2023

An Examination of the Impact of Police Chaplain Programs and Spirituality on Police Officers' Mental Health

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

An Examination of the Impact of Police Chaplain Programs and Spirituality on Police

Officers' Mental Health

by

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MA, Walden University, 2020

MS, Texas Southern University, 2018

BS, Luther Rice Seminary, 2015

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

February 2023

Abstract

Spirituality has been a fundamental aspect of treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in many officers. PTSD affects a high percentage of officers and many of whom live a highly stressful and traumatic life even outside of work. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. The research question asked how a police chaplain program and spirituality impacted police officers. This study's theoretical framework was Pargament's theory. Qualitative research with a narrative analysis design was chosen to collect data from semi-structured interviews. The 10 participants, including six senior police personnel and four chaplains, belonged either to the clergy or to senior police personnel, had at least 10 years of positive experience, had impeccable professional records and accomplishments, and had experience with traumatized police officers and participation in different programs of spiritual nature or similar measures of therapy. An inductive, thematic procedure was used to find three themes: Law enforcement is a stressful occupation in which officers may suffer from PTSD. Spirituality is associated with PTSD prevention and positive coping. Chaplain programs support spirituality and are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health. The findings provide an understanding of how the police may use police chaplain programs and spirituality to engage in self-care and ultimately provide better services to the community they serve, resulting in positive social change.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The topic of this study was an examination of the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. I addressed the problem of how a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers. The main problem addressed was the following: What programs and spirituality methods could improve the mental health of police officers? This is significant because police officers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental illnesses have increased. Therefore, there is a need to answer the research question of whether and how a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers to correct or improve that problem.

Additionally, I used Pargament's (1997) theory as a theoretical framework for this study. Furthermore, I used the creative methods research methods video open and detailed interviews with clergy and senior police staff to determine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. The potential implications of the study include the development and increased application of police chaplain programs and spiritual practices, which might help improve police officers' mental health.

The major sections of this chapter include a background of the study, as well as the gap in knowledge in the topic of improving mental health of police officers through a police chaplain program that this study will address. This chapter also includes the problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, and frameworks that will be used in this study. The nature of the study, definition of key terms or constructs, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations will also be included in this

chapter. This chapter will conclude with the significance of the research and a summary of the main points of this chapter.

Background

Almost every police officer faces a challenging situation that affects his or her mental health. Each challenging situation is associated with a certain kind of mental trauma, negatively affecting their mental health status. In turn, this can lead to the development of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and the development of other mental health illnesses. Furthermore, such trauma may negatively affect the state of their family, communication with other people, and the performance of professional duties. Hence, mental health is significant in the professional and personal life of a police officer. Thus, a problem for developing specific measures aimed at improving police officers' mental health arises.

It is essential to prevent possible critical conditions such as depression, suicidal moods, and violence. According to Lusk et al. (2018), military veterans' spiritual/religious beliefs may positively impact their mental health. Consequently, many researchers suggest using spiritual practices to improve individuals' mental health, including militaries and police officers. According to Clifton et al. (2018), police officers find themselves in altercations that elevate their stress levels, which in turn impact their ability to respond to situations appropriately. Consequently, the public accuses the police of exhibiting insensitivity, as well as of being unaccountable. Furthermore, in another research, Roz and Raval (2017) showed that many police officers are subject to many job-associated stressors, making occupational stress a significant concern. According to

Robinson (2019), interacting with the public regularly and the absence of complete control over their surroundings put the police officers at risk of stress. Furthermore, the police are always exposed to the constant danger of the job and respond to distress calls, administrative requirements, caseloads, and police culture. Consequently, the law needs spiritual guidance since it can provide them with a mechanism of handling the stressors they face. Therefore, there is a need to study the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on the potential health of police officers. This study focused on a current issue that had affected both the law and society in general. Moreover, the study contributed to the existing literature on police spirituality and outcomes.

Occupational stress usually leads to adverse work outcomes. According to Robinson (2019), the police report a negative association between occupational stress and unfavorable policing outcomes, including poor task performance and different health problems. However, in their research, Santa et al. (2018) noted that police officers did not perceive all stressors within their environments as harmful, given that they might have incentivized them into taking the policing job. Similarly, police officers who get encouragement from their peers consider that their jobs are not demanding or stressful. Nonetheless, Pandya (2017) indicated that stressors pose adverse effects on police officers. Therefore, it is imperative to initiate effective measures to address them.

Various measures are proposed and considered effective in addressing stress. According to Pandya (2017), spirituality is recognized as a significant resource in managing stress-related problems. Moreover, Shaw et al. (2016) indicated that spirituality reflects a state of mind, which offers individuals a specific meaning or direction.

Consequently, spirituality provides a formula that law enforcers could invoke in approaching their work. Against this backdrop, policing or law enforcement has an element of spirituality given that police officers are exposed to different risks while discharging their duties.

As found in extant literature, conversations about the police and the quest to improve their services are almost always focused on their training and operations outcomes. There have always been discussions over the police's necessity, mostly because they are more involved in dealing with mental health issues. In terms of police operations, they are almost always attributed to the culture within the policing environment, and the training the officers receive, or lack thereof, and in some cases, prejudice (Beauchamp, 2020). While these have been severe issues, not much, at least not in the public sphere, is spoken about the actual mental health issues that the police officers face due to doing their job. Further, even in situations where this has been explored, previous literature has shown that there is a general lack of consistent and effective solutions for alleviating the mental health issues faced by police officers.

Overall, there are many indicators that police officers suffer from mental health issues that should be the focus of intervention practices. A considerable percentage of police officers have reported mental health issues like PTSD and depression and have reported symptoms like suicide ideation and the tendency for self-harm. This implies that there is a need for interventions that improve their coping abilities. Religious coping is one of the healthiest options, mainly as conceptualized through the Pargament's (1997) theory.

Despite playing an essential role in society, the police force experiences numerous challenges that undermine its effectiveness. Efforts to handle different work-related challenges, including stress that affect the police, have suggested that programs, such as chaplaincy and spirituality, may play an important role. Consequently, it is imperative to research to explain these concerns. This study is primarily needed to improve police officers' mental health by educating them, utilizing, and developing chaplain programs and spirituality. This study is also required for the criminal justice system, as it can positively impact law enforcement's work. Again, this study's outcomes can be helpful to utilize spiritual practices and programs in other organizations.

Problem Statement

The research problem that this study aimed to address is that police officers suffer an alarmingly high prevalence of mental health issues. According to Frank et al. (2017), a very stressful work environment poses both short- and long-term effects. Police officers often encounter work-related stress, which affects their health (both mental and physical), job performance, and personal relationships (Frank et al., 2017; Robinson, 2019). As Robinson (2019) indicated, police officers experience elevated levels of behavioral, physical, and mental problems if compared to the general population. For example, Robinson established that within the United States, the occupational death rate among police officers was nearly thrice that of the public workers. Moreover, police officers were at a higher risk of committing suicide than their counterparts in other related jobs (Robinson, 2019).

Furthermore, in their investigation, Tuttle et al. (2018) stated that suicide rates stood at 17 individuals for every 100,000 among police officers, which is a stark contrast to 11 people for every 100,000 in the case of the general population. The researchers further indicated that suicide rates were higher for small police departments given case overload and working within thin budgets. Although chaplaincy programs could offer spiritual help, Moran (2017) observed that the police culture that places minimal emphasis on spirituality negates the approach's effectiveness. According to Moran, the problem is associated with the absence of a conceptual framework that could define spirituality's role and nature in policing matters. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop a clear understanding and an essential meaning of spirituality based on the police force's experiences and interpretations.

The main problem addressed was the following: What programs and spirituality methods can improve the mental health of police officers? The research question addressed the issue of how a police chaplain program and spirituality had impacted police officers. According to Garcia-Irons (2018), this problem is relevant because between 7% to 19% of police officers have symptoms of PTSD and other mental health diseases. This problem area needed to be addressed to improve mental health and police officers' life satisfaction (Lusk et al., 2018; Robinson, 2019). This problem built on the previous research on the impact of spiritual methods and practices on patients' mental health with various mental illnesses (Frank et al., 2017; Smith-MacDonald et al., 2017). The research problem focused on solving the current gap that the research did not address the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. From this research, I aimed to discover the effectiveness of spirituality methods, including police chaplain programs, in addressing police officers' mental health problems. A direct link occurred between the problem and purpose since the study's purpose solved the research problem. Also, the purpose of the study addressed the research question.

I explored the police officers' perceptions concerning the role of chaplaincy and spirituality in the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities, which was the phenomenon of interest in this research. Moreover, the paper considered taking a broader perspective in addressing the phenomenon of spirituality to generate results to inform how chaplaincy and spirituality might help police officers to overcome various issues, including adversity, stress, and work-related challenges.

Research Question

The research question for this qualitative study was the following: How does a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers?

Theoretical and/or Conceptual Framework for the Study

Theoretical Foundation

This study's theoretical framework was based on Pargament's (1997) theory. Pargament (1997) posited that spiritual care could help individuals gain control, discover meaning in life, achieve a state of comfort, and attain closeness with other people, thereby changing the experience positively (Xu, 2016). This theory and ideas of Sherman

et al. (2018) regarding the role of religion and spirituality to manage PTSD prompted the research question of that study. Therefore, Pargament's (1997) theory was related to the research question as it examined how a police chaplain program and spirituality affected police officers.

Conceptual Framework

Fry's model of spiritual leadership was also used as a framework to complement Pargament's (1997) theory. Fry's spiritual leadership theory is traceable to Fairholm's spiritual phrase of leadership (Fry et al., 2017). The thesis described how people accomplish their spiritual needs while at work. Based on the theory, spiritual direction encompasses attitudes, values, and behaviors essential for intrinsically motivating oneself and colleagues to possess a sense of spiritual survival using the membership. The model underscores the significance of spiritual leadership on both individual and group outcomes, thus underscoring its relevance to this research on police officers' spirituality through a police chaplain program.

The relevance of Fry's spiritual leadership theory to workplace research is high. This is exemplified in many studies that have referenced the idea of explaining spirituality and leadership (Klaus & Fernando, 2016). Initially, the theory comprised four attributes: vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, and spiritual well-being. Later, the model was revised to include mindfulness/inner life and life satisfaction (Fry et al., 2017). Based on the theory, different ways aimed at naturally stimulating employees in the workplace through the experience of spirituality in striving to achieve meaningful work and attaining more significant levels of job satisfaction have been suggested. Thus, the

spiritual leadership theory was an appropriate model for exploring how police officers could create a meaningful vision grounded on spiritual calling, which formed the basis for superior levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and increased overall job performance.

Nature of the Study

The examination of spirituality and its impact was the fundamental concept of this study. The qualitative research guided the research design because it relied on the previous data and analysis and used qualitative methods as an interview. The value of qualitative research was that it was more open to participants and could build a detailed picture of the study. Qualitative research was chosen to conduct available interviews with police officers to analyze and rely on these data. The phenomenon being investigated was police officers' mental health. The data were collected from police clergy and senior police staff to determine police chaplain programs and spirituality's impact on police officers' mental health. The narrative analysis approach was used to analyze the interviews.

Definitions

The present study has central concepts that have the following definitions for the purposes of this study:

Mental health: Mental health refers to the psychological, emotional, and social well-being of a person.

Mental illness: Mental illness is a cognitive or behavioral pattern that leads to impaired functioning and distress.

Police chaplain programs: Police chaplain programs imply the provision of spiritual support and promising practices to police officers and their families.

Post-traumatic stress disorder: Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder resulting from exposure to one or more traumatic events. The disorder is characterized by intrusive memories of the event, avoidance of memories of the event, negative thoughts and mood related to the event, duration of these symptoms for at least one month, and significant severity (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

Spirituality: Spirituality, broadly, refers to "lifestyles and practices that embody a vision of human existence and of how the human spirit is to achieve its full potential…embrac[ing] an aspirational approach to the meaning and conduct of human life" (Sheldrake, 2012, p. 1).

Assumptions

The author assumed a difference between spiritual survival and chaplaincy practices and that there was a massive gap in the spiritual training of the current police curriculum. These assumptions were necessary for the study's context since they connected with the research question and required additional research. The following additional assumptions were made.

- Police officers participating in different types of investigation were aware of the meaning and practice of spirituality.

- Police officers possessed an inherent ability to be spiritual regardless of their religion or belief system.

- Respondents' responses to study prompts would remain truthful and directly represent police officers' spiritual experiences and accounts.

Scope and Delimitations

The study covered the chaplain programs' examination, their features, and effectiveness and explored spirituality and spiritual practices to discover their positive impact on police officers' mental health. I included the interviews with the police clergy and senior police staff to determine the effect of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. My study's transferability was that its findings could be applied to utilize and develop chaplain programs and spiritual practices to improve police officers' mental health status in all police departments in America.

For the delimitations of this research, the study excluded retired officers from participation in the research. Similarly, the study did not include friends, family members, or police officers' close colleagues to overcome potential bias. The study limited itself to the active police personnel given the absence of clarity on the variability of police officers' responses. Also, examining the police psychologist's work and their treatment of the police officers' mental health illnesses was left out in the research. This choice was because this research focused not on "traditional" medical help and its effectiveness but on the impact of spirituality and chaplain programs. Therefore, the study did not cover the "traditional" medical treatment and work of psychologists and psychiatrists and their effects on police officers' mental health.

Limitations

The main limitation of my study was the gap in the research literature regarding the research question. Additionally, there were some possible biases in the research participants' views and opinions—clergy and senior police staff. Therefore, I found it necessary to interview the police officers, who utilized spirituality practices and "treatment" and police chaplain methods, to address the preferences. Also, I explained the benefits of that research's unbiased outcomes to reduce the impact of limitations. The study did not apply "online sampling" to every police department to determine the police officers' current mental health status and compare it before and after utilizing police chaplain programs and spirituality. I found it a challenge to choose the "right" interview questions for the respondents to reveal the effects of the police chaplain programs and spirituality.

