Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

2022

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Emotional Health of Military Police

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

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MA, American Military University, 2012

BS, Saint Leo University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

In recent years, reports of police stress during the COVID-19 pandemic have proliferated across the United States. The extent and nature of the pandemic on the morale and emotional health of law enforcement and the communities they serve have received significant attention from scholars and researchers. In addition, a growing body of literature examining the impact on work performance and overall mental health of first responders serving selflessly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic also exists. However, there was gap in the research of the impacts on the emotional health of military police members that have worked during the pandemic. In this study, the perspectives of 10 military police members who served during the pandemic were explored through semi-structured interviews. The interview subjects members stationed at a Texas Air Force Base. The goal was to understand if, and how, working during the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted these military members' emotional health and their perspectives on and decision to continue or leave their respective military organizations. The study revealed that there was a significant impact to the military members' emotional health, and their decisions and conclusions were based on those impacts. Concerns over personal safety, continuous change of policies, and a lack of transparency had as much influence as the negative connotation of the police members wanting to leave the service. These finding may be used by any military police organization to create positive social change by mediating their members' beliefs and promoting transparency between military members and their leadership.

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Chapter 1: Study Overview

The study assessed the impacts of COVID-19 on the emotional health of military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Stress for military police is always problematic due to various issues, including recruiting constraints, schedules, and deployments. The specific focus of this study was to see what impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the emotional health of military police personnel. To accomplish this, the study used qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews with military police personnel, until saturation was reached.

Problem Statement

At the end of 2019, the world changed, and the ability to sustain the workforce on several fronts, such as hospitals, airports, stores, and military bases, struggled. During the pandemic, most businesses and operations could allow employees to work remotely. However, this is not possible for American military forces, police, and other first responders who must serve regardless of exterior/environmental factors. Historically, 1918-1919 was the last time the world saw a pandemic of the magnitude as COVID-19. It is important to note that, from a historical perspective, the Spanish flu potentially led to several events that threatened security. After the Spanish flu pandemic, society was tested with attacks by the anarchist Luigi Galleani in the 1920 Wall Street bombing (Oshewolo and Nwozor, 2020). The pandemic tested the capabilities and workforce of police forces across the nation to protect their citizens. As a result of the pandemic, police agencies struggled to protect citizens, thus making them vulnerable when the attack occurred by Galleani (Dudley, 2020).

Based on a literature review, there was a distinct gap related to the emotional health of Airman and the capabilities of military police at bases. They not only have to meet requirements as regular police officers but are also called upon for other unique requirements. Some of their requirements are to be ready to deploy at a moment's notice to solidify America's foreign policy, as well as control and quarantine the first COVID-19 infected Americans returning home from overseas. Researchers currently do not have enough information to identify the effects of long-term surge events such as the pandemic on military police, thus preventing them from getting the support required from the Pentagon. When large-scale incidents take place, additional manning is generally required. If other personnel are not available, the department is forced to change work cycles and hours, potentially impacting the overall emotional health of military police officers.

Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, military police officers were subjected to additional exposure due to their mission. Furthermore, officers were also worried about family at home and their exposure. Finally, daily officer postings were adjusted to meet high demands and safety protocols. For example, two and four-person patrols were changed to one-person patrols. This resulted in more stress and exposure to the criminal elements. The combination of the factors mentioned above contributed to burnout and caused officers to quit or seek medical attention due to the stress related to staffing. In this study, I investigated how the impact of the pandemic took a toll on the military police's emotional health to highlight the issues to better prepare forces for other large-scale surges that may arise in the future. The research bridged the gap between regular

and surge operations and what will be needed for military police personnel to be successful in the future, including how to cope with emotional health, manning, and burnout. This demographic has yet to be studied, and there is a need to understand the emotional stress of the pandemic on military police personnel.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on military police personnel, which included military police officers that supported the mission before and during the pandemic. Furthermore, the study looked to assess the emotional stress associated with working in a complex environment through sampling. This population was accessed through a convenience sample of military personnel that were briefed about the reason of study and purpose of interviews, first by their known associates and friends, then reiterated by me directly. Finally, all these candidates were volunteers from the military police stationed at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base in San Antonio.

To achieve this goal, the military chief of police (CC) was notified and informed that interviews would be conducted of his members off duty. This was not required; however, letting leadership know built trust between the military police leadership and myself, which instilled confidence in them that my study could create social change. These interviewees were only reached when available, off duty, via social media or introduced via my extensive professional network. After introduction via professional network, I made contact with the military members and presented a flyer. I then talked about the study and the benefits. After a causal conversation and establishing a bond with

the potential participant, I made them aware of the research study and specified that participation is entirely voluntary. The candidates for this study were self-identified military police officers that worked before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Nix and Richards (2021), police forces have been incredibly stressed during regular social calls due to the pandemic and effects of the quarantine. However, no study has been done on the impact of the pandemic on the military police with their unique requirements. Some of the unique requirements are the federal government's selection of XXXXXXXX Air Force Base as one of the first locations for quarantine sites for COVID-19 exposed citizens returning from overseas, as well as deployments and other regular police officer duties. The study was designed to fill the existing gap in the literature related to the impacts on military police during the pandemic. This has resulted in leaders at the highest level being unable to effectively staff their military police forces for their requirements without excessive burnout. Furthermore, not understanding the mental state and exposure to COVID-19 potentially took a toll on the military police personnel. The goal of this study was to identify policy recommendations for military police leaders and to understand the effects of surge operations, including exposure to the pandemic and the overall emotional health of their officers.

While studies have been conducted on different first responding agencies and police departments, no study had been done on military police that is a unique and integrated part of homeland security. These airmen are tasked with not only the burden of law enforcement duties but also overseas deployments. The study looked to fill the gap by analyzing the pandemic's impacts on the men and women of the military police

squadron at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. The study also examined how leadership dealt with any issues related to emotional health during the pandemic.

Significance

The pandemic created new issues for military police personnel that impacted operations, such as officers present for duty. It was likely that the stressors of dealing with worldwide deployments, supporting the federal quarantine mission, and serving military housing impacted their emotional health. The military police leadership had created new methods to deal with the absence of officers (Ackerman and Peterson, 2020). The study is meant to fill a gap in research in understanding the impacts of surge operations on the emotional health of military police officers during the pandemic. Researchers do not know entirely what issues could have caused impacts on the emotional health of military police officers, thus leadership not having a proper solution to prevent burnout. I sought to fill the gap in study to help military police leaders become ready for any future large-scale incidents. I intended to keep leaders informed of all the identified factors, especially from the policemen's perspective of their issues, which were highlighted during the study. The thought that there may be so many factors that affected military police emotional health during the pandemic created a gap and lessons ready to learn for potential improvements once factors are documented. I strongly believe that military police leaders will resolve any issues once they are made aware. If no issues arise, the military chief of police will still have a documented account of impacts on behavior health of military police officers during an extended surge such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, finding in this research highlight long-term issues that have not been considered and overlooked that did affect military police. Finally, this research can be used at several different locations for informational purposes, since the location where the participants were located is not the only base selected to provide quarantine services for civilians (Christenson, 2020). In day-to-day operations, military manning constraints for military police around the U.S. military is not a new issue and has been highlighted before. For example, police departments plan to deal with surges such as natural disasters and large-scale incidents that demand their workforce. Other issues such as separations, retirements, and recruitments are kept into consideration for manning requirements. The unique nature of the pandemic needs a surge for an extended amount of time. This timeline can be weeks, months, or years (Dudley, 2020). The requirements of military police units can vary depending on commander discretion. However, they mainly support imminent long-term issues, such as the current pandemic. They also ensure communication and information sharing with other first responder agencies such as medical, fire, public health, and EMS units, which is key to mission success. These mission-critical posts are manning intensive and require staffing 24 hours a day.

Research Question

The study addressed the following research question:

1. What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on the emotional health of military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base?

Theoretical Framework

The study had three principal theoretical lenses to facilitate the design. They were Bakker and Demerouti's job demands-resources (JD-R) theory/behavior theory, the Lazarus and Folkman (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory, and finally Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery. Taken together, these frameworks became the vehicle for design, execution, and analysis for facilitation towards the completed study. These theories were used to explain how COVID-19 (the phenomenon) systematically impacts the workforce's emotional health. Furthermore, the theories helped to describe the population, situation, and phenomenon accurately and systematically. The combination of theories defined if the workforce is overworked and their feelings towards the impacts on their health.

More specifically, for the completed study, these theoretical insights provided literature for understanding how COVID-19 had a physical, mental, and emotional impact on the workforce, primarily through issues related to adequately staffing the department. What can be deduced is that in the nation today, there is a disparity in different jobs when it comes to how COVID-19 effects operations. Transitions between environmental factors and the workforce have impacted the health and resources of the military police organization. Research indicates that police officers on the frontline working during the COVID-19 pandemic have an increased risk of encountering job burnout. Studies previously showed that people involved in different phenomena, such as Hurricane Katrina, had irregular stress and depression symptoms even a year after the event (Obradovich et al., 2018).

The forthcoming dissertation built extensively on Bakker and Demerouti's (2001) JD-R because this model can be used to predict employee burnout, engagement, and consequently organizational performance. Using JD-R as a theoretical lens, the dissertation argues that COVID-19 has several impacts on the emotional health affecting military police that are unknown. These impacts on emotional health have long-term implications on officer well-being along with actual work performance. Officers that have been affected by burnout are not likely to perform as expected and to cause long-term emotional health impacts to themselves due to not being able to manage the stress at hand (Bakker and Demerouti, 2001). JD-R's core is the nexus between the job and the stress resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the premise that individuals affected by stress without proper recuperation time impact emotional health. This happens because the individual does not know how to deal with the stress effectively, which gives rise to other issues such as long-term emotional health effects, absence from the front lines, and overall resource consumption without proper output. In short, JD-R provides evidence for the existence of two simultaneous processes. High job demands without appropriate resources and manning will exhaust employees' emotional health and physical resources, which will lead to depletion of energy resulting in health problems (Bakker and Demerouti, 2001).

The research of LePine et al. (2005) supports this application of JD-R to understand how a fulfilling and meaningful job turns into potential emotional health impacting experience. Job stress may result from repetitive work activities, work pressure, organizational politics, and role conflicts. Furthermore, life events such as the

illness of a family member, especially during the pandemic, will disrupt practical uses of job resources and effectiveness in having long-term emotional health issues (Bakker et al., 2019).

Lastly, as the authors note, JD-R shows that military police employees are faced with increased job constraints, and the pandemic makes things worse. Hence, they are likely to use maladaptive self-regulation strategies. Some of these strategies include coping with inflexibility and self-undermining (Bakker et al., 2019). In addition, pandemics cause increases in job strains which lead to affecting emotional health recovery. Bakker et al. (2019) stated organizational resources such as human resources practices and health leadership may help employees to regulate short-term fatigue and avoid enduring burnout and affecting emotional health. Understanding the impacts of emotional health is vital to give military officers tools such as emotional intelligence and proactive personalities to help regulate stress and damage to their emotional health. The completed dissertation looked to identify, if any, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional health of military police. Once again, the principal focus was on applying Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R theory to study the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on military police assigned.

In an article by Pedrosa et al. (2014), the authors demonstrate how the human behavior of professionals has changed throughout the pandemic. The article also shows how the COVID-19 pandemic and Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R behavior theory are linked in as much as COVID-19 has impacted the military police personal, which causes stressors at an exponential scale, with individual military police officers creating self-

coping mechanisms for impacts to emotional health that could be unknown to military leaders. Bakker posits that work stressors, such as the pandemic, we are facing occur through continuously working, without breaks, with evolving environmental stressors causing long-term emotional health damage, which shapes decision-making and subsequent action.

In the article written by Pedrosa and Bitencourt (2014), working during the pandemic led to crucial components of the emotional reaction of professionals on the front lines, such as healthcare workers and law enforcement. The authors also state how internal and external factors, such as personality traits, gender, media, economy, and the government response, influence how pandemic impacts emotional health. This article also discusses several measures that might minimize the emotional impact derived from the pandemic. The article talks about several groups, leaving a gap for military police. Military police leaders are always willing to improve the conditions of their employees once issues are identified. The authors assert that the pandemic has intensely affected frontline workers and involves a myriad of behavior processes that impacts emotional and physical health, the most significant of which, according to JD-R, is continuous work in a stressful environment, repetitive, without a proper rest cycle (Bakker et al., 2019).

Further, as the authors note, JD-R stipulates that factors that affect workers over an extended period will cause potential issues such as stress, depression, and a gradual permanent impact on emotional health. It is already noted that frontline workers face several stressors regularly that can be addressed by their respective leadership when issues are identified. In the military police field, problems are generalized and cannot be

adequately resolved due to the gap in research. The authors assert that it is of fundamental importance that the populations being studied during the pandemic provide accurate information concerning operations during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure proper help is available to the workers (Pedrosa et al., 2001). In this dissertation, I examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the military police officers that have been working on the frontlines and sought potential solutions to the effects from the workers now to prepare the force for future surge operations. Once again, the principal focus was on the Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R theory to study the impacts of COVID-19 on the emotional health of military police assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base and potential solutions so that this dissertation could make recommendations to military leadership.

Today's stringent job requirements and a nearly constant cycle of work required from military police mean that the impacts of COVID-19 on the military police have been redoubled, exerting more significant effects than at any other time in human history. As a nearly universal phenomenon against all the lives of most Americans today, the pandemic has had drastic impacts in unique requirements, such as being ready to deploy, deploying at a moment's notice to solidify America's foreign policy, as well as control and quarantine the first COVID-19 infected Americans returning home from overseas, and finally, protect and serve the local Air Force Base communities.

Further, as has been shown in the discussion of Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R theory, a significant feature of JD-R is its emphasis on the role of irregular work cycles, excessive job demands, and external environmental factors dramatically impact the

overall long term emotional health of the workforce. These variables significantly motivates the forthcoming study, which requires the use of the JD-R theory to ascertain how COVID-19 has affected the capabilities of the officers, shaping potential negative self-perception, relationships with family members, expected quality of work out-put and long term impacts on emotional health.

Relative to the application of JD-R theory, Schaufeli (2017) found in his studies that employees working in poor conditions and burned-out workers are synonymous with the instances of sickness absence, occupational injuries and accidents, poor work performance, and lower than expected productivity which impacts emotional health. Ultimately, understanding and self-monitoring the company's workforce translate to the organization's success. If military police leadership can understand what is potentially impacting emotional health in their forces, they can influence factors within their control. For example, ending the COVID-19 pandemic is not a controllable factor, especially with the virus continuously mutating.

The author states that once factors affecting emotional health are identified, then timely targeted measures can be taken to prevent burnout preventing impacts to emotional health. According to Schaufeli (2017), apart from this intrinsic reason, there is also an extrinsic reason for organizations to monitor the workplace. Some companies are doing this in Europe, and it is their legal responsibility to ensure their workers are getting emotional health surveillance. Organizations should also be held legally liable to ensure their employees get the help they need and taking appropriate measures to make a healthier workplace (Schauefeli, 2017).

The inception of burnout is when the pandemic caused the military police to work 24-hour cycles given more stressors to officers assigned and more exposure to prolonged work in an environment that has not existed since the Spanish flu in 1912. The behavior theory, as explained by Arnold B. Bakker, if a litmus test were to be applied, it would try to answer the fundamental questions relative to this research about the pandemic impacts on military police emotional health, or even what different stressors the pandemic caused within this group that would have impacted their overall emotional health. As an example, there are currently groups working on the frontlines, such as civilian police and healthcare employees, working through burnout with several long-term impacts on emotional health (Schauefeli, 2017). As Dudley (2021) has shown, the machinations of expectations from law enforcement are to provide uninterrupted services while taking on the pandemic. As shown, Dudley argues, in most revelations of the impacts on civilian law enforcement, it will be difficult for national law enforcement to continue to operate without long-term effects on their workforce. This situation would be worse for military police due to the unique responsibilities of being a police officer and military member simultaneously.

A central focus of the completed dissertation was on the impact on the overall emotional health of military police through representative research conducted in other cases, such as the study on police stress and resilience during the pandemic by Strongner and Mclean (2021). The authors' study on police stress and resilience has explored the particular impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on emotional health. Their study shaped the image of what a police officer goes through daily, accumulating different stressors.

As was shown, the impacts on emotional health come from the continuous work, expectations, lack of a rest cycle, and currently stress magnification of the pandemic, which makes the dealing with death a surreal reality. Stronger et al. described the effects of the pandemic and how the police officers' resilience has been challenged. They argued that resilience will wear out fast, especially dealing with pandemics impacting emotional health.

Policing is already a taxing occupation, mentally and contending with factors such as different shifts, violence, and current lack of public support, which all add to chronic stress that has long term impacts on emotional health (Hartley et al., 2011). As can be seen, police officers have a significant risk of mental health issues compared to the general population. Military police have the same responsibilities as civilian police officers, plus the additional duties of deployments and quarantining COVID-19 infected Americans on XXXXXXXX Air Force Base (Christenson, 2020). This article articulates that emotional health issues among law enforcement personnel are analogous with the work environment, organization politics, inconsistent shift scheduling, and exposure to traumatic events and subsequent post-traumatic stress disorder; (Hartley et al., 2011)

A newer and more modern use of the JD-R (behavior theory) is the recent study of law enforcement burnout in the United Stated and United Kingdom by Jacquelyn Keaton (2021). In this modern use of JD-R, she applies the principles of the known stressors to police and questions the long-term effects on officers. The study looks at the prolonged exposure to stress at work. It highlights the three dimensions of exhaustion, which relate to the depleting emotional resources the officers must deal with the

challenges associated with their jobs (Keaton, 2021). According to Keaton (2021),

burnout is ubiquitous enough to be mentioned by the World Health Organization, which

recognizes burnout as a factor that can impact emotional health and as a reason for

someone to seek medical attention (World Health Organization, 2019). Behavior theory

is used to understand how environmental factors affect individuals and their abilities to

make decisions. As has been shown, the pandemic has been recognized as an influential

environmental factor that is significantly impacting emotional health, linking the Bakker

and Demerouti JD-R behavior theory, which was particularly salient to the completed

analysis of the role of the pandemic in impacting the emotional health of the military

police. The JD-R supported the premise of this dissertation, which focused on external

conditions such as the pandemic on the emotional health of the military police.

