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Correctional Officers' Perspectives on Cellphone Contraband Introduction by Fellow Officers

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, 2014

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Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

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Abstract

Occupational deviance in the form of cellphone contraband introduction poses a serious threat to the safe and secure operations of correctional facilities across the United States. More importantly, security staff members who participate in this form of unethical and illegal behavior undermine and impair both staff-inmate relationships as well as collegial relationships among officers. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of correctional officers who have experienced contraband introduction by fellow correctional officers and to understand the overall impact within the correctional environment. Based on ethical climate theory, this qualitative phenomenological study sought to describe the contributions of social factors as well as organizational policy practices regarding cellphone contraband introduction by correctional officers. Through phenomenological data analysis, findings indicated that correctional officers were more likely to ascribe universal responsibility to both the organization and officer violators and to believe that contradictions within the organizational climate inadvertently reinforced cellphone contraband introduction among fellow officers. Recommendations included alternative interview options, expanding the geographical search area for sampling, exploring factors within the organization that could impact the organizational climate, and comparing climate-related acts of deviance in other correctional settings. The data provided in this study adds additional insight for correctional administrators into the necessity of a multifaceted approach to addressing officer-involved cellphone contraband introduction.

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Dedication

To my ancestors, who by virtue of their struggle made it possible for me to carry on the legacy.

To my mother and father, who refused to allow me to forget the importance of my education and eternal learning.

To the king, Jaiden Lennox, who challenges me to be the best version of myself so that he can always strive to be better.

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I could not have done any of this without the love and support of those who believed in me the most, even when I did not believe in myself.

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To my committee members, Dr. Klemp-North, Dr. Dennis, and Dr. Jones: thank you for challenging me and pushing me to produce a dissertation that I will be proud of for the rest of my life.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

An organization's ability to function is reliant on the quality of the individuals within it, which is especially true within the field of corrections. Within the last 20 years, corrections officials have noticed an unsettling surge in occupational deviance especially as it relates to cellphone contraband introduction (Burke & Owen, 2010; Roth, 2011). Cellphone contraband is not a localized issue that only affects select areas but has been identified as a global problem (Burke & Owen, 2010). Cellphones within prisons threaten the safety, security, and stability of the correctional environment and pose a significant risk of danger to both inmates as well as staff members within the facility (Grommon, Carter, & Scheer, 2018; Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985) because these devices allow for the continuation of criminal activity as well as unmonitored access to society (Burke & Owen, 2010). Cellphones in prisons have been linked to activities such as extortion, escape attempts, drug trafficking, gang activity, and even murder plots (Burke & Owen, 2010; Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985; Roth, 2011). For example, a 2008 case in Texas highlighted the dangers of cellphone contraband in prisons when an inmate contacted a well-known state senator from a contraband cellphone and threatened the safety of his adult daughters (Graczyk, 2008). Similarly, a recent South Carolina case brought the indictments of 34 individuals from Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina who were all accused of aiding in a large-scale drug trafficking case by inmates orchestrating distribution with the help of contraband phones (Waters, 2017). In Florida, several employees were arrested for attempted contraband introduction after it was

discovered the employees were illegally communicating with an inmate serving a life sentence (Wear, 2018). This inmate was also involved in sexual relationships with at least two of the officers arrested and was attempting to exploit the sexual relationships to force their assistance with methamphetamine distribution within the facility (Wear, 2018). And although these may seem like isolated cases, they are more common than not within American corrections regardless of size.

Besides California, nine southern states—South Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, and Arkansas—had the highest cellphone confiscation rates within their prisons than any of other states in the nation (Riley, 2017). Corrections officials in one of these southern states appear to understand the importance of eliminating the issue of cellphone contraband (Cook, 2015; Rankin, 2015; Riley, 2017). This particular state is identified as having the fourth largest corrections department in the nation and ranked within the top 10 departments with the highest rates of cellphone contraband. Further, cellphone contraband confiscation rates in this particular state were the third-highest in the nation (Riley, 2017) compared to states with the three largest departments of corrections—Texas, California, and Florida which are the largest, second-largest, and third-largest, respectively—in the United States ("Cell Extortion," 2015). Corrections officials are aggressively targeting cellphone contraband introduction within their facilities in attempts to curb the problem in many states around the country. For instance, corrections officials in one state reported a 15.02% reduction in contraband from 16,322 incidents in 2016 to 13,870 incidents in

2017 with 8,081 reported cellphone contraband confiscations in state prison facilities (Georgia Department of Corrections, 2018).

The confiscation rates of cellphone contraband highlight an alarming problem that has increased in urgency over the years with the exposure of a number of high-profile cases involving inmates in possession of cellphone contraband. One such case involved a jury duty scam in which inmates within a Georgia prison contacted citizens and threatened them with arrest warrants for not reporting to jury duty ("Cell Extortion," 2015; Seville, 2016). The unsuspecting victim would be instructed to pay a "fine" using Greendot cards, which were eventually traced back to the inmates ("Cell Extortion," 2015; Seville, 2016). In a 2016 sting operation, 46 correctional officers in Georgia were indicted and later convicted and sentenced for their participation in one of the largest corruption scandals to affect the department (Cook, 2017). The correctional officers were identified as participants in contraband smuggling—which included cocaine, methamphetamine, and cellphones—at numerous institutions across the state in conjunction with one of the state's most problematic prison gangs—the Ghost Face Gangsters (Cook, 2017). Shortly after the mass indictments of correctional officers, an inmate was indicted for the 2014 murder of a 9-month-old baby, which was the result of a retaliation hit he ordered from his prison cell on a contraband cellphone (Harris, 2016; Reed, 2016; Saul, 2016). The hit was approved and ordered via cellphone by the inmate—a member of Sex, Money, Murder gang—and his superiors—who were serving time at a supermax federal facility in Colorado at the time of the murder—in retaliation for the murder of a fellow gang member perpetrated by the baby's uncle (Harris, 2016;

Reed, 2016; Saul, 2016). In 2018, another inmate was convicted and sentenced to life

imprisonment plus 20 years for ordering a hit on a man who owed him $500 (Barker,

2018; Yeomans, 2018). The inmate ordered the hit from a contraband cellphone he had

received while in prison serving time for a previous murder (Barker, 2018; Yeomans,

2018). Cases such as these present the clear and apparent dangers associated with

cellphone contraband in prisons.

 Although cellphone contraband is often introduced by a variety of sources,

correctional officers who participate in this form of deviant behavior create the greatest

risk to their organization due to the associated relational impacts. Correctional

administrators struggle to manage cellphone contraband, which creates a wide range of

problems both within correctional facilities and in the general public. Because of this,

there is a greater sense of urgency to understand the impacts of this problem from the

perspective of those who are at greater risk due to this exposure.

Background

 In order to understand perceptions related to cellphone contraband introduction,

an extensive review of the relevant literature was conducted. Deviance literature

highlighted individual, within-group, and organizational factors such as poor pay, societal

isolation, within-group assimilation, and job satisfaction as contributors to employee

deviance (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Biron, 2010; Cook, 2017; Farnese, Bello, Livi,

Barbieri, & Gubbiotti, 2016; Ferris, 2009; Ivkovic, 2005; Norman, Avey, Nimnicht, &

Pigeon, 2010; Riley, 2017; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998; Souryal, 2009; Thau,

Bennett, Mitchell, & Marrs, 2009; Thompson, 2009). However, the corrections

profession is underrepresented throughout this literature, which created generalizability concerns. The scope of corrections literature was limited in regard to deviance and was primarily limited to inappropriate relationships and boundary violations (Donner, Maskaly, & Thompson, 2018; Mahfood, Pollock, & Longmire, 2013; Maillicoat, 2005; Souryal, 2009; Worley & Worley, 2016). There was also an identifiable discrepancy regarding culpability (officers or inmates) in deviant workplace activities (Dial & Worley, 2008; Marquart, Barnhill, & Balshaw-Biddle, 2001; Worley, 2016; Worley & Cheeseman, 2006; Worley, Marquart, & Mullings, 2003; Worley, Tewksbury, & Frantzen, 2010) and a deficiency in self-report data related to correctional officers' experiences with contraband activity. The recency of contraband literature reiterated key concepts of deviance and corrections literature by presenting concerns with pay, job satisfaction, within-group socialization issues, and underreporting related to officer codes of silence as relative factors in contraband introduction (Burke & Owen, 2010; CAPI, 2016; Grommon et al., 2018; Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985; Roth, 2011; York, 2016). However, researchers have not provided any explanation for ethical considerations or climate contributions from the perspective of correctional officers. Further, the majority of this information was based on secondary studies and reviews of available studies as opposed to direct studies. Lastly, the climate literature reported ways in which climate influences organizational behaviors—especially through affective and perceptual factors (Ivkovic, 2005; Schneider, Ehbart, & Macey, 2013; Taxman, Cropsey, Melnick, & Perdoni, 2008; Trevino, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). However, similar to deviance literature, the studies' populations consisted of non-corrections professionals which again

limited generalizability. This study aimed to remedy these gaps by exploring ways in which contraband activity by fellow officers impacts the organizational and within-group perspectives of non-participatory correctional officers.

Problem Statement

Institutional structure, social order, and behavioral management are the primary responsibilities of security staff within correctional institutions (Ferdik & Smith, 2016; McKelvey, 1977). Any behavior that contradicts ethical, moral, and formally established mores directly undercuts institutional authority as well as safe and secure operations within a correctional facility (Henry, 1998). Cellphone contraband introduction by security staff is a contemporary example of immoral and illegal behavior that undermines organizational policy and standards within corrections. Correctional experts and researchers agree that cellphone contraband introduction is problematic across many correctional departments (Cook, 2015, 2017; Graczyk, 2008; Rankin, 2015; Reed, 2016; Riley, 2017; Saul, 2016; Seville, 2016; Smith, 2018; Associated Press, 2018; Thompson, 2009), warranting increased attention for the identification of suitable remedies. Limited qualitative data exists that provides substantial exploration of the impact of this behavior relative to both organizational climate and deviancy as well as the overall correctional environment. The collection and analysis of additional relevant data allows for greater insight into cellphone contraband introduction perpetrated by correctional officers. Further, it allows for additional clarification of systemic factors—including both institutional and social factors as well as current regulatory policies—that may exacerbate this particular form of occupational deviancy within correctional settings.

Purpose of the Study

Cellphone contraband introduction is detrimental to institutional safety and secure offender management. The current body of literature lacks specificity in regard to rationale behind officer participation in cellphone introduction as well as reporting behaviors by noncomplicit officers. Because of this, a greater need for deeper exploration into significant acts of deviance—in this case, cellphone contraband introduction—exists. In addition to causing damage within individual institutions, cellphone contraband is equally disruptive to the supervising agencies as well as the surrounding communities. Security staff are often held to a higher standard as compared to other staff (i.e., food service, civilian, medical, mental health, etc.) due to their perceived power and control within the correctional organization. The authority ascribed to these individuals intensifies the negative impact associated with participation in this level of occupational deviancy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of correctional officers (of all rankings) who have experienced contraband introduction by other security staff.

Research Questions

The following central research question and two subquestions regarding correctional officer cellphone contraband introduction and climate influence were developed based on the identified problem statement and purpose of the study.

Central question: How do cellphone contraband violations by correctional officers impact the perceptions of other correctional officers regarding cellphone contraband prevention in state prisons?

SQ1: How does correctional climate encourage cellphone contraband

introduction by correctional officers?

SQ2: How does the correctional climate impact reporting of cellphone

contraband violators by non-complicit officers?

Theoretical Framework

Victor and Cullen's (1988) ethical climate theory was the applicable theoretical

reference for guiding this research. According to this theoretical tenet, organizations are

comprised of specific ethical climates relative to "position, tenure, and workgroup

membership" (Victor & Cullen, 1988, p. 101). Ethical climates are identified based on

five categories: law and code, independence, rules, caring, and instrumentalism (Victor &

Cullen, 1988). Victor and Cullen suggested sociocultural and organizational factors

encourage the overall development of ethical climate, which is explained further in the

next chapter. This theory supported the research by accounting for the organizational and

sociocultural influences of cellphone contraband introduction within prisons (as

addressed in the central question and RQ1). Additionally, ethical climate theory helped

further exploration into the role of non-complicit correctional officers as well as their

interactions with and perceptions of their work environments following their awareness

of cellphone contraband introduction (as addressed in the central question and RQ2).

Nature of the Study

Qualitative methodology was most appropriate for this research. Problems and

issues in need of in-depth exploration are most suitable for qualitative research (Creswell,

2013). Researchers who identify a "need to study a group or population, to identify

variables that cannot be easily measured, or to hear silenced voices" while establishing "a complex, detailed understanding of an issue" (Creswell, 2013, p. 48) are best served with a qualitative methodological approach. Because of the unique nature and depth of this problem, qualitative methodology presented as most appropriate for the examination of how and why cellphone contraband introduction occurs at the hands of correctional security staff. Moreover, the alignment of the established purpose and corresponding research questions assists with the conceptualization of both known and unknown contributory factors that continue to counteract current preventative measures.

Cellphone contraband introduction is a problem not experienced by society as a whole. Instead, it is exclusive within a certain type of environment—correctional facilities—and experienced by a specific group of people—staff and inmates within the correctional environment. The individuals who are the most knowledgeable of this particular phenomenon of interest are those who are most impacted by it on a regular basis—correctional officers. As such, a phenomenological study design was employed as most effective in understanding the ways in which correctional officers are effected by cellphone contraband introduction by other officers. This particular design choice also provided for exploration of underlying themes relative to the overall understanding of contraband introduction through the lived experiences of study participants (Creswell, 2013). The central purpose of phenomenological research is to provide qualitative insight into the lived experiences of a particular situation or phenomenon; additionally, I was able to focus on the experiences of the participants with limited focus on social or cultural norms, preconceived notions, or values in order to identify shared themes that

collectively explained their experiences with the established phenomenon. Participants in this study consisted of a group of officers who met a specific set of criteria including length of time as correctional officers and previous exposure to incidents of cellphone contraband introduction. I interviewed these individuals using a semistructured questioning strategy and analyzed their responses using phenomenological data analysis.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this research provided the contextual foundations for the study. First, it was anticipated that participants would have differing interpretations of interview questions, different lived experiences as correctional officers, and different ethical beliefs which would inform their interview responses. It was also expected that participants would answer the interview questions honestly. Finally, I assumed that the findings associated with this study would be reflective of correctional officers who work in state prison facilities. The nature of prison environments varies based on population, size, demographics, security-level, and so on; consequently, the experiences of correctional officers in similarly defined prison environments could relate to the experiences of participants identified in this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study reflected the perspectives of corrections officers in order to supplement the qualitative literature focused on contraband introduction. The study focused on the lived experiences of correctional officers exposed to this particular form of employee deviance. This study does not account for the experiences of nonsecurity staff working within the corrections environment. Additionally, the perspectives of

upper-level management and administration were also not considered. Even though no two prisons operate in an identical manner, I did not incorporate facility-specific concerns into the research. The outcome of this study provided some insight into the perspectives of those who have experienced cellphone contraband introduction by fellow officers as well as the impact of this behavior and how correctional officers viewed their organization and their coworkers as a result of such incidents.

