

Conclusion – 315 words

This study examined how police perceptions and interpretations of domestic violence shape their responses and the subsequent effects on victim safety and the probability of arrest. The findings indicate that, while police intervention has the potential to be effective, responses are frequently inconsistent and influenced by factors such as officer bias, insufficient training, resource limitations, and the perceived severity of incidents. Numerous respondents conveyed concerns that police force domestic violence seriously only in cases of a severe nature, resulting in deficiencies in protections for victims experiencing coercive control and emotional abuse. Furthermore, arrest rates were perceived as erratic, with many individuals believing that perpetrators are arrested only sporadically or infrequently. This may reflect challenges associated with evidence collection, victim cooperation, or officer discretion.

Public confidence in the police regarding the management of domestic violence incidents appears to be ambivalent. Although a considerable number of respondents recognised the paramount importance of ensuring victim safety, apprehensions were expressed regarding delayed response times, insufficient follow-up, and inadequate support during initial interventions for victims. Moreover, a noteworthy percentage of participants opined that officer biases—about gender, age, or personal perceptions—could influence decision-making processes, potentially resulting in victim-blaming or skepticism in some instances.

To enhance outcomes, the respondents underscored the necessity for improved trauma-informed training, heightened awareness of coercive control, enhanced investigative procedures, and more robust support mechanisms for victims. Ensuring timely police responses, comprehensive case management, and cooperation with support services may foster greater trust in law enforcement agencies and offer more effective protection for victims of domestic violence.

The research underscores the pressing necessity for reforms in police methodologies concerning domestic violence, aiming to ensure heightened consistency, impartiality, and victim-centered strategies. By tackling deficiencies in training, limitations in resources, and entrenched systemic biases, law enforcement agencies can significantly improve their efficacy in managing domestic violence incidents, thereby enhancing both the safety of victims and the legal outcomes.