In addition to the application of the JD-R theory, my study also drew extensively on the

work of the transactional theory of stress and coping, as put forth and refined by Lazarus

(Lazarus and Folkman, 2007). In the transactional theory of stress and coping, stress

occurs as a series of transactions between the person, environment, and situation (Lazarus

and Folkman, 1984). Using this theory leads to how the transactional theory of stress

creates a nexus between the stresses that military officer's experience and that impacts

emotional health. This theory helps develop the necessary groundwork to understanding

how the officers' exposure to the traumatic events (COVID-19), resulting in outcomes

supported with evidence that can be later studied for future gaps in study. The

transactional theory depicts the individuals as one point and their interactions to the

environmental stress as a second point. This relationship between the two points makes a

complex, dynamic, mutually influential, and interdependent tractional network (Lazarus

and Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that the external stressors

effects individuals subjected to the phenomena (pandemic). The officers, point one, will

have impacts by the environment factors, point two. This creates a relationship between

the two points. Lazarus (2012) believed that the transactional theory of stress and coping

led to individuals' filter stressors and emotional impacts. The affected individuals think

they can minimize the harm, which can impact their emotional health. Within the context

of the completed study, the regular stressors and the effects of the pandemic could be

seen to constitute rapidly emerging and impacting military police officers, causing long

term impacts to the police officers (in Lazarus's sense), which simultaneously defines the

relationships of the actor (the officers) and are environmental factors (the pandemic). Due

to the pandemic exponentially increasing the number of points of contacts (officers)

impacted by the pandemic, the complexity of the relational ties linking them is similarly

magnified. If, as JD-R theory suggests, individuals that constantly work without a cycle

of rest can result in burnout, and the transactional theory indicates external factors cause

stress, it shows that the impacts of the pandemic potentially impacting emotional health

are connected. In the research by Stogner et al. (2020), the focus on officers that have

worked during the pandemic, expected to provide protection to the community, enforce

lockdowns, and social distancing, has caused enough continuous stress in the lives of the

officers to alter their emotional health and the way the exposed officers manage stress.

Transactional theory of stress is of particular value to my study because it is the premise

of the intractable link between the subject and the pandemic, which facilitates the

analysis of the effects of the pandemic on the military police officers' motional health. How the military police officers negotiate this locus of contention was the preeminent focus of the completed study. Further, the importance of this theory in relational attributes of subject-external factors proved particularly useful for the conducted study as to the impacts on the emotional health of the officers. Military police officers will be shown to occupy one positional point, their sense of self stress management, accordingly to this theory, establishes a relationship with both the military police officer and the pandemic to show the overall impacts on emotional health.

Another foundational theory upon which this study is based is Benight and Bandura's (2004) social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery. Benight and Bandura's theory studies traumatization on the role of perceived ability to self-cope and its efficacy in recovery from experiences in the framework of social cognitive theory. This theory will be referred to as "self-efficiency theory" in this document. When the mechanisms of the phenomenon (pandemic) structure prevent the attainment of stress self-coping, the individuals' emotional health has been impacted by that same system, the individual's practical coping skills are overexerted when compared to the norms results, according to this theory.

This self-efficiency theory is fundamental to this study since the pandemic is a traumatic and constant event equal to a large-scale attack compared only to the one on September 11, 2001. Furthermore, this behavior theory also focuses on crucial ongoing stressors include perilousness, unpredictability, and uncontrollability (Stogner, 2020). With military police, the very officers tasked with protecting and enforcing social norms,

also serving as the instruments through which citizens receive access to those services, may be significantly affected or denied due to the constant stress and demand on the officers. Very much like JD-R behavior theory, then, the application of self-efficiency theory to the present study situates the impacts of emotional health on military police at the nexus of forces that are impacting the officers without the ability to recharge and self-cope.Within this framework, prevailing frontline operations during the pandemic provide representations that would position these subjects as both the embankment of societal norms and the inevitable unknowing apostate of those norms.

Benight and Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery, therefore, provide a practical framework to assess the implications of the constant stress of the pandemic on the military police on the frontlines, as represented by the previous studies on the impact on police officers during surge operations. For example, Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery describes the essential foundation of emotional health as the mechanisms of human self-efficiency is to control the external factors that govern their lives. The paradigm of "self-efficiency" describes a state where the subjects regulate human functions through cognitive and decisional processes; the subject or node can either enhance themselves or result in self debilitating mannerism—the ability to self-motivate and preserve the characteristics that impact emotional health in the face of continuous stress. The totality of variables that affect the officers' emotional life, vulnerability to anxiety and depression, and resiliency to adversity are all the main characteristics that impact their emotional health (Benight and Bandura, 2001).

However, as was explored in the completed dissertation, the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and unique responsibilities functions as a surrogate for the abnormal pedagogies provided by the individual's external factors such as the environment and internal factors such as self-coping. Self-efficiency theory was applied to the completed study insofar as it was used to explain and assess the complete picture on the impacts of the emotional health of military police officers. As such, the self-efficiency mechanics were unable to aid the officers to properly manage their stress because of the combined effects of regular tasks, the disintegration of social norms by the pandemic effects, and the strains of the unique responsibilities are creating stressors that impact moral health, within the social circles where they are members, like that in Benight and Bandura's theory and JD-R as a response to environmental stimuli.

A research poll by Harley et al. (2011) gives insight into the differences in health risk levels between police officers and the rest of the general U.S. population. The poll showed that nearly half of the police officers slept less than six hours a day. The probability of sleep loss for shift workers was four times higher than the rest of the U.S. general population. Chronic sleep loss can lead to excessive fatigue and impaired ability to react to stressful events. Furthermore, the prevalence of depression was twice as high with police officers compared to the general population. Depression is known to create chronic illness and impact emotional health (Harley et al., 2011). This poll gave a glimpse of the impacts on the emotional health in the lives of military police on the front lines during the pandemic, constantly working, deploying, quarantining infected, and protecting the communities of XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

The lack of highlighting the impacts of emotional health on the military police officers created a situation where the continuous cycle had implications on these officers that will continue to decay their self-efficiency mechanisms. The goal of having a healthy workforce to stand against the next large-scale event may not be attainable because of the lack of information available that can help leaders improve the conditions of their officers. Since accurate information is not available on the overall impact on the military police officers, it prevents the organization from having a healthy workforce level that can perform up to expectations. The military police are already understaffed and struggling with the effects of the pandemic, which is beyond the scope of all other first responders. The JD-R theory applies because it speaks to the inability to properly sustain during uncontrollable situations that cause undesirable results for the organizational goals.

In the conducted dissertation research project, the focus was on the of emotional health impacts on military police officers during the pandemic. The exposure to working in a potentially stressful environment might result in the officers not recovering the help they need, resulting in a long-term impact on the emotional health of military police officers (Stronger, 2020). Additionally, according to the transactional theory of stress, the transactions between the subject and the environment, which are two points of the transactions, affect how the subject processes and internalizes their responses to stress, as explored by Lazarus (2012). These truth values of the mentioned points of the transaction were shown in the completed study, which showed a significant impact the individual's emotional health, walking away with long-term effects that may never be resolved.

Results by the uncontrolled events such as the pandemic that has disrupted American

society, influencing military officers when they are needed the most. Understanding the

likely impact of working if can only be measured by a few events in the last century, can

be attempted to be understood via the elements of both JD-R theory and self-efficiency

theory, understanding of those theories is essential not only in trying to assess why

stressors exist, but also in determining if the totality of effects of the transaction exchange

has developed impacts to the military police that may impact them in the long term,

jeopardizing the mission of future surge engagements.

In 2020, Stogner et al, presented the intriguing notion of vise amidst the idea of

several stressors and mental health issues is what drives the questions informing the

proposed study. If there is a way that the issues that military police are having can be

accurately documented, it should immediately be studied and explained in detail to

military leaders— highlighting them can expose the dangerous and significant impacts on

emotional health, giving a chance of treatment. The completed dissertation research study

isn't about the common challenges that police officers face, but rather about how the

pandemic has affected military police ability to self-actuate the surrounding stressors that

might have severely impacted the officers' emotional health. An exemplified example of

a stressor to military police is the change in standard operating procedures. The research

has shown that the reactions of the law enforcement have been near-ubiquitous, such as

their enforcement of keeping social distancing and conducting fewer traffic stops. This

would be intended to help reduce face-to-face interactions; however, incidents such as

domestic violence and theft are at an all-time high, requiring police responses (Stogner et al., 2020).

In support of self-efficacy theories, an understanding must be established that it isn't specifically deviance we are talking about but deviation from goals. The connection is the lack of the ability to self-manage the stress of military police through the exploitative shaping of the pandemic and decision-making processes of military leaders with their current understanding. When Slocum (2010) developed the theory of explorations of behavior continuity, it was not necessarily designed to understand the impacts on emotional health. However, it provides the framework on how the COVID-19 pandemic may influence officers' stress and emotional health even after a 100% effective vaccine has been created (Stogner et al., 2020). Slocum's theory states that the negative impacts of the past and existing stressors have an impact on individuals' capabilities to deal with new obstacles and challenges. His theory shows that officers working through the pandemic are not likely to deal with stressors associated with COVID-19 and are less ready than the pre-pandemic timeline.

To further expand on Slocum's (2010) theory, being in an uncertain pandemic results in a neurotransmitter and stress hormone, which results in increased susceptibility to the negative impacts to emotional health (Stogner et al., 2020). Slocum's theories pertain principally to decision-making processes which lead to officers having issues dealing with evolving regulations, enforcing shut-downs and social distancing, and other stressors regularly associated with police work. Nevertheless, these insights provide a valuable framework for the proposed study since they facilitate the analysis of self

efficiently managing stress, including those resulting from the pandemic, which could have potentially impacted the emotional health of military police at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

The demographic focus of the research project was military police and the problem of the stressors of not only dealing with regular police work or of being in the military but the unprecedented impacts of the pandemic on the police officers while sustaining common obstacles. According to a 2020 impact of COVID-19 on law enforcement agencies wave poll, the responses to the credible situation of the police today have increased even though police leadership has asked for lower physical contact via decreased traffic stops. Significantly, another wave poll, as of April 2020, found that only 43% of police officers received any specific training for protection against COVID-19 (Lum et al., 2021). These polls solidified the premise of the completed study; the April 2020 and 2021 polls essential and intriguing findings motivate this study.

Police officers are falling out at locations all over the world. So much so, in Belgium, an entire city was without police altogether due to the many officers contracting COVID-19. In the United States, police leaders are raising the alarm as police shortages are sweeping the nation. This exodus is affecting small and large departments alike. In Minneapolis, after the death of George Floyd, 300 officers resigned. A review of their exit interviews revealed that leadership politics, along with the stress of the pandemic, was too much to handle (Westervelt, 2021). Officers leaving their jobs is a luxury compared to military police, as leaving their job will mean prison. It may well be, as the forthcoming dissertation will explore, that the military police have no other option than to

face their issues head-on. As shown, military police have additional stressors and must find a way of efficiently operating their points which aligns with self-efficiency and transactional theory. Such a hypothesis was affirmed the principal concern of the conducted study, which examined whether the stressors faced by the military police during the pandemic affected their emotional health, leading to them falling out due to mental health issues, leaving the military, or seeking medical help for extended periods which disqualifies them from working.

<div align="center">**Comparing the Theories**</div>

The efforts of the completed study to explore the impacts of COVID-19 on the emotional health of military police assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base was founded on three principal theories: Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R behavior theory, the Lazarus and Folkman (1987) transactional behavior theory, and finally, the Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery. Perhaps the most significant variable uniting these theories is that of behavior. Regarding the conducted study, these theories emphasize the ability of the subjects to cope with stress via self-efficiency. The investigation pertains less to their original emphasis on police officers' ability to manage stress or normative deviance and more on deviance from the subject's ability to handle all surrounding stressors and their responses to the external stimulus presented to them by the pandemic that controls the military police personnel. The application of Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery applies. The theory posits that humans subjected to an unstable environment that is out of their control cause stress and overloads the subjects' ability to proceed with stress impacts emotional

health efficiently. If the subject does not receive relief or a break in the cycle of stress, then the ability to respond to dangerous situations officers face dramatically drops. So, within the social cognitive theory, there are questions about behavioral and cognitive learning and environmental concerns relevant to the three theories. There were three points related to the events in cognitive learning: that of behavioral, environmental, and personal events, which became applicable when discussion about the impacts of the pandemic on the emotional health of military police assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base was conducted.

Understanding Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery is key to interpreting the applications of Lazarus and Folkman's (1987) transactional behavior theory (Deflem, 2015) and how it applied to the completed research dissertation project. The understanding of social cognitive theory ties into the Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R behavior theory, as it enables the analysis of the internal and external pressures which the pandemic and extra military police responsibilities can cause to the emotional health of the military police personnel. Relative to this, Bakker argued that when a subject is continually working in a cycle surrounded by stressors without proper recuperation, it will result in a deterioration of emotional health and reduced quality of productivity greater than expected by leaders (Deflem, 2015). The Lazarus and Folkman (1987) transactional behavior theory suggests that emotional health can get impacted when the transitions between the two points in which the officer and the environment are left unmonitored will negatively impact the subject's health. This is particularly true if subjects' cognitions are shaped under the factors that have made the

pandemic a turbulent environment. To expect the military police to continually work unaffected in pursuit of normative effects during the pandemic will inevitably and invariably be thwarted. Are the uncontrollable variables that make the pandemic such a volatile environment enough to impact the emotional health, leaving long-term damage on the officers? And if enough military members are left untreated, will they be able to sustain everyday lives after service? How many military police members will walk away because leaders do not understand their stressors? Therein is the relevance of all three theories mentioned above and how they applied to the completed research and dissertation project.

Nature of the Study

This study used a qualitative approach centering on interviews and field observations to support a phenomenological analysis. Qualitative design was appropriate for this dissertation topic because it enabled the study of the participants' viewpoints along with analysis of the discourse that subjects used to describe their perspectives. By soliciting subjects' descriptions of their perceptions, experiences, opinions, and behavioral responses, and combining these with an analysis of the language, both spoken and unspoken, the subjects use to convey their answers, I was able to glean a greater insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts these military officers' emotional health.

This study assessed how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the emotional health of military police assigned at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. This is a point that became prevalent in my mind when, while working as a military police headquarters member, I

observed that military police personnel could not remain available for duty. Furthermore, it was evident that the posted were exhausted, irritant, and having issues with family members at home. An open and honest discussion with military police personnel revealed that the officer felt abandoned, defeated, and irrelevant to leadership. It was revealed that the officer had become discouraged because they thought that leadership did not understand what they were going through. They witnessed traumatic events during the pandemic and constantly feared for their own life and their family waiting at home. A study conducted by Maskály et al. (2021) in the *International Journal of Criminal Justice* is about the changes made by police officers in their standard operating procedure and the impacts of those changes on the officers. Though not specific to emotional health of military police, what was relevant in their study was the demographics variable and the impact that stressors of the pandemic on police officers working through the pandemic. Additionally, in the study by Maskály et al., there is references to external stimulation of the pandemic causing impacts on the emotional heal of the police officers.

Other significant points brought up in the study by Maskály et al. (2021) is that this was a global study and the findings where not all the same in all the countries that participated. All the studied police organizations implemented changes due the pandemic, and some of the changes caused optimism and excitement, according to polls. The descriptive nature of the study looked at the potential changes in the domains of organization, complaints, operational and COVID-19 related policing. There are some important results shown, as some positive acceptance to change is present.

This study was necessary to identify what potential policy changes have been made around the world that have made positive impacts on self-efficiency to stressors and have positive impacts on police officers. The results of these studies may help military police leaders adjust current policy and develop new ones derived from lessons learned by others.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As indicated in the previous chapter, the completed dissertation project looked to bridge a significant gap in the existing literature, where academic studies have failed to adequately assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional health of military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. However, a significant body of literature currently exists to examine the effects of working during the pandemic. This literature provided the academic foundation on which the study built.

Negative Impact of COVID-19 on Emotional Health

A significant body of academic literature exists to demonstrate the negative impacts of police officers working during the pandemic. For example, Stogner et al. (2020), Maskály et al. (2021), and Groover et al. (2020) found that police officers working during the pandemic have several significant adverse impacts. These impacts include stress, mental health, resiliency, and misconduct that may arise due to the volatile situation of working during the pandemic. According to the articles, COVID-19 policing has served as stress multiplier for significant stressors for officers and compounds the organizational stress with the occupation. These studies were an essential jumping-off point for this project, which looked to determine whether the impacts of the pandemic on military police are similar to what is found.

The study conducted by Stogner et al. (2020) revealed significant gaps in the existing research, gaps which this study intends to fill. This study was able to collect opinionated data of military police who worked before and during the pandemic. Another primary variable missing in the study by Stogner et al. is the demographic variable the completed

dissertation project intends to address: how the pandemic specifically impacts military police at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base in San Antonio.

In support of the works by Stogner et al. (2020), Maskály et al. (2021), and Groover et al. (2020), a more recent qualitative analysis by Pink et al. (2021) exposed negative impacts of the pandemic on police, at times appearing mischaracterizing because the study is based on Pink et al.'s perceptions that was taken from law enforcement leadership and what the media is reporting. For instance, Pink et al. claimed that the pandemic has caused police officers to experience a lower level of emotional health due to the occupational risks of working during the pandemic. Public perception and leadership guesstimates cannot be used to gauge the level of psychological or emotional health impacts. So, if researchers could make an error in perception and representation, then it could be safe to assume the general public who put less effort into researching incidents might come to a more expedient and even less accurate conclusion.

This amplifies the need to examine the effects of the pandemic on military police working during this phenomenon. Interestingly, Pink et al. (2021) also mentions numerous academic sources which are used in the present study. Works from Stogner et al. (2020), Maskály et al. (2021), Groover et al. (2020), and others who similarly talk about the impacts on police during normal and pandemic operations and those studies which demonstrate that the slightest misinformation is accepted as fact and resolutions to help the officers are based on these perceptions.

Criticism of Pink et al.'s (2021) work was not the intent in this dissertation, but rather their work supports the idea that police officers are impacted by the pandemic and the

discontent with their conditions which seems to echo throughout hers and other studies.

The point in Pink et al.'s work is more specific to police officers that develop stressors in normal conditions and the assumptions of stress being magnified due to the pandemic.

So, if police officers' occupations have a heightened physical and mental health consequences due to the dangers they face daily, this will be amplified during an outbreak of an infectious disease such as the COVID19 pandemic. These findings were amplified by Stogner et al. (2020), Maskály et al. (2021), and Groover et al. (2020), who found that not only did pandemic increase stressors, it had a significant negative effect on emotional health, according to their studies.

These insights were echoed in Hartley et al.'s (2011) study of stressors of police officers in comparison with the general U.S. population. The authors found those police officers had one of the poorest cardiovascular disease health profiles impacting the emotional health of any occupation impact. Consistent with these findings, the prevalence of key emotional health risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes were identified as high in police officers. The study further affirmed that these negative characteristics would be multiplied if an event such as terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 took place. Current events such as the COVID-19pandemic can also have the same effects on police officers. Further, the Kyprianides et al. (2020) study found that in large U.S. cities, police officers showed more impacts to stressors to COVID-199 pandemic, and more police officers dropped out of service or could exhibit the most significant impacts to emotional health.

The statements of impacts to emotional health (Pink et al., 2021) are merely one of many different behavior effects which has been applied to representations of phenomena associated with the police force working during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, there were several events, such as the George Floyd incident, where police officers were involved in large-scale events that, according to the authors, could cause the same impacts to emotional health as mentioned above. However, what is different in the authors' theories of behavior reaction is that the officers themselves were never asked what they were going through or what assistance was required. The differences between the two events are significant enough, yet authors have the same negative behavior reactions representations that draw no distinctions. It is this lack of differentiation by those studies that is believed that may have impacted the military police officer assigned at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. The unknown variables that were studied where given to us by the officers themselves.

