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Role Conflict, Work-Related Stress, and Correctional Officer Misconduct

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Abstract

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by

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MA, Kean University, 2010

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Correctional officer misconduct is a prevalent issue within U.S. correctional facilities that jeopardizes the protection and management of inmates. Research shows that correctional officers experience more work-related stress than individuals in other occupations, but it is unknown whether work-related stress and role conflict predict correctional officer misconduct. The purpose of this study was to examine role conflict and stress as predictors of correctional misconduct through the lens of transactional theory, role theory, and strain theory. A cluster sampling method was used to distribute surveys to 107 correctional officers in four New Jersey correctional facilities. The surveys contained items from the Job Stress Scale, the Role Conflict Scale, and the Self-Report Deviance Scale. Data were analyzed using linear regression analysis. The results indicated that role conflict was a negative predictor of misconduct whereas work-related stress was not a predictor of misconduct. In one unit of role conflict, the score resulted in decrease with misconduct participants. Role conflict was positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors such as organization neglect and aggression. The study findings may inform the development of policy and training for correctional officers that may help to reduce officer misconduct and improve their quality of life and desire to stay in their positions. These changes may enhance the rehabilitation of inmates.

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Dedication

To my wife, Adriane, and my daughter, Kai, for supporting me through the struggle achieving this monumental moment.

To my mother, Lucille, who brought me into this world with just an 11th grade education and who raised a son who received this level of education, may she rest in heaven.

To my extended family and friends, thanks for your support during the moments I needed you as the process became overwhelming challenging achieving a doctorate degree.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The correctional environment houses those considered violators of laws and policies of that period. From the late 1700s through present day, authorities in Colonial America and the United States have housed the penitentiary population in unpleasant conditions where they have experienced severe punishment (Clear et al., 2013). Various ideologies, from inhumane conditions (e.g.,, whipping, working from sunup to sundown, hard labor, and establishing workhouses) to multiple-model approaches (e.g., rehabilitation, work release, and electronic monitoring), have underpinned prison reform based on political influences. Over the years, the U.S. prison population has increased, which has made the task of correctional administrators more challenging. In addition, administrators continually must address the demands of the public and political leaders as their agencies undergo prison model changes (Clear et al., 2013; Ellis, 2001).

The bulk of these challenges has fallen on the correctional officers who manage not just policy demands but also have firsthand experience with inmate-initiated violence. Correctional officers have had to adjust their traditional role of discipline enforcers to keep inmates confined. Handling the treatment aspect of the rehabilitation process as part of their duties has sometimes led to role conflict for officers (Clear et al., 2013; Dowden & Tellier, 2004). Clear et al. (2013) found that penitentiary officers exhibited a significant amount of stress while remaining fair and consistent.

Because of exterior demands regarding the treatment of inmates, correctional officers have moved from emphasizing disciplinary confrontation to a more embracing and caring disposition (Ross, 2013). Dowden and Tellier (2004) suggested that

correctional officers must adjust to role conflict. Research has shown that role conflict is one of the more reliable predictors of stress for correctional officers. Researchers do not currently know if there is a link between role conflict and stress and officer misconduct (Ross, 2013). The close interactions of inmates may lead to more abuse and increased misconduct.

Clear et al. (2013) suggested that correctional officers experiencing role conflict might adopt a negative attitude toward their organization, and the strain would create a more punitive disposition toward the inmates. However, researchers have not established whether stress predictors lead to correctional officers' misconduct. In this study, I sought to determine whether there is a predictive relationship between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct. The study's implications for positive social change include providing insight that organizational leaders and policy makers can use to prevent or reduce officer misconduct, which may contribute to greater officer morale and retention and enhance the rehabilitation of inmates. The knowledge from the study may also provide broader insight on law and policy making in the United States; as Ross (2010) noted, "Deviance is the foundation from which many of society's policies, practices, and laws are developed" (p. 110). In this chapter, I provide an overview of the study, including the background, problem and purpose, research question (RQ) and hypotheses, theoretical foundation, and methodology. I also define key terms and discuss the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background of the Study

Researchers studying correctional officer stress have focused on how stress develops from the environment. The penitentiary environment is characterized by internment client conflict (Clear et al., 2013) and stress for correctional officers who are vulnerable (Misis et al., 2013). Cheek and Miller (1979) interviewed several correctional officers; the researchers determined that inmates, poor communication, and powerlessness were some factors that accounted for correctional officers' stress. Some correctional officers use excessive force for those trafficking cell phones and drugs into the correctional facilities. Worley and Worley (2011) suggested that correctional officers were more likely to be involved in deviance within their 8-hour duty. Nevertheless, there is little research on whether role conflict and stress are predictors of correctional officers' misconduct, according to my review of the literature (Ross, 2013).

As Ross (2013) noted, few scholars have studied correctional officers' misconduct overall. Leaders of correctional agencies and the American Correctional Association have explored developing an ethic code concerning correctional officers' roles. They have done so as administration and correctional officers have engaged ethically questionable behavior that violates norms (Ross, 2013). Because of the nature of the penitentiary environment, Lambert et al. (2009) suggested the importance of studying the impact of this work environment on officers (p. 461). Role conflict in the authors' correctional agency rehabilitation model puts the correctional officer in a controversial position as a disciplinarian, keeping a distance from the inmates.

Correctional stress represents a serious concern (Edmondson et al., 2010; Finn, 2000; Lambert et al., 2009). Historically, research has shown that the correctional environment fosters a dangerous atmosphere. Over the years, correctional officers have endured several changes in the nature of their work, from patrolling the hallways, guarding coworkers, and protecting criminals from one another, as well as experiencing the various policy changes to be implemented by the administration (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000). With these ongoing changes, the relationships among correctional officers and inmates also change. The dynamic nature of correctional officers' work makes the study of predictors of officer stress and misconduct worthy of investigation.

Problem Statement

Within the walls of the correctional environment, some penitentiary officers engage in misconduct. For some time, correctional officers have exhibited questionable behaviors from excessive force to bringing in contraband (Ross, 2013). In 2011, for instance, Senior Correction Roman of Northern State Prison was found guilty of racketeering and official misconduct for running drugs and prepaid cellphones for inmates at that prison facility (see Clear et al., 2013). Moreover, Megerian (2011) reported that Assistant Commissioner Lydell Sherrer of New Jersey was sentenced to 3 years for attempted extortion and bribery against members of his department. Armstrong et al. (2015) suggested that the correctional officer faces unique challenges due to the increase in pressure they experience. Ross (2013) indicated that penitentiary officers sometimes engage in deliberate behavior that extends to falsifying log information in the logbook, coming in late, being distracted with magazines, watching television, and even

compromising security and safety of their fellow correctional officers. Correctional officer misconduct is a prevalent issue within U.S. correctional facilities that jeopardizes the protection and management of inmates (Fellman, 2017). Because of the detrimental consequences of correctional officer misconduct, researchers have identified some potential antecedents to correctional officer misconduct, such as work-related stress and role conflict, to minimize the occurrence (Lambert et al., 2019; Worley et al., 2017).

Correctional officers experience more work-related stress at both the individual and organizational levels than individuals in other occupations (Russo et al., 2018). Researchers have linked enhanced work-related stress for correctional officers to correctional institutions being inherently stressful environments (Saunders et al., 2017; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Kinman et al. (2017) and Bezerra et al. (2016) suggested that role conflict was a significant source of work-related stress among correctional officers. It is unknown whether work-related stress and role conflict predict correctional officer misconduct. Lambert et al. (2019) suggested that researchers should investigate work-related stressors and the effects on work deviance among correctional officers. The need for this research is supported by Boateng and Hsieh (2019), who stated that existing research on the relationship between work-related stressors and correctional officer misconduct is limited due to insufficient instruments for measuring correctional officer misconduct. A researcher performing further inquiry into the antecedents to correctional officer misconduct can inform prison policy, training initiatives, and the development of interventions to reduce misconduct in the workplace (Russo et al., 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship, if any, between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct. The participants, 109 correctional officers within NJDOC institutions, completed the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). Role conflict and work-related stress were the predictor variables, and misconduct was the outcome variable. Role conflict was defined as an individual expected to play two discordant roles. Stress was defined as tensions exerted from demanding circumstances. Misconduct was defined as improper conduct motivated by conscious of one's act.

The examination of these stressors was essential to the study goal of revealing the possible causes within the correctional environment contributing to correctional officers' misconduct. The quality of life for a correctional officer under severe conditions is an issue that merits investigation. The U.S. penitentiary environment has multiple stressors for the penitentiary officer (Clear et al., 2013). These stressors and role conflict may be related to correctional officer misconduct, which can be catastrophic to workers, their families, and the staff within the correctional environment.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The main RQ in this study concerned the nature of relationships among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct. The RQ and corresponding null and alternative hypotheses were as follows:

RQ: What is the predictive relationship between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct?

H_0: Role conflict and work-related stress do not predict correctional officer misconduct.

H_a: Role conflict and work-related stress predict correctional officer misconduct.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study included the transactional theory of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984), role theory (Rizzo et al., 1970), and general strain theory (Agnew, 1992). The transactional theory of stress describes stress as a consequence of transactions between a person and the environment (Miller & McCool, 2003). Moreover, it focuses on internal or external demands and the person's response to those issues (Miller & McCool, 2003). I used this theory to provide a foundation for my exploration of work-related stress among correctional officers. Folkman and Lazarus (1984) developed the transactional theory of stress to highlight the nature of transactional stress that individuals encounter in their daily life. The route from stressful conditions to positive results is a course that is highly individualized and situationally specific, and the cognitions that accompany the experience are inseparable.

The transactional theory of stress explores individuals' appraisal of acute and chronic stressors that they experience from their environments, such as situational demands and exposure to particular workplace scenarios, and their ability to cope. The application of the transactional theory of stress provides a perspective to examine stress from either internal or external events (Miller & McCool, 2003). The transactional theory

of stress provided the foundation to explore work-related stress within the NJDOC's institutions stemming from personal conflict, job characteristics, or the correctional environment. Cheek and Miller (1982), Dowden and Tellier (2004), and Ross (2013) suggested that correctional officers face a significant amount of stress, which derives from role conflict, as well as other stress factors, and that abuse of power may lead to correctional officers' misconduct.

The basic tenet of role theory is that individuals engage in different behaviors depending on the environment they are in, the situation, or their perceived social identities (Biddle, 1986). Another notion of role theory is that when an individual assumes two or more roles with incompatible expectations, the individual experiences role conflict—a source of stress that leads to ineffective performance in respective roles (Rizzo et al., 1970). Research has shown that role conflict is related to workplace deviance (Chiu et al., 2015). When individuals experience stress from conflicting roles, they become frustrated; therefore, they may engage in hostile, aggressive, inappropriate, or counterproductive behaviors (Chiu et al., 2015).

According to the presumptions of the general strain theory, individuals experience strain when facing negative stimuli, the removal of positive stimuli, or failure to accomplish essential goals (Agnew, 1992). When individuals experience this strain and do not have appropriate coping mechanisms, they can become angry, frustrated, or depressed (Agnew, 1992). Because of its central focus on adverse, behavioral reactions to stress, the general strain theory is popular in delinquency research and criminology (Kaufman, 2009; Semenza & Grosholz, 2019). For example, if correctional officers feel

vulnerable or underrecognized, they are more likely to seek inappropriate relationships with inmates (Worley & Worley, 2011). Together, the transactional theory of stress, role theory, and general strain theory explain correctional officer misconduct as a reaction to stress and role conflict.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I explored the relationship between work-related stress, role conflict, and correctional officer misconduct in correctional institutions. In a correctional environment, correctional officers face several stressful events. Clear et al. (2013) stated that stressful life changes for correctional officers occur as they work within the correctional setting, engaging with managerial policies or conflicts among staff. The stressors perpetuate adverse outcomes of stress and may lead to misconduct. Excessive force against an inmate is usually exhibited when an officer uses force as a form of control due to stress (Clear et al., 2013). Moreover, the causes of misconduct can be stressful, which can lead the correctional agency into judicial interpretation (Clear et al., 2013).

