEA.

Law Enforcement Agency or Department – A law enforcement agency or department is a public police agency responsible for the enforcement of laws as they relate to the general public. This does not include jails, prisons, or private security firms.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Law enforcement agencies have not enjoyed a tremendous amount of credibility within their communities. Due to a variety of causes over the past few decades police

departments have been sorely lacking in much needed support. Primarily because of perceived injustices committed by the hands of police officers, the public seems disillusioned and is looking for answers. Changes in society have resulted in changing public demands; the police are expected to use new techniques to handle new problems because the old ideas and way of handling problems are insufficient. Through the process of accreditation law enforcement agencies and the public alike should enjoy a raised level of standards and therefore increased credibility.

Independent of binding legislation that controls the quality of law enforcement, most departments operate in a vacuum, doing anything they want, how they want. The politics involved within departments continue to allow for this isolationism. Law enforcement agencies are bound to uphold laws (local, state, and federal), but standards of law enforcement actions are not defined, allowing agencies to conduct day to day business as they see fit. Agencies cannot continue in this vein, something to control the standards which law holds enforcement accountable must be enforced. Police departments are turning to accreditation not only standardize but to professionalize as well. Credibility is needed, professionalism is desired, and without progress towards some standardization of procedures, neither will be accomplished.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine whether accreditation of law enforcement agencies acts as a precursor towards higher levels of perceived professionalism in communities where accredited agencies operate. This study is designed to explore if law

enforcement agencies can meet their quest for improved community relations by providing an option for bettering standards.

Prior to this investigation, there has not been an empirical study on law enforcement agencies specifically within the Southeast to consider their accreditation efforts and outcomes. This study will expand previous research on law enforcement accreditation by examining whether accreditation improves perceived credibility among citizens within Southeastern State communities protected by accredited law enforcement agencies. This study provides research data for police departments interested in improving community relations through the process of accreditation.

SIGNIFICANCE

The public rarely sees the true nature of law enforcement; rather they are bombarded with inaccurate images of police at work in the media. Accreditation and the work surrounding the process usually do not inspire a great deal of intrigue; however, once the quality of law enforcement is discussed everyone seems to have an interest, if not an opinion. This study is important because it tests the value of law enforcement accreditation in the area of quality, accountability, standardization, and responsiveness to community needs (Bizzack, 1993, p. 8). Additionally, this study is significant because it is the first study of its kind measuring outcomes of accreditation in the Southeastern United States.

This study is also important to all agencies, which have either gone through accreditation, are going through accreditation, or are merely contemplating the process; important for what it provides, a test of the process. This study examines evidence to

determine the role accreditation plays in the achievement of a professionalized department, one that can attain the lofty goal of being credible as well as accountable to the community.

HYPOTHESES/Framework

Generally, it is argued that accreditation improves the overall effectiveness of law enforcement agencies (Anderson, 1994, Baker, 1996, Bizzack, 1993, Williams, 1989). This research is based upon the theoretical framework of Baker (1996) who has studied the effects of accreditation on law enforcement agencies specifically in the areas of selection, promotion, and education. An additional framework used was that of Bizzack (1993) who maintained that the overall progress of police improvements have come primarily from accreditation.

This researcher believes that accreditation for law enforcement can be shown to have a major impact upon the amount of credibility within the communities in which the department operates. By comparing agencies within the Southeastern States both before and after they have been accredited the researcher hopes to show that accreditation helps to improve the overall credibility and professionalism of the department within their community. Therefore, the researcher hopes to reject the null hypothesis that an agency's accreditation status has no effect on professionalism scores.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Surveying every law enforcement agency that has had some contact with the accreditation process is not only impractical but also unnecessary. Therefore, the focus of

this study has been sufficiently narrowed to encompass law enforcement agencies within the Southeastern States. Included in this study are agencies that have successfully completed the accreditation process with CALEA and several agencies that are at various stages in the process. Additionally, several non-accredited departments were randomly selected for comparison purposes.

The research reflects the departments' belief of enhanced credibility is based upon contact within their respective communities. Citizen surveys are a requirement of every accredited agency as they provide police departments' feedback on their performance. Unfortunately, not all departments conduct surveys so the researcher relied on agency records of comments and citizens complaints as well as agency self-reports about their credibility.

Due to the researcher being an active accreditation manager as well as a sworn police officer in a Southeastern State other departments within these states have been open to this research. Agencies selected have shown a willingness to cooperate with the study and have, in general, allowed access to files and personnel that may not have been available to an outsider. The accuracy of the data collected from these departments and the ability to use any compiled data may be a cause of concern based on the differences in data aggregation techniques as well as data interpretation.

Due to the size and nature of the survey, as well as the time limitations of this study, validity and reliability may be in question. Care was taken to create the most reliable and valid instrument possible. In order to do so the researcher chose previously used instruments from other accreditation surveys (Baker, 1996; Bizzack, 1993). These surveys have been used numerous times by researchers to gather relevant information on

the accreditation process within law enforcement agencies. Questions from these previously used instruments should assist in achieving the most valid and reliable instrument possible.

ASSUMPTIONS

This researcher assumes that the agencies being surveyed will grant access to all requested data and that this data is accurate. In addition, this researcher assumes that the instrument used for this project will accurately garner the information needed answer the research questions. Lastly the researcher assumes that the information provided by the agencies being surveyed is truthful and void of errors.

professional standards accrediting agencies for these various fields have provided a much needed measuring stick. Law enforcement agencies are now turning to accreditation in order to bring about professional standards.

Studies on the process, benefits, and costs of accreditation are numerous and provide valuable information on the subject of accreditation in general. However, at 20 years of age, law enforcement accreditation has not received much research attention. Despite this, research is beginning to reflect that accreditation may be of benefit to agencies that have undertaken the process.

THE PROCESS

Clauser and Carpenter (1988) researched the process of accreditation with CALBA on their own department with the purpose of dissecting the process for other law enforcement agencies in their quest for accreditation (p.62). The authors described the

process of accreditation as having four distinct phases (application, self-assessment, on-site assessment, and commission review and decision) which provide departments with a roadmap to achieve accreditation while also providing the opportunity to improve departmental operations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Accreditation for different professional venues, to include hospitals and universities, has served, for numerous years, as a means to ensure quality and consistency of performance. In fact, according to Anderson (1994), "The accreditation model has long been used to ensure professionalism in a variety of occupations and professions" (p.10). In order to ensure that these occupations and professions are meeting minimal professional standards accrediting agencies for these various fields have provided a much needed measuring stick. Law enforcement agencies are now turning to accreditation in order to bring about professional standards.

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process of accreditation as having four distinct phases (application, self-assessment, on-site assessment, and commission review and decision) which provide departments with a roadmap to achieve accreditation while also providing the opportunity to improve departmental operations.

The accreditation process was shown to be a difficult, lengthy procedure that requires proper management of every aspect. Enormous documentation and manpower are needed to complete the process of accreditation. The authors hoped to show that by following their methods for achievement of accreditation that any agency, if they desire, could achieve the ultimate show of professionalism for law enforcement. Clauser and Carpenter determined that regardless of the drawbacks, ultimately the process was worthwhile as, "accreditation is the one method available today that differentiates between agencies that are truly working to make law enforcement a profession and those that are content to maintain the status quo" (p. 62).

LIABILITY PROTECTION

Due to the rise in civil and even criminal legal action against law enforcement agencies, a level of protection is needed for departments and citizens alike. According to the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA - 1994, 1995, 1996) agencies could benefit substantially from accreditation. CALEA was established to "improve the delivery of law enforcement services" and, according to CALEA (1995) provided the services through the set of established national standards (p. 1). With the assistance accreditation provided, the risk of lawsuits has been diminished according to CALEA Update (1998). CALEA Update shows a reduction of lawsuits by 17% over a

four year time period and a 35% reduction of severity of judgements over the same time period (p. 3).

According to the research, accreditation provided protection against many lawsuits by forcing agencies to meet standards that effected the quality of life issues many lawsuits attack. Dorsey (1983) noted that accreditation would not solve every problem faced by law enforcement agencies, but accreditation could assist in making significant improvements (p. 79). By making improvements, lawsuits may be limited and liability costs may be reduced.

