

Juvenile Probation Officers: How the Perception of Roles Affects Training Experiences for Evidence-Based Practice Implementation¹

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CURRENTLY, THERE ARE OVER 800,000 youth involved in the U.S. juvenile justice system. Within this system, probation is the primary tool for managing delinquent youth in various phases: diversion from formal prosecution, community sanction, and aftercare. As a fundamental part of this process, probation officers (POs) serve as the supervisory link between punishment/custody and rehabilitation/freedom for America's delinquent youth, with primary management responsibilities for addressing the unmet needs of a myriad of justice-involved juvenile offenders. Despite the pivotal role of probation and POs, meta-analysis has found that juvenile probation has a small (yet significant) impact on youth outcomes (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998). Likewise, research suggests that enhancements such as police partnerships (Giblin, 2002), job preparation, and outdoor adventure (Minor & Elrod, 1990, 1994) or family group changes (Minor & Elrod 1994; Quinn & Van Dyke, 2004) offer little improvement over standard probation. This provokes the question: how can probation practices improve youth outcomes?

Unlike adult probation, the juvenile justice system has traditionally operated under a "child saving" premise, where attention focuses on the prevention of delinquency by intervening in the lives of the youth (Applegate, Davis, & Cullen, 2009). An example of a model that falls under this idea is The Reclaiming Futures model. This model has three goals for youth: (1) more treatment (improve the identification of those who need treatment, assessment of individual needs, and connecting youth to treatment), (2) better treatment (ensure that youth receive treatment that has been proven to work through scientific evidence), and (3) beyond treatment (improve youth connections to pro-social activities, community partnerships, and adult mentors) (Reclaiming Futures, 2011). Researchers find significant improvement in the quality of juvenile

justice and substance abuse treatment services in communities using the Reclaiming Futures model. This success has spurred additional implementation of the model across the U.S. (Binard and Prichard, 2008) while supporting the current push toward evidence-based practices (EBPs). Yet, regardless of research supporting the Reclaiming Futures model as an evidence-based practice, probation's emphasis in the last two decades has shifted away from child saving and toward safety and community control (Chiancone, 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Young, Dembo, & Henderson, 2007; Taxman, Perdoni, & Harrison, 2007).

With conflicting or changing emphases and goals, juvenile POs often experience role conflict or tensions between rehabilitation and punishment goals (some of which are inherent in the criminal justice system) (Day, 1983; Mulvey & Iselin, 2008; Ward & Kupchik, 2010). Presently, we do not know how POs navigate child-saving goals in conjunction with the current push toward security and law enforcement and the even greater push towards holding youth responsible for their actions. We also do not know whether POs with certain role orientations have a different understanding and perception of the EBP training they receive. This study aims to fill this gap in our present knowledge and highlight some of the challenges juvenile probation agencies face when implementing EBPs with POs.

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Literature Review

Probation Officer Roles

Punishment and rehabilitation are two very distinct goals of the criminal justice system that coexist as objectives of juvenile social control (Feld, 1999; Kupchik, 2005; Morris & McIssac, 1978). Within criminal justice settings, juvenile POs are the most likely justice actors to experience tensions between these goals as they experience conflict between rehabilitating youthful offenders and ensuring community safety (Day, 1983; Mulvey & Iselin, 2008; Ward & Kupchik, 2010). That is, POs must balance their work position with their personal/professional role orientation when dealing with the youth offenders they supervise.

Referred to as "the working philosophy of the probation officer" (Klockars, 1972, p. 550), the role of the PO is self-determined and often used as the reasoning and justification for behaviors. Prior literature defines a role as "a collection of patterns of behavior which are thought to constitute a meaningful unit and deemed appropriate to a person occupying a particular status" (Turner, 1956, p. 316). To this end, research has widely cited the existence of differing roles and strategies associated with probation. The most prominent PO roles discussed in this literature include law enforcement, social service, and resource broker (Abadinsky, 2006; Carlson & Parks, 1979; Clear & Latessa, 1993; Cuniff & Bergsmann, 1990; Dell'Apa, Adams, Jorgenson, & Sigurdson, 1976; Klockars, 1972; Lawrence, 1991; Sluder & Reddington, 1993; Steiner, Purkiss, Kifer, Roberts, & Hemmens, 2004). First, most unlike the other two roles, the law enforcement orientation involves placing importance on the legal authority and enforcement aspects of the supervisory duties associated with probation (Clear & Latessa, 1993; Klockars, 1972; Lawrence, 1991). Law enforcement-oriented POs are primarily concerned with controlling the probationer in order to protect the community, often placing focus on compliance and punishment (Abadinsky, 2006).

