Education, Training and Ethical Dilemmas: Responses of Criminal Justice Practitioners Regarding Professional and Ethical Issues

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Abstract

All professionals in the corrections and law-enforcement field must be aware and sensitive to ethical dilemmas confronted in the course of their duties. One key skill is the ability to determine the right thing to do when challenged with common but somewhat enticing situations in criminal justice. Training and education in proper behavior and professional standards is imperative in creating ethical workers. Administrators, educators, trainers, and field professionals must include exercises that increase reasoning capacities and aid individuals in recognizing the ethical consequences of various actions or inactions. In this exploratory study the researchers sought to identify how criminal justice professionals from a variety of specialties responded to written situations involving ethical or moral actions. Additionally, the study examined the training and education provided to the respondents in the course of their jobs and/or schooling. The researchers analyzed the utility of continued education in socially acceptable moral and ethical standards within the field of criminal justice.

Even as agencies in criminal justice increase their minimum educational requirements for hiring personnel, society continues to see misconduct among the police, probation officers, correctional staff, and security personnel. Could this be the result of absent training in ethical decision making? As pointed out by Turano (2001), "the implementation of ethical training for the rank and file does not appear to be a high priority" (pp.3-4). Additionally, Pollock (2004) has claimed that there is the perception that ethics and morality are declining because of the elimination of opportunities for teaching morals. Scaramella (2001) supported this perception in a study where he found that even college-educated recruits may not be exposed to ethics courses during their education (none of the state universities in Illinois, at least, offered courses in ethics during his study). To add to this absence, Cox (1996) has stated that ethical training is not offered in most new hire training curriculums.

On the one hand, training is viewed as "a systematic process of altering the behaviors of employees. [While on the other hand], others view training as a specific process of increasing one's skill and knowledge about a specific job" (Khan, 1997, p. 14). In order to create and enforce behaviors vital to an agency, the agency must train employees on what is or is not expected of them. Without such training, individuals may not make reliable decisions, thus, opening the door for unethical, unprofessional, or improper actions. Training in ethics is no different than training in other areas. A policing agency would not assign a gun to a new officer without first training him or her in the proper way to use and carry the weapon. In order to ensure that criminal justice professionals make ethical and professional decisions, agencies must also provide them the skills necessary to do so.

If ethics training is not the sole responsibility of criminal justice agencies, one question that may be asked is "What exactly is the role of the university in teaching ethics?" Braswell (2002) pointed out that higher education courses can help develop awareness and exposure to ethical issues, initiate growth of critical thinking skills, enhance dependability, and increase understanding in coercive actions. Pollock (2004, p.7) reiterated Braswell's (2002) claims by stating that lessons on ethics can promote awareness and better prepare individuals to ethically deal with opportunities to misuse power, act as reminders of the duties owed to the public, and provide tools to students to practice dealing with potential ethical dilemmas that they may face in the profession. Since the socialization of individuals into the criminal justice subculture begins very early in one's career, focused education in proper behaviors may move forward the professionalization of the field.

As put forth by Cooper (2004) socialization can be used in positive and negative ways. He supported socialization based on educational goals versus indoctrination. Indoctrination, Cooper (2004) believed, may manipulate people, undermine their choices and diminish the capacity of individuals to function as moral agents. But by placing a portion of the burden of ethical training on universities, academicians can teach ethical conduct and practice according to well-established theoretical principles and precepts (Elliston & Feldberg, 1985). Thus, theory is put into practice in a uniform, consistent, and pedagogical fashion without relying on traditional socialization practices based on senior officer and new recruit pairings that allow for "war story" exchanges and informal teachings of unauthorized behaviors. It must be taken into account, however, that even if ethical training is offered at the university level, it is not acceptable for agencies to believe that a "college education [is] a panacea to improve individuals and to

solve problems that have not yielded to other approaches" (Niederhoffer & Smith, 1974, p. 98).   Ethical decision making skills must come from other sources as well. It is also not acceptable to believe that individuals automatically know good and bad behaviors or will learn what is right and wrong from their parents, schools, teachers, peers, and religious affiliations.   Criminal justice agencies, as well as academicians, must take responsibility for introducing and reinforcing right and wrong behaviors through training. This study was developed to assess if criminal justice workers would report that they would act in ethical ways when confronted with situations that may lend themselves to unethical behaviors and to determine if workers are receiving training in ethics.

