

# Force Science Forum

A medium for the delivery of the research conducted or supported by the Force Science Research Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato.

*Selective attention*, commonly referred to in law enforcement as tunnel vision and tunnel hearing, plays a very significant role in an officer's perception, performance, and memory in a high stress encounter. An aspect of this phenomenon that the Force Science Research Center (FSRC) at Minnesota State University, Mankato, is interested in researching is the officer's attentional responses and the impact of that on the ability of an officer to effectively multi-task—particularly in a life and death encounter. Clinical investigation has informed us that the emotional response of an officer has a high degree of relevance on the officer's attention and then on the ability of an officer to both engage in life-saving behavior and simultaneously give meaningful and relevant commands in an attempt to control a threatening subject. The observations have also led us to hypothesize that the more an officer perceives that he or she has control of a situation, the more he or she is capable of giving relevant, meaningful commands. The less control he or she perceives that he or she has over a situation and the more threatening the situation is, the less relevant and meaningful the officer's commands are as his or her attention becomes focused on the need to engage in life-saving action to stop the threat. This article is the first in a series that FSRC will present as this phenomenon is explored and the most effective types of responses and the most effective commands for officers in high stress, life-threatening encounters are sought.

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## Command Types Used in Police Encounters

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Police officers regularly encounter situations in which escalating emotion can lead to hostility or violence between law enforcement and potential suspects. These

situations can quickly become dangerous for both the individuals involved as well as bystanders. In order to increase public safety and officer effectiveness, it is necessary to investigate and minimize the factors that contribute to antagonistic encounters between law enforcement and potential suspects. Certain communication styles and tactics may be more effective than others in eliciting immediate compliance and decreasing violence (Thompson, 1983). Likewise, a failure to communicate clearly and concisely has been shown in certain circumstances to exacerbate negative interactions (Forehand & McMahan, 1981). Although police behavior has been researched, an investigation of specific commands used by police has not yet been conducted (Bayley & Bittner, 1984; Bayley & Garofalo, 1989; Johnson, 2004; Reiss, 1971; Thompson, 1983).

In addition to command types, Johnson (2004) has noted that certain communication styles may be more appealing to potential suspects than others. Johnson also states that citizens who felt treated fairly were more likely to comply with the law. Factors such as respect, tone, and demeanor of an officer's verbal communication are important factors in reducing violence and increasing compliance (see also Reiss, 1971).

In studies evaluating compliance, researchers have consistently found that the clarity or feasibility of commands are important elements in eliciting compliance to demands (Bertsch, 1999). After a literature review of the studies looking at these components, Bertsch categorized commands into eight types. She further broke each type into *alpha* and *beta* command subtypes in order to distinguish between specific, feasible commands (i.e., *alpha*), and vague, unfeasible commands (i.e., *beta*) consistent with Peed, Roberts, and Forehand (1977). Bertsch studied the effects of these 16 command types and subtypes within the context of student compliance in a classroom setting. The command types included interrogation, question, regular, indirect, stop, don't, negative, and other. This identification of command types has not yet extended into the law enforcement literature, which is surprising given the abundance of police forces in various countries and cultures, and the importance placed on compliance with police commands. Bertsch's review and subsequent study showed clear and striking benefits to using concise and specific alpha commands. There has not been a study in the compliance literature to date which has shown any advantage to using nonspecific beta commands in an effort to elicit compliance.

Thompson (1983) investigated communication styles used by police officers. Thompson's communication research focused on the use of an impartial perspective, which was achieved through evaluation of the facts (who, what, when, where, how) and an evaluation of the purpose of each encounter. Thompson also focused on using language appropriate to each individual and to appeal to the emotions, reasoning, and character of potential suspects. Johnson's (2004) study showed significant public support for specific and general aspects of Thompson's verbal judo during traffic stops. However, participant input was not obtained for additional and specific verbal commands. Additionally, Bayley and Bittner (1984) and Bayley and Garofalo (1989) described and evaluated police behavior, which involved both physical and verbal behavior. Specific command types were not investigated, however.

Mastrofski, Snipes, and Supina (1996) investigated a number of components related to compliance in officer-citizen interactions. No major differences in compliance rates were noted by Mastrofski et al. among requests issued by officers for citizens to leave another citizen alone, calm down and stop the disorder, and cease illegal behavior. They also studied the use of authoritative force in both police entry and requests. Police entry refers to the style of the initial verbal approach with the suspect, including friendly/nonthreatening interrogation, command/threat, and force categories. Experimenters found only the force entry tactic to be significantly different in eliciting compliance, actually producing less compliance. Investigators also found that officers exhibiting the most authoritative entry tactics were least likely to gain compliance. Additionally, Mastrofski et al. found no significant differences in compliance among the request categories, including suggestions and requests, persuasion and negotiation, and commands and threats. It was noted, however, that greater police experience was associated with a greater likelihood of making commands and threats and a reduced likelihood of making suggestions and requests.