Second, the social service role (often referred to as case manager or a therapeutic agent) emphasizes client needs and treatment, motivation, support, and guidance in dealing with and solving problems, and emotion management (e.g., how to work through ambivalent feelings) to assist offenders to successfully adjust to the community (Abadinsky, 2006; Clear & Latessa, 1993; Klockars, 1972). Goals of this approach include changing the offender into a law-abiding citizen through rehabilitative means by using community resources, programs, and services (Lawrence, 1991). Finally, the resource broker's primary goal is to assess the tangible needs of the probationer and arrange for appropriate services to address those needs, rather than attempting to change the actual behavior of the probationer directly (Abadinsky, 2006). Resource brokers' main functions include assessing the needs of offenders and then linking or referring them to suitable programs, resources and services to address those needs (Abadinsky, 2006; Carlson and Parks, 1979; Cuniff & Bergsmann, 1990; Dell'Apa et al., 1976).

In an examination of these differing roles, Sluder, Shearer, and Potts (1991) created scales

measuring POs' support for casework, resource brokerage, and law enforcement orientations. Mean scores from the scales demonstrated that officers most often enacted the resource broker role (mean=36.35), closely followed by social service (mean=36.03), with law enforcement (mean=32.76) the least-embraced orientation amongst their sample of 159 POs. Similarly, Whitehead and Lindquist (1985) surveyed 108 probation and parole officers on a variety of measures such as professional orientation, participation in decision-making, and role conflict. Findings revealed that probation and parole officers mostly emphasized rehabilitation while deemphasizing punishment. Less than ten percent of their sample felt counseling and rehabilitation services were unimportant parts of probation and parole officer responsibilities, while a majority of the sample (68 to 95 percent) disagreed with all four survey questions related to increasing punitiveness in response to crime (Whitehead and Lindquist, 1985).

Prior scholarship also finds that juvenile POs embrace social service roles more than POs with adult caseloads (Sluder & Reddington, 1993). For example, Sluder and Reddington's (1993) survey of 206 POs examines the work ideologies of both juvenile and adult POs and considers differences in their support of the social service, resource broker, and law enforcement orientations. They find significant differences between juvenile POs and adult POs. In their study, juvenile POs were much more likely to support a social service orientation than were adult POs. Additionally, in Shearer's (2002) survey of 158 juvenile and adult POs, they find that adult PO trainees display more support towards law enforcement as a caseload management strategy ($m=11.22$) than do juvenile PO trainees ($m=10.31$). There was no significant difference between juvenile and adult PO trainees' support of social service and resource broker management strategies (Shearer, 2002).

Research also links role orientation to a variety of other factors, such as PO age, race/ethnicity, and individual case specifics. When examining their survey data for individual status characteristics, Ward and Kupchik (2010) found that younger POs were more likely to be punishment orientated, whereas those over 40 years old were less punishment inclined. Black POs were more likely to support treatment than white POs, but these authors found no racial differences regarding views of punishment.

Similarly, other research found juvenile POs use a balanced approach when dealing with delinquent youths on their caseloads (Schwalbe & Maschi 2009; Ward & Kupchik, 2010). For example, Ward and Kupchik (2010) suggest there is no consensus among POs regarding whether treatment or punishment is the more appropriate juvenile social control goal. Instead, juvenile POs often embody both orientations depending on the case (Ward & Kupchik, 2010). Likewise, Schwalbe and Maschi (2009) found juvenile POs often blended "accountability-based" approaches (such as confrontation and threatening to use formal sanctions) with rehabilitation approaches (such as counseling and treatment). This work further suggests that probation and parole officers organize their work around their entire caseload, making decisions relative to all cases as opposed to an individual case (Emerson, 1983). In this "holistic" approach to decision making, POs allot resources and energy based on the assessment of the demands and needs of one case compared to the demands and needs of other cases under supervision (Emerson, 1983).

In summary, juvenile POs appear to be more likely than their adult PO counterparts to embrace the social service role. Specific role orientation is likely related to a variety of factors such as PO age, race/ethnicity, and individual case specifics. Despite research distinguishing among the three roles, it is possible that POs employ a balanced approach incorporating elements from multiple orientations as needed.