Methodology

The written survey used in this study was developed by Scaramella (2001). Scaramella's survey has been used on at least two other occasions with similar populations (i.e, practitioners in the field of criminal justice) and yielded comparable results (Scaramella, 2001; Turano, 2001). In the current study, the survey was used to ascertain the ethical standards held by 110 criminal justice professionals who attended a Career Fair at a mid-sized Midwestern university in October of 2004. Attempts were made to survey all participants of the Career Fair. The survey was confidential and anonymous.

The survey (see Appendix A) contained 28 variables. Ten of the variables were independent focusing on gender; age; race; educational level; income; the university the respondent attended/graduated from; major course of study in college (if any); field of employment; family affiliation in the criminal justice field; and whether the respondent had attended an ethics course in the past. The remaining 18 variables were dependent variables using "brief scenarios depicting circumstances which required the respondents to choose one course of action from a list of alternatives which would most closely demonstrate how they would react" (Scaramella, 2001, p. 12) if actually faced with the situation. The respondents had the option of entering an open-ended response for each question in which they believed the listed responses did not apply. Open-ended responses were coded and are reported when necessary in the data analysis section. All other data was coded appropriately and analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data is reported in frequency distributions in the Data Analysis section of this article.

According to Scaramella (2001, pp. 12), the scenarios used in the questionnaire "described common police encounters that contained a range of responses from ethical to violations of common rules and regulations of criminal justice behavior. More specifically, the scenarios covered various acts of misconduct such as: on-duty consumption of alcohol; drug use; accepting gratuities; excessive force; verbal abuse; accepting kickbacks; perjury; theft; and nonfeasance involving misconduct by police officers."

The researchers realized that many of the questions on the survey focused specifically on policing tasks; although, professionals from all criminal justice fields were asked to complete the questionnaire. This is not believed to be a problem because most of the agencies present (over 70%) at the Career Fair were police-based. Additionally, there was a small, convenience sample used in the study. The reader is cautioned to consider the limitations of a small sample and a convenience sample when reviewing the findings. Although both can be problematic, the authors believe the findings are fairly typical and indicative of the criminal justice field, especially since the findings of this study reinforce those found by Scaramella

(2001) and Turano (2001) who both used the same survey. Because of the small sample size the findings are limited to descriptive statistics.

Data Analysis

Survey respondents were primarily male (79%) while females accounted for 21% of the sample. The majority of the respondents (45%) were in the 31-40 age category, with 26% in the 21-30 age range, 23% being 41-50 years of age, and 6% being 51 years of age or older. Overwhelmingly (85%) the respondents were Caucasian or white. Only 9% of the respondents were Black or African American and Hispanics accounted for 6% of the sample. Nine percent of the sample reported to have a high school diploma or general education diploma, while 15% of the sample claimed to hold an associate's degree. The majority of the sample (62%) reported to have a bachelor's degree while 13% held a master's degree. One percent stated that they had other educational qualifications.

Surprisingly to the researchers, the most reported annual income of the respondents was $62,001 and over (reported by 46%). Less than one percent reported making $15,000-$30,000, 15% reported an annual income of 30,001-$46,000 and 39% reported making $46,001-$62,000. When asked whether the respondents graduated from Western Illinois University (WIU), 41% claimed to be WIU graduates. Over 50% did not graduate from WIU. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported that criminal justice was their major course of study in college. Five percent reported that criminal justice was their minor course of study and 26% reported that they did not study criminal justice in college. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents claimed to be employed in or associated with the policing or law enforcement field. Six percent reported working in the corrections (including probation and parole) and security fields, respectively, while 10% reported "other field." Eighty-two percent of the respondents had taken an ethics course and/or had attended an ethics training in the past. Eighteen percent reported not to have had an ethics course.

Data also showed that 65% of the respondents reported that they did not have immediate family members who worked or had worked in the field of criminal justice. Thirty-five percent of the respondents claimed to have an immediate family member who worked or had worked in the criminal justice field.