Liability costs were the subject of an in-depth five year study conducted by the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA). This study, summarized in diagram 1-1 and table 1-1 focused on the difference of the liability cost of law enforcement agencies based on their status as accredited or non-accredited. According to this study when lawsuits and financial claims against law enforcement agencies who have accreditation are compared with those who have not been accredited, accredited agencies show a 16% reduction in frequency of lawsuits and a 35% reduction in the severity of claims. This study concluded, "Police Accreditation does in fact significantly impact a law enforcement agency's ability to prevent and reduce loss in the area of police professional liability" (IRMA, p.2).

Figure 1-1 Severity of Claims against departments based on accreditation status (IRMA Study)

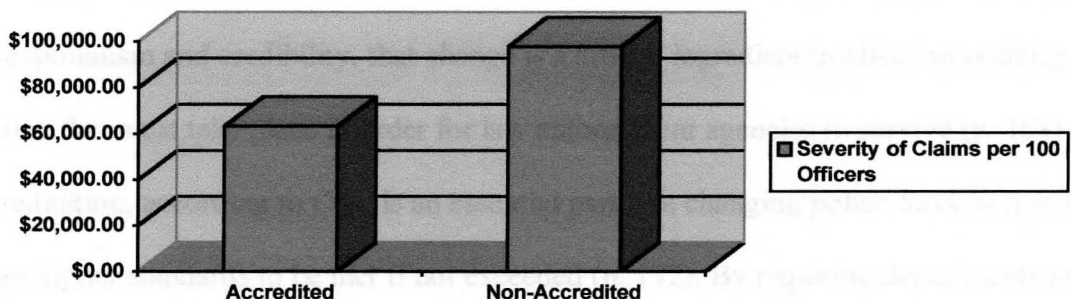


Table 1-1 Severity of Claims against departments based on accreditation status (IRMA Study)

Agency Status	Total # of Sworn Officers	Total Claims	# of Claims per 100 Officers	Total Severity	Severity per 100 Officers
Accredited	627	54	8.61	\$396,882.76	\$63,298.69
Non-Accredited	1342	138	10.28	\$1,312,089.62	\$97,771.21

THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Stewart (1985), addressed another problem - the future of public law enforcement. Stewart focused on the impact several private sector alternatives have on the future of the traditional police department. According to Stewart, it is not beyond the realm of possibility for the private sector to handle the every day task of law enforcement (p. 371). In order for the police to survive they must professionalize and win back the trust and the respect of the public they serve.

Although not directly addressed in Stewart's article, the idea of accreditation is alluded to in the area of professionalism. In order to improve law enforcement agencies and raise them to the level of a profession, standardization of policies and procedures is required. Stewart's belief is that in order "to survive as leaders in public safety, they (police) will need to reestablish their credibility and update their craft" (p. 382). The future of law enforcement cannot be left behind; accreditation appears to be the best answer to reestablish what is lacking.

In addressing the changing atmosphere Cox (1990) stated, in his study emphasizing professionalism and credibility, that change is a crucial ingredient in effective policing, and one that must take place in order for law enforcement agencies to survive (p. 168). Accreditation, according to Cox, is an essential part of a changing police force in that it forces higher standards to be met if not exceeded (p. 172). By requiring departments to

meet higher standards, communicate with the public through surveys and the like, and to promote effective leadership and management through education and training, Cox believes accreditation can assist departments in meeting the ever demanding role required of police.

The main benefit of accreditation appears to be the ability to change and keep up with today's society. According to Medeiros (1987), accreditation for law enforcement has worked on a philosophy sensitive to the ever-changing role of the police (p. 14). Because of the sensitivity to the changing atmosphere the accreditation standards have changed as well, constantly providing up to date standards for law enforcement agencies to meet.

Huggins and Kehoe (1991) agree; they studied the accreditation process for the nation's jail system. The authors stated that the idea that accreditation provided constant change was of primary importance and something that could not be overlooked. The Huggins and Kehoe article viewed the accreditation process as a "beacon of light" that would continue to guide law enforcement agencies toward improved standards and therefore increased professional credibility (p. 42).

Anderson (1994) studied accreditation for law enforcement with similar results. Anderson found that accreditation was an impetus for needed change, as it forced departments to review policies and make needed changes (p.34). In his study of airport security accreditation, Anderson determined that providing for change within the organization was of the utmost importance and accreditation's value to an organization is immense if for no other reason than it provides a measuring tool for agency credibility and professionalism.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE IMPROVEMENT

Dorsey (1983) proposed that there are valid reasons for undertaking the accreditation process to include the fact that accreditation, if nothing else, forces administrators within the agency to evaluate their entire system of policies and procedures. Dorsey hoped to illustrate that through the process of accreditation, a review of all practices and procedures could at the very least benefit the organization because it compels the organization to either justify procedures and policies or change them to adapt to a different environment (p. 78).

Kroeker and McCoy (1988) also stressed the importance of effective policies that are in line with standard practices. Kroeker and McCoy's research illustrated the importance and function of proper department policies. Although not mentioning accreditation in particular, Kroeker and McCoy mentioned that policies do need to be standardized in any way possible to eliminate any confusion on the part of police officers (p. 112). What the authors illustrated in their article is that through effective policies and procedures the intended function of policies "to minimize the opportunity for error in critical situations" can be realized (p. 107).

Walker (1985) has performed research on the blue-ribbon commissions and their impact on police he specifically addressed the accreditation issue. Walker noted that accreditation, although generally accepted throughout the law enforcement community has met with some opposition from state and local law enforcement groups who oppose imposition of national standards from an outside agency, not the idea of addressing standards within the departments in particular (p. 367). The main obstacle for accreditation was, therefore, in addressing standards that would satisfy the general police

mentality. Walker believed however that accreditation can be a benefit to the field of law enforcement in that overall it "may cause agencies to take the first important step down the road to thoughtful planning and analysis" (p. 369).

Daughtry (1996) focused on the positive aspects of the process of accreditation, namely that it ensured constant review of agency policies and procedures (p. 20). Constant review of policies and procedures ensured, at the very least, that departments do not fall behind the public they are required to serve. "National and local incidents involving police will continue to expose questionable police practices and produce increased public scrutiny. These demanding and difficult times emphasize the need for accreditation" (Daughtry, 1996, p. 23). With this thought in mind Daughtry supports the accreditation process in general and CALEA in particular because CALEA establishes a support mechanism as well as a driving force for the continued improvement of law enforcement agencies.

PROFESSIONALISM

One of the main reasons for accreditation is not only to judge whether or not police departments measure up to appropriate levels of professionalism but to ensure these levels by requiring agencies to meet professional standards. According to Lumb (1994) the "police do not meet acceptable standards of practice warranting entitlement to professional status" (p. 15). Lumb proposed that if police wanted to be judged as professionals then they had to meet professional standards.

Lumb determined that it was not unreasonable to require law enforcement agencies to meet minimum standards of professionalism established by an outside body. The

reasoning is quite simple, according to Lumb, "when a police officer is given the right to deprive a person of his or her liberty, bring charges, and in an extreme circumstance take someone's life, basic responsibilities and specific roles should be stipulated" (p. 15).

Behan (1989) agreed with Lumb that accreditation provides a vehicle for improvement. Behan (1989) stated that with the creation of CALEA in 1979, law enforcement agencies were enabled, for the first time, to meet standards specifically designed to improve police service, increase confidence in law enforcement, and to provide for a new standardization of police practices and policies (p. 126).

Behan (1989) believed that law enforcement accreditation is the best way to improve and professionalize law enforcement and to bring police officers in to the realm of other professionals (p. 131). Several benefits were noted, mainly that an improved organization that maintained or updated policies and procedures was created. Additionally, there was an enhanced esprit de corps and improved morale among members in the department. Increased accountability and more professional status from the general public as well as from other professionals was also mentioned in Behan's study (p. 131).