Significantly, Westervelt (2021) also examined the behavior reactions of police officers during the pandemic as these studies impact officers because the examination results are used by police leadership to make improvements to prevent burn-out or negative impacts to emotional health. The author used officers' exit surveys and statistical facts in regards to the number of officers that were leaving the force. Furthermore, issues were evident because police force recruitment and retainment were at an all-time low. However, the author did not narrow the research to the actual officers working the pandemic via interviews to get accurate information on how their emotional health was being impacted. Nevertheless, this study provided an important point of

comparison against the data to that was derived from the completed dissertation project and centering on military police, notably to mention that some of these officers may become future military police leaders at the Pentagon.

Another vital concern of the present study is the decision of military police officers wanting to abandon their careers and their decisions to leave the Air Force due to them working the pandemic. The completed dissertation project looked to determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic contributes to impacts of emotional health, which could also result in military police exiting the service. As has been demonstrated, the existing literature relating to this subject is inadequate. Many of the studies mentioned as a reference in this dissertation appear to speak to the responses of all police officers, where the demographics of their study participants are different from the demographics of the completed dissertation. Then there is what many of the studies project as impact to a decline in the health of the officers by working during the pandemic. However, these studies do not assess whether the effects of the pandemic have impacted their choices of quitting, abandoning their careers or their impacts to emotional health. My research supports social change by informing military police administration of the impacts of emotional health and efforts to more effectively assist leadership in preventing impacts on long-term emotional health.

Effects of the Pandemic on Police Officers

Laufs and Waseem (2020) examined the effects of the pandemic on police officers comparatively during normal operations vs operating during the pandemic. The authors found that through proper monitoring of workers and adjusting policies accordingly,

negative impacts of law enforcement hazards can be kept to a minimum. However, this study was quite broad-based and did not target individual officers or military police specifically, as this dissertation does. However, the data derived from Laufs and Waseem's study provided an essential point of comparison with that derived from the completed study of what impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on military police assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Military at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base

Because the study that was conducted was of personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base, it was important to see the many of the attitudes and behaviors that have shaped the communities and leadership perception of the overall status of the emotional health of the police officers on the front lines. A significant body of literature exists to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement. Marcus et al. (2020) found that the exposure to working during the pandemic has minimal to no impacts on the emotional health of military police. The researchers from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that the military police had accomplished its mission of quarantining control. This study was backed by data that showed that five airmen out of 10,400 were infected and quickly removed and isolated for further testing. Because these are some awesome achievements, this is all that is studied and portrayed to media and military leadership at the Pentagon, leaving the military police officers to bear the consequences that resulted. These studies where especially important for the completed dissertation project, as they provided insight into the decisions of leaders to provide help to their officers that had impact their emotional health.

The present study premises that the most important item for leaders at the strategic levels is positive results and if police department operate with positive results, they will likely not get the attention they need. It is conceivable that if the military police did not accomplish their tasks and made a complete mess of the quarantining process, further studies would have been initiated to understand the impacts that are causing negative results.

Threats to Law Enforcement

In an important study on the impacts of the COVID-19 on police officers, Strongers (2020) found that when police were subjected to large scale events without continuous monitoring, several impacts on health could be identified, such as mental health, cardiovascular health, ability to make decisions in stressful environments, communication with the community, and family relationships at home had all been negatively impacted. The study suggests that it is likely that officers would have long-term impacts on their emotional health, and the ability to integrate back into society and family would be greatly impacted. The study suggests that all the police officers' issues are now identified so that leaders can deal with the issues. Couched in negative terminology, threats to law enforcement significantly increased. Again, these studies have not targeted military police officers or police officers directly, a critical gap this completed dissertation project wanted to bridge.

As has been shown, this study was to focus specifically on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional health of military police personal assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. It is understood that working during the pandemic not

only has negative effects, but also has some impacts on overall health and is likely to have long-term impacts on emotional health that may take years to treat.

Influence of Literature on Plans to Resolve Issues Faced by Police Officers

Laufs and Waseem (2020) recently conducted an important study examining the impact of police officers working prior to and during the pandemic. Laufs and Waseem found, more specifically, the officers who worked prior to the pandemic without a proper work and rest cycle tended to have stronger negative attitudes and degrading overall health. This effect was increased when officers were subjected to an uncontrollable event such as the COVID-19 pandemic, continuously working, risk exposure, without a proper recuperation cycle. Though not relating specifically to the effects of uncontrollable events that police officers must face, this study is useful in demonstrating how the COVID-19 pandemic can impact the overall emotional health of police officers who have continuously faced the pandemic. This results in leadership having facts, which can result in effective plans to resolve disclosed issues.

The belief which drove this research is that the COVID-19pandemic and uncontrollable events do have effects on police which result in impacts on their emotional health, especially when compared to the general population. However, the completed dissertation project differs in demographics, most especially for military police. The question in this study was not whether the impacts from working during the pandemic cause negative effects and other stressors associated with this event, but to understand the potential of the fore-mentioned issues from the officers directly (Strongner, 2020). In a study conducted by Wesley (2020), there is specific research conducted about the impact

of the pandemic on officers' preparedness. The study shows that members of the law enforcement community were caught off guard initially, and their operational status is continuously evolving. The authors emphasize that there is literally no existing "playbook" for law enforcement for controlling the pandemic of this size and scale and is highly reliant on observations and studies. Additionally, this study by Wesley et al.(2020)which was published in the Journal of Natural of Public Health Collection, was a quantitative study that explored from a quantitative method what impact that might existed, but did not into the specific demographics of military police who have additional responsibilities, nor obtain the raw opinion data that was completed dissertation project.

Though I assumed that the impact of the pandemic on the officers is negative, and as such will have some degradation in the military police's emotional health, the fact is that the primary goal of the dissertation was to confirm what effect it had, whether on stress, self-efficiency, or emotional health. In many ways, the demographics of military police at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base are different from the demographics of other police officers or even military bases. As such, a different result could occur if this study was made broader. It supports the idea that perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic portrays negative impacts on police's emotional health, which rapidly deteriorates their ability of self-efficiency; that is what I wished to accomplish by conducting this research.

This study was intended to fill the gap in other researchers conducted as recently as November of 2020, conducted by Groover et al., (2020), and the Journal of Natural of Public Health Collection. Which in this study, I conducted a quantitative study of 623 police officers via a web-based cross-sectional survey. The goal of these researchers was

to determine what impacts police officers face working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study showed 10.6% of the police personnel had significant anxiety, and 18% have significant depressive symptoms with overall psychological morbidity of 22.2%. (Groover et al., 2020). Although similar in scope to this my intent, the study conducted by Groover et al., was quantitative and did not articulate the demographical factors within their test group, and expose any potential differences of opinion due to the quantitative nature of the study. The completed dissertation project goal was to obtain the raw opinion data from a military police officers working during the pandemic assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

To further explore the impact of COVID-19 as a negative factor in an academic study, one would have to use the works of Pink et al., (2020). Third-person perceptions, impacts of the pandemic, and designing of new policing: Developing a theoretical framework for assessing the impacts of the pandemic on emotional health. The Journal of Criminal Justice, another well-designed study which exposes the negatives of working during the COVID-19 pandemic via the general in the perception of polls and surveys by police officers, in response to several negative perceptions by law enforcement leadership. A term which is germane to the study in the concept that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic can be legitimately accessed via individualized face-to-face interviews, which can have more influence on law enforcement leadership policymaking at the Pentagon at not only XXXXXXXX Air Force Base and other Air Bases. But to reverberate what was already stated earlier, does that impact of working during the pandemic have a negative emotional impact on military police, or does it have no effects

at all? Can truly understanding the impacts of working during the COVID-19 pandemic help resolve issues faced by officers and make them a prospect of social change? That was the focus of this study by conducting a completely qualitative study that would hopefully obtain raw opinion data which might help foster an understanding of what it would take to turn a negative into a positive if needed.

Interestingly, the scholarly work done by Groover et al., did not highlight any potential for future conflicts in the research. To that, it is assumed that the quantitative study mitigates much of the potential of conflict and may remove some of the elements which is desired in the proposed study to determine the raw opinions of those being studied. In a generic qualitative design, I wanted to know not only how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts military police but how those effects impact the emotional health of those officers at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. It is conceivable that military police personal at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base might be impacted, causing them to leave the field or quit the Air Force altogether, becoming a force of change that negatively impacts their emotional health resulting in the field getting affected. This is what I want to find out by conducting a qualitative study.

Additionally, the study conducted by Groover et al., has gaps in the study created by not going further into the variable of military police and the interpretation of researchers and military leadership through end results of operations. It is this gap which led me to believe to be significant enough to potentially be a variable in the completedstudy. What studies and successful results of operations are used to improve officer quality of life and impacts to emotional health? Youtube, Snapchat, etc.? The problem is as long as media

portrays mission success and operational results are positive, leadership will always believe nothing is wrong. This research study aims to determine these virtual demographics exist to such a degree that there should be studied even further. Regardless of whether the topic is germane to just impacts of the pandemic on police, it is conceivable that there could be a need for social change, which exposes disinformation for what it is and harbor change for truth in the virtual world. However, that was not the primary idea behind the completed dissertation project.

In a study conducted by an organization that monitors police brutality internationally, with its headquarters in Geneva, World Organization against Torture (OMCT), published in a report and presented to the U.N. council (OMCT, 2021), the researchers study the impacts of working during the pandemic on police officers internationally. Their opinions of all demographics of police officers subjected to working during the pandemic result in police misconduct but fall short of determining what impacts on emotional health results in the cases of police brutality. This quantitative study which does not explore the raw opinionated data which this study intended to extensively explore. The title of the article by the OMCT is Police brutality reaches torturous levels after the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology used in their study is significant to determine that the perception by local media and researchers who use their opinions using generalized polls by providing quantitative results, not the raw opinion data of the actual officers working during the pandemic, to understand the true effects of the exposure of the COVID-19 pandemics, and what if any is the impacts to emotional health in police officers working during the pandemic. To that, the study conducted

encompassed all police officers, not focusing on specific demographics. Realistically, the studied demographic is too large and most certainly falls short of explaining the impacts of personal working during the COVID-19 pandemic on emotional health.

The opposing view of myself, from the aforementioned research can be argued as being a difference in demographics and in depth individualized research. This view is argued more closely in the proposed dissertation by the research works of Dai et al., (2021), titled *The impacts of* COVID-19*on police responses*, in the Oxford University Press. Where it clearly expresses the idea that demographic areas are impacted differently from other demographic areas in nearly an extreme manner, which is supported by qualitative research methods and gives a clear indication that what people think and how that act in one area of the population can be a complete opposite of that from another area.

The study by Laufs and Waseem (2020) focuses on how the COVID-19 pandemic has had several impacts on not only law enforcement but other first responders such as healthcare workers. I also make some comparisons with the general population, all showing negative impacts on their health. Though police emotional health is not a specific variable of Laufs et al., study, I explored all the impacts of working in a stressful environment causing burn-out in society.

How impacts to the large groups are perceived by policymakers is of great interest to the proposed dissertation research from the point of view that these studies and perceptions playing out and become what known improvement plans are, then it is assumed that those plans will potentially resolve all the issues that officers have that

impact officer emotional health. Myassumptions for the completed dissertation project researched where that the current studies of police polls and organizations result in the potential idea that the organization get well plans do not improve the situation for police officers on the front-lines and make the impacts on military police officers emotional health much worse. Imagine if a person who has a fever gets treated for simply a headache instead. While they are both in the same area, the issue is not being resolved. This mindset, of which is the intent to discover in the proposed dissertation research. The Lufas et al., study could be applied to any research topic that involves police officers who may face unforeseen and unpredictable challenges with potential short- and long-term effects.

The unforeseen and unpredictable challenges of the COVID-19pandemic could be applied to lessons learned from time spent in this volatile environment that could be used to improve the lives of the officers on the front lines.

Additionally, the "Black Swan Theory" by Naseem (2001) was developed keeping in mind being prepared for the unexpected. This theory was developed because it was assumed that swans were all white up to 1697 until a black swan was seen for the first time in history. The Black Swan Theory argued several important points. There were that the Black Swan event is a surprise to the people observing it and does not happen in the confines of the norms. The event is usually a large scale and can have a major negative or positive impact. Once the event or phenomenon is observed or experience, relevant data begins to appear; however, the data can be miscalculated or incorrect, which could lead to misleading conclusions. According to Naseem (2001), the theory can

established methods to help predict and take calculated risks in an environment that are outside the realm of the predictable. What is interesting about this theory is that it states that no historical data is enough to forecast an event that can be labeled as a Black Swan event. Furthermore, leaders must think outside the box to improve the odds of survivability because not data or mathematical calculations are sufficient due to the unpredictability of the violative situation.

It can be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic is a Black Swan event and due to all the effects of the factors that are unpredictable and unforeseen, can have drastic impacts on workers that are facing this environment. Specifically, such theories could be applied to the exploration of the degree and mechanism of the impact on the emotional health of military officers exposed to these unpredictable events, and that once these officers being to deteriorate, their abilities, such as self-efficiency, can have long term impact on emotional health that can take years to treat. Additionally, the belief is that the completed dissertation project was to expose that the previously mentioned environment could have impacts on the emotional health of military police officers due to the unpredictability and lack of data available to help prepare policies to protect their organizations.

The Black Swan Theory has been effectively used by Naseem (2001), when he describes September 11. 2001 attacks as a Black Swan event. This was an unpredictable, large-scale event that had consequences to all involved, including police officers. The author also states the impacts of the Black Swan events depend on the observer. An example shared was the terrorist who witnessed were not subjected to the Black Swan

theory; however, the American first responders were (Naseem, 2001). The events of the attack were large-scale and unpredictable, which impacted the emotional health of the people that worked the front-line, especially the police officers. Aspects of this theory will be applied to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is unpredictable, stressful, and lacking sufficient data to make policies to effectively prevent impacts to emotional health. In this article, Is touched on some of the same variables to be employed in the completed dissertation that of the emotional health impacts military police assigned at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. However, this theory also lacks the detail required to get an accurate description of military police officers are impacted. The study, however, does have some the systemic variables such as large scale, unpredictable, stressful, major change, and lack of information in regards to the phenomenon to make improvements to better prepare military police. This is where the completed dissertation research expanded upon by focusing on raw opinion data of the impacts does the COVID-19 pandemic had on military police assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

Most of the studies provided in this completed dissertation project where relative in many ways to the desired direction of the research. Nevertheless, they are found wanting in many different developmental concepts that the completed dissertation study looked specifically to address, such as demographics of the military police officers, unique responsibilities, self-efficiency mechanisms, and the overall impact of emotional health. Additionally, I believe that if any impacts to the emotional health of officers are present, it is because military police leadership is not aware. I also believe that the overall health of the military police officers is gauged through the results of their operations,

which is usually successful at all costs. Though that is was not a focus of the completed dissertation, it was a potential variable that had be exposed in appropriately worded study questions posed to the study participants in a quantitative study.

The various theories which could apply to impacts of working during the COVID-19 pandemic have influences on the officers that have been presented in many different variances, one presentation which is supportive of this quantitive study and relative to a finding of impact on emotional health is the study done on the impacts on police wellness during the pandemic and perceptions of researchers and police leadership is a study conducted by Drake et al., (2020), who in the Journal Public Safety Initiatives has stated that in nearly one million people globally tested positive and nearly one million have died. Those figures are likely going to increase of around 100,000 deaths, especially for police officers that will have violate most national guidelines on social distancing. According to the study, as of March, 31 2021the, New York City has had nearly 1200 officers test positive for COVID-19. 5,500 officers have called in sick, which is 15% of their workforce. These statistics where valuable support to the completed quantitative study. Drake (2020) believes the only way to save officers' lives is through intervention through quality research. He believes that researchers should broaden their understanding of officer wellness and consequences in-depth and on the communities they serve. He also wanted the plans put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions on emotional health. The study acknowledges the expense and burden of such evaluations but highlights the importance of detailed data that must be available to leaders to take effective steps. That belief that officers wellness should be studied individually in detail

is the basis of the completed study to show how the phenomenon of the COVID-19

pandemic had impacted the emotional health of military police assigned to XXXXXXXX

Air Force Base.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Possible Types and Sources of Data

Due to the broad arena of military police officers, the study focused on a specific base in order to optimally reach saturation and satisfaction. Several units all over the United States have military police personal assigned. These units all face different adversities during the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to their civilian counterparts, which has been documented in studies by Nix and Richard (2021) and Nassim's (2014) theoretical analysis of a "Black Swan Event." For this study, I selected participants from military police officers assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base, using the snowball method for initial selection. Military police personal assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base were best suited for this study because not only did they bear the responsibilities of regular community policing, they had their military obligations, which consist of deployments worldwide to promote American foreign policy, and were responsible for controlling quarantined American citizens that first contracted the COVID-19virus and returned from cruise ships all over the nation. This study ascertained if the collected responsibilities had an impact on the emotional health of the assigned military police officers that worked during the pandemic through raw, focused opinionated data.

I contacted the military chief of police to make a connection and inform him of the study that was to be conducted prior to selecting military police members for the interviews. This enabled respect; the possibility of making social change is heightened when leaders are not blindsided. The only criteria for personnel selected for the study was that they must attest to having worked during the pandemic. There were no

questionnaires or written screening used to identify participants. However, once

suitability had been established, an ice breaker conversation took place and rapport was

built. Some of the of questions to be asked during the interview (Appendix A) were

discussed to promote an early thought process prior to the interviews that were conducted

at a later time determined by the participant. I asked if working during the pandemic may

have had a potential impact on their emotional health.

The vetting process was conducted when I made initial contact with the subjects

and determines suitability via screening. Upon completing initial contact with my

extended network, several candidates were referred as potential additional participants

until saturation was reached. I was in continuous contact with my chair to discuss

satisfactory saturation numbers. Semi-structured interviews were administered to chosen

candidates. Data analysis was conducted principally through discourse analysis.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and subjects' responses were parsed and

analyzed as the selected military police subjects describe their perspectives on how

working during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their emotional health. The

controlling variable was the subjects' responses surrounding their emotional health as a

result of working before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researcher's Role

The primary role of a qualitative researcher is to engage the issue at hand and get

raw opinionated data from the selected subjects without any compromises, such as the

integrity of the information from the subjects who have worked during the pandemic.

Subjects were selected equally from the different parts of the organization, which

included personal from the day and night shifts, and from several different roles such as patrolman, frontline officers, shift leaders, K-9 units, and weapons trainers to fully gauge the potential impacts to their emotional health from working during the pandemic from all their respective viewpoints. My challenge in this study was to gain and maintain the trust of the study participants, given that I myself am a military member. I did not wear the military uniform and refrained from identifying himself as an active-duty member whenever possible to ensure it had no bearing on selection of the candidates or interviews after that. This helped speed up the connection and breaking the ice between me and the candidate as I have no affiliation with this organization or any unit within XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. Openly making initial contact in uniform and identifying as being in the military could give the participants at least pause in trusting that the study was not impacted by my personal bias. It was my job to provide the participants with assurances that no bias existed, their information, answers, and viewpoints were to be protected and cannot have any negative impacts on their military careers, and finally, their responses cannot be traced back to them in any manner. I masked several variables to prevent potential identification such as which participant held which position or worked which specific shift. Once the hurdle of establishing trust was completed, it resulted in a bond that helped achieve the results sought by this study.

