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Draft Research Title Question: Police Officer responses to incidents of domestic violence

Domestic violence is a critical public health and social issue that affects millions of people globally (World Health Organization, 2024). The way police respond to such incidents directly impact victims' safety, justice, and well-being. Studying police responses can help identify strengths and weaknesses in current practices, ultimately contributing to public safety and better support for survivors (Elgezouli, 2022). In recent years, issues like the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased rates of domestic violence, or the Black Lives Matter movement, which raised awareness about police accountability, have intensified the need to examine how police handle domestic violence cases. This makes the research timely and relevant to current societal debates. By exploring these areas, the dissertation can contribute to a better understanding of how police responses can be improved to better support victims and ensure justice, which is crucial for both academic inquiry and real-world applications (Heydari, 2019). Police actions in domestic violence cases are often shaped by specific policies and laws, such as mandatory arrest policies or victim protection laws. Researching this topic allows us to explore how these frameworks are implemented in practice and whether they achieve their intended goals. For an undergraduate dissertation, this provides an opportunity to evaluate the impact of public policy in real-world situations.

### Aims

- Explore and evaluate how police officers respond to incidents of domestic violence (HMICFRS, 2019).
- Challenges faced by police forces and the impact on victim offenders (HMICFRS, 2022).

### Assess Police decision-making

- Investigate how police officers make decisions during domestic violence incidents including factors influencing arrests and engagement with victims and offenders (College of Policing, 2018).

## Evaluate Policy and training

- Analyse how current policies and training programs affect police responses, and whether they are adequately equipping officers to handle domestic violence cases (HMIC, 2014).

## Examine victim outcomes

- Explore the short and long-term impacts of police interventions on domestic violence victims, including safety, access to resources, and the likelihood of repeat abuse (College of Policing, 2022).

By focusing on these key objectives, they will help deepen understanding and suggest practical improvements in how law enforcement handles domestic violence.

For a dissertation on police officer responses to incidents of domestic violence, the key literature should cover a range of areas including the effectiveness of police interventions, legal frameworks, victim perspectives, and issues related to police discretion and training (Myhill, 2018). Use of books such as “domestic violence; The criminal justice response” this book provides an in-depth analysis of the criminal justice system’s handling of domestic violence cases, with a focus on police practices. It outlines how different approaches, like mandatory arrest policies, affect police interventions and victim outcomes. (Taylor, 2024). The use of articles (Hirschel et al., 2007) “domestic violence and mandatory arrest laws: To what extent do they influence Police Arrest Decisions”. This article critically examines the implementation of mandatory arrest laws and their influence on police decision-making. It can help assess whether such laws lead to better outcomes for victims or if they sometimes hinder discretion in handling complex situation. Exploring the training and development of the police, exploring in depth the study of “Perceptions of their Role in domestic violence cases: Training, skills and victim contact” (Maple and Kebbell, 2024), this study examines police perceptions of their role in responding to domestic violence and the extent to which training influences their actions. It provides a foundation for evaluating whether current training programs effectively prepare officers for the complexities of domestic violence cases. Another form of research is looking at articles, a recent study from (Morgan, Boxall and Payne, 2022), explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced rate of domestic violence and the challenges police face in responding to these incidents. It provides a contemporary angle on how crises impact law enforcement’s ability to protect victims. This literature offers a strong foundation for exploring police responses to domestic violence by covering theoretical, legal and practical perspectives. It helps frame the research within the context of the real-world policing challenges and offers both critical and supportive views on law enforcement practices. Through this literature, the dissertation can critically assess how police

responses impact victims, how laws influence officers' actions, and where gaps in training and policies exist.

The target sample for a dissertation examining police responses to domestic violence will likely need to be carefully chosen to capture a range of perspectives and experiences. 10-20 police officers depending on the size of the department or region being studied and available resources but also in their rank such as patrol officers, sergeants, and detectives who have handled DV cases. Receiving perspectives from both experienced officers and those newer to both as both are on different ends of the spectrum which will assess how experience affects responses and attitudes. This target sample ensures that the research will gather rich data on how police officers handle domestic violence incidents, the experiences of those affected, and input from professionals in the field.

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