In Table 1, 42% reported that they would wake a co-worker up if they found him or her sleeping while they were both working a midnight shift. Thirty-nine percent claimed that they would wake the co-worker up and tell him or her that the behavior was unacceptable, while only 6% would react ethically by notifying a supervisor of the co-worker's behavior. Seven percent claimed that they would take no action and 6% claimed "other response" as the action they would take.

Table 1

Respondent Sees Co-Worker Sleeping while Working a Midnight Shift

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he wakes them up	46	41.8	42.2	42.2
Wakes them up and tells them their behavior is unacceptable	42	38.2	38.5	80.7

S/he notifies a superior of their behavior	7	6.4	6.4	87.2
Takes no action	8	7.3	7.3	94.5
Other response	6	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	109	99.1	100.0	
Missing 9	1	0.9		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 2 reveals that 42% of the respondents would act ethically, by issuing a citation (11%) or notifying a superior (32%), if they caught an off-duty police officer

Table 2
Respondent Catches an Off-Duty Police Officer Driving while Under the Influence of Alcohol During the Course of the Respondent's Police Duties

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he issues a citation	12	10.9	11.1	11.1
Issues a verbal or written warning	18	16.4	16.7	27.8
S/he notifies a superior	34	30.9	31.5	59.3
Takes no action	1	0.9	0.9	60.2
Other response	43	39.1	39.8	100.0
Total	108	98.2	100.0	
Missing	2	1.8		
Total	110	100.0		

driving home while under the influence of alcohol. Seventeen percent claimed that they would issue a verbal or written warning, less than 1% would take no action, and 40% would use some other response as their action.

Table 3 shows that when confronted with a co-worker who is stealing merchandise, only 4% would act ethically by arresting the co-worker, notifying a supervisor (12%), or telling the co-worker that they

disapprove of the behavior and notifying a supervisor (54%). Seventeen percent reported that they would tell the co-worker that they disapprove of the behavior but take no official action; while 13% claimed they would use an "other response" to the situation.

Table 3

Respondent Sees a Co-Worker Stealing Goods from a Mini-Mart that the Respondent is Guarding While on Duty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he arrests the co-worker	4	3.6	3.7	3.7
Tells co-worker s/he disapproves behavior, takes no official action	18	16.4	16.8	20.6
Tells co-worker s/he disapproves behavior & notifies a superior	58	52.7	54.2	74.8
S/he notifies a superior	13	11.8	12.1	86.9
Other response	14	12.7	13.1	100.0
Total	107	97.3	100.0	
Missing 9	3	2.7		
Total	110	100.0		

Ethical responses in Table 4 consisted of paying for the meal (32%) or leaving a large enough tip to cover the cost of the meal (38%), while unethical responses accounted for 26% stating they would thank the cashier for the meal and 4% claiming to use an "other response" when confronted with the opportunity to receive a meal at "no charge" from a local restaurant.

Table 4

Respondent is told that there is "No Charge" for a Meal Eaten at a Local Restaurant

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he thanks the cashier	28	25.5	25.9	25.9
Insists on paying for the meal	35	31.8	32.4	58.3
Leaves the server enough money to cover the cost of the meal	41	37.3	38.0	96.3
Other response	4	3.6	3.7	100.0
Total	108	98.2	100.0	

	Frequency	Percent		
Missing 9	2	1.8		
Total	110	100.0		

In Table 5, 74% of the respondents reported reacting ethically, by either arresting the co-worker (2%) or notifying a superior of the incident (72%), if they saw a co-worker push a handcuffed arrestee of child sexual assault down a flight of stairs causing bodily injury. Fifteen percent of the respondents claimed that they would tell the co-worker that

Table 5

Respondent Sees a Co-Worker Push a Handcuffed Child Sexual Assault Arrestee Down a Flight of Stairs Causing Bodily Injury

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he arrests the co-worker	2	1.8	1.9	1.9
Tells co-worker s/he disapproves behavior, takes no official action	16	14.5	15.0	16.8
S/he notifies a superior of the incident	77	70.0	72.0	88.8
Takes no action	11	10.0	10.3	99.1
Other response	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Total	107	97.3	100.0	
Missing 9	3	2.7		
Total	110	100.0		

they disapprove of the behavior but would take no official action, 10% would take no action, and 1% chose "other response" as the action they would take.