Participants

As previously mentioned, the participants for this study were selected via snowballing, where the military police personnel where the primary point of referral to their peers. I had contacted the chief of police (CC) to make them aware of the research,

to help promote social change if needed. This was done prior to conducting interviews with the military police personnel that gave consent. The plan was to have my extended professional network introduce me to the members, who will notify me of the best time to meet the participants at a time and place that is convenient for them as long as it was off the military installation. I was prepared 24 hours a day to conduct interviews, which helped with the speedy completion of this study. My professional network was paramount to introductions, as none of the participants initially answered on social media.

My primary goal was to cause no inconveniences to the military personnel. I was able to have access to the military members when they were off duty. This protected their valuable time off and ensured they were not bothered when they were resting. I was able to accomplish this because I conducted interviews both in the day and at night, whichever was convenient to the participant. I made contact with the police personnel and made an appointment with the candidates that gave consent and self-identified to meet the prerequisite of working during the COVID-19pandemic via Zoom or on the telephone, as none of the participants wanted to do a face-to-face interview due to the pandemic. Pre-designated private areas were selected just in case they changed their minds and are discussed later in this chapter. The desired number of participants was 10, which was deemed sufficient when I met saturation. As mentioned previously, the participants were from different shifts and roles. These shifts were day and night, along with several roles being equally represented. That allowed me to get first-hand information from responding officers who are usually first on the scene, K-9 officers who are required for tracking and deterrence, leaders who manage the entire working shift, members that have deployed

during the pandemic and finally weapons specialist that work day and night to keep the force armed and deployment ready. As a prior watch commander of the military police force, I understood that the impacts on the emotional health may be different depending on the role; however, each person's input was equally important to reach a proper conclusion to this study. No member was recruited while on the installation or while on duty; they were simply made available to me via snowball sampling which was increasingly successful. Military police officers are usually available during their allotted time off, usually odd hours which can be either day or night, a challenge I was eager to meet.

Research Design

The chosen research design of this study consisted of a qualitative phenomenological method, using a generic qualitative inquiry design, where the focus of the study was to obtain the raw opinionated data of the study participants who are military police personnel that worked during the COVID-19 pandemic and were assigned to the XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. This design was selected to understand better the lived experiences of the studied participants who have regularly worked during the pandemic.

Research Strategy

I chose this approach based upon many different variables. The most significant variables were my experience working long term stressful environments and previously leading military police personnel. Once the qualitative approach was identified, I determined the specific benefits of the most helpful course. The two main qualitative

research strategies are non-experimental and experimental designs, where the participants described their experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic during the interview process.

Population, Setting, and Sampling

The search, solicitation, and screening of participants was conducted online through telephone calls or social media. Since the study only involved military police personnel, that that are usually hanging out together in large numbers and are assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base, the best method to select candidates was the snowball method. I made contact with my professional network and was able to make contact military police member who told me the best time to contact them, as already identified their schedules and time off is hard to predict, especially during the pandemic. Once contact with the participants that meet the criteria was made, appointments were made at the military member's convenience. I was aware that interviews may have to be conducted at different hours, such as 3:00 am or midnight, to accommodate officers that sleep during the day. Selected members read the consent forms and gave consent and were given a quick synopsis of the questions to be asked from the list of questions that was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and used during the interview process. Participants were sought until saturation satisfaction was achieved.

The setting for the interviews was primarily on telephone or Zoom. This was because of the precautions due to the pandemic. However, I was willing to conduct interviews at locations such as parks with plenty of space for privacy, public libraries, or anywhere participants would have been comfortable and free of distractions. An

important consideration that was made was that the interviews where recorded, so background noise needed to be avoided. Also, I showed my face via video conference several times. Furthermore, due to the pandemic, proper protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and social distancing plans were prepared and would have been used. Since the COVID-19 restrictions were in place, and as some of the candidates desired, the interviews were all conducted by video sessions or over the telephone.

Instrumentation

There were several instruments used during the semi-structured interviews to solicit responses from the potential candidates. First, the Dragon Speech Recognition software was used to transcribe interview data for analysis. The interviews provided the details needed to help me identify any themes applicable to my topic of study. The interviews were a good time for the participants and I to develop a rapport, which helped further the discussion of the phenomenon under study. The semi-structured interviews assisted me in obtaining specific answers to the research and ask follow-on questions that help negotiate unforeseen variables.

The semi-structured interview questions (See Appendix A) were tailored to the participants' lived experiences working during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these experiences had impacted their emotional health. Therefore, open-ended questions were used to explore the topic to obtain the raw opinionated data of what the participant thinks, feels, and what environmental concerns might also be significant to their beliefs of how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting them. Tape recordings of the interviews captured the necessary details after receiving consent regarding protecting and masking their data.

The semi-structured interviews assisted me in being able to not only obtain the answers specific to the research but to also allow for follow-on questions that helped develop unforeseen variables to the phenomenon. The interview began with basic questions and gradually required more detailed responses. The questions in the interviews were approved by the IRB.

Data Collection

The data collection process in this qualitative study included the answers to the questions during the interviews and the tape recording of the interviews. That data were the core of the study to help me understand the answers and transfer those answers into viable raw opinionated data relative to the research study. The data in this qualitative study are original and helpful to the concepts of the phenomenological study.

Initial Contact

As previously stated, the initial contact with the participants was made via snowball sampling as I was introduced to several participants and began interviews for suitability. I hoped that after initial contact was made with the first subject, it would initiate the snowball sampling where the subject would engage with their peers assisting in reaching more candidates. This did happen and was a success. It was anticipated that snowball sampling would be extremely effective, which proved to be valuable. This method was selected as the easiest way for a researcher to get the most suitable members and gain the trust of the possible candidates (Jalca et al., 2019).

Interview Process

Once I received IRB clearance, I began using the snowball sampling method as the primary method to get the participants. They were selected using the suitability requirement mentioned above and then given a copy of the list of questions that would be asked during the interview (Appendix A). Upon successful vetting and being selected as a participant, my contact information, such as email and phone number, were provided via a flyer and given to the participants, along with the consent form and ascertaining when and where the participants want to continue.

I ascertained what location was comfortable for the participant. Meeting date and time was provided to me, where some initial discussions were then to be had to ensure that the participant understands the nature of the study and reassure the participant that I and research will be unbiased and that the participants' information will be protected. A coding system was also used as identifiers for the participants, such a P1, which translates to Participant 1.

Interviews were conducted only on a one-on-one basis, via technology. This was achieved in over a two week period where the participants were asked to provide their life experiences as relative to the study, where raw opinionated data was what I desired to obtain from the participant through conducting semi-structured interviews where participants will were asked to speak openly about their experiences. I attempted to make the participants comfortable and had several side conversations initially to break the ice. I believed such encouragements enhanced the participant's trust further. Furthermore,

several of the participants are now friends with me in social media and have been added to his professional network.

I used a Sony BX Series Digital Voice Recorder for recording that was purchased for this project only. Once interviews where completed, I explained and thanked the participants and explained to them the potential impacts to social change they had made. This is a frequent practice in the military where thanking someone for their service can go a long way and have a positive impact on their morale and emotional health. All interviews and the recordings were analyzed for systematic reading, comparing, and interpreting the information as needed for the accuracy of the data. The data was transcribed onto a hard drive with advanced security capabilities such as multiple passwords and biodata authentication, which will never be used for any other purpose; it was than secured and locked in a safe. The transcriptions were done by a Nuance software called Dragon Speech. This was so I was the only one handling and transcribing the data, and no persons outside the research project was involved. The recordings are now kept in storage, if any regulatory authority might later request validation of the transcriptions. No other software was used, as I used a qualitative design to obtain raw opinionated data that I wanted to connect via direct analysis. All interviews were analyzed for a systematic meaning by reading, then rereading, comparing, and interpreting the data as needed to ensure the accuracy of the information was achieved. The transcribed data was then handled with the highest level of care and was stored with the recordings in a secure, locking safe that only I will have access to. No qualitative software was used to analyze the data as I' desire was to utilize the generic qualitative

design as intended to obtain raw opinion data that I wanted to connect to through direct analysis personally.

Limitations, Challenges, and Barriers

The interview process was effective for the completed structure of the study. While analyzing the plus ups of positions required can show a potential increase in manning required if present. The only way to ascertain the reason for the absence or the impacts of the pandemic on the workforce during surge operations is by properly analyzing each interview. I was working alone and under an extreme time constraint due to a medical condition. For this reason, the interviews were conducted until saturation only. This ensured I could review the information in-depth and cross-reference other articles to understand the impact on the emotional health of the military police members. When dealing with the military, a preliminary issue was getting access to the members as no one was willing to talk unless introduced by a friend. Getting the members to trust me was a challenge. This took an extended period of time as none of the initial participants responded to messages sent by me. I had the advantage of already being in the military and having an extensive professional network of colleagues that were willing to assist. Time management, frequent and open communication with the military police members was vital to the success of the study. Military leaders are always willing to make improvements that they're made aware of and that is one of the goals of this study.

Another issue is that a large part of this research is was reliant on the selected candidates' self-reporting and could have resulted in unconsciously false and misleading results if not careful. For example, candidates may not be willing to pass information

entirely due to the interview being conducted by another active military member, or thoughts of reprisals from organizational leadership, even though I has no affiliation with the local military police (Tracey, 2019). This was not the issue with the interview process. Members were informative and honest.

It can be challenging to create a relationship with these military police personnel to gain their valuable insight. They're known to be a tight-knit group that spends access of 12 hours a day together, which can be more time than with their regular families. Furthermore, on deployments, they serve six months together and are usually hesitant to talk to people outside of their group. Another issue for me had to overcome was the fear of reprisals. Reprisals from leadership are one of the greatest things military members fear and often times do not want to talk to anyone or even seek any kind of help due to this issue. Building a relationship on trust is critical; proving privacy and nondisclosure of personal information was a burden on me (Acosta, 2014).

Since I was the only researcher on this project, there were several other factors to be aware of. The most critical vulnerability to watch for was my own operational bias. As a 19 years' prior watch commander that managed military police officers through several large-scale operations and dealt with absent and understaffed police forces, it was essential to remember that the experiences are different from this phenomenon. Some of the events that I has led in the military are managed defensive positions for extended periods overseas, several natural disasters such as hurricanes, flooding, plane crash rescue and recovery operations, and finally managing police officers in other hostile environments such as shootouts and hostage situations.

While all these events may have caused a level of stress that could have had some potential impacts to the emotional health of my military team members, the COVID-19 Pandemic is a unique phenomenon that has not been witnessed since the Spanish Flu of 1916. The COVID-19 Pandemic's unique characteristic requires a surge of such a large magnitude that could have taken a toll on the workforce that I could not have understood. The prevention of this bias in this analytical work was of great importance. I did monitor myself to prevent any false interpretations of the candidate's interviews.

I is was not a professional at gathering information for analysis. However, based on the data needed, the qualitative method, with interviews, was going to give the best chance of figuring out the effects of the Pandemic on the military police's emotional health. I was aware of the self-biases and nature of the small sample size and continuously self-monitored to ensure the validity of the research was not compromised.

I used several best practices to ensure credibility, as highlighted by Amankwaa (2016). I must understand the candidate's background, earn their trust, and follow up to confidentiality promises. The subjects should be interviewed where they are comfortable, offering several locations so the subjects can have a choice, and I must be familiar with the settings to be used. The interview questions must be well selected, encourage discussions and prevent closed-ended responses along with having proper candidates. The interview questions must be appropriate to the effects of the pandemic workforce, and the field notes must be relevant and unbiased. The interview must begin with questions that are easy to answer and gradually build on the candidates responses to open ended discussions.

The next barrier to the completion of this research is the logistical aspect. From a practical standpoint, getting access and finding a good area for discussing sensitive issues was though to be a challenge. Coordinating interviews and conducting the interview, ensuring enough time to get the in-depth data required, with no inconvenience to the participant. Due to the pandemic restrictions, I was prepared for both in-person and virtual interviews.

There were several locations I had prepared just in case the participants wanted to meet face to face. A few examples of areas that were on standby was the public library which is private enough to conduct interviews. The library was currently had light traffic due to the pandemic and can be ideal location for an interview. Some public parks with ample space with shade were available and would meet all social distance guidelines. However, all interviews were doing remotely as this is what the participants desired. The social aspect of the impacts of the Pandemic were evident even before the interview started. The methods of the interviews conducted were via Zoom or telephone call. Sometimes I showed my face in video calls in hopes of increases trust and building a relationship when he felt that there was a barrier. I was ready to meet or exceed all COVID-19safety protocols such as protective equipment and social distancing gloves and masks that were purchased for the interviews and would have been be provided upon request if the candidates had so desired.

The significance of ethical guidelines must not only be reviewed but thoroughly understood and followed while including consent of all the participants. This was done by at least informing the the chief of police that interviews were going to take place off duty

and off the installation. This all consisted of the my explanation of the study and getting consent documents from each person, including a recorded verbal consent for acceptance, and understanding by the interviewee (Amankaa, 2016).

The research plan development, which the dissertation committee had approved following current Walden University guidelines, will ensure that the whole process follows standards set by the institution. Lastly, I understood the writing must be in APA, clear, and to the point grounded by the highest standards of academic writing and research.

Research Coding

Research project coding is a fundamental expectation of a research study. The data collection process was accomplished by using Microsoft Office software such as Word and Excel. Some themes that were being soughed are the responses related to their emotional health, lived experiences, and the perceptions of the candidates caused by working during the pandemic that researcher found relevant to the study. A coding system was employed pseudonyms and codes to identify and categorize the participants, such as P for the participant and a number to indicate their number. No other codes were used in effort to protect the identity of the participants as further coding could jeopardize anonymity. The coded information was added with that data collected from the participant before being analyzed by me to ensure that the data followed the embodiment of a qualitative study, which is a fundamental foundation of any study to ensure that the data meets the elements of the study and provides accuracy and clarity. No other coding is required to prevent any chances of identification and protection of privacy.

Protection of Participants

The candidates that volunteered and self-identified only. All participants received information about the objectives of the research study prior to consent or the interview. That information was provided in written and verbal form. It informed the participants that their involvement in the study is voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The data was analyzed from the participant's responses and was handled in such a manner as to protect and provide the anonymity of the participants.

I provided assurances to the participants throughout the process to ensure that they understood that no harm or adverse action can or could be taken against them for participating in the research study. Furthermore, the participants were explained that there is no way they could be identified due to the lack of name, rank, sex, position, even coding was reduced to help with anonymity with the organization and other identifying characteristics recorded. Participants received written and verbal information regarding the objective and content of the study by the standards set in the Belmont Report, which in a sense is a litmus test for modern-day research that relates to the ethical standards of research and the protection of research participants (Anabo et al., 2019).

Summary

Chapter three covered the methodology of the completed dissertation research, starting with an introduction to the completed qualitative research study and how social change will positively impact the military police field. Next, details that are provided

about the selected candidates and who and why they were selected, along with the procedures that were used to legally interview the candidates after I received IRB approval.

The interview process is discussed along with the different potential environments, and protective measures that were taken due to possible COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. Furthermore, this chapter also discussed the obstacles such as communication with the military and building a relationship of trust with the candidates, along with the burden of protecting their opinions from leadership reprisals.

Later in the chapter, the instruments were described, such as the questionnaire, recording device, transcribing software, and hard drive with security capabilities to prevent access by others other than myself. Chapter three also explained how I protected the identity of the candidates via coding and using simplistic identification such as P1, which is participant 1. The chapter also described the research design and structure, which was used an outline for the phenomenological research design for the generic qualitative study. This was used so that I could explore the impacts that working during the COVID-19 Pandemic have had on the emotional health of military police personnel and gain a clear understanding of their personal opinions regarding their experiences and have long-lasting impacts of positive social change on military police personnel.

Chapter 4: Results

Research Setting

To meet saturation for this project and ensure the reliability and validity of the study, I made one on one contact with all participants via telephone, social media, or Zoom. This was done after I verified eligibility of the potential participants. The participants were sent consent forms and asked for consent verbally. Once all consent was affirmed and recorded, a time was scheduled to conduct the interview at the participants' earliest conveniences. Prior to interview beginning, the consent was re-verified and recorded. Contact was made with the military police members through my vast professional network. The qualifications for participation in this study was that participants self-identify that they had worked during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the qualified participants had to be from the military police at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. I, along with the consent form, gave all pertinent information of who was encouraged to participate in the study and guided participants through the steps to a successful scheduled interview time and place. They were explained that participation was completely voluntary, and they could stop at any time.

Numerous potential participants called or messaged me through social media to inquire about the study. Candidates' suitability was determined, and interviews were scheduled online or via telephone at an acceptable time and location.

Demographics

Contact was made with 12 participants; none of them were dropped from the study for any reason. The 10 participants wanted to be part of the study and were eager to

help foster social change. A total of 10 participants were selected from the participation pool of interested potential participants. This number was deemed to have met saturation for the purpose of this study. All participants where members of the military police stationed at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base and had worked during the pandemic. Different positions in organization that where selected were patrolmen, K-9, staff support, weapons experts, and watch commanders.

Participant Selection

After all the required number of participants were recruited to obtain saturation, as outlined in the research plan, and selected for the study, I contacted the selected individuals and asked them to confirm their willingness to continue with participation in the study. Once the confirmations were obtained and consent forms signed, dates and times were set up with each of those participants. I called members that were not selected, explaining that a sufficient pool of participants had been selected and that their willingness to participate was greatly appreciated.

Data Collection

In this qualitative study, I used the phenomenological approach to explore the members' perceptions of the impacts on emotional health of working during pandemic. One Zoom interview was conducted; the remaining participants chose the option of interviewing via telephone and online as part of the data collection process. The participants were provided interview questions based on their lived experiences, behaviors, and perceptions of working during the pandemic as a member of the military police organization on XXXXXXXX Air Force Base.

As was anticipated, some participants appeared concerned that I was a member of the military but became comfortable when assured that my role was separate from the professional role and that my profession would not impact the study or its participants in any way. Furthermore, I informed the participants of my upcoming retirement, which helped break the ice. As documented in the limitations section, building trust and breaking the ice was a complex process and sharing the potential social change motivated open-ended conversations and answers to the questions.

During the interview process, several of the participants seemed to have a change in tone. For example, during the ice breaking phase, the individual was easy going and answers were easy and very opinionated; however, once the questions started in regards to the research, there was an audible difference in delivery, which indicated they were talking about something that made them uncomfortable. The most common of these changes were pauses before responding to questions or changes in posture, voice, and some minor emotional overtones, especially after specific question were asked.