Limitations

This study demonstrated a unique set of limitations relative to the problem as well as the population of study. For one, the study involved participants from one geographical location—a state in the southeastern United States—which could impact generalizability to other sites. Additionally, the study focused on the lived experiences of one particular subgroup within the prison staff population—correctional officers—which could also affect generalizability across other staff groups. The study was also time-limited with only one data collection event. Because of this, the data reflected participants' perspectives at a specific period in time and does not account for any changes that may have occurred in the passage of time since interviewing. Researchers have previously addressed difficulty in accessing participants within law enforcement agencies due to excessive secrecy and distrust of outside authorities. This practice, which often limits the availability of research data within this area, has been identified as the "code of silence" within law enforcement and the "correctional officer code" among corrections security staff. Bureaucratic restrictions by prison administrators in efforts to prevent public awareness of internal problems might restrict or prevent on-site access to

research participants. To account for this, I recruited and interviewed participants off-site in order to maintain anonymity of their voluntary participation and encourage response authenticity. Even with off-site recruitment, participant reluctance due to implicit correctional officer codes remained a consistent limitation of this study even with reassurances regarding anonymity and confidentiality. As a result, a number of participants who initially agreed to participate in this study subsequently declined further participation in data collection. I was still able to use multiple participant responses in order mitigate validity concerns related to variability in experience.

Definitions

The following definitions of terms are provided to facilitate understanding of the contextual meaning of specific terms as applied to this body of research.

Code of silence or *thin blue line*: As defined by Plouffe (2012), "the unwritten rule that a police officer does not report, complain about, or testify against a fellow police officer. It is also commonly referred to as the 'thin blue line'." This construct makes research efforts involving law enforcement agencies difficult as personnel—especially officers—are not typically forthcoming with information (Payne, 2005). Studies into misconduct or deviant behaviors are often difficult to conduct through self-report data as distrust and suspicion of researchers and research intent is high among officer participants (Payne, 2005).

Correctional officer code: Similar to the code of silence in police organizations, this is an informal code of conduct that discourages speaking against fellow officers or violations by fellow officers, requires that officers provide unconditional support to one

another, and prohibits officer familiarity with and cooperation in illegal activities with

inmates (Kauffman, 2005). This code also reinforces isolation and separatism from other

staff members by supporting an "us versus them" mentality among officers (Kauffman,

2005).

Deviance: Conduct that is generally considered by members of a social system as

"wrong, bad, immoral, illegal, or worthy of condemnation or punishment" (Jensen,

2007).

Ethical climate: As an extension of organizational climate, ethical climate refers

to the "general and pervasive characteristics of organizations, affecting a broad range of

decisions" and is defined by five dimensions: law and code, instrumentalism,

independence, caring, and rule (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Occupational deviance: For the purposes of this study, the definition of

occupational deviance incorporates components of both Robinson and Bennett's (1995)

and Friedrichs' (2002) definitions as voluntary behavior that is self-serving and

counterproductive in nature, violating both formal and informal occupational norms and

threatening to the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

Organizational climate: Fluctuating characteristic within an organization that is

contingent upon external environmental factors such as employee behavior and attitude

(Ashkanasy & Doris, 2018).

Social distance: Refers to the appropriate level of social interactions between

individuals based on relationship dynamics (Brazill, 2003). For this research, social

distance will be addressed in terms of violations of appropriate social boundaries (or "boundary violations" in text) among correctional staff and inmates.

Staff: Refers to all members who work within the organizational setting regardless of group identification or title (Mahfood et al., 2013). In this research, correctional officers will be identified by their professional title in order to provide internal consistency and distinction from other organizational members.

Use of force: Legitimate power granted to only police by the state that allows officers to use necessary force against uncooperative citizens (Beausoleil, 2012). This power is generally limitless and allows officers to forcefully compel submission in order to protect society (Beausoleil, 2012). It is important to note that legal acceptance of this granted authority does not always equate to moral legitimacy as some uses of force are deemed legal even when they are immoral (Beausoleil, 2012).

Significance

This study was significant because it provided increased understanding of occupational deviance—specifically in the form of cellphone contraband introduction—among correctional officers. The current deficiency in the available literature evinced the need for additional research that qualitatively explored ethical foundations within the correctional climate. The majority of the literature in this area provided insight into occupational deviance relative to inappropriate sexual relationships/conduct with inmates, inmate perceptions of rogue correctional officers, as well as typologies associated with inmate manipulators and generalized categorical definitions of deviant correctional officers. Increasing occurrences of this form of occupational deviance

served as further validation of the growing importance of this phenomenon. The exploration of correctional officers' experiences with contraband introduction provided increased insight into the role of organizational ethics and the impact of these ethical guidelines on staff perspectives within the work environment. The use of participant responses from correctional officers who work within one of the largest correctional departments in the United States allowed for greater application of this study's findings to the body of literature regarding prison contraband introduction. Findings from this study could provide administrative insight into the organizational and social factors that continue to unknowingly exacerbate this problem, as well as assist with specialized training development and modification.

Summary

The gap presented in the current literature allowed for greater exploration into the pervasive problem of cellphone contraband introduction. The current literature presented data that outlines general characteristics of individuals who participate in deviant workplace behaviors as well as basic typologies of officers who participate in occupational deviance. Researchers have also presented economic, social, and environmental factors; however, none of these factors provided a solid justification for why these officers chose to engage in deviant behaviors. Additionally, the literature provided little explanation for how these experiences affect those who were exposed to deviance—specifically cellphone contraband introduction—during the course of their job performance. With this study, I attempted to remedy these unaddressed concerns through qualitatively supported correctional officer data. The next chapter provides an in-depth

examination of the current literature, highlights gaps, and presents justification for the

current body of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The introduction of cellphone contraband by correctional officers remains an widespread problem for prison organizations. Sometimes contraband is introduced by visitors or civilian staff; however, officers are just as susceptible to this form of deviance as non-sworn individuals. Everyday citizens are often astonished and disheartened at the news that a corrections officer has been accused of introducing cellphone contraband into a correctional facility. Low pay is often attributed as the greatest contributing factor to deviant behavior among correctional officers (Cook, 2017; Riley, 2017; Souryal, 2009; Thompson, 2009), and although this may be true it is not always the case. As salaried employees within a single department, correctional officers make roughly the same amount, but not all participate in this type of behavior; therefore, it is hard to rely solely on low compensation as an explanation for this type of deviant behavior when it presents as the exception rather than the norm. Other potential contributing factors identified include work-related stress (Worley, 2016), feeling unsupported or uncared for within the organization (Worley & Worley, 2011, 2013), feeling devalued or unappreciated by the organization (Worley, 2016), and low education (York, 2016). However, even in consideration of these alternative possible contributors, researchers have been unable to unequivocally identify any one factor as the sole reason behind employee deviance in corrections. Following an explanation of search strategy, this chapter examines the theoretical foundation that supported the basis for this research as well as the available literature regarding workplace deviance, corrections, contraband, and organizational

climate. The major concepts identified in this literature review provided the foundation for the study.

Literature Search Strategy

Despite the number of cases illustrating the dangers of cellphone contraband, there is little literature available to guide correctional policies and legislature in determining best practices for combating this problem. The purpose of this study was to qualitatively conceptualize the experiences of corrections officers exposed to cellphone contraband introduction by fellow officers. This chapter provides an exhaustive review of the relevant literature through the use of peer-reviewed journals and articles, books, and government data accessed through the Thoreau multi-database system on the Walden University library website using keywords such as *deviance, corrections officers, prison, corruption, code of silence, blue wall, workplace deviance, occupational deviance, organizational deviance, workplace corruption, ethics, ethical climate,* and *officer code.* However, a review of the literature demonstrated a deficit in the literature focused on qualitative studies of contraband introduction and the impact it has on those who work in these environments. Further, the literature was deficient in identifying the ways in which the organizational climate of the correctional environment contributes to deviant behavior, specifically pertaining to cellphone contraband introduction. Correctional literature was limited to boundary violators (both inmate and correctional officers) and inappropriate relationships (both sexual and non-sexual) as well as typologies and internal contributing factors which lead to deviant behavior. Contraband literature focused on quantifying the problem as opposed to qualifying it, whereas climate and

deviance literature applied mostly to non-corrections occupations. The most relevant

discussion of climate-related deviance pertained to use of force and codes of silence

within law enforcement. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature by

exploring the contributions of organizational climate in contraband deviance by

correctional officers within the workplace.

Theoretical Foundation

Ethical climate theory focuses on what is perceived as ethically acceptable within

an organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988). This theory places less emphasis on what is

right or wrong and provides theoretical support for why employees engage in unethical

behavior within the organization. Victor and Cullen (1988) posited that employees may

believe they will be rewarded and supported by the organization if they engage in

behavior that is perceived as personally unethical but accepted within the organization

based on a rewards and punishment system. In other words, if an individual can

somehow identify justification for deviant behavior, he or she is more likely to engage,

regardless of consequences, due to reframing of what constitutes ethical behavior within

his or her particular organization. Further, if certain acts of deviance are tolerated and

not punished with equal veracity, employees are more likely to believe they too will

receive leniency, thus assuming the agency utilizes policies as passive threats unlikely to

be enforced. The tenets of this theory are further affected by gender, age, ethical

development, personality traits, and stage of organizational career (Victor & Cullen,

1988), all relevant factors within correctional facility employment. In addition, theorists

note that social norms, organizational form, and various firm-specific factors would serve

as dominant antecedents (Victor & Cullen, 1988). In other words, the standards and factors specific to an organization often dominate the formation of ethics that dictate behavioral norms among the organization's members.

With specific relevance to this study, ethical climate theory supported the inquisition into institutional factors and social dynamics that contribute to active participation in contraband introduction by correctional officers. Current research has identified protective factors (i.e., power bases, assignment of ethical responsibility, administrative support) presumed to minimize individual susceptibility to this type of deviance. Ethical climate theory supported the research by allowing for exploration of why the behavior occurs within the correctional setting in the absence of a dichotomous conceptualization of right and wrong. Instead, this theory clarified the influence of the development of ethical beliefs and the modification of these beliefs over periods of time as influenced—specifically as it relates to this research—by stage of organizational career, gender, ethical education, age, and personality traits. The stage of organizational career as well as ethical education—which is greatly impacted based on the officer's age of entry into the profession and length of career—will be of particular interest to this study.

Key Concepts in the Literature

Deviance

Throughout the evolution of deviance literature, deviant behavior within the workplace has been defined and redefined a multitude of ways. In their research on deviant behavior typologies, Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined employee deviance as

"voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (p.556), whereas Friedrichs (2002) conceptualized occupational deviance as self-serving, counterproductive acts that are in violation of formal and/or informal occupational norms. Deviancy by organizational standards can involve behaviors that are either ethical or a violation of policy or jurisdictional law or both (Friedrichs, 2002). Robinson and Bennett identified four categorical definitions of employee deviance that serve as foundational classifications within the literature. Production deviance, which is the least serious of all four categories, is defined as minor, organizationally harmful acts perpetrated by an employee, whereas property deviance includes acts that are significantly harmful to the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Acts of deviance committed against another individual, or interpersonal deviance, also vary in the same severity—minor and serious—and are identified as either political deviance or personal aggression, respectively (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Based on their early research, Robinson and Bennett suggested that future research extrapolate the relevant factors that contribute to both socially and organizationally motivated deviance in order to better understand this type of employee-generated problem. As such, many researchers have since answered the call to contribute to this body of literature by identifying individual, organizational, and interpersonal factors that are instrumental in the facilitation of workplace deviance.

The prevailing assumption within an organization is that deviant employees are internally motivated to aggress against their employer. Researchers have identified perceptually driven antecedents that have strong implications in workplace deviance

(Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006; Verdorfer, Steinheider, & Burkus, 2015). Judge et al. (2006) found that employee job attitudes and the social context of the work environment strongly impact individual propensity towards organizational deviance, whereas personality and justice perceptions within the workplace influence acts of interpersonal deviance. Verdorfer et al. (2015) also opined that employee deviance is provoked by perceptual beliefs created through workplace interactions such as teamwork, communication, decision-making. The researchers posited that employee cynicism is moderated by positive work environment and socio-moral climate and as cynicism increases so does workplace deviance (Verdorfer et al., 2015). Individual factors are relevant in understanding why employees deviate from organizational norms; however, research has shown that they are not the only factors worthy of consideration.

The organization itself has some role in the deviancy of its employees and is not absolved of any degree of liability. Organizational factors such as climate, attitudes, leadership, and socialization practices (e.g., training, mentorship, and social framing) are instrumental in the onset of deviant behaviors (Biron, 2010; Ivkovic, 2005; Norman et al., 2010; Thau et al., 2009). As proffered by Norman et al. (2010), an individual's ability to align oneself with the organization impacts that person's functioning as a successful employee. Norman et al. studied the implications of organizational identification on psychological capital (PsyCap), organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), and deviance. PsyCap is based on four individual characteristics: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency (Norman et al., 2010). The combination of these four characteristics contributes to the individual's conceptualization of self within the organization which in

turn contributes to behaviors exhibited within the workplace (Norman et al., 2010). The

researchers found that high organizational identity contributed to higher PsyCap, higher

OCBs, and lower deviance (Norman et al., 2010). Norman et al. posited that when the

opposite is true, individuals are more likely to exhibit higher deviancy behaviors.

Additionally, Thau et al. (2009) suggested that employees engage in deviant behaviors as

resolution for negative treatment by superiors (see also Biron, 2010). Biron's (2010)

findings indicated that employees establish organizational ethics based on actions

demonstrated within the workplace, especially those of superiors, whereas Thau et al.

identified management style as a key component in organizational perceptions of

mistreatment. It is suggested when supervisory support is either neglectful and/or

abusive, employees will resort to reciprocal mistreatment as a way of retaliating against

the organization (Biron, 2010; Thau et al., 2009).