I chose a quantitative research methodology to quantify the variables of interest and generalize based on results (see Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research is also appropriate to test hypotheses and make predictions (Apuke, 2017), in this case, about whether work-related stress and role conflict predict correctional officer misconduct. I chose a correlational design because I measured the direction and magnitude of relationships between variables (see Apuke, 2017).

I analyzed data using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is a quantitative data analysis technique that is used to measure statistical variables (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). I used a multiple regression analysis to calculate the viability of the predictor variables (i.e., work-related stress and role conflict) in predicting the outcome variable (i.e., correctional officer misconduct). In multiple regression analysis, the R-value monitored the correlation between predictors' values, results, and logical values to account for the variance outcome that the R indicates (see Field, 2012). Subsequently, the beta weight was related to the equation and unidentified limitation, and it determined each contribution of the predictors. At the same time, the value showed the relationship between the correctional officers and the predictors (see Field, 2012).

The population for this study was correctional officers in New Jersey. The desired sample size was 107 correctional officers, as calculated using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2009). I used a cluster sampling technique to obtain a sample of participants from each of the four correctional institutions. The surveys were hosted on SurveyMonkey, an online platform. I was able to send participants a direct link to the survey. SurveyMonkey was chosen as the platform because of its strict security measures ability for anonymous data collection and ease of use (SurveyMonkey.com, 2020). Another reason was the ability to incorporate the informed consent form as the first page of the survey. I sent an invitation to participate, a description of the study, and the SurveyMonkey link to the union representatives and the training lieutenants of these four NJDOC institutions.

Definitions

Correctional officers: Staff who handle the care, custody, and control of arrested individuals awaiting trial while on reward or who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to serve time in a prison or jail (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019).

Misconduct: Improper conduct motivated by a premeditated course of one's actions (Fellman, 2017).

Role conflict: The stress that individuals experience because of occupying and meeting conflicting demands from multiple roles (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Work-related stress: The harmful physical and emotional responses that can develop within the correctional setting based on individual, situational, or organizational factors (Bezerra et al., 2016).

Assumptions

Although quantitative researchers strive to be objective in presenting results, it is imperative that they state their assumptions. In each research venture, assumptions cannot be eluded. During this study, I made some assumptions about the population and the design. I selected participants from four correctional facilities. Because participation was voluntary, I assumed that the respondents would provide appropriate information drawn from their experience as correctional officers.

Moreover, I assumed that the respondents would provide accurate information to the best of their ability. I assumed that the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011) are appropriate measurement tools for this particular population. In

addition, I assumed that the research approach were appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation. Finally, I assumed that the transactional theory of stress, role theory, and general strain theory were appropriate for framing this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this study was on the predictive relationships among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct. This study was delimited to 107 correctional officers employed at four NJDOC institutions. The study was also delimited to survey data collected using the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). Finally, the results of this study were delimited to an analysis of anonymous, self-reported data. Moreover, results were self-reported and measured based on individual experiences of misconduct. The results may not be generalizable to other correctional officers outside of New Jersey.

Limitations

Research studies have limitations associated with the chosen research approach that restricts the generalizability of results (Apuke, 2017). For this study, the use of cluster sampling may limit the generalizability of results. I may have introduced bias into the research when selecting prisons from which the sample was drawn. This study was also limited to using self-report measures. Participating correctional officers may have been apprehensive about answering questions about sensitive subjects, such as work-related stress, role conflict, and workplace deviance truthfully; thus, results may be influenced by response biases. Another limitation of this study was the use of an online

survey platform. Schleyer and Forrest (2000) and Y. Zhang (2000) suggested that computer illiteracy and feeling uncomfortable in respondents could hinder response, limiting the number of responses received.

Significance

I addressed the limited research about factors in a correctional facility that may contribute to officer misconduct (see Armstrong et al., 2015). The data collected from this study showed some insight to exacerbate training about the criminal aspect that can develop within the correctional environment. The findings can potentially assist correctional agency leaders in effecting change. The agency leaders must identify the misconduct to decrease it in the institution. Then, the correctional agency leaders should get ahead of the issues to do what is necessary to provide a risk assessment to minimize correctional officers' misconduct. In this way, the study may contribute to positive social change. If the statistical data collected disclose that correctional officers' misconduct is significant, leaders of correctional agencies across the United States may make the necessary changes to ensure a safe working environment for their correctional officers.

Significance to Theory

The literature (see Clear et al. 2013; Ross, 2013; Worley & Worley, 2011) supports efforts to improve the safety and well-being of correctional officers working in an environment that can be hostile. Policy shapes that treatment of dangerous inmates in the correctional environment. Several departments formed by the correctional agency bureaucratically handle the inmates' needs, including custody. *Custody* is a term used by the NJDOC to describe their correctional officers' monitoring and governing of inmates'

movements within units and scheduling events in and out of the institution (New York Department of Correction, 2016). The control over inmates exhibits power that can be dangerous for the correctional officer and the population they serve.

Leaders of a department of correction implement the policies through a chain of command, which includes how the correctional officer will perform their duty. The correctional officer role has changed from a more disciplinary concept to a more caring close and personal approach that intensifies workplace stress (Clear et al., 2013). The new interaction can bring the correctional officers closer to where situations can erupt, putting the correctional officers in compromising positions. Misconduct is prevalent as the correctional officer engages in illegal behavior (Worley & Worley, 2011). The transactional theorists of stress emphasize the individual response to a situation featuring confinement within the environment (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984), whereas role theorists emphasize the strain that results from conflicting role demands (Rizzo et al., 1970). These demands lead to further stress on correctional officers. Therefore, the general strain theory shows how these stressors lead correctional officers to misconduct (Agnew, 1992).

Significance to Practice

I focused on identifying how stress develops and how the NJDOC can manage correctional officers' misconduct. The NJDOC houses the state's minimum to maximum custody inmates found guilty during judicial review by judge or jury. In a correctional setting, correctional officers monitor and manage people who have committed various types of crimes (e.g., rapists, arsonists, robbers, etc.). In this relationship, the correctional officer may transform from the disciplinarian to a close interacting rehabilitating staff.

Within the correctional environment, the correctional officer's role sometimes becomes conflicted (Armstrong et al., 2015; Clear et al., 2013), as managers choose to enforce policies. Some correctional officers engage in harmful behavior.

Worley and Worley (2011) suggested that some correctional officers engage in brutality, drugs and cellphone smuggling, as well as inappropriate sexual activity. These stressors are prevalent, and correctional officers still carry out other tasks to maintain the integrity of the facility, such as monitoring conduct, escorting inmates, searching cells and inmates for contraband, ensuring safety, and conducting sanitation and fire inspections (Clear et al., 2013). In the correctional environment, the administration and the union must negotiate fair treatment of correctional officers as their roles are defined. Leaders of NJDOC may want to explore how managed care could minimize dangerous fatalities resulting in death. Leaders may want to expand training of most of custody staff to discuss the issue of correctional officer's misconduct manifest from the environment. Armstrong et al. (2015) suggested that leaders of correctional agencies who want to be proactive in managing the issues that cause correctional officers' misconduct should cultivate healthier and safer environment. Knowing the signs and causes of stress and misconduct can potentially help NJDOC leaders to prevent officer misconduct.

Significance to Social Change

This research may lead to positive social change. Over several years, the correctional environment has developed from one involving traditional turning keys to one involving electronic computerized systems (Clear et al., 2013). Management styles have transformed as training for correctional officers incorporates courses, such as

defensive tactics, cultural diversity, report writing, domestic violence, and new post

orders (Clear et al., 2013; New York Department of Correction, 2016). NJDOC

administrators manage the agency through policy and bureaucracy, which guides their

supervision of correctional officers. The various management styles incorporated are

designed to hold correctional officers firm in their duties. These duties guide the

correctional officer role in governing the inmates and can be positive or negative.

When correctional officers are assaulted, they receive medical care. Some

correctional officers fear reprisal from the inmate population and the administration

based on the perceptions of the correctional supervisor, coworker, or the administration.

The implication can create a level of stress that a correctional officer may find hard to

recover from. The NJDOC may want to embrace changing issues developed within their

environment. Clear et al. (2013) suggested changes within the environment for the

betterment of all staff to create a healthy working environment. Access to comprehensive

intervention diminishes pressure on the correctional officer and anxiety of those who

have engaged in misconduct (CorrectionsOne, 2020). NJDOC leaders may want to allow

communication between correctional officers and the administration as part of a a policy

may allow officers to build confidants (CorrectionsOne, 2020).

Using body scanners may ensure that correctional officers do not falsely accuse

inmates of having contraband. CorrectionsOne (2020) suggested that a body scanner

provides security for both the inmates and the correctional officer to minimize false

allegations. Moreover, training for both correctional officers and supervisors to discuss

role conflict and stress (e.g., encountered and situational stressors) may prevent

misconduct encountered within NJDOC institutions. Clear et al. (2013) suggested that having the ability to freely discuss internal issues allows departmental issues to be met head on to cultivate change.

Summary

In this study, I examined whether role conflict and other stress that correctional officers exhibit might cause misconduct. I explored the rationalization of the levels of correctional officers' stress from the job and how harmful it can become. In this chapter, I provided an overview of the study and discussed why the relationships between role conflict and stress in predicting correctional officer misconduct should be studied. In the next chapter, I explore literature on the study's focus, including how the correctional environment is an essential element that may predict correctional officer stress. The literature includes discussion of the organizational environment and how the stressors are transactional to the correctional officers and the population they serve.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Correctional officers are a vital part of U.S. correctional agencies. For the most part, officers receive training to service inmates declared guilty of crimes against federal, state, and municipal governments. The correctional officer is both proactive and reactive. The correctional officer should ensure that inmates remain safe and secure while touring the units and other areas where inmates are allowed. On the other hand, the correctional officer intervenes with inmates who may be carrying contraband, according to the correctional agency's policy.

Over the years, U.S. correctional agency leaders have adopted various ways for the correctional officer to interact with the inmate population. Clear et al. (2013) defined correctional officers as subject to various changes in their approaches during different periods. Statistical data have shown that the changes from disciplinarian to close personal rehabilitation models have increased the stress of the correctional officer (Clear et al., 2013). Besides engaging inmates about issues or disciplining them for infractions, correctional officers must adapt by handling issues as part of a professional discipline. Although correctional officers receive departmental training in how to engage the inmate population; however, they do not receive training on role conflicts that may relate to potential officer misconduct (Clear et al., 2013).

Due to the seriousness of the population's risk for misconduct, researchers have provided some interpretations and theoretically based frameworks for exploring correctional officers' role conflict and stress as these may predict correctional officers'

misconduct. Clear et al. (2013) and Ross (2013) observed that misconduct had increased over time and that administrators found it challenging to address. In most correctional organizations, correctional officers violate policy; in some cases, administrators and supervisors at times fail to administer action. Misconduct comes in various ways, including malicious, negligently, or budgetary. For example, the correctional officer can steal, fail to protect, or eliminate a visit from an inmate. Each correctional institution leader develops a policy to assist them in governing. Depending on the behavior of the correctional agency, the point of difficulty can be challenging if the executive manager and supervisor exhibits a corruptive behavior to control the population accused and found guilty of violating federal, state, or municipal law (Ross, 2013).

Clear et al. (2013) suggested that over the years, correctional organization leaders have had to adapt to current situations by adopting various management approaches to govern the correctional environment. From the harsh punitive procedures to the rehabilitation model, correctional officer boundaries became blurred (Worley et al., 2017) as the role of the correctional officer became conflicted. Moreover, Clear et al. (2013) suggested that as long as the environment shows corruptive behavior stemming from the top, that same behavior may be exhibited from subordinates under their responsibility. Scholars, Clear et al. (2013) and Worley et al. (2017) have explored limiting factors that may cause correctional officers' misconduct.