Conducting such research required building trust with respondents. In the case of the police force, building trust with the considered outsiders was difficult. Moreover, matters of spirituality were personal. The implication was that study participant might not be prepared to share their spirituality as they would perceive it as a sensitive topic. I assured respondents that their responses were only intended to help in research to overcome the challenge of trust. The answers were only used to assist in knowledge creation rather than being used for other purposes. Furthermore, the information shared was used in confidence. Thus, respondents were not exposed to any risks or information disclosure.

Significance

The study may fill the gap in the impact of spirituality on law enforcement officers' well-being and indicate effective ways to improve their mental health status. This study's benefit is related to the improvement of law enforcement's mental health, which will enhance the quality of their work and the criminal justice system. Additionally, the study can positively affect society since spirituality and spiritual practices can improve other people's mental health.

Across many societies, including the United States, public outcry through protests continues to justify the need for police reforms (Clifton et al., 2018). In the assessment of observers such as Clifton et al. (2018), the officers who become involved in discipline cases might have faced high levels of stress that have negatively impacted their ability to discharge their duties amicably. Therefore, carrying out the study of exploring the effect of spirituality on police outcomes provides a glimpse of how the police may reform themselves to offer responsive services to the community. The study is also likely to enhance the knowledge of spiritual matters within the police service.

In their study, Chopko et al. (2016) implied that low levels or the absence of spirituality in policing could explain police officers' maladjustment behaviors. Essentially, individuals in charge of law enforcement need to learn additional avenues for assisting officers in handling their frustrations and stress that come with police work. In this regard, the study's findings add to the existing knowledge of and literature on criminal justice and police spirituality. Furthermore, the task is likely to contribute to other disciplines, given law enforcement's interconnected nature with other fields. In this

regard, public policy and general administration and security may be influenced by this study.

Summary

The main points of the chapter included a background of the problem and the gap in knowledge that this study aimed to address. This chapter also discusses the problem statement, purpose of the study, and the main research question that guided this study. This chapter underscored the use of the frameworks for this study, outlining the relevance of Pargament's (1997) theory and Fry's model of spiritual leadership for this qualitative research. The assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study were also discussed in this chapter.

The given study examined the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. I discovered the effectiveness of spirituality methods, including police chaplain programs, in addressing police officers' mental health problems. There was a direct link between the problem and a purpose since its purpose was to solve the research problem. Also, the purpose of the study addressed the research question.

The study also explored the police officers' perceptions concerning the role of chaplaincy and spirituality in the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities. Moreover, the paper considered taking a broader perspective in addressing the phenomenon of spirituality to generate results that would inform how chaplaincy and spirituality might help police officers to overcome various issues, including adversity, stress, and work-related challenges. The latter might become barriers

to well-being, mental health, and efficiency in police officers after traumatizing experience and, thus, need constructive solutions.

       The next chapter, Chapter 2, addresses the current literature that establishes the relevance of the problem. This includes in-depth discussions of studies related to the constructs of interest, as well as methods that are consistent with the scope of this qualitative study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

I addressed the research problem of police officers suffering an alarmingly high prevalence of mental health issues. Garcia-Irons (2018) found that between 7% and 19% of police officers exhibit symptoms of PTSD and other mental illnesses. With such high numbers, this problem should be addressed to improve police officers' mental health and life satisfaction (Garcia-Irons, 2018; Lusk et al., 2018). Over the years, various researchers have suggested different possible solutions (Lusk et al., 2018). I aimed to plug the research gap on police chaplain systems' effectiveness and programs on police spirituality to solve mental health issues. As such, researchers focused on spirituality (Smith-MacDonald et.a., 2017). This research focused on the efficacy of the chaplaincy system.

This current literature includes topics relevant to the problem of prevailing mental health problems among police officers. This current literature also examines the effectiveness of spirituality methods in addressing mental health problems, as well as the causes of mental health issues and barriers to care. This literature review section focuses on three approaches to the literature review. First, the focus is on the literature reviewed to determine the theoretical course and framework. Secondly, the process is on the literature reviewed to determine the gap in the literature, with the third section focusing on the literature reviewed to determine the appropriate methodology for the area. It starts with an outline of the research aims and problem statement, followed by a brief overview

of the literature search strategy. It then tackles the three sections, beginning with the theoretical framework and a review of the related research.

Literature Search Strategy

Identifying a clear strategy for literature is critical because it helps in relevant articles to explore the literature. Systematic searching for literature is essential in the literature review (Cooper et al., 2018). I focused the search strategy, in this case, on two methods or methodologies. The first was a direct search with keywords on Google's search engine, which produced various articles and publications. The general focus here was on guidance publications and published research studies. The guidance publications included publications from such reputable organizations as the WHO and industry websites and databases like Medscape and data collection and aggregation websites like our world in data.

Several factors were considered in determining which published articles to involve in the review. First, they must have been published articles within the past seven years, with the extended period deemed necessary to further capture trends in the subject matter to contextualize the research and literature gap further. Secondly, the published research papers must have been paper peer-reviewed journals. The second method for searching for literature on the subject was the pearl growing method. This strategy uses citations and sources already found to look for further publications on the subject matter at hand (Schlosser et al., 2006). This technique resulted in older articles than the original scope of 5 years but provided useful insight on the subject.

The databases searched here included Psychiatry Online, PubMed, PTSDpubs, PsycINFO, PsycArticles, and the Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. The Journals included The British Medical Journal, Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies, Archives of Suicide Research, the British Journal of Social Work, Military Medicine, Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, the JAMA Network, among others. Keywords and keyword combinations were as follows:

1. *Theory: mental health, police, theoretical perspectives*

2. *Methodology: spirituality research methods*

3. *Literature gap: police mental health, police chaplaincy programs, spirituality, and mental health*

Given that a considerable part of this research process was based on finding research and literature gaps in the issues of mental health and how spirituality might help in alleviating the problems, it was expected that in some cases, there would be a general lack of current research. I used several strategies, such as expanding the date range up to 7 years rather than the past 5 years. Depending on the old information's usefulness, old publications, dissertations, and conference proceedings were not necessarily individually mentioned. Instead, there was no current research on the subject matter, and the only information strands that existed were from research done decades ago. Finally, multiple old research articles were eliminated as it would likely have not added any value, or the weaknesses of the study, including the age, made it obsolete. Judgment on which category the old research articles fell was subjective on my part and was based on such factors as perceived usefulness, fit with the current research paper/literature review or

theoretical perspective being prepared, and the weaknesses identified by the actual researchers at the time of the publication.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical perspective used was Pargament's (1997) religious theory. This theory posits that individuals' orientation in terms of their global religiousness might translate to specific religious beliefs and practices. These beliefs would, in turn, be directly related to the health outcomes and well-being measures of these individuals (Pargament, 1997). Pargament (1997) believed that there was a strong link between religion and well-being. This connection could effectively be leveraged to help improve various individuals' coping abilities, especially those likely to be found in stressful situations like police officers. It was based on the belief in the positive link between religion and healthcare.

Historically, there has been a link between well-being and religiosity/spirituality has been one that existed across many cultures. Various historical accounts point to humans, both collectively and individually, turning to supernatural forces to intervene on their behalf when faced with ill-health, and problems that affect their health, including famine, wars, and disease. In the modern world, most people tend to turn to religion when faced will ill-health (Cummings & Pargament, 2010). However, formally, Pargament (1997) alleged a link between religion, health, and well-being. This link then provides individuals with more vital coping systems and well-being.

There are seven essential elements or features that provide an adequate description of the Pargament (1997) theory. First, the theory believes religion to be the

process of searching for significance in sacred ways, with spirituality and its holy nature seen as an essential element of faith. Further, spirituality is seen as beyond religion and as a vital life dimension (Pargament, 1997). Pargament (1997) viewed spirituality as the search for significance during times of stress. The theory posits that religion is involved in coping because of religion's relative availability and because it is compelling (Pargament et al., 2001).

The Pargament (1997, 2007) theory provides a comprehensive overview of ideas that are not hard to describe, including spirituality and religion. In one of the earliest summaries of the Pargament (1997) theory, Pargament introduced the approach, presenting it as a psychology of the religion of coping. Granted, the idea of religion and coping was not necessarily new, even at this theory's publication. However, Pargament provided one of the first formal links between the field of psychology and religion. The book offers a rationale for the study of religious coping as a field of psychology. More importantly, it provides a concrete analysis and definition of the various elements of religion like spirituality, religious pathways, and destinations and how they relate to the larger coping concept. It was in this book that Pargament established the value of the Pargament theory. Pargament also analyzed the many ways through which religion and coping intertwine through the various coping mechanisms. Finally, Pargament also provides the theory's evaluative and practical implications, making this book an incredibly impersonal and effective presentation of the link between religions and coping.

Religion does not act only as a defensive mechanism but proactively helps individuals cope with situations (Pargament & Ano, 2004). Religion transforms five

functions: it helps individuals discover meaning in life, gain control of their mental state, get closer and more comfortable with God, achieving closeness to others, and transform life (Pargament et al., 2000). Religion is a conservational force, helping individuals maintain meaning and connection during a time of crisis. Religious coping mechanisms can be positive or negative. Religion intervenes in stressors through the combined religious moderator-deterrent model. As stress levels rise, religious coping increasingly protects religious people from the harms of stress.

Xu (2016) built on Pargament (1997) and in various subsequent publications, applying the theory to social work. Spirituality, though subjective, forms a significant empirical and theoretical basis for social work. According to Xu (2016), the Pargament (1997) theory of religious coping is essential, especially in a spiritually sensitive environment. Xu (2016) started with an explanation of the value of spiritually sensitive social work, which is presented as an element of social work's holistic nature. Even though social work acknowledges the importance of the holistic approach and spirituality in this approach, the actual implementation has been difficult without a proper understanding of religion and its link to coping at a much broader, theoretical level. Xu used the Pargament (1997) theory as a theoretical perspective to provide a fuller and more impartial experience of religious coping; thus, its connection to social work. Social workers can use the Pargament theory practically in spiritually sensitive social work concerning engagement, assessment, and intervention to establish this link.

Several researchers have used the Pargament (1997) theory in the same way as used in this paper. For instance, Zavala and Curry (2018) investigated religion's

effectiveness in helping police officers cope with alcohol consumption issues. Zavala and Curry provided the most direct comparison because of focusing on police officers (the subject of the current research paper) and alcohol abuse. This issue can escalate to a mental health issue in the form of alcohol abuse disorder. The researchers tackled alcohol abuse disorder identified as a common problem among the police (Zavala & Curry, 2018). The Pargament (1997) theory then becomes a crucial theoretical perspective in understanding coping. In a doctoral dissertation, Robinson (2019) also used the Pargament (1997) theory, investigating police officer perception of spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. I used the spiritual leadership theory developed using the elements and ideas of the Pargament theory (Robinson, 2019). Police officers operate in an environment with a considerable number of stressors. In such an environment, coping then becomes an essential element of their well-being and success on the job.

I chose the Pargament (1997) theory because of its link to mental illness, health outcomes, and coping, which were the significant areas of focus for the research. It is a theory that looks at religious managing in an impartial and empirically driven way, providing a strong basis for its use as a theoretical perspective in investigating the effects of religion on police officers' coping mechanisms, given the nature of their jobs. Further, the theory also examines religious coping deeply, measuring and reviewing it in an actual context that goes much further than the simplistic measures of frequency of participation in religious activity.

The selected theory had a direct relationship between the topic and the research question. Through the research question, I focused on mental health issues, health outcomes, and coping within police officers' work. The specific focus was on the effectiveness of the police chaplaincy program in improving spirituality. The first step was to link spirituality to coping, which was the core component of the Pargament (1997) theory. Understanding religion and coping then provided a strong basis for the knowledge of the chaplaincy program's elements in terms of its ability to improve the ability to cope with stressors.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

This research followed the following three themes. First, I found it important to examine the prevalence of mental health issues for police, as well as understanding most stress for the police was essential. It provides the overall rationale for the research and targets this demographic with interventions that focus on coping, which has shown little consensus. The research on stressors for the police is varied and complex. On the one hand, a strand of research believes that the police do not necessarily experience more stress than others. Police may be more desensitized and depersonalized than other demographics. On the other hand, recent surveys have pointed out that a significant portion of the police experiences high levels of stress and symptoms. Understanding this finding is an essential foundational first step in the research.

Causes of mental health issues and barriers to care: understanding and establishing the need for and importance of coping mechanisms call for understanding the causes of these mental health issues. These stressors would need a coping mechanism to

come from the work environment but might be worsened by different topics. First, the

likelihood of seeking care, the availability of said care, and the quality of the

consideration when it is aimed are some of the issues to be explored. One must also look

at whether institutional and cultural circumstances support this care's seeking and any

other potential barriers to care.

Religion, spirituality and coping for police against mental health issues: having

established the need for coping mechanisms and the reasons why this need exists, the

next step in literature review would be to find the link between religion and coping, and

how this can then be applied, through the conclusions of the Pargament (1997) theory,

into the police chaplaincy program.

Prevalence of Stressors for Police Officer

Several researchers have investigated the prevalence of mental health issues for

the police. Surprisingly, over time, there have been conflicting results in this regard.

Generally, mental health is one of the biggest problems the world over. According to the

World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), depression, one of the most common mental

health afflictions, affects over 264 million people worldwide, with more women affected

here than men. Other prevalent mental health issues include bipolar disorder, affecting

over 45 million people worldwide; schizophrenia, affecting 20 million people worldwide;

and dementia, affecting approximately 50 million people (WHO, 2019). The

determinants of mental health issues include individual attributes, such as managing one's

thoughts, interactions, behaviors, emotions, and cultural, political, economic, and social

issues. Others have national policies, standards of living: social protection, community

support, and the effect of working conditions (WHO, 2019).

Further, health systems are in a position where they have not yet responded

adequately to the burden of mental health disorders. Thus, the gap between the need for

mental health treatment and its provision is enormous, especially in low- and middle-

income countries and communities. According to the WHO (2019), somewhere between

76% and 85% of people with mental health issues never receive treatment of any kind for

their disorders. Those that can access these mental health services do not necessarily

receive the highest quality of care possible (WHO, 2019). Mental health is one of the

most significant issues that the world faces today, and with inadequate resources to solve

it, it is little wonder that the police are one of the most affected demographics.