One element that was investigated in Mastrofski et al.'s (1996) study was defined as *coercive balance of power*, which included elements such as the number of officers present, the use of a weapon, and the sex of the officer. The presence of male officers and higher numbers of officers were less likely to lead to compliance, although only the number of officers was significant. These findings are counterintuitive, and they make a clear case for further investigation.

Mastrofski et al. (1996) also evaluated the type of problem behavior categorized as traffic, minor offense, drugs, and serious. The more serious the offenses in this study, the lower the likelihood of compliance. Researchers also found race to be a factor in compliance with officer requests. Results indicated that White officers were more likely to produce compliance with minority citizens and minority officers were least likely to elicit compliance with White citizens. Additional results suggested that males were more likely to comply than females.

Mastrofski et al.'s (1996) research only included commands which were unambiguous, excluding indirect and beta commands altogether. Current literature lacks research on the use of specific command types based on form and feasibility. No information is yet available on how command type relates to violence, compliance, or latency of response.

The current study will expand upon the research of Mastrofski et al. (1996) by evaluating differences in Bertsch's command types across suspect compliance, latency, violence, and type of crime in law enforcement/suspect exchanges. Due to the negative connotation associated with interrogation in law enforcement, for the purpose of this study, the interrogation command type will be re-termed *interview*.

## **Method**

### **Data Collection**

Data from police interactions were accessed via prerecorded videos, direct observation, or live video recordings on ride-alongs with law enforcement.

Data collected while riding with law enforcement involved two different police departments and nine different officers over the course of 11 rides. A total of four observers participated in ride-alongs during the busiest shifts, between Thursday and Saturday evenings anytime from 3:00 PM to 4:00 AM. Riders observed the law enforcement interactions in person and through dash-mounted cameras. In addition, observers viewed six different recordings of police interactions. These included two dash camera videos, a *Hard Copy* video, a *World's Wildest Police Video*, and two *COPS* videos. Officer commands were recorded as one of eight command types and one of two subtypes. Suspect compliance and latency were also recorded. Additional officer and department information along with circumstantial information were recorded as well. This included the type of crime, possession of a weapon, use of officer force, and the level of violence.

**Independent and Dependent Variables**

Independent variables included command type and type of crime. A *command* was defined as any verbal communication directed by law enforcement to non-emergency personnel in which a verbal or motor response was appropriate. Commands were divided into eight types and further classified into two subtypes. See Tables 1 and 2 for definitions and for examples of the eight command types and two subtypes.

**Table 1. Definitions of the Eight Command Types and Two Subtypes**

Command Type	Definition
Regular	Orders that are stated directly
Stop	Instruction to terminate an ongoing behavior generally preceded by the word "stop"
Don't	Instruction to terminate an ongoing behavior or a future behavior generally preceded with the word "don't"
Negative	Instructions to terminate an ongoing behavior which do not begin with the words "stop" or "don't"
Indirect	<i>Suggestions</i> (allowing for nonresponse) to respond motorically or verbally that are <i>not in question form</i> —The statement only indirectly indicates what response is expected. It requires the recipient of the command to infer what response is expected.
Question	Statement in question form to which a motoric response is expected, even though a verbal response is available but inappropriate
Interview	Statement in question form to which the only appropriate response is verbal
Other	Any command that cannot fit in one of the above categories or a command that may fit in two or more of the categories at the same time
Command Subtype	Definition
Alpha	Command in which a motoric or verbal response is appropriate and feasible
Beta	Command in which compliance may be difficult due to vagueness, interruption, or indirectiveness