Accreditation studies by Williams (1988 and 1989), Bizzack (1993), Baker (1996), Anderson (1994), and Crowder (1998) have concluded that social change necessitates the need to improve law enforcement. Williams (1988 and 1989) concluded that accreditation can only improve the agencies which undertakes the process. Williams determined through analysis of departments from across the country that accreditation provides an immeasurable opportunity for agencies to drastically improve themselves and in the process improve their credibility and perceived level of professionalism within their community (1989, p. 45). In both studies, Williams concluded that accreditation was a

worthwhile process to achieve a goal that provides immense benefits.

Bizzack (1993) studied the accreditation process over a ten-year time period to determine if the process was indeed worth the effort. In this study Bizzack concluded that accreditation represents a significant departure from traditional law enforcement and that in and of itself causes criticism from traditionalists who abhor change (p. 86). According to Bizzack, due to the nature of law enforcement's preference for a non-changing role in society accreditation represents a challenge that must be met in order for police departments to advance.

Bizzack showed that accreditation should be treated as a new "type of management technology" in that, like other technologies, such as computers, it advances the level of police capability (p. 89). Bizzack stated that in order to achieve the professional status desired, accreditation is not only essential but the only way around tradition police beliefs: "The police establishment can call themselves professionals and their work a profession all they want. This will not make it true. Until thinking moves from the old model into a new paradigm that is at least closer to the definition of professionalism proposed by accredited agencies, then real police professionalism will continue to be elusive" (p. 88).

Baker (1996) gave credit to the process for providing agencies with the opportunity to improve themselves and achieve the much-heralded title of professionals (p. 142).

According to Baker, in order to achieve professional status police agencies must move forward and meet "a set of nationally applicable standards," as those provided by accreditation (p. 138).

Crowder's (1998) doctoral dissertation on the state of law enforcement accreditation

verified that the process of accreditation would enhance the operational ability of a police agency (p. 121). In his study of the latest 100 law enforcement agencies to achieve accreditation through CALEA, Crowder determined that accreditation contributes to professionalism. Crowder found increased citizen support, reduced liability costs, and improved morale, all of which make for a more professional department.

OPPOSITION

Despite the overwhelmingly positive response to accreditation there are those who disagree with accreditation's value as a tool for improvement (Franks, 1987; Eastman). According to Franks (1987), accreditation has achieved nothing more than can be accomplished with an all-encompassing police manual of operations. Further, Franks believed that due to the fact that communities vary dramatically from place to place having one set of national standards is not only unnecessary but inappropriate as well (p.15).

Frank's contention is that departments should avoid accreditation because of its costs. There is, according to Franks, no evidence to support the contention that accreditation encourages departments to improve practices nor provides greater professional standing within the community. Frank's recommendation is to allow agencies to determine their own needs and make the necessary adjustments on their own. Professional status and community credibility can only come from the community served and not from an outside agency (p. 15).

Eastman has a similar view of the accreditation process. He stated that accreditation is a costly, make work, unneeded scheme and that everything accreditation provides law

enforcement can be achieved by the agency with less work and, of course, at a lower price tag (p.1). He believed accreditation is overrated and that there is no evidence that the benefits suggested by CALEA are in fact achieved (p. 2).

Eastman agrees with Franks about individualized departments and a national standard, put quite simply the belief is that these national standards will not work. In addition, Eastman believes that professionalism and credibility is for the individual community to determine and not an outside agency with set standards that may or may not apply to the specific police department undergoing the process. Finally, Eastman considers accreditation to be a waste of precious departmental resources that could be allocated to other, more important tasks and programs.

The negative view of accreditation is summed up as follows: "it appears that largely those who have opposed the idea of accreditation have little experience in dealing with the process, and it is evident that much of that literature espousing that view is opinion" (Bizzack, 1993, p. 21). This rebuttal to the negative literature is similar to most of the research on the accreditation process, simply put, accreditation appears to be beneficial in the eyes of most researchers as they continue to study the effects of accreditation for law enforcement.

SAMPLE

The accredited agencies that were the base of this research were agencies within the southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina,

RESEARCH DESIGN

and Tennessee. The State of Florida, although considered a southeastern state, was

The purpose of this research paper is to determine whether or not there is a connection between law enforcement accreditation and levels of perceived credibility and professionalism within the police departments and communities they serve. Law enforcement accreditation is relatively new and has, as of yet, not enjoyed wide application within law enforcement agencies, although the approval rating for accreditation has steadily increased. The chosen population for this research study is law enforcement departments and not the community. As it would be too difficult to survey community reactions across the region, instead the research will measure numbers of citizen complaints and law suits filed against accredited and non-accredited departments as a basis for comparison.

The method of data collection selected for this study was survey research. The researcher chose this method because it allows for the identification of characteristics of

law enforcement agencies and allows for efficient collection of relevant data for the

purpose of generalization. In addition, this methodology provided respondents with a tool that shows attitudes and opinions on the process of accreditation and the effect

accreditation has on their departments. The use of a survey allows the law enforcement departments a means to provide relevant data while maintaining relative anonymity.

What the researcher predicts is that there is a connection between accreditation and perceived levels of police credibility and professionalism within the community.

INSTRUMENT

SAMPLE

The accredited agencies that were the focus of this research were agencies within the southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The State of Florida, although considered a southeastern state, was excluded due to the fact that state accreditation is mandated by Florida State law and national accreditation by CALEA is strongly encouraged. The researcher felt that due to the Florida mandate and the voluntary nature of national accreditation (CALEA) including Florida would unnecessarily skew data. The limited number of accredited agencies necessitated that every accredited department within this region was surveyed for this research, this amounts to a total of 105 agencies of various sizes and locals.

For comparison purposes departments throughout the same southeastern region not currently accredited and those in various phases of accreditation were randomly selected from all available departments using *The National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators*. A total of 535 non-accredited law enforcement agencies of various sizes and locales were randomly selected to participate in this survey, using a random number table.

The total sample size of 640 law enforcement agencies represents thirty (30%) percent of the total population of law enforcement agencies within the southeastern states. This population included agencies of all sizes, functions, and accreditation status. The purpose of including accredited and non-accredited was to provide a large enough sample in order to generalize, include all types of law enforcement agencies.

accredited agencies, as well as a sample of non-accredited agencies in the southeastern

INSTRUMENT

Primarily concerned with perceived levels of professionalism and credibility for departments within their community, the survey was designed to measure variables in relation to a department's accreditation status. Open ended as well as closed ended questions were used to provide in-depth answers that would allow departments to voice opinions on the accreditation process and what it brings to their department in particular. Due to the desire for explicit information on department views and community reaction, quantitative as well as qualitative data were gathered to provide a broader picture.

The questionnaire was created specifically to address questions concerning community views. Although CALEA requires accredited agencies to survey their communities, other agencies are not required to use surveys. Unfortunately, because not all agencies formally survey their communities the researcher was forced to rely on citizen complaints and lawsuits filed to gather relevant information. Although there are previously created and utilized instruments to measure levels of professionalism and credibility, the researcher developed a different tool, based upon several different surveys from the literature, to focus specifically on how the departments and their communities perceive that accreditation has helped or hindered their department. Although the survey instrument was based upon previously used instruments it is still untested specifically for validity and reliability.

PROCEDURES

An introductory letter was used as a cover letter for the packets sent out to all CALEA accredited agencies, as well as a sample of non-accredited agencies in the southeastern

states. A total of 640 survey packets were sent out during the third week in September 1999; these packets included: a cover letter, introduction letter, a survey, instruction sheet, and a self-addressed stamped return envelope. Due to the researcher being involved in the Law Enforcement Accreditation Coalition of Tennessee (LEACT), the state PAC for Tennessee and CALEA as an Accreditation Manager, support from the state PAC, being a sworn police officer, and having a personal relationship to some of the departments being surveyed a high return rate was expected.