Interaction between Probation Officer Roles and Training

There has been relatively little research linking PO role orientations to effective correctional interventions. One study by Fulton, Stichman, Travis, and Latessa (1997) finds that intensive supervision officers who received comprehensive training and participated in development activities (as compared to regular supervision officers who received no special training or related activities) were more oriented towards probation/parole's rehabilitative goal than toward the supervisory goal. In other research not specifically related to probation, Friedmann, Taxman, and Henderson (2007) reported that adult offender substance abuse treatment programs managed by administrators who believed rehabilitation was a main goal of the criminal justice system were more likely to implement EBPs. Administrators who placed less emphasis on punishment

used EBPs more often (Friedmann et al., 2007). Similarly, Henderson, Young, Farrell, and Taxman (2009) examined state corrections agencies and local criminal justice facilities to determine how organizational characteristics relate to the use of EBPs. Findings reveal that organizations emphasizing rehabilitation over punishment were likely to use more EBPs. While this prior work does not directly relate to PO role orientations and perceptions of trainings on evidence-based practices, it does suggest a possible link between a rehabilitative orientation and the adoption and implementation of EBPs.

To date, we know that prior research has examined role conflict and how POs manage these different probation strategies (Schwalbe & Maschi, 2009; Ward & Kupchik, 2010), but there has been little to no examination of the relationship between role orientations and perceptions of evidence-based job training for juvenile probation officers. As the movement to implement EBPs gains momentum, it is important to consider whether and how probation officers, as front-line (street-level) workers, adopt and implement the EBPs their organization trains them to employ. In this paper, we examine interviews with juvenile POs to understand how PO role orientation relates to perceptions of evidence-based training/practices and the probationers they supervise.

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Method

JARPP Background

The Juvenile Assessment, Referral, Placement and Treatment Planning (JARPP) study is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse under a collaborative agreement between George Mason University and the University of Maryland. The JARPP study focuses on measuring the effectiveness of different types of training and staff development protocols on the desired juvenile justice worker practices of assessment, treatment planning, and service case management. The main goals are to: 1) assess the impact of a new juvenile assessment, referral, and placement strategy on youth utilization of services; 2) assess the impact of different training and staff development components, and 3) analyze the impact of a new case management component on youth outcomes. The larger JARPP study used a randomized controlled experiment (RCT) to assess the impact of different training strategies on use of evidence-based practices in their interactions with the youth. The study was conducted in 12 randomly selected juvenile probation offices, each randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups: 1) Enhanced (receiving motivational interviewing and intensive JARPP training followed by booster training sessions and on-site peer coaching focused on creating a social climate in support of using the evidence-based practices); 2) Standard (receiving motivational interviewing and intensive JARPP training followed by education-oriented booster sessions to focus on learning to use the techniques of the evidence-based practices), and 3) Control (receiving a one-day motivational training only). The study team also surveyed probation officers in all research sites in three waves and conducted semi-structured interviews with a subsample of JARPP POs. This paper uses data from semi-structured interviews only. See Taxman, Henderson, and Young (2011) for further information about the design of this study.

The JARPP study hypothesized that POs in the Enhanced and Standard training groups would experience improved attitudes towards the probation organization as well as increased perception that the organization was committed to integrating the new assessment, referral, placement, and treatment planning protocol into day-to-day practice. Additionally, JARPP researchers hypothesized that the booster sessions and peer coaches involved in the enhanced training would lead to better overall outcomes (Taxman, Henderson and Young, 2011).

Interviews

As part of the larger project, qualitative researchers conducted interviews with a subsample of JARPP officers between April, 2009 and July, 2009 (n=14), shortly after the intensive training. PO interviews lasted between 38 minutes and 1 hour and 56 minutes at locations away from the probation office. All interviewees volunteered. One researcher conducted each interview, while a second researcher recorded the interviews and later transcribed the recordings. To keep interviews informal and comfortable for participants, interviewers used a semi-structured conversational style with an overall focus on receiving answers to several key questions. These

questions focused on the main goals of the project and included questions about primary job responsibilities and professional training experiences (including, but not limited to study-defined activities). Researchers used follow-up probes that aligned with initial answers, so each interview took on its own distinct pattern within a general framework. For example, researchers asked, "What impact has the JARPP training that you have been provided had on your case management and supervision procedures?" Then they followed up by investigating why and how JARPP training differed from other trainings they received (complete set of interview questions in the [Appendix B](#)). The Human Subjects Research Board (HSRB) at George Mason University approved this research procedure.