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine whether relationships exist among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct for 109 correctional officers within the NJDOC institutions using the Job

Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). I measured role conflict and work-related stress as predictor variables with misconduct as the outcome variable. Lambert et al. (2019) suggested that researchers should investigate work-related stressors and the effects on work deviance among correctional officers. The need for this research is also supported by Boateng and Hsieh (2019). They stated that existing research on the relationship between work-related stressors and correctional officer misconduct was limited due to insufficient instruments for measuring correctional officer misconduct. Further inquiry into the antecedents to correctional officer misconduct can inform prison policy, training initiatives, and the development of interventions aimed to reduce misconduct in the workplace (Russo et al., 2018).

In this chapter, I provide a historical perspective of correctional officers' misconduct from the perspective of the transactional theory of stress. I examined correctional officers' misconduct and the stress developed from the environment. The exploration of the literature in this chapter will contain the characteristics of the correctional officers' population and the role they play within that correctional setting. The focus is on the misconduct of the correctional officer, with specific attention to the experiences of role conflict and the stress (e.g., encountered and situational). I used the transactional theory of stress to examine the relationship between role conflict and stress in predicting correctional officers in adult institutions.

Literature Search Strategy

I assessed peer-reviewed evidence to develop the literature review. The RQ was the following: Is there a relationship between role conflict and stress in predicting correctional officer's misconduct in adult institutions? Databases searched included EBSCOhost, ProQuest, ERIC, JSTOR, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO. I also used the search engine Google Scholar. The search consisted of keywords, including *correctional officers*, *role conflict*, *stress (encountered and situational)*, *prison environment*, *correctional facilities*, *officer-inmate boundaries*, *workplace deviance*, *work-related stress*, *correctional officer*, *misconduct*, *the transactional theory of stress*, *role theory*, and *general strain theory*. The inclusion criteria included quantitative and mixed methods studies with publications in English from between 2005 and 2017, with some exceptions for pertinent information about correctional officers' stressors from full-length articles and peer-reviewed works. I did not consider undergraduate research, partially published or abstract-only works, or publications in nonscientific journals.

The PsycARTICLES database provides access to full-text, peer-reviewed scholarly and scientific articles and American Psychiatric Association journals. EBSCOhost provides dissertations in a variety of subjects (EBSCO, n.d.). PsycINFO provides several hundred journals and abstracts in various disciplines, including behavioral and social sciences (APA PsycINFO, n.d.).

My searches of PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and EBSCOhost produced several hundred articles. PsycARTICLES provided over 200 articles, with 12 usable ones using the term *stress*. The term *correctional stress* provided over several hundred, and 17

articles were usable. The term *correctional environment* produced over several hundred articles, with seven being usable. The term *correctional officers' role conflict* generated hundreds of articles, and six articles were usable. PsycINFO provided a significant number of articles on the terms mentioned with some of the same authors, as well as the same for EBSCO. However, some of the articles led me to other key terms for evaluation. Some articles led to research on misconduct, but most explored it as a description in books, and seven peer-reviewed articles were used.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study included the transactional theory of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984), role theory (Rizzo et al., 1970), and general strain theory (Agnew, 1992). The transactional theory of stress is a theory developed to describe stress as a consequence of transactions between a person and the environment (Miller & McCool, 2003). Moreover, transactional theorists of stress focus on internal or external demands and the person's response to those demands (Miller & McCool, 2003). This theory provided a foundation for exploring work-related stress among correctional officers. Folkman and Lazarus (1984) developed the transactional theory to highlight the nature of the stress that is transactional. The route from a stressful condition to a positive result is a course that is highly individualized and situationally specific; moreover, the cognitions that accompany the experience are inseparable.

The transactional theory of stress explores individuals' appraisals of acute and chronic stressors that they experience from their environments, such as situational demands and exposure to particular workplace scenarios, and the ability to cope. The

application of the transactional theory of stress provides a perspective to examine stress from either internal or external events (Miller & McCool, 2003). The transactional theory of stress provided the foundation for exploring work-related stress within the NJDOC's institutions as stemming from personal conflict, job characteristics, or the correctional environment. Cheek and Miller (1982), Dowden and Tellier (2004), and Ross (2013) suggested that correctional officers face a significant amount of stress, which exposes role conflict issues and other stress factors; moreover, abuse of power may lead to correctional officers' misconduct.

I used the transactional theory of stress to theorize the predictive influence of role conflict and stress within the correctional environment on officer misconduct. The transactional theory of stress shows the realities of environmental conditions. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) assessed the stressors exhibited from the environment and found that stressors are more selective based on why or what must be tolerated.

Based on the transactional theory of stress, a correctional officer can experience high levels of stress with role ambiguity, increased job strains, and wider job scopes with less attention from managers or supervisors. Correctional institutions harbor violence and negative relationships among officers, supervisors, inmates, and managers experiencing role conflicts (Lereya et al., 2015). The transactional theory of stress suggests that correctional officers who experience risk factors from the correctional environment can exhibit stress that is transacted.

The basic tenet of the role theory is that individuals engage in different behaviors depending on their environments, the situations they face, or their perceived social

identities (Biddle, 1986). Another notion in role theory is that when an individual assumes two or more roles with incompatible expectations, the individual experiences role conflict, which is a source of stress that leads to ineffective performance in respective roles (Rizzo et al., 1970). Research results have shown that role conflict is related to workplace deviance (Chiu et al., 2015). When individuals experience stress from conflicting roles, they become frustrated; therefore, they may engage in hostile, aggressive, inappropriate, or counterproductive behaviors (Chiu et al., 2015).

Researchers have explored role conflict as a correlate to a construct like a workplace deviance, which are counterproductive work behaviors. Spector and Fox (2005) and Bowling and Eschleman (2010) found that employees who experienced role conflict reported more hostility toward customers, frustration, organizational neglect, and aggression, which were all considered forms of counterproductive work behaviors in these studies. Similarly, Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) found that employees experiencing role stress (i.e., role conflict and ambiguity) were more likely to be the victims and perpetrators of workplace bullying than those who did not experience role stress. The results of these studies showed support for a researcher using role theory as a framework for the current study.

According to the presumptions of general strain theory, individuals experience strain when they are exposed to harmful stimuli, positive stimuli are taken away, or they fail to accomplish important goals (Agnew, 1992). When individuals experience this strain and do not have appropriate coping mechanisms, they can become angry, frustrated, or depressed (Agnew, 1992). Because of its central focus on adverse,

behavioral reactions to stress, the general strain theory is popular in delinquency research and criminology (Kaufman, 2009; Semenza & Grosholz, 2019). For example, if correctional officers feel vulnerable or underrecognized, they are more likely to seek inappropriate relationships with inmates (Worley & Worley, 2011).

Aseltine et al. (2000) also used the general strain theory to explain how negative experiences elicit emotional responses that lead to deviance. The authors found that negative experiences among youth promoted aggressive types of deviance; however, the researchers did not support negative experiences as a cause of nonaggressive types of deviance (Aseltine et al., 2000). Together, I used the transactional theory of stress, role theory, and general strain theory to explain correctional officers' misconduct as a reaction to role conflict and environmental stressors.

Literature Review

Correctional officers' duties can be rewarding as they attempt to change lives under stressful conditions. Researchers have suggested that correctional officers safeguard inmates and correctional managers, supervisors, and other correctional officers (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000). Although correctional officers perform these duties, it occurs under strenuous conditions that increase stressors that can lead to misconduct (Ross, 2013). In governing a correctional society, correctional officers face role conflict and situational stressors encountered during the periods they are obligated to perform their duties (Clear et al., 2013; Ross, 2013). Finn (2000) suggested the correctional environment is a hub for stress where correctional officers must govern individuals found guilty of crimes by a federal or state judicial system. Research has shown that in

governing such a society of the convicted, officers face stress in their roles as those roles have changed over the years (Clear et al., 2013; Ross, 2013; Worley et al., 2017). However, the literature has shown that these effects can be influenced by age, gender, and tenure (Clear et al., 2013).

History of U.S. Corrections System

Literature references have shown that in the United States, prison leaders modeled the European concept of prisons. Leaders of the American prison system face a troublesome environment; over time, management styles, and the purpose of the correction changed (Siegal, 2012), which caused more correctional stress. In the early period of the colonies, leaders of the jails housed individuals who had committed an offense. Corporal punishment was a deterrent factor for citizens as correctional officers enacted harsh punishments (Barnes, 1921).

Officers performed gruesome executions publicly. Eventually, after 1775, America's prison system shifted to classifying and segregating provisions (Barnes, 1921; O'Connor, 2014; Simpson, 1936). Criminal codes were established that increased the population of inmates, and punishment was harsh. During this period, "whipping, branding, mutilating, confinement in the stocks or pillory, and 'ducking' were among the most popular of these forms of punishment" (Barnes, 1921, p. 37).

The prison fosters several challenges that contribute to correctional officers' stress, as literature references exposed. Researchers have shown that the correctional environment derives from European concepts, which has caused public scrutiny and penal codes for individuals who broke the laws to deter them from a life of crime (Clear

et al., 2013; O'Connor, 2014; Peak, 2010; ToersBijin, 2012). Leadership developed new ways to manage. Additionally, the correctional officers had to enforce the rules mandated by the correctional agency. Leaders of the correctional system adopted various managerial and leadership styles as policies changed. Those correctional officers had to adapt as new correctional relationships occurred. They had to adjust to supervision, role conflict, and managerial enforcement of policy as the violence within the system continued; therefore, the officers' stress levels increased (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000).

Literature has indicated that governing correctional environments evolved over the years, and those changes exhibited challenges for correctional officers (Allen et al., 2013; Clear et al., 2013), which addressed my hypothesis. The governance of the correctional environment exhibited issues that I explored to determine a correctional officer's outcome serving under these conditions to determine the impact. Predictors of correctional officers increase stress (e.g., encountered and situational; Worley et al., 2017), while negative correctional officers' relationships flourish (Finn, 2000; Steel, 2008). Moreover, correctional officers' relationships are challenged negatively (Sykes, 1958); all these occurrences are based on age, gender, and tenure (Klofas & Toch, 1982; Lambert & Paoline, 2005).

I examined the literature about role conflict and stressors (e.g., situational and encounter) that can predict correctional officers' misconduct governing adult institutions. I discussed information useful for the NJDOC professional to embrace insight into what kind of services needed for the correctional staff. I investigated correctional officers based on age, gender, and tenure. Moreover, I examined the predictors that are significant

of role conflict and stressors (e.g., situational and encountered) and can predict correctional officers' misconduct in governing adult institutions. However, the association among role conflict, stress, and correctional misconduct was drawn as it relates to this paradigm. Therefore, I used the transactional model of stress as my theoretical framework to explain how issues within the correctional environment influenced the correctional officers working within the agency.

Overview of Correctional Officers in the United States

Correctional officers play an essential role within the correctional environment. In the interim of governance, the correctional officers' role is defined as being responsible for watching individuals who have been arrested and charged for a crime, then sentenced to a jail or prison facility (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). As models have changed, the correctional officers changed; correctional administration developed new policy mandates. The control model merged with a rehabilitation model to draw the correctional officer closer to the population they were to serve (Clear et al., 2013). The effects of role conflict and stress (e.g., situational and encountered) can vary (Allen et al., 2013; Seiter, 2008).

There can be a significant difference in the level of stress experienced between men and women if individuals face role conflict issues related to misconduct. Over several years, the role of the correctional officer has changed. Sex is defined as two humans categorized as male or female based on their reproduction functions (Gentile, 1993). Historically, Pollock (2006) defined correctional officers as turnkeys who would provide a safeguard for inmates on cell blocks, as men held the position only. Eventually,

the correctional officers' positions changed as their roles moved to a more professional one, and women were slowly accepted into the field. Women face harassment in a male-dominated field (Feinman, 2005). However, men were accepted but faced stress from sanctions from supervisors and management who enforced policy (Dowden & Tellier, 2004).

Nevertheless, during the change, the correctional officer was referred to as a correctional officer, jailer, hack, or detention officer (Allen et al., 2013). By the 1950s, the correctional establishment commenced a new philosophy (Bosworth, 2005; Clear et al., 2013). The Department of Corrections became a paramilitary system that exacerbated professionalism (Bosworth, 2005).