It has been inferred that group dynamics have a significant role in the acceptance

or disapproval of employee deviance (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Farnese et al., 2016;

Ferris, 2009; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). As the moral authority within the

correctional setting, officers have the responsibility of modeling ideal behavior and

positive social reinforcement (Antonio, Young, & Wingeard, 2009). Farnese et al. (2016)

explained that socialization and mentorship serve as reinforcement for organizational

commitment and subsequent deviance deterrence. Further, belongingness and social

alignment are important within any work environment as employees want to feel as

though they have some place in their organization (Farnese et al., 2016; Ferris, 2009).

Ferris (2009) opined that group valuation helps employees develop critical identity

components and self-esteem within organizations and that members engage in deviance

when organizational and supervisory support in the development of these components are

deficient. On the other hand, some researchers found that group dynamics serve as

catalyst to deviant behaviors in the workplace (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Robinson &

O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) asserted that negative

workplace behaviors are reinforced through group dynamics based on research into the

socialization in work groups. They found that individual antisocial behaviors mimicked

those of their chosen work group and their experiences became reinforced and heightened

by their desires for deeper alignment with their group (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly,

1998). Ashforth and Anand (2003) also established socialization as a crucial component

in the normalization of corruption and the perpetuation of deviant behaviors within

organizations. Based on a study of corruption normalization, three components serve as

cornerstones in the normalization process: institutionalization, rationalization, and

socialization. Institutionalization promotes the routinization of corruption and

rationalization legitimizes corrupt acts so that they become socially acceptable (Ashforth

& Anand, 2003). Ashforth and Anand stated that socialization reinforces corruption and

is imparted upon newcomers so that they become indoctrinated into the perpetual cycle.

The current deviance literature provides some insight into individual,

organizational, and within-organizational dynamics that impact employee deviance. The

identification of these factors is helpful to administrators who are invested in the

identification of deviancy markers within their organizations. The concern, however, is

that this literature focuses primarily on non-corrections organizations in which case

generalizability becomes difficult. Additionally, it does little to address the concerns associated with contraband introduction among correctional officers. In considering this type of deviancy in corrections, other factors must also be considered including the uniqueness of the corrections environment and those who work and live in this setting. Therefore, an examination of the corrections literature will help provide additional insights that will guide this research.

Corrections

To understand deviancy among officers, it is important to understand the environment in which these individuals work. Correctional facilities are strategically designed to reinforce isolation among offenders from society in the form of physical and psychological barriers. However, this separation not only impacts the inmate population housed within the walls of the facilities but also the staff who report to work within the prisons as well. Prison staff are responsible for the safe and secure daily operations of the prison facility and must manage the responsibilities of their jobs while also facing the internal dangers associated with it (Maillicoat, 2005). Scholars agree that the corrections literature is relatively deficient in providing a thorough examination of deviant behaviors such as corruption, theft, or sexual assault among correctional officers (Blackburn, Fowler, Mullings, & Marquart, 2011; Ross, 2013). The current literature highlights contributory environmental and social factors, possible indicators, as well as commonalities in deviant officers. While it provides for some understanding into deviant behaviors among correctional officers through the perspectives of staff as well as

offenders, the literature is not exhaustive and provides limited insight into a small scope of the problem.

Prisons are designed to manage individuals who violate societal norms. Correctional facilities are reflective of the populations that they house ranging from minimum, medium, maximum, and supermaximum facilities (Maillicoat, 2005). Offenders are sentenced to prison environments as determined by the severity of their crimes and the length of their sentences. The policies and rules that govern these facilities are established by the agency to address the needs of the offender population while also ensuring public safety. Correctional officers serve as the liaisons between inmates and organizational management. Because of this, correctional officers are recognized as the physical embodiment of order and regulation which is necessary for safe and secure facility management, which is also known as 'legitimate' (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2016). Offender management within prisons is based on theoretical dominance (Marquart et al., 2001) rather than any other form of domination within the system as staff are often outnumbered by those under their care. For instance, one correctional system suggested correctional officers made up 56% of their correctional workforce at 5,478 members while the inmate population totaled roughly 54,000 for the 2017 fiscal year (Georgia Department of Corrections, 2018). As such, legitimacy among corrections staff plays an important role in the formation of the theoretical dominance that permeates within the prison environment. Legitimacy is linked to environmental stability in prisons which helps minimize discord and chaos among inmates (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2016). Scholars opined that the rigidity and strictness of the prison

environment require stability and rule enforcement in order to function safely and humanely (Garland, Hogan, & Lambert, 2013; Maillicoat, 2005) and the absence or compromise of legitimacy threatens this stability (Blackburn et al., 2011; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2016). Legitimacy is most commonly compromised when correctional officers participate in deviant behaviors within the workplace.

According to a number of researchers, professionalism serves as the ideal antagonist to corruption and deviance (Shively, 2015; Souryal, 2009; White, 1972); however, it has done little to curb its growth within correctional departments domestically and internationally (York, 2016). Deviance in corrections is often identified as "inappropriate work-related activities which [correctional officers] may engage" (Ross, 2013, p. 111) which is vague and obscure. Because of this ambiguity, formally recognized deviant behaviors are loosely classified as: deviance against the institution (i.e. property theft, failure to perform, leave abuse, and so on), deviance against inmates (e.g. inappropriate relationships with inmates, abuse of power, excessive force), deviance against other correctional officers (i.e. contraband introduction, discrimination or harassment towards coworkers, intoxication while working, and so on) (Henry, 1998; Ross, 2013). Souryal (2009) identified similar categorizations for correctional officer deviance with slightly different defining terminology. Nonfeasance are passive acts of deviance which incorporate omission or avoidance such as failure to report deviant acts by others or plausible deniability while misfeasance represents acts that are illegitimate acts committed willingly for personal gain (Souryal, 2009). Malfeasance, on the other hand, are deviant acts which violate state law and/or organizational policy which includes

participation in contraband introduction (Souryal, 2009). The inability of researchers to formalize unanimous guidelines for acts of deviance in corrections lends plausibility to pertinent concerns.

Correctional literature indicates a number of potential indicators and contributors to correctional officer deviance which occur as a result of both environmental and social factors within the correctional setting. The most common types of deviant behaviors among correctional officers are boundary violations and inappropriate sexual relationships which often serve as the precursor to contraband introduction (Blackburn et al., 2011; Worley, 2016). Typically, correctional officers engage in employee deviance for some sort of personal gain that is either economic or sexual in nature (Blackburn et al., 2011; Worley, 2016). Correctional officers are at increased susceptibility to deviance as inmates have an inherent desire to further perpetuate manipulative tactics during incarceration (Henry, 1998). Shively (2015) asserted that offenders identify target employees are through perceptual weaknesses such as selective rule reinforcement, role insecurity, and oversharing of personal problems. However, even though staff are encouraged to remain cognizant and vigilant while working with inmates and to maintain clear personal and professional distance in order to resist corruptibility (Ferdick, 2018; Shively, 2015), some officers still fall victim to deviance.

Coupled with inmate exploitation, high workplace stress, inadequate pay, poor job satisfaction, and low administrative support have also been cited as some of the most likely contributors of employee deviance (Donner et al., 2018; Mahfood et al., 2013; Maillicoat, 2005; Souryal, 2009; Worley & Worley, 2016). Correctional officers are

faced with an enormous amount of demands from both offenders as well as administrators. In addition to these demands, high turnover and understaffing force correctional officers to serve in roles and capacities for which they are often undertrained or ill-equipped to handle. Maillicoat (2005) highlighted workplace stress as an occupational mainstay for correctional officers often contributing to role ambiguity and conflict which other researchers correlated with deviance. Through quantitative self-report data on job satisfaction and work-related stress, Mahfood et al (2013) found that uniformed staff identified as being less satisfied with their jobs due to lower perceived risk. Perceptions of risk are important in corrections as they help correctional officers remain attune to their environments and heighten their awareness of danger and unrest among inmates. Similarly, Worley and Worley's (2016) research on self-reported correctional officer boundary violations yielded findings which indicated decreased perception of risk and danger contributed to the onset of boundary violations. Participants identified insufficient pay and workplace stress as decision-making factors when considering deviant activities, indicating a negative correlation between stress and boundary violations on statistical models (Worley & Worley, 2016). In other words, as work stress decreased for correctional officers, their perception of danger also decreased and their willingness to participate in deviance increased. Further, increased societal isolation and self-identification or alignment with inmates further are suggested justifications for the rationalization of correctional officer boundary violators (Worley & Worley, 2016).

As underscored in deviance literature, administrative support impacts the way correctional officers interact with their work environment. It has been suggested that supervisory support may have significant impact in officers' compulsion to participate in work-related deviance (Garland et al., 2013; Vickovic & Griffin, 2014; Worley & Worley, 2011, 2013). Through quantitative analysis, Worley and Worley (2011) described the protective role of support within the correctional work environment as helping correctional officers cope with perceived deviance among other staff. Their findings based on correctional officer self-report data suggested that care, especially from supervisors, creates a gravitational effect among participants who reported lowered participation in deviant behaviors even if they believed others were behaving inappropriately (Worley & Worley, 2011). This means employees are more likely to form bonds that help deter deviant behaviors when they feel as though other staff, including their supervisors, care about their well-being. Garland et al (2013) also identified supervisory support as an influential factor in reducing role stress among correctional officers. Correctional officers reported that job consistency and strong support from administration—particularly supervisors—helps with the overall minimization of role stress. Further, supervisory support helps create a reliable coping mechanism to deal with internal work-related issues (Garland et al., 2013) which is necessary in stress reduction. Utilizing secondary correctional officer self-report data, Worley and Worley (2013) later advised that the consequences of poor supervisory support include general reduction of threat perception, higher perceptions of deviance among others, and increased justification and participation in employee deviance. In

other words, correctional officers need the support of their supervisors in order to support their overall organizational commitment and to reinforce the values needed to avoid inappropriate workplace behaviors.

Another study utilizing correctional officer survey data also found that supervisors were more likely to have positive perceptions of their work environment and were more likely to demonstrate higher levels of affective organizational commitment as compared to non-supervisory officers (Vickovic & Griffin, 2014). These perceptions were developed based on organizational justice, beneficial interactions with management, and appreciation of individual contributions to the organization (Vickovic & Griffin, 2014). The investigators also identified age and gender demographics as mitigating factors in determining commitment levels among supervisors but not among non-supervisors, but did not provide specifics regarding these findings (Vickovic & Griffin, 2014). The significance of these findings illustrates the perceptual differences that exist within an organizational subgroup. Lack of acknowledgement of these differences can contribute to unnoticed behaviors of retaliation by individuals who feel unappreciated and undervalued within the organization.

Along with the classification of contributory factors related to correctional deviance, it is important to also examine possible indicators as well. While some indicators of deviance may be inherent, most are influenced by the daily conditions confronted by correctional staff. An examination of the literature provides a significant listing of important elements of consideration when assessing for employee deviance (Henry, 1998; Souryal, 2009; Donner et al., 2018). Henry (1998) advised an overall

mindfulness of staff who demonstrate increased familiarity with inmates, increased

affluence, increased complaints against particular staff, and increased time spent

lingering in the facility when off-duty. While Henry and Souryal (1998) agree that

frequent vocalization of job frustration and unsatisfactory pay, Souryal also opined that

the cyclical facilitation of deviant behavior relies heavily on the continued perpetuation

of conspiratorial-survivalist behaviors which encourage mistrust and decreased

transparency among staff. Souryal also pointed out that structural isolation detaches

officers from the realities of public scrutiny and further reinforces overall desensitization

and perpetuation of the prison industrial complex, all of which have the potential to

fortify justification of deviant behaviors. Interestingly, one study on correctional officers

correlated internal factors such as temperament, impulsiveness, and risky behaviors with

deviancy as well as implicit approval of deviance among others (Donner et al., 2018).

These same indicators, as impacted by job satisfaction and cynicism, have also been

associated with adherence to an inferred 'code of silence' (Donner et al., 2018). In some

cases, the aforementioned indicators can be circumvented with proper attention to the

contributory issues. Yet, the reality of the situation suggests that some officers will chose

to engage in deviant workplace behaviors regardless of precautions and discouragement.

Correctional officers who commit deviance within their workplace do so for

various reasons as previously identified. The literature reveals some discrepancy in

regards to where to assign culpability in the initiation of inappropriate staff-offender

relationships (Dial & Worley, 2008; Marquart et al., 2001; Worley, 2016; Worley &

Cheeseman, 2006; Worley et al., 2003; Worley et al., 2010). Some researchers have

noted that certain institutional factors prelude this breach of trust, yet, disagree on where

to place responsibility for these acts (Dial & Worley, 2008; Marquart et al., 2001).

Correctional officers are placed in a compromising position when dealing with the inmate

population. As such, they are required to rely on offender labor to maintain institutional

functioning, bargain for compliance and submission, and work within close proximity

with inmates (Dial & Worley, 2008; Marquart et al., 2011). This is known as a 'norm of

reciprocity' which must exist in order for staff to maintain authority and domination over

inmates in light of the limitations and conditions which exist in the prison setting (Dial &

Worley, 2008; Marquart et al., 2011). However, this norm of reciprocity may also open

the door for corruption among staff members due to the relative increase in familiarity

and decrease in boundary maintenance. Dial and Worley (2008) opined that

understanding the dangers associated with the norm of reciprocity should provide some

insight into the importance of aggressively punishing the obvious culprits—the inmate

violators. On the other hand, Marquart et al (2011) suggested the onus be placed on

employee violators in order to reinforce the significance of social framing and to reiterate

the inappropriateness of boundary violations between staff and inmates. While these

researchers agree on the precariousness of the norm of reciprocity principle in

corrections, they lack agreement in the identification of the instigator.

This inability to agree is present among other corrections researchers throughout

the literature. For instance, Worley et al (2003) analyzed self-report inmate data to

identify types of inmate violators. Three typologies emerged from the data—

heartbreakers, exploiters, and hell-raisers—based on their boundary violation intentions

(Worley et al., 2003). The researchers suggested that the persistence of the inmates coupled with their strategic approach to encouraging the boundary breach supports the inmate-instigator concept (Worley et al., 2003). Worley and Cheeseman (2006) later supplemented this argument with their research into staff 'non-sharable problems' as the gateway to corruption and offender manipulation. Inmate participants reported careful selection of staff members who were socially isolated and experiencing personal problems that they felt they could not share with anyone other than the inmates (Worley & Cheeseman, 2006). The participants disclosed that the creation of a presumed safe sharing space allowed them to diminish boundaries between them and the staff member thereby creating opportunities for manipulation and deviance (Worley & Cheeseman, 2006). Based on the forethought and investment required to selectively target staff members, inmate violators are the likely antagonists.