As noted in Table 6, 94% stated that under no circumstances would they perjure themselves in court. Four percent claimed that they would commit perjury to ensure the conviction of a defendant and one percent claimed that they would use perjury to prevent themselves or a co-worker from scrutiny or would use some "other response."

Table 6

Whether or not the Respondent is Willing to Perjure His/Herself in Court

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Only to prevent him/herself or his/her co-worker from scrutiny	1	.9	.9	.9
Only to ensure a conviction of a defendant	4	3.6	3.7	4.6
Under no circumstances would s/he perjure him/herself	102	92.7	94.4	99.1
Other response	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Total	108	98.2	100.0	
Missing 9	2	1.8		
Total	110	100.0		

Approximately 64% of the respondents in Table 7 would act ethically by returning the money given to them by a motorist in exchange for not writing a citation for speeding and would notify their supervisor of the incident. In addition, 25% of respondents would also act ethically by returning the money to the motorist, notifying a supervisor of the incident (1%), or arresting the motorist (8%). "Other response" was reported by 2% of the respondents.

Table 7
A Motorist Drops a $20 Bill on the Respondent's Lap as a Thank You for Not Writing a Citation for Speeding

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Returns the money to the motorist	27	24.5	25.2	25.2
Returns the money & notifies a superior of the incident	68	61.8	63.6	88.8
Notifies a superior of the incident	1	.9	.9	89.7
S/he arrests the motorist	9	8.2	8.4	98.1
Other response	2	1.8	1.9	100.0
Total	107	97.3	100.0	
Missing 9	3	2.7		
Total	110	100.0		

Fully 95% of the respondents claimed to respond ethically by not accepting payment (35%), notifying a superior of the incident (21%), or performing the requested service for no payment (39%), when

requested by a local liquor store owner to provide extra patrol during closing time for $100 per month. Only 5% reported "other response." Table 8 reveals this data.

Table 8

A Liquor Store Owner Offers Respondent $100 Per Month to Provide Extra Patrol at Closing Time

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he doesn't accept the payment	37	33.6	35.2	35.2
S/he notifies a superior of the incident	22	20.0	21.0	56.2
Performs the requested service without payment	41	37.3	39.0	95.2
Other response	5	4.5	4.8	100.0
Total	105	95.5	100.0	
Missing 9	5	4.5		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 9 reveals that all of the respondents would behave ethically by inventorying all of the stolen liquor found in a stolen van according to the rules and regulations of their department, rather than taking some of the alcohol for themselves or allowing their friends or family to have some of the liquor.

Table 9

Respondent Finds Stolen Liquor in a Stolen Van while Inventorying

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completes inventory report according to dept's rules	104	94.5	100.0	100.0
Missing 9	6	5.5		
Total	110	100.0		

As noted in Table 10, if a local lawyer offered the respondents a "referral fee" for recommending him or her to citizens in need of legal help, 60% responded ethically by claiming they would refuse the fee, 17% would not only refuse the fee but would never refer anyone to that attorney, and 1% would arrest the attorney. Four percent stated that they would accept the fee and 1% would accept the fee and steer as much business to that attorney as possible. Seventeen percent listed "other response" as their answer to this question.

Table 10

Local Lawyer Offers the Respondent a "Referral Fee" for Recommending Citizens to Him or Her for Legal Help

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent refuses the fee	62	56.4	59.6	59.6
S/he refuses fee & does not refer anyone to that attorney	18	16.4	17.3	76.9
Accepts the fee	4	3.6	3.8	80.8
Accepts fee & steers as much business to that attorney	1	0.9	1.0	81.7
S/he arrests the attorney	1	0.9	1.0	82.7
Other action	18	16.4	17.3	100.0
Total	104	94.5	100.0	
Missing 9	6	5.5		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 11 indicates that 61% of the respondents would notify their supervisor's superior, as is ethically required, if they saw their supervisor drinking alcohol in his or her office during working hours. Twenty-six percent would tell their supervisor that his or her behavior is unacceptable, 8% would take no action, and 5% would use an "other action" as their response to this situation.