The correctional officer's primary duty is the care and custody of the inmates according to the policies and procedures defined by the Department of Correction for the term mandated by the judicial system. The correctional officer's role involves providing services in the organizational setting. The services of the officer are to assist the inmate advocating for goods and services as they attempt to adjust to the problem; however, supervisors became distant as management struggled over the budget, thereby creating a hostile environment where leaders pushed productivity only (Bales, 1997; Clear et al., 2013; Seiter, 2008). The services include referring inmates to medical, overseeing the unit, supervising work detail (e.g., industrial shop and school), and overseeing recreation and office assignments (Clear et al., 2013). However, as men had embraced the development of the roles within the Department of Correction, women had slowly incorporated similar stressors.

Women's correctional roles have followed a different path until recent years. During the 1800s, women who participated in the correctional field were called matrons and held line positions (Feinman, 2005). Moreover, some female officers were integrated as prisoners to disclose what some of the other female prisoners were plotting (Feinman, 2005). Eventually, research has shown that female correctional officers embraced most correctional duties as well as their counterparts due to the 1972 Civil Rights Act (see Newbold, 2005). Because of the Civil Rights Act, female correctional officers face indecent exposure from male inmates, violent confrontations, and harassment from coworkers and supervisors as they patrol the units (Clear et al., 2013; Feinman, 1994; Newbold, 2005). However, Feinman (2005) argued that it is not the role that causes stress; it is the female perception while working in a male institution.

Over the years, the term *prison guard* was changed to *correctional officer* (Bales, 1997). The national name of correctional officer ideology moved to a custody and control motto; previously, abuse of inmates caused judicial review (Pollock, 2006). However, the role requires a skillful, educated, trained, and responsible person to monitor the units. Therefore, within the United States, leaders had taken measures to implement more efficient training for their correctional officers. However, leaders have not defined the line to correctional misconduct.

Training

Leaders of the correctional agency modified the training by establishing an academy in the United States. Before correctional agency leaders adopting an academy, they relied on the local police for guidance (New York Department of Correction, 2016).

In the 1930s, New York was the first state to acclimate an academy by changing the ways that correctional officers were trained (McShane, 2008). The focus of the New York correctional academy was on leadership and intelligence over the use of force (McShane, 2008). During the academy period, correctional officers were taught vital policies and procedures that served the correctional system. During this period, correctional officers embraced the concepts, ideologies, and associations when they reached their institutions of employment.

The training academy for correctional officers increases the message of unity against the opposition (e.g., inmates, corrupt staff, and correctional officers). In the NJDOC, correctional officers take classes on the Administrative Code Title 10A, which governs the correctional population and the dangers of the environment (New York Department of Correction, 2016). Moreover, self-defense courses are taught about using weapons and hand-to-hand combat to survive and provide an edge against dangerous criminals (Allen et al., 2013; Cook, 2005). In the interim, rituals from the group are repeated during their employment within the NJDOC.

Rituals are acts where the essence is not outward but dwells within the core of groups from social, religious, or other entities. Positive and negative positions occur as correctional officers navigate the correctional environment. Rituals form in how they enforce rules on inmates for compliance. Groups form developing internal processes to accomplish this compliance (Cook, 2005). Executive management's primary focus is for rules to be followed. Usually, according to the policy written within the Department of Correction guided by the federal and state guidelines, power comes from data and the

rule of law (Clear et al., 2013; New York Department of Correction, 2016). The supervisors form a bond to ensure the correctional officers remain in compliance. Correctional officers develop ways to achieve inmate compliance to ensure supervisors have the results needed to keep the orderly running of their facilities. Supervisors tend to establish a cohesive unit through some sort of reward program to encourage effective outcomes (Hargis et al., 2011).

Complications can arise within the Department of Correction, and the way rules are enforced on group enforcement methods. Supervisors, management, or correctional officers must come to a consensus for rituals to stay alive. Researchers have suggested that people's dispositions change the outlook and attitude of the group (Newcomb, 1943; Sherif, 1936). The implications of trust resonate with the group. Cook (2005) suggested the essential part of a group is trust. Situations' indications exhibited predictable trends through behaviors, attitudes, and social norms, establishing boundaries acceptable to the group (Galinsky et al., 2008). Still, these had not shown a correlation to correctional misconduct.

Confidentiality builds trust among correctional officers. Correctional officers face violence within the areas that they patrol. Makeshifts weapons are made among the inmate population for protection, extortion, and other threats (Clear et al., 2013). The code of silence is a ritual practice among the law enforcement community. In any level of law enforcement, officers are reluctant to discuss each other's wrongdoings (Crank et al., 1995; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007; Skolnick, 2000).

In the interim of duty, correctional officers may face some issues and exhibit some situations that can be questionable. Correctional officers may be sexually harassed by a coworker or supervisor, use excessive force, or fail to protect another inmate. In any form of misconduct, some correctional officers will act on their internal cohesiveness for protection and solidarity based on the collective well-being rather than personal interest (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Crank et al. (1995) suggested that the decision is made quickly to exacerbate the silent culture to avoid public and judicial assessment. However, what is learned in training can assist the correctional officer in the performance of their duties.

Duties

The correctional environment is a dangerous and complex society. The correctional system leaders incorporate correctional officers to enforce the policy. Moreover, strict rules are followed to maintain order. Historically, the correctional system has evolved from physical brutality by flogging and other catastrophic displays to single cells (Clear et al., 2013). Over time, several ideologies have formed, such as reformatory models, medical models, and rehabilitation models, which have shaped the correctional officers' roles (Seiter, 2008). Later, the transformation of the correctional ideologies unveiled some hidden challenges among the correctional officers that were astonishing. Therefore, I explored the role of the correctional officer, the discipline, and the relationship with the inmate population.

Correctional officers' roles are defined by the correctional agency. Because inmates have been found guilty of an offense by federal or state laws, correctional

officers are incorporated for the task. The primary function of the correctional officer is to prevent escape. Thus, Seiter (2008) stated that correctional officers should count inmates according to a schedule designed by the correctional department. Inmates are escorted and observed through cameras overhead in pertinent positions and watched by correctional officers (Clear et al., 2013; Seiter, 2008). Correctional officers monitor and control inmates' movements as they implement activity plans designed by the Department of Correction. As safety is paramount, daily searches are conducted by the correctional officer for contraband (e.g., drugs, excess amounts items, and makeshift weapons; Seiter, 2008).

Over 20 to 30 years, the role of the correctional officer has evolved. As I aforementioned, the focus has been on punishment, deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation, and restitution inherited by the correctional officer (Seiter, 2008). Research has shown that a balance between roles can be conflicting as roles evolved from rehabilitation and punishment and the expectation of supervising, counseling, protecting, and processing the care of inmates (Clear et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2007; Seiter, 2008). The continuing effects lie in compliance, which can be considered weak and sensitive, as inmates' tensions can increase, and confrontations can develop (Lambert et al., 2007; Seiter, 2008).

In a correctional officer's role, a key duty is to strike a balance between the officer and the inmate. A correctional officer has to minimize the confrontation on minor rules in exchange for compliance to establish interpersonal relationships (Clear et al., 2013). The correctional officer is in the daily life of the inmate, and rules must be

enforced according to the correctional agency's policies as part of a bureaucratic system (Clear et al., 2013). The orderly running of the institution depends on the correctional officer; the superiors mandate that policy adherence is a necessity. However, the correctional officer's role is to maintain and yield to rules. In the pursuit to maintain order, supervisors have embraced correctional officers' abilities to decrease nonconformity (Clear et al., 2013).

In the interim, the correctional officer had to embrace role challenges. The research has shown that the correctional officer's role became mutable over the years. The correctional officer had to adjust as leaders determined when to explore the option to penalize or to use a rehabilitative approach, which they lacked training in ways to employ those approaches. The correctional setting concepts involved increasing conformity amongst the inmate, and the correctional officer was expected to manage tasks outside of what the role entailed. Nevertheless, the role of the correctional officer is based on a security and control model to enforce inmates' compliance. Leaders still expect the use of other methods outside the traditional role (Clear et al., 2013; Pollock, 2006; Seiter, 2008); however, researchers did not draw a clear line between role conflicts as a predictor of misconduct. As the correctional officer's role changed over the years, the correctional officer became more stressed.

Overview of Stress

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2004), a leading medical research center, defined stress as an entity and over-all response to the environment's pressures or strains. The CDC explained that the interaction of individuals within that

environment could strain perceptions or a threat exceeding one's ability to adapt, which can cause demands on an individual's well-being. Selye (1973) suggested stress, whether positive or negative, has a nonspecific response, which forces an adaptive ability. However, the individual reflects a perception and sense of self (George et al., 2016) differently depending on personality, physical ability, or overall health (CDC, 2004). Researchers have suggested that the body is influenced by the demands made on it and can show results from physical or emotional influences (Pollock, 2006; Selye, 1973). In the interim, stress causes reactions to the body that may influence an individual's life. Nevertheless, stress can cause serious bodily harm or death. Stress comes in various types, and an individual exposed to stress can be affected.

Types

Stress develops episodic acute stress and chronic stress, with each being harmful. Acute stress disorder occurs after a traumatic event exhibited in an individual's life (Harkness & Monroe, 2016). Researchers have suggested that acute stress causes a great response on the body over time (Bhanji et al., 2016; Bosmans et al., 2016; Edmondson et al., 2010). Acute stress over time can influence individuals' conduct on how they respond to an event related to the primary stressor (Bhanji et al., 2016; Fried & Fisher, 2016; Chiu et al., 2015). Acute stress has effects stimulated by external events exhibited by an individual (e.g., burnout, work environment, fight, or losing a job). For example, Fried and Fisher (2016) researched clinicians working with a vulnerable and at-risk population. The researchers assessed work-related moral stress, job burnout, organizational ethic climate, and organizational research support (Fried & Fisher, 2016). The researchers

disclosed that the clinicians working in that environment experienced some effects on therapeutic decision-making, mental health, and job effectiveness (Fried & Fisher, 2016). Fried and Fisher (2016) exposed that there were higher risk associates with increased levels of moral stress and job burnout, as opposed to associates supportive of organizational climates that had low intensities of moral stress and job burnout.

On the other hand, chronic stress has a more extended effect on the premise that the individual has no control over the emotional suffering during a prolonged period (Dias-Ferreira et al., 2009). Takase, Akima, Uchata, Chsuzu, and Kuria (2004) suggested that long-term includes preexistent conditions (e.g., posttraumatic disorders, cardiovascular events, depression, high blood pressure, and diabetes). If these said events do not exist in an individual, the body can develop and attack the immune system diminishing their health (Takase et al., 2004). Each of these forms of stress, acute and chronic, influence people as they are engulfed by the stressors around them. An environment where an individual is exposed to the risk of violence, whether faced directly or indirectly, can cause some mental health issues. Particularly in a correctional setting, a correctional officer may experience a sighting of violence immediately or over a period; each presents catastrophic events if an assistant is not rendered.

Causes

The cause of stress can be exacerbated by various sources. Stress can be exhibited from waking up, planning one's day, living and working in a dangerous environment, receiving bad news from a physician, or experiencing many events that elevate human stimuli. Each of these events is environmental and can stem from organizational

decisions, role conflict, and lack of trust in a supervisor's abilities or lack thereof that can cause stress (Manning & Preston, 2003; Meijer et al., 2006).

Organizational stress develops from the inconsistencies within that organization. Organizational structures incorporate a hierarchy to enforce policies, rules, and regulations to assist in the organization's operation. In any event, implementation can cause stress within the organization. Organizational stress causes increased pressures that are unwarranted and uncontrollable demands established by underprivileged work strategies, insufficient managers, and unacceptable exertion circumstances (Manning & Preston, 2003). Circumstances stemming from organizational stress are a typology of repetitive support from other managers increasing pressures and employees with abilities to perform the appropriate task as increased demands create a stressful environment (Manning & Preston, 2003).