Many researchers have found that police officers report high levels of mental

health issues. For instance, according to recent surveys done in one large police force in

Dallas, Texas, over 26% of police officers screened positive for such mental health issues

as depression, anxiety, and PTSD, with many others exhibiting such symptoms as suicide

ideation or the tendency towards self-harm (Anderson, 2020). This was an extensive

survey that showed a wide range of mental health issues for police officers. For instance,

the research revealed that mental illness rates were high, especially among female police

officers who were divorced, widowed, or separated, or had some military experience.

Anderson (2020) also revealed some reasons behind the issues with reporting. For

instance, the study showed that police officers' concerns with confidentiality and stigma

might prevent them from seeking treatment (Anderson, 2020). Therefore, there is a need

to identify police officers with psychiatric problems and connect them with the most

appropriate care and resources that improve their resilience and coping levels, especially

given the nature of their jobs.

Jetelina et al. (2020) also investigated the prevalence of mental health issues

among the police and their healthcare use. The results showed a high prevalence of

mental health issues among this population; however, there was a low likelihood of them

accessing care. These include the inability to identify when they were experiencing

mental health issues, concerns about confidentiality levels, the belief that the

psychologists available to them could not relate to their occupational problems, and

stigma issues. There was a general belief that officers who would seek help for mental

health issues might not be fit for duty.

Causes of Mental Health Issues and Barriers to Care

Having established the prevalence of mental health among police officers, this

theme's research focuses on literature that explores why. Violanti et al. (2017) also

examined the sources of stressors and health for police officers. This research goes much

deeper than only listing the sources of stress for the police. It divides police stressors into

two categories, those that come from job content, including such issues as work

schedules, long shift workers, court work, threats to their physical and psychological

health, and various traumatic events. The second category of stressors is those that come

from the job context of the organizational stressors. These are the stressors related to the

organizational behavior that then interact to produce stress, including workplace relations

and bureaucracy (Violanti et al., 2017). These results show an empirical link between

workplace situations and stressors and the need for investment into resources and mechanisms to help police officers cope with these different categories of stressors.

Edwards and Kotera (2020) also identified police work as risky regarding its likelihood to cause several mental health conditions for the police officers in the line of duty. It further provides contextual clues, pointing to such issues as high and increasing sickness levels and the general reduction of police officer numbers. Therefore, leaders should push for mental health treatment and improve coping mechanisms. Edwards and Kotera explored the various sources of institutional negativity and stigma within the police force regarding mental ill-health. The researchers found several barriers to care for the police officers, including police culture, the stigma that comes from mental illness, and the fear of disclosure of mental illness.

Further, these barriers are difficult to break (Edwards & Kotera, 2020). The results show that police officers' police culture and attitudes towards mental health might contribute to some of the causes of psychological illness, rather than particularly the nature of the job. Therefore, there should be an increased level of education and awareness of mental health issues.

Police officers and other law enforcement officers do an inherently stressful job, often with little personal or institutional focus on their mental health. The findings suggest a high presence of psychological disorders. Johnson (2016) found that such issues as the levels of unit cohesiveness and the levels of support from the rest of the unit might significantly impact those who have mental health issues. In the context of this research, this support might come in the form of the police chaplaincy program. Police

chaplaincy offers police officers the chance to take advantage of religion and spirituality as a coping mechanism for stress.

Demou et al. (2020) started from the standpoint that police work can be stressful and demanding. These levels of stress and the demands of the job can end up impacting employee well-being. In this case, the term employee refers to the actual police officers and the staff (Demou et al., 2020). Demou et al. (2020) attempted to understand the nature of the mental health issues and the mental health risk factors faced by police officers and Scotland's support staff. Demou et al. focused on interviews with various stakeholders, most of whom were police superintendents, individuals who, by implication, have served in the police force for an extended period. The results indicate that the police officer's job is full of stressors, resulting from poor working hours, leadership approached the workload and the organizational culture. Some suggested solutions included training, counseling, and changes in the workplace environment (Demou et al., 2020). There is space for such interventions as religion and spirituality to improve resilience. Interventions may target the workplace environment for changes, reducing mental health issues and improving police officers' ability to cope with stressors.

In a dissertation about law enforcement officers' mental health-seeking behaviors, Haecker (2017) investigated trends in help-seeking behaviors by evaluating information gathered from counselors, clinicians, peer groups, and chaplains. The mention of chaplains is essential, especially considering the research context. Even resilience and coping built from religion and spirituality count as health-seeking behavior and are

subject to barriers. Haecker (2017) considered the issue from the counselors' viewpoint and not the police officers themselves. This diversity in perspectives offers essential insight in ways that may improve the chaplaincy program's effectiveness.

Religion, Spirituality, and Coping for Police Against Mental Health Issues

Understanding the barriers to access to mental healthcare services for the police is vital for several reasons. First, it establishes the need for a coping mechanism, especially considering the nature of police work. Coping then becomes a proactive way to deal with these stresses in the daily lives of the police. Secondly, it establishes the chaplaincy program's need in law enforcement, given that religion and spirituality have been identified as a potential facilitator of coping with stressful situations and perceived stress. Finally, it offers pointers on how to improve access to this chaplaincy program once it has been established to improve its overall effectiveness within the context of the policing culture and policy environment.

The environment in which police officers work and live, right after their training, broadly defines their stress level and their limited ability to seek help or treatment for their mental health conditions. Police officers are supposed to and even, in many ways, are trained to be perfect. Their training tunes them for perfection not only among themselves but also among the public. It is believed that law enforcers' general attitude is that they do not have any personal or work-related problems; instead, they are considered individuals who do not suffer from any work-related issues, especially mental health issues (Berg et al., 2006). A lot of attitudes that police officers exhibit in the workplace result from the training approaches and other people's expectations instilled in them.

According to White et al. (2015), law enforcement mentality can be compared to that of a warrior since they exhibit and value resilience, strength, and courage. Nevertheless, law enforcement undergo a rigorous training program and hiring process; they learn that any sign of weakness (real or perceived) may jeopardize their careers. Any perception of them as people losing control that alludes to mental health issues could seriously affect their careers.

The police profession is male dominated, with them being often encouraged to exhibit traditional male traits. Training changes individuals while striving to make them a part of the uniformed law enforcement team rather than develop them as individuals. During training, the personality and self-identity are broken down and rebuilt to fit into the desired image of an individual that displays aggression, self-reliance, independence, toughness, and a tendency to suppress any weakness signs. Therefore, the police persona can be easily interchangeable with that of an ideal male. Any deviations from the expected patterns of behavior are not welcome and might even be punished.

Furthermore, the role of the police officer stresses the need for selflessness. Police officers are held to a higher standard than other professions. They are expected to take care of their colleagues and partners and put themselves in jeopardy of a different kind, helping other people at the expense of their personal needs (Stanley et al., 2016). This attitude contributes to their belief that they should not necessarily seek assistance for themselves even if they need the help. The stress police officers are under based on other people's expectations significantly increased in the past few years. Societal changes, including raising awareness and pressure on police officers and a growing public

oversight with everyone being able to record them on phone cameras and access footage from their devices online, have increased the pressure officer's experience.

In the workplace, police culture regarding mental health issues contributes to the stigma of mental health and the health-seeking behaviors of police officers when faced with mental health issues. According to Bell and Eski (2015), police officers can sympathize with physical injuries such as leg breaks, but their mental health issues might not receive the same reaction. In law enforcement circles, mental health issues are not discussed openly, with physical ailments and afflictions being given more intensive responses. Further, officers generally shy away from any form of external help, which is often seen as a sign of weakness (Bell & Eski, 2015). Being perceived as weak is a problem in law enforcement circles, as there is always the feeling that other police officers cannot trust an individual seen as soft.

Various researchers have investigated the multitude of stressors that police officers face in the line of work. According to Dabney et al. (2013), police officers tend to face stressors from two general sources, occupational sources, and organizational sources. The occupational stressors emerge from the dangerous work that the police officers do in the workplace, including such circumstances as high-speed chases and shootings (Dabney et al., 2013). The organizational stressors come from the job's day-to-day aspects, including the department size, the rules, regulations, and procedures governing police work, rotating shifts, chain of command issues. In many cases, the sheer frequency of stress rather than the actual severity of the stress leads to depersonalization experiences, with available resources for the officer's adaptation significantly reduced

considering the demands of the job, leading to the officer breaking down because of stress (Berg et al., 2006).

Further, whether occupational or organizational, these stressors will often be unique to the various departments and positions. For instance, officers who work sex crimes suffer the most stress. According to Craun et al. (2014), the number of years spent studying these kinds of crimes is directly related to investigators' stress levels. Other investigators who suffer from high levels of stress investigate cases of online child pornography and child exploitation (Craun et al., 2014). The stressors are unique to their unique roles, and the more enormous organizational stressors they face compound to place them at a higher risk for dysfunction and psychological issues. Homicide investigators also experience high levels of stress due to their work's highly emotional nature, the time constraints and demands, and the unique tasks they must undergo in the process of doing their job (Dabney et al., 2013).

Two types of stigmas have generally been considered by law enforcement officers, public and self-stigma. Both types of stigmas are associated with a reduced likelihood to seek treatment and psychological help. Public stigma happens in situations where the public endorses the prejudice that certain groups stigmatized groups face. In this case, the image that police officers have and maintain in the general public's eyes. One way this image is built is through police-related media on television and various media sources (Franklin et al., 2019). The police officer's constructed image among the eyes of the public means that the public is likely to cosign any prejudice that they might face when they seek mental health treatment, which in this case would be perceived as

weakness and unlike a police officer. Self-stigma happens when the individuals who are part of the marginalized group internalize the stigma endorsed by the public. In this case, the police tend to internalize and begin believing the kinds of prejudice and judgment they face from the public. These types of stigmas contribute significantly to the reduced tendency to seek treatment for mental health issues (Karaffa & Koch, 2015). Both kinds of stigma also reduce police officers' tendency to even speak about mental health issues, lest they be seen as unreliable or weak and judged as unfit for the job.

The Hobfoll and Ford (2007) conservation of resources (COR) theory might be used to explain the stress that police officers undergo. It might be useful in describing how the burnout and emotional dissonance among police officers often lead to heightened anxiety. Theories of stress often look at stress due to the individual's appraisal of the stressful situation. However, the COR theory believes that pressure results from the environmental, social, and cultural issues the individual faces, not necessarily the individual's appraisal of the events around them. According to the COR theory, stress comes from the need for individuals to acquire and maintain their circumstances and ensure that they then distance themselves from threats that might risk these circumstances. COR believes that stress comes from an individual's inability, as a member of a larger group, to achieve the common goals towards which members of cultures strive (Hobfoll & Ford, 2007). The implication here is that stress is culturally determined, seeing as most people live or work in a shared social context, and therefore strive towards specific sets of shared resources or goals. Through experience or knowledge, individuals, as they continue to live within these social contexts, slowly

realize and recognize what they need to acquire and maintain that is essential to them, which then symbolizes, directly and indirectly, success in their local environment.

In the police's context and the stress that they experience, the COR theory believes that police officers work to preserve their position and place, both as members of the collective force and responsible for its image, and as individuals responsible for how they are viewed in the police force itself. Therefore, they must work to preserve this position; if they fail, they experience high levels of stress.

Summary and Conclusions

This literature review revealed the following three themes: the prevalence of mental health issues for the police, the sources of mental health issues and barriers to care, and use of religion, spirituality, and coping for police against mental health issues. I identified religion and spirituality as a potential facilitator of coping with stressful situations and perceived stress. However, it is unknown how religion and spirituality can help police officers cope with stressful situations and perceived stress. Therefore, there is a need to examine the impact of religion and spirituality as a proactive way to deal with these stresses in the daily lives of the police. I fill this gap in extant literature and extend knowledge in this discipline. I focused on examining the effect of a police chaplaincy program and spirituality as a facilitator of coping with stressful situations and perceived stress among police officers.

Chapter 3 provides details on the methodology for this qualitative research study, outlining the rationale of the research design. The following chapter also includes discussions on the methodology including participant selection logic, instrumentation, as

well as procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 3 also tackles issues of trustworthiness by outlining different and appropriate strategies to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and intra- and intercoder reliability. The following chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical procedures before presenting a summary of the main points of the chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. Although it was a topical issue, an examination of the literature revealed a considerable gap in the current knowledge; thus, a constructive and in-depth investigation was needed. I aimed to enhance mental health in police officers and improve their professional performance and positively impact society.

The present chapter contains the justification of the design and approach selection based on analysis of alternative ones. Therefore, interviews were the most relevant instrument to communicate with respondents since they did not limit their answers to simple yes or no in response to the statement and allowed me to clarify aspects that might appear vague or controversial during their dialogue. The online format was imperative because it did not interfere with the pandemic restrictions and permitted to conduct each interview easier and faster since there was no need to meet at a particular place.

Each participant was guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Informed consent was also a crucial part of the present research design. The information acquired during the research was used only for the present study purposes. The exploratory study was based on the course of secondary research available in Chapter 2. Finally, the present research results were developed into a holistic guide that aimed to feature how spiritual assistance and chaplain programs could improve the mental health and performance of police officers.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the present study's methodology and shows the selected

methods; their relevance and potential determine the study's outcomes; thus, its efficiency

in future practical use. This chapter deals with the identification of the research tradition,

approach, and design as well as their relation to the problem statement and purpose of the

study, the role of my process in the investigation, details on setting and sample selection,

the approach and stages of data collection and its consequent analysis. Moreover, the

present section describes issues of trustworthiness, ethical matters, and protection of

participants' rights. Data on the pilot study and presentation of the final research

outcomes are also provided in Chapter 3.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for this qualitative study was the following: How does a

police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers? The central phenomenon

of the study was police officers' mental health. In exploring this topic, I employed a

qualitative tradition of research. The study's selected research method was qualitative,

and this choice was justified by the nature, purpose of the study, and expected outcomes.