Arguably, other researchers have implied employees are the true provocateurs in these situations. Worley et al (2010) research on boundary violations yielded consequences of inappropriate staff-offender relationships and identified preventative measures to avoid these violations. Negative peer relationships, negative staff-inmate relationships, negative relationships among inmates, and negative repercussions for staff members were identified by inmate participants as resulting effects of boundary violations (Worley et al., 2010). Preventative measures included improved supervision and policy changes directed at employees and the general prison culture (Worley et al., 2010). Conclusions of this research—based on inmate self-report data—places the burden of prevention on staff members as opposed to the inmates themselves. Through

autoethnographical data, Worley (2016) also highlighted the importance of recognizing

the employee's role in boundary violations but cautioned against the regular practice of

public shaming as prevention. As a former corrections officer, Worley reported on the

regularity of inappropriate relationships in prisons and the importance of how

administrators approach these incidences as they occur. In many cases, officers who are

officially caught in precarious situations with inmates serve as examples for current

employees. The administration often uses these cases for public vilification and

admonishment to deter other employees from participating in deviant behaviors with

inmates (Worley, 2016). However, Worley suggested that these practices may do more

harm than good because they inadvertently reinforce feelings of alienation, isolation, and

sometimes inadequacy as opposed to camaraderie and unity. In other words, the

placement of responsibility on guilty officers is not discouraged; however, administrators

should rethink their responses to deviant behaviors in order to increase prevention

effectiveness.

Other interesting findings emerged throughout the corrections literature that are

worth mentioning. It is important to note that only one study (Worley et al., 2010)

identified sexually inappropriate relationships as the most consequential within the prison

setting, a finding not indicated in other studies included in the current literature. Another

study proffered a specific timeframe of 36 months of initial employment for deviance

onset (Marquart et al. , 2001). Other studies indicate certain demographics such as

Caucasian race (Worley & Worley, 2013) and female gender (Blackburn et al., 2011;

Dial & Worley, 2008) as possible risk variables for deviance participation. Blackburn et

al. (2011) opined that women were both more likely to participate but less likely to condone deviant behaviors in corrections (Blackburn et al., 2011). Lower pre-employment scoring as well as history of rule violations were also noted as a potential risk variable (Marquart et al., 2001). It is difficult, however, to ascertain whether individuals who meet these criteria are more likely than others to participate in deviance since the implications of these findings lack generalizability as they are not supported across the literature spectrum.

This literature highlights the overall importance of job conditions and employee perceptions in countering deviant behaviors in staff. While many forms of deviance exist in corrections, boundary violations—both sexual and non-sexual—serve as the precursor to contraband introduction. Without the breach in personal and professional distance, there would be limited opportunity for manipulation and deviant behaviors. Additionally, discrepancies in the accountability and acknowledgement of the general severity of boundary violations as a whole further contributes to the lack of insight into contraband activity in prisons. Obscurities in defining the problem demonstrates the inherent complexity of contraband introduction in prisons. Prison administrators struggle to manage this problem using available data as guidance because of insufficient clarity and specificity. This study seeks to provide some resolution to these issues.

Contraband Introduction

The scarcity of literature regarding contraband introduction attests to the recency of interest in studying this problem. Prison contraband is both a domestic and international problem that has no clearly identified solution (Roth, 2011; York, 2016).

Stability in prisons is a critical factor in safety and security management which is why it is reiterated across various areas of prison research, including contraband literature. For years, contraband literature reflected the viewpoint that contraband was a necessary evil in stability maintenance because contraband contributes to perceived autonomy and provides resolution to the inherent deprivations associated with incarceration (Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985; Grommon et al., 2018). Kalinich and Stojkovic (1985) studied the impact of contraband on power dynamics and legitimacy within correctional settings and opined that contraband was beneficial to both staff and inmates in regard to the overall stability of the prison social structure. Contraband markets—which include inaccessible items and items not approved by the correctional administration such as cellphones, drugs, weapons, gambling paraphernalia, currency, and other goods—allow inmates to feel as though they have retained some power and are manipulating the system while also allowing staff to sustain their overarching power within the system by facilitating a system selective punishment which heightens demand and sustains the need for the contraband market (Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985; CAPI, 2016). As stated earlier, the introduction of these items often comes as a result of boundary violations in the form of inappropriate sexual or non-sexual relationships. However, it has been suggested that the development of interpersonal relationships between staff and inmates is necessary for the development of bonds necessary to help support the internal power structure that exists between staff and inmates (Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985). Kalinich and Stojkovic noted that while contraband allows for environmental stability, it also endorses increased secrecy and deviancy among both staff and inmates and creates and unsustainable system

of management. In other words, the formation of inappropriate relationships and the silent exploitation of the contraband markets by staff were seemingly beneficial to prison administrators until they were no longer manageable.

Over the past few decades, the research in contraband has shifted from the belief that contraband markets support the power structure within prison settings and assist administrators with the maintenance of stability to the understanding that contraband introduction produces dangerous and widespread consequences for those involved (Burke & Owen, 2010; CAPI, 2016; Grommon et al., 2018; Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985; Roth, 2011; York, 2016). While earlier contraband literature attributes the utility of the contraband market with maintaining prison stability and overall functioning (Kalinich & Stojkovic, 1985), other researchers have evolved the literature to reflect the dangers associated with contraband introduction in correctional settings. York (2016) inferred the potential for injuries and death in prison are more often than not associated with contraband introduction or inappropriate relationships while other researchers noted the risk to public safety also associated (Grommon et al., 2018). In the hierarchy of prison contraband, cellphones are big ticket items because they allow inmates to remain connected to the outside world and continue their criminal activities while incarcerated. The contraband system provides a cycle of wealth for participants which is the top priority for those within the inmate population and correctional officers are often enticed by the allure of substantially supplementing their income regardless of the associated risks and dangers (York, 2016). Not surprisingly, poor compensation has been associated with contraband smuggling as correctional officers can earn anywhere from $100-$1000

per phone which can significantly improve wage disparities (Burke & Owen, 2010; CAPI, 2016). According to Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), the 2017 annual wage for correctional officers was $43,510 which was 9% below the national per capita average. An official 2016 audit reported the starting salary for entry-level Georgia Department of Corrections correctional officers as $24,322 with a proposed increase to $27,936 during the 2017 fiscal year (Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, 2016). Based on this apparent income discrepancy, it is easy to see the allure of substantial income supplementation.

Deviant officers involved in the contraband market are typically confronted with outcomes such as termination and/or legal repercussions (including fines, probation, incarceration, or any combination of these; York, 2016). The ramifications of contraband introduction are constantly reiterated and displayed as incessant reminder for anyone with any interactions with prisoners. Yet, even with the threat of a guaranteed negative outcome, some correctional officers still succumb to manipulation and deviance. York's review provided the first indication in this literature of the existence of a potential "thin blue line" and the silent reinforcement of a "code of silence" (para. 18) as explanation for why officers choose to engage in contraband introduction. York suggested that a subculture of loyalty—similar to police organizations—exists among correctional officers and this subculture inadvertently perpetuates deviance among officers. York also credited this subculture with underreporting of corruption by supervisors even though the expectation of reporting deviance is placed on all members of the organization. In accordance with York, the Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity at Columbia

Law School (CAPI, 2016) also suggested that supervisors provide certain protections by covering up the deviant behaviors of other staff members. Obstructive acts such as these not only impair investigation attempts but also interfere with accessing accurate contraband data.

Researchers agree that contraband introduction is a widespread problem; however, they have been unable to accurately specify the scope of this quandary within corrections. At the time of this research, Grommon et al (2018) provided the only quantitative data set reflective of contraband cell phones in prisons. Grommon et al.'s (2018) study on confiscation totals revealed the discrepancies between internal confiscation data and cellphone availability in prisons. The researchers analyzed data from a prison facility which utilizes a managed access system—which filters the cell transmissions of authorized and unauthorized cellphones—and compared it to confiscation totals (Grommon et al., 2018). Findings indicated cellphone availability was twice as high as cellphone confiscation totals at a rate of 5 to 19 (available) per 1 confiscated phone (Grommon et al., 2018). This research further solidifies the position that the availability of accurate data is necessary in understanding the scope of cellphone contraband introduction.

It is worth mentioning that job dissatisfaction and low hiring standards are also identified as possible contributory factors specifically related to contraband introduction (York, 2016). Poor education was also mentioned as having possible correlation with contraband introduction (CAPI, 2016). However, neither of these were heavily supported across the data. As demonstrated, contraband literature is fairly recent with most having

occurred within the last decade. The research available exhibits a limited breadth of understanding in the impact of contraband introduction on non-participants. Differing from deviance literature and corrections literature, minimal information is provided in specific traits or characteristics associated with this particular act of deviance. Few contributory or indicative factors that are specifically applicable to contraband introduction have been identified in the literature thus far. The limited availability of data in this area affirms the need for additional research that will help provide greater understanding into this area of concern.

Climate

The climate of an organization attests to the interactions between the principles of the organization and its employees. At the time of this research, the climate literature—similar to the deviance literature—is heavily influenced by non-corrections related literature and there is very little mention of climate within the corrections literature. However, it is beneficial to understand how an organization's climate relates to the problems that plague the environment. This is especially true in corrections as the organizational climate may have a significant impact on how employees interact with their organizational environment and the choices that are made based on those interactions. The climate literature provides insight into the establishment of organizational climate and the importance of climate in employee behavior.

The concept of organizational climate centers on the individual's perspective—including attitudes, experiences, and descriptions—regarding his or her place of employment (Ivkovic, 2005; Schneider et al., 2013). The organizational climate can

determine how people interact within their work environment and elicit certain

behavioral responses based on these interactions (Taxman et al., 2008). Climate is a

critical factor in correctional officer job performance within the prison setting (Lugo,

2016). The development of ethical climate research stems from the need to understand

the influence of morality in ethical workplace decision-making. Early moral

development research highlighted the influence of education and social exposure in

cognitive reasoning and cognitive processing relative to problem-solving (Kohlberg &

Hersh, 1977). Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) emphasized the need to consider the impacts

of individual choices on all members who may be affected by those choices instead of

reasoning from a solely self-serving perspective as the foundation for moral judgment.

The researchers opined that while moral judgment serves an important function in moral

development, it is often not enough to constitute moral action (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

As an extension of this, Victor and Cullen (1988) assessed the organizational

characteristics, or climates, that either influence or discourage individual moral action

among employees. Of the five identified climate dimensions, caring climates are most

preferred by employees and significantly influence ethical decision-making on an

individual level within organizations (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The researchers opined

that climate variation within organizations is not uncommon as organizational subunits

have their own climates which may be in alignment or opposition to the general

organizational climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). However, the presence of a caring

climate within an organization increases employee fit and belongingness which heightens

individual consideration for others and increases moral reasoning during ethical

dilemmas (Victor & Cullen, 1988). It has been suggested that employee-focused mission statements may assist with influencing the development of a caring climate by establishing the guidelines which foster community among workers (Vidaver-Cohen, 1998). Therefore, the development of a caring climate within an organization may serve as a deterrent for deviant staff behaviors.

Climate plays a significant role in determining organizational commitment among employees (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Schwepker, 2001; Trevino, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998). For example, one study explored the relationship between contextual ethical factors (climate and culture) and ethically-motivated attitudes and behaviors in the form of commitment and observed unethical behavior, respectively (Trevino et al., 1998). Based on participants' responses, self-interest and egoism climate dimensions were identified in positive association with unethical conduct while the law and code dimension was associated with a reduction in observed unethical behaviors (Trevino et al., 1998). The findings also indicate that the combination of climate and culture have strong influences on ethical decision-making as employees will model the behaviors and examples set by ethical leaders within the organizational context (Trevino et al., 1998). Results of this study also indicated a positive association between employee- and community-focused climates and organizational commitment (Trevino et al., 1998), in support of Victor and Cullen's earlier findings. This study was unique due to the fact that it measured both the influences of both ethical climate and ethical culture in one study in order to highlight distinctions between the two constructs and the influences of both on employee commitment. Schwepker (2001) later emphasized the importance of the

creation of an ethical climate in order to strengthen organizational commitment, enhance employee fit, and decrease turnover. Ethical climate encourages rule reinforcement, organizational justice, and ethical activity through the implementation of policies and procedures, and codes of ethics (Schwepker, 2001). Schwepker found that the overall establishment of an ethical climate within an organization reinforces employee satisfaction and commitment and discourages turnover intent because it emphasizes the importance of ethical action and minimizes ethical ambiguity. The researcher highlighted the application of this study to one particular population—salespeople—due to their social isolation within the organization (Schwepker, 2001). This similarity provides for increased generalizability to correctional officers because of the same social isolation they experience, albeit on a larger scale, as part of their occupation. Similar to these studies, Martin and Cullen (2006) also surmised that employees engage in behaviors that reflect implicit decision-making guidelines as established by the ethical climate. In the presence of caring climates, employees who feel appreciated and valued within the organization will reciprocate this treatment with loyalty and trustworthiness (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Conversely, when employees feel the climate reflects the best interest of the organization and the organization emphasizes individual self-advancement for the sake of the organization, they will resort to organizational deviance in retaliation (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Employee behavior, therefore, is a reflection of their perceived treatment within their organization and can serve as a benefit or a detriment to the organization.