**Table 2. Examples of the Eight Command Types Across Alpha and Beta Subtypes**

Command Type	Alpha Examples	Beta Examples
<b>Regular</b>	Put your hands on your head Drop the gun Take your hands out of your pocket Give me your driver's license Get out of the car Get on the ground	Get back Move Give it up Let me see them Chill out Do it now Do the right thing
<b>Stop</b>	Stop shooting Stop talking Stop fighting Stop the car Stop, drop, and roll	Stop that Stop Stop screwing around Stop bothering me Stop it
<b>Don't</b>	Don't leave your vehicle Don't say another word Don't jump Don't shoot Don't move	Don't Don't touch that Don't do that Don't make me mad Don't even think about it
<b>Negative</b>	Quit resisting Quit talking Quit fighting Quit running Quit moving	Quit Quit aggravating me Knock it off Quit that Halt
<b>Indirect</b>	There is nothing we can do. Hitting her won't solve anything. We want to talk to you. All you have to do is comply with our commands. I said freeze. We're not going to kill you. You're threatening me with the gun.	There's nothing to see here. That's all you have to do. We'll give you a hand. I said no.  We don't want to do it. If you stop, we'll stop.
<b>Question</b>	Would you step out of the vehicle? Could you put your hands behind your back? Could I have your driver's license? Could you move away from the curb?	Could you move? Could you calm down? Why don't you put it down? Do you want to get tased again?
<b>Interview</b>	What is your name? How old are you?" Do you know how fast you were going? What is your address? Have you been drinking?	What is going on? What is your problem? Do you understand? What were you thinking? What are you going to do?
<b>Other</b>	Why don't you stop yelling and calm down? Don't move or you'll regret it. No, don't do that.	I want you to stop, okay? Stop or I'll shoot Knock it off, or else! You better not expect me to believe that; tell me the truth.

Both the interview and question commands are phrased as a question. These commands are distinguished by the response, however. A verbal response would be appropriate for the interview command whereas it would be possible but inappropriate for the question command. The question command requires a motor response. For example, "What is your name?" requires a verbal response and is an interview command. A motor response is most appropriate to commands such as "Could you please sit down."

The next two command types, regular and indirect, can often be confused. The regular command type is defined as an order that is stated directly. The indirect command type is a suggestion (allowing for nonresponse) to respond motorically or verbally and is not in question form. The indirect command does not state a specific command, but it is classified as a command because a specific response is desired by the issuing individual.

The next three commands—(1) don't, (2) stop, and (3) negative—were combined to form an exclusionary command category. All of these commands are a request to terminate an ongoing behavior, and the don't and stop commands can also be used to avert a future behavior. The differences between these commands lies in the use of the words "don't" and "stop." Don't commands are defined as instructions to terminate an ongoing behavior or a future behavior generally preceded with the word "don't." Stop commands consist of instruction to terminate an ongoing behavior generally preceded by the word "stop." Alternatively, negative commands are defined as instructions to terminate an ongoing behavior, which do not begin with the words "don't" or "stop."

The final command type, other, is defined as any command that cannot fit into only one of the above categories or a command that may fit in two or more of the categories at the same time. This command type is most often used when a command fits into more than one of the command types such as "Why don't you stop it."

These eight command types are further divided into two subtypes: (1) *alpha* and (2) *beta*. An alpha command is defined as a command in which a motoric or verbal response is appropriate and feasible. Contrary to this, a beta command is defined as a command in which compliance may be difficult due to vagueness, interruption, or indirectiveness.

Observers could also indicate up to two categories of crimes for each encounter. These crime categories included assault, threat, suicide, narcotics, theft, burglary, arrest warrant, disorderly conduct, and other. Due to limitations of the sample size, only the primary crime was used, and suicide, theft, and arrest warrant were combined.

*Assault* was defined as physical violence such as domestic assaults, bar fights, sexual assaults, etc. *Threat* included "terrorist," verbal, or physical threats. *Suicide* was defined as a call when someone had committed suicide or was threatening to do so. *Narcotics crimes* included calls related to possessing, selling, making, or intending to sell drugs or drug paraphernalia or being under the influence of narcotics. *Theft* included taking property or merchandise in which there was no break-in and entry and no physical harm to others. This could occur during stealing and shoplifting calls if there was no break-in or harm to others. *Burglary*

was defined as break-in and entry or physical harm to others while stealing. *Arrest warrant* was categorized as a police call in which police were attempting to arrest someone because of a court order to do so. Arrest warrant calls did not include calls during which the officer decided to arrest an individual because of the circumstances of the situation rather than because of a court order. *Disorderly conduct* included any disturbance to others such as public indecency, peeping toms, public intoxication, disturbing the peace, etc. The *other* category included any calls that didn't easily fit into any of these categories.

*Dependent variables* included level of compliance, latency of response, and level of violence. *Level of compliance* was divided into compliance, forced compliance, and noncompliance: *Compliance* was defined as an individual responding appropriately to an officer's command by means of free will prior to another command by the officer; *Forced compliance* occurred when an individual responded appropriately to an officer's command as the direct result of the officer using physical restraint, a Taser®, or shooting a gun; and *noncompliance* occurred when an individual did not respond appropriately to an officer's command by free will or to the officer's use of physical restraint, a Taser®, or firing of a gun. *Latency of response* was further divided into three levels: (1) *immediate* if compliance occurred within approximately 10 seconds, (2) *delayed* if between 10 and 30 seconds, or (3) *none* if more than 30 seconds.