Researchers have suggested that correctional officers' primary stressors come from their conflicting roles, as management and supervisors bring on stress to redefine those roles (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cheek & Miller, 1982; Finn, 2000; Lambert et al., 2009; Tewksbury & Higgins, 2006). Correctional roles are based on custodial responsibilities as the main detail of the correctional function. Unfortunately, correctional officers' assignments shift, merging treatment without the formal training of other professions. Cheek and Miller (1979) suggested that the lack of clarity and ambiguous responsibilities could cause significant problems in the correctional officer and significantly increase stress levels.

In the organizational structure, midlevel managers or supervisors facilitate the policies needed to conduct the organization's business. However, the supervisors' messages to employees can be stressful. Over time, researchers have focused on ineffective supervision that can be harmful when it is counterproductive, unethical, and problematic (Ellis, 2001; Ladany et al., 2013; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001). Supervisors have primary input about where they shall work and who they are going to supervise. Organization leaders place employees where needed, with the presumption that they would achieve proficiently (Ellis, 2001). In the interim, supervisors can harm, regardless of their skills or behaviors (Ellis, 2001; Ladany et al., 2013).

Causes of stress can come from usual or unusual sources based on the encounter and situation. The empirical literature has shown that environmental factors play a substantial role, such as organization, coworkers, role, and supervision (Ladany et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2009; Manning & Preston, 2003). Developments from each of these entities can affect people in various ways. For example, Cheek and Miller (1979) suggested that if a role was ambiguous and lacked clear directions, it could exacerbate a problem and elevate stress. Moreover, the following represent sources of stress: gender differences, job satisfaction, perceptions of the organization, the commitment to the organization, the appearance of impropriety (Carlson et al., 2003), the increasing harassment of females (Stohr et al., 1998), and the assumption of female inability to handle physical confrontations (Hemmens et al., 2002). Nevertheless, as the causes of stress proven to be a severe issue, the outcome of stress can be just as devastating.

Research has shown that role conflict is related to workplace deviance (Chiu et al., 2015). When individuals experience stress from conflicting roles, they become frustrated; therefore, they may engage in hostile, aggressive, inappropriate, or counterproductive behaviors (Chiu et al., 2015). Role conflict has also been explored as a correlate to a construct similar to workplace deviance, which is counterproductive to work behaviors. Spector and Fox (2005) and Bowling and Eschleman (2010) found that employees who experienced role conflict reported more hostility toward customers, frustration, organizational neglect, and aggression, which were all considered forms of counterproductive work behaviors in these studies. Similarly, Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) found that employees experiencing role stress (i.e., role conflict and ambiguity) were more likely to be the victims and perpetrators of workplace bullying than those who did not experience role stress.

Symptoms

The exploration of stress can manifest differently. Research has shown that individuals responding to an event after experiencing or witnessing what appears to be an extreme threat to them or others exhibit stress (Edmondson et al., 2010). The symptoms can be exhibited differently. Individuals can experience depersonalization, dissociative amnesia, numbing, and derealization (Edmondson et al., 2010). Moreover, a symptom of stress can be an individual re-experiencing the event, thereby causing anxiety and posttrauma to mainly exhibiting critical incidents (Maguen et al., 2009). Critical incidents that employee encounters can be catastrophic to developing posttraumatic stress disorder

(George etal., 2016; Lereya et al., 2015; Maguen et al., 2009), the tension in a challenging setting, and suicide (ToersBijin, 2012).

Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms are exhibited after one sees or participates in a chronic or acute devastating event. An officer may encounter events directly or indirectly in a correctional setting. The volume of these events is mutable and exhibited at various times and places throughout the correctional facility. One of the symptoms is a member suffering from experiencing devastating events may revisit the experience several times (Lereya et al., 2015; Maguen et al., 2009). A person may avoid and illustrate numbness exhibit feeling of emptiness and the will to not relate with peers in that setting that exhibited the critical situation (Ehlers & Clark, 2000). Hyperarousal experiences include inconsistent sleeping patterns where a person becomes angry and irritable, experiencing paranoia by restricting peers and family activities (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Maguen et al., 2009).

In a correctional setting, stress comes in the form of burnout. Many correctional officers experience dangers lurking within that environment. Correctional officers face assaults from inmates whether they are directly involved by stopping it or indirectly by viewing it through cell doors or from a tower as inmates physically confront each other (Allen et al., 2013; Armstrong et al., 2015; Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Finn, 2000; Lambert et al., 2007). Maslach et al., (2001) suggested personal, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as dimensions of chronic emotional and interpersonal job stressors, whether encountered or situational. Cordes and Dougherty (1993) expressed that burnout is characterized by a lack of energy. Burnout embraces a cynical observation of oneself

by declining interpersonal interactions. Depersonalization is an emotionless deposition and detachment toward the organization and coworkers (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

The symptoms of stress expose an individual to devastating outcomes. An individual can experience dissociative amnesia, depersonalization, derealization, and numbing (Edmondson et al., 2010). Moreover, as the stressors are more prevalent, the more an individual exhibited painful results. Sleep deprivation causes a lack of concentration, while depersonalization refers to an individual detaching from the organization and employees (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Attempted or considered suicide establishes interrupted sleep patterning, builds social isolation and loneliness, and creates burnout that can damage interpersonal relationships (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). All these stressors exhibited from the correctional setting demands a concept for a cause of action as the pressure can increase.

Stressors for Correctional Officers

The correctional environment has a multitude of stressful elements from managerial bullying, ineffective supervision, coworkers' relationships, and correctional officers and inmates' relationships. The stress from these elements affects correctional age, tenure, and gender in some form based on the literature provided. Organization leaders develop policies for their staff to follow. Supervisors implement the rules generated from those policies. Correctional officers need each other to show a united front to face the opposition from both supervisors and inmates to enforce the rules. A bond is formed, and trust is developed as rituals formed within the group show how a member contributes. During the correctional officers' performances in their duties,

interactions with the inmates can flourish. As the correctional officer interacts with management, line supervisors, coworkers, and inmates can be stressful based on the interaction, which can exhibit a perception of how communication can be interpreted.

Ineffective Supervision

Empirical data have shown that supervision over a period can be counterproductive, problematic, unethical, and harmful (Ellis, 2001; Gray et al., 2001; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001). Ineffective supervision can devalue supervised persons and cause them to fail at task orientation (Ellis, 2001) and offer little accountability in supervisor performance (Ladany et al., 2013). Employees value the expectation of trust from a supervisor.

Trust is a skill incorporated in any corporation, business, or agency. Rotter (1967) defined trust as a promised word, whether written or stated verbally to a person or group, with which one believes. Chughtai and Buckley (2008) defined trust as when one believes in someone's word, just as a supervisor in any organization, staff must exhibit a level of trust. Supervisors who have exposed a failure to trust would have a strong negative association with employment stress (Lambert et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2009) and a great predictor in a correctional conclusion. In the interim, leaders who exhibit trust need skills incorporated from within and, if broken, trust must be based on an evaluation stemming from the past (A. Zhang et al., 2008).

Another element that supervisor's process is the power that transcends across age, tenure, and gender. I hypothesize that men and women correctional officers can be forced to concur with abuse of the rules because of power invested in supervision. According to

Galinsky et al. (2008), power—if not used properly—can cause conflict internally and arouse dissonance, which can illustrate change. Excessive force is one of the leading causes of inmate assault and tools used by some supervisors for inmate compliance (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000). Researchers have suggested that a disproportionate control exists over much-needed resources and consequences based on a situation or established social relationships (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Keltner et al., 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). A supervisor embraces pressure to drive others to accomplish the mission to implement the corporation's adjectives. In the end, researchers have validated that power can change the development of a person in the way they embrace the world (Bargh et al., 1995; Chen et al., 2001; Galinsky et al., 2008).

Another hypothesis is that age and tenure have exhibited little or no effect on supervisors' negative implementations of enforcing policies. Correctional officers make decisions based on the moment (Clear et al., 2013). For instance, a supervisor has an inmate assaulted by a few correctional officers for breaking the rules; at that moment, the correctional officer who witnessed the action has to decide how to deal with the event. This stressful event can be experienced on an individual basis and experienced differently (Edmondson et al., 2010). I explored that leadership is valuable and a key component in governing the inmate population; through leadership, the correctional officer can exhibit misconduct, but the researchers in this subsection did not establish a correlation among role conflicts to misconduct.

Managerial Bullying

Bullying is a problematic and public menace associated with long-time and detrimental effects for the victim (Lereya et al., 2015). If someone is being bullied repeatedly or witnessing this occurrence, the person is encouraged to inform someone (e.g., local authorities and employers) who can assist. Nevertheless, workplace bullying is even more damaging and exhibits a combination of emotional abuse and social banishment that communicates destructive organizational damage to the health of the employee (Lutgen-Sanvik & Tracy, 2012).

In the United States, approximately half of employed adults are bullied (Lutgen-Sanvik & Tracy, 2012). Bullying influences "1 in 10 U.S. workers experience persistent abuse in any given year, another 30 percent to 40 percent are bullied sometimes during their working lives, and on an additional 10 percent witness bullying but are not targeted directly" (Lutgen-Sanvik & Tracy, 2012, p. 5). Primarily, organization communication research has shown that bullying is a multilevel problem interrelated with the grander social system of significance and is incorporated into institutional policies. For instance, the employee can be apprehensive about filing charges on supervisors and managers when other managers can view those cases.

The effects of workplace bullying are psychological harassment in several organizations. Lutgen-Sanvik and Tracy (2012) suggested that supervisors and managers in a negative environment caused fear within the United States. Research has shown the effects of workplace exhibited by management include shouting, swearing at an employee, repeatedly joking at the same person, intense micromanaging, and ignoring

work and produce because of implementing unrealistic deadlines; these issues have caused a tremendous psychological impact on the employee (Cox, 1978; Einarsen et al., 1994; H. Hoel & Faragher, 2004; J. S. Hoel et al., 2002; Spector & Fox, 2005). Bona and Malik (2013) argued that the symptoms of workplace bullying are severe. The authors suggested that a person experiencing symptoms from workplace bullying would face high blood pressure, heart palpitations, migraine and tension headaches, nausea, chest pains, heart attacks, tremors (e.g., lips and hands), and posttraumatic stress disorders (Bona & Malik, 2013). In the interim, the organization leaders struggle to find qualified employees, lose innovation because of the employees being reluctant to produce new ideas and face high turnover rates that can cause the leaders to invest in hiring and developing new employees (Bona & Malik, 2013; H. Hoel & Faragher, 2004).

Managerial bullying has an unfavorable effect on employees (Lutgen-Sanvik & Tracy, 2012), particularly correctional officers (Dowden & Tellier, 2004). Historically, researchers have suggested that those in the correctional environment exhibit close communication within the agency (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000; Lambert et al., 2007). Some agency leaders demand disclosure agreements to keep internal communication mute. Researchers have hypothesized that men and women are harassed, but women are more likely to sexually harassed than men (Einarsen et al., 1994; Feinman, 2005). Few researchers have examined age and tenure because those are based on how a person perceives stress (Edmondson et al., 2010). The researchers did not connect an outcome between managerial bullying and a correctional officer's misconduct. However, Clear et al. (2013) stated that if the communication was vague and trust was exhibited, the

correctional officer's perception of what punishment (e.g., unofficial duties: cell confinement, denial of privileges, and confiscation of materials that include radio or television without official documentation) to administer could be based on the assumption that the correctional officer would receive backing.

Coworkers' Relationships

Correctional officers are essential entities of the correctional agency function. The bonding of the correctional officers is paramount to build a cohesive unit to fulfill the requirements required by their managers and supervisors. Correctional officers face increasing stressful challenges. These challenges include role conflict, informing and apprehending correctional officers who bring in contraband, control over inmates, correctional officers who lack the experience to assist, coworkers who become too close with inmates, being consistent, and using excessive force (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000; McShane, 2008). Moreover, a code of silence resonates from these events as officers try to avoid shame or convictions; they are isolated from other correctional officers who find themselves in compromising positions.