The reason for this choice was that I needed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the issue

in question and, subsequently, develop a range of guidelines and recommendations

targeted on the implementation of chaplain programs and spirituality practices for police

officers worldwide in the United States. To be more precise, the given research needed

answers concerning the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police

officers' mental health. To receive such data, I had to explore and understand the holistic

picture, with all the pros and cons, to develop a sound, credible, and reliable strategy for

incremental implementation of the programs above in regular police personnel practices. Thus, the guide should be evidence-based, effective, and universal in its practical applications. Furthermore, to do so, I needed enough detailed data possible to acquire via interviews. The selected research type was precious since it was open to participants and relied on the diversity of the data and itemized responses during the interviews. Therefore, I invited representatives of the clergy and senior police staff from two different settings.

Online interviews served as the effective means of acquiring information I needed to rely on the guide. Further, the problem statement implied a considerable gap in available knowledge in spirituality and chaplain programs' use to enhance police officers' health. The research design was expected to provide sufficiently detailed, credible, and high-quality data on the subject to expand the current knowledge. Therefore, a qualitative method was selected.

The qualitative tradition of research suggested diverse options for data acquisition. For instance, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, biography/history, ethnography, and narrative analysis approach. Phenomenology focuses on the description of what participants have in common in terms of experiencing a studied phenomenon. This approach sought to learn what the respondents can ascribe to the given phenomenon (Teherani et al., 2015), which was not what the current study needed. I aimed to focus not only on the respondents' previous experiences but also on negative implications, potential barriers, and challenges, as well as on expected outcomes and resources—both available and needed—to make the phenomenon work.

Biography and history were irrelevant to the present study as far as researchers used only when a particular personality, event, or epoch were studied and analyzed. A case study was also irrelevant since it implied in-depth insight into a specific case, whereas I strove to collect and analyze different experiences and visions to receive an objective and realistic picture. The same concerned ethnography. It was irrelevant because it provides terms for investigating a particular context's particular culture (see Teherani et al., 2015), while I intended to learn about practical implications and effectiveness of the acclaimed phenomenon.

The following two approaches were grounded theory and narrative analysis. The first one focused on the development of theories grounded in the study data. This was not a proper choice for the current study since it did not provide me with the necessary scale and depth. Moreover, there were no effective instruments for the acquisition of data required for practical use. Finally, the narrative analysis approach was relevant since the use of stories (e.g., Reissman, 2007) permitted both the scale and depth of the study needed. That is, the narrative analysis approach was selected as far as it provided information based on evidence and experience, and context. This process allowed me to learn stories of individuals to contribute to more individuals.

The exploratory study was not conducted as far as there was enough evidence in the current course of time to build the inquiry on, and the gaps in the currently available knowledge could lead to further research. Hence, the present study relied on the course of secondary research only. The research outcomes were developed into a holistic guide on spiritual assistance and chaplain programs for police officers. The focus included the

results of the study, their analysis, and inferences and a separate part of recommendations and guidelines on the improvement of police officers' health.

The selected approach provided an opportunity to delve deep into the studied matters and receive itemized information about prior experience and barriers, limitations, challenges, stereotypes, and other factors that undermined the efficiency of the highlighted spiritual programs for police officers. Therefore, the narrative research analysis that actualized using online interviews was selected for this investigation. The interview helped me receive answers to the posited questions effectively due to the following reasons: (a) The interview format did not limit the respondents in terms of details or range of experiences, recommendations, or insights; or (b) the interviewer welcomed each participant to leave feedback and any other details they deemed relevant to the topic but had not been included in the list of questions developed by me—in such a way, the maximal amount of data was collected, which was impossible with surveys or questionnaires; (c) I clarified any questionable or unclear aspects of respondents' answers if needed at once—in such a way, ambiguity and lack of clarity in the research outcomes were prevented, but which was impossible in surveys or questionnaires.

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher, I developed and conducted the study. I arranged and performed all the interviews and provided informational support for all the participants. Afterward, I aimed to analyze and draw justified and reliable conclusions. My role required being an observer in the given study. I did not partake in the investigation process, namely in interviews, but designed and conducted them, observing the process of information

acquisition and, subsequently, analyzing it. This process was necessary to (a) avoid any bias and acquire data only in relevant (target) audience; (b) see the picture in a holistic manner, which was crucial for the given study; and (c) add clarifying questions or clarify the sense of parts of the interview if needed.

My role as a researcher in the data collection procedure followed several stages: (a) to design the study and to develop the interview questions; (b) to arrange all the processes related to interaction with the potential participants, informed consent, and informational support included; (c) to conduct the interviews and collect the data; and (d) to arrange the acquired data in a constructive relevant manner. I had to conduct all the communication with the participants during the given research and other parties related to this investigation.

There were neither personal nor professional relationships between me nor the participants of the given study. I instructed each participant and clarified all the aspects of their interaction in written and oral forms while conducting the interview yet kept to their role of observer. The mission of the latter was to observe and analyze afterward, not to impact or change. I added clarifying questions, but there were no intended or ambiguous questions and instructions in the whole process to contribute and provide a minimum of biases in the research outcomes.

Because there were no grounds for biases in the power relationship context, there were no measures to establish and introduce all the participants of the process. Nonetheless, I proclaimed that all potential incidents were prevented using the following rules: (a) No interpersonal and private communication occurred with the participants, (b)

no personal attitudes and opinions of mine were taken for justification of the data and concluding, and (c) facts and evidence were the leading grounds for making inferences and serving as cornerstones of the guide.

The ethical process is a core part of every qualitative research (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014). There are such essential aspects of ethical research as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. First, confidentiality refers to the data provided by the respondents. Surmiak (2018) underlined that a particular group of participants recognized as the vulnerable ones, and ethics of confidentiality should be adhered to impeccably in this case. The current research did not involve respondents from stigmatized groups the vulnerable participants usually belong to, but spirituality and mental disorders were a rather personal and delicate matter. Therefore, a high level of confidentiality was guaranteed to the respondents. Thus, their responses were projected digitally.

Furthermore, the data from videos were not disclosed to any other parties and used for research purposes only. In this case, I found it impossible to enact the anonymity principle fully because the data collection process was conducted using online videos. The focus of voluntary participation was guaranteed: each potential respondent received the invitation to partake via email, and to become a respondent, a simple confirmation process was required.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The given study's sampling strategy was purposive and based on the preliminary selection of the target population. The target population was identified as clergy and senior police personnel. Other criteria included location, two settings selected for the given study, equal distribution of participants between the settings, and the number of interviews planned. The latter was equal to 12, and the equal distribution of participants between the locations was 15 respondents per one selected setting. Further selection was random, regardless of age, gender, and sociocultural and religious aspects, which did not impact any stage or detail of the given research. The sample included clergy and senior police staff.

If some potential respondents selected randomly failed to complete the interview due to any reason, such as change of plans, health issues, there was a backup group ready for such a situation. This group consisted of four potential respondents (two representatives of the clergy and two senior police staff). I informed these people about their roles, likely scenario of participation, and all the regular respondents' information. If some of the initially invited participants failed their mission in this study, a person with the correspondent status was requested from the backup group to partake. Thus, I scheduled an extra week used for any unpredicted changes or adjustments to the study process.

The selection of clergy and senior police personnel to partake in this investigation was justified in the following way: (a) The church provided sufficient and credible data

on the use of chaplain programs and spirituality for improvement of mental health in the context of traumas, and (b) police staff provided professional vision and experience. The issue of eligibility was crucial for the study and its future effectiveness as far as eligible respondents would bring value and precision to the research. In contrast, those who did not meet this criterion usually dissipated my focus and trigger unjustified and vague outcomes. I did not set standards of the age, gender, sociocultural, and religious aspects as a part of eligibility criteria for the participants as far as they were not directly related to the issue in question and did not affect in any negative manner the outcomes. Nevertheless, the following criteria were included in the process of eligibility analysis: (a) the respondents should belong either to the clergy or to senior police personnel; (b) there was only two settings that I worked with; (c) according to this criterion, a potential participant should have at least 10 years of positive experience in the identified fields; (d) the impeccable professional record and accomplishments were expected; and (e) experience with traumatized police officers and participation in different programs of spiritual nature or similar measures of therapy.

The primary characteristic features of the selected sample, apart from those pertinent to eligibility criteria described above, were as follows: (a) high level of proficiency, which was necessary for credibility and reliability of the data provided by the respondents during the interview, and (b) the selected sample was characterized by long-term employment in one sphere and accomplishments in it, such as innovative approach, new strategies and changes in standard practices, and an excellent personal profile and leadership skills. These features, especially innovation and leadership, were

crucial for the current study as far as I aimed to contribute to the enhancement of the given system where there was not much success in spirituality and chaplain programs' use for the benefit of mental health in police officers who had suffered from traumatizing professional experience at least once. Therefore, innovative vision and proactive approach were essential to receive valuable and relevant data to build the guide. All the participants were expected to have both positive and negative experiences related to the theme of investigation to contribute to the objectivity and credibility of the final results and value of the guide for different cases.

The current research aimed at maximal depth and itemized outcomes to acquire a holistic picture of the issues studied. Therefore, interviews were conducted; the number of participants was not significant to preserve the quality and credibility of the study and acquire enough detailed data with which to base inferences. Hence, 30 interviews were conducted during this research. Each interview consisted of 15 primarily open-ended questions. Each question aimed to acquire a maximal amount of credible data and details to contribute to reliable and objective outcomes of the study. I expected that respondents provided enough details and shared cases and examples from their actual professional practice to add to the research outcomes' credibility and reliability. The given inquiry was profound, which was why clarifying additional questions was also included in the list. I asked five further questions to the respondents if their answers were relatively short or did not provide necessary or expected details. Furthermore, at the end of the online interview, the participants could add anything considered relevant and crucial and that the interview questions had not covered effectively.

First, two selected settings were contacted to receive confirmation for cooperation in the given study. Once the verification was received, the announcement about the research and tours of collaboration was distributed between the highlighted personnel at a Zoom meeting, and invitations were sent via emails to those willing to partake. All the details of participation were provided initially for announcement during Zoom meeting so as the potential respondents had a clear and holistic picture at once and did not refuse to partake after receiving all the information individually.

The next step was confirmation of participation by potential respondents. This was done utilizing registration on a specific platform. I launched the forum to receive official confirmation and collected primary data needed for the next steps of the research. Once all warranties were received, I contacted every respondent via the preferred means indicated on the platform and established the Zoom interview time and other terms. All the informational support, clarifications, and other arrangements the participants would need were performed and provided by me.

The number of online interviews were 30, 15 ones per set. The process of determination of the number of respondents was a challenge because of the following factors: as far as I aimed to develop a guide expected to be applicable all over the United States, the research outcomes needed to be maximally objective and credible, which required enough data, sources, and a course of constructive analysis. Nonetheless, an extensive study was impossible because it required much more time, assets, and costs. Therefore, I estimated that 30 detailed and focused interviews with relevant representatives of both clergy and police would suffice for the given study to establish

essential, trustworthy outcomes for the guide. This number of respondents allowed me to identify the gaps in knowledge and comprehension of critical areas of concern and determine further directions of narrower research. I understood that there could be a larger sample in surveys' use, but this instrument was irrelevant to the nature and purpose of the present study. Therefore, the final number was 30, and I recommended using a 30 to 50 index in the future to maintain depth and prevent extreme biases.

Instrumentation

An observation sheet was included in the process of interviewing clergy and senior police officers. This process was necessary for the provision of a clear picture of core issues with which I had interest. I developed the observation sheet as well as the interview protocol before the first interview and used them both during each interview, indicating such core points as the positive effect of spirituality on police officers' mental health, adverse effect of spirituality on police officers' mental health, the positive effect of chaplain programs on police officers' mental health, adverse effect of chaplain programs on police officers' mental health, types of spiritual practices used, gaps in the area of contribution to officers' mental health, and suggested solutions. I recommended to fill the observational sheet after the actual interview to maintain my maximal focus on the respondent and the information provided.

During the actual interview, I used a list of questions where each question the responded had provided sufficient response should be checked and the unclear aspects market and returned to the interview after the participants finished the current answer. Video of the discussion was used as a source of data several times afterward to make a

transcript, analyze the data more thoroughly, and construct a system of care provision for police officers' mental health. The latter was expected to have a background, the current stage of development, preventive measures, and treatment plan after the traumatizing experience of police officers and gaps and controversies. All the sources from primary research were aligned and compared with the results of secondary research. The outcomes of this analysis were put into a separate table featuring core findings, controversies, needs, barriers, and potential solutions.

One of the significant challenges I faced during the study was the sufficiency of data collection instruments and, subsequently, the findings' sufficiency to respond to the research questions. It was impossible to cover all the aspects of the theme in question utilizing one study. Therefore, I estimated the level of sufficiency in the given context via the following criteria. First, the depth the instrument allowed me to delve into the area of concern. Interviews suffice for the given purpose entirely as far as they permitted not only to receive detailed and broad responses but also invited respondents to add more if they deemed appropriate, which meant that I could have exceeded the limits of the study set initially. Second, access to the material in the recorded interview permitted me to return to each interview during the analysis as many times as needed, which also contributed to sufficiency. Third, the scale of the study was not large, but it was enough for the given study because 30 different perspectives were collected. This amount served as a solid starting point for deeper investigations further on.

For Published Data Collection Instruments

Chapter 3 relied on a range of sources about the practical process of qualitative research, data collection instruments, and my role in the study. Sources used for identification, justification, and combination of data collection instruments included Olsen (2012), Adosi (2020), and Billups (2020). All the data collection instruments used in the present investigation were traditional and had been employed in a wide variety of studies, research, and inquiries. Moreover, Olsen (2012), Adosi (2020), and Billups (2020) often adjusted the given data collection instruments to their study to align them with both a research purpose and a particular study's potential. The present study did not involve any specific novel data collection instruments that had been published and launched in practice recently.

