

TRISHA RHODES

Graduate: Doctoral

School Resource Officer and Patrol Officer Perceptions of Roles and Job Satisfaction

Major: Criminology & Criminal Justice

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Clinkinbeard

Despite growing research on police in schools, there is relatively little known about how the school environment influences officers. School resource officer (SRO) programs increase the range of traditional roles and include activities that may conflict with law enforcement roles, such as mentoring, advising, and teaching. Officers who experience ambiguous or conflicting role expectations may be less satisfied with their work. Officer job satisfaction may also be influenced by individual characteristics, such as locus of control. Importantly, job satisfaction is linked with work performance, and SROs' work affects the lives of youth, parents, and school staff. The present study examined the influence of the school environment on officers' perceptions of their roles, locus of control, and job satisfaction. A sample of 307 patrol officers was matched and compared to a sample of 182 SROs within a Midwestern region. Officer perceptions were compared between patrol officers and SROs. Additionally, predictors of job satisfaction were explored for both patrol officers and SROs. Findings indicated areas for future research as well as implications for the recruitment and training of officers assigned to schools.