All packets were sent to the head of the agencies with a request to involve the department's Accreditation Manager, if involved in accreditation, who would be most familiar with the accreditation process. To assure the importance of the survey and that the packets were delivered, phone calls were made to the Chief of Police or the Accreditation Manager, if applicable. In the event that a department did not receive a packet, another was express mailed to them. Responses were requested to be returned in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided, by October 15, 1999. If the survey was not returned, a postcard was sent to the Chief of Police for that department requesting the survey be filled out and returned within an additional seven days. Confidentiality of all persons and departments was guaranteed.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis was accomplished by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) ®. Due to the nature of the open-ended question format statistical analysis on some questions was challenging. With open-ended questions the nature of the

responses were analyzed on a case by case basis and categorized along perceived themes of respondents' comments.

Citizen complaints, lawsuits filed, and lawsuit damages awarded were compared between departments accredited and those who were not accredited to determine if in fact this research agrees with previous literature.

Tables were based on the data collected and the results were reported in narrative form. All data collected were compiled and analyzed paying strict attention to the proper scientific method to ensure impartiality on the part of the researcher and to attempt to eliminate as much researcher bias as possible. Although the nature of the relationship of the researcher with the topic being studied is cause to question researcher bias, the researcher attempted to overcome bias by using careful research and data collection techniques. The researcher also underwent a human subjects' review by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Human Subjects Committee in order to ensure that the research was conducted properly.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter will reflect all findings of the survey. Included in this chapter are response rate, agency profiles, and analysis of the research hypotheses. Additionally, further information will be reported on how agencies responded to the survey. These responses were both quantitative and qualitative.

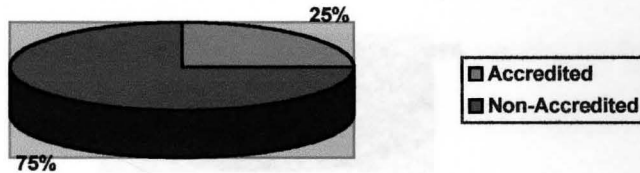
RESPONSE RATE

In September 1999, a total of 640 surveys were packed and mailed to agencies throughout the States of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. These surveys were designed to include both accredited and non-accredited agencies. A date of October 15th, 1999 was set for the return of the survey questionnaires. By October 15th, 1999 the researcher had received 213 completed surveys or 33 percent of the total survey population. The researcher sent out reminder postcards requesting completion of the survey and by October 30th, 94 additional completed surveys arrived bringing the total to 307 completed surveys or 48 percent.

Of the completed surveys 76 or 25 percent were from agencies that were accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA). These 76 agencies represented 72 percent of all accredited law enforcement agencies in the southeastern states. Of the remaining completed surveys, 231 or 75 percent were from

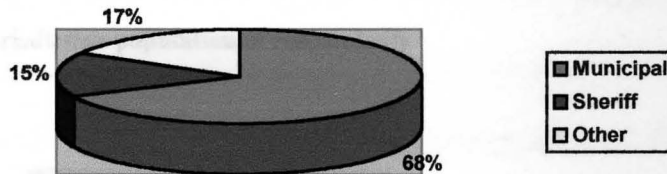
non-accredited agencies (see Figure 2-1). Six of the 231 non-accredited agencies were actively seeking accreditation and were at some point in the process.

Figure 2-1 Accreditation status of respondents



Municipal law enforcement agencies made up the majority of the respondents at 209 (68%) of those completing the survey. Of the remaining agencies 47 or 15 percent were Sheriff's Departments while 51 or 17 percent were listed as other types of law enforcement agencies such as University, Airport, and Metropolitan police agencies (see Figure 2-2).

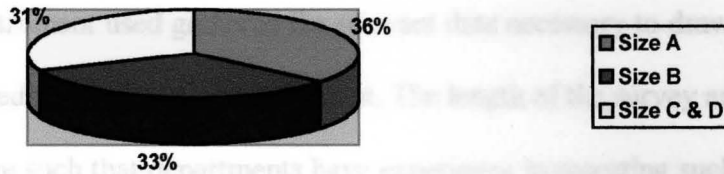
Figure 2-2 Agency type of respondents



Agency size was determined by using the CALEA standards for size determination. That is, size A ranges from 1 to 24 personnel, size B from 25 to 74, size C from 75 to 299, and size D starting at 300 or more personnel. The researcher determined that of the respondents 112 or 37 percent were from size A, 101 or 33 percent were from size B, 71 or 23 percent were size C, and 23 or 7 percent were from size D agencies. Due to the limited number of respondents from size C and D agencies, the researcher collapsed this

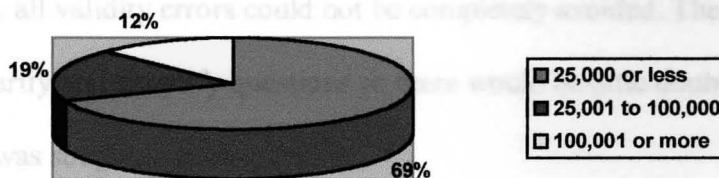
variable into three sizes by combining size C and D, thereby making size C 94 or 30 percent (see Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3 Agency size of respondents



Lastly, the researcher collapsed the variable of jurisdiction population sizes into three sizes up to 25,000, 25,001 to 100,000, and over 100,000. Of the respondents 212 or 69 percent were from the smaller of the three sized populations. Fifty-seven or 19 percent of the respondents came from communities ranging from 25,001 up to 100,000 citizens. Finally, 38 or 12 percent of the respondents were from departments whose service area numbered over 100,000 people (see Figure 2-4).

Figure 2-4 Jurisdiction population of respondents



METHODOLOGY

There was no difference in proposed and actual methodology. This researcher used a survey questionnaire to gather relevant data on southeastern law enforcement agencies that were both accredited and non-accredited in order to discover if previous literature on law enforcement accreditation holds true for southeastern law enforcement departments.

Agencies surveyed represented a wide variety of types, sizes, and populations and are representative of the population of southeastern law enforcement agencies.

The survey instrument was adapted from a survey used by Bizzack (1993). Although no instrument can be guaranteed to be completely valid and reliable, the researcher believes that the instrument used gathered the relevant data necessary to draw conclusions on accreditation for law enforcement. The length of the survey and the nature of the questions were such that departments have experience in reporting such information. Given anonymity it is assumed that managers were likely to provide truthful responses.

Due to the fact that different agencies have different methods of collecting and analyzing data gathered for their agency validity problems were possible. The researcher tried to avoid validity errors by providing an instrument based not on agency data or what the researcher felt this data meant, but on the opinions of agencies based upon their data.

Unfortunately, because different agencies have different definitions of terminology, different methods of handling complaints, and different procedures for dealing with their communities, all validity errors could not be completely avoided. The researcher did attempt to clarify and simplify questions so there would be little doubt about what information was sought in each question.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND RESULTS

All data from the survey were carefully tabulated, checked and rechecked several times prior to analysis. Due to the amount of data gathered, some categorical variables were collapsed for analysis. The researcher used the SPSS ® statistical package to

analyze data. The researcher used the chi-squares test and t-test as the method of analysis for some nominal statistics, using the level of significance of 0.05 to determine if the null hypotheses could, in fact, be rejected.

The researcher chose five hypotheses to be tested: (I) Agency type makes no significant difference in accreditation status; (II) The number of personnel in a department makes no significant difference to accreditation status; (III) Accreditation makes no significant difference in officer salary levels; (IV) Surveying of the community makes no significant difference to number of complaints filed; and (V) Accreditation makes no significant difference in professionalism scores (likert). The additional data will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table 2-1 shows all the results of the chi-square tests performed on hypothesis I. A total N of 307 agencies was gathered for the following results. For Hypothesis I, that agency type makes no difference in accreditation status, a chi-square test yielded a chi-square of 58.93 and a p of 0.00, which rejects the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference between agency type and accreditation status. What this indicates is that municipal agencies (city law enforcement) is more likely than other types of agencies to achieve accreditation. The possible error committed is a Type I error.