Coding Procedures for Interview Data

Researchers employed several methods of managing, coding, and analyzing interview data. First, we linked all interview transcripts to Atlas.ti, a qualitative data management program for coding and analysis. Atlas.ti is a commonly used program for coding qualitative data, such as transcribed interviews (Muhr, 1991). Before beginning the coding process, we created a code "start list" (resource broker, social service, law enforcement, male, female, white, black, education, job experience, age) (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to organize a structure of codes based on the prior literature on roles of POs. This deductive approach is helpful in developing a structure of codes and organizing text for later analysis (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

Next, we used an inductive approach to compare each interview file with previously coded interview files using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method is helpful for determining if new data fits with the existing data and in developing code structure. This method also required that researchers refine and develop new codes as needed throughout the coding process. Researchers utilized a team, collaborative approach when coding PO roles. Both authors independently analyzed and coded the interviews to determine whether PO's orientations were law enforcement, social service, or resource broker. We relied on Max Weber's concept of "ideal types" to classify each PO into only one category that most represents their role. After comparison of coding, researchers agreed on role orientations with 83 percent inter-coder reliability. The use of both the deductive and inductive coding approaches together yields an integrated approach that facilitates the development of themes within the data (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

To analyze the data, researchers used a qualitative analytic technique called Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). QCA is most helpful in recognizing the simplest combinations of factors that lead to a particular outcome (Cress & Snow, 2000). Using QCA, we constructed a truth table using Boolean logic to summarize the different combinations of causal conditions related to specific outcomes as discussed above (Ragin, Shulman, Weinburg, & Gran, 2003; Romme, 1995). Originally, we constructed a truth table with predictor variables: role orientation, tenure on the job, race, gender, and age based on previous literature that suggested these variables might affect role orientation (Ward & Kupchik, 2010). We removed age since it was highly correlated with tenure on the job and race and gender because they did not affect the PO perceptions of training or probationers in any combination. To construct a truth table, we entered data into a chart in dichotomous form (1=yes, 0=no) for each case (PO) (Romme, 1995).

The JARPP truth table included role orientation and tenure on the job with view of probationer and view of training as the outcome variables. Once data were entered into a truth table, we logically simplified that data to determine what different combinations of conditions produce a specific outcome (Ragin et al., 2003). The goal was to specify the different combinations of role orientation and tenure on the job that produce varying views of probationers and training. To minimize the table, researchers compared rows with the same outcomes to each other. Using Boolean Minimization (a standard technique in QCA analysis), we minimized all rows that led to the same outcomes but differed on only one causal condition. This represents the most fundamental procedure in Boolean analysis (Romme, 1995). For example, in our data, rows two and three differ solely on the tenure condition; therefore, we can minimize those rows. This means that individuals in the control group with social service orientation, regardless of job tenure, have a negative view of probationers and a negative view of training.

Findings

To recap, this project considers the influence of *juvenile probation officers' roles and type of training on perceptions of the probationers they supervise and of their collective experiences associated with the JARPP concepts of assessment, treatment planning, and case planning*. Using qualitative interview data and a Boolean truth table, our research suggests two findings. First, we find that workplace roles do not affect perceptions of probationers or training. Second, at a practical level, enhanced specialized training may affect positive views of training and positive perceptions of probationers, as the embedded study group is the only group with positive attitudes toward both. In these sections, we report on the representative data from interview transcripts that support findings. To begin, we present a findings summary in [Figure One](#).

PO Roles, View of Training and Perception of Probationers

POs typically fit into one of three distinct workplace roles: law enforcement, social service and resource broker (Abadinsky, 2006; Carlson & Parks, 1979; Clear & Latessa, 1993; Cuniff & Bergsmann, 1990; Dell'Apa et al., 1976; Klockars, 1972; Lawrence, 1991; Sluder & Reddington, 1993; Steiner et al., 2004). Some of this research suggests a link between workplace roles and demographic and experience variables (e.g., training/education, time on job, age) (Ward & Kupchik, 2010). Yet, our data tell a different story. Although POs at times display goals and perceptions related to a mixture of role orientations (as expected with juvenile POs), our data suggests the presence of two (rather than three) distinct roles: social service (57 percent) and resource broker (43 percent) among juvenile POs, with a mixture of demographic and experience characteristics in each group. This relates to different dimensions of the "child saving" perspective, where those aligned with social service orientations view their responsibilities as using services to prevent youth from further penetration into the justice system.