A *violent encounter* was defined as an encounter between an officer and potential suspect in which the individual posed a threat to the officer in the form of a weapon, extreme agitation, substance intoxication, or physical force. *Nonviolent* was defined as an encounter between an officer and potential suspect in which the individual appeared to pose no threat to the officer.

## **Training and Interobserver Agreement**

All observers received training on the operational definitions and use of coding sheets. Observers were allowed to practice independently on several videos. A reliability check was conducted on one of the five videos, which contained 22.9% of the video commands. Interobserver agreement was 93%. Prior to conducting ride-alongs, each observer was able to reach 100% agreement on the commands given in a video.

## **Procedure**

The primary investigator viewed and coded all six videos. For each new law enforcement encounter, the department and jurisdiction, the officer rank, and use of force were indicated if known. Additionally, the number of individuals giving commands, weapons possessed, the violence of the encounter, and the type of crime committed was recorded. Each command type, the level of compliance obtained, and the latency of any compliant response was noted for each police-suspect interaction.

## Results

### Command Type and Subtype

Of the 1,801 commands given, a large portion were interview,  $n = 938$ , 52.1%; followed by regular,  $n = 563$ , 31.3%; indirect,  $n = 141$ , 7.8%; other,  $n = 99$ , 5.5%; question,  $n = 45$ , 2.5%; and the exclusionary commands,  $n = 15$ , .8%. *Exclusionary commands* were mostly stop commands,  $n = 7$ ; followed by negative,  $n = 6$ ; and don't,  $n = 2$ . The majority of the command subtypes were alpha, with a total of 1,488 commands or 82.6%, whereas the total number of beta commands,  $n = 313$ , were less than 18%. See Figures 1 and 2 for frequencies of commands.

Figure 1. Frequency of Eight Command Types

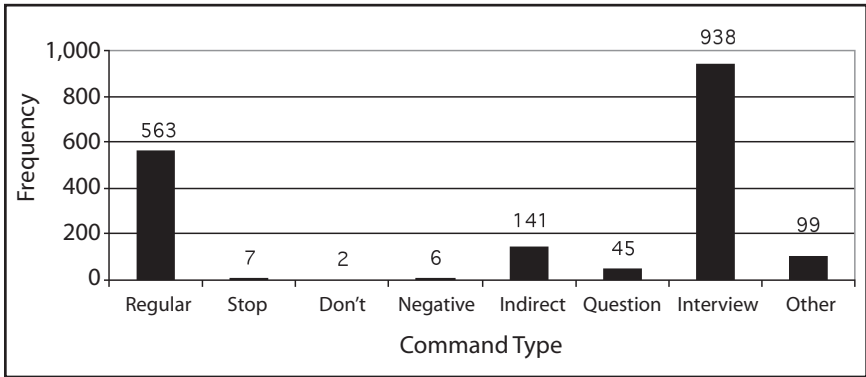
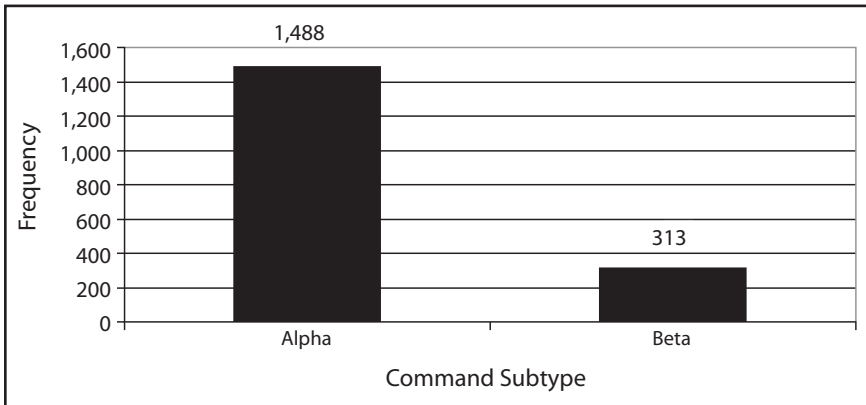