Table 2-1 Agencies accredited by agency type

Accreditation Status	Agency Type						x ²	p
	Municipal		Sheriff		Other			
	%	n	%	n	%	n		
Accredited	59.2	45	11.8	9	28.9	22		
Non-Accredited	71.0	164	16.5	38	12.6	29	58.93	0.00

For Hypothesis II, that the number of personnel in a department makes no difference to accreditation status the researcher ran a chi-square test. The result of the chi-square test reflects a chi-square of 138.82 and a p of 0.00, which rejects the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference in agency size and accreditation status. Larger agencies are more likely than other types of agencies to achieve accreditation. Table 2-2 shows all the results of the chi-square test performed on hypothesis II.

Table 2-2 Percentage of accredited agencies by number of personnel

Accreditation Status	Number of personnel						x ²	p
	24 or less		25 to 74		75 or more			
	%	n	%	n	%	n		
Accredited	3.6	4	19.8	20	55.3	52		
Non-Accredited	96.4	108	80.2	81	44.7	42	138.82	0.00

For Hypothesis III, that accreditation makes no difference in salary levels the researcher ran an ANOVA. The result of the ANOVA reflected a calculated F of 95.45 and a significance level of 0.00. These results enabled the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference between salary level and accreditation status.

That is, once achieving accreditation, salary levels increased in accredited agencies.

Table 2-3 shows all the results of the ANOVA performed on the above hypothesis III.

Table 2-3 ANOVA – Salary level by accreditation status

Salary Level	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	824.33	1	824.33	95.45	0.00
Within Groups	2634.16	305	8.64		
Total	3458.50	306			

For Hypothesis IV, that surveying of the community makes no difference to number of complaints filed the researcher ran an ANOVA. The researcher gathered data for the years 1996, 1997, 1998. These results are broken down for those three years. The result of the ANOVA for 1996 reflected a calculated F of 6.86 and a significance level of 0.01. In 1997 a calculated F of 5.70 is found with a significance level of 0.02, and for 1998 a calculated F of 4.54 resulted with a significance level of 0.03. These results enabled the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference between surveying the community and the level of complaints. Agencies that survey their jurisdictional population have a reduced rate of complaints against officers and the department. Table 2-4 shows all the results of the ANOVA performed on hypothesis IV.

Table 2-4 ANOVA - Number of complaints filed by survey status

Complaints (by year)		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1996	Between Groups	6849.69	1	6849.69	6.86	0.01
	Within Groups	241153.15	242	998.15		
	Total	248402.83	243			
1997	Between Groups	7039.49	1	7039.49	5.70	0.02
	Within Groups	303819.31	246	1235.04		
	Total	310858.80	247			
1998	Between Groups	3587.36	1	3587.36	4.54	0.03
	Within Groups	206946.27	262	189.87		
	Total	210533.63	263			

For Hypothesis V, that accreditation makes no difference in professionalism scores (likert) the researcher ran an ANOVA. The result of the ANOVA reflected a calculated F of 7.05 and a significance level of 0.01. This rejects the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference between professionalism scores and accreditation status. Accredited

agencies have increased professionalism scores over their non-accredited counterparts.

Table 2-5 shows all the results of the ANOVA performed on hypothesis V.

Table 2-5 ANOVA – Professionalism scores (likert) by accreditation status

Professionalism Scores	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	34.51	1	34.51	7.05	0.01
Within Groups	1493.25	305	4.90		
Total	1527.75	306			

Other descriptive results based on this survey are provided; tables 3-1 through 3-4 display these results. According to the data gathered all but ten agencies had written policies and procedures. The ten agencies that did not have written policies and procedures were non-accredited. Additionally, 15 (6.5%) agencies, do not distribute these policies to their personnel (see table 3-1). These 15 agencies were non-accredited.

Table 3-1 Distribution of manual by accreditation status (in percentages)

Distribute Policy Manual	Accreditation Status	
	Accredited	Non-Accredited
Yes	100.0	93.5
No	0.0	6.5
Total (N)	100.0 (76)	100.0 (231)

Agency goals and objectives were established by 185 or 60.3 percent of all agencies. Of these, 109 were non-accredited agencies, this indicates that 47.2 percent of non-accredited agencies formulated goals and objectives as compared to 100 percent of accredited agencies. Distribution of goals and objectives to personnel indicates a similar

finding, 69 or 29.9 percent of non-accredited agencies distribute goals and objectives compared to 66 or 86.7 percent of accredited agencies (tables 3-2 and 3-3).

Table 3-2 Formulate goals and objectives by accreditation status (in percentages)

Formulate Goals And Objectives	Accreditation Status	
	Accredited	Non-Accredited
Yes	100.0	47.2
No	0.0	52.8
Total (N)	100.0 (76)	100.0 (231)

Table 3-3 Distribution of goals and objectives to officers by accreditation status (in percentages)

Distribute Goals And Objectives	Accreditation Status	
	Accredited	Non-Accredited
Yes	86.7	29.9
No	13.3	70.1
Total (N)	100.0 (76)	100.0 (231)

Although surveying the public is by no means a requirement, it serves as a method to determine how an agency can better serve the community. In line with this reasoning the researcher was interested in determining how many agencies actually participate in community surveys. The results of this question are illustrated below in table 3-4. According to this data accredited agencies consistently garner opinions of their community by conducting jurisdictional surveys. The majority of non-accredited agencies do not systematically survey their jurisdictions.

Table 3-4 Survey of community by accreditation status (in percentages)

Survey Community	Accreditation Status	
	Accredited	Non-Accredited
Yes	94.7	36.8
No	5.3	63.2
Total (N)	100.0 (76)	100.0 (231)

While only 76 of the agencies responding to the survey questionnaire were accredited this represents 72.4 percent of all accredited agencies in the southeastern states. These agencies were asked additional questions pertaining to training, community support, mutual aid (intradepartmental) relations, and salary specifically, to determine if these variables changed as a result of accreditation. Diagrams 2-1 through 2-4 display these results. More in-depth responses from accredited agencies further explaining these results are elaborated in the next section on qualitative results.

In the area of training, an overwhelming majority of accredited agencies, 82.9 percent, stated that the level of training increased due to accreditation (Figure 3-1). Similar results were seen in the area of increased community support and enhanced relations with other law enforcement agencies (intradepartmental relations), 77.6 percent and 92.1 percent respectively (Figure 3-2 and 3-3). Most importantly, due to the fact that salary base was listed by many agencies as their prime concern, the majority of accredited agencies, 80.3 percent, stated that their base salary increased since becoming an accredited agency (Figure 3-4).

Figure 3-1

Accreditation and effect on training

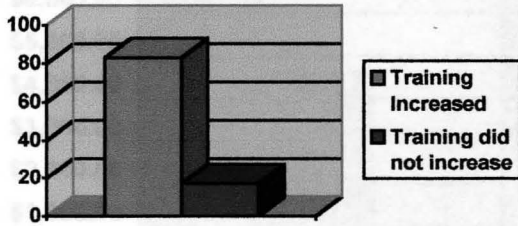


Figure 3-2

Accreditation and effect on community support

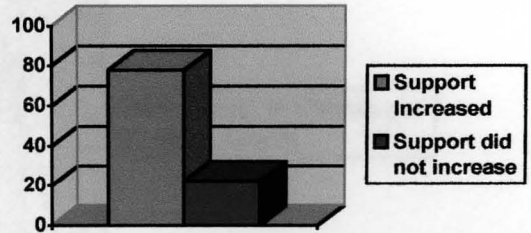


Figure 3-3

Accreditation and effect on intradepartmental relations

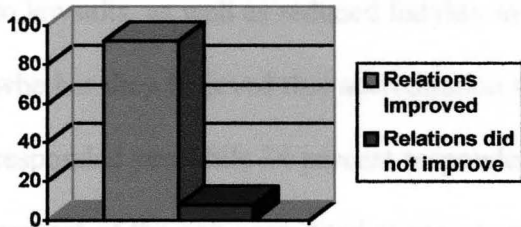
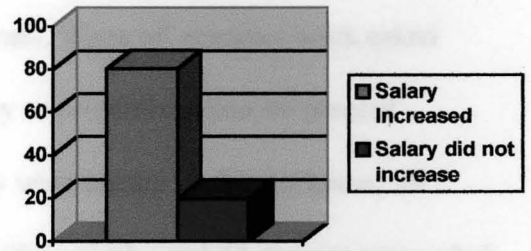