There was an opportunity for me to modify and adjust the data collection instruments to fit the study's purposes, context, and research questions. I did not intend to modify the selected device, apart from conducting the interviews online. I needed a record of each interview for recurrent analyses of the data provided by the respondents. All the sheets and tables used in interviewing the participants and consequent analysis were also relevant to the given study and were used according to conventional research practices. There were no changes in the selected data collection instruments based on the participants' cultural peculiarities. I interacted only with clergy and senior police staff, which meant that no potential problematic issues related to discrepancies in religious and spiritual vision and beliefs of the participants were expected.

Content validity was preliminarily estimated at the beginning of the study and assessed again once I conducted all 30 interviews. The first estimation was performed when the respondents' criteria developed, settings were selected, and questions for the interview were created. I made all these steps, aligning the expected outcomes with the expected and needed results for a reliable, constructive, and potentially effective study. I selected two settings and two different groups of respondents to make the findings more objective and more capable of representing the entire domain of U.S. police officers. The latter was significant as far as I acquired a holistic picture at the end of the study. The clergy had experience with police officers traumatized and their mental health suffered, whereas senior police officers represented the target population.

I developed the data collection instruments for the study's aims based on analyzing the cultural and professional contexts of the target population. The professional context of the target population's performance was associated with access to confidential information that should not be revealed to the public. Such an argument was especially relevant for the senior police personnel engaged in the study. I aimed to concentrate on questions that did not raise such a problem to avoid concerns related to the confidential information's potential discussion. Thus, I avoided excessive tension among the audience, leading to the data collection procedure's poor quality. The target population's specifics did not define any additional requirements to the data collection instruments' professional or cultural context. Neither chaplains nor senior police officers were considered the target population groups with specific cultural needs addressed in the study.

For Researcher-Developed Instruments

The presented research was based on applying data collection instruments created by me. In this context, I found it essential to select a reliable basis for the definition of optimal question formats used in the interview formats of the data collection. The literature review was determined as the most reliable basis for developing the interview questions. Orientation on the literature review findings had to form the knowledge base describing current results and existing gaps in the study's selected field.

Specific literature sources applied to the development of the interview forms utilized in the data collection process were mentioned in the dissertation's previous section. Literature sources included Beauchamp (2020), Anderson (2020), Jetelina et al. (2020), Violanti et al. (2017), Edwards and Kotera (2020), Johnson (2016), and Stanley et al. (2016). All the presented literature sources addressed specific aspects of the research problem and provided valuable insights to determine the study's knowledge gaps and opportunities. These studies' findings contributed to a better understanding of the research field and identifying the most promising questions discussed in the study.

The study results depended on the content validity of the instruments used in the data collection context. Thus, I applied a set of content validity assessment methods, including face validity, content validity, and convergent validity. The main idea of face validity testing was that the data collection instruments were delivered to the study field expert. In turn, an expert provided an objective position about the reliability of the selected instruments' application to resolve the study questions (Bolarinwa, 2021). In comparison, the content validity level was assessed based on the effectiveness of data

collection tools used to estimate the critical study parameters. I developed interview forms to assess the study's theoretical framework's essential parameters to determine the content validity level. Finally, convergent validity was evaluated by comparing similar research questions with different methods (e.g., Bolarinwa, 2021). In this context, interview forms addressed quite similar questions using other data collection methods. Comparing results for both strategies had to show their internal validity in the study of the research field.

Also, it was essential to assess the effectiveness of data collection tools from the point of study participants. The following criteria were evaluated: simplicity of interview questions for understanding among respondents and optimization of interview structure for participants to be motivated for the full completion of the data collection forms. One of the primary sources of risk for the project was related to the subjectivity bias, where participants might be unmotivated for full and responsible completion of the data collection procedure or face problems with understanding their role during the process.

Procedures for Pilot Studies

One of the essential pilot study elements was related to the pilot study participants' debriefing procedures. Completing the interview forms during the pilot study should not be considered a result required to justify the data collection tools' reliability and validity. It was necessary to collect feedback from the respondents to understand their position about the pilot study outcomes in this context.

Each participant was asked to give additional comments about the data collection process's quality after the pilot study. In the format of a 5 to10 minute discussion, I asked

participants of the pilot study to characterize the following characteristics of the interview forms: simplicity in the understanding of questions, the level of motivation for participation at different stages of the data collection process, and the level of subjectivity bias risk to varying stages of the data collection process. Participants suggested whether the format of the questions was boring or difficult for them, whether they felt a loss of motivation and desire to finish the data collection process as soon as possible on the specific step or not. The final question was related to the definition of potential logical mistakes in data collection format as respondents observed them.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The main question stated in the study context was related to assessing the role of police chaplain programs for the improvement of spirituality and mental health in police officers and other personnel engaged in the law enforcement system operations. Methods of interviews served for resolving the stated question in different ways. It was essential to describe various aspects of the data collection procedure used to solve the critical study problem.

A detailed description of the critical aspects of the data collection procedure was performed for the format of interviews. The process of data collection was conducted online. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, provided all the participants had access to it and faced no difficulties or barriers to such activity. I discussed this process with the respondents at the beginning of cooperation. All the informational support, confirmation of participation, and other communication with the participants were conducted online, namely, using emails and the platform for registration to participate in the study. These

peculiarities were determined by the pandemic and the necessity to conduct the research as comfortably and efficiently for each respondent as possible. The latter meant that meeting in the setting with clergy and police officers could be a challenge because of each participant's different schedules and locations, while online participation maximally eliminating this barrier.

The data were collected from the selected group of 30 respondents. The process of the data collection was performed by me independently from any other third-party groups. I asked basic and additional questions during the data collection process to gather the most reliable and valuable data for further analysis. The frequency of data collection events depended on my capability and free time availability among study participants. In the optimal format, I aimed to collect interview data from three to four participants per day. The final schedule for the organization of interviews depended on free time for both parties of the study. One interview's duration was about 30 minutes (+ 15 minutes if needed). I aimed to organize the interview process in a way to minimize time expenses for participants. Nevertheless, if I found it necessary to take additional data from the participants and agreed to provide extra time during the interview, the final procedure might have taken up to 45 minutes.

The procedure of data recording included recording data online in video and audio formats. The video format of data was recorded only if a specific respondent gave their formal permission for such actions. The interview recording served as a basis for further data analysis procedures, the interview transcript's development, and the definition of the study outcomes. The format of the follow-up interviews was defined based on the

outcomes of the primary data analysis. In case I found it sound to collect additional data from a specific respondent, I contacted this respondent with an invitation for a different interview lasting for a maximum of 15 minutes.

The final aspect of the data collection process included follow-up procedures applied to the participants of the study. Under specific conditions, depending on the character of respondents or groups of participants, I found it reasonable to apply follow-up data collection procedures to understand the study object better. For example, the interview analysis findings for specific participants demonstrated to me that this expert could provide more valuable information in the study. For such a scenario, each participant was asked whether they were ready to participate in the follow-up interview procedure or not if I found it necessary to collect additional data after the analysis of initial results.

The format of the follow-up interviews was considerably smaller as compared to the initial data collection process. It took up to 10 to 15 minutes, with the focus on the additional aspects of the study problem identified by me in the analysis of initial data.

Data Analysis Plan

Interview data collection methods served for the objective of resolution of the critical research question. Interview data collection methods were aimed to address the complete list of research questions developed for this study. I used such an approach to the organization of the data collection procedure to assess the selected instruments' convergence validity and analyze the study problem from different perspectives. The interview data collection was supposed to provide complementary outcomes, thus

allowing for the definition of the general picture of response to the study question. Each interview was analyzed separately at the first stage of data analysis. Next, the interview outcomes were examined in the context of holistic research, compared, and contrasted. The third stage of the study required alignment between the results of primary and secondary research.

An essential element of the data analysis was the coding procedure's definition applied to the collected data. The format of the interview questions was organized in the way for specific questions to address appropriate parameters from the theoretical framework of the study.

The continual iterative coding method was applied to analyze qualitative data collected during interviews. I focused on the inductive coding approach to minimize subjectivity bias issues during the study. An advantage of inductive coding compared to deductive coding was that it was applied to the study of unknown objects, for which a codebook had not been developed earlier. In the context of the selected study problem, it was reasonable to consider the issue as considerably new and based on the inductive coding approach. I used the interview data study to search for the perception of specific elements of the study problem among respondents. The study's theoretical framework was united with the interview form to organize interview questions.

The process of data analysis for the interview data did not require the application of any type of specialized software. In this case, I performed the critical function of data analysis, and the coding process was performed with the Microsoft Word software program.

Particular attention was paid to the discussion of the discrepant cases that occurred during the process of data collection and analysis. I aimed to avoid subjectivity bias in this aspect through the pilot study's organization and optimization of interview forms. Thus, I considered any form of the discrepant case an outcome of the influence of a phenomenon that was incorrectly targeted in the study.

For this scenario, I delivered follow-up research, depending on the discrepant case's character. It was usually a format of the interview for me to cooperate with a respondent on the specific aspect of the problem identified during data analysis. For example, I identified discrepant cases in the context of interview data analysis. I concluded that this specific case was not an outcome of subjectivity bias but a phenomenon that required more careful study. I contacted a typical respondent for whom this case was identified and asked for a follow-up interview. Results of the discussion should contribute to the clarification of the discrepant issue.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The study's trustworthiness relied on the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of the research outcomes. I minded each aspect to acquire high-quality products and relied on solid and credible guidelines for further use in practice. This process was crucial because I aimed to create a guide for use all over the United States.

Credibility

An essential aspect of the study outcomes development was assessing the data and results' credibility. I applied several methods to establish credibility: triangulation,

member check, and reflexivity. I performed a triangulation procedure to use interview data collection methods to assess similar research questions. Comparing the results for both strategies showed whether the study's outcomes were justified or not and whether there were any logical internal conflicts or not (Natow, 2019). The member-check method was used during interviews when I collected thoughts from respondents and then repeated key ideas and asked respondents to clarify whether the main idea of their response was figured out correctly or not. Finally, reflexivity was used in the analysis of end data. I aimed to assess his subjectivity's role in determining raw data to develop an objective vision of the object under study (see Dodgson, 2019). A combination of these methods guaranteed the high validity of the study results.

Transferability

Another aspect of the trustworthiness of the study findings considered was external validity. I found it essential to find solutions to study the external phenomenon based on the limited sample. The following methods were used: (a) variation in the selection of respondents and (b) thick description. A comprehensive description instrument was applied to consider the current processes existing in the study problem's environment as a part of the interview. Respondents were asked to describe the general climate existing in their workplace from the viewpoint of mental problems and factors of risk. As for the variation in the selection of respondents, I diversified representatives of both social groups in the sample by the parameter of previous work experience. I found it essential to collect primary data from the participants with a high level of work experience and people with a new view of the problem under study.

Dependability

The following methods were applied to assess the level of dependability in the study outcomes: (a) triangulation and (b) regression analysis. I used the triangulation method to compare the findings of data collection and analysis for the study's interview methods. The comparison of results demonstrated the dependability of separate parameters in the theoretical framework of the study. The assessment of the existing relationship between separate parameters of a theoretical framework expressed numerically, with the Likert-scale method's application contributed to the definition of the actual dependencies between variables of the study.

Confirmability

The confirmability aspect in the context of results trustworthiness was implemented to apply reflexivity and member check methods. The member-check approach helped me conduct the correct interpretation of the respondents' positions in the context of interviews. I found it essential to collect permanent clarification from the participants to ensure that their words were correctly interpreted, and no misunderstanding appeared. The reflexivity method allowed me to divide their subjective opinions from respondents' objective expressions. Finally, a follow-up interview was applied to clarify potential biases.

Intra- and Intercoder Reliability

The final aspect of trustworthiness considered was related to the intra and intercoder data reliability. A high level of data reliability in this aspect was guaranteed in direct connection of specific elements of the interview forms with the parameters of the

theoretical framework of the study. Thus, a correlation between the end parameters of the theoretical framework and the elements of the data collection results was established. I applied these connections to assess the reliability of the specific hypotheses defined by the study's theoretical framework based on the findings of the data collection and analysis.

Ethical Procedures

The research format involving human participants required specific attention measures to guarantee the protection of an individual's confidentiality and security of their interests. The problem of protecting the participants' rights during the study was explained with the principle of protecting the person's interests. All the participants were guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Informed consent was used. Moreover, every participant had a right to quit at any stage of the research if needed. All the information provided during this research was used exclusively for research purposes and was not disclosed to third parties. I supposed that the realization of the study objectives would not be associated with the generation of adverse outcomes for potential participants. Neither of the research work outcomes had specific risks and losses for individual participants.

Regarding the stated principle of protecting the respondents' rights and interests, I was forced to apply specific practices to protect them. Proper steps included rejection of ideas about studying participants' personal information. It was one of the primary sources of risk for participants; in such a manner, their data could be used by unauthorized viewers of the study outcomes in the form of publication. The study results might include

sensitive information that should not be associated with the personality of study participants. Under such conditions, personal data were avoided in the publishing phase to prevent situations when the study's findings were associated with participants' personalities.

Another important aspect of protecting study participants' rights was related to cooperation between a research group and respondents during the study. The process of data collection and other forms of direct collaboration between a scholar and respondents was arranged to prevent potential risks to the participants of the research. Taken together, the principle of protection of respondents' interests and rights during the study placed additional requirements for researchers. This principle was included based on the research process planning.

The organization of the study involving human participants required the collection of approvals from several regulatory institutions. Regarding academic research process organization, one of the leading organizations engaged in the discussion and support of the research design involving human participants was the Institution Review Board (IRB). I was required to inform the representatives of the IRB about all details of the research design developed for the aims of the study, including the methodology of data collection and analysis, format of cooperation with the sample representatives, and potential influence for them during and after the end of the study. Representatives of the IRB must consider all aspects of the future research and define risk sources for respondents. If the study's organization was associated with an inevitable risk for

participants, such examination should be prohibited. In all other cases, researchers and regulatory bodies should optimize the format of the research design.