Correctional facilities utilize policies and procedures for offender management and departmental functioning but these policies are not employee- or community-focused and may not provide sufficient ethical guidance in light of growing concerns with employee deviance. Instead, one might consider the dominate climate in corrections as falling within the rules and regulations dimension which has its limitations in ethical reinforcement. One study conducted in an industrial setting explored climate perceptions and organizational misbehavior based of self-report data by supervisors and employees (Vardi, 2001). Based on this data, respondents reported that organizational misbehavior is contingent upon the prevailing ethical climate and is manifested as both covert and overt acts aimed at various targets within the organization including productivity, property, coworkers, or the organization (Vardi, 2001). Vardi also found that the organizational climate—identified as rules and regulations within this particular organization—prioritized the needs of the organization over employees which often fosters an atmosphere of deviance among employees. Interestingly, the study also highlighted interpersonal differences in climate perception as managers reported climate from a more positive perspective than employees (Vardi, 2001). The findings associated with this study suggest that rule-dominated climates may not be the answer in regulating deviant employee behaviors. Another study assessed the salience of emotionality in ethical decision-making among employees and found that guilt and shame serve as the primary factors for eliciting ethical and unethical behaviors, respectively (Trevino et al., 2006). The study assessed the differences between those who apply 'means' (or formalists) versus 'ends' (or utilitarians) during problem assessment and the emotional

processing that drives the behavioral responses to these ethical dilemmas. Trevino et al (2006) noted that adult conceptualization of right and wrong is largely influenced by two forms of thinking: whether the means justifies the action or whether the end result justifies the action. While both formalists and utilitarians regarded moral issues as those involving some type of harm, utilitarians were less likely to recognize violations of behavioral norms as moral issues which significantly impacted their decision-making regarding deviant behaviors (Trevino et al. 2006). In other words, individuals who are motivated by the end-result are less likely to recognize deviant behaviors as harmful because it does not compute as such in their problem identification process if the end result is somehow beneficial. External social factors such as climate, culture, consideration for others, peer and leadership modeling, organizational justice, and rewards also influenced ethical decision-making and play a role in behavior management (Trevion et al., 2006). The role of climate as an informal regulator in employee behavioral management deems it worthy of organizational attention when confronting deviancy in the work environment. Findings of this study indicated individuals who experience guilt were more likely to resolve moral dilemmas with ethical behavior because of the possible infliction of harm on others while individuals who experience shame were more likely to respond with unethical behaviors in order to deter self-inflicted pain (Trevino et al., 2006). The emotional guidelines associated with behavioral responses are also further reinforced by climate factors such as employee-focused versus organization-focused climate considerations as previously established in earlier climate research. Trevino et al. (2006) also opined that both individuals with internal loci of

control and women have increased sensitivity in identifying ethical issues, a finding not mentioned in other related studies. Interestingly, the researchers noted that older employees or employees with longer tenure presented with lower moral judgment scores (Trevino et al., 2006, see also Victor & Cullen, 1988). This finding suggests the possibility of increased desensitization to unethical behaviors in those with longer job history, which was later reiterated in research on whistleblowing behaviors and ethics perceptions among supervisors.

Researchers have also identified tenure as having a significant impact on ethical reporting behaviors in law enforcement (Dennehy & Nantel, 2006; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). These bodies of research represent a limited group of literature that explains climate considerations within law enforcement professions. Dennehy and Nantel (2006) concurred that camaraderie amongst corrections officers created an "us versus them" mentality that reinforced the code of silence principle. The code of silence discouraged reporting of misconduct and also implicitly endorsed unethical behavior due to the diminished risk of reporting and associated disciplinary sanction (Dennehy & Nantel, 2006). This suggests that correctional climate within the correctional setting allows the code of silence to reign supreme when it is not employee-focused and prioritizes organizational needs over the safety and concern of staff. Further, when correctional climates are left unchecked and deviant behavior is not addressed both officers and offenders react accordingly. Dennehy and Nantel opined that uniform accountability of staff is necessary for overall climate management and improvement. Additionally, Rothwell and Baldwin (2007) described policing as an organization adhering to the law

and code climate in which case officers base ethical decisions off of what they are taught in trainings and field supervision. It is important to note that ethical dilemmas not addressed through these forms of instruction are often decided based on discretion and individual information processing. As such, some officers engage in unethical behaviors during employment which forces other officers to either accept or report the behavior. Reporting employee misconduct, known as whistleblowing, is often discouraged among officers and even though failure to do so is unlawful (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). The results of Rothwell and Baldwin's research indicated an employee-focused climate— friendship or team climate—as positively related to willingness to report misconduct; however, this same climate counteracted willingness to report amongst longer tenured employees. That is, police officers who feel a sense of community and belongingness may be more willing to report misconduct as a means of positively addressing the well-being of fellow officers. Yet, older or more established officers may be less willing to report others in the same climate due to their sense of camaraderie and loyalty to one another. Rothwell and Baldwin also implied that longer-serving officers may have increased exposure to deviant behaviors among coworkers and refrain from reporting in accordance with feelings of cynicism and despondence towards the organization.

Other researchers have analyzed the effects of ethical climate on employee deviance (Chen, Chen, & Liu, 2013; Trevino, Weaver, & Brown, 2008; Hsieh & Wang, 2016). Trevino et al. (2008) posited that social identification contributed to organizational identity, one's feelings towards the organization, and possible unethical behavioral responses to organizational problems. Individuals who felt detached from

their organization were likely to develop feelings of cynicism and perceived organizational ethics as less favorable (Trevino et al., 2008). The findings also indicated that supervisors were more likely to relate to the organization and have increased positive perceptions towards their organization in comparison to non-supervisors (Trevino et al., 2008). Further, supervisors were also more likely to recognize the ethical climate of the organization as both positive and supportive of employee reporting behaviors during ethical concerns whereas employees perceive the opposite to be true (Trevino et al., 2008). Non-supervisory employees in this study were more likely to perceive the ethical climate as one that was organization-focused and motivated to conceal deviant behaviors for the benefit of the organization (Trevino et al., 2008). This is suggestive of the possibility that the separation in rank between employees and supervisors not only creates a physical divide but also alters the perceptual realities of each groups' interactions with the work environment. Employees may be more likely to feel emotionally detached from their organization which may provide subconscious justification for active or passive participation in deviant activities. Chen et al. (2013) also investigated the role of negative emotional experiences and employee deviance and found that employees who have negative emotional experiences related to their job reported a higher propensity to engage in workplace deviance. Additionally, results indicated specific ethical climates contributed to negative affectivity (NA) and deviance. Chen et al. (2013) reported the significance of an instrumental climate in reinforcing negative affectivity and increased employee deviance while a caring climate contributed to positive affectivity and decreased deviance. In other words, employees are likely to utilize emotional

experiences to make sense of their work environment and react according to those experiences. Hsieh and Wang (2016) also determined that perceived ethical climate informs decision-making relative to organizational deviance. Similar to Chen et al.'s study (2013), participants in this study processed work-related ethical dilemmas on an individual-level through cognitive, emotional, and attitudinal reasoning (Hsieh & Wang, 2016). As part of this process, perceived ethical climate assisted with individual-level processing based on previous organizational interactions and helped employees determine whether or not to engage in organizational deviance (Hsieh & Wang, 2016). Findings also suggested job satisfaction as demonstrating a moderative effect on PEC and subsequent OD (see also Schwepker, 2001). Therefore, it is inferred that positive perceived ethical climate is reflective of positive organizational interactions which decreases individual-level propensity to engage in organizational deviance.

As presented in other areas of the literature, socialization is an important factor in the development and sustenance of organizational climate. Organizational socialization provides reinforcement of formal and informal practices for both new and seasoned employees, which is especially important for corrections staff as they adjust to their roles and social seclusion (Farnese et al., 2016). As previously reported, deviance in corrections occurs at a much higher rate than data can account for which places a number of employees in a position of dissonance regarding decision-making such as whistleblowing, active or passive participation, attrition, and so on (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Ashforth and Anand (2003) suggested this dissonance is necessary in corruption deterrence as it encourages non-deviant officers to identify an

appropriate response that demonstrates acceptance or denial of such behaviors. However, not everyone is prompted by the discomfort that emerges from moral awareness to engage in counter-deviant behaviors. In their study of unethical behavior and organizational systems, Martin, Kish-Gephart and Detert (2013) opined that in some positive ethical climates a narrow focus on facilitating ethical behaviors within the organization inadvertently allows some unethical behavior to go unnoticed and unaddressed. The organizational members then choose to engage in unethical behaviors through cognitive distortion and irrational justification (Martin et al., 2013). Similar to Trevino et al.'s (2006) findings, Martin et al. (2013) implied that this rationalization is based on the ability to satisfy self-serving means through unethical actions with little consideration for the widespread effects. Poor accountability for unethical behaviors further espouses deviant activity even if the organizational climate discourages such behaviors because participants are able to justify their actions in a way that decreases their internal discomfort. This has the potential to reach others through group identity and increased desires for social alignment. Another study of non-corrections professionals noted that group relatability and group identity were reinforced through positive ethical climates (Goldman & Tabak, 2010). Further the interactions facilitated through these group dynamics encouraged interpersonal considerations and supported group benevolence—a deterrent of deviant employee behaviors (Goldman & Tabak, 2010). Additionally, scholars highlighted the importance of belongingness in behavioral regulation noting an apparent deviation from internal moral standards when confronted with group standards of morality (Pagliaro, Presti, Barattucci, Giannella, & Barretto,

2018). The findings indicated that participants were more likely to select behavioral

responses that were reflective of the organizational climate while also in consideration of

their group alignment (Pagliaro et al., 2018). Self-interest climates were more likely to

elicit responses that resulted from moral disengagement and encouraged deviance while

friendship climates, like caring climates, were more likely to elicit feelings of

belongingness and deter deviant responses (Pagliaro et al., 2018). This is an important

consideration as group assimilation and alignment are predominate socialization

dynamics within prisons and among corrections officers. While individuals are

responsible for the development of their personal moral character, this research has

demonstrated the counteractive effects of group dynamics in the enactment of moral

standards within the workplace.

Organizational climate also informs decision-making regarding deviant workplace

behaviors. This literature has explained that decision-making among employees is

predominately based on emotional responses to ethical situations. Employees formulate

responses to deviance based on how they feel about the organization, their social group

within the organization, and their perceptions of how the organization and social groups

feel towards them. It is apparent that moral calibration outside of employment is often

diminished or completely disregarded when faced with ethical concerns within their

organization. As a result, it is important for organizations to consider the type of climate

that is fostered and how that climate is perceived by employees in order to confront

issues regarding deviance. This literature, however, was not thoroughly representative of

law enforcement or corrections and still left unanswered questions. The literature does

not provide explanations for climate considerations in regard to serious deviance such as contraband introduction. The literature also does not provide insight into how officers perceive the organizational climate following exposure of contraband introduction.

Summary

The current literature provided general insight into deviance, corrections, contraband introduction, and the influence of climate within the organization. Both deviance and climate literature highlighted the influence of organizational and social factors that contribute to deviance within the workplace. The majority of these studies reflected non-corrections populations which created concerns regarding generalizability of results for this unique population. Additionally, the climate literature was heavily supported by research that addressed the impact of emotionality in ethical problem-solving. The corrections and contraband introduction literatures established economic and interpersonal concerns as the factors most likely to contribute to correctional officer deviance. However, consideration for the consistency of these factors across all demographics did not fully substantiate these as causal influences in this form of officer deviance. Neither body of research presented perceptual data of officers who have dealt with the residual effects of contraband introduction by fellow officers and the concerns that come along with awareness of such behavior by other officers. This body of research attempted to resolve this gap through the qualitative exploration of officer perspectives as described in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of correctional officers (of all rankings) who have experienced contraband introduction by other security staff. This chapter provides an overview of the research design, the purpose in this particular design selection, as well as the role of the researcher. This chapter also highlights participant recruitment and selection, data collection, and data analysis. Ethical concerns and methodological rigor are also addressed in the contents of this chapter, which segues into the study's findings as presented in chapter four.

Research Design and Rationale

Research questions regarding correctional officer contraband introduction and climate influence were developed based on the identified problem statement and purpose of the study.

Central question: How do cellphone contraband violations by correctional officers impact the perceptions of other correctional officers regarding cellphone contraband prevention in state prisons?

SQ1: How does correctional climate encourage contraband introduction by correctional officers?

SQ2: How does the correctional climate impact reporting of contraband violators by non-complicit officers?

These questions arose as a result of the need to explore perspectives regarding cellphone contraband introduction by correctional officers and understand the impact the

decision to participate in this particular form of deviance has on non-participatory officers. I used a transcendental phenomenological study to highlight key concepts relative to the lived experiences of those with previous exposure to cellphone contraband introduction. Transcendental phenomenology focuses more on descriptions of participants' experiences as opposed to the interpretations of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). The expectation was that the participants' experiences would produce themes that would enhance the current knowledge associated with this concept. Through this study I was able to assess how cellphone contraband introduction impacts officers' perceptions of the organization, the work environment, social interactions, and reporting behaviors. I was also able to inquire into the factors (e.g. organizational, environmental, and social) that influence ethical decision-making regarding participation and reporting deviant activities.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I served in the capacity of observer in order to present the perspectives of participants based on their lived experiences. I did not observe in the traditional sense but served as an interviewer documenting the experiences of those who had some direct experience with the phenomenon of interest. After reviewing the descriptions provided by the participants, I identified themes relevant to the phenomenon of study and reported findings based on this information. I had no prior personal relationships with any of the participants involved in the study. Although I had minimal prior experience with the phenomenon of interest as a former corrections employee, this experience was not similar to that experienced by corrections officers.

Moustakas (1994) recommends bracketing—or epoché, which is a process of identifying

and blocking out personal biases associated with the phenomenon of interest prior to

commencement of research interviews—to ensure that my personal experiences would

not interfere with my objectivity.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

I initially anticipated identifying correctional officers throughout one southeastern

state as participants for this study. To achieve this, I utilized a specific type of purposeful

sampling—criterion sampling—to identify research participants. Criterion sampling

allows for the utilization of information-rich cases that meet some criterion as established

by the nature of the research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Specifically, criterion-i sampling

allows for the identification and selection of participants based on predetermined

criterion of importance as opposed to criterion-e sampling, which focuses on the selection

of outlier cases that do not fall within the identified criterion (Palinkas et al., 2015). The

identified research questions indicated the use of criterion-i sampling as most appropriate

in the strategical selection of research participants who could provide rich, useful data.

The criteria for participation in this particular study were

- tenure—at least 24 months post-law enforcement certification (peace or
  sworn) employment as a correctional officer, and

- exposure—knowledge of at least one incident involving contraband
  introduction into the facility during current tenure. This knowledge may come

as secondary information provided following the incident from other officers

or supervisors.

Beginning December 19, 2019 , I circulated a general announcement that included

my contact information and requested voluntary participation in the study. Voluntary

participants who contacted me were subsequently screened according to the

predetermined criterion and selected based on fit. Initially, I sought a range of eight to 10

officers for interview to reflect on their experiences with contraband introduction

exposure during their tenure. This range was identified due to the detail-oriented nature

of the study and the general recommendation of smaller sample sizes in qualitative

inquiry by previous scholars. Dukes (1984) and Riemen (1986) both suggested no more

than 10 individuals for a phenomenological study in order to ensure that the researcher

pays adequate attention to detail in documenting the lived experiences of participants (as

cited in Creswell, 2013). This smaller sample size allowed for greater saturation of data

as I was able to spend more time extrapolating information from participants that was

fully reflective of their experience with contraband introduction in their profession. The

recollections of these experiences were then used to detail the phenomenon in a way that

was reflective of the impacts of contraband introduction.