Table 11

Respondent Sees His or Her Supervisor Drinking Alcohol during Working Hours

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he tells superior his/her behavior is unacceptable	27	24.5	26.2	26.2
S/he takes no action	8	7.3	7.8	34.0
Notifies his/her superior	63	57.3	61.2	95.1
Other action	5	4.5	4.9	100.0
Total	103	93.6	100.0	
Missing 9	7	6.4		

Total		110	100.0		

The respondents reported that 65% of them would notify a supervisor if they witnessed their co-workers planning to keep half of the money found in a house being searched for narcotics. Only 1% of the respondents stated they would arrests their co-workers, 25% would tell the co-workers that the behavior was unacceptable but take no action, and 9% would use some "other action." Table 12 reveals the data gathered in this question.

Table 12
Respondent Witnesses Co-Workers Planning to Keep Money Found in a Searched House

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent arrests his/her co-officers	1	0.9	1.0	1.0
S/he tells them behavior is unacceptable, takes no official action	26	23.6	25.0	26.0
Notifies a superior	68	61.8	65.4	91.3
Other action	9	8.2	8.7	100.0
Total	104	94.5	100.0	
Missing 9	6	5.5		
Total	110	100.0		

Almost all of the respondents (98%) reported ethical behavior in Table 13 by indicating that they would never take any illegal drugs during off-duty hours. One percent reported taking recreational drugs such as marijuana and 1% reported "other response."

Table 13
Whether Respondent would take Illegal Drugs during Off-Duty Hours

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent takes recreational drugs such as marijuana	1	0.9	0.9	0.9
S/he never takes any illegal drugs	104	94.5	98.1	99.1
Other response	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	106	96.4	100.0	
Missing 9	4	3.6		

Total		110	100.0		

The majority of the respondents (92%) also reported ethically when asked if they would have sex with a stranger during working hours. Five percent reported having sex only if they were sure it would not be discovered, less than 1% reported having sex regardless of the consequences, and 3% claimed to use an "other response" when confronted with this opportunity.   Table 14 displays these responses.

Table 14

Whether Respondent would have Sex during Working Hours with a Stranger

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent resists the opportunity	97	88.2	91.5	91.5
S/he has sex only if s/he were sure s/he won't be discovered	5	4.5	4.7	96.2
S/he has sex regardless of the consequences	1	0.9	0.9	97.2
Other response	3	2.7	2.8	100.0
Total	106	96.4	100.0	
Missing 9	4	3.6		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 15 indicates that 67% of the respondents would act ethically by not drinking alcohol with co-workers in a secluded area while on duty. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents would also take the ethical approach of notifying a supervisor of the incident. Two percent would drink the alcohol to be sociable and 2% would take "other action."

Table 15

Whether Respondent would Drink Alcohol with Co-Workers During Working Hours in a Secluded Area

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent also drinks the alcohol to be sociable	2	1.8	1.9	1.9
Refuses to drink the alcohol	71	64.5	67.0	68.9
S/he notifies a superior	31	28.2	29.2	98.1
Other action	2	1.8	1.9	100.0

Total	106	96.4	100.0	
Missing 9	4	3.6		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 16 indicates reluctance on behalf of the respondents to take action against co-workers who engage in illegal gambling during off-duty hours. The majority of the respondents claimed to take no action (77%) when confronted with this situation. Only 1% claimed to also gamble during off-duty hours and 1% claimed to arrest everyone gambling. The other ethical response of notifying a supervisor only garnered 12% of the responses. Nine percent would take "other action."

Table 16

Respondent Sees Co-Workers Engaged In Illegal Gambling In A Local Tavern During Off-Duty Hours

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Respondent also begins to gamble	1	.9	1.0	1.0
S/he arrests everyone gambling	1	.9	1.0	1.9
Takes no action	80	72.7	76.9	78.8
Notifies a superior of the incident	13	11.8	12.5	91.3
Other action	9	8.2	8.7	100.0
Total	104	94.5	100.0	
Missing 9	6	5.5		
Total	110	100.0		

Table 17 reveals that the majority of the respondents (72%) would react unethically by taking no action if they stopped an off-duty police officer for a traffic violation. Nine percent would issue a citation and 5% would notify a supervisor of the incident. Fourteen percent claimed that they would take "other action" in this case.