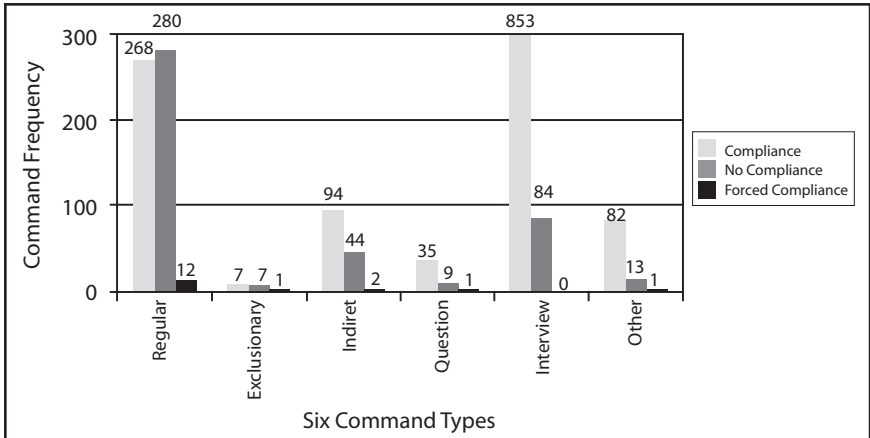
Figure 2. Frequency of Alpha and Beta Command Subtypes



## Compliance

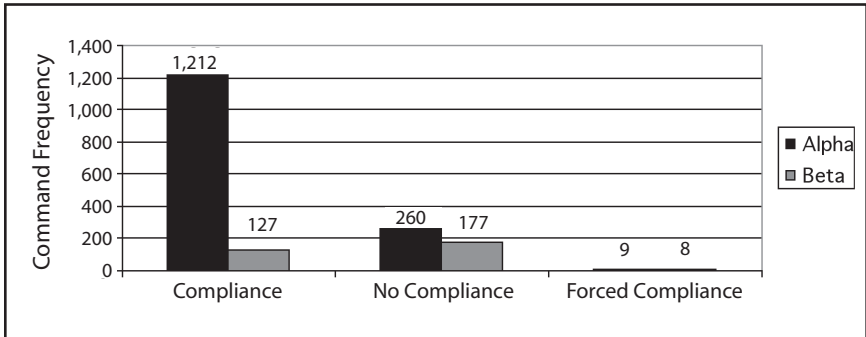
Results indicated that the level of compliance was significantly different across the six command types:  $\chi^2_{(10)} = 368.66, p < 0.001$ . The percentage of compliance per command was greatest for interview commands, 91%; followed by other, 85%; question, 78%; indirect, 68%; exclusionary, 50%; and regular, 48% (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Compliance Across Six Command Types**



Results further indicate that there were significant differences in compliance and noncompliance across alpha and beta commands:  $\chi^2_{(2)} = 231.059, p < 0.001$ . The greatest percentage of compliance per command was found in alpha command subtypes: 82%, compared to beta commands, 41%. The percentage of alpha command subtypes that produced noncompliance was only 18% compared to 57% of the beta commands (see Figure 4).

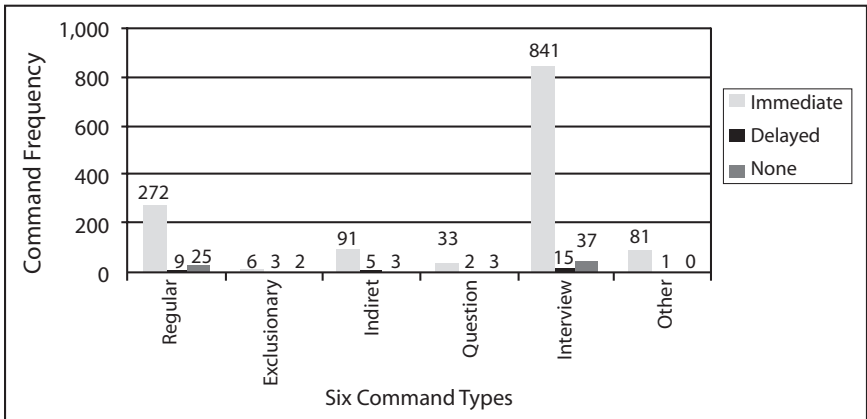
**Figure 4. Compliance Across Alpha and Beta Subtypes**



## Latency

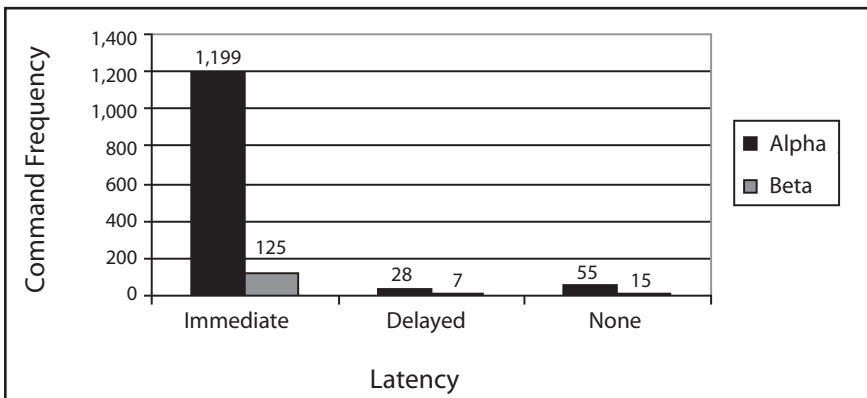
Results indicated a significant difference in latency of compliance across the six command types:  $\chi^2_{(10)} = 54.604, p < 0.001$ . The exclusionary commands produced the smallest percentage of immediate compliance per command, with only 55%; followed by question commands, 87%; and regular, 89%. All other command types produced at least 90% immediate compliance. Exclusionary commands were also found to produce the highest percentage of delayed responses at 27%. All other command types produced 5% or less in delayed responses (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Latency Across Six Command Types**