Figure 3-4

Accreditation and effect on salary

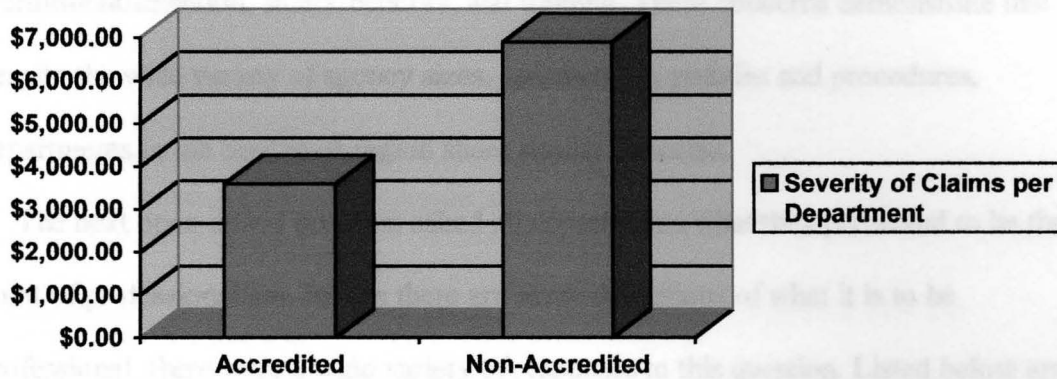


Similar to the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA) study mentioned in the literature review, this study found an correlation between law enforcement accreditation and lawsuits and financial settlements. Table 4-1 and figure 4-1 presents results of this analysis. When lawsuits and financial claims against law enforcement agencies who have accreditation are compared with those who have not been accredited, the accredited agencies show a 77% reduction in frequency of lawsuits and a 48% reduction in the severity of claims. Although these numbers represent a limited number of agencies, the differences are significant.

Table 4-1 Severity of Claims against departments based on accreditation status

Agency Status	Total # of Departments	Total Claims	# of Claims per Department	Total Severity	Severity per Department
Accredited	76	72	0.9	\$271,100.00	\$3,600.00
Non-Accredited	231	307	1.3	\$1,598,000.00	\$6,900.00

Figure 4-1 Severity of Claims against departments based on accreditation status



Accredited agencies have a decrease in complaints, lawsuits, financial settlements due to lawsuits, as well as reduced liability insurance costs. When all agencies were asked whether they believed that accreditation was the key to professionalism 46 percent responded yes while 34 percent responded that they were unsure or did not know; 29 percent of the non-accredited agencies responded affirmatively and 43 percent responded that they were unsure or did not know indicating that although not accredited there is some belief that accreditation can bring about law enforcement professionalism.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND RESULTS

Several open-ended questions were included to provide an opportunity to share thoughts about professionalism and accreditation. This section will highlight those responses and attempt to identify the range of perceptions about accreditation. Also included in this section are estimations of average costs of and time spent on the accreditation process, to provide guidelines for departments considering the process.

The first of these open-ended questions was asked to all departments regardless of their accreditation status. The researcher inquired about the top three concerns facing law

enforcement departments. Three main areas of concern most often noted were: recruitment/retention; salary/benefits; and training. These concerns demonstrate that despite the wide variety of agency sizes, jurisdictions, policies and procedures, departments in the Southeast region share similar concerns.

The next open-ended question asked all departments what they perceived to be the point of professionalism. Just as there are many definitions of what it is to be professional, there were a wide variety of responses to this question. Listed below are the top five responses to the question what do you believe to be the point of professionalism:

- Maintain a high level of integrity, honesty, and moral character
- Treating people with respect and courtesy while building public confidence
- Leaving a positive impact on those you deal with
- Building of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Taking responsibility for mistakes and share the success

The remaining open-ended questions were directed towards accredited agencies. These questions were posed in such a way as to draw out perceptions as to what is right and what is wrong about accreditation; the amount of time spent in the accreditation process, as well as how much money was spent for the process. The responses of these agencies provides a view of the accreditation process, its benefits, and liabilities.

First, the researcher inquired as to the benefits and drawbacks experienced by departments in the accreditation process. Although responses varied they can be summed up into a few categories:

Benefits:

- Provides recognition for professionalism
- Provides a set of nationally accepted standards
- Increases the morale, pride, and sense of ownership in the department
- Increase public confidence with the agency
- Increases training and assist in justification of budget request

- Forces department management and supervision to be more accountable

Drawbacks:

- Excessive paperwork
- Too time consuming
- Some loss of flexibility in making management decisions
- Excessive documentation required
- Costs

These benefits and drawbacks, again, are the most frequent, however they are consistent throughout the research and provide a picture of what accredited departments face.

Accredited agencies were asked to expand on what the accreditation process actually entails. In this series of questions agencies reported on the most difficult aspect of the process; what changes could or should be made to the process; what recommendations they would make to other agencies contemplating the process of accreditation; and finally, what, if any examples of the benefits and improved support could they give that resulted from accreditation.

The most difficult aspect of the accreditation process, as listed by accredited agencies, was gathering the support needed for the implementation of the accreditation process. This support included front-line personnel, department supervision and management, as well as city or county government. Several agencies stated that gathering support was not only the most difficult, but was also the most important; without first gathering the support the process would ultimately fail. The fear of anything new or of any change was a primary reason why gathering support was considered the most difficult, as one respondent put "police hate change, it's against their nature." Listed below are additional statements concerning the question regarding the most difficult aspect of accreditation:

- Adherence to the standard
- Some documentation request were difficult to meet
- Time and financial constraints

The researcher requested accredited agencies to suggest changes in and provide recommendations for other departments contemplating the accreditation process. Listed below are the top suggestions for the changing of the process and recommendations for the departments undergoing the accreditation process:

Suggestions for changes:

- Streamline the process
- Avoid duplication of standards
- Provide more examples of what documentation is required
- Reduce documentation required
- Provide a larger staff at the national level to enhance communication

Recommendations to departments:

- Gather the support needed from all levels up-front
- Have a staff of more than one person and provide support to that staff
- Include as many personnel in the process as possible
- Keep the process open, continue to keep the department members informed
- Join State Police Accreditation Coalitions for additional support

The researcher requested accredited departments provide examples of any benefits and improved support they could give that resulted from accreditation. Again, listed below are the top responses that agencies believe was directly attributed to accreditation.

- Increased training
- Increased salary base
- Increased support from citizen groups as well as city/county government
- Better relations with other agencies and community leaders
- Increased department morale and pride

Accreditation does appear to enjoy a great deal of support from those who are actively involved in the process. This is readily observed in the fact that of all accredited

departments responding to this survey 100% of them stated that they planned to continue in the accreditation process and seek reaccreditation. Additionally, as seen in the quantitative results above the majority of accredited departments believe that accreditation is a key to the professionalization of law enforcement agencies. The qualitative responses provide certain evidence that accreditation, although it does have drawbacks, is a worthwhile process.

Lastly, a standard response of those that oppose accreditation is that it is costly and time consuming. The researcher found the following results when inquiring about the costs and time spent on accreditation: Of the responding accredited agencies the researcher found that the average hard dollar cost of initial accreditation is just under \$20,000 while time spent on the accreditation process averaged just over 2 years.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this research the author can report that there does appear to be a connection between accreditation of law enforcement agencies and levels of professionalism. Additionally, there also appears to be a connection between surveying the community, of which the department is a part, and a reduced rate of complaints, lawsuits filed, lawsuit financial settlements, and in general an increase in community support. What was found is that law enforcement accreditation, if not the complete answer to improved law enforcement, is at least a start towards professionalism as it increases training, increases community support, reduces department liability, and provides a tool for professionalization.

While the findings listed in this research report do agree with most of the literature it should be noted that these results can only be applied to this researchers target population that is, the law enforcement agencies within the southeastern states surveyed. This researcher does believe that indications about the effectiveness of accreditation in bringing about increased professionalism and community support can be inferred to the larger population of southeastern law enforcement agencies.