All the participants' behavior was documented during the interview process. I documented this as they responded to the interview questions. Capturing and documenting these data was instrumental in the process of the interview, and I used these data in the comparative analysis process. The primary focus of this study was the perceptions of the participants; there were significant nonverbal and often involuntary cues that served as list of the perceptions and the emotional responses of the participants. During the interview processes, two participants gave telephonic interviews, and eight interviews took place via Zoom. The eight participants interviewed via Zoom all

permitted me to proceed with recordings. Of the telephone-interviewed participants, both

permitted themselves to be recorded. The most common of emotional responses to the

questions was nonverbal in nature, but due to the recording, the body language of the

participants was recorded. The most common emotional response on the telephonic

conversation was a prolonged silence or stating "I don't know" followed by a response.

These verbal and nonverbal cues led me to believe that the participants were at least

partially uncomfortable with the questions and their responses when asked about what

impacted their job negatively during the pandemic. There were several uncomfortably

long pauses when asked how did working during the pandemic impacted their emotional

health. Some participants even asked, "Will anyone know I said this?"

Each interview lasted between 30 and 20 minutes, and all interviews were

recorded, transcribed, and documented. Upon completion of each interview, the recorded

and transcribed data was entered in an Excel spreadsheet and was coded for protection of

the participant information and security. Throughout this process, confidentiality was

maintained and any possible identifiers were removed. No one other than myself has seen

these data.

Data Analysis

I used Microsoft Office products such as Word and Excel software to organize,

document, code, and analyze the interview data. Important data such as members' shift

they worked and position in the organization were aligned with the recruitment process,

were combined with each participant's interview responses, and those responses were

then transferred into the Excel spreadsheet for qualitative analysis.

The coding processes deployed was learned during the Walden University residences and allowed the data to be categorized and anonymized for each participant. That data were sorted according to when the interview was done and finally was re-arranged form anonymous entry. Participants had worked several positions such as responding officers or K-9 and then analyzed using the open and selective coding process to determine the limitations of instances and to compile the data into a single file.

During data collection, specific data were selected that were part of the phenomenon and evaluated as relevant data to answer the RQ. Any data that were selected were appropriately coded to allow for complete and thorough analysis of every facet of the results. Also, the codes were defined and labeled for each relevant feature of the data. The codes were documented and then entered an Excel worksheet to record and organize the codes, analyze the data, and provide summary information and file locations.

Once the data received had been coded, categorized, and summarized, the information was double checked to ensure accuracy via recording and notes taken during the interviews. This process permitted me to contact participants to confirm or clarify that the collected information was captured accurately. Furthermore, this follow-up process allowed the participants to make changes, as necessary.

Question Analysis

As described above, once the data were collected from participant interviews, they were transcribed and entered on Excel spreadsheets for analysis. The data analysis resulted in specific details the participants provided on the impacts of emotional health of military police working during the pandemic and some extra information that was not

expected such as their decisions to abandon or to remain the in the military police career.

The RQ addressed in this study were as follows:

RQ: What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on emotional health of

military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base?

The responses of the 10 participants interviewed are presented as answers to the

preceding interview question and shown below in table 1.

Data collected from the participants for this research study were from answers to

the Interview Questions 1 through 17.

Table 1

Particpant Impacts to Emotinal Health Reported

Participants	A Officers Reported impacts to emotional health	B Officers Reported no impacts to emotional health	C Why?
Military police	9	1	Regular workloads led to several stressors, however the COVID-19 pandemic magnified impacts to emotional health and introduced new issues that the organization was not prepared to tackle

Most of the military police members from both day and night shifts advised that

their regular duties as a military police member were stressful enough and the COVID-

19pandemic introduced them to a threat they did not understand nor were prepared for.

Military police members observed material from the Central Disease Control and military leaders that tried to educate them about the pandemic. However, the officers felt the information was contradicting and was a result of lack of experience and exposure to an environment such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, they had never given consideration about families and friends' safety at home and were able to keep their concentration on the tasks to be competed at work. This not only lowered their ability to produce results as expected but made them vulnerable to the harsh environment of the pandemic due to not properly understanding what the COVID-19 virus is and how to protect themselves and their families. Furthermore, following social media and reading about and talking to their friends about their experiences with COVID-19 virus and loss of lives made self-coping extremely difficult. Some military police officers relate the COVID-19pandemic stressors to that of a deployment in Afghanistan and Iraq, where their lives were in constant danger. Furthermore, some members felt that COVID-19 was a stronger adversary than enemies they had faced overseas. This is because they had intelligence and could see the enemy. The pandemic was not understood, nor could they see the silent killer and panicked at a simple cough.

At this point, it was determined through many of their self-reflections that the exposure of the military police members to the pandemic's environment had an impact on their emotional health. But there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that the extra stressor of the COVID-19 pandemic had impacts on their emotional health and not simply their regular responsibilities as in earlier chapters is noted that their

responsibilities are far and beyond their civilian counterparts, such as local community policing, quarantining known COVID-19 infected personal and deployments to sustain American foreign policies. However, some day shift officers stated that their ability to self-cope stress, dealing with issues at home, and maintaining a positive relationship with their co-workers had some impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most significant impact was when a few officers were personally impacted and had observed friends or family members get sick or die due to the pandemic. After witnessing friend or family impacted, the participants reported that they had considerable more stress to deal with due to the ongoing pandemic.

Some of military police members advised that they were now considering leaving the organization due to the irregular work, unknown nature and variables of the surge event, and other stressors. Most of the officers had never been exposed to a surge event of this magnitude, and it is my understanding of the overall theme of the officers that the pandemic has had a large impact on the emotional health of the military officers and their peers. Additionally, some officers reported that collectively the different variables that effected their daily routines were irregular work schedule, no significant information about the virus, the burden of quarantining, protecting the community and themselves for an unknown amount of time significantly brought on depression and the willingness to continually preform as expected began to deteriorate as described in theory according to the JD-R theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2001). Military officers also reported that the influence became more significant after they observed or witnessed family or friends who were impacted by the pandemic and would often speak of their friends that were

negatively affected by the pandemic. This negative impact was magnified via social media, and several officers reported that they wanted to stay away from social media platforms all together. Significantly, four of the military police officers interviewed in the organization were veterans with over 15 years of service in the military with deployments. Also, six of the military police members had less than 10 years of service with low deployments. Regardless of experiences, all military members compared working through the pandemic to working during September 11, 2001.

Data collected from the participants for this dissertation came from answers to the Interview Questions 1 through 17. The participants were asked questions based on the research question "What are the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their emotional health?" These questions were designed to assess the pandemic's impact on participants' emotional health, including secondary effects like wanting to leave the force or not wanting to work at the expected level.

A common theme among many of the participants was they first fully followed any instruction provided to them in regards to the protection from the pandemic. However, over time the credibility of the prevention information provided began to fall drastically. Nearly all participants agreed that military police organization provided the participants with information on the COVID-19 pandemic was not properly researched and made-up as they worked during this time. Furthermore, social media platforms and the CDCs information provided significantly confused them and left them unprepared to face the pandemic. The majority of the members indicated that COVID-19 Pandemic impacts on their work schedule resulted in an irregular work rests pattern that led to a

lack of a proper recuperation. Officers indicated that along with working continually without breaks and exposure to social media made them depressed to the point that they did not want to come to work.

The responses of the military police personnel indicated that, although they did not trust the sources of information such as the CDC and organizational guidelines, they were more active on their own such as searching on social media and google for the majority of the time to find ways to protect themselves. It was discovered that of the military police personnel nearly 90% of officer had negatives opinions on how information was shared and handled during the pandemic that led to drastic impacts to their emotional health. However, they were still motivated to gather as much information as possible to protect themselves, their families and possibly find ways to get out of the military or not work during the pandemic. This suggests an important avenue for future research in the effort to understand how operations such as the pandemic impact surge on staffing for military police organizations. These studies can also be extended homeland defense and other first lines workers that were working during the phenomenon.

All participants said they believed that they felt that the COVID-19 Pandemic had impacted their emotional health in some way. Some more drastic than others. Some military police personal stated they felt drastically aged, such as one year worked felt like ten years.

When most of the participants spoke on the topic of the working during the pandemic they mostly stated any time they talk about it has negative impacts to their

emotional health. They said that social media and news channels made things predominantly worse and increased their impacts to emotional health negatively. When the interviewees where asked what caused them the most unsettlement during the COVID-19 pandemic, all the interviews stated that at some time during the pandemic the immense stress was caused by variables out of their control such as no routine work schedule, unknown phenomenon plaguing their every move, frequent policy changes, no transparency and finally wondering if they were next or if the pandemic would lay calm to their families.

Also, notably, the participant responses indicated a pattern as it relates to relationships with peers, friends and family. The military police members interviewed indicated that they spent a considerable amount time during the day thinking about their families and their welfare. Furthermore, all interviews clearly indicated that they were continuously worried about their peers getting sick and having to carry their workload. The interviewees also indicated that during working the pandemic there was a continuous issue with manning that prevented them from doing more with less and not having a regular rest cycle. Below is a table of jobs that were interviewed to get a wide variety of viewpoints to gauge the impact on emotional health

Table 2 Military Police roles selected

Participants	Day	Night	Why?
Patrol	1	1	Patrols are the tip of the spear and do it all.
K-9 patrols	1	1	

Weapon specialist	2		K-9 are used for detection and deterrence
		1	
Watch Commander (FC)	1		FC lead the officers each shift
Staff support (SS)	2		SS complete paperwork, deal with legal issues and provide any support needed by front line workers

Breakdown of Research Question and Responses

Research Question

What influence does the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on emotional health of military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base?

The findings for this research question are presented below:

1. All participants had some sort of negative impacts to their emotional health, while one participant stated as time progressed they felt the pandemic had a positive impact on their emotional health.

2. The majority of participants will need significant time after the pandemic to get to a baseline where their emotional health was before the pandemic.

3. Majority (9 out of 10) participants believed that their emotional health had been negatively impacted.

4. The impacts where gauged on a scale of impacts low, mild or significant impacts to emotional health. The 10 participants fell into the following Categories.

a) Six participants reported significant impacts.

b) Two participants reported mild impacts.

c) One participant reported low impact.

d) One participant reported no impact.

5. Most of the participants disclosed that they did not trust the information that was being provide by the organization or even the CDC in regards to the protection against the pandemic. They felt policy was made up on the fly.

6. Majority of the participants (8 out of 10) had communication issues with their peers and family members that impacted their emotional health.

7. Out of the participants two of the interviewees were devastated by death in their families. This disclosure was not part of the research questions but was felt to be an important piece of data to support the research as it supports the premise of how the pandemic impacted their emotional health.

8. From the participants interviewed two reported not being allowed to visit terminally ill family members due to the pandemic. This disclosure was not part of the research questions but was felt to be an important piece of data to support the research as it supports the premise of how the pandemic impacted their emotional health.

9. Out of the ten participants three had gone through a divorce due to the pandemic. The interviewees stated that the pandemic created walls and significantly impacted their ability to communicate. This disclosure was not part of the research questions but was felt to be an important piece of data to support the research as it supports the premise of how the pandemic impacted their emotional health.

7. One participant who was got a divorce during the pandemic stated that the pandemic had no impact their emotional health as they were grateful for being locked at home with their spouse. This helped them understand how different and incompatible they were. He stated that the pandemic had some impacts on their communication but overall it was a positive.

8. Of the 10 participants at least six of them disclosed that their communication during the pandemic with close family and friends who were impacted and they no longer felt comfortable having a conversation due to the political nature of the pandemic and the stance on vaccine.

9. All the participants indicated that they did their own research to gather information to protect themselves against the pandemic.

10. Most of the participants (9 out of 10) advised that the protective equipment given to them such as cloth masks did not protect them from COVID-19

11. Out of the participants three interviews stated that the COVID-19 pandemic did non reversible damage to their emotional health.

12. Eighty percent of the participants believed that the pandemic had significantly made their jobs harder.

13. Only one of ten reported a no impact to emotional health due to the pandemic

14. When asked about their personal opinions about working during the pandemic only six out of ten participants felt working during the pandemic was not worth the risk and would not remain till the end to retire from doing police work. They would instead get out the first chance they got. Three of the participants advised that after separating

they would not return to the front lines and work from home now. They stated the pandemic made them realize that nothing is more important than life, family and health.

15. All the participants pointed towards the pandemic being a phenomenon that they were not prepared for and felt their organizations and the government had to learn from trial and error. They also indicated the government had not experience with a an enemy that cannot be seen

16. Of the participants 4 advised they would not continue to work for the military police all said that COVID-19 pandemic was the sole driver for their decision to commit to separation, though all of the participants also admitted that the military police job itself was stressful prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. 10 of 10 felt that there organization had help available to support their emotional health.

18. 4 of 10 felt they did not feel comfortable going to mental health for support due medical issues such as discharge and medical board dismissal. However, not due to repercussions from the military police organization.

19. 10/10 felt that it was unreasonable and not fair how their jobs required them to risk their lives when their peers in other career fields are at home safe with the same pay.

20. All participants felt that they did not trust the road to recovery from the pandemic by their government

21. 50% of interviewees did not appreciate the shot mandate. This was not a question asked during the interview but was important to the study

22. Three of 10 felt betrayed by their organization given the ultimatum of being fired due to not getting the vaccine.

To summarize this section, which focused on the opinions from the interviews to understand the impacts on emotional health of working during the pandemic. There appeared to be significant effects on the individuals that conducted the interviews, not just to their emotional health. During the interviews I started seeing a pattern of feeling helpless to variables out of the members' control. The interviewees were giving the impression of reaching burnout and not having time to recuperate. Majority of the members felt that there was no one to ask how they were doing. They portrayed that if people check on them and simply asked how they were doing, would have helped how they felt. Additionally, the perception of the participants of leadership management of their forces was positive, they clearly wanted to be checked up on. The impression the research got was they wanted to talk to someone, not necessarily as a medical capacity but as someone genuinely concerned.

Interview Questions and Responses

There were a total of 17 Interview Questions and were specific to the impacts of the working during the pandemic and got detailed and personal as they went along. None of the interviewees stopped the interviews or did not ask to answer any of the questions. Some of the participants actually gave more information then requested. Significantly, all participants indicated that they were impressed with the topic of this dissertation as they felt a need for social change. All participants gave credibility to military police leaders at all levels and stated that they would work towards change once

their opinions were read by the right people. Also of note is the fact that eight of the 10 participants indicated that with mission success, and without a proper vehicle to inquire of how they felt, their opinions would never get heard. Further, the participants indicated that as long as the mission got done, the impacts on the workforce did not matter. Lastly, all the participants believed that news and social media sources to be lacking in honesty when covering the pandemic in any form. This is a stark contrast to the participant perceptions of the coverage of the pandemic and the road to recovery. None of the participants felt that their government has their best interest at heart. 50% of the interviewees felt that the vaccine mandates were intrusive. Three of the participants felt violated and betrayed due to the ultimatum of being fired if not vaccinated.

Seven of the participants indicated that the policy's the CDS were releasing were contradictory. For example once they were vaccinated, they did not have to wear masks at work. This was also used as an incentive. Which was later taken away, and every one told to mask up again because COVID-19 infections were spreading regardless of vaccination according to five of 10 the participants. All participants indicated confusion when talking about prevention techniques as they felt the information was so conflicting that they didn't know who to listen too. Four of the 10 participants stated that this inconclusive information led to tremendous stress and impacts to emotional health as they never knew if they were taking COVID-19 back to their families. Most participants admitted to utilizing social media as their main platform for information. They stated they would watch for others having the same issues and try to use the best solution. This at least led them in a false positive of protecting their families and helped lower stress

levels. Most of the participants openly disclosed that social media was not the best place to get important information, particularly when lives are at stake.

Table 3 Levels of impact reported to emotional health

Participant emotional health impact levels

Participant	low impact	medium impact	significant impact	No impact
P1				X
P2	X			
P3		X		
P4		X		
P5			X	
P6			X	
P7			X	
P8			X	
P9			X	
P10			X	

Out of the six participants that were significantly impacted three of the participants felt that no amount of therapy or time lapse will ever return their emotional health to how it was before the pandemic started. Three of the other significantly impacted participants required a year. The two participants with medium impact stated that it would take them around six months of therapy to get their emotional health to wear

it was prior to the pandemic. The one participant that had low impacts to emotional health indicated approximately 1-3 months to recover to base line emotional health. Finally, the member with no impact stated they would not require any help or therapy to make adjustments and carry on with life. The member stated the pandemic had no impacts to their emotional health.

Table 4 Time needed to reach baseline emotional heath levels

Frequency of time required to return participants to baseline emotional health

Participants	1-3 months	6 months	1 year	not possible
6 Significant impact			3	3
2 medium impact		2		
1 low impact	1			
1 no impact	N/A			

Of the ten participants involved in the study, 6 of them decided to remain in the military police career for sure after the pandemic. The others decided to change the directions of their career pursuits to a different jobs, three of them are thinking about working from home while others are going towards administrative jobs. The participants who decided to leave the military police career to pursue other endeavors felt the stressors to emotional health was not worth the job and benefits anymore.

All participants reported at some point working during the pandemic and during lockdowns that that their ability to communicate with people was impacted in some way. Several of the participants reported not being able to socialize impacted their emotional health. Majority of the participants reported the routine of working and being locked at

home had long term impacts on their ability to communicate with people outside of their family. Finally 50% of the participants felt that they were less tolerant of people and felt irritable at things that would not have bothered them prior to the pandemic. All of the participants advised that they do not see the end of the pandemic anytime soon and it is better to get used to it. Furthermore, they felt as it it would eventually die out and become like the flu.

Subtheme: Perceptions and Decisions

Of the 10 participants, nearly all of them agreed that their emotional health had been impacted. Even with the one participant that stated no impact, according to their statement I was able to feel that him working during the pandemic had indeed impacted him at work and changed the dynamic of his relationship at home. I did however report as the participant's stated, he had no impact to emotional health during the pandemic. From the participants who did get impacted their emotional health when working during the pandemic, they indicated their perception of the work was a endless stressful loop with irregularities. Six of the 10 participants that decided to stay in the military police organization said the perception of the health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic becoming less lethal and having some form of regularity in the coming year is the only reasons they are contemplating staying on the front lines, at least for now.

Nearly all those participants who decided to part ways from the military police reported a higher level positivity and their choice to leave the uniformed police services reported a positive impact to emotional health. They also indicated that their decisions

about their careers might not be permanent, but at this point safety concerns are forcing their hands.

Interview Excerpts

The following are some interview excerpts from the participants in this study that were collected, recorded, and transcribed:

Interviewee P1

This participant was a member with less than 10 years of service as a military police officer. The member stated they felt that their job prior to the pandemic was stressful as is police work. When the pandemic kicked in it resulted in pressure that was not anticipated nor was he prepared to deal with. He stated that he had several impacts to his emotional health and was significant in nature with several secondary effects. Some of these effects were irritability, loss in faith in the government, dislike for the job and impacts to relationships with peers and family. This member reported that he had a death in the family due to COVID-19 and was not allowed to visit their family during their last moments. This is the time they reported they would leave the service. They also indicated that they could see their peers' emotional health depreciate over time and their personalities morph into someone they weren't. He stated that he was confused over feeling empathetic over anger when someone felt sick because of the workload increase. Less workers meant he would have to do more with less. One statement he made resonated deep within me was " My emotional health has been significantly impacted and I don't think it will ever go back to it was before the pandemic" The participant alluded to a few concerns of being a police officer at this moment in time and indicated that it

was not worth risking his family's life. At this time P1 will be engaged in leaving the police force.