Results further indicated that there were significant differences in compliance and noncompliance across alpha and beta commands:  $\chi^2_{(2)} = 14.02, p < 0.001$ . Alpha command types produced immediate compliance 94% of the time and delayed compliance 2% of the time. In comparison, beta commands produced immediate compliance 85% of the time and delayed compliance 5% of the time (see Figure 6).

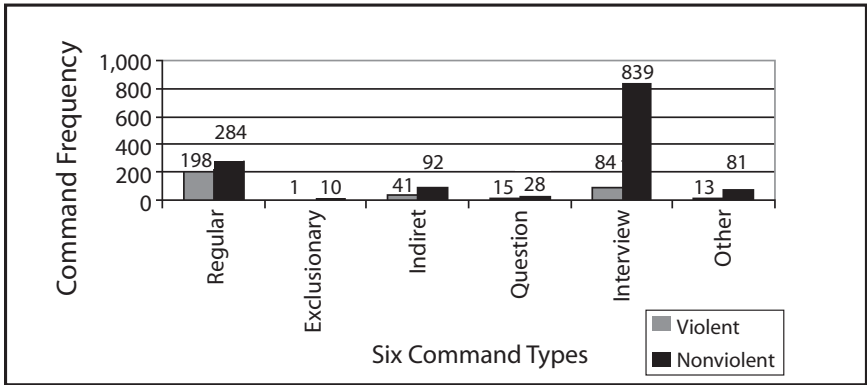
**Figure 6. Latency Across Alpha and Beta Subtypes**



## Violent Versus Nonviolent

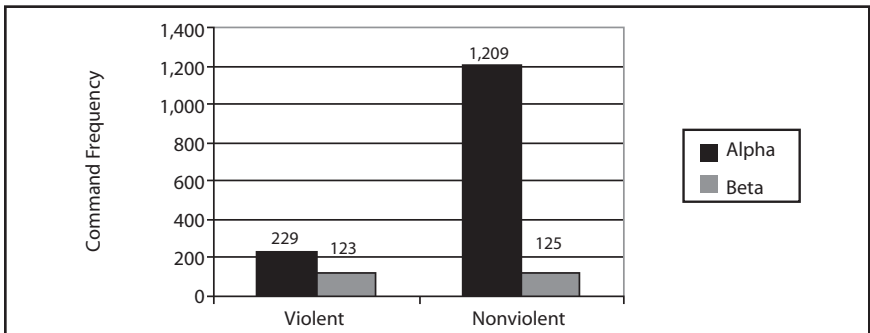
Of the 1,801 commands observed, 352 commands corresponded to a violent encounter and 1,334 to a nonviolent encounter. Results also indicate differences in the use of the six command types in violent versus nonviolent encounters:  $\chi^2_{(6)} = 213.398, p < 0.001$ . The greatest percentage of commands used in violent encounters was regular commands, 41%; followed by question, 35%; indirect, 31%; other, 14%; and interview and exclusionary, 9%. The greatest percentage of commands used in nonviolent encounters was exclusionary and interview, 91%; followed by other, 86%; indirect, 69%; question, 65%; and regular, 59% (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Frequency of Six Command Types Across Violent and Nonviolent Encounters**



Results further indicate that there were significant differences in the use of alpha and beta commands in violent and nonviolent encounters:  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 145.179, p < 0.001$ . The percentage of alpha commands used in violent encounters was 16% compared with 84% used in nonviolent encounters. Beta commands occurred 49.5% of the time in violent encounters and 50.5% of the time in nonviolent encounters (see Figure 8).