This research does appear to agree with previous research on the subject of law enforcement accreditation in general. Specifically, these results agree with previous research in the area of reduction of complaints, lawsuits, settlements, and insurance costs while demonstrating a general increase in training, salary levels, relations with other agencies and in support from the communities these departments serve. Lastly, this research agrees with previous research in the belief that law enforcement accreditation has a direct positive effect on professionalism of law enforcement agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

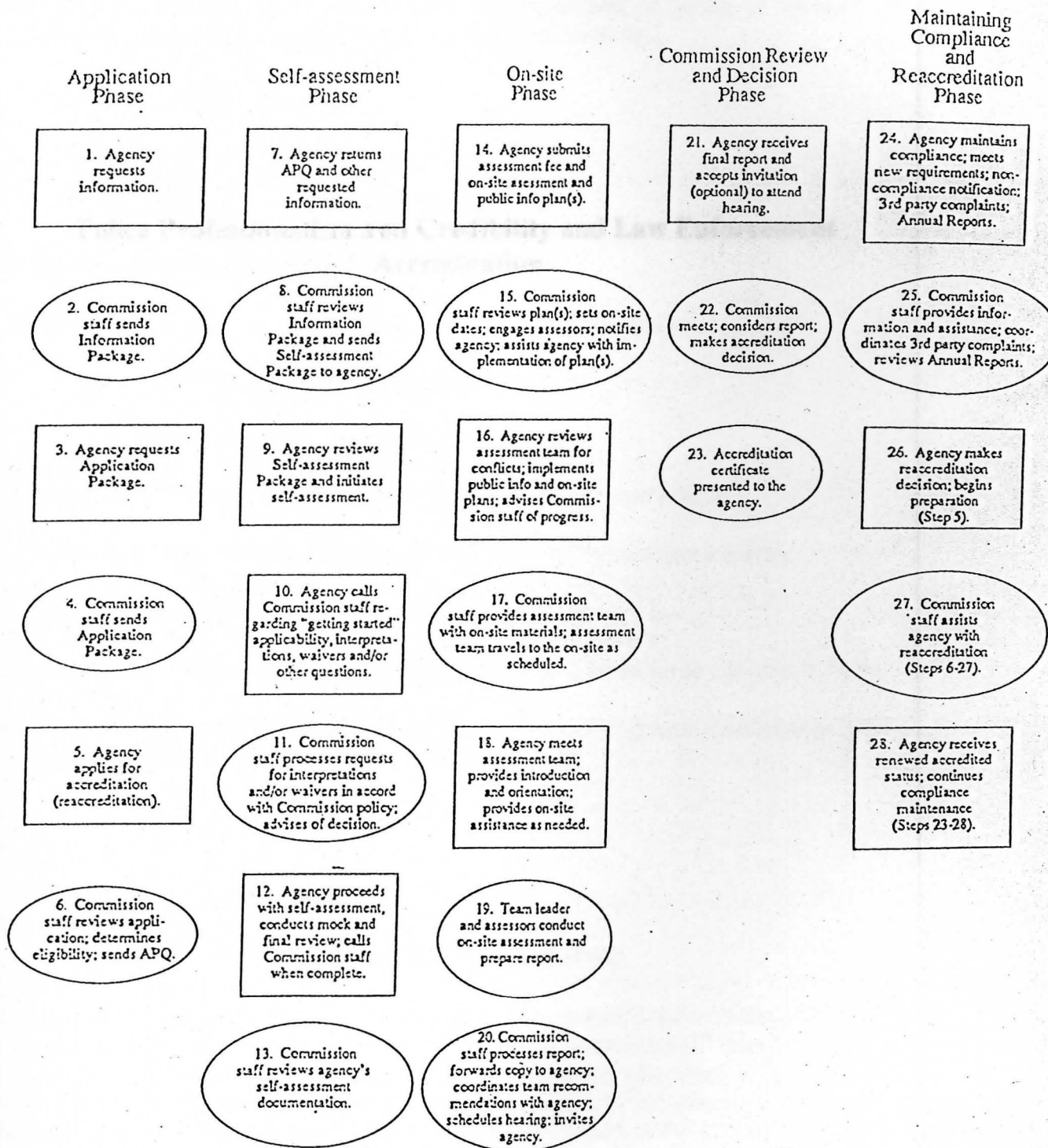
Although there has been an increase in the research on law enforcement accreditation and its effects on police agencies, the need for the research is ever present. With that thought in mind it is the recommendation of this researcher that more research be done in order to truly understand the effects, both positive and negative, of law enforcement accreditation. The survey questionnaire used in this research project should be expanded to provide for more detailed information regarding accreditation requirements to determine if these requirements truly meet the needs of the individual department. In

addition, a larger sample and/or population should be used to enhance the statistical test being used.

What the findings of this research suggest is that accreditation is a benefit not only to the agencies that undergo the process, but to the community as well. There does appear to be a connection between accreditation status and the cost of litigation for agencies, with accredited agencies showing a reduced amount of litigation and litigation cost than do their non-accredited counterparts. Additionally the officers within these accredited agencies see better, more advanced training than do their counterparts in non-accredited agencies. This enhanced training can only increase the safety of the officers as well as ensure that the communities they are serving will be served by the most prepared and best trained police force possible. Lastly the institution of a community survey conducted by departments ensures that the agencies truly understand the issues that the community needs addressed. With this information true public service is possible.

Law enforcement accreditation is still in the early stages of development. At this time there is a small minority of departments that have undergone the process of accreditation but this number grows annually. This researcher believes that law enforcement accreditation is a worthwhile program that has numerous benefits for the law enforcement agency as well as the surrounding community. The purported beliefs by some that accreditation is unneeded and ineffective are not supported, in fact the results of this research show the opposite to be true. If the trend continues toward more professional police forces then accredited law enforcement agencies will continue to increase in number. Accreditation does appear to be at least one key to an enhanced professional police force.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS OVERVIEW (CALEA, Accreditation Process Book, 1995)



STATEMENT OF CONSENT

SURVEY

All data gathered via this survey will be used only for the purposes of this research study. Names, to include personnel as well as department names, shall not be released nor shall any characteristics that would identify any department or person be released. All data will be presented in aggregate form to ensure confidentiality.

INSTRUCTIONS

Police Professionalism and Credibility and Law Enforcement Accreditation

1. Please read and sign the consent form.
2. Please complete the survey according to the following procedures:
 - a. Non-Sanctioned agencies complete Parts I & III
 - b. Accredited agencies complete the entire survey
3. Please answer all questions completely and to the best of your ability.
4. Please take care of your details so that answers are read correctly.
5. Allow sufficient time to complete your survey thoroughly.
6. Return completed surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelope by October 1, 1999.
7. If you have any questions, please call Officer Angel D. Geoghagan, Chattanooga Police Department, Chattanooga, Tennessee, at 423-243-3825.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to participate in the research study entitled "Police Professionalism and Credibility and Law Enforcement Accreditation." I understand the purpose of this study, the benefits and risks involved, and I understand that my participation in this survey and participation in this study are voluntary. I understand that my participation in this study will not affect my employment or any other benefits. I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that my participation in this study will not affect my employment or any other benefits.

Conducted by:

Officer Angel D. Geoghagan
Chattanooga Police Department
Chattanooga, Tennessee

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY - CONSENT FORM

All data gathered with this survey will be used only for the purposes of this research study. Names, to include personnel as well as department names, shall not be released nor shall any characteristics that would identify any department or person be released. All data will be presented in aggregate form to insure confidentiality.

- 2. Is your agency accredited? Yes No
- 3. Type of Agency: Municipal Sheriff's Office University
 Airport Other

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please read and sign the statement of consent below.
2. Please complete the survey according to the following procedures:
 - a. Non-Accredited agencies complete Parts I & III
 - b. Accredited agencies complete the entire survey
3. Please answer all questions completely and to the best of your ability.
4. Please type, print, or write clearly so as to ensure answers are read correctly.
5. Attach additional sheets whenever you deem necessary.
6. Please return this survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope by October 1, 1999.
7. If you have any questions please call Officer Angel D. Geoghagan, Chattanooga Police Department, Chattanooga, Tennessee, at (423) 493-2825.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to participate in the research study entitled "Police Professionalism and Credibility and Law Enforcement Accreditation." I understand that participation is completely voluntary; I may withdraw at any time; there is no fee associated with this survey; and participation poses no risk to my agency or myself. In addition I have read and understand the Statement of Confidentiality printed above.