Regarding human participants' engagement for the study's aims, I addressed ethical concerns based on the defined ethical research principles. The following principles were mentioned: beneficence (doing good), no maleficence (preventing or mitigating harm), fidelity and trust within the fiduciary investigator/participant relationship, personal dignity, autonomy, voluntary, competent decision making and the privacy of personal information (Koonrungsesomboon et al., 2016). Thus, I developed the procedures of recruitment and data collection involving human participants to deliver benefits solely to the participants, prevent any form of harm or risk, provide complete and detailed information about the study objectives and procedures, preserve personal dignity of the respondents, and guarantee voluntary and informed decision-making. I developed a detailed consent form informing the potential participants about the future study's objectives and procedures. Participants gained complete information about the research process and guarantees for themselves. Based on the analysis of full details, they made independent decisions about participation.

Specific attention was given to the organization of data collection activities during the study from protecting respondents' interests and rights. Thus, I found it essential to follow a similar set of ethical standards previously identified. The data collection process was organized to deliver benefits, avoid harm for the respondents, and guarantee informed decision-making and protection of individual dignity and voluntary participation in the study.

I ensured voluntary participation at all stages of the data collection process to address the stated ethical standards. Participants could abandon the study at any stage, with the protection of their rights and interests. For example, if a participant asked for withdrawal in the middle of the interview stage of data collection, they received such an opportunity without the need to explain their motives. Also, I asked for the respondent's agreement to use their data collected in the study. If no such agreement was achieved, all previously collected data were deleted and never used in the data analysis phase. All data collection instruments were developed to avoid the participants' negative impact, both their personalities and dignity. Each participant could receive additional information at all stages of data collection on their request.

The realization of the ethical standards about the data collection and analysis procedures required formal agreement signs from the study participants. Regarding the presented research, I designed a standard consent form signed by study participants before they were engaged in the data collection. In such a manner, each prospective participant received the invitation letter, including the consent form. I used these documents to invite the individual to participate and inform them about its objectives and procedures. All guarantees prescribed by the defined ethical standards of human-involving research were mentioned in the consent form. The specific individual was considered a participant of the study only after signing a consent form. It was an indicator of their agreement to the terms of the study.

Specific attention in the context of human-involving study was paid to the special treatment of primary data. I avoided the application or publication of personal data to

guarantee the prevention of harm to an individual participant. Thus, the collected data were characterized with complete confidentiality. No personal data about the study participants were collected, stored, and published. The respondents were not asked to provide personal information, and if such information was provided voluntarily, I neither saved nor collected it. Each participant received full guarantees of confidentiality in the context of the study. For the interview format of data collection, each participant used fictitious names and avoided video recording to guarantee complete confidentiality.

Ethical aspects of the human-involving study organization also included specific requirements for data treatment organization during the study. The main principle was related to the protection of personal data confidentiality. No personal data were collected or stored on interview data collection and analysis phases. Participants were not asked to mention information about their names and surnames, ages, genders, addresses, or any other personal information. Age data were collected based on specific intervals, without mentioning a particular number for each participant.

The study participants' names and surnames were coded using numbers, and the numerical expression of participants' data was used in the data storage. No personal information was published in the final version of the research paper. Only I had access to the data, and the authorized access to these data was protected with the system of codes known only by me. No dissemination of information was supposed to happen during or after the study. All the data about the study outcomes will be destroyed within 2 years after the publication of the final research paper. The earlier destruction of data may be possible at the personal request of the participants.

A set of additional ethical issues took place in applying the archival data for the aims of the presented study. Specific attention was paid to the following aspects: (a) conflict of interest or power differentials, (b) justification of the used incentives, and (c) provision of confidential information related to the policy authority. Conflict of interest could occur if a specific respondent wants to deliver false information to cause harm to other actors inside the target organization. In this source of risk, no information that could generate such outcomes was collected. Everyone took part in the personal act of data collection, avoiding contact with representatives of other hierarchical levels.

Justification of the used incentives was a source of risk if respondents had concerns about the means of the data use after the study. Thus, the consent form addressed key categories of problems. If specific situations were left, participants were free to request a consultation from a scholar or withdraw from the study in any phase. The provision of confidential information related to the police authority was caused by my incentive to collect personal data and intended for use by police personnel only. The format of data collection did not suppose request of such data.

Summary

This chapter of the dissertation summarized information about the research design used to achieve critical objectives and address research questions. I aimed to demonstrate different research approach elements and justify the effectiveness of the selected research strategy. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research design was determined. I aimed to reach a complex understanding of the object under investigation; therefore, the balance of both methodologies was utilized orientation on the quantitative research

design allowed for objectivity and generalization of the study outcomes. I used the qualitative research design to collect the most helpful information from experts and justified sources of data.

Specific data collection methods used during the study included interviews. The interviews' findings contributed to the improved understanding of the problem under study among the elected representatives of the target population. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants would have experience with the phenomenon and to safeguard the trustworthiness of the study results. Specific formats of interview forms were developed based on the previous literature review outcomes, the definition of the existing knowledge base, and research gaps that had to be filled.

The defined research design was also characterized with careful attention to the aspect of ethical concerns. Human participants' engagement led to the need for developing specific conditions for the protection of their rights and confidentiality. Procedures and solutions were applied to protect the rights of the study respondents. Such solutions could create barriers in the study's context, though I aimed to address them in the way of proper selection of candidates. The research design was considered the optimal solution to address the stated research objectives.

This chapter of the dissertation addressed a question about the research design format applied to implement the study's key objectives. The following chapter of the thesis provides a discussion of the critical results of data collection. Thus, the readers can observe the outcomes of the presented research design application. Interview data collection is shown together with the data analysis methods application's effects. Key

results presented in the following section of the study form the basis for defining the

study outcomes and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. I hoped to discover the effectiveness of spirituality methods, including police chaplain programs, in addressing police officers' mental health problems. The research question in this qualitative study was the following: How does a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers?

The following section of this chapter contains a description of the study setting. This chapter then proceeds with a description of the participants' demographic characteristics, followed by discussions of the execution of the data collection and data analysis procedures described in Chapter 3. Next, this chapter includes a discussion of the evidence of the trustworthiness of the findings, followed by a detailed presentation of the findings. This chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

Setting

The semi structured interviews were conducted through the online videoconference application Zoom. Online interviews were used to promote the health and safety of the participants through compliance with social-distancing guidelines associated with mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were scheduled at the participants' discretion to ensure they had adequate time to provide detailed responses to the questions in the interview guide. The participants were asked to accept the Zoom call from a location where they would be safe and comfortable, and where they would have privacy and few distractions. No personal or organizational conditions influenced

participants or their experiences at the time of study that influenced the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

The sample consisted of 10 participants, including six senior police personnel and four chaplains. All participants had at least 10 years of experience in their fields. All 10 participants reported experiences with traumatized officers and with participation in therapeutic programs of a spiritual nature. The participants are designated with alphanumeric pseudonyms in this chapter to maintain the confidentiality of participants' identities. The six senior police personnel are designated P1 through P6. The four chaplains are designated C1 through C4.

Data Collection

One semi structured, one-to-one interview was conducted online, via Zoom, with each of the 10 participants. The interviews were audio recorded using Zoom's integrated audio-recording feature. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 30 minutes. There were no variations from the data collection procedure described in Chapter 3, and no unusual circumstances were encountered during data collection.

Data Analysis

Verbatim transcripts of the 10 interviews were analyzed using the inductive, thematic procedure by Braun et al. (2014). In the first step, the data were read and reread in full to gain familiarity with them. The second step of the analysis involved coding the data by grouping and labeling different blocks of text from the transcripts that expressed similar meanings. Blocks of text or data segments, which expressed a meaning relevant to

the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health were assigned to codes. Each code was labeled with a brief, descriptive phrase indicating its relevance. When different data segments had similar, emergent meanings, they were assigned to the same code; in this way, the codes were formed inductively. As an example, P1 stated, "I'm exposed very often with occupational stressors that have negative impacts on my job performance." P1's statement was assigned to a code labeled, "frequent exposure to occupational stressors." P2 stated, "Every day, investigators and police officers are exposed to stressors." Like P1's response, P2's statement indicated frequent exposure to occupational stressors, so it was assigned to the same code. In total, 120 data segments were assigned to 32 codes. Table 1 indicates the codes and the number of data segments assigned to them from each participant group.

Table 1

Data Analysis Initial Codes

	Number of data segments assigned to code:	
	Chaplains	Police personnel
Code	($n = 4$)	($n = 6$)
Anxiety about danger is a stressor		1
Being on call is a stressor		1
Can identify causes of stress		1
Chaplain programs are beneficial to officers	4	6
Chaplain programs can promote officers' mental health	5	6
Chaplains can help non-religious officers		1
Discrepant data - Infrequent exposure to occupational stressors		1
Discrepant data - No experience of PTSD		1
Discrepant data - Unsure whether spirituality can prevent PTSD		1
Experience of sleep disorder		1
Experience of trouble concentrating		1
Faith promotes positive coping	3	
Frequent encounters with officers experiencing occupational stress	2	
Frequent exposure to occupational stressors		5
Have experienced PTSD symptoms		4
High level of spirituality		5
High stress resistance		6
Moderate level of spirituality		1
Observing signs of PTSD among other officers	4	6
Occasional encounters with officers experiencing occupational stress	2	
Spiritual practice of gratitude		1
Spiritual practice of meditation		3
Spiritual practice of prayer and worship		5
Spiritual practice of study		4
Spiritual wellbeing can be compromised in law enforcement work	4	2
Spiritual wellbeing is not compromised by work	2	4
Spiritual wellness is an effective coping strategy	4	6
Spirituality can only mitigate PTSD	1	2
Spirituality helps prevent PTSD	3	3
Supervisor is a stressor		1
Using a holistic approach to counseling	4	
Workload is a stressor		3

In the third step of the analysis, themes were sought in the data (see Braun et al.,

2014). Themes were formed inductively, by grouping related codes. Codes were

identified as related when indicating different components of a broader, overarching

pattern in participants' responses. As an example, the code 'frequent exposure to occupational stressors' was grouped 13 other codes, including but not limited to "being on call is a stressor," "observing signs of PTSD among other officers," and "workload is a stressor." The 14 codes were identified as related because they all indicated the perceived nature or prevalence of stressors in law-enforcement work. In total, the 32 codes were grouped to form three themes.

The fourth step of the analysis involved reviewing and refining the themes (see Braun et al., 2014). The themes were compared to the original data to ensure they accurately indicated patterns in participants' responses. The themes were also compared to one another to ensure they did not overlap, and each theme was assessed separately to ensure it indicated a single, cohesive idea.

In the fifth step of the analysis, the data in the codes and themes was reviewed again to name the themes (see Braun et al., 2014). The data in the themes was compared to the study purpose and research question to identify the significance of each of them as an answer addressing the research question. Each of the three themes was then named to clarify its significance in relation to the study objectives. In the sixth step of the analysis, the presentation of results in the following section of this chapter was created. Table 2 indicates how the 32 initial codes were grouped to form the three finalized themes.

Table 2

Grouping of Codes to Form Themes

	Number of data segments assigned to theme:	
Theme Code grouped to form theme	Chaplains ($n = 4$)	Police personnel ($n = 6$)
Theme 1. Law enforcement is perceived as a stressful occupation in which PTSD is common	8	25
Anxiety about danger is a stressor		
Being on call is a stressor		
Can identify causes of stress		
Discrepant data - Infrequent exposure to occupational stressors		
Discrepant data - No experience of PTSD		
Experience of sleep disorder		
Experience of trouble concentrating		
Frequent encounters with officers experiencing occupational stress		
Frequent exposure to occupational stressors		
Have experienced PTSD symptoms		
Observing signs of PTSD among other officers		
Occasional encounters with officers experiencing occupational stress		
Supervisor is a stressor		
Workload is a stressor		
Theme 2. Spirituality is associated with PTSD prevention and positive coping	13	36
Discrepant data - Unsure whether spirituality can prevent PTSD		
High level of spirituality		
High stress resistance		
Moderate level of spirituality		
Spiritual practice of gratitude		
Spiritual practice of meditation		
Spiritual practice of prayer and worship		
Spiritual practice of study		
Spiritual wellbeing can be compromised in law enforcement work		
Spiritual wellbeing is not compromised by work		
Spiritual wellness is an effective coping strategy		
Spirituality can only mitigate PTSD		
Spirituality helps prevent PTSD		
Theme 3. Chaplain programs are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health	16	12
Chaplain programs are beneficial to officers		
Chaplain programs can promote officers' mental health		
Chaplains can help non-religious officers		
Faith promotes positive coping		
Using a holistic approach to counseling		

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Procedures were implemented in this study to strengthen the four components of trustworthiness. The four components include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These components are the qualitative analogues of the quantitative constructs of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the findings in the study with respect to the sample and setting from which they were derived. In this study, data triangulation and member checking were used to enhance credibility. Data triangulation involved comparing findings from two different groups of participants, including senior police personnel and chaplains, to identify commonalities and discrepancies. Member checking was conducted during the interviews by paraphrasing participants' responses and asking them to verify or recommend corrections to those researcher interpretations.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the accuracy of findings with respect to samples and settings other than those from which they were drawn. Thick descriptions of the findings are provided in this chapter to assist readers in assessing the transferability of the findings on a case-by-case basis. Thick descriptions have been provided to convey the perspectives in which participants' responses were grounded using the participants' own words. In the results section of this chapter, thick descriptions are provided in direct quotes from the data presented as evidence for all findings.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which the integrity of the study procedures is verifiable, as through the replicability of the study. In this study, dependability has been enhanced by including detailed descriptions of the planned study procedures and their rationales in Chapter 3. A detailed description of the execution of the data analysis procedure has been provided in the present chapter to enable the reader to verify the procedure's integrity.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the findings in a study represent the participants' perceptions and opinions rather than those of me. The member-checking procedure used in this study contributed to confirmability by enabling participants to verify or correct my preliminary interpretations of their responses during their interviews. Thick descriptions of the findings in the results section of this chapter will enable the reader to verify confirmability independently by comparing the findings to the data in which they were identified. Reflexivity was also used to strengthen confirmability, through my engagement in reflection on potential biases and mindful efforts to suspend those biases during all study processes.