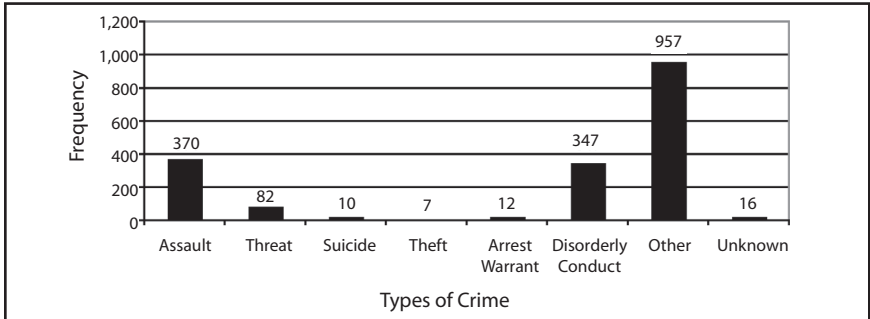
**Figure 8. Alpha and Beta Subtypes Across Violent and Nonviolent Encounters**



## Type of Crime

The crime associated with the most commands was other, 53.1%; followed by assault, 20.5%; disorderly conduct, 19.3%; and threat, 4.6%. All other crimes were each associated with less than 1% of the commands (see Figure 9). Due to the type of statistical analyses and small number of cells containing suicide, theft, and arrest warrant, these three categories were combined to form one category. Thus, the total number of crime categories was reduced from eight to six.

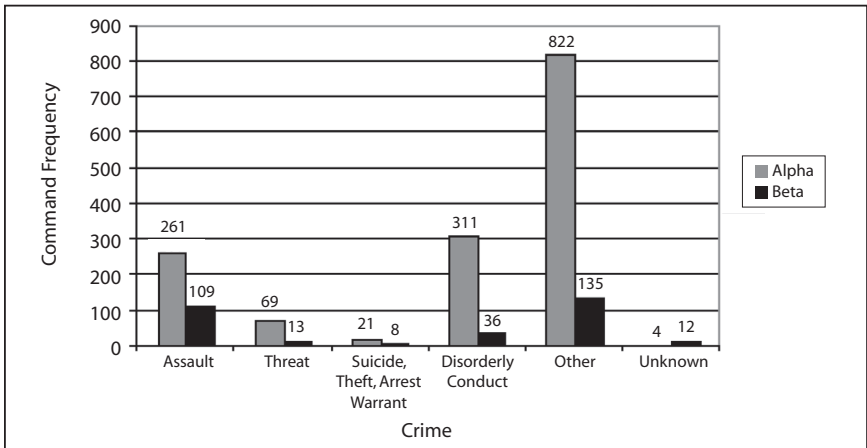
**Figure 9. Frequency of Commands Across Crime**



Results indicated that there were significant differences in the six types of crime across the six command types:  $\chi^2_{(25)} = 109.36, p < 0.001$ . The use of regular commands occurred most for other crimes, followed by assault, disorderly conduct, and threat crimes. The use of regular commands was less than 1% for each of the additional crimes. Exclusionary commands were used primarily for other crimes, followed by assault, threat, and disorderly conduct crimes. There was no use of exclusionary commands for any other crimes. Indirect commands were highest for other crimes, followed by assault, disorderly conduct, suicide/theft/arrest warrant, and threat crimes. There were no indirect commands used in the additional crime categories. Question commands were used most for disorderly conduct and other commands followed by assault and unknown crimes. No question commands were used in the additional crime categories. Interview commands were found most commonly in other crimes, followed by disorderly conduct, assault, suicide/theft/arrest warrant, and threat crimes. The use of interview commands was less than 1% for unknown crimes. Other command types were greatest for other crimes, followed by disorderly conduct, assault, and suicide/theft/arrest warrant crimes.

Results further indicated that there were significant differences in the use of alpha and beta commands across the six types of crime:  $\chi^2_{(6)} = 95.832, p < 0.001$ . The majority of alpha commands were used in other crimes, 55%; followed by disorderly conduct, 21%; and assault, 17.5%. All other alpha commands were divided by less than 5% in each of the additional crime categories. The majority of beta commands were found in other crimes, 43%; followed by assault, 35%; and disorderly conduct, 11.5%. All other beta commands were divided by less than 5% in each of the additional crime categories (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Crime Across Alpha and Beta Subtypes**



## Discussion

There is a lack of research evaluating command categories, defined by command structure and form, on outcomes of police interactions. This study was designed to evaluate differences in the use of command types and subtypes used by police officers in different crimes and with different levels of violence. The effect of different command type and subtype on compliance and latency was also evaluated.

## Compliance

Results indicate that a much higher proportion of the alpha commands, 82%, resulted in compliance in comparison to noncompliance. In comparison, the beta commands resulted in compliance 41% of the time and 57% in noncompliance (the remaining 2% were coded as forced compliance). This supports the idea that alpha commands may be more likely to result in compliance than beta commands. The clarity and feasibility of alpha commands may make it more likely that an appropriate response will be made.