Instrumentation

This study incorporated an interview protocol (see Appendix A) for data

collection in response to all stated research questions. The interview protocol was not a

duplicate of previous interview protocols and was developed by me. The interview

protocol consisted of semistructured, open-ended questions that encouraged in-depth

reflection of personal experiences relevant to contraband introduction. The interview

questions were developed as an extension of the central research question and also

reflected the identified sub-questions. The framing of the protocol questions related

directly to the underlying theoretical foundation and elicited responses that described the

phenomenon relative to ethical climate theory. The development of interview questions

based on both the research question and the application of ethical climate theory ensured

the elicited data was reflective of the phenomenon.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants were allowed to decide on an interview format—in-person or video

conference—that was not cumbersome for the them. I reminded participants that their

voluntary participation was not an extension of their employment and not subject to

review by their employer. This was done to ensure participants were interviewed as

private citizens without oversight by the department. The participant interviews were

conducted solely by me. The interview process occurred only once and was expected to

last no more than 1 hour 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded via audio recorder, which

I tested for accuracy and functionality prior to the interview. A backup audio recorder

was also used in the event of malfunction of the primary recorder. In the event that I

would not able to secure enough participants through the original recruitment method,

participants would be asked to provide two additional participant referrals in order to

identify additional individuals who met the predetermined criteria and were willing to

participate in this study. At the conclusion of each interview, I debriefed the participants

by providing basic information regarding the nature of the study, allowing for questions or concerns on behalf of the participant, and reiterating confidentiality measures.

Data Analysis Plan

Phenomenological data analysis was used to process and analyze the data collected. I transcribed the collected data myself to ensure accuracy in textual construction of interview data. Following transcription, I identified significant statements in the transcripts in a process called horizonalization (see Moustakas, 1994). These significant statements serve as textual representations of the participants' experiences relevant to the phenomenon of interest. Horizonalization produced clusters of meaning that highlighted the significant themes presented in the data. I identified initial codes based on the horizonalization data and later recoded this data to determine consistencies and inconsistencies in themes, at which time relevant textural and structural descriptions emerged as data references. Textural descriptions are written descriptions of the participants' experiences as reflected in the statements and themes identified from the data, whereas structural descriptions provide contextual value to these experiences by also incorporating relevant situational influences as indicated by these themes and statements (Moustakas, 1994). The difference between these descriptions is that textural descriptions reflect what was experienced while structural descriptions reflect how the phenomenon was experienced. Both descriptions were used to establish the essence (i.e., the shared experiences of the participants) of the phenomenological study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—was established through a number of practices throughout the initial stages of this study. I clarified any pre-existing biases through epoché—or bracketing—in order to block out any predetermined judgments and substantiate researcher objectivity. I also clarified the existence and impacts of any previous experiences and prejudices relative to the phenomenon of interest, which helped minimize the influence of any subjective interpretations. The participant selection process also helped reaffirm trustworthiness through variation in participant selection. The two primary criteria—tenure and exposure—were used to vet potential participants. Other demographic information such as age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status were not applied as selection criteria in order to maintain heterogeneity in the sample. This allowed for the application of a variety of perspectives with the expectation that this sample would be reflective of the correctional officer population. Throughout the research process, I maintained a reflective journal for the disclosure of private reflections that could have produced undue influence on the study. Following the initial coding process, I undertook a code-recode procedure to confirm the dependability of the results. Additionally, member checking assisted with confirming my interpretations of the data in order to safeguard the credibility of the research. For this step, participants who elected to review the data analysis were contacted and provided with an opportunity to identify any interpretation inaccuracies.

Ethical Procedures

For ethical considerations, the experiences and reflections of the participants were

not a reflection of the organization for which they work. Participants were attesting to

their experiences within their professional capacity and were not speaking on behalf of

the department. Participants were more likely to withhold information or speak in terms

that positively reflected the agency if they were subjected to study participation on-site.

In an attempt to secure authenticity in participant responses, I opted to interview officers

as private citizens. Therefore, the participant recruitment and study commencement did

not take place at any particular worksite or through participation with any department of

corrections. I also informed participants that their responses and participation were

voluntary and independent of their employers. The content of the interview was

reflective of the officers' lived experiences with the phenomenon itself. Further, I

encouraged the participants not to speak on behalf of the department and to speak

specifically in regard to their personal experiences with exposure to cellphone contraband

introduction. I obtained permission from the Walden University Institutional Review

Board (approval # 12-17-19-0525989) to conduct a study involving human subjects prior

to recruitment and additional investigation efforts. I anticipated no harm and very

minimal (if any) risk to the participants, which was consistent throughout the research

process. Recruitment efforts ensured the anonymity of study participants who contacted

me to express participation interest based on their review of the recruitment

announcement placed on various social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook,

and Twitter. Initial contact with participants provided them with an overview of the

purpose of study and their role as participants. I provided participants with informed consent forms, which they had the option to sign, and an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns regarding their participation. Participants were informed that the data related to this study would be shared with necessary members of the research committee and that final results would be provided for participants' review. I remained mindful during the interview process of sharing information that could bias or encourage false reporting by participants. This research incorporated anonymity to promote participants' comfort in participation. I also protected participants' identities by developing composite profiles in order to respect privacy concerns. In order to avoid one-sided findings, I have reported all perspectives relative to the study's findings. When confronted with early withdrawals or participation refusals, I incorporated a referral process in order to seek out additional participants. Refusals and withdrawals were documented as part of the findings in the study in order to maintain trustworthiness and transparency in the study. Electronic data has been stored on an encrypted external drive which has been placed in a locked file safe. If necessary, physical copies of documentation (such as forms requiring signatures) would be scanned to the electronic drive and physical copies would also be placed in the locked file safe for data security and storage. Additionally, these physical copies would be stored and filed separate from research data with the university's research department. The data related to this study will be stored for a period of no less than 5 years following study completion.

Summary

The concepts outlined in this chapter highlighted the process by which this study explored the perspectives of correctional officers exposed to contraband introduction. The research design, rationale, and researcher role provided the foundation on which the current study was based. The methodology included the steps that were incorporated to further identify viable participants and data collection and analysis procedures. Concerns related to trustworthiness and ethicality of the study process were also discussed at length. Chapter 4 presents the findings related to the study as established in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The understanding of correctional officer perspectives on cellphone contraband introduction by fellow officers was central to this particular study. Through interview questioning, I sought answers to the following questions: How do cellphone contraband violations by correctional officers impact the perceptions of other correctional officers regarding cellphone contraband prevention in state prisons? How does correctional climate encourage cellphone contraband introduction by correctional officers? How does the correctional climate impact reporting of contraband violators by non-complicit officers? This chapter provides details related to the data collection and data analysis processes as well as the final results, which will be interpreted in the final chapter of this study.

Setting

In accordance with the recruitment process described in the previous chapter, a recruitment announcement was circulated on various social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter on December 19, 2019. The conditions of the study were as expected in regard to working with individuals in law enforcement. Only one participant mentioned specific influential organizational conditions present within the department that could have contributed to decreased participation. This participant reported organizational downsizing due to budget cuts and stated that a number of employees throughout the organization were concerned with job stability and security. This departmental shift could have discouraged participation if employees believed the

organization would find out about their participation and use it against them. Because this information was provided early in the study, I took it into consideration during the remainder of the recruitment process.

Overall, I experienced some difficulty in securing voluntary participants from the targeted area of the study. In response to this obstacle, I attempted to secure referrals from participants identified in both the recruitment process as well as those who participated in data collection. However, this still did not generate additional participants who were willing to provide data for this research. Based on these factors, I opted to collect and analyze data based on the available participants.

Demographics

Approximately 14 individuals initially contacted me about participating in the study. For the purposes of this study, all 14 will be considered participants as they all scheduled interviews with me with the intent of participating in the data collection process. The demographics of the overall participant pool were variant, and demographic information relevant to this study was provided during pre-screen interactions. These relevant demographics included rank, length of tenure, age, and gender (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Data: Initial Recruitment Sample

Participant	Age	Gender	Tenure	Rank
Participant 1	39	F	7 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 2	59	F	28 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 3	28	M	6 years	Lieutenant
Participant 4	32	M	10 years	Captain
Participant 5	42	F	16 years	Lieutenant
Participant 6	47	M	19 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 7	52	F	20 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 8	50	F	27 years	Sergeant
Participant 9	32	F	4 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 10	35	F	4 years	Sergeant
Participant 11	39	F	10 years	Sergeant
Participant 12	47	F	13 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 13	33	M	5 years	Sergeant
Participant 14	35	M	3 years	Correctional Officer II

Seven of the individuals who contacted me to participate in this study held the

rank of Correctional Officer II (COII). This rank is established by a tenure of more than

one year as a Correctional Officer I, which is the entry rank for all individuals hired as

officers in correctional facilities. Four of the individuals held the rank of sergeant, which

is a supervisory role one step above correctional officer. These individuals are the next in

rank to correctional officers and are generally responsible for mid-level management

tasks. Two individuals were ranked as lieutenants who are one rank above sergeants and

two ranks above correctional officers. These individuals are considered upper middle

management within the facilities and are responsible for specific shifts and areas of

coverage (i.e., general and specialized housing, recruitment, transportation, special

operations, and physical areas of the prison). One individual was the highest ranked of

the volunteers and was promoted to captain of his facility prior to data collection. The captain of the facility is considered the chief of security and all security staff report to this individual. This person is responsible for the day-to-day operations of staff and offenders within the facility and serves as the head of security who reports to administrative staff within the facility.

Even though I emphasized the independence of the research from any particular corrections organization, there was still some reluctance by some participants to follow through with interviewing once scheduled. Three individuals (Participants 6, 7, and 10) contacted me various numbers of days prior to their scheduled interviews to cancel, generally citing concerns of retaliation and possible reprimand. One individual (Participant 4), who initially agreed to be interviewed, was offered a promotion approximately one week prior to the scheduled interview. As a result, this person was reluctant and subsequently declined interview as a result of fear of possibly jeopardizing his new position. One other individual (Participant 9) contacted me and scheduled a day for interviewing. However, on the day of the scheduled interview, the individual reported to me that her supervisor advised against the interview without internal departmental approval even though I had told her that she would be participating as a private citizen. Another individual (Participant 5), who was scheduled for interview, was arrested for suspected contraband introduction prior to her interview and stated that her lawyer advised against participation in this study due to potential legal ramifications. One other participant (Participant 12) was also arrested for charges unrelated to her employment but was subsequently terminated and declined further participation. Four additional

individuals (Participants 3, 11, 13, and 14) scheduled interviews, but I was unable contact them following the initial scheduling. As a result, Participants 3 through 7 and Participants 9 through 14 were not included in the remainder of the data collection process (see Table 2).

Table 2

Demographic Data: Initial Recruitment Sample with Withdrawal Reasons

Participant	Age	Gender	Tenure	Rank	Reason for withdrawing participation
Participant 1	**39**	**F**	**7 years**	**Correctional Officer II**	**N/A-final participant**
Participant 2	**59**	**F**	**28 years**	**Correctional Officer II**	**N/A-final participant**
Participant 3	28	M	6 years	Lieutenant	Scheduled, no follow-up
Participant 4	32	M	10 years	Captain	Received promotion
Participant 5	42	F	16 years	Lieutenant	Arrested for contraband introduction
Participant 6	47	M	19 years	Correctional Officer II	Reprimand concerns
Participant 7	52	F	20 years	Correctional Officer II	Reprimand concerns
Participant 8	**50**	**F**	**27 years**	**Sergeant**	**N/A-final participant**
Participant 9	32	F	4 years	Correctional Officer II	Supervisor advised against participation
Participant 10	35	F	4 years	Sergeant	Retaliation concerns
Participant 11	39	F	10 years	Sergeant	Scheduled, no follow-up
Participant 12	47	F	13 years	Correctional Officer II	Arrested for undisclosed reasons
Participant 13	33	M	5 years	Sergeant	Scheduled, no follow-up
Participant 14	35	M	3 years	Correctional Officer II	Scheduled, no follow-up

In contrast to those who completed the data collection process, these participants' decisions to discontinue participation prior to interviewing also provided substantive value related to study limitations, which is explained in greater detail in later sections. The remaining three participants—Participants 1, 2, and 8—provided interview data that was utilized in this research (see Table 3).

Table 3

Demographic Data: Final Interview Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Tenure	Rank
Participant 1	39	F	7 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 2	59	F	28 years	Correctional Officer II
Participant 8	50	F	27 years	Sergeant

More women than men contacted me for during recruitment for this study. A total of nine female and five male participants were a part of the overall sample. The ranks of these individuals were diverse across the entry- and mid-level management roles with five women and two men representing the Correctional Officer II group and three women and one man representing the sergeant group. The only group that showed equal representation was the rank of lieutenant with one male and one female participant. The only captain represented in the recruitment sample was male. Of these initial volunteers, the 11 who subsequently withdrew participation were: three female COIIs, two male COIIs, two female sergeants, one male sergeant, both the male and female lieutenants, and the male captain.

The ages of the sample of nonparticipating volunteers ranged from 28 to 52 years old with an average age of 38.36 years for the group. The tenures of these individuals were between 3 and 20 years with an average length of 10 years on the job. The youngest volunteer in this group was a 28-year-old male with the second highest rank but one of the shortest tenures at 6 years. The shortest-tenured employee of the initial nonparticipating recruits was a 35-year-old male with the lowest rank (COII) and 3 years

of service, whereas the oldest and longest-tenured of these individuals was a 50-year-old female COII with 20 years of service.

For the final collection of data, those who elected to participate were all females and maintained the ranks of Correctional Officer II ($n = 2$) and sergeant ($n = 1$). The ages represented by those who were interviewed were 39, 50, and 59 years old—an average age of 49.33—with a significant gap of 20 years between the oldest and youngest participants. Of this cohort, the highest-ranked participant—a 50-year-old female sergeant with 27 years of service—was neither the oldest nor the individual with the longest tenure. The youngest final participant (a 39-year-old female) was the shortest-tenured (7 years) and shared rank (COII) with the oldest participant (a 59-year-old female) who was also the longest-tenured (28 years). The average tenure within this group was 20.67 years with a range of 21 years between the shortest- and longest-tenured participants of the interview.