Furthermore, the supervisor relationship can be stressful. With the shortage of correctional officers, correctional officers face more demand to fulfill agency requirements (Clear et al., 2013). The correctional officers find this endeavor hard to fulfill as mistakes happen abundantly. As the workloads increase, the lack of confidence is built as supervisors are reluctant to back their correctional officers (Clear et al., 2013; Finn, 2000; McShane, 2008). When the supervisor undermines decisions made by the correctional officer in front of the inmate, the supervisor weakens the employees'

abilities to do the job and creates a dangerous atmosphere. Supervisor fraternization can exhibit favoritism in the decision-making process. Other correctional officers' perspectives outside the fraternization can be obscure, and fear of favoritism may cause a burden on those officers.

Stemming from the training academy and at the institution, cohesiveness amongst correctional officers is inevitable in the correctional environment. Stress is an issue within the Department of Correction, but I hypothesized that correctional officers' relationships with other correctional officers can be damaging, with little significance. Each correctional officer, whether male or female, build relationships. Women who work in prison dominated by men can face challenges, but it is equally challenging for men working in a female prison (Clear et al., 2013; Feinman, 2005).

Role conflict varies depending on if the correctional officer is wearing the hat of a counselor or enforcer. The role of the correctional officer is defined by the Department of Corrections policy. Still, the leaders of the policy do not determine how much discretion the correctional officer has based on the correctional officers' perception of treatment (Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980). One correctional officer's bad conduct can transfer to another correctional officer because of the cohesiveness amongst them. However, there is no correlation between correctional officers' relationships with correctional officers' role conflict and misconduct when misconduct occurs through what is perceived as transferred through some form of suggested communication.

Inmates' and Officers' Relationships

Correctional officers and inmates' relationships are illustrated in two forms: stress and the outcome exhibit. Corruption and abuse of power are essential; these elements cause the relationship to be estranged. Johnson and Bridgmon (2009) suggested injury; scrutiny by the correctional agency, community officials, and the media; death; and legality issues as forms of excessive force. Corruption is an attempt made by the correctional officer to gain an economic advantage. Corruption allows the correctional officer to befriend an inmate because they attempt to ease through the prison environment (Sykes, 1958).

In some situations, gender plays a part as corruption causes fear. Researchers have assumed that women have fear because of limited physical abilities. Research has shown women's vulnerabilities as an indicator of why they cannot stop criminal indulging due to an inability to protect themselves (Cops & Pleysier, 2010; Hale, 1996; Killias & Clerici, 2000; Rader et al., 2012). Researchers have shown that women had higher levels of fear than men (Gordon & Baker, 2015).

Correlates of Correctional Officer Stress

Correctional officers experience more work-related stress at both the individual and organizational levels than individuals in other occupations (Russo et al., 2018). Researchers have linked enhanced work-related stress for correctional officers to correctional institutions being inherently stressful environments (Saunders et al., 2017; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Kinman et al. (2017) and Bezerra et al. (2016) suggested that role conflict was a significant source of work-related stress among correctional

officers. However, the problem is unknown of whether work-related stress and role conflict predict correctional officer misconduct.

Kinman (2016) explored working conditions for correctional officers, such as demands and exposure to aggression, as correlates to job stress through time, strain, and behavior-based work-life conflict. Kinman used a sample of 1,682 correctional officers in UK prisons and quantitative survey data. The author also explored the relationships among work-life conflict, working conditions, and emotional exhaustion, with detachment and affective remuneration as moderating variables (Kinman, 2016). The results of the study showed that emotional exhaustion and working conditions were positively related to all dimensions of work-life conflict (Kinman, 2016). Furthermore, job demands and exposure to aggression were positively related to emotional exhaustion, and these relationships were enhanced by low detachment and high remuneration (Kinman, 2016).

According to research, correctional officers experience a great deal of psychological stress that leads to ineffective performance and burnout (Klinoff, 2017). In response to this notion, researchers are now focusing more on the variables that influence responses to correctional officer stress. For example, Klinoff (2017) explored the relationship between correctional officer resilience and burnout among 301 correctional officers employed at five different Broward County detention institutions using self-report survey instruments. Specifically, the author aimed to discover (a) whether correctional officer optimism, hope, and social support were related to higher levels of resilience; (b) the degree to which resilience protects correctional officers from job

burnout; and (c) whether resilience mediates the relationships between optimism, hope, and social support and job burnout (Klinoff, 2017). The results of the study showed that resilience was a significant mediator in the associations between correctional officer optimism, hope, and social support and dimensions of burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion and cynicism; Klinoff, 2017).

Like Klinoff (2017), Steiner and Wooldredge (2015) explored the effects of support on correctional officer job stress using the job demand-control-support model, a sample of 1,800 correctional officers from 45 different corrections institutions in Kentucky and Ohio, and multilevel analysis. The results of the analysis showed that job stress had a positive relationship with job demands and the experience of victimization (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Furthermore, perceived coworker and supervisor support was negatively related to job stress (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Finally, the results of the analysis showed exposure to violence was positively related to job stress (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015).

Lambert et al. (2019) explored procedural, distributive, and transactional justice as correlates to correctional officer job stress. The authors used a sample of 219 correctional officers from Southern maximum-security prisons and a quantitative research methodology (Lambert et al., 2019). The results of the study showed that all three forms of organizational justice influenced correctional officers' job stress (Lambert et al., 2019). Procedural justice indirectly influences job stress through distributive justice. In contrast, distributive and transactional justice directly and negatively

influenced job stress. Transactional justice indirectly influenced job stress through distributive and procedural justice (Lambert et al., 2019).

Boateng and Hsieh (2019) explored the influence of organizational justice on job stress and misconduct among 169 correctional officers employed at five different prisons in Ghana. The results showed distributive and interactional justice significantly contributed to correctional officer stress and misconduct. Moreover, the researchers related higher perceptions of distributive and interactional justice to reduced misconduct complaints (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019). Furthermore, higher perceptions of interactional justice related to reduced job stress among correctional officers (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019).

Research results have shown that a relationship exists between job stress and correctional officers' attitudes toward inmates (Misis et al., 2013). Misis et al. (2013) explored the relationship between job stress among correctional officers and their perceptions of prisoners using a sample of 501 correctional officers working in Southern prisons, surveys, and hierarchical regression analysis. The independent variables included job characteristics, demographic characteristics, supervisor support, and attitudes toward prisoners, and the dependent variable was work-related stress (Misis et al., 2013). The results of the analysis showed that decreased perceptions of supervisor support and increased perceptions of a dangerous job related to increased job stress (Misis et al., 2013). Furthermore, correctional officers who perceived prisoners as humble and nonmanipulative experienced less job stress, whereas correctional officers who perceived prisoners as arrogant, antisocial, or hostile experienced more significant job stress (Misis et al., 2013).

Viotti (2016) explored the work-related factors that contributed to correctional officer job stress using a qualitative research approach, a sample of 28 correctional officers in Italy, and interviews. The results of qualitative template analysis revealed several themes categorized by type of factor (i.e., intrinsic work-related, social, organizational, external, and physical environment) that influenced job stress (Viotti, 2016). The intrinsic work-related factors included an amount of responsibility, demands from prisoners, health-related risks, and conflicting values (Viotti, 2016). The factors related to job assignment included many hours worked and relocation (Viotti, 2016). The social factors included coworker relationships and hierarchical organizational structure (Viotti, 2016). The sole organizational factor identified as an influence on correctional officer stress was organizational justice (Viotti, 2016). The sole external factor that related to job stress was a negative social image (Viotti, 2016). Finally, the sole physical environment factor was the prison building itself (Viotti, 2016). Out of all the stress-inducing factors identified in this study, correctional officers' relationships with inmates produced the most stress (Viotti, 2016).

Correctional officers' image was identified as a factor that influenced job stress in Viotti's (2016) study. The image was also a variable in Vickovic's (2015) study; the researcher focused on correctional officer stress. Specifically, the officer aimed to investigate how correctional officers perceived occupational prestige from the media, public, friends, and family effects job stress among 641 correctional officers working at a Western correctional system (Vickovic, 2015). The results of the study showed that the media held the most negative views on participants' occupations, and family and friends

held the highest positive views on the occupation (Vickovic, 2015). Occupational

prestige did not predict work stress. However, when tenure and race were entered into the

equation as mediating variables, occupational prestige from the media influenced stress

among longer-tenured employees. In contrast, occupational prestige from family and

friends influenced job stress among officers who self-identified as non-White (Vickovic,

2015).

Bezerra et al. (2016) evaluated the risk and protective factor of correctional

officer job stress that were reported in the literature. An extensive review of the literature

showed that contact with offenders, deficiency in resources, overcrowding, perceived

dangerousness of the job, and too much work were risk factors for correctional officer job

stress (Bezerra et al., 2016). The protective factors to correctional officer job stress

identified in the literature review included peer and supervisor support and training

(Bezerra et al., 2016).

Trounson et al. (2016) examined differences in correctional officers' perceptions

of environmental adversity at work and compared them to employees in other professions

to gain insight into how the prison environment influences workers' well-being. The

authors used the Work-Related Environmental Adversity Scale and a sample of 440

employees from various professions, including correctional officers (Trounson et al.,

2016). The results of the study confirmed the authors' hypothesis that perceived work-

related environmental adversity among correctional officers would be significantly more

than for individuals who worked in other, non-emergency or safety-related professions

(Trounson et al., 2016).

Correctional Officer Misconduct

Misconduct is determined as an act of a person who intentionally violates the policy and procedure of an organization (Ross, 2013). Within the change of command of a correctional agency, public servants formulate policies and procedures over the years based on the development of methodology. Under the scrutiny of administrators and correctional officers' supervisors, correctional officers are held to a code of ethics. Research has shown that correctional officers have indulged in misconduct as they made attempts to adhere to the code of ethics (Clear et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2019; Ross, 2013).

Correctional officers are the first line in governing the inmates' population movements. In the process, the correctional officers maintain a healthy level of control while performing the task, and they may exhibit deviant behaviors to fulfill the correctional agency's policy. Research has shown that correctional officers have brought in contraband, taken property, used excessive force, and even had sexual relationships with inmates (Clear et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2019; Ross, 2013). Cooke et al. (2019) found that correctional officers were vulnerable, isolated, and deliberate in the escalation of misconduct. The author suggested that correctional officers moving beyond temptation have engaged in sexual promiscuity with an inmate. Finally, correctional officers work in high-risk environments, and lines can be blurred that can lead them into compromising situations. Knowing these entities exist in a correctional setting may cause correctional officers who encounter stressful situations to misbehave while appearing in control.

Fellman (2017) conducted an extensive literature review about correctional

officer misconduct to determine the common forms of misconduct, antecedents, and

methods for detection and prevention. The author determined three classifications of

misconduct among correctional officers from the literature (Fellman, 2017). The first

classification included assault, helping inmates escape, bribery, facilitating inmate crime,

drug trafficking, and providing false statements (Fellman, 2017). The second

classification of misconduct included felony behavior when off duty, physically

threatening an inmate, and abusing government property (Fellman, 2017). The third

classification of correctional officer misconduct included the use of verbally threatening

language, violating policy, misdemeanor behavior off duty, using drugs or alcohol on the

job, and forming inappropriate relationships with inmates (Fellman, 2017).

Fellman (2017) identified the leading cause of correctional officer misconduct in

the United States as inadequate supervision. Furthermore, the most common methods for

deterring misconduct among correctional officers involved providing written policies and

procedures that would address acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and disciplinary

actions, as well as implementing procedures for supervisors to report misconduct

(Fellman, 2017). Finally, prison leadership should consider the factors that influence

misconduct, such as correctional officer honesty, risk, opportunity, and incentive, when

minimizing misconduct among correctional officers (Fellman, 2017).