<div align="center">

Results

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The research question used to guide this study was the following: How does a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers? Three themes were identified during data analysis to address the research question: (Theme 1) law enforcement is perceived as a stressful occupation in which PTSD is common, (Theme 2)

spirituality is associated with PTSD prevention and positive coping, and (Theme 3) chaplain programs are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health. The following subsections are presentations of these themes.

Theme 1: Law Enforcement is Perceived as a Stressful Occupation in Which PTSD is Common

All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. Most police participants indicated that they frequently experienced significant occupational stressors and that they had experienced symptoms of PTSD such as sleep disturbances and difficulty concentrating. The police participants also indicated that they frequently observed signs of PTSD in their fellow officers. All chaplain participants indicated that they frequently or occasionally encountered police officers who were experiencing symptoms of PTSD.

Five out of six police participants stated that they frequently encountered occupational stressors that had a negative impact on their job performance. P1 described frequent exposure to such stressors in stating,

> As a criminal investigator and supervisor, I'm exposed very often to occupational stressors that have negative impacts on my job performance, because I'm constantly dealing with everyone's issue and trying to solve it, which is time consuming, which creates more stress.

P2 affirmed that exposure to stressors was frequent for law enforcement officers: "Every day, Investigators and Police Officers are exposed to stressors." P6 described being exposed to stressors that negatively impacted job performance, "Almost daily." P4 and P5 estimated that they faced such stressors about twice per week. P3 provided

discrepant data in stating that they were exposed to occupational stressors that negatively affected job performance, "Not very often."

Asked to describe the nature of the stressors to which they were exposed, the Police participants collectively noted two, with workload being the stressor most frequently cited. P1 said, "The majority of my stressors are taking on too much at one time and trying to find the time to manage all of it." P3, who reported infrequent exposure to stressors, said of the nature of the stressor they encountered, "At times, it [the stressor] has been the heavy workload with minimal staff." P6 cited specific work tasks as stressful: "I believe I can identity the causes of stress from police work that affect me on a daily basis, including deadlines on written reports, [and] frustration in waiting on other entities for evidence, documents, and interviews." P4 cited a different stressor, saying of their occupational stress, "It usually comes from my superior." In addition to administrative tasks, P6 reported, "Anxiety from going into situations that may be inherently dangerous," was a significant occupational stressor. P2 said of the most significant stressor they experienced, "Being on call-out status is a big stress that can take a toll on the family." However, P2 added, "I do not allow this stressor to impact my job performance. The mission still needs to be accomplished."

Five out of six police participants stated that they experienced symptoms of PTSD, including sleep disturbances and trouble concentrating. Answering the question of whether they experienced PTSD symptoms, P2 said, "Yes, but I do not wish to discuss these." P3 affirmed that they had experienced PTSD symptoms, and P5 cited a specific incident that caused them to experience PTSD: "At one point in time, right after the

Oklahoma City bombing, yes. The PTSD was mitigated through therapy." P6 said they

experienced PTSD symptoms, "At times, yes, over the years." P1 reported experiencing

two symptoms of PTSD, saying, "I suffer from a sleep disorder and [trouble]

concentrating at times, due to me thinking about work-related issues."

All six police participants reported that they observed signs of PTSD in fellow

officers. P1 said when confirming they had observed PTSD symptoms in other officers,

"A law enforcement career is a very high stressful job, at which some point in your career

you will experience some type of stress disorder." P5 said they had observed signs of

PTSD in other officers, "Frequently, among many of those who have been exposed to

extremely stressful scenarios." P6 stated of PTSD symptoms in other officers, "I have

noticed it, although it is often masked." P2, P3, and P4 answered, "Yes," when asked if

they observed signs of PTSD in other officers, but they declined to elaborate.

All four chaplain participants indicated that they observed officers experiencing

occupational stressors. For example, C4 said, "I come across police officers who have

been exposed to occupational stressors daily." C1 reported that they encountered officers

who were experiencing occupational stressors, "Fairly regularly." C4 added, "Many

officers have shared information with me concerning their PTSD." Asked if they had

noticed signs of PTSD among officers, C1, C2, and C3 answered, "Yes" but declined to

elaborate.

Theme 2: Spirituality is Associated With PTSD Prevention and Positive Coping

All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. The police participants reported

that they had a high or moderately level of spirituality, that they engaged in a variety of

spiritual practices, and that they had high or moderately high levels of stress resistance. The police participants also expressed the perception that spirituality can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation, and that spiritual wellness is an effective coping strategy. Chaplain participants similarly expressed the belief that spiritual wellness can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation and that spiritual wellness is associated with positive coping.

All six police participants indicated that they had a high level of stress resistance. P1 said, "My level of stress resistance is very high. I can still function under high stress for a short period of time." P2 said their level of stress resistance was, "Very high," and P3 described their level of stress resistance as high in saying, "I am capable holding myself together emotionally in crisis situations." P4 said, "I have a pretty high level of stress resistance." P5 reported that their level of stress resistance was, "Moderately high to extremely high," and P6 described their level of stress resistance similarly in saying, and "I think I have a moderate to high level of stress resistance that probably developed over the years."

Police participants' high reported levels of stress resistance were associated with similarly high levels of spirituality. P1 said of their high level of spirituality, "I trust completely in God and count on him to give me strength to overcome situations." Asked if they had a high level of spirituality, P3 answered, "Yes, I do. It is very important." P5 described their spirituality in saying it was, "Extremely high," and that they were, "faithful to my spirituality." Asked whether they had a high level of spirituality, P2 and P4 responded, "Yes." P6 provided partly discrepant data in reporting a moderate rather

than high level of spirituality, stating their spirituality was "not particularly high, but I do have somewhat of a spiritual guidance level."

In describing the manifestations of their spirituality, all six police participants reported that they engaged in multiple spiritual practices. P1 reported engaging in "prayer, praises, worship, study, and constant thankfulness," and P2 described themselves as participating in "church, reading the Bible, [and] praying." P3 reported practices of, "Reading, prayer, and meditation." P4 said they engaged in "prayer, singing in the choir, church attendance, and Bible study," and P5 reported, "Daily prayer, meditation, and fellowship." P6, who reported a lower level of spirituality than other police participants, said of the spiritual practices they engaged in that these included "meditation and taking time for myself to release the stress of the day or week."

Three police participants expressed the perception that spirituality could help prevent PTSD. P1 said of the perceived capacity of spirituality to prevent PTSD, "Trusting in God is the key. God can give you rest when you're restless and peace when you're weary." P3 answered affirmatively when asked if spirituality could help prevent PTSD but added, "Depending upon your level of spirituality." Asked if spirituality could help prevent PTSD, P4 answered, "Absolutely."

Two police participants stated that spirituality could not prevent PTSD, but that it could mitigate PTSD in traumatized officers. P5 expressed this perception in saying of whether spirituality could prevent PTSD, "Prevent? No. Mitigating PTSD? Most certainly." P6 said, "I think it is possible for spirituality to help treat PTSD, but not too sure about preventing." P2 provided discrepant data in expressing uncertainty about

whether spirituality could prevent or mitigate PTSD: "I don't know. I can't speak for someone else regarding their spirituality and if or how it can help their post-traumatic stress disorder."

All six police participants expressed the perception that spiritual wellness was an effective coping strategy. P1 said of whether spiritual wellness was a positive coping strategy that it provided examples of overcoming adversity:

Yes, when I talk to God, my mind is set at ease. When I read about others in the Bible that faced stressful situation and how God delivered them, I believe he can and will deliver me. Then I see how God delivered others here on earth, gives me hope he can and will deliver me.

P2 said of using spiritual wellness to cope, "Praying and believing in God and that he has a plan helps me every day." P3 used spirituality as a reminder of the transitory nature of stressors: "It helps me to realize that the situation is only temporary, and God is in control. It helps me build my inner strength and helps me with understanding the reason for this experience." Spirituality helped P4 to feel protected, they said, "It keeps me focused on the fact that God is in control of my destiny, and he will protect me." Asked whether a state of spiritual wellness assisted them in coping with stress, P5 said, "Yes it does. I use that which I've learned from my spiritual journeys to apply to the levels of response to stress, identifying, responding to, and putting away the stress, or stressors." P6 said of spirituality as an effective coping strategy, "I believe it does help me to relax and allow the stress to pass through me and leave my body."

All four chaplain participants also expressed the perception that spiritual wellness was associated with positive coping. C1 said spiritual wellness could help officers to cope positively with PTSD, "Most of the time. It depends on the depth and overall spiritual wellbeing of the officer prior to the [traumatic] event in question." C3 described spiritual wellness as part of the holistic wellness that contributed to positive coping:

> Spiritual wellness is a vital part of holistic wellness. Officers see the absolute worst of humanity and it has a negative impact on them. If there is not a solid emotional, physical, and spiritual foundation, they will fall through the cracks and become another statistic.

C4 expressed the perception that spirituality was associated with positive coping with PTSD because "spirituality, officer wellness and resiliency go hand in hand." C4 added, "Prevent? No. But spirituality can be used as a coping skill or mechanism, understanding of a higher power that is in control of the situation. And eventually, that same higher power will comfort and support during a challenging time."

Asked whether spirituality could help to prevent PTSD, three chaplain participants responded in the affirmative. C1 said, "In working with previous departments, I have found it [spirituality] to be very effective when the officer is open to such [spiritual] counseling." C3 answered the question of whether spirituality could help prevent PTSD by saying, "Absolutely." C2 described spirituality as, "An important component" of PTSD prevention. C4 expressed that spirituality could not be used to prevent PTSD, but it was an effective coping strategy, as indicated in the language quoted previously.

Theme 3: Chaplain Programs are Associated With Benefits to Police Officers'

Mental and Holistic Health

All 10 participants contributed to this theme. The police participants indicated that

chaplain programs are beneficial to officers and can contribute to officers' mental health.

Chaplain participants shared those perceptions and added that chaplain programs

benefitted officers because faith was associated with positive coping.

All six police participants indicated that chaplain programs were beneficial to

officers. P1 described chaplains as able to pray for intercession on behalf of officers who

may be experiencing doubts or lapses of faith:

> A police chaplain is very beneficial to every police agency. Police chaplains can
>
> assist with police and nonpolice related issues. God desires the prayers of the
>
> righteous, and if I'm not righteous at the time I'm going through a storm, the
>
> police chaplain can intercede on my behalf.

P4 perceived chaplain programs as beneficial to officers because they helped

officers to maintain a relationship with God: "I believe that everyone needs a relationship

with God. Having a relationship with God is priceless. Only with a relationship with God

can one navigate through the stresses and challenges that law enforcement demands." P5

added that chaplain programs can assist officers of any level of spirituality: "Even those

officers who don't harbor a spiritual existence can benefit from spirituality. Chaplains

can be an aid to those who have, or don't have, faith in spirituality." P6 corroborated P5's

perception that chaplain programs were potentially beneficial to all officers: "I believe

the support of a chaplain program would be beneficial to all law enforcement personnel

because I think it would help officers to cope with different types of stressors on the job, and off the job." P2 and P3 both responded "Yes" when asked if they believed chaplain programs were beneficial to officers but declined to expand on their answers.

All six police participants also expressed the perception that chaplain programs could promote officers' mental health. P1 believed that the contribution a chaplain program could make to an officers' mental health depended on the level of the officers' spirituality, saying of whether chaplain programs could help, "Yes, for those who believe and completely trust in God. No, for those who believe in God, but don't trust God or man." P3 said chaplain programs could promote officers' mental health because "having someone to trust and be there to provide that support is definitely beneficial. Even more so if the chaplain is in the same line of work [i.e., law enforcement]." P6 said,

> I believe the chaplain programs would have a positive effect on law enforcement officers' mental health, because many officers do have spirituality and can certainly use the benefits of the chaplain program during times of stress or grief, whether it is due to work or personal issues.

Asked whether chaplain programs could benefit officers' mental health, P2, P4, and P5 answered affirmatively but did not elaborate.

All four chaplain participants also perceived chaplain programs as beneficial to officers. Asked whether such programs were beneficial, C1 noted that their investment of their career in such programs was a testament to their perceived efficacy, saying, "Yes. If not, I would not be doing what I am." C2 referenced their extensive experience of the apparent effects of spiritual counseling on officers in saying of whether chaplain

programs were beneficial: "Yes, based on 40 years of police chaplain experience." C4 described chaplain programs as beneficial to all first responders: "Chaplaincy benefits the police officer. Not just the police officer, but all first responders, including dispatchers who are on the radio facilitating through the critical incident. They shouldn't be forgotten."

All four chaplain participants also reported that they perceived chaplain programs as specifically promoting officers' mental health. C1 indicated that the efficacy of chaplain programs in promoting officers' mental health depended on the officers' receptivity to spiritual counseling: "I have found it to be very effective when the officer is open to such counseling." Asked whether chaplain programs promoted officers' mental health, C4 said, "Absolutely, the chaplaincy brings forth hope in a dark and desperate time for law enforcement. If no one else understands, the police officer's chaplain does, especially if he or she is an active or former police officer." C2 and C3 both answered affirmatively when asked if they perceived chaplain programs as benefitting officers' mental health.

In expressing why they perceived chaplain programs as promoting officers' mental health, the chaplain participants described faith and spiritual counseling as contributing to positive coping with PTSD and stressors. C2 indicated that a police chaplain might be the only spiritual resource available to some officers:

> Many officers have no direct pastor, church affiliation or other forms of spiritual influences. Often, a police chaplain is the only source he or she may have when facing extreme issues such as death, substance abuse, family issues, mental health

issues, etcetera. Police chaplains providing spiritual input along with certified counselors meet two of the important levels along with physical concerns being addressed.

Notable in C2's just-quoted response was the perception that spiritual counseling was one component of effective coping, with a second component being work with a certified counselor. This response was consistent with C2's statement that spiritual counseling was part of holistic care: "I believe man exists on three levels, spiritual, mental, and physical. All three need to be addressed for overall wellness." C1 used language like C2's in saying, "I would encourage a holistic approach that involves the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual wellbeing of the officers." The contribution of spiritual wellness to holistic wellness, C1 indicated in a different response, was to promote positive coping:

> As a devout Christian and person of strong faith, I believe that officers have a spiritual resource at their disposal, if they have a faith base that allows them to address traumatic events in a healthy, therapeutic manner. Officers without such a base often resort to destructive tendencies and practices like alcohol or drug abuse, risky behavior, sexual escapades, etcetera.