Table 17

Respondent Stops An Off-Duty Police Officer For A Traffic Violation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he issues a citation	9	8.2	8.7	8.7
Takes no official action	74	67.3	71.8	80.6

Notifies a superior of the incident	5	4.5	4.9	85.4
Other action	15	13.6	14.6	100.0
Total	103	93.6	100.0	
Missing 9	7	6.4		
Total	110	100.0		

According to Table 18, the majority of respondents (55%) would take an unethical approach by telling the co-worker that the behavior was unacceptable but take no official action if they heard a co-worker using vulgar or profane language with a citizen. Twenty-four percent would take no action at all and 5% would take "other actions." Only 16% of the respondents would behave ethically by notifying a superior of the incident.

Table 18
Respondent Hears a Co-Worker Using Vulgar or Profane Language with a Citizen

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
S/he takes no action	25	22.7	23.8	23.8
Tells co-worker behavior is unacceptable, takes no official action	58	52.7	55.2	79.0
Notifies a superior of the incident	17	15.5	16.2	95.2
Other action	5	4.5	4.8	100.0
Total	105	95.5	100.0	
Missing 9	5	4.5		
Total	110	100.0		

Discussion and Conclusions

As has traditionally been the case in criminal justice, the majority of the respondents were male, between 31-40 years of age, and white. Many of the respondents were educated at the bachelor's degree level and the average annual income among the respondents was over $62,000. The majority of the survey respondents did not graduate from WIU, although they held degrees with an emphasis in criminal justice. The respondents were primarily employed in policing or law enforcement. Few of the respondents had immediate family members that worked or had worked in the criminal justice field. Overall the respondents answered ethically to 13 of the situation-based questions posed in the survey.   Those questions in which respondents indicated unethical or improper responses included situations in which their co-workers were involved, such as when co-workers were stealing merchandise from a mini-mart, engaging in illegal

gambling during their off-duty hours, violating traffic laws, and using vulgar or profane language with public citizens. This is somewhat surprising since over 80% of the respondents claimed to have attended an ethics course or training in the past.

One possible explanation of this behavior may be related to the subculture of the criminal justice field. As pointed out by Cox (1996) and others, socialization into the subculture of criminal justice begins very early in one's career and persist throughout the lifespan of the career. The results in this study may indicate exactly how influential the police subculture may be in keeping officers from reporting various acts of misconduct by other officers. The infamous code of silence, where officers garner an "us against them" mentality and resist taking official action against co-workers even when blatant law violations occur, may be so ingrained in the subculture of criminal justice that intermittent training in ethical behaviors and policy will have little affect on worker actions. According to Cox (1996), the police subculture, which is pretty similar to other criminal justice agencies, consists "…of the informal rules and regulations, tactics, and folklore passed on from one generation of police officers to another. It is both a result and a cause of police isolation from the larger society and police solidarity…" (p. 165).   However, officers who buy into this subculture and participate in ignoring legal infractions by co-workers are exhibiting unethical behaviors.

How, then, can this behavior be changed?   As suggested at the beginning of this paper, educational institutions may be able to contribute to increased ethical behaviors by offering curriculums in ethics and morality. Cox and Allen (2005, pp. 36-37) have suggested that higher education emphasizing ethics is the key as long as the curriculum is created to support the "… socialization process instead of merely ivory tower theoretical discussions of how policing [or other criminal justice fields] *should* be. Looking at the complicated legal, political, and societal decisions forced upon…officers and the unlimited number of discretionary decisions and repercussions may be more practical in teaching aspiring police [and other criminal justice] professionals than using philosophical exercises or conceptual teaching methods." In other words, academicians ought to adopt a key role in portraying the socially acceptable behaviors, morals, values, and attitudes that should be held by criminal justice professionals.

This can easily be accomplished by not only portraying ethical behaviors and giving ethical examples in the classroom, but by providing students with situations in which they make ethical decisions, openly discuss the decisions made and compare those decisions to previous or current ones made by those already employed in the field. Additionally, current criminal justice professionals, in both administrative and line-staff positions, should be invited into the classroom to have open and frank discussions with students about expected behaviors, inappropriate behaviors, the code of silence, and misperceptions about the field and officer performances. Ethical dilemmas should be considered at every level of the undergraduate and graduate degrees and should be built into the curriculum, either as separate classes or as exercises in each class. As suggested by Cox and Allen (2005, p. 37), "taking the approach that ethics is a learned behavior that can be taught through reinforcement is the best way of utilizing the resources available to university faculty. Further, the college graduate who becomes the new recruit will have been exposed multiple times to both formal and informal ethical dilemmas if universities take the initiative to participate in the socialization process."