P1 frequently indicated that there was help available which was presented by the organization and felt as if there would be no repercussions for seeking help. He did indicate that his organization had deployed his their forces to the best of their abilities, yet felt no one has the right to stop him from visiting family. When seeing something on social media about the pandemic stressed him out and due to friends getting sick and posting on social media increased his anxiety. P1 reported that there was no transparency in policy and guidelines were made up and not standardized throughout the Air Force. He stated his peers from other installations were allowed to travel while the ban was in place.

Interviewee P2, a member with less than 10 years of service

P2 indicated that his work was tough prior to the pandemic. He stated that he was ok with that because it was expected from police work. P2 stated that after the pandemic their job had drastically changed and their emotional health was significantly impacted. P2 stated "This whole time I have been alone and no one has checked on me, my grandparent died because of the Pandemic and I couldn't even visit them" His indication a feeling of being betrayed because he was not allowed to attend their funeral. P2 stated they felt unwanted because he has served about a decade and because of a vaccine they are willing to throw him out. I noticed a sadness in the voice of the interviewer and a loss of enthusiasm when talking about work. He stated that he noticed his peers changing and hanging out with them now felt like a distance memory due to the hostile thinking in regards to the pandemic and the vaccination. Though concerns were raised about how his leadership

handled his personal case, he did state that he would not do anything different on how their forces were deployed and felt comfortable getting help with no repercussions. He indicated that he did indeed get help, however he felt no amount of therapy would bring his base line emotional health back to how it was prior to the pandemic. P2 frequently indicated that his relationships had been effected to the pandemic and him and his wife had more arguments than normal.

P2 disclosed that his decision to get out of the military because he did not want to put his family through more hardship and further degrade is health. He stated that he thought about starting something at home as a source of income and did not want to return to a regular working environment in the future. Finally, P2 Also stated that social media made things worse as anytime he logged on with Facebook and Instagram, it seemed the pandemic didn't even exist. Furthermore, social media gave him the impression that everyone was living their best life and yet he was in a mask all day struggling to stay above water.

Interviewee P3, a harden veteran of the police force with over 15 years of service.

P3 self-disclosed that he had seen it all and fought and seen things unimaginable. He stated that prior to the pandemic work was simply a job for him. A way to provide for his family. After the pandemic he felt frustrated with the regular change in policy that would contradict each other. He stated between working during the pandemic and politics surrounding the vaccine led to his emotional health impacts being low. He stated that he felt that most of his peers and the people that work for him did not have the same emotional strength as he did. He indicated that his deployments around the world and his

engagements overseas led him to have stronger emotional health which prepared him to

be able to handle the obstacles that the pandemic had created. P3 stated that he noticed

his peers morale being affected due to the pandemic and the ability to socialize and have

a regular conversation had changed. He felt that communication has been affected so

drastically due to the pandemic that having a regular conversation with your close friend

without getting into argument about the pandemic and the effects of the vaccine is not

possible. P3 indicated that he would not deploy the organization forces different than they

were used. However, he did state that he would have checked on his people more and

ensured their emotional health was stable. Finally, P3 indicated that after approximately

three months of therapy his emotional help would be back at the baseline as it was prior

to the pandemic.

Similar to P2, this participant felt that there were other issues that impact

emotional health of his workers and himself. Some of these issues were the government

continuously changing their minds in regards to the effectiveness of the vaccine, the

requirements for travel and lastly the trust factor and wondering if the government

leading the charge against the pandemic. At this time he wondered if the government had

his best interests at heart and whether they really were trying to stop the pandemic. But

unlike P2, there was enough of a low overall impact with only a three month recovery

time for P3.

Interviewee P4, was also a veteran with more than 15 years of service

P4 stated as military police and enjoyed his job prior to the pandemic. He stated

that after the pandemic everything changed negatively for his job. Mask mandates for

cloth masks did not even work and made no sense. The participant indicated that the most stressful part of his day was taking COVID-19 back to his family. He stated that there were no repercussions for receiving any mental health and only required some assistance. While the P4 indicated that his emotional health had medium impact. He had several stressors to deal with. Such as conversations with peers were now arguments about whether the vaccine was effective or to the true intent of the government in regards to ending the pandemic. P4 indicated that he did not trust the government anymore and did not appreciate getting forced a vaccine that he did not want. He also felt betrayed after almost two decades of service the organization was willing to throw him on the street. This member no longer wanted to serve and leave the military police organization

P5 was a service member with more than 15 years of service

P5 stated he was someone who did not have any issues with their job. He described his job as becoming almost unbearable after the pandemic and stated that the country as a whole had no idea how to deal with the pandemic. He stated " the last time we faced something like this was the Spanish flu of 1916" P5 stated that he felt like not only the organization but the government was making up the rules as they went along because of not having any data or playbook to deal with the pandemic. He indicated to me that he had significant impacts to emotional health due to working during the pandemic. He said it was not easy going to work every day not know if the participants was going to contract the disease and bring it home to his family. P4 stated that he felt that there were no repercussions for seeking help or taking a knee, however he stated he didn't think amount therapy could help his emotional health return to how it was before

the pandemic. He said his communication with his peers definitely got impacted and the lack of a steady work and rest cycle deteriorated his ability to deal with stress. He also voiced his opinion about other jobs in the military were getting paid the same, while he risked his life daily. This is because most people in the military of the same rank get paid the same regardless of job, for example a police officer vs administrative assistant. This member no longer wanted to serve and is looking to get out.

Interviewee P6, was a member with less than 10 years of services

P6 stated he was someone who enjoyed their job prior the pandemic and found their job tough after the pandemic. He stated an example like wearing a mask all through the day not only caused stress but effected his health overall due to making it harder to breath with the mask on. P6 clearly stated that arranging child care was very stressful during the pandemic. He stated that this caused significant impacts to his emotional health working during the pandemic. P6 indicated that he noticed peers morale decline and some of them were not allowed to visit their families or go to funerals during the pandemic. He said it was hard for him to witness them being forced to come to work. He said another issue was worrying about his family at home. He felt that being close to people all day greatly increased his chance of contracting the virus. This member like P5 was also looking to get out of military police as he felt it wasn't working the front line anymore. This participants felt like this was a never ending nightmare as initially he thought it was only going to be a few weeks issue. He now had to realize this was the new norm. He also stated that he wouldn't change the way the organization handled the pandemic but wished people would have asked how he was doing or check on him more.

P7 is a veteran with more than 15 years of service.

He described their job as a daily grind but nothing major. After the pandemic the member indicated that their job became extremely stressful. P7 indicated they did not feel comfortable being close to people due to the pandemic. The interviewee felt that the mask they were forced to wear did not protect them. The participant stated that they witnessed their peers morale deteriorated as they worked almost every day without a regular work rest cycle. They also stated that how did the organization expect goals to be met when officers had reached burnout. P7 indicated that working during the pandemic had significant impacts to emotional health and felt comfortable seeking help. This interviewee stated that no amount of therapy would return their emotional health to the baseline of prior to the pandemic. P7 stated their relationship with family was greatly impacted as a civil conversation about something fun was not possible. For example, when the participants spoke to their father it turned into an argument everything time about the vaccine mandate. P7 did not appreciate the forced vaccine mandate and felt violated. This member was also looking to leave the military police service.

Interviewee P8 was military police member with over 15 years of service

P8 enjoyed their job before the pandemic said that he was busy like anyone would be. He said that the impacts to his job after the pandemic were immediate as there was panic and know one knew what to do. He said that the pandemic was new for the country and we had to learn through trial and error. He felt that his organization was late to take advantage of the cyber domain and it's productively. P8 stated "it's better late than never". He said that the largest impact to him was his ability to mingle and socialize as he

described himself as a "social creature". He said he thrived prior to the pandemic and now he had to get use to the cyber domain. I noted that the P8 got a divorce during the pandemic yet there was no impact to emotional health. The participant said he was grateful to the pandemic that showed him that he was not compatible with his wife. This saved him time in the long run. He would not change the way the organization handled business other than switching to utilize telework more effectively. He said he noticed his peers impacted by the pandemic because they no longer felt comfortable talking in public. He did not feel that there would be any repercussions to seeking medical help. This member did not reveal any intentions of leaving the military police force. P8 has made it abundantly clear that the pandemic also had positive impacts like working from home, using the cyber domain etc.

Interviewee P9, was a military police member with less than 10 years of service.

P9 indicated that their job was stressful due to the regular workload of being a police officer in the military. However this dynamic changed after the COVID-19 pandemic due to the restrictions and the constant regulation changes daily. He stated that the organization was making up the rules as they went along because they did not understand the pandemic. The participant stated that his emotional health was significantly impacted during the pandemic. P9 noticed a drastic change in his peers as they became more aggressive and low tolerant towards each other. He said that his ability to deal with stress efficiently deteriorated without a regular standard rest to work cycle. Furthermore he stated a drastic increase in domestic issues all over the installation which led to more responses and paperwork. He said that while he did not feel any

repercussions to seek medical attention he felt that no amount of therapy would return his emotional health to the base level prior to the pandemic. During the initial stage of the pandemic he did not feel comfortable going to people's homes during domestic calls. The only thing on his mind was not to contract the disease and take it home to his family. Furthermore this member went through a divorce during the pandemic and felt that at times working the front lines is not worth it. P9 also stated there were major problems with guidelines and were contradicting. For example if social distancing was an issue and enforced why was basic training graduation allowed again. This put police officers at risk as they now had to make contact with hundreds of people to check ID's.

P10 was member with less than 10 years of service as a military police member.

He stated his job was hectic prior to the pandemic but nothing that he was not able to manage. P10 stated that changed after the pandemic as the work load increased due to people falling out. He stated not knowing if his peers would be coming to work. An absence of his peers from work meant more pressure for the healthy. He also stated most of his stress was not being able to see his family. This member indicated that he had no family here and was heavily reliant to seeing his parents and grandparents. In the beginning of the parent this was taken away. Another issues was being at work all day and not having the basic necessities such as food and water due to crazy shoppers. This member indicated that he didn't have supplies due to the pandemic. This participants impacts was mild and approximately would take approximately six months of help or down time to return to baseline emotional health level prior to the start of the pandemic. This member stated they should only have people into work that were absolutely

necessary. At times there were people not required but at work being exposed and had the chance of getting sick. P10 thought everything else was perfect and felt comfortable reaching out for help if required with no repercussions.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was an important factor in the study. After full disclosure and transparency by me about the purpose of the study, I was able to gain the trust of the participants by explaining the purpose of the study from the very beginning of the interview process. Once the participants contacted me via snowball method, the details of the information about the study was explained to them and how important their opinions were. Furthermore, I answered all the participants' questions before, during and after the interview process. I followed up with the participants via social media and phone calls to those who provided a method to establish contact or were provided by friends and acquaintances through the snowball method. Any solicited questions which they might have had bout the study where answered. I remained actively engaged with the participants throughout the entire process and felt successful in forging a respectful relationship with each of the participants, some of whom are friends on social media now. I established a trusting relationship with the participants by assuring them that their discussions with me were strictly private and their information would be protected at all costs. Once their confidentiality was assured, they became open with me to point that all questions were answered to not only to the satisfaction of me but to the participants' satisfaction as well.

Credibility

It was believed that due to me being in the military, it would be a struggle to establish credibility with the participants, but once I detailed the purpose of the study and the benefits and purposes of social change, it became easy to establish credibility with the participants. Further discussions about integrity and clarity of the research earned me even more credibility with all the interviewees. my knowledge and experience of the topics of the study, and leading military police officers provided additional credibility once reassurance was given to the the participants that I was not taking any stance but simply wanted to know their personal opinions. However, the most significant action by me was to provide credibility was to listen to them intently and answer their questions clearly.

Additionally, I was able to establish credibility with the participants regarding sharing of information and engaging and listening to their life experiences living and working through the pandemic. Furthermore, my ability to be emphatic while listening and understanding the participants losses. Mys' willingness to conduct the interviews at any time, at their place of choice, or to show mys face on the screen added some level of credibility to the study. Pratt et al. (2020) stated that the key to maintaining trustworthiness during a qualitative study was to establish a rapport with participants by establishing true transparency of not only the research study, but of me as well. Allowing the participants, the opportunity to review their transcripts also helped to establish credibility even though none of the participants have asked to do so.

Transferability

Due to the the present study being qualitative in nature, it provided me with an ability to compare the data of other similar qualitative studies to not only assess the form of the studies, but also to evaluate their data, which would help provide a better understanding of the impacts to emotional health while working during the pandemic, so if any developing phenomenon might exist to aid this research study during the execution of the study. According to Daniel (2019), transferability is key to a successful study, and that during the transferability phase, it is imperative that the data and analysis has an adequate amount of synergy. Moving data and the analysis from a similar study to another study, the waist of deploying it in this study not only aided in the establishment of a solid research foundation, but also assisted in the form and how this study flowed overall. In this study, I provided enough information so that those who wish to review the study can do this in a way to understand the study but also the data and its implications for their own research.

Dependability

To ensure the dependability of the study, it became necessary to constantly evaluate and remain self-reflexive regarding the processes through which the raw data was coded, archived, document and applied. On the completion of the study, the litmus test is whether other researchers can read the study and come to the same conclusions as those I came to during this course of this study. All elements of the study were captured accurately and as result of the data there was no changes needed to the research. The foundations of the study, and all information obtained was validated, and it was evident

that some of the participants had a emotional response to the topic at hand. This was understandable and expected as these participants are risking their lives on the frontlines. Such emotional responses are vital to the research but difficult to capture into words just as the participants intended. What a participant says can be recorded, but mannerisms, the body language and the environment is not as easy to capture and reflect in writing.

Confirmability

As I continued through the study there were no changes needed in the development of the study. Although I desired to make changes to reflect the emotional responses, no changes were made due to time constraints involved and some delays which developed during the IRB phase of the study, and the COVID-19 Pandemic which mandated that traditional interviews might be too risky for the participants. Frequent reviews of all notes, recordings and transcriptions were done to ensure that all information obtained during this study was clear, concise, and truthful to not only the words of the participants, but the meaning and intent of the study itself.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In a qualitative phenomenological study, the primary goal of myself is to understand not only what the interviewees say, the raw opinion data, but also how they respond to specific things (Daniel, 2018). In this study, I wanted to determine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on emotional health of military police personnel. The study revealed that there are significant impacts to emotional health, with some that stated that their emotional health would never return to the baseline of the pre pandemic period. The responses led me to conclude that the participants' emotional health was impacted and their decisions to continue to serve had been affected. In the research study, some aspects I had not initially considered became apparent. One such aspect of the study was the revelation that concerns over personal safety and the ability of self-coping had some differences depending on time served. For example, military police members with more experience had a higher ability to cope with the stress. Second, I did not anticipate the vaccine mandate impacting the emotional health of the military members as it was mentioned by at least 50% of the participants.

Prior to the pandemic, military police officers already dealt with more stressors than their civilian counterparts. But after the pandemic, these military norms of producing mission completion and organizational expectations are challenged. The challenges faced by military police officers and the impacts to their emotional health are issues that are not talked about or studied. The variables that I did not consider such as vaccines, frequent policy changes, and travel restrictions created by the pandemic have increased the

stressors that military members deal with, resulting in the deterioration not only to their health but the work force.

Interpretations of Findings

Several interpretations were drawn from the data collected in this study. They are listed with the Research Question below

RQ: What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on the emotional health of military police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base?

It was clear that all the participants understood what emotional health meant, except for one participant, who I had to explain it to. They all understood what effects the isolated variables of working during the pandemic caused. The impact to emotional health was each officers' opinions on how working during the pandemic caused them to feel and their own emotional health. Furthermore, I let the participants decide how long they would need to return to the baseline of emotional health before the pandemic started. The findings revealed that most (9/10) of participants had an impact on their emotional health while working during the pandemic. The perceptions were shaped by the nature of participants' engagement with the pandemic during their tours of duty protecting and serving their communities.

Some themes began to emerge during the collection of data and analysis phase of the study that was germane to the research and supports some ideas for continued research to address the gaps of this study. One such theme was that the participants' desires were not to leave the military police organization altogether. Numerous participants indicated that they may, in fact, only consider leaving if nothing improves

when it comes to the current situation. For example, the results of a forced separations from the military of people that did not obey shot mandates or improved polices to take leave for rests. This theme supports the premise of the research question but also lends to the potential explanation to what other participants might have been thinking but did not disclose at the time of the interviews.

A predictable work and rest cycle is key to keep a healthy work force that can efficiently self-cope with stress and meet the requirements and expectations of the organization (Bakker et al., 2001). However, all participants disclosed that there was no balance between work and rest. Furthermore, the workload would generally increase as military police members fell sick. Also, there was no predictable rest cycle, as the pandemic caused staffing issues that required attention from members that were scheduled to be off. The participants were almost evenly split in terms of shift worked, roles, and range of experience. This enabled a point of view from the least experienced to harden veterans who had experienced hardship.

One theme that emerged fairly consistently was that inconsistency in policy, not only from the organization but from the CDC itself, was not present. I could feel the frustration of the participants forced to wear masks and take protective action when they were ensured the vaccination would prevent this. The constant change in policy as shown during the interviews almost as frequent as daily would frustrate the officers and cause impacts to emotional health. I could tell that the participants were truly military members as they wanted to follow the rules; however, I understood their frustration because who knows which policies are beneficial and keeps them and their families safe. However, the

participants also claimed that if they saw something on organizational policy that they didn't trust, they would look elsewhere, such as a cloth mask versus N95 medical mask that was not in compliance with uniform color requirements. The theoretical framework, Lazarus and Folkman's (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory, chosen for this study was supportive to the research and to the findings of the research. Lazarus and Folkman stated that the person's capacity to cope with and adjust to problems faced is a consequence of the transactions that occur between a person and their environment. The more the officer has transaction with their environment, the greater the impacts of the transaction. This shows how the military police members working during the pandemic and dealing with the pandemic daily and its variables had a tremendous impact on their capacity of self-efficiency.

It can be argued that the differential levels of perception in impacts to emotional health and recovery various between the variables and demographics in support of Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery, argument can be made that self-coping efficacy in recovery from different types of traumatic experiences depends on several variables such as experience, duration, role and other contributors to the recovery from the traumatic event (2019). During the research, there were clear developing themes that members' impact to the stress was depending on how it was preceded by that individual and not just the amount of experience they had or their role in the military police field. Although the study by Pink et al. (2021) showed that law enforcement officers were negatively impacted during the pandemic, it did not go into detail as to why. Most law enforcement leadership informed Pink et al. that the pandemic

negatively impacted the workforce, which does not help social change. It is research like this that lends support to the ideas behind this study and that there was a need for opinionated data to help push positive social change. During this study, I found that some military police members had impacted emotional health that could not be repaired.