C4 agreed with the other chaplain participants that holistic health was the goal to which chaplain programs and the associated spiritual wellness contributed, saying, "The Chaplaincy and Peer Support Program is to champion the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, health, and recovery of fellow employees." C4 added that the purpose of chaplain programs and their contribution to officers' mental health

was "to achieve and advance a healthy and stable work and personal lifestyle through maintenance of emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological health and wellbeing." Thus, chaplain participants emphasized that spiritual counseling was effective as a component of a holistic approach to caring for officers' overall wellbeing in relation to occupational stressors.

Summary

The research question used to guide this study was the following: How does a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers? Three themes were identified during data analysis to address the research question. Theme 1 was the following: Law enforcement is perceived as a stressful occupation in which PTSD is common. All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. Most police participants indicated that they frequently experienced significant occupational stressors and that they had experienced symptoms of PTSD such as sleep disturbances and difficulty concentrating. The police participants also indicated that they frequently observed signs of PTSD in their fellow officers. All chaplain participants indicated that they frequently or occasionally encountered police officers who were experiencing symptoms of PTSD.

Theme 2 was the following: Spirituality is associated with PTSD prevention and positive coping. All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. The police participants reported that they had a high or moderately level of spirituality, that they engaged in a variety of spiritual practices, and that they had high or moderately high levels of stress resistance. The police participants also expressed the perception that spirituality can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation, and that spiritual wellness is an effective

coping strategy. Chaplain participants similarly expressed the belief that spiritual wellness can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation and that spiritual wellness is associated with positive coping.

Theme 3 was the following: Chaplain programs are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health. All 10 participants contributed to this theme. The police participants indicated that chaplain programs are beneficial to officers and can contribute to officers' mental health. Chaplain participants shared those perceptions and added that chaplain programs benefitted officers because faith was associated with positive coping. Chapter 5 includes discussion, interpretation, and recommendations drawn from these findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of police chaplain programs and spirituality on police officers' mental health. The qualitative tradition with a narrative analysis approach was used to address the problem of how a police chaplain program and spirituality impacted police officers. The study is significant as the population of police officers with PTSD and other mental illnesses increases. I hoped to discover the effectiveness of spirituality methods, including police chaplain programs, in addressing police officers' mental health problems. The research question in this qualitative study was the following: How does a police chaplain program and spirituality impact police officers? Three themes were identified during data analysis to address the research question: Law enforcement is perceived as a stressful occupation in which PTSD is common, spirituality is associated with PTSD prevention and positive coping, and chaplain programs are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health.

Interpretation of the Findings

Law Enforcement is Perceived as a Stressful Occupation in Which PTSD is Common

All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. Most police participants indicated that they frequently experienced significant occupational stressors and that they had experienced symptoms of PTSD, such as sleep disturbances and difficulty concentrating. These findings corroborated other research in the literature review; for

example, Jetelina et al. (2020) indicated the prevalence of mental health issues among the police because of the stressors of the job. In one large police force in Dallas, Texas, over 26% of police officers screened positive for such mental health issues as depression, anxiety, and PTSD from on-the-job stressors (Anderson, 2020).

In the current study, five out of six police participants stated that they frequently encountered occupational stressors that had a negative impact on their job performance. P1 described frequent exposure to such stressors in stating,

> As a criminal investigator and supervisor, I'm exposed very often to occupational stressors that have negative impacts on my job performance, because I'm constantly dealing with everyone's issue and trying to solve it, which is time consuming, which creates more stress.

Like this finding from the current study, thereby aligning with this study's findings, Violanti et al. (2017) considered the sources of stressors and health for police officers as coming from job content, including such issues as work schedules, long shift workers, court work, threats to their physical and psychological health, and various traumatic events. These results showed an empirical link between workplace situations and stressors, implying the need for investment into resources and mechanisms to help police officers cope with these different categories of stressors. Homicide investigators also experience high levels of stress due to their work's highly emotional nature, the time constraints and demands, and the unique tasks they must undergo in the process of doing their job (Dabney et al., 2013). In further alignment with the current study's findings, Edwards and Kotera (2020) identified police work as risky regarding its likelihood to

cause several mental health conditions for police officers in the line of duty. In agreement with Edwards and Kotera, Demou et al. (2020) indicated that police work can be stressful and demanding, impacting employee well-being. Such stress shows the need for police officers to develop coping methods like spirituality and chaplains, especially if they resist seeking help in other ways, such as through therapy (Jetelina et al., 2020).

Spirituality is Associated With PTSD Prevention and Positive Coping

All 10 participants contributed data to this theme. The police participants reported that they had a high or moderately level of spirituality, that they engaged in a variety of spiritual practices, and that they had high or moderately high levels of stress resistance. The police participants also expressed the perception that spirituality can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation, and that spiritual wellness is an effective coping strategy. Chaplain participants similarly expressed the belief that spiritual wellness can contribute to PTSD prevention or mitigation and that spiritual wellness is associated with positive coping. Three police participants expressed the perception that spirituality could help prevent PTSD. These findings corroborated existing research, such as Haecker's (2017) dissertation. I investigated trends in help-seeking behaviors by evaluating information gathered from counselors, clinicians, peer groups, and chaplains. I identified resilience and coping built from religion and spirituality as health-seeking behaviors. Haecker's dissertation differed from the current study only in that it considered the counselors' viewpoints and not the police officers.

This finding was not discussed often in the literature reviewed, as it did serve to help bridge a gap in research; however, the finding might be better understood when

viewed through the theoretical perspective of Pargament's (1997) religious theory. This theory posits that individuals' global religiousness might translate to specific religious beliefs and practices directly related to the health outcomes and well-being measures of these individuals (Pargament, 1997). Pargament (1997) believed that there was a strong link between religion and well-being, which supported the current study participants' explanations of coping with PTSD. For example, P1 reported engaging in "prayer, praises, worship, study, and constant thankfulness." P2 participated in "church, reading the Bible, [and] praying." This connection may effectively be leveraged to help improve various individuals' coping abilities, especially those likely to be found in stressful situations, such as the police officers of the study. It is based on the belief in the positive link between religion and healthcare.

Like the current study, Robinson (2019) used the Pargament (1997) theory, investigating police officer perception of spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. Robinson found that police officers operated in an environment with a considerable number of stressors, supporting Theme 1 of the current study, listing coping as essential for their well-being and success on the job. Coping can refer to police officers using spirituality. Chopko et al. (2016) implied that low levels or the absence of spirituality in policing could explain police officers' maladjustment behaviors, making coping important, as discussed by participants in the current study (P1 said of their high level of spirituality, "I trust completely in God and count on him to give me strength to overcome situations").

Chaplain Programs are Associated With Benefits to Police Officers' Mental and Holistic Health

All 10 participants contributed to this theme. The police participants indicated that chaplain programs were beneficial to officers and could contribute to officers' mental health. Chaplain participants shared those perceptions and added that chaplain programs benefitted officers because faith was associated with positive coping. These findings could not be completely corroborated by the literature reviewed, as chaplains were not mentioned specifically by much research, aside from Haecker's (2017) dissertation about help-seeking behaviors by evaluating information gathered from counselors, clinicians, peer groups, and chaplains. The mention of chaplains was essential, especially considering the research context and because there were not any studies specifically discussing chaplains and police officers. Haecker showed that the chaplaincy program's effectiveness, indicating the importance of having such programs in place.

In alignment with Haecker (2017), all six police participants indicated that chaplain programs were beneficial to officers. Similarly, P1 believed that the contribution a chaplain program could help: "Yes, for those who believe and completely trust in God. No, for those who believe in God, but don't trust God or man." All four chaplain participants also perceived chaplain programs as beneficial to officers. The finding was like other research; for example, Johnson (2016) found that such issues as the levels of unit cohesiveness and the levels of support from the rest of the unit might significantly impact those who have mental health issues. Regarding this research, this support might come in the form of the police chaplaincy program. Police chaplaincy offers police

officers the chance to take advantage of religion and spirituality as a coping mechanism for stress.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of my study was the gap in the research literature regarding the research question. Additionally, there were some possible biases in the research participants' views and opinions, such as those differing from clergy and senior police staff. Therefore, I interviewed the police officers, who had used spirituality, "treatment," and police chaplain methods, and explained the benefits of the research's unbiased outcomes. I did not apply "online sampling" to every police department to determine the police officers' current mental health status and compare it before and after utilizing police chaplain programs and spirituality; thus, the study might not apply to the entire population. The small sample size ($n = 10$) also limited the generalizability of the study.

I faced challenges choosing interview questions that would encourage the respondents to reveal the effects of police chaplain programs and spirituality. Thus, it was important that I built trust with respondents. Regarding the police force, building trust with the considered outsiders was difficult. Moreover, matters of spirituality are personal. Thus, study participants might not be prepared to share their spirituality as they perceived it as a sensitive topic. To overcome the challenge of trust, I assured respondents that their responses were only intended to help in research. The answers were only to be used to assist in knowledge creation rather than other purposes. Furthermore, the information shared was used in confidence. Thus, respondents were not exposed to any risks or information disclosure issues by my maintaining participants' anonymity.

Recommendations

Some recommendations can be made based on the limitations and findings of the study. The limitations were the small sample size. Although most qualitative research has a small sample size, which past qualitative researchers have cited as acceptable (Billups, 2020; Olsen, 2012; Shaw et al., 2016; Surmiak, 2018), future researchers can address this limitation by replicating this study with different participants. The participants may come from a different region, race, culture, and so on, thereby adding to the results and further filling the gap in research. Quantitative researchers can also conduct further research using a larger sample size and issuing a test to assess spirituality levels. It may also be interesting for a qualitative researcher to take up ehtnography if they have experience within the police force itself. Any further research into the PTSD and spiritual coping methods will help future police officers and research.

A recommendation can be made based on Theme 3: Chaplain programs are associated with benefits to police officers' mental and holistic health. Not much research was found to corroborate this finding; therefore, future researchers are encouraged to continue studying chaplain programs and police officers. This phenomenon is not well understood, and if it is a way for officers to cope with PTSD and mental issues, it is worth further study.

Implications

The study helps to fill the gap in literature about the impact of spirituality on law enforcement officers' well-being and effective ways to improve their mental health statuses. This study's benefit is related to encouraging improvements in law

enforcement's mental health, possibly enhancing the quality of their work and the criminal justice system. Additionally, the study may positively affect society because spirituality and spiritual practices can improve other people's mental health (e.g., Robinson, 2019).

Across many societies, including the United States, public outcry through protests continues to justify the need for police reforms (Clifton et al., 2018). Clifton et al. (2018) assessed officers who had become involved in indiscipline cases. I found that the officers had faced high levels of stress, negatively influencing their abilities to discharge their duties amicably. Therefore, exploring the effect of spirituality on police outcomes provides a glimpse of how the police may reform themselves to offer responsive services to the community. Thus, an implication for social change is that the study is also likely to enhance the knowledge of spiritual matters within the police service.

Chopko et al. (2016) implied that low levels or the absence of spirituality in policing could explain police officers' maladjustment behaviors. Individuals in charge of law enforcement need to learn additional avenues for assisting officers in handling their frustrations and stress from police work. Thus, the study's findings add to the existing knowledge of and literature on criminal justice and police spirituality. Furthermore, the task is likely to contribute to other disciplines, given law enforcement's interconnected nature with other fields. In this regard, public policy and general administration and security may be influenced by this study.

Conclusion

Police suffer an alarmingly high prevalence of mental health issues. For instance, Garcia-Irons (2018) found that between 7% and 19% of police officers exhibited symptoms of PTSD and other mental illnesses. With such high numbers, this problem needs to be addressed to improve police officers' mental health and life satisfaction. Over the years, various researchers have suggested different possible solutions (Lusk et al., 2018). Therefore, I aimed to add to the research about a possible coping method: spirituality. I helped to fill the research gap on police chaplain systems' effectiveness and programs on police spirituality to solve mental health issues. More research is still needed to aid in further bridging this gap and lowering the suffering of police officers so that they can continue to keep society safe.

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Appendix A: Police Chaplain Interview Questions

Walden University IRB # 01-11-22-0989884

1. How do you serve your agency as police chaplain?

2. How often do you come across officers whose exposure to occupational stressors that have a negative impact on your job performance?

3. Have you ever noticed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among officers?

4. Do you think that spirituality helps to prevent post-traumatic stress disorder?

5. Does a state of spiritual wellness assist officers in coping with the stress, and if so, how?

6. Do you consider spiritual and mental well-being to be compromised in law enforcement work?

7. Do you think that chaplain programs have positive effect on police officers' mental health?

8. Do you think that such programs can be beneficial for police officers? If no, why?

9. What interventions do you suggest provide a holistic approach to counseling with police officers?

10. Elaborate on your opinions about how a religious faith would be beneficial to officers?

Appendix B: Police Officer Interview Questions

Walden University IRB # 01-11-22-0989884

1. How often are you exposed to occupational stressors that have a negative impact on your job performance?

2. Are you able to identify the causes of the stress that you tend to experience at work?

3. In your opinion, what is your level of stress resistance?

4. Do you feel you have a high level of spirituality?

5. Do you think that spirituality of your colleagues influences the level of your own?

6. Have you ever experienced major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as trouble sleeping and concentrating, a high level of irritability, or aggressive behavior?

7. Have you ever noticed any symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among your colleagues?

8. Do you think that spirituality helps to prevent post-traumatic stress disorder?

9. What types of spiritual practices do you follow?

10. Does a state of spiritual wellness assist you in coping with the stress, and if so, how?

11. Do you consider your spiritual and mental well-being to be compromised due to the nature of your work?

12. Do you think that chaplain programs have positive effect on police officers' mental health?

13. Do you share your negative emotions caused by stress at work with your colleagues? If yes, how often? If no, why?

14. Does your police department have a police chaplain program to support you during hard times?

15. Do you think that such support can be beneficial for police officers? If no, why?