Results for the command types indicated that 70% of the stop commands, 50% of the regular commands, 33% of the negative commands, and 31% of indirect commands produced noncompliance. The other four command types produced noncompliance 20% or less of the time. This data calls into question effectiveness of stop, regular, negative, and indirect commands.

## Latency

The data indicated that alpha and beta commands produced fairly similar levels of latency (i.e., the time span from commands being issued to commands being complied with), with 94% of alpha commands and 85% of beta commands resulting in immediate compliance. These results provide additional support for the use of alpha commands.

Results further indicated that negative and stop commands ranked lowest in producing immediate compliance. Negative commands resulted in immediate compliance only 40% of the time, and stop commands were only 50% compared to 87% or better from all other command types. Additionally, these two command types scored highest on delayed latency, with stop commands producing delayed latency 25% of the time and negative commands 40% of the time, while all other command types were 5% or less.

## **Violent Versus Nonviolent Encounters**

The results indicated that 84% of the alpha commands occurred during nonviolent police encounters, while 50% of the beta commands occurred during nonviolent encounters. Additionally, only 16% of the alpha commands occurred during violent encounters, while 50% of beta commands occurred during violent encounters. This may provide support for the use of alpha command subtypes to promote nonviolent police encounters and the minimization of beta commands to prevent violent encounters. The use of more specific and feasible requests by law enforcement may lead to fewer violent encounters.

All of the eight command types occurred more often during nonviolent than violent encounters; however, 41% of the regular commands, 35% of the question commands, and 31% of the indirect commands occurred during violent encounters. The higher percentages of these command types in violent encounters supports the idea that these commands may be more likely to lead to violent encounters. The use of more interview, question, negative, or other commands may lead to a reduced number of violent encounters.

## **Type of Crime**

Both alpha and beta subtypes occurred most often in the other crime category. Alpha command types occurred second most frequently in disorderly conduct crimes followed by assault crimes. Beta command types occurred second most frequently in assault crimes followed by disorderly conduct crimes.

With the exception of negative command types, the majority of all the command types occurred in the other crime category. The majority of question commands were used during disorderly conduct crimes. The majority of don't commands occurred during threat crimes. The majority of stop crimes occurred during assault crimes. Also, interview and regular commands were used the most compared to all other commands during assault, disorderly conduct, and other crimes.

The results provide strong support for the use of alpha command types to promote nonviolent encounters and compliance with police requests. There is evidence to suggest that the use of alpha subtypes may facilitate more immediate compliance. It is more difficult to draw conclusions about differences in the use of alpha and beta commands in different crimes, however; it is clear from the results that more research is needed in this area.

The results suggest that regular, question, and indirect commands are being used more frequently in violent encounters. Although causation cannot be determined from this study, the result raises concern. Furthermore, the use of stop and

negative commands may be hindering compliance and reducing the likelihood of individuals ceasing unwanted and sometimes violent behaviors. Although once again causation cannot be determined, the results of this study suggest that officers may actually be prolonging noncompliance by using negative commands. In addition, the regular and indirect commands may also be hindering compliance.

## Limitations

It is important to note that several of these results should be analyzed with caution. Of the eight chi square analyses conducted on crime, compliance, latency, and violence for the six command types and two subtypes, four of these analyses had a higher percentage of cells with low expected frequencies. The percentages were 25% for crime across subtype, 27.8% for compliance across six command types, 44.4% for latency across six command types, and 52.1% for crime across six command types.

The other limitation associated with the type of statistical analyses conducted is the inability to look at the interaction between variables. The statistical analyses did not allow for an investigation into the command type and subtype interaction effects on violence, latency, compliance, and crime.

It is also difficult to make interpretations of the crime data since more than 50% of the crimes associated with the commands were categorized as "other." Furthermore, there are only 15 commands categorized as "exclusionary": seven stop, six negative, and two don't commands. The limited data for each of these categories may make it difficult to interpret the findings.

## Implications

This study emphasizes the importance of command form and clarity in increasing suspect compliance and increasing the speed of suspect compliance. This study also draws attention to the frequency of different command types across different crimes. The results suggest that less effective commands occur more often in situations where violence is a likely outcome. This might indicate that these commands may play some role in this outcome, or at the very least it suggests that beta and negative commands do not increase either the speed or likelihood of compliance. The opposite is more likely true. This research and future similar research could be used to develop a template of appropriate versus inappropriate commands and responses for certain circumstances. This, in turn, might prove very useful in officer training on the use of efficient commands for communicating with suspects and preventing violent encounters.

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