The same phenomenon could be said to exist because the military police organization were not prepared to face a pandemic of this magnitude. In support that the COVID-19pandemic was a Black Swan Event, an event that has not been seen, or is expected, no data or guide exists. The only way to succeed is to go through the motions (Nasseem, 2019). The majority of participants indicated that not only did their organization, but they felt the government itself learned as they went. All participants felt that the COVID-19 pandemic was something they had not seen. Furthermore, there was no guide to success, no data or statistics to show us how to succeed. Almost all participants stated, "Our organizations learned through trial and error and used what worked." Although these are gaps in this research, they are still compounding variables within this research that of what impact to the emotional health working through the pandemic has on society, even if society holds little value to understanding first responders.

The findings provided insight to not only how much of an impact working through the pandemic has had on the participants emotional health, but the number of participants that have had permanent impacts. Furthermore, it is important to note that how many officers are deciding to leave the services. It is also important to recognize how guides and instructions of the organizations and the CDC are used for informational

purposes and not accepted for accuracy as lifesaving advice. Some impacts that should

not be overlooked were the divorces and deaths that took place in the small sample of

participants I selected. I had picked people at random from different sections of the

military police organizations, and yet four out of the ten had something significant

happen to them. It would be interesting to study a large sample to see what significant

impacts are devastating the emotional health of military police members. I did not ask

about divorces, deaths, or vaccines during the interview; this could be something to

consider important for future studies.

In Bakker and Demerouti's (2001) JD-R theory/behavior theory, a worker is part

of a process where if the employee does not get a steady and reliable work and rest cycle,

the worker's ability to efficiently cope with stress diminishes, thus impacting their quality

of work. This theory forms a cycle that supports this study specifically. Everything in this

circle is influences on by the pandemic that has impacted the participants in several ways.

The most specifically the environment, which is key to JD-R theory, as the environment

influences the participants to not be able to produce or process or cope with stress. How

these influences have an impact on people is key to the belief that the pandemic impacts

first responders, and military police members are specially impacted enough, specifically

those who have worked or supported the frontlines that are looking to leave the military

or feel they cannot help fix the impacts to their emotional health.

Bakker and Demerouti's (2001) JD-R theory/behavior theory posited that

changing one of the three factors alone are not significant enough to change the impacts

to their emotional health or the throughputs, but emotional states can be changed when all

the factors are changed. Having more time off, better management of Human Resources, and clear policies could be significant enough to influence the impacts to emotional health. But when all three of the observations are changed with the three steps of rest, resources, and policies, the idea of change occurs (Bakker and Demerouti, 2001)

Other themes about the impacts on the emotional health that arise during data collection included the fact that the participants that identified that they wanted someone to check on them, someone to ask how they were doing, and if that is done to some satisfaction of the participants could help lower stress level considerably. This trend was not only prevalent in members that lived alone, but those who had families at home. The participants gave more thought to their decisions to leave their organizations, told me that it was a little too late now, but if some issues were handled differently, it wouldn't have been this bad. In the developing theme, some participants had been denied travel for relaxation, to see family, or attend funerals due to the pandemic, and were forced to work, according to them. However, others from different installations where allegedly allow to travel, depending on leadership interpretations. These policy decisions, and the way they were handled is a violation of their rights, and they did not wish to be subjected to this control again. Some participants felt that working the frontlines for the pay, when compared to other military members getting the same compensation, was an issue. One participant stated that in regards to the inequality he faced, "There are people working from home now, they get paid the same as me, this isn't fair."

Another evolving theme of this research was the psychological variable that I had not considered when developing the research plan. The thought of the participants'

morale and their desires were a consideration, of course, but not considered to be a factor beyond just minor dissatisfaction. Most the participants disclosed that there was a psychological impact upon them when not only working but reading about continuous policy changes. Statements made during the interviews reflected that the continuous guidelines and polices changes negative had an impact on the participants, which is in line with Lazarus and Folkman's (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory. It was at a point during the research that a participant disclosed that a grandfather had been killed by the pandemic, and he was not allowed to even see him. This caused an emotional reaction that I had not been prepared for and that amplified the depth of the issue of participant emotional health and how it is affected by working through the pandemic.

The study results reflected various themes that are the foundation to the premise that the military police working during the pandemic had an impact on their emotional health, and factors such as vaccine mandates, lack of check-ups, and continuous policy changes are forcing officers to leave. The themes identified during the research exposed much more than a premise. They uncovered what the participants unanimously called a need for social change. Most importantly, the participants disclosed that it is how information dissemination was being handled was key to their perceptions and that transparency is important to them and those whom they interact with daily. However, participants clarified that transparency has to be trustworthy and, though trustworthiness was an issue, the perception of the participants was changes in rules and policies daily was just like reading a bulletin board and did not have the human factor. It was an equal concern to them how the CDC's guides continually changed and contradicted itself. At

one point, one of the participants even made the assessment that leadership and supervisors could come spend time with them and explain why certain things were being done the way they are, and not just told to accept the changes and move forward.

The conclusions drawn during the study pointed heavily to the negative impacts on emotional health of the military police that had worked during the pandemic in all their different roles. Perceptions of the impacts where significant enough for the officers to make life changing decisions such as leaving the force or not wanting to contribute to the expectations of the organization. A conclusion then could be drawn that there could potentially be a gap in research of the potential decline of personal for staffing military police recruitment candidates.

During the study, the findings showed most of the participants who worked during the pandemic carry scars such as loss of trust, degradation socializing skills and stress self-efficiency coping skills, loss of loved ones, divorces , lack of motivation and now a potential discharge from services if vaccine mandates are not met. Indicating that although it is clear that there has been an impact to their emotional health, the impacts will be magnified as they enter the phase of the new variants of the pandemic. Most notably, I found that most of the participants will look to seclude themselves and further cut themselves of from society until they can get out of the service. As a one participant stated "now we have these new variants coming out weekly, this is not going away and is becoming a way of life."

I was able to break the ice and build trust with all the participants. They then engaged in the interviews openly and, with little to no hesitancy. They gave clear

indications that their emotional health had been impacted drastically as soon as the first questions was asked about the COVID-19 Pandemic. Nevertheless, the impacts to emotional health from the pandemic are getting clearer and adjustments can now be made to address every issue, regardless of how small or frequently it is mentioned. Polices can be reconsidered or distributed in different ways as it is evident that they are having an impact on the officers as much as working during the Pandemic. Some officers will withdrew from the military services while others will change their jobs to something that is more out of harm's way with the same pay. The difference in this aspect of how working during the pandemic has impact the participants emotional health, equally impactful is policies such as vaccine mandates, change in rules such as mask on or off and time off to go see family had equal impact on their emotional health. This was a surprising outcome to the research which was unexpected to me and creates the desire to further study at a later time.

Many references in the literature used by me were case studies which focused on impacts of the Pandemic on first responders through surveys and leaderships perceptions, but it brings up a valuable question of if there is awareness of these issues and why is there not a pursuit for a solution to these questions? This in a sense brings up some phenomenological questions within this research that if the participants are getting emotionally impacted while working during the pandemic and other external variables than why can we not help ease their problems and make policy makers aware of these impacts beyond only looking at mission accomplishment? How can we build back the lack of trust during these trying times and show the participants that their organizations

care about their well-being? Also, if there are obvious needs for transparency why not seek that transparency rather than give up on being a part of social change and staying engaged? The findings indicate that the relationships the participants have with friends, peers, family, organization and even themselves has drastically changed impacting their emotional health. These relationships are having more of an impact on their careers than the organizations are comprehending. As JD-R behavior Theory and the transactional theory that would predict, the participants gave indications that their behaviors or in this case decisions are based heavily on the lack the transactions with their environment and their organizations. Their impacts to emotional health from working during the COVID-19 Pandemic thus in alignment with the theory of Lazarus and Folkmans (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory that they were emotional health was impacted by their surroundings, some of which is from the pandemic, while some where secondary effects.

A few emerging themes were taken from the participant responses. Of particular significance is that the participants gave an example of was being close to people and having to put themselves at risk. For example checking ID's, going into people's homes or firearms instructors having close proximity with their students. Less credibility is given to the polices that are made to protect them as wearing personal combat gloves and checking hundreds of IDs a day at the entrance of the installation with just a cloth mask on is enough to keep them safe. Or having multiple people together at the beginning of shifts that can be potential super spreaders if even one officer is sick. One specific incident which nearly all the participants gave as an example was the wearing of black or

brown cloth masks that need to be worn by the military police members. Nearly all the participants identified that the cloth masks to do not protect them and why are they wearing it? Shouldn't they have proper medical masks? What if they contract the COVID-19 virus and take it to their families?

Another developing theme which emerged during the research was that of travel and time off. Nearly all the participants indicated that they had been drastically impacted by not being allowed to travel to see family. One participant stated "I have no one, but my sibling, and I am not allowed to see them. I don't have to fly, I can simply drive". If that is only relief to dealing with the pandemic how is anything but negative impacts expected. Almost all the participants stated that there is not steady rest cycle and needing a break. The hurry up and wait mentality needs to end. One participant asked me "why are we all here? More than 50 personal and we are supposed to be six feet apart". Only one of the participants claimed they were not impacted by any of the revolving changes in policy as he stated we are in the military and it is expected from them. He gave no credit to the pandemic on impacting his emotional health at all. Interestingly that participant had gone through a divorce during the pandemic.

As with the themes from the RQ, there is reinforcement in the theme that morale is a concern of the participants as they observe their surroundings including their environment and people around them. The participants disclosed that there is so much misinformation that they felt they needed to look up information on Facebook to keep themselves and their families safe. The majority of participants who had impacts to their emotional health often complained of inequality when compared to other military

members. This potentially leads to another gap in study where military police risking their lives for unfair pay when compared to other jobs? Several participants indicated that they were not lucky to be home like other jobs on the installation. Where does this ideology come from? Are some participants married to people in other jobs on the installation or perhaps know someone that is not doing much compared to them? While these are not facts, rather opinions of personal that had been impacted by hard work during these trying times, it can be looked into at another time. A few of the participants that decided to remain engaged in their jobs indicated that they are stressed about the possibility that they might be working through a Pandemic forever. As one participant stated "this was supposed to be a week thing, not a forever thing and now look at us?"

An analysis of the interview responses elicited in this qualitative study reveals important and somewhat unexpected insights. First, as could have been predicted through the application of Lazarus and Folkmans (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory, the subjects overwhelmingly confirmed their emotional health had been impacted by either working during the Pandemic or the continuous change in polices. Further, as was also predicted at the outset of this study, the interviewees indicated that their ability to effectively communicate and pursue organizational expectations was diminishing. Furthermore, watching their social media accounts and observing listening to the online discussions of close friends and family members had a stronger impact on their attitudes, decisions and emotional health equally to other factors , including working during the Pandemic, organizational policy changes and communication barriers. This supports the idea that the participants social support networks are highly influential, even when those

close peers are not actively endorsing or critiquing a course of action. For example, a number of the subjects reported that they did not always disclose how they felt even to close friends. Nevertheless, the concern over the anticipated reaction of these important figures in the subjects' lives, compelled a number of the subjects to either to continue to keep their thoughts to themselves, rather than deal with the consequences of judgement from their peers. As previously noted, for example, a number of the interviewees reported that their peers had changed and were now less tolerant and where now not always available for an empathetic ear. The participants' lack of ability to talk to their friends or families due to their views supports the idea that they rather not deal the anticipated reactions of close friends and family. This confirms Benight and Bandura's social cognitive theory of post-traumatic assertions regarding recovering from PTSD as the impacted participant will not go towards any avenue when there are not comfortable rather, just bottle it up inside, which is the worst thing to do.

Thus, the study, though limited in scope, provided significant data to support the hypotheses this qualitative approach was designed to assess, lending credence to the motivating premise that military police members working during the COVID-19 pandemic have had impacts to their emotional health. Further, the data supported the premise that the influence is magnified through social media, and external factors in general that the participants are making life changing decisions that are fueled by this significant impacts.

One important but unanticipated theme that emerged from the study, however, is the impact of perceptions that the participants emotional health cannot be returned to the

baseline prior to the pandemic. Multiple interview subjects reported that their emotional

health had been so significantly impacted that no amount of time off or therapy can fix

their issues. For the ones that did state that their emotional health can be returned it was

an average of a year to six months away from work and time to themselves. Significantly,

for the participants that were impacted even low on the scale were deciding to leave the

service. This possibly suggests that the participants with perceived impacts less when

compared to their peers might want to leave not just due to the Pandemic but other issues

not disclosed in the interviews. For example the member with low emotional health

impact stated the Pandemic and the politics makes things worse, however he was done

anyway and didn't want to deal with the job anymore. The fact that the majority of these

participants emphasized a possibility of leaving the organization suggests that their

emotional health and dislike for their job is being driven from other variables as well. The

seeming escalation of the danger faced by law enforcement at present seems to have had

the most significant influence on these subjects. This presents an important opportunity

for future research in as much as an understanding of are military police officers content

with their jobs and their organization? Once they have been exposed for a certain number

of years to the job, it can be valuable to understand what issues they have with the job

which can help increase retainment.

Limitations of the Study

This study possessed a few limitations. The first was the sample size of

participants, though saturation was obtained and the sample size, and I believed that the

study could have benefitted greatly from a larger participant pool, the backgrounds,

experiences and opinions were important to the development of the phenomenon believed

by me to exist. What participation pool that existed did open areas for future theory and

research of the impacts to the military police career in general and what influences their

members to become negative.

Another limitation was the excluding of higher echelon such as Chiefs of police

and Pentagon leadership, which for all intents and purposes would have made this study

too broad in scope. This also would potentially have required a mixed-method

methodology, something which was not desired for this study but is a promising avenue

for future studies by me once the degree has been conferred.

Perhaps the most significant limitation of this study was that due to the pandemic

most all the interviews were conducted via telephone, which left out much of the desired

one-on-one contact I wanted to have with the participants. For example I wanted to

spend more time with the participant, not only to build a rapport with them, but to also

gauge their body language while conducting an interview. There are times that a person's

body language supports what they are trying to say. In this study the video conferencing

did not provide much beyond what the screen would provide, and made it necessary to

ask the participant to repeat themselves due to some short interruptions in video or phone

call.

<div align="center">**Recommendations**</div>

The data gleaned from the present study provide clear evidence that the emotional

health of the military police members working during had been impacted, so much so that

some of the participants felt that they could never be helped and wanted to leave the job

all together. The best recommendation to address this issue would be to raise awareness of the social problem which develops from working during surges and large scale events and to also raise awareness of the potential impact that misinformation has the members risking their lives on the frontlines. This is important when the future of a profession is at stake from potential candidates of change are diverted from their path.

Most importantly, a recommendation to be drawn from this study is for military police organizations entities to evaluate their transparency policies and allow for more information to be released as required. The pandemic has now consistently shown the negative side of withholding information and not being sure of something and hastily releasing it. This os how distrust can build in a community. It is this particularly important aspect which nearly all the participants disclosed as a concern of theirs. A willingness to accept the organizations can do something to address their members emotional health can be the start to helping the participants' perception, which in the long run would help with their ability to self-cope. To add to this recommendation it would be remiss of me not to disclose that nearly all of the participants stated that they wished that someone check on them. Frequently enough to show they care, not to just do so to stay out of trouble or due to requirements. Furthermore, this research also leads to the idea that each situation is different and can a dying person be indeed allowed to see their dying family member? Perhaps we can step away from one shoe fits all mentality.

Ultimately the recommendations in a research study must be tangible in nature, but if there was a philosophy which could develop that would spread into communities it would be that of understanding and empathy. All the participants disclosed a certain

amount contempt by some in their community towards their perception of what they were going through. The majority of the participants stated they could no longer talk to their friends and peers. They made it clear that everything turns into an argument. The sociological and psychological impacts are less significant if persons closely related to the participants were more understanding that the participants want to be part of the solution, not the problem.

Also, in a qualitative study conducted by Laufs and Waseem (2020) focuses on how the COVID-19 Pandemic has had several impacts on not only law enforcement but other first responders such as healthcare workers. Here the study talked about the stressors faced by all front line workers and impacts to their health. The researchers also make some comparisons with the general population. Though police emotional health is not a specific variable of Laufs et al., study, the researcher explored all the impacts of working in a stressful environment causing burn-out in society. This was important because it can give some insight to the issue identified, are each of the frontline workers being compensated correctly, as several participants in the study highlighted

Laufs et al., (2020), perceptions of police stressors are shown during the pandemic but not compared to support the perceptions of this study but unlike this study Laufs et al., also interviewed made the claims that all first line workers had impacts to emotional health. It is this point which was brought to light by many of the participants of this study, that military police members are not treated equally to other military members. Is their perception not trustworthy, and the participant perception fogged due to their impacts to emotional health?

If a researcher were to attempt to conduct research into a theory of social decline it would be paramount of that research to include what influences existed that involved current impacts to the emotional health of the officers. If the pandemic is causing impacts to the emotional health of the workers, than what secondary effects are being caused that are effecting the officers? For example the information that is being passed and changed continually is lacking in integrity, or is it that perhaps the organization does not know what to do as supported by the Black Swan Event idea. Lazarus and Folkmans (1987) transactional theory/behavior theory clearly posits that constant negatives projected upon someone will cause a negative reaction by that person and will result in a negative behavior

The articulable data provided during this study is significant to not only me and participants, but also to the military as a whole. If there are perceptions, misleading or not, which cause a negative impacts to emotional health in demographics of military police members, it then becomes more than a passing concern, but at a point could become a catastrophic failure for the career field as a whole. The awareness of the problem must go beyond just acknowledgement and be addressed in a manner that stakeholders all approach the problem with an open mind and willingness to engage in amicable negotiations. Arguably to a point as a military executive, I understood the perceptions of the police members, and the data which shows an alarming number of participants in the organization whose emotional health has been significantly impacted. Regardless of role, this is a problem throughout the military police organization where it seems at this moment in time to be a concern to such a degree that military police

members are hesitant to commit to their duty and according to data recovered in this study.

Implications

Several critical issues emerged from this study which are reflective of negative impacts to the emotional health of the military officers that worked during the pandemic. Firstly, most of the participants did not feel like someone in their organization cared to check on their health and stress levels. The participants trust is eroded with the organization does not allow a member to see a dying family member. A key item to remember is that this scenario does have an impact on observes as well as indicated during the interviews.

A recurring theme of the study was that polices were being changed constantly. It seems like everything was panic driven as some the participants shared. An example given by a few participants was get the COVID-19 vaccine and you are immune to the disease and you do not have to wear a mask. This statement changed in a few weeks as they were back in masks made of cloth matching with their uniforms and their peers who had received the vaccine where still getting sick. This was for some of the participants to appear to be an emotional breaking point and their desires to continue to produce for the organization stopped. It is the emotional response of society that may further impact the emotional health of the police workers is the article by Graber (2021) which touches on, but most specifically mentioned law enforcement and their willingness to leave their jobs when being forced vaccines. This article also shows us through a poll that 44% of law enforcement would leave if they were forced. This statement, if happens could devastate

the military. Today the Air Force is now dealing with a mass retention issue and cannot support the Presidents mandatory mandate.