Signature

Date

PART I - GENERAL AGENCY INFORMATION

Please provide the following information

1. Agency Name: _____

2. Is your agency accredited? Yes No

3. Type of Agency:
 Municipal Sheriff's Office University
 Airport Other (describe) _____

4. Number of Personnel:
a. Sworn - _____
b. Civilian - _____
c. Total - _____

5. Current starting salary (officer) - \$ _____

6. Population of agency jurisdiction:
 Less than 10,000 75,001 – 100,000 250,001 – 300,000
 10,001 – 25,000 100,001 – 150,000 300,001 – 500,000
 25,001 – 50,000 150,001 – 200,000 500,001 – or more
 50,001 – 75,000 200,001 – 250,000

7. Does your agency have a written policy and procedure manual?
 Yes No

8. Are your agency policies and procedures issued to all agency personnel?
 Yes No

9. Does your agency have written annual goals and objectives?
 Yes No

10. If you have written annual goals and objectives are they given to all personnel?
 Yes No

11. Does your agency ever survey your jurisdictional area to garner opinions on agency conduct?
 Yes No

12. What is the annual number complaints on officers your agency has received for each of the last three (3) years for the following:

	1996	1997	1998
a. Inadequate Training?	_____	_____	_____
b. Use of Force?	_____	_____	_____
c. Improper Conduct?	_____	_____	_____
d. All Other Complaints?	_____	_____	_____

13. What is the annual number of lawsuits that have been filed against your department or any officer in your department for each of the last three (3) years for the following:

	1996	1997	1998
a. Inadequate Training?	_____	_____	_____
b. Use of Force?	_____	_____	_____
c. Improper Conduct?	_____	_____	_____
d. All Other Complaints?	_____	_____	_____

14. What is the annual amount, rounded to the nearest hundred, that your agency has paid in lawsuit settlements or decisions for each of the last three (3) years?

\$ _____ (1996); \$ _____ (1997); \$ _____ (1998)

15. Following are factors proposed by theorists to be involved in "professionalism." Please indicate by a check in the appropriate box how strongly you believe each factor to be important to professionalism:

Beside each of the statements below, please indicate with a check mark whether you: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), or Don't Know (DK):

Statement Of Factors	SA	A	D	SD	DK
a. The public's perception of the police should be as favorable as possible	()	()	()	()	()
b. Extensive training of police is necessary to achieve competence	()	()	()	()	()
c. College education for police is necessary to achieve competence	()	()	()	()	()
d. There should be definite standards of competence for police	()	()	()	()	()
e. Police should have high ethical standards	()	()	()	()	()
f. Having definite standards of integrity is necessary for police	()	()	()	()	()
g. Having definite standards of conduct is necessary for police	()	()	()	()	()
h. Serving the public interest is the true goal of policing	()	()	()	()	()

16. Please indicate in the appropriate space if you believe that accreditation affects the professionalism of policing in general:

() Yes () No () Maybe () Do not know

17. List 3 of the major concerns facing your department in the area of administration and department management (i.e. training, benefits, recruitment, etc.)

If your agency is accredited please complete the rest of the survey. If your agency is not accredited please skip ahead and complete Part III.

3. Please fill in the costs of the accreditation process at your agency:

a. Your agency fee to the accrediting committee or organization: \$ _____

b. Other costs:

Item	Range	Cost	Notes

Please make attachment if necessary TOTAL \$ _____

4. a. Please list benefits that your agency has derived from accreditation:

b. Please list benefits that your agency has derived as a result of being not accredited:

5. What changes would you make in the accreditation process?

PART II - ACCREDITED AGENCIES

1. a. What is the date accreditation was granted to your agency?

b. What was the length of time for your agency to move through the entire process?

_____ years _____ months

2. What were the reasons your agency initially chose to enter the accreditation process?

3. Please fill in the costs of the accreditation process to your agency;

a. Your agency fee to the accrediting commission or associations:

\$ _____

b. Other costs:

Reason for Cost	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please make attachment if necessary

TOTAL: \$ _____

4. a. Please list benefits that your agency has derived from accreditation:

b. Please list liabilities that your agency has derived as a result of becoming accredited:

5. What changes would you make in the accreditation process?

9. Call to service. Please indicate correct numbers for the total calls for service for

6. a. What was identified as the most difficult problem your agency encountered as it moved through the accreditation process?

b. How would you recommend this type of problem be handled?

7. What specific measures would you recommend to any agency considering entering the accreditation process?

For questions 8 – 13 list the appropriate figures for as many years as applicable. If, for example, your agency was accredited in 1995 please list the appropriate figures for 1992, 1993, 1994 for prior to accreditation numbers and 1996, 1997, 1998 for post accreditation numbers.

8. What was the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) annual clearance rate (Part I crimes only) for your agency for:

a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?

_____ (year _____); _____ (year _____); _____ (year _____)

b. Annual UCR clearance rate since accreditation was granted

_____ (year _____); _____ (year _____); _____ (year _____)

c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records

_____ (month _____); _____ (month _____); _____ (month _____)

9. Calls for service. Please indicate correct numbers for the total calls for service for:

- a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- b. Average number of calls since accreditation was granted:
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records
____ (month ____); ____ (month ____); ____ (month ____)

10. Please indicate the annual number of lawsuits related to allegations of inadequate training for:

- a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- b. Annual number since accreditation granted:
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records
____ (month ____); ____ (month ____); ____ (month ____)

11. Please indicate the annual number of lawsuits related to allegations of improper use of force for:

- a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- b. Annual number since accreditation granted:
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records
____ (month ____); ____ (month ____); ____ (month ____)

12. Please indicate the annual number of lawsuits related to allegations of improper vehicle pursuit driving for:

- a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- b. Annual number since accreditation granted:
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)
- c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records
____ (month ____); ____ (month ____); ____ (month ____)

13. Please indicate the annual number of citizen complaints against officers for:

a. Each of the last three (3) years prior to your agency being accredited?
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)

b. Annual number since accreditation granted:
____ (year ____); ____ (year ____); ____ (year ____)

c. If your agency has been accredited for less than one year, please respond with a monthly rate for the last three months for which you have records
____ (month ____); ____ (month ____); ____ (month ____)

14. a. Do you plan to seek re-accreditation? () Yes () No

b. If not, please indicate why:

15. Has the level of training provided to your officers increased as a result of accreditation? () Yes () No

16. Has your department's starting base salary increased since your department received its initial accreditation? () Yes () No

17. a. Has your agency experienced an increase in public or citizen support since accreditation? () Yes () No

b. What are examples of support you have identified?

18. Has your agency experienced improved relationships with other law enforcement agencies since accreditation? () Yes () No

19. Accreditation is proposed as promoting professionalism. Please indicate in the appropriate space if you believe accreditation has affected professionalism in your agency:

() Yes () No () Maybe () Do not know

20. Please explain your answer to question 19:

PART III - CONCLUSIONS

1. Please indicate what you believe to be the point of professionalism:

2. Please use the space below for any comments you wish to make concerning any of your responses to the questions or about the survey in general:

Thank you for your participation, your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions please call or e-mail Officer Angel D. Geoghagan at the number listed below. Please return this survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope by October 1, 1999 to the following:

Officer Angel D. Geoghagan
 Accreditation and Standards
 Chattanooga Police Department
 3300 Amnicola Highway
 Chattanooga, TN 37406
 (423) 493-2825

geoghagan_a@mail.chattanooga.gov

This survey was created based on the accreditation survey from:

Bizzack, J. W. (1993). Professionalism & law enforcement accreditation: The first ten years. Lexington, KY: Autumn House.

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