In the JARPP interviews, POs coded as having a social service orientation were most likely to stress the importance of duties such as arranging counseling sessions for their clients and making sure they received the services they needed. The POs "support and encourage" counseling sessions or treatment and identify themselves as counselors. POs who employed a social service role in their work described themselves as "change agents" or "role models" for probationers. For example, one PO discussed himself and his work in the following way, "You are your brother's keeper or you are your sister's keeper, and that's exactly what I do. I try to do the best I can for that person. I don't have to know them, I don't have to like them, but I'm gonna do the best I can to help them get where they need to be, which is a better place." In this example, the PO describes his role as a counselor and cheerleader, "Trying to encourage them to do what they're supposed to do." He continues, "I try to support them and encourage them and try not to focus too much on the negative aspects." Another PO added that they try to get the youth involved in "something pro-social, just getting them out of doing what they normally would do."

Alternatively, resource broker POs focused most on linking probationers to services and helping them "complete conditions of probation." Resource broker POs do not emphasize individualized services or counseling. These POs often note that they are *not counselors or social workers* and their job involves more of what one PO called a "brokerage type of thing." The following quotation from an interview with a resource broker PO is representative of other POs' perceptions of this role. This PO notes, "You follow the child, the child goes to intake and the decision is made whether to forward it to court and if it goes to court, we follow the case through adjudication and then disposition, and then if they're placed on probation, we really try to help them complete all the conditions of probation." He continues, "It seems to me to be more about assessing the need and directing to the source to address that need." Another PO explained that he had to refer to himself as "probation" because "if I say case manager, some people misinterpret it as a social worker. You know, and they think you do things like that along social worker lines, and I'm like, no. You know, I work, you know, with the courts." He continues, "Sometimes you're a referee between departments, like departments of education, social services, court services, the middle person." In this example, the PO makes a distinction between the two roles and plants himself firmly in the resource broker role. He does not want to

confuse outsiders. His role is just working within the system and not as a social worker.

The truth table (see [Appendix A](#)) suggests a significant relationship between the number of causal conditions and probation outcomes. Perhaps more revealing was our subsequent analysis that considers the relative significance of particular conditions as compared to others. It also inspects the combinations of conditions required to achieve a particular outcome. Our causal conditions include workplace role, study group, tenure, race, gender, and age and the outcomes include positive or negative views of training and probationers. We use interview data from the 14 PO interviewees as individual cases with distinct causal combinations (Ragin, 1987, 1999). The truth table presents all of the logically possible selections in our data.

After aligning cases and data in a Boolean truth table, we minimized to discover which conditions are relevant to the outcomes. First, we found that POs display a negative view of probationers and a positive view of training if their tenure on the job is greater than 10 years. Under these conditions, their role orientation does not matter. For positive views of probationers and trainings, role orientation did not matter for POs whose tenure on the job was less than 10 years. This may mean that POs with less than 10 years employment shared positive views of probationers and training regardless of role orientation. Similarly, role orientation did not matter for POs with less than 10 years job tenure, who displayed positive views of probationers and negative views of training. That is, POs with less than 10 years employment shared positive views of probationers and negative views of training regardless of a social service or resource broker role.

The findings for the outcome of negative views of youth probationers and training varied slightly according to workplace role. For these outcomes, role orientation still did not affect views of probationers and training, but the variables involved in the equation vary slightly. For example, if a PO's role orientation was a resource broker and his or her tenure on the job was less than 10 years, the PO viewed probationers and training negatively. If a PO's role orientation was social service, tenure on the job did not matter. That is, social service POs shared negative views of probationers and training, regardless of the number of years on the job. Overall, roles do not have a direct impact on views of probationers or training.