Data Collection

As stated in the social media announcement, I explained during preinterview conversations that interviews would be conducted away from employment sites to encourage confidentiality and anonymity. Additionally, conducting off-site interviews would also build trust between the researcher and the interviewees as this has been cited as a limitation in research by previous correctional researchers. Based on withdrawal rates during the recruitment phase, I remained cognizant of potential underlying concerns related to participants answering questions regarding deviant employee behaviors. In

attempts to overcome these preinterview concerns, these individuals were reminded that anonymity and confidentiality would be observed throughout the research process.

In total, three participants (Participants 1, 2, and 8) were interviewed as part of this study. This number was significantly lower than the originally stated range of 8 to 10 participants due to the factors mentioned earlier in the chapter. Because phenomenological research emphasizes the importance of depth and quality in understanding individual experiences, this number was identified as sufficient in meeting the needs of this study. Participants were interviewed at their convenience through video conferencing due to weather and travel concerns. The participants were provided with the informed consent via email prior to the scheduled interview and verbally confirmed their consent as well. Interviews ranged in time from approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes and each interview was recorded on two audio recorders.

Participants were asked two preinterview questions to confirm on-record the length of time as a corrections officer and the age each began working as an officer. These questions were followed by 12 main interview questions that allowed for elaboration on individual experience with exposure to cellphone contraband introduction and reporting behaviors regarding this activity. The main interview questions often provided opportunity for expansion through follow-up questioning, which allowed for greater depth and detail in understanding the phenomenon of interest. The questions were categorically divided to address perceptions of cellphone contraband violators and the work environment as well as perceptions of reporting behaviors. Sample questions include the following:

- In your opinion, why do you believe some correctional officers participate in cellphone contraband introduction and why do you think others do not?

- What role does the structural rigidity (rules, paramilitary, physical barriers and isolation) of the prison environment have on cellphone contraband introduction activity?

- In your opinion, is the prison work environment receptive to those who express concerns of suspected or confirmed contraband introduction by other officers?

At the conclusion of the main interview, participants were asked two follow-up questions to allow for open expression of any information not covered earlier in the interview process and to determine whether they wanted to participate in the member-checking process.

Data Analysis

Transcription

I transcribed the interviews myself instead of using an outside transcription service as identified in the previous chapter. This was decided due to my concerns of misinterpretations of audio, which could impact coding and interpretation. Instead, I decided to use transcription software that was compatible with one of the audio recorders used for the interview to transcribe each interview. Once the software provided a rough transcript of each interview, I then listened to each interview and checked each line of the document against the recordings for accuracy. The final transcripts were then used for the manual code-recode process to identify the following themes and subthemes present within the data.

Themes

Three central themes relevant to the phenomenon of interest emerged as a result of coding the data presented in the participant interviews. These themes—peer dynamics, personal characteristics, and organizational climate structure—served to illustrate the experiences of the participants relative to cellphone contraband introduction and officer violators. 'Personal characteristics' were identified as individualized criteria believed as playing some role in the decision-making of those involved in cellphone contraband introduction. A number of specific subthemes were prevalent throughout the participant data. However, these were relatively consistent across the sample. In looking at the subthemes associated with the 'personal characteristics' theme, morality, susceptibility to manipulation, and thrill seeking were prominent among all three participants. The 'peer dynamics' theme was indicative of interpersonal factors among staff that these individuals perceived as contributive to officer-related incidents of cellphone contraband introduction. Belongingness and support were two of the most common subthemes relative to peer dynamics and cellphone contraband introduction. Specifically, organizational moral and social support as well as social acceptance were recognized as having significant impacts on officer decision-making. Finally, 'organizational climate structure' highlighted organization-specific antecedents that reinforced the behavior of contraband violators. The associated subthemes—safety, exposure, consistency, and transparency—were highlighted as dominant factors in reporting behaviors.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The participant selection process assisted with maintaining the transferability of the data findings. As previously stated, a total of fourteen participants contacted the researcher with the intention of providing data for this study. While all fourteen did not end up participating in the data collection process, the heterogeneity of the initial sample still has important implications. Tenure and exposure were the inclusionary criteria for this study which was provided at the outset as part of the social media announcement used for recruitment. The individuals who contacted the researcher did so with the understanding that they would be considered for participation if they have worked at least two years as a certified peace officer and have exposure to at least one incident of cellphone contraband introduction. It is significant to note the individuals who later declined participation were of various tenures, ranks, ages, and genders while those who completed the data collection process were of various ages, rank, and tenure but not gender. While these demographics were not significant in participant selection, they may have some significance in the data implications.

In order to ensure the credibility of the analyzed data, the researcher implored member-checking to confirm interpretative findings. The three participants were asked at the conclusion of their interviews whether they wanted to participate in this particular process at which time only two participants agreed to review the data interpretations for accuracy. Both confirmed that the interpretations ascertained from the interview data were in line with their intended statements and neither identified any discrepancies or misrepresentations. The confirmation of interpretation accuracy was also a testament to

findings unimpeded by any underlying researcher bias. As stated in the previous chapter, the researcher worked to minimize the imposition of biases by journaling thoughts that would impact objectivity in data analysis. The only relevant bias the researcher was able to identify was that those who participated in the interview process would not be open and forthcoming regarding this subject matter especially given the difficulty experienced in securing those who intended to follow through with the actual interview process. The researcher was also concerned that the information provided would serve to promote the participants' employers or glamorize the organization in order to minimize the risk of revealing any negative information. However, the information obtained from the interviewees was in-depth and was perceived by the researcher as authentic because it did not serve to glamorize the their employer. The researcher, having minimal experience with the phenomenon of interest, was able to interpret the information provided by the participants as it was presented through the interviews without any undue influence.

Results

Officer Perceptions of Cellphone Contraband Violators

According to the data, correctional officers have strong opinions regarding individuals who participate in cellphone contraband introduction. All three participants agreed that morality played a significant role in cellphone contraband introduction. Participant 1 suggested that strong morals, integrity, and pride in one's role could help to minimize the desire to engage in this form of deviant workplace behavior, which was later echoed by the other participants. Participant 1 stated,

> I would never in a million years bring an inmate anything. Not a piece of gum,
> contraband, money, because it's all about integrity…holding true to your sworn
> oath to the state and I think it's the type of person you are. You're either going to
> do it or you're not.

This was also reflected in the sentiments of the senior ranking member among the participants who stated, "I think it comes down to the type of person that is choosing to work here…a person is either going to do it or they won't".

Susceptibility to manipulation was noted by all three participants as a significant indicator of one's likeliness to participate in cellphone contraband introduction. Based on their experiences, the consensus among the group was that low self-esteem was usually characteristic of the females who engaged in cellphone contraband introduction while financial status improvement was common among male violators. It was interesting to note that even though financial incentive was identified as a motivator for male participants, only Participant 2 believed poor salary was a deciding factor among violators. Additionally, Participants 1 and 8 suggested thrill-seeking as an underlying motive for cellphone contraband activity while Participant 2 suggested institutionalization—or the subconscious emulation of inmate behaviors and characteristics by officers—as a primary motive.

All three participants had differing opinions regarding age, education, and rank as deterrents for deviant workplace behaviors among fellow officers. Participant 1 suggested neither age nor education played any significant role in deterring or encouraging cellphone contraband introduction among fellow officers. Participants 2 and

8 both agreed that poor education could increase the likeliness that a person would elect

to engage in this type of behavior. Participant 8 also suggested that age could be a factor

in the decision-making associated with cellphone contraband introduction. According to

this participant,

> [T]hey recruit young people from the local high schools… a lot of times they
>
> don't know any better and haven't had any real job exposure and they don't
>
> recognize the impact that something like that can have on them in the future.

In discussing the relationship between rank and cellphone contraband violators,

participants 1 and 8 had differing but noteworthy opinions. According to participant 1,

contraband introduction is not uncommon among senior ranking staff (such as

lieutenants, captains, and wardens) which is suggestive of rank serving no significant role

in deterrence. As an indication of her recognition of the fact that the behavior that is

modeled by supervisory staff is the behavior that will most likely be emulated by lower

ranked staff Participant 8 stated, "I try to be as ethical as possible and I try to display that

to my staff."

In reporting their perceptions of cellphone violators, all three participants were

unanimous in their beliefs that the behavior changes their view of the individual as

opposed to the organization. Participants 1 and 2 intimated that they would no longer

trust an officer who was suspected of introducing contraband into their workplace. Both

participants felt that this behavior was not only a violation of trust between co-workers

but it was also a violation of public trust. As a the only participating supervisor,

participant 8 presented a unique perspective regarding contraband violators as she

reported feeling a sense of disappointment in staff identified as introducing contraband. According to this participant, "I feel like it's a reflection of me (leadership) because maybe they did it because they felt like they couldn't reach out to any of us for help."

Climate and Cellphone Contraband Introduction

While perceptions of individual violators are most effected by incidents of contraband deviance, the participants were also able to conceptualize ways in which the organizational climate inadvertently reinforces this behavior. The participants agreed that while cellphone contraband introduction is not condoned, it is generally an anticipated occurrence among staff members. The participants suggested that this expectation creates a certain degree of cynicism among staff, particularly security staff, because, as one participant explained, "[I]t's almost like a waiting game to see who it's going to be."

The participants explained that cellphone contraband introduction is an issue that is discussed ad nauseum during one's tenure as a correctional officer beginning with basic correctional officer training (BCOT) and continuing with annual mandatory trainings. It is also heavily discussed among staff when incidents occur primarily in an unofficial, fact-seeking capacity. All three participants conceded an unspoken separation between security staff and civilian staff and indicated that contraband violations by civilian staff often involved illegal substances (including narcotics and cigarettes) and sexual interactions. According to the participants, these incidents are not internalized to the same extent as violations by fellow officers. Participant 1 suggested that cellphone contraband introduction was more common among security staff because of the constant

proximity to inmates and the lack of consistent scrutiny of security personnel upon entrance. This same participant also opined that this same inconsistency often aids higher ranking individuals with contraband introduction which is why, in her opinion, rank plays an insignificant role in deterrence. Participant 2 stated that when made aware of incidents of contraband introduction she expects the violator to be civilian personnel as opposed to security staff while participant 8 stated that the social distance between the two staff groups allows her to easily disconnect from these incidents when they involve civilian staff.

Additionally, participants surmised poor morale and lack of support as instrumental organizational elements in contraband introduction among security staff. Participants concurred that the climate within their individual work environments generally lacked in support from peers, superiors, and administration. Participants 2 and 8 attested to the necessity of organizational support when faced with understaffing, long shifts, and the underlying dangers within correctional facilities. Participant 1 explained that within-group moral and social support are critical among officers because of the inherent stress associated with the work environment. She disclosed that based on her interactions with non-correctional staff via social media, the community perception is that all correctional officers participate in some form of contraband introduction. According to her, this misconception forces correctional officers to seek out support among their fellow officers and that support could be either positive or negative depending on the group. Additionally, this participant theorized that social acceptance among officers— particularly young officers—often dictates behaviors within the workplace, a theory

supported by Participant 8. Because of the reported insufficiency regarding intraorganizational support, familial support and external social support were suggested as protective factors in deterring contraband introduction among officers even though neither participant believed the problem would ever fully end. In line with this, Participant 1 asserted that justifications or minimizations of unethical or illegal behavior within one's social support could affect the decision-making process of an officer with Participant 8 reinforcing this position stating, "it (contraband introduction) isn't that uncommon which means the individuals start to normalize it which makes participation that much easier to rationalize."

Climate and Reporting Behaviors

Safety, exposure, consistency, and transparency were implicated as salient concepts in the discussion of reporting behaviors in corrections. When questioned about administrative receptiveness and officer comfort in reporting suspected contraband introduction, the participants' responses differed in some areas. The participants were unanimous in identifying concerns for safety as the primary cause for reporting other officers suspected of contraband introduction. Participant 1's stated rationale for reporting was "we are a brotherhood, yes, but…I'm protecting myself first and foremost." Similarly, Participant 2 state, "I start to fear for my safety… anyone who is compromised in that manner can't be trusted. I don't feel comfortable working around them anymore." Participant 8 described a similar sentiment in that by not participating in this type of behavior, she has not compromised the safety of her staff as a supervisor. Yet while the participants credited the organization with attempting to proactively

discourage staff participation in contraband introduction through routine trainings, they also credited consistent exposure to the problem as an inadvertent reinforcement for some. Participants 1 and 8 suggested consistent exposure combined with inconsistent repercussive actions bolster an individual's ability to justify participation in cellphone contraband introduction. According to these participants, staff are made aware of these incidents and often find out later that accused parties do not consistently face the repercussions outlined in policies and trainings. Participants 1 and 8 also explained that punishment discretion is often left to individual facilities and decisions regarding termination and resignation in lieu of termination determined by facility administration while cases that involve arrest and prosecution are based on the discretion of the district attorney. These same participants concurred that when officer violators face significant consequences, specifically arrest and prosecution, other officers understand and appreciate the gravity of the situation. According to Participant 8, "[I]f they thought the punishment would be severe enough, they would probably not want to do it." When less severe consequences were imposed officers, the participants reported feeling a sense of disappointment and silent complacency on behalf of the department.

Additionally, these participants suggested a lack of transparency by the department—as evidenced through community relations and also through intraorganizational relations—as having a significant role in participation as well as reporting behaviors. Participant 1 was the only participant who identified administrators as being receptive to officers reporting contraband violators. However, this participant also agreed with Participants 2 and 8 in noting that reporting incidents of suspected

contraband introduction seemingly goes unanswered. At least two participants reported

that it was not uncommon for contraband violation incidents to be handled "quietly" so as

to not bring unwanted attention to the department. The participants posited that this lack

of transparency was prevalent within the organizational climate. Participant 2 believed

the organization's lack of transparency was a result of reputation preservation and

community relations.

> I think the agency's lack of real acknowledgement of the problem leaves it
>
> unaddressed and allows it to continue to run rampant and I think people know it.
>
> The agency doesn't want the public to know that there are some people who are
>
> supposed to manage these people who actually get caught up in bringing in
>
> contraband.

Participant 8 opined:

> I still feel like the department is trying to brush it under the rug but it further
>
> reinforces the notion that they—as a department—are not taking as active of a
>
> role in confronting the problem head on…The agency underreports the numbers
>
> because they don't want the department to seem more corrupt in public opinion
>
> than it really is.