Having suggested educational changes, the focus must be turned to agency responsibilities. If, as recommended, the creation of employees with integrity relies with both the university and criminal justice

agencies, administrators in agencies must put into place policies, training, and expectations that foster ethical behaviors. The approach to policy must be made with care, however, so that employees do not feel as though every action taken will be sanctioned. As noted by Murphy and Caplan (1991), policy manuals can become so specific that it is unrealistic for officers to follow every policy without taking the chance of violating another. "The existence of so many prohibitions can have an effect opposite to that intended. Officers will come to view the rules as a public relations ploy, as pious announcements not to be taken seriously. If the manual makes it seem as if everyone is eligible for disciplinary action, the threat of punishment loses much of its significance; when discipline does occur, it therefore seems arbitrary and unfair" (Murphy & Caplan, 1991, p. 317). According to Murphy and Caplan (1991), over-managing through policy can also create the belief that even honest mistakes may be sanctioned so minor rule violations must be hidden. This perception facilitates corruption.

In creating policy regarding ethical actions, agencies should create policies that are "realistic, not moralistic" (Murphy & Caplan, 1991, p. 317). Policies should be clearly defined, stated, and emphasized in day-to-day actions. The policy manual should be developed as a guide to acceptable conduct by incorporating legal standards of behavior and departmental values with work practices. The policy manual should be introduced to new recruits immediately upon being hired and reemphasized to officers during the year.

Ridding departments of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy is another step to increasing integrity. "This approach, in which neither new recruits nor sworn officers are asked to openly discuss ethical violations or misconduct, appears to assume that if these issues are not addressed they don't exist. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth" (Cox & Allen, 2005, p. 35). One way of reducing this behavior is to hire people with strong character (again, the university may be important) (Ryan, 2003). Using questions such as the ones in this study's survey may provide some insight into a candidate's ethical beliefs. Of course, a candidate may respond with socially acceptable responses instead of what he or she would actually do if confronted with the situation; but, at least it could be determined that he or she knows what the correct answer should be. Through teaching and training in integrity, the candidate may change the beliefs held prior to employment and respond accordingly. Those that survive the hiring process should be exposed to continuous discussions involving ethical responsibilities as new recruits and as seasoned officers.

The top down structure of many criminal justice agencies should also be considered when discussing how to increase ethical behaviors. Good ethics and strong fortitude must be demonstrated by those holding the highest positions, not only at the immediate supervisory level, but also at the highest level of authority. When speaking of the policing agency, Murphy and Caplan (1991, p. 313) suggest that integrity begins with the chief. The chief must "…make clear to the force that corruption will not be tolerated…in formulating the message, the chief must take care not to attack all personnel. An anticorruption program should not offend those who have maintained standards. The chief's statements condemning corrupt officers should offer comfort to the honest and dedicated ones, as well as counsel and support to dishonest officers who are still redeemable. Finally, in defending a moral ideal, the chief should not be perceived as expressing meanness, envy, or moral superiority." They go on to say that the chief must set an example by not accepting gratuities, taking gifts, or assisting friends and family with traffic tickets as well as refraining from other behaviors identified as improper. The chief should also institute

reforms that target unethical behaviors as an agency and not just as an individual problem. By looking at corruption as an agency failure and trying to confront the failure through agency initiatives, the traditions, policies, or practices that foster unethical behaviors may be changed or eliminated (Murphy & Caplan, 1991).

Last, training is an absolute necessity in deterring unethical behaviors. According to Ryan (2003, p. 49), "tolerance, sexual harassment, and cultural diversity training must become part of the regular curriculum for a department." Reinforcing ethical actions should be included in new recruit training, in the socialization process, and in opportunities for promotion. "Failure to prepare police officers adequately for the challenges and assignments they are given – that is, failure to foster integrity rather than incompetence – can lead to officer corruption" (Murphy & Caplan, 1991, p. 311). As noted in this study, intermittent training is not effective. Continuous focus on what is expected, increasing accountability through legal and policy initiatives, and open discussions on misconduct and ethical violations should be common practices in the criminal justice agency.

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