Type of Training (study group), View of Training and Perception of Probationers

The second finding considers the importance and impact of varying levels (or degrees) of training. Our analysis suggests that three of the four possible outcome combinations emerge from a mixture of study group participants (Enhanced, Standard, Control). The only outcome combination that is limited to one study group was positive views of both probationer and training. This group consists entirely of Enhanced training group participants (14 percent of the sample). They expressed positive perceptions of probationers they supervise. One PO notes, "I am not a believer that anyone is born bad," while another PO remarks, "If they're going to all the trouble to stop by, I feel like we should pay attention." POs in the Enhanced group often discussed going out of their way to meet with clients and make clients and their families their first priority. These POs also perceived the JARPP training sessions as an enjoyable and helpful way to "sharpen skills." One PO expressed their positive view of training, stating:

Specific to the whole JARPP project, I enjoy anything that has to do with making stuff better...improving and I'm always looking for ways to give me a new angle to use. So, many of the tools they've shared with us through that project [JARPP], I've found helpful because I intentionally make it a point to try and put some of those techniques into place, in doing all the rest of the stuff that comes naturally to me.

Only 25 percent of the POs in the Enhanced group perceived JARPP training negatively. In this instance a PO related JARPP training to a prior experience with counseling training. When asked about the impact the JARPP training had, this PO responded,

To be honest with you, not really much at all. I've actually been doing it before. I've had advanced counseling, intermediate counseling training, through the department, so a lot of this stuff like how do you interview people, and open-ended questions...I've already sat through two days of training on that.

Predictably, all members of the Control training group displayed negative views of training. As previously noted, this group received only one day of motivational interview (MI) training and did not receive the intensive JARPP training, booster sessions, or on-site coaching. POs in this group spoke about the entry-level training they received when they first began their job, calling it "useless" and discussed it as "the last place you learn." Similarly, POs in the Enhanced and Standard training groups (who each received considerably more JARPP training) also noted the perceived unhelpfulness of entry-level training. Many suggested that incorporating JARPP training into this early training would be more beneficial. One PO from the Standard group summed it up well when he said, "personally, I think that if it was entered [JARPP] when you did the entry-level training, that it would be perceived better" and later stated that JARPP would be most beneficial if it was offered in the initial training sessions provided to new employees. Another PO from the Enhanced group concurred, noting, "when I left [the entry level training] I thought, this would be great for introduction to new workers."

POs in the Standard group generally displayed mixed perceptions regarding JARPP training. Several viewed training as helpful, describing it as "an effort to get us to do less talking and get the kids to do more talking." However, others thought that POs in their office perceived JARPP protocols negatively because they thought JARPP had unrealistic expectations. For example, one PO discussed his trouble with JARPP by saying,

In an ideal situation, I would love to use their JARPP program every single day. In reality, half the time we get literally two to five minutes to see our kids, in an ideal day, you're cramming, between the hours of 3:30 and 4:30, maybe five if you feel nice to see them till 5:00, on an ideal day, what 15, 20 kids? You don't have time to sit there and be like, open-ended questions galore, and you just don't have time!

Along similar lines, POs in the Enhanced and Standard training groups displayed mixed perceptions of the additional training tools. Overall, there seemed to be some confusion surrounding the actual responsibilities and duties of on-site coaches. One PO summarized this view by stating, "Well I guess, we have JARPP Assistants, but I guess none of us know what they do." POs also perceived booster training sessions negatively, with one PO referring to them as "a complaint session" and another calling them "crazy crap." However, there were some positive perceptions of these additional training sessions, with some POs viewing them as helpful reminders, and one PO dubbing them "a boost."

In summary, findings revealed that role orientation and perceptions of training or probationers are not directly related. In addition, analysis of study group participation displayed only one clear relationship: positive views of both training and probationers resulted from participants in the enhanced training group. Further, perceptions of additional training tools were mixed amongst role orientation and study group participants. These findings have important implications for structuring EBP training and implementing EBPs in probation agencies.

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Discussion

The JARPP training protocol focuses on strengthening the resource broker and social service roles of juvenile probation officers by addressing the components of effective case planning. Focusing on finding and understanding the best method of training has the collateral benefit of influencing the organizational culture to better support new ideas in a juvenile justice setting. This paper does not document the outcomes of JARPP training. Instead, the focus is on the analysis of qualitative interviews on how POs perceive the training they received to implement new ideas within an existing workload (that is typically overburdened). One major finding suggests that PO roles do not have a direct impact on perceptions of training and probationers. While the law enforcement role was not found among the POs in our sample (which was to be expected given that we are dealing with juvenile POs), social service and resource broker role orientations were associated with both positive and negative perceptions of training and probationers. POs in our sample often mentioned having many different responsibilities, some noting they wear "many hats." This suggests that POs still face multiple demands and competing goals. Future work should aim to help POs learn effective performance and management of their

job despite multiple and often conflicting demands.