Participant 1, on the other hand, attributed transparency issues with investigation

preservation by stating, "I think they are receptive but a lot of times they may act like

they're not because they have certain things in the work or they got somebody being

investigated." According to the participants, the lack of transparency also deterred

reporting because officers feel as though their concerns are not being taken seriously or

are being ignored. Additionally, the participants reported an awareness of at least one incident of a fellow officer reporting their suspicions and subsequently receiving negative treatment by peers and superiors. Participants 1 and 2 indicated that situations that resulted in peer ostracization diminished within-group trust. This lack of transparency is concerning for officers because it not only undermines the strict and rigid façade of the paramilitary prison-system but it also negatively-impacts the morale of those who work within the organization

Summary

The data recruitment, collection, and analysis processes associated with this study followed most procedures as described in the previous chapter in order to answer the foundational research questions. According to the data reported in this study, the perpetration of unethical and illegal acts by rogue officers were attributed solely to the individual and not the environment in which they work. Deviant acts committed by fellow officers were not viewed as a derivative of the work environment and instead were considered moral deficits on the part of the actor. Contraband introduction was identified as a persistent, yet predictable threat and cellphone contraband introduction was indicated as an evolution of this unending problem. However, there were mixed perceptions in regard to reporting behaviors while the officers who declined participation provided support for the consideration of possible peer and administrative discouragement. The results of this chapter are explored further in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The central purpose of this study was to gain perceptual insight into the lived experiences of correctional officers who, at some point during their careers, have experienced cellphone contraband introduction by fellow officers. The findings of this study indicate that officers are likely to have a negative view of the individual violator. Additionally, some officers may feel as though the organizational climate does little to deter the behaviors of rogue officers. As a result of this climate, officers may also experience some hesitation in reporting suspected contraband introduction by fellow officers.

Interpretation of the Findings

Ethical climate theory served as the theoretical foundation for this study in order to assist in the exploration of institutional factors and social dynamics within the correctional environment that could potentially reinforce contraband introduction among officers. Ethical climate theory establishes the existence of unspoken guidelines within an organization that dictate whether employee behaviors are viewed as acceptable or unacceptable based on an underlying system of rewards and punishment. Employee behaviors within the organization could be considered unethical or immoral to those outside the organization but could also be viewed as justifiable within the organization depending on the norms that exist within the organizational climate. According to ethical climate theory, the correctional climate is one that most aligns with both law and code and rules climates. Law and code climate sets the expectation that employees will adhere

to legal and professional standards, whereas rules climate requires employees to follow all company rules and procedures (Victor & Cullen, 1998). Although this may be the image the department hopes to portray to outsiders, the experiences described by the participants suggests a disconnect between perception and reality. Prior to the commencement of this study, the available data provided little insight into the differences of perceived versus actual organizational climate through the lens of those who work in these environments. Based on the data provided, correctional officers could perceive the organizational climate as having some role in contraband introduction behaviors and the reporting of these behaviors to administration.

Within the context of this theory, the data confirm the existence of some form of ethical dissonance within the correctional environment. When discussing their individual experiences with incidents of officer-involved contraband introduction, the consensus among the participants was that the perception of the participating officer is irrevocably altered. Although the participants did not explicitly state a change in perceptions of their work environments, the data support a less than favorable view of the organization in regard to this specific topic as evidenced by their reporting of a general disappointment with the organization's lack of prevention efforts. The data also indicate that accountability avoidance and responsibility evasion may be reinforced by the organizational climate due to inconsistencies in punishment and reprimand. Additionally, noncomplicit officers are less likely to feel empowered to report their suspicions of possible violators due to perceived lack of administrative interest and potential retaliation for expressing concern for this behavior. In other words, noncomplicit officers believe

potential violators are less likely to be deterred by established consequences because those consequences are not consistently reinforced during known incidents of contraband introduction.

The findings of this study also reiterate contributory factors of contraband introduction as previously highlighted in the existing literature. The relevant literature suggests the existence of factors within the correctional work setting that are instrumental to the cellphone contraband market (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; York, 2016; CAPI, 2016; Farnese et al., 2016). These factors include individual characteristics, peer dynamics, and intraorganizational dynamics—similar to those identified within this study—that influence employee decision-making regarding deviant behaviors as correctional employees. Within the context of the available literature, this study confirms the roles of morality, social support, and belongingness in this decision-making process. Financial incentives and self-esteem were also confirmed as contributing agents to engagement in contraband activity; however, these factors were identified as secondary extensions of the others. The findings also reinforce correctional employees' valuation of support by not only those outside of the workplace but also within the immediate work environment, particularly administrative support. Previous researchers have emphasized correctional employees' inability to identify sufficient support within their work environment as negatively impacting their views of their workplace and subsequent interactions with peers and superiors (Worley, 2016; Worley & Worley, 2011, 2013). Further, this lack of organizational support was also implicated as a potential catalyst for unethical behaviors within the workplace. In this regard, the current study confirms the findings of previous

studies while also suggesting that employees may experience difficulty in identifying sources of support within their organization which increases officers' apathy and indifference towards deviancy issues such as cellphone contraband introduction. Additionally, this study extends the current body of literature by providing additional insight into officers' views of contraband activity as potentially unavoidable within the correctional work environment.

Limitations of the Study

I anticipated limitations related to generalizability, time-limited data collection, and the impact of the correctional officer code on sampling size. The data collected are reflective of individuals who have experienced cellphone contraband introduction while employed as correctional officers. All participants—including those who did not participate in the data collection phase—were from the same geographical area and were of various experience levels and tenures. Given that the three individuals who participated in the data collection process were from the same geographical location, the geographic limitation is one that remains relevant in this study.

The data collection process was conducted once but with individuals who had different tenures and rank. The main concern with a time-limited study is that it is not reflective of an experience over the course of time and provides a single snapshot of the phenomenon at a specific period of time. However, the significance of the tenure points and rank differences allows for insight into this phenomenon at different points of the career trajectory. Because two individuals were of the same rank but at different points in their careers (early career and approaching retirement), their experiences regarding the

same phenomenon have different implications relative to their work history in corrections. The tenure of the participant with the highest rank was one year shorter than that of the longest-tenured participant; however, their perceptions regarding certain aspects of the phenomenon were also in slight contrast. Therefore, differences and similarities indicated by these participants may have some application to others who hold similar ranks and tenures. Experiences of those who fall midway between these career points as well as those of higher rank were unaccounted for in this study, which offers opportunity for exploration.

It is important to note that the final sampling size was smaller than anticipated. In keeping with the research plan, voluntary participants contacted me to express interest in providing data for the study. The identified range of eight to 10 participants was initially met and included scheduled interviews for all except one participant. At some point, the majority of these individuals expressed no interest in further participation in the study. As the participants began to withdraw from the study, three additional participants expressed interest in the study bringing the total of volunteers to 14. However, these two participants also declined further participation by avoiding additional contact. Only one of the participants who completed data collection offered to share my contact information with other prospective participants; however, no additional volunteers were identified. By exhausting the sampling procedures identified in Chapter 3, I was confident in proceeding with the remaining steps of the study.

Although the data provided were sufficient for extrapolating relevant findings, sample size is important when determining saturation in any qualitative study. The data

and findings relative to the predetermined research questions were consistent throughout with few identifiable discrepancies noted within subareas—such as the influence of education on one's willingness to participate in cellphone contraband introduction. Also, the interview participants were homogenous in gender but not rank, age, or length of tenure, which provides additional credibility to response consistency among them. As such, saturation can be confirmed to a certain extent; however, additional data collected as an extension of this study could help provide additional confirmation.

In addition, the correctional officer code could be implicated as a limitation in sampling. Similar to the code of silence among other law enforcement officers, the correctional officer code discourages the sharing of information that would be harmful to the reputation of other officers or the organization for which they work. Initially, those interested in participation in the study voluntarily contacted me and provided relevant demographic information in anticipation of completing the data collection process. Following the completion of interviews with the first two participants, I began to experience challenges with participants following through with the data collection process. With the exception of the eighth participant, who participated in interviewing, and the two participants who experienced legal concerns during the course of the recruitment process, the remaining nine participants were most likely reluctant to participate due to the unspoken code of silence. At least three of the participants openly spoke of retaliation concerns during post-scheduling cancellations. Although the others did not overtly express the same concerns, it can be inferred that these individuals likely became wary of answering questions that involved other officers for one reason or

another. Given the timing of the cancellations—after interview times were scheduled—

one could speculate that these officers had spoken with other officers or supervisors and

were either directly or indirectly discouraged from ongoing participation in the study.

One individual stated that her supervisor told her that she would need permission to

participate in the study, which was a factually inaccurate statement given that she was

informed by me that she would be interviewed as a private citizen and not as a

representative of her organization. However, in working in an environment that

discourages open participation with outsiders, once the seed of doubt was planted it was

unlikely that she could be convinced that her participation would not subject her to any

official reprimand or punitive actions from her employer. The others most likely

received similar misinformation from within their work environment and were deterred

from continued participation as a result. Therefore, it is probable that those who

subsequently declined participation in interviewing without any formal explanation were

impacted by this informal code of conduct.

Additionally, the time-lapse between recruitment and data collection may have

provided the officers with time to reconsider their involvement and the possible

implications associated with participating in this type of research. Even though the

purpose of the research was detailed for the participants, it would not be surprising if,

over time, these individuals assumed an underlying motive or agenda associated with

studying this particular phenomenon. This is especially likely to be true if I was viewed

as an outsider or non-law enforcement because blind loyalty is a central tenet within

many, if not all, law enforcement agencies, even if it comes at the detriment of others. If

participants believed I was attempting to "trap" or "trick" them into sharing information that could be used against them later on or that the information would be shared with outside law enforcement, this could have increased their angst and hesitation in moving forward with data collection efforts. Based on historical references and examples, officers in any area of law enforcement are often reluctant to report on other rogue officers' behaviors even with the protection of anonymity and confidentiality (York, 2016; Dennehy & Nantel, 2006; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). The recourse for reporting officer offenses is often worse for the witnesses and creates an intolerable work life (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Even with my disassociation with the department of corrections, officers remained reluctant to fully cooperate throughout the entire process of the study. Coordinating efforts with the organization most likely would not have changed this and, instead, probably would have encouraged participant deception in order to deter negative administrative repercussions. It also would have allowed the department an opportunity to encourage favorable reporting by officers which would disproportionately impact the accuracy of the data. In understanding this reality, it was unlikely that any changes to the process of this study would have significantly improved participation.

Recommendations

The completion of this study yielded a number of significant recommendations for future research. Due to the sensitive nature of this particular topic, future studies should consider conducting written interviews with participants. This may help minimize some reluctance on behalf of participants who may be more willing to engage in data collection through a less personal method. Also, consideration for participants who are

no longer employed in corrections may also be useful in securing participants for data collection. Individuals who are no longer employed with the agency may be less likely to experience hesitation relative to retaliation concerns if there is some distance between them and their former employer. Additionally, expanding the target population to include multiple states or regions might improve participation. While this might also present other limitations not represented in this study, it could also improve generalizability concerns as well as increase the breadth of relevant data. It would not be unwise to consider working in conjunction with an interested agency; however, this would still create concerns regarding participant authenticity. Future studies might also explore the role of the correctional climate in discrepancies in deviance (i.e., male violators versus female violators, civilian staff violators versus security staff violators) or whether adherence to organizational climate in corrections is susceptible to certain demographics. Exploration of this phenomenon can also extend into other areas of consideration such as jails versus prisons, state versus federal facilities, and variations in offender custody level. Distinctions such as these are significant within correctional environments as they often contribute to noticeable variations within each independent climate.

Implications

Corrections organizations around the world continue to lose the war with cellphone contraband. Correctional administrators often blame the introduction of contraband on external forces and view it as a problem in need of external regulation, hence the development of tougher laws and regulatory policies to address this issue. This study, however, demonstrates that the unwillingness of these administrators to reflect on

internal contributors will continue to diminish their ability eradicate this problem. Rather than seeking out external contributors, this study indicates the need for reform of internal practices in order to recalibrate the climate so that policy and practice are in alignment. Policies are only as good as the agencies who reinforce them and based on the data provided in this study, policy reinforcement is a central issue in contraband introduction according to the people who are directly impacted by it. Correctional departments across the country have some form of policy that directly deals with contraband introduction; however, it is unlikely that poor reinforcement is characteristic of only one or two of these departments. And with an increase in public attention focused on criminal justice reform, some community shareholders believe cellphones in correctional environments aid in increased transparency as well as insight into conditions and treatment of individuals within these institutions. As a result, there are some who believe cellphones in prison serve some beneficent purpose and should not be completely restricted. This line of thought further substantiates the need for correctional researchers to expand the body of knowledge centered around the dangers of cellphone contraband introduction within correctional facilities. Similarly, it is imperative that departments work to ensure their policies are guided by this research and are fully reinforced without exception because inconsistencies in punishment detract from the significance of the behavior as well as the virtue of the organization. Additionally, this study further supports the basic tenants of ethical climate theory by adding to the available body of climate literature within correctional organizations. Conducting correctional research from a climate-based theoretical foundation allows for the application of this theoretical foundation in the

exploration of other areas within correctional research. Similarly, climate-based correctional research also provides for deeper exploration into other forms of correctional deviance that may not have been explored with consideration for the role of organizational norms.

Conclusion

Corrections officers are viewed as gatekeepers and protectors by the community, sheltering law-abiding citizens from those who violate societal norms. This image becomes tarnished each time an officer is exposed for introducing contraband into an institution. Before this behavior becomes the norm rather than the exception, it is imperative that measures are taken to decrease the occurrence. By exploring the perceptions of those who have been impacted by contraband introduction, this study expounds upon the existing body of literature to provide greater depth and clarity for researchers, administrators, and policy developers alike.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Questions:

1. How long have you worked as a P.O.S.T certified correctional officer and what is your rank?

2. What familiarity do you have with the prison contraband market?

3. Are you aware of a current contraband market within your facility?

4. How important are cellphones to the prison contraband market?

5. How likely are officers to report suspected or confirmed contraband introduction by other officers?

6. How likely are you to report potential contraband introduction by other officers in your facility?

7. In your experience, have officers been treated differently for reporting cellphone contraband introduction by other officers?

8. What factors influence your decision to report or not report this behavior by fellow officers?

9. Generally speaking, what factors do you believe deter people from being forthcoming with information regarding cellphone contraband introduction by officers?

10. How likely are officers to report suspected or confirmed contraband introduction by anyone?

11. How likely are you to report potential contraband introduction into your facility by any staff?

12. What factors influence your decision to report or not report this behavior by other non-security staff members?