The participants who disclosed that their emotional health was impacted by working during the pandemic also disclosed that their ability to recover would be long term or for some not even possible. They also continued to voice their distrust of how policy wise the pandemic was handled stated repeatedly that they just want to make things tolerable for them and their peers. But it took a significant impact on their emotional health to full fill the expectations of what was being asked of them, this being indicative of the theoretical framework chosen for this study. This brings about the belief that their organization as a whole is less tolerant of the impacts of their people emotional health and is more directed to their organizational requirements only. There is a sociological implication here which could be a devastating one if potential long term workers are influenced away from the career field as this only adds to the problem.

According to JD-R Theory (2001), the steps to ensure a healthy, long term work force is to ensure transparent communication, steady time off, and understanding of the goals and the people accomplishing them. If the Pandemic continues and the steps mentioned are continually altered, it can have an influence on those who are the future of a specific profession, deter them from their chosen path by use of negativity or hate, this will have dire consequences on society as a whole. This was something communicated to me by some of the participants in direct words, other participants in the context of how they felt about their original decisions to enter the military police organization.

Although 40% of the participants had decided to leave their jobs, most of the remaining participants felt compelled for change in transparency in communion and how large scale events where handled. Participants that wanted to exit further stated that they might have been persuaded to stay if people showed compassion and empathy towards them. For example, a direction that could be taken was a person who would have provided some mentoring for them, someone with the experience of large scale stressful events, and had led people through hard times. Participants felt that someone in their organization in a prominent position could have made the difference with just a little encouragement. This specific point is not germane the working during the pandemic, but it is specific to the participants decisions to continue with their careers and is significant in their decisions to continue, or not. All individuals should be given a certain amount of respect and dignity regardless of their choices and perceptions so long as those choices are to be part of a solution. The implications herein show a direct correlation between working during the Pandemic and the decisions of the military police in the middle of the storm. How to address the problem is yet another research study about the human factor which exists where the solution is there but is being prevented by the lack of truth, acceptance and openness.

One of the most significant implications of this study is truly understanding what issues the military police officers are facing due to working the Pandemic, according to a study by Kamal et a., (Dec, 2020) first responders have a high chance of developing mental health issues, becoming social isolated, depressed, reaching burnout and having suicidal ideations. According to them it is know that the military is currently having a

suicide problems. Just like the data collected has indicated that the participants are feeling some or all the emotions mentioned in the article. The study showed a polls between essential workers unessential, where in military police are essential. According to Kamal 22% of essential workers during the pandemic had considered suicide compared to 11% of non-essential personal. It was also recorded that police officers reached burnout and were not able to process stress effectively their overall health.

This study helped me as the participants indicated some of the issues during the interviews processes. Many other signs where evident such as burnout, depression and anti-social tendencies where implied but not clearly stated. I understood these implied answers because several participants stated that they didn't feel like communicating and rather keep to themselves. Furthermore, all participants stated their communicating abilities had been impacted and they didn't feel like doing anything. Lastly, most participants stated they needed a break and were tired. This was clearly indicated when they felt they could no longer meet the high expectations of their organization. The participants' disclosures mirrored the ones that of their civilian counter parts, minus the issues with policy transparency that every participants talked about as impacting them in some way. No participants indicated suicidal ideations.

People from different roles in law enforcement will usually represent backgrounds with different points of view and perceptions. In this study it was evident that the demographics of the participants varied somewhat, some of them with more experience, others from the opposite, and other demographics such as different jobs within the organization which could potentially be a factor in the study, but there was no validation

of a conflict of data or of the selection criteria for the study as all of the participants met

the specific criteria. The study showed an overwhelming number of the participants were

engaged heavily in their organization during the Pandemic in their own respective roles,

and their emotional health was impacted for the most part. Their transactions with the

environment impact their emotional health overtime negatively due to the constant

stressors that are not in the control of the military members such as policies or the arrival

of new COVID-19 variants, as supported by the Lazarus and Folkmans (1987)

transactional theory, which states when officers continually have negative interactions

with their environment it will impact their health and over time will continually get

worse.

It could also be implied from the data retrieved in this study that a number

of the people which the participants were personally connected who had a fundamental

and negative opinion, possibly also because of burnout, due to working during the

pandemic, also tended to make things worse. I can come to this implied result because

several participants stated that their peers had become negative and talking to them and

sharing issues had become unpleasant. This shows that potentially if the participants had

peers that were positive in nature, it may have impacted emotional health in a positive

way. In an article by Rebuck et al., (2020) there is a definitive discussion about the

research which he conducted about the variables in positivity in law enforcement. When

one officer is positive it helps spread positivity among other officers garnering several

benefits. Some such benefits are positively during hard times makes tougher tasks seem

easier. Positive attitudes lowers stress of not only the officers but others around them. A

mindset of it must not be bad if everyone is happy. Finally it can also reduce use of force incidents as officers are less likely to be less aggressive. This articles findings can be implied to this study because the total burnt-out and negative effects are only magnified as impacts to emotional health. The question for another research project which stems from the data collected in this research study is to determine what impacts occur to law enforcement operations if officers are collectively positive?

The themes and patterns of this study suggested that military police members regardless of experience and roles within the organization had been negatively impacted by working during the pandemic and other variables not considered by me such as constant policy changes, forced mandates of vaccinations. These variables are important to this study because they are important to the participants and hence important to their emotional health well-being. The participants' impacts to emotional health have caused them to make life altering decisions that will impact them for years to come, as well as the organization as a whole. The trickle effects of officers leaving the service or even if retained not wanting to work to the organizational expectations will impact the organization continually in the long run. Finally, as discussed by Rebuke et al., (2020), the negatively will spread like a wild fire giving leaders a force that is not operating at its true potential and due to the wide responsibilities of military police internally might impact America foreign policy.

Implications for Social Change

This study can be a positive influence by contributing to positive social change by identifying a problem in society and providing ideas of how to address the ideas in a

manner which will foster trust by those who are impacted by various aspects involved in this study.

The perceptions of people in the general when it comes to military police is life can be stressful, however the mission is getting accomplished and everything is fine. The military has a reputation of being tough and doing what they're told to do. While there is nothing wrong with the mindset, today this might not apply. This is because military police is currently working through a large scale event, that the government has no idea how to deal with, no guide or statistics to help drive policy and lastly only way forward is through a trial and error basis. As indicated in the article a Black Swan Event (Nadeem, 2002) is dubbed as an event that is large scale and unknown. Furthermore, it is an event that does not have historical data and the playbook is generated via trial and error. The last event to be labeled a Black Swan Event was the September, 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. The military is used to having everything planned down to the finest details in operation orders. Each member understand their role and what needs to be done. This proven logic might not be effective anymore and perhaps with this study military leadership can accept this logic and work to make subtle changes to address the moral and emotional health their members. In order for a solution to be generated, leadership at all level must accept that a change is needed and for this delegation of responsibility, there must be willingness to grant someone their trust.

The emotional health of the military police members depends on people being involved who are a willing participant in change, and anything which stands between those who want to engage in change is something that must be eliminated. For one,

members with valuable experience are deciding to leave the service due to the impacts to their emotional health and the stress compiled with the uncontrollable factors the COVID-19 Pandemic. Furthermore, they are leaving with negative perspective that can affect future members coming into the military police field. Supervisors in the Air Force have been trained for years to lead and take care of their subordinates, however the research data shows that they are currently falling short trying to keep morale and emotional health positive. The Pandemic is a new phenomenon and its effects are constant and 24 hours a day. As a participant stated " it doesn't end at work, I carry the stress at a store buying food for my family, and I am constantly thinking, am I doing all I can to keep them safe? If we cannot provide proper, trustworthy and tested guidelines for these members than the organization is culpable. I knew from experience that once military leaders hear about potential issues they tend to address them. If they do not see their members need intervention, they are culpable. While the study's data was raw opinionated data, facts are the organization will lose 4 out 10 members interviewed. If the military leadership entities are not engaged in transparency to the various policies coming down from the pentagon, they are culpable in the misdirection of solution.

In a qualitative study conducted by Jones (2020), the question of transparency in policies is questioned. The participants in the study by Jones provided insight like that of the participants in this study, that the ever changing policies that made no sense to them. The policies that came down from the federal government and then changed according to the many leaders in the police force that is making life stressful for the officers. This impacts how they deal with people and increases the possibilities of use of force incidents

from taking place. The perfect setting for military police officers is a hot debate that can be traced back to its existence, it will always be different, much like the opinions of the participants of this study. In this study 10 of the 10 participants wanted to see transparency in guidelines and policies. Each and every member was impacted in their own way. It could have been the ban on traveling to attend a funeral or a mandatory military function that is openly breaking social distance protocols. Or something as complex as does the color coordinated cloth masks that are not keeping the police officers safe really necessary? Perhaps how many times a day leadership does morale checks on their member. How do morale checks have to be adjusted due to the pandemic, because 9 of 10 participants needed more. If this study were to be accurate to a broader population it could be argued that just per 40% of the work force currently might be thinking of changing jobs, currently unhappy or deciding to leave the service all together. This along with the reality of 100s of service member's that will be forced discharged from the service on the Presidents mandate will strain staffing. This is not part of the study but something that will soon become an issue.

Social change means that people must be accepting of that change and so long as military police officers are continuing work in extremely long hours with irregularities, as a participants stated "facing an invisible enemy" will continually impact the emotional health of its members. This will lead to the continual erosion of members trust, morale and emotional health and eventually result in a decline of work performance and eventual mission failure. Not to say the censorship is key to the problem, but the refusal to dispel information known to be wrong and not protecting its members either based on

experience or medical conclusions, results in the wanting to understand the true reason of continual policy changes being only checking a box or political. It is these things that need to be considered as part of changes needed within society.

Listed below are suggested steps to bring about social change.

1. Policies and guidance's that drive operations such as protective gear, social distancing and travel bans should be transparent. When it comes to protective gear it needs to be clear either cloth masks work or not. A simple answer to that the N95 does not match the uniform is not good enough. The military police member need to only think about the job, not if their equipment works as intended. If social distancing is in effective it needs to apply to all setting including mandatory formations and functions. There needs to be an understanding of what and why are mandatory military formations happening. The promulgation of negativity feeds a problem, not providing for a solution. It is not censorship to provide information in a manner which does not provide a negative emotional response. Instead of making it appear as though a party is not open to comment, perhaps explaining that they cannot for legal reasons comment at this time. Each installation doing what they want to do, is not the intent as the Air Force fall under one commander

2. A fundamental change in what information is released by agencies as it relates to military travel and how each individual case is handled. For example if there is a mandatory travel ban, what is the exception? 9/10

members voiced issues about travel bans that could have easily been dealt with on a individual basis. For example two people reported that they were not allowed to attend funerals of immediate family members. They also reported that other installations military police was allowed to travel.

3. Open and frequent communication between the military members and their leadership in regards to morale checks. This was a significant issue addressed by 10/10 participants that they wished that someone would have just checked on them. 8 of 10 participants stated that talking to someone could have helped improve their impacts to their emotional health. One of the participants credited me being the first person to ask him "Tell me how you are doing, and how are you handling these issues?" A point which was clearly made by more than half of the participants that are leaving the Force in this study was that they would have been open to continue their military service if encouraged by a mentor, or leader.

4. Most importantly, if military police leaders want to continue obtaining the best results all around and attract and keep new recruits there going to have to go back to the drawing board on large scale operations and come up with a better predictable work rest cycle. Just because the country is under distress or attack does not mean the military police should work nonstop without a break resulting in long term non recoverable mental health issues according to some of the participants. One participant stated we need to stop being reactive and become proactive.

5. Lastly, quick adaptation and transparency of policies coming from higher echelon such as the White House and the Pentagon. More than 50% of the participants stated that policies coming from the top hit multiple levels of bureaucracy such as Wing, Group and finally local leadership level before they are changed according to a leader's opinion and not necessarily in the best interest of the men and women on the front lines. For example, if social distancing and staying away from crowds is the key to COVID-19 control than why is basic training graduations opened again and not just kept virtual. This event puts stress on the officers and increases the changes of contamination and exposure to the virus. Looking strategically this increases the potential tourist traffic into the city causing a never ending cycle of COVID-19 exposure.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study has provided research information on the impacts of emotional health on military police members working during the pandemic. Further studies could be conducted in the following areas:

1. A possible decline in the retainment of military police due to the impacts of emotional health.

2. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the military police staffing and recruitment.

3. The impact of increased transparency of policies and guidelines on the effectiveness in military police operations.

4. The OODA loop of improper work rest cycle on military police morale.

5. Journalistic integrity and the impact of proper morale checks on military police organizations.

6. Does negative perception of separated military police members have potential impact on recruitment numbers?

7. How does the COVID-19 vaccine mandates impact the emotional health or staffing of the military police organization

8. Is special incentive pay the key to resolving issues faced by frontline workers or military police?

Conclusions

This study primarily focused on the impacts of emotional health on military police members stationed at XXXXXXXX Air Force Base. While the intended goal was to determine what the impacts, if any, where to the emotional health of the military police officers of the participants while working during the pandemic, this study uncovered much more. By observing and talking to the participants, I discovered that these participants wanted to speak about the issues they lived through and want to see a solution to their problems, and they want to be engaged in the solution to the problems. Whether or not the problem is working to much without a proper work rest cycle, or misleading information, four of the participants felt that the best approach was to leave the military organization, or change their jobs. This study went beyond emotional health and how it impacted these military members, it went into an area which clearly exposes a sociological problem that is not just confined to certain demographics.

If a single military police member leaves the organization or their job and discontinues their service because of any negative reason they feel there is not answer to, the military and society as a whole suffers, and anyone not willing to be part of the solution is part of the problem. The participants clearly embraced this research study to be heard and they all said that there is a lot of work to be done and were very satisfied with the social changes I was looking to accomplish. They stated that this was the first study they have heard that is looking to address the issues they feel are important, not interpreted through leadership or surveys. Throughout the data collection process the overworked members, with compounding issues such as misinformation, and lack of transparency has only developed a feeling of distrust and disconnection which has impacted each of the participants. None of them want to give up on their military careers but made hard decisions out of their own fears of being exposed to COVID-19 and burnout that will push them deeper into potential depression and even more impacts to their emotional health.

The participants clearly stated that they believed from the time that they have been working through the COVID-19 phenomenon their morale has continually been effected and is significantly impacting their emotional health and some whom cannot be fixed with time or therapy. What they observed during the pandemic is how certain policies and contradicting guidelines were wrong and political in nature, but the lack of explanations and morale checks from supervisors and leaders are forcing them to leave. They explained that their motivations to be part of the solution to a problem was strong, but not prominent enough to put themselves at and their families at risk and speak

positive about their experiences while working as a military police member. Essentially stating that they were caught in the middle of two sides, without any progress being made. All participants have stated a desire to continue or stay in military police services when some of the issues are sorted and it is safer to work.

The problems that these first responders face is not an issue that is just for people at this location but also a problem for other installations all over the world. This emotional unrest of today is going to have ripple effects in the military police field because many members are retiring from services, or are quitting long before retirement because of morale or policy issues. This does not account for the 100's of people that are going to be forced out due to the vaccine mandate. This could potential cripple the military police organizations around the world. We have to remember that military police are not like local law enforcement, they have a higher purpose in protecting American foreign policy and their communities. If they have burnout or the staffing is not available, how many issues can this create? The disconnect between military police and their leaders who are tasked with serving them could be the cause of many issues the military is facing today such as depression and growing suicide numbers. These issues have kept leaders at all levels wondering how and what can be done to prevent these negative trends from growing.

Some of the participants clearly described their impacts to emotional health due to what they believed were obvious violations of trust and lack of a proper work and rest cycle, and a lack of standardized policies for the better of the members instead of bureaucracy. By policies such a travel bans and being force to work when family

members are dying developed a deep distrust of policy. This negative interactions during the pandemic has fostered their desire to join the ranks and be a part of what they saw as the desperately needed change. A change that needs to happen before the next large scale operation or future conflict. Where utilizing proper theory and education, and not bureaucracy to make decisions to ensure proper maintenance of the force. But when confronted with what they would do to improve the emotional health of other members they decided to go the route of getting out of the service and potentially becoming a counselor or entering the medical field, while others said it wasn't their problem as they wanted to work on themselves. This within itself hurts the military police organization as in, if that one person is not in the right place, the right job, at the right time when someone needed them, something that some of the participants disclosed is an issue when the right person was not there to mentor them or check on their welfare and emotional health.

The question arises about the problem which exists and what answers can be derived from the data collected in this study. To that it become necessary to ask if there is a rational way to develop a response which would expose the negatives impacts to emotional health and bolster a morale from those who are more keenly impacted by the negatives of what appears be a Pandemic that was supposed to be a few week, is now looking to carry one for the unseen future. Is there potential for the impacts to emotional health not be negative by proper leadership and transparency? The question spawns an immediate reaction from many in the military police organization that it cannot because things will never change. The mission comes first and that is all that matters. Bureaucracy

and leaders that want to appease their superiors will never be open to change. This is something that I struggled with as a military police leader. I myself have been charged in the past with the morale and welfare of military police members. Both during regular peace time and during surge and long term events. I was optimistic and feel that with proper supporting data, the Pentagon is always looking to improve the lives of their servicemen and women. However, if they are unaware and the organizational goal as are being met, than technically from their viewpoint there is nothing that needs to be fixed. Something's that come to mind is there a way that more information can be released in the name of transparency and create an environment of trust? And, would more information and transparency create more animosity and distrust? Do they do business now due to reasons that the participants are unaware? These are all questions which need answers, the problem is that they are questions being asked by the participants and that the lack of answers is what makes them reconsider their career paths and pursuits. It is those pursuits which create a need for further research to answer that if long term operations in environments such as the working during the COVID-19 Pandemic continue and is impacting emotional health, is it possible that the number of military members will leave the force? How will recruitment be effected and cause numbers to diminish? With fewer experienced veteran military police members working in key leadership positions, will that develop to yet another potential phenomenon? All in all, the need to seek answers could not be stronger and researchers could benefit greatly by finding those answers which hopefully more than just academic minds could benefit from.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Research Question

What are the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional health of military

police personnel assigned to XXXXXXXX Air Force Base?

Interview Questions

• Reassure the participant of confidentiality of the interview process

• Provide participant with resource and IRB information

1. What was your daily job like before the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. How is your job different now during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. What examples can you give in the differences that have impacted you positively?

4. What examples would you give in the differences that have impacted you

negatively?

5. What examples would you give that helped prepared you to work during the

Pandemic?

6. How would you describe your work during the pandemic compared to others on

the military instillation?

7. How do you feel about working during the pandemic?

8. What are some examples of what concerns you the most about working during the

Pandemic?

9. What impacts, if any, have those examples had on you?

10. What impacts do you believe working during the pandemic had on your peers?

11.   What options are available to you to seek help for the examples you mentioned that impacted you and your peers?

12.   What do you feel are the repercussions, if any, of receiving help for the examples you mentioned?

13.   What examples could you give to what is a way to properly deploy your work force for the COVID-19 pandemic or other events comparable?

14.   How would you describe your overall emotional health prior and working through the pandemic?

15.   How are your relationship with friends and family been impacted by working during the pandemic?

16.   How long do you think it will take to completely reverse any impacts of working during the pandemic?

17.   Do you have anything else to share with me?

•   Ask the participant if they have any questions about the interview or study

•   Give thanks for the participant giving their time for the interview