A second major finding regarding the impact of training was that POs from all three study groups (Enhanced, Standard, and Control) were represented in different combinations of positive and negative perceptions of training and probationers. The only exception was for POs who shared positive views of both training and probationers. These POs were also all participants in the Enhanced study group and therefore received both booster sessions and on-site training assistants. While prior research contends that single training sessions or workshops are ineffective for creating lasting change within an organization, training that includes follow-up/booster sessions or coaches is often more successful (Baer et al., 2004; Fixsen et al., 2002; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Miller & Mount, 2001; Miller, Yahne, Moyers, Martinez, & Pirritano, 2004; Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrne, 2004; Taxman, 2008). Prolonged training that incorporates additional training sessions and support from coaches is said to work because they provide staff with the opportunity to further their knowledge and strengthen the learned skills, while also providing the opportunity for feedback (Danserau & Dees, 2002; Fixsen et al., 2002). Despite the fact that not all members of the Enhanced training group shared positive perceptions of training and probationers, it is an important finding that those who received the intensive training and booster sessions devoted to developing a social climate to support the use of evidence-based practices displayed the most positive perceptions overall.

The current research is limited in that we can only report on what POs verbally told us in the interviews. Based on our findings, further work is warranted to include observations of POs in their daily routine. Pairing interviews with observations allows researchers to examine if and how probation officers "talk the talk" and "walk the walk." Observational data is also particularly useful in QCA analysis, as this method is especially appropriate when analyzing situations with complex patterns of interaction (Cress & Snow, 2000). Perhaps an underused method of analysis in qualitative research, QCA is helpful in yielding important findings as it allows researchers to examine the different ways in which variables interact and combine to yield particular outcomes, even with small sample sizes. This increases the possibility of determining variety as well as identifying the different paths that lead to a particular outcome (Cress & Snow, 2000).

Our findings have implications for the ongoing debate about role orientation in probation, as they suggest that role orientation is not a major factor in perceptions of training and probationers (clients). This finding lends support to previous findings that the differences in the tasks POs choose to implement (e.g., treatment service, support, control, and assistance) are not merely a product of their personal role orientation, but derive from the broader organizational philosophy (Clear & Latessa, 1993). Perhaps, as Clear and Latessa (1993) suggest, the position of the organization as a whole on PO supervision style is important and helps determine the attitudes and task implementation of staff members.

With the current push to implement EBPs in criminal justice organizations comes a corresponding and crucial push to determine how street-level workers like POs adopt and implement these practices. Previous research highlights several organizational factors that affect the adoption and implementation of EBPs. For example, using self-report and survey data, Farrell, Young, and Taxman (2011) examine the effects of organizational climate, supervisory leadership, staff cynicism for change, and interagency coordination on the implementation of a service-oriented EBP. Results indicated that implementation of EBPs is difficult in organizations where staff are cynical regarding change within their organization or have unfavorable perceptions of their supervisors (Farrell, Young, & Taxman, 2011). Likewise, Mulvey and Iselin (2008) also found that a heavy caseload and a lack of time could prevent juvenile justice staff members from implementing new practices. Future research is necessary in order to link the qualitative interview data with quantitative survey data from the JARPP study. This expanded examination could shed light on additional variables that might affect the adoption and implementation of EBPs within justice agencies.

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Appendix

Appendix A.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) Truth Table

	Training Group	Social Service Orientation	Resource Broker Orientation	Tenure less than 10 years	Tenure greater than 10 years	Negative perception of probationers	Positive perception of probationers	Negative perception of training	Positive perception of training
1	C	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
2	C	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
3	C	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
4	C	0	1	~	~	0	1	1	0
5	C	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
6	S	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
7	S	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
8	S	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
9	E	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
10	E	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
11	E	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
12	E	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
13	E	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
14	E	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

C=control training group; S=standard training group; E=enhanced training group

1=yes; 0=no;

~ =missing

Appendix B.