Researchers of correctional officer misconduct have focused on perceptions of

coworker misconduct and boundary violations because of the apprehension of

correctional officers in admitting to deviant behaviors in the first or second classifications

of misconduct. Worley et al. (2017) focused on correctional officers' perceptions of coworker misconduct and boundary violations. The researchers used a collective efficacy theory as their framework. The authors used a sample of correctional officers from seven different correctional facilities in the United States and measures for job stress, perceived dangerous work conditions, and peer and supervisor support (Worley et al., 2017). The results of the study showed a positive relationship between perceptions of coworkers' officer-inmate boundary violations and job stress (Worley et al., 2017). Another positive relationship was found between correctional officers' perceptions of job dangerousness and coworkers' officer-inmate boundary violations (Worley et al., 2017). In terms of support, both supervisor and peer support had a negative relationship with perceptions of coworker boundary violations (Worley et al., 2017). Furthermore, correctional officers reported fewer deviant behaviors overall in the facility when receiving support from coworkers and supervisors (Worley et al., 2017).

Worley et al. (2019) discussed the increased occurrence of correctional officer termination on account of misconduct, and thus, aimed to discover the correctional officer characteristics that influence their tolerance toward misconduct, specifically the mistreatment of inmates. The authors carried out their research in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice using a sample of 501 correctional officers and quantitative questionnaires (Worley et al., 2019). According to the results, the demographic characteristics that influenced correctional officers' favorable attitudes toward inmate mistreatment included being young and male (Worley et al., 2019). Furthermore, correctional officers who had lower levels of job satisfaction and believed that they did

not receive support from home or their supervisors were more tolerating of inmate abuse and mistreatment (Worley et al., 2019). This finding coincided with Worley et al.'s (2017) research, who found a supervisor and peer support as factors that would influence correctional officers' perceptions of misconduct committed by coworkers. Finally, Worley et al. (2019) found that correctional officers who believed that one or more of their coworkers had violated officer-inmate boundaries were more accepting of inmate mistreatment than those officers who did not believe their coworkers were perpetrators. The authors concluded that when correctional officers believe their coworkers are "crossing over to the offenders' side, may have turned a blind eye toward acts of officer-on-inmate maltreatment in an attempt to demarcate a line between the keeper and the kept" (Worley et al., 2019, p. 1).

Boateng and Hsieh (2019) explored the influence of organizational justice on job stress and misconduct among 169 correctional officers employed at five different prisons in Ghana. The results of the study showed that distributive and interactional justice significantly contributed to correctional officer stress and misconduct. The researchers found higher perceptions of distributive and interactional justice related to reduced misconduct complaints (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019). Furthermore, higher perceptions of interactional justice related to reduced job stress among correctional officers (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019).

Misconduct among correctional officers also has a negative influence on their coworker's well-being. For example, Worley et al. (2019) explored the relationship between correctional officer misconduct and coworkers' job satisfaction among 501

correctional officers within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice using the social structure and anomie theory. The results of the study showed that correctional officers who believed their coworkers violated boundaries with inmates reported lower levels of job satisfaction than correctional officers. The latter did not believe their coworkers violated boundaries (Worley et al., 2019).

Correctional officer misconduct is a prevalent issue within U.S. correctional facilities that jeopardizes the safety and management of inmates (Fellman, 2017). Because of the detrimental consequences of correctional officer misconduct, researchers have identified the potential antecedents to correctional officer misconduct, such as work-related stress and role conflict, to develop interventions that will minimize the occurrence (Lambert et al., 2019; Worley et al., 2017). Lambert et al. (2019) suggested that researchers should investigate work-related stressors and the effects on work deviance among correctional officers. The need for this research is also supported by Boateng and Hsieh (2019). They stated that existing research on the relationship between work-related stressors and correctional officer misconduct was limited due to insufficient instruments for measuring correctional officer misconduct. Further inquiry into the antecedents to correctional officer misconduct can inform prison policy, training initiatives, and the development of interventions to reduce misconduct in the workplace (Russo et al., 2018).

Summary and Conclusions

The correctional environment is stressful and dangerous, and correctional officers are needed to fulfill their mission. The correctional stressors are significantly linked to an organizational decision, role conflict, trust in the abilities of supervisors, and the

dangerousness of the job. Moreover, they can be influenced by ineffective supervision, managerial bullying, coworkers' relationships, and inmates' and officers' relationships.

The primary goal of the correctional officer is to prevent escape. Correctional officers monitor inmates' movements and search for contraband in inmates' areas and on their person. In some events, the correctional officer is thrown into a physical confrontation with the inmate if the events are unappreciated. Unity is pertinent to the correctional officer's survival. Rituals amongst the correctional officers illustrate a collective front to ensure inmates' compliance. However, rituals of the group of the correctional officer can lead to compliance as excessive force, sexual harassment, and failure to protect is exhibited from the member of that group.

Nevertheless, correctional officers exhibit a high level of stress, which can lead to a short lifespan. I believe that correctional job-related stress encountered or situational can lead to severe complications. Additionally, I believe that role conflict and job-related stress can influence a person based on gender, age, and assumed tenure. Violence, ineffective supervision, coworkers' perceptions, and harassment all exhibit factors that dwell within the correctional walls that can subsequently be relevant to a correctional officer's misconduct, which I intend to explore.

Lambert et al. (2019) suggested that researchers should investigate work-related stressors and their effects on work deviance among correctional officers. The need for this research is also supported by Boateng and Hsieh (2019). They stated that existing research on the relationship between work-related stressors and correctional officer misconduct was limited due to insufficient instruments for measuring correctional officer

misconduct. Further inquiry into the antecedents to correctional officer misconduct can inform prison policy, training initiatives, and the development of interventions to reduce misconduct in the workplace (Russo et al., 2018).

Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the quantitative design and methodological process. I explored the factors relevant to disclose if relationships exist among role conflict, stress encounter, and situational stress, which may lead to correctional officers' misconduct in adult institutions. Moreover, the chapter included how the data was collected and analyzed from the population influenced by the correctional environment.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

A correctional agency's goal is to protect the population by using correctional officers for security and control. Research has shown that environmental issues within the correctional system cause stressors that have led to officer misconduct (Armstrong et al., 2015; Clear et al., 2013; Ross, 2013). Correctional officers must ensure compliance by using control techniques to maintain order (Clear et al., 2013; Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980). Armstrong et al. (2015) and Lambert et al. (2007) suggested that perceptions of inmates as inflicting violence and conflicts with coworkers increase the probability of a correctional officer committing misconduct. In this quantitative study, I examined the relationship among role conflict, work-related stress (e.g., encountered and situational), and correctional officer misconduct in adult institutions.

Moreover, I explored stressors to expose the possible causes based on factors within the correctional environment that may contribute to correctional officers' misconduct. I explored different work-related stressors as predictors of correctional officer misconduct; these included correctional managerial bullying and relationships between correctional officers, their supervisors, and inmates. However, I aim to improve the quality of life of correctional officers working under tireless circumstances.

The specific purpose of this study was to examine whether relationships exist among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct for 107 correctional officers within NJDOC institutions. The survey that I administered contained items from the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al.,

1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). In this chapter, I

detail the quantitative method and correlation design used in this study. I also describe

the population and sampling technique, instrumentation, and the variables that were

examined in the study. In this chapter, the data collection procedures, data analysis

techniques, and ethical procedures are explained. The chapter contains a summary of key

points at the end.

Research Design and Rationale

The independent (predictor) variables in this study included work-related stress

and role conflict, and the dependent (outcome) variable was correctional officer

misconduct. I chose a quantitative research methodology to quantify the variables of

interest and generalize based on results (see Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research is also

appropriate to test hypotheses and make predictions (Apuke, 2017), in this case, to

determine whether work-related stress and role conflict predict correctional officer

misconduct. I chose a correlational design because I could measure the direction and

magnitude of relationships among the variables (see Apuke, 2017). Using a correlational

design, I was able to determine if one or both predictor variables (i.e., work-related stress

and role conflict) influenced the outcome variable (i.e., misconduct). This design choice

was consistent with research designs needed to advance knowledge in the discipline

regarding the antecedents to correctional officer misconduct (see Apuke, 2017).

I did not choose an experimental or quasi-experimental design because I did not

seek to establish a cause-and-effect relationship. Manipulating the variables of work-

related stress and role conflict among correctional officers to measure their influence on

misconduct would have been both unethical and challenging to achieve in an

uncontrolled environment (Queiros et al., 2017). Another design consideration was a

causal-comparative design. Researchers have used this design to evaluate the influence of

an independent variable on a dependent variable among two or more groups (Salkind,

2010). For this reason, I rejected the causal-comparative design. Finally, I considered but

ultimately rejected the descriptive design because descriptive research is more

appropriate for researchers who describe the characteristics of a population (Walker,

2005). In the interim, I chose a quantitative methodology to determine if both predictor

variables influence the outcome variable based on the RQ.

Methodology

I include in this section detailed information regarding the study population,

sample, and sampling procedures. Also, I include descriptions of recruitment,

participation, and data collection procedures. Finally, this section includes details on the

instrumentation, operationalization of constructs, and data analysis plan.

Population

The general population for this study was correctional officers in New Jersey. The

NJDOC has 13 institutions throughout New Jersey, where leaders house the states'

various types of offenders from minimum to maximum security inmates (New York

Department of Correction, 2016). The correctional officer is an officer responsible for the

safety, custody, security, and supervision of inmates in prison (New York Department of

Correction, 2016). The target population for this study was correctional officers from the

Edna Mahan, Northern State, East Jersey, and New Jersey State correctional facilities.

Leaders of the institutions in this study enforce the same standard rules and regulations.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The desired sample size for this study was 107 correctional officers, as calculated

using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2009). I based this calculation on the use of multiple

regression analysis with two predictor variables, a minimum effect size of .15, 95%

power, and a .05 probability error (Faul et al., 2009; see Appendix A). I used a cluster

sampling technique to obtain a sample of willing participants from each of the four

correctional institutions. A researcher uses cluster sampling to select participants by

randomly sampling a cluster of individuals from a large population (Frankfort-Nachmias

& Nachmias, 2008). Using this sampling strategy allows a researcher to collect samples

from large populations, clustering some after the researcher has identified strong, similar

traits within the unit (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Cluster sampling occurs in two phases. In the first phase, the researcher selects

boundaries and divides areas into blocks randomly (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias,

2008). In the second phase, the researcher categorizes the units selected within the blocks

where each unit's participants have a chance to be included (Frankfort-Nachmias &

Nachmias, 2008). Once the block is determined, the appropriate population size is

contracted from the total number of that group. For this study, correctional officers at

each correctional institution were represented in the clusters. I randomly chose the

correctional officers in each cluster using a lottery method or number generator that drew

from employee identification numbers.

The four NJDOC facilities from which the sample was drawn included Northern State Prison, Edna Mahan State Prison for Women, New Jersey State Prison, and East Jersey State Prison. The requirements to participate included that the officer be at least 18 years and older, have completed 1 year or more of service, and be employed at one of the four correctional institutions. I limited the study to correctional officers only; I did not include supervisors or retirees.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I hosted the surveys on SurveyMonkey, an online platform that allows a researcher to send participants a direct link to the survey. SurveyMonkey was the chosen platform because of its strict security measures (i.e., SSL encryption, password protection), the ability to collect data anonymously, ease of use, and the ability to incorporate the informed consent form as the first page of the survey (Survey Monkey.com., 2020). I sent an invitation to participate letter, a description of the study, and the SurveyMonkey link to the union representatives of these four NJDOC institutions. I sent a formal letter addressing the executive members of the union and the Police Benevolent Association detailing the purpose of the research, inclusion and exclusion criteria, how data would be used, and the process of informed consent (see Appendix B). I asked the union representatives to share the invitation to participate on the Police Benevolent Association Local 105 application for the correctional officers at each correctional institution.