Interview Questions

1. How do you view your role as a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) case manager?
2. How did you learn how to be a case manager in DJS? How have you learned how to supervise kids on your caseload (on probation or on aftercare)?
3. What impact has the JARPP training that you have been provided had on your case management and supervision procedures? How does this training differ from other training you have received?
4. Have you encountered any barriers in implementing the training tools you have been provided?
5. Are the instructions and messages you get from the JARPP trainer consistent with what you hear from your superiors?
6. Do you think JARPP training is something that should get routinely incorporated into case management training in DJS? Why or why not?
7. Do you have any additional information regarding your experience with case management procedures and policies that you would like to add?

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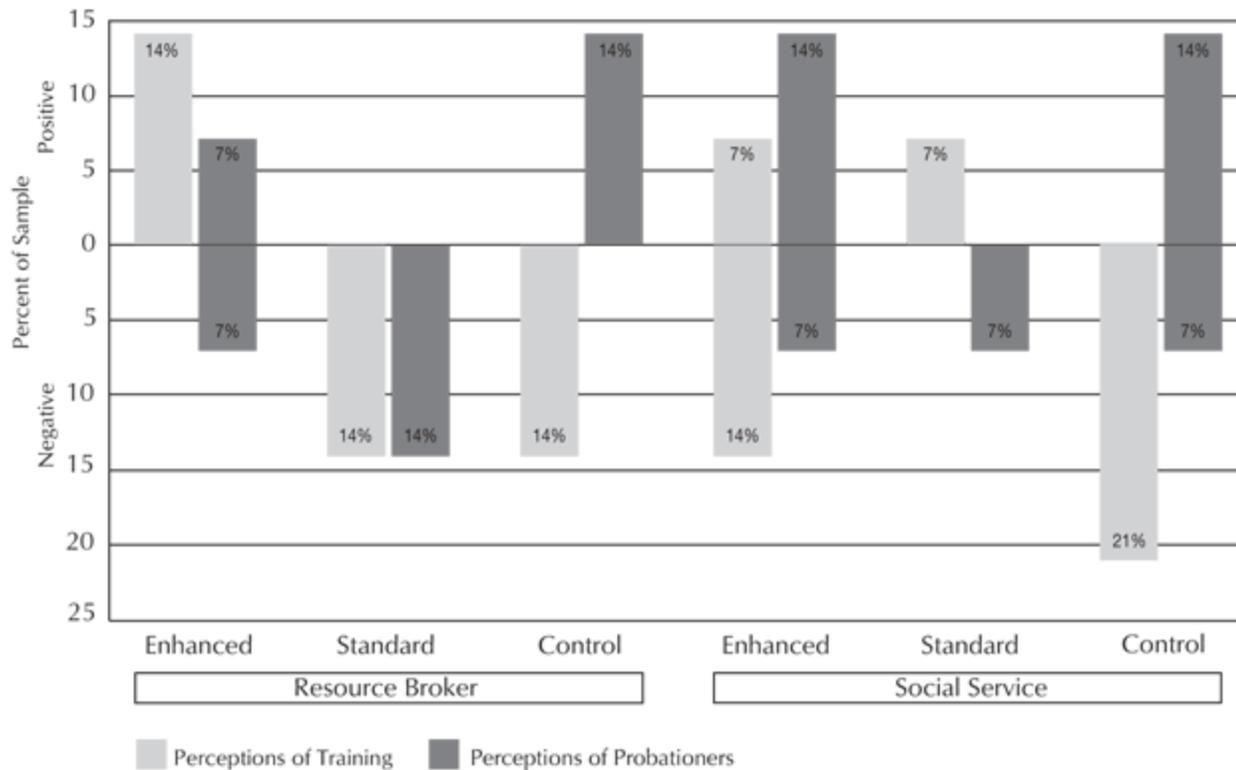
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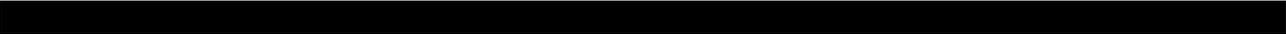
[Figure 1](#)

Figure 1.

FIGURE 1.

Perceptions of Probationers and Training





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1. Administrators also cite convenience and reduced travel expense for the offender.
2. Technical violations of probation account for a significant proportion of prison beds in Texas. This brings into question the role of officer discretion versus adherence to hard-line rules regarding handling of technical violations of supervision.

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1. This research was partially funded by National Institute of Justice Dissertation Research Grant, 2007-IJ-CX-0031. The full report can be found at: http://hssfacyty.fullerton.edu/pscj/cgardiner/Gardiner_Diss_Prop36.pdf