The officers who agreed to participate logged on to the SurveyMonkey website from any computer, smartphone, or tablet at a convenient time. The first page of the

survey contained the informed consent document with the purpose of the research, participants' rights to withdraw at any time without consequence, how anonymity will be ensured, and how the data would be used and secured. The participating correctional officers clicked "I agree" to proceed to the next page, which hosted the demographic survey and the questions from each scale. The participants who clicked "I do not agree" exited from the survey. The participants who withdrew from the survey clicked out of the web browser. Answers were not saved for the participants who clicked out of the web browser. In the demographic survey questions, the participating officers indicated their gender, age, tenure, and work institution; however, no personally identifiable information was collected.

The participants who finished answering the survey questions were prompted to click "submit the survey," which concluded their participation. Before participants commenced the study, they saw a statement that addressed the mental health concerns of anyone in need of assistance at any time during participation. A list of outside groups, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of professional counselors was provided, such as Cop 2 Cop program that anonymously assists officers.

The survey averaged, 15 minutes to complete. All survey responses were kept on SurveyMonkey until the desired number of surveys was reached. Once the desired number of surveys was reached, I closed the survey and exported the data into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). I then proceeded with data analysis.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

This section provided the operationalizations of constructs measured in this study. This section is also dedicated to describing the instruments that were used to collect data. The reliability and validity estimates are provided for each scale as well as a list of their items.

Work-Related Stress

In this study, I operationalized work-related stress as "an individual's feelings of job-related tension, anxiety, worry, emotional exhaustion and distress" (Lambert & Paoline, 2005, p. 264). The instrument that measured work-related stress is the Job Stress Scale developed by Crank et al. (1995). This scale consists of six items scored on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 represents *strongly disagree,* and 5 represents *strongly agree* (Crank et al., 1995). The Job Stress Scale is considered reliable with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .78. Validity for this scale was established by Paoline and Lambert (2011), who found job stress as negatively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational support. The statements on the scale included:

1. When I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight.

2. A lot of times, my job makes me very frustrated or angry.

3. Most of the time, when I'm at work, I don't feel that I have much to worry about.

4. I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working.

5. I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work.

6. There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset.

Role Conflict

In this study, role conflict is operationalized, according to Katz and Kahn's (1970) definition. Katz and Kahn (1970) stated, "Role conflict is understood as the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) role outputs or requirements, in such a way that the performance of one of them makes the performance of the other more difficult" (p. 213). The Role Conflict Scale developed by House et al. (1983) was chosen because it addressed the issue of role conflict confounding with stress as seen in other role conflict scales by avoiding stress worded items. This scale has seven items that are scored on a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 represents *strongly disagree,* and 7 represents *strongly agree* (House et al., 1983). High scores on this scale indicate elevated levels of role conflict (House et al., 1983).

Westman (1992) and O'Driscoll and Beehr (1994) determined the reliability for this scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .79 to .86, respectively (Fields, 2013). Westman (1992) and O'Driscoll and Beehr (1994) determined the validity of this scale; the researchers found that role conflict correlated negatively with job dissatisfaction (Fields, 2013). The statements in this scale include the following:

1. I often get myself involved in a situation in which there are conflicting requirements.

2. There are unreasonable pressures for better performance.

3. I am often asked to do things that are against my better judgment.

4. I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.

5. I have to buck a rule or policy to carry out an assignment.

6. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.

7. I have to do things that should be done differently under different conditions.

Misconduct.

For this study, misconduct was operationalized as "any type of behavior that a correctional officer engages in during their her shift that is either illegal and against agency policy" (Worley & Worley, 2011, p. 295). The instrument chosen to measure correctional officer misconduct is the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). This scale consists of 16 hypothetical scenarios scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 represents *strongly disagree,* and 5 represents *strongly agree* (Worley & Worley, 2011). I used this scale because it measured low-level misconduct among correctional officers using nonthreatening scenarios, which was important. After all, some correctional officers did not disclose information regarding their engagement in misconduct.

Face and construct validity were established for this using item-to-item analysis and a pilot-test using a sample of correctional officers (Worley & Worley, 2011). Worley and Worley (2011) also established an acceptable level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .73. The hypothetical scenarios in this scale included the following:

1. I only "call-in" sick when I am seriously ill.

2. Uses of force should always be reported no matter how small.

3. I would never let an inmate break a rule.

4. I would never shake hands with an inmate.

5. If I saw a coworker smoking inside the prison, I would report this to a supervisor no matter what.

6. If I caught two inmates fighting, I would report this to my supervisor no matter what.

7. I have never had an inmate try to give me something (e.g., note, soda, food).

8. If I was counting and an inmate was masturbating, I would write him/her a disciplinary case no matter what.

9. I would never tell an inmate anything personal about me.

10. Even if I hated an inmate, I would never tamper with his food.

11. If I were hungry enough, I would let an inmate give me food.

12. If I saw a coworker, who was my friend, giving a cigarette to an inmate, I would not tell a supervisor.

13. It is o.k. for employees to read books/magazines while on duty.

14. If I saw a coworker, who was my friend, ripping up an inmate's mail, I would not report this to a supervisor.

15. If I saw a coworker, who was my friend, slap an inmate, I would not report this to my supervisor.

16. If I saw an employee giving an inmate a soft drink, I would tell Someone immediately.

Data Analysis Plan

The SPSS software and multiple regression analysis were used to process and analyze the data collected. Multiple regression analysis calculated the viability of the predictor variables (i.e., work-related stress and role conflict) in predicting the outcome variable (i.e., correctional officer misconduct; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Descriptive statistics was used to present the distribution of scores for each scale and to establish the data that met the assumptions of multiple regression analysis. The assumptions are that independent and dependent variables have a linear relationship, data are typically distributed, independent variables are not related to one another, and a similar variance exists among independent variables (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The multiple regression analysis was used to identify a regression model that reports R^2, F-tests, and standardized beta coefficients (Hopkins & Ferguson, 2014). The R^2 statistic represents how well the model fits or how much variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. The standardized beta coefficients or correlation coefficients represent the size and direction of relationships between independent and dependent variables (Prematunga, 2012). The strength of relationships is expressed as a number between 0 to 1, with weak relationships at .10 and healthy relationships at .50 (Cohen, 1988), and the direction relationships are expressed as either + (positive) or – (unfavorable; Prematunga, 2012). Correlations are evaluated for significance using a 95% confidence level and .05 margin of error.

Threats to Validity

Various aspects of a research methodology can threaten the external and internal validity of research findings (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). External validity refers to the generalizability of results to a broader population or different contexts (Hopkins & Ferguson, 2014). Internal validity refers to the degree to which extraneous variables can be dismissed as predictors of the outcome (Hopkins & Ferguson, 2014).

External Validity

A potential threat to external validity in this study is recruitment difficulty. Recruitment was difficult because of the constructs that was measured. Some correctional officers did not want to disclose information regarding their engagement in deviant behaviors. I used a scale to measure low-level misconduct among correctional officers to address this potential issue. The scale was specially developed for this population; it presented nonthreatening scenarios for participants to rate the level to which they agree on matters, such as reporting abuse from a coworker and calling in (Worley & Worley, 2011). Another threat to external validity is self-report or response bias. Correctional officers may inflate or deflate responses to questions because they want to appear favorable. Therefore, I made it clear to participants that all responses to survey questions will remain anonymous.

Internal Validity

A central threat to internal validity in this study included the participants' characteristics. It is unknown whether correctional officer participants' responses are influenced by confounding variables. For example, correctional officer misconduct may

be influenced by underlying mental health concerns rather than work-related stress and role conflict. I have chosen a sample size large enough to achieve an adequate level of confidence to address this threat. The targeted number of samples based on the a *priori* sample size calculation is 107 correctional officers considering 95% power level. A total of 109 correctional officers were gathered in the study. Therefore, the samples are sufficient to achieve a power of 95% for the statistical analyses. Another threat to internal validity is the presence of multicollinearity, which is the overlapping of constructs being measured (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For example, multicollinearity would occur if items in a work stress scale and role conflict scale were similar, which can happen because many stress scales incorporate role stressors. I chose a work stress scale that would not operationalize work stress as a role related to address this potential threat.

Ethical Procedures

I kept all data private. The participants were informed that their informed consent forms will be removed and stored in a safe place secured. The participants were informed that their participation will remain anonymous, as well as any information provided if a participant refuses to continue the study. The data collected by the service engine, SurveyMonkey, which preserves the integrity of its consumers, will be secure until a designated date that this company policy dictates. I am the only researcher for this project, and the participant information will be accessed by SurveyMonkey and me. After approximately three years, the information will be discarded by electronically deleting all data based on SurveyMonkey policy.

Walden University's Institutional Review Board approved this study (approval no. 06-22-21-0429836). The NJDOC through its Department Research Review Board has approved this research based on an acclamation agreement on standards. The participants were informed that there are no consequences for terminating their participation, which can occur at their convenience. The participants were advised that their participation will remain strictly voluntary, and the findings will be distributed to the correctional executive members for distribution to their members.

There is a minimum available risk because it took the participants 15 minutes to complete the survey. The reason is that all the participants are correctional officers. Correctional agency leaders can use the findings of this research to render assistance and implement policies to lower the stressors that can lead to a correctional officer's demise. Privacy is my most significant concern, as ethical issues are addressed to ensure confidence with this population.

Summary

I discussed the quantitative methodology and correlational design chosen to facilitate the explanation about the relationship between correctional officers' work-related stress, role conflict, and misconduct in New Jersey correctional institutions. The population in this study is correctional officers, and the target sample size is 107 participants and 109 were utilized. I considered the reluctant for those Correctional Officers' who may be concern of reprisal, which was anonymous. Before collecting data, I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board and from the New Jersey Department of Correction's Department Research Review Board. Surveys

used to collect data on the constructs of interest (i.e., work-related stress, role conflict, and misconduct), which was hosted on SurveyMonkey. I used multiple linear regression to show how vital the predictors are to correctional officers' misconduct that may have derived from occupational stress. In the next chapter, I explained the findings to determine if my hypothesis was correct. Moreover, the chapter contains a description of the data collected, discrepancies, and how the results defined the statistical analysis according to the RQ.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine whether relationships exist among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct for correctional officers within the NJDOC institutions. I used items from the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). The target number of participants was 107. A total of 158 prospective participants responded in the study. Among the 158 participants, 49 participants did not complete more than half of the survey questionnaires. Therefore, only 109 participants were included in the study. Based on the power analysis, the109 participants were sufficient to achieve statistically valid results. For participants with missing values, the missing value was substituted using mean imputation. The mean score for the item was used to substitute the missing value. The RQ and null and alternative hypotheses for the study were as follows:

RQ: What is the predictive relationship between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct?

H_0: Role conflict and work-related stress do not predict correctional officer misconduct.

H_a: Role conflict and work-related stress predict correctional officer misconduct.

Data Collection

The 109 participants responded to a demographic questionnaire, the Job Stress Scale, Role Conflict Scale, and the Self-Report Deviance Scale. The descriptive statistics

for participants' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. Data on gender, institution where the participant is employed, years in current organization, age, marital status, and education were collected. Most (79.8%) of the participants were male (n = 87).

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	87	79.8
Female	22	20.2
Total	109	100.0
Institution employed		
1.00	24	22.0
2.00	35	32.1
3.00	37	33.9
4.00	13	11.9
Total	109	100.0
Years in current organization		
1.00	15	13.8
2.00	14	12.8
3.00	24	22.0
4.00	35	32.1
5.00	21	19.3
Total	109	100.0
Age		
1.00	9	8.3
2.00	33	30.3
3.00	37	33.9
4.00	22	20.2
5.00	8	7.3
Total	109	100.0
Marital status		
1.00	48	44.0
2.00	33	30.3
3.00	15	13.8
4.00	13	11.9
Total	109	100.0
Education		
1.00	70	64.2
2.00	37	33.9
3.00	2	1.8

Total		109	100.0

To address the RQ, I performed linear regression analysis. Prior to conducting the linear regression analysis, I tested data assumptions of linear regression. A boxplot was employed to test the assumption of outliers. In the analysis, the misconduct variable is the dependent variable. As observed in Figure 1, points 4, 99, 88, and 98 are outliers. The nearest acceptable value was used to substitute the outlier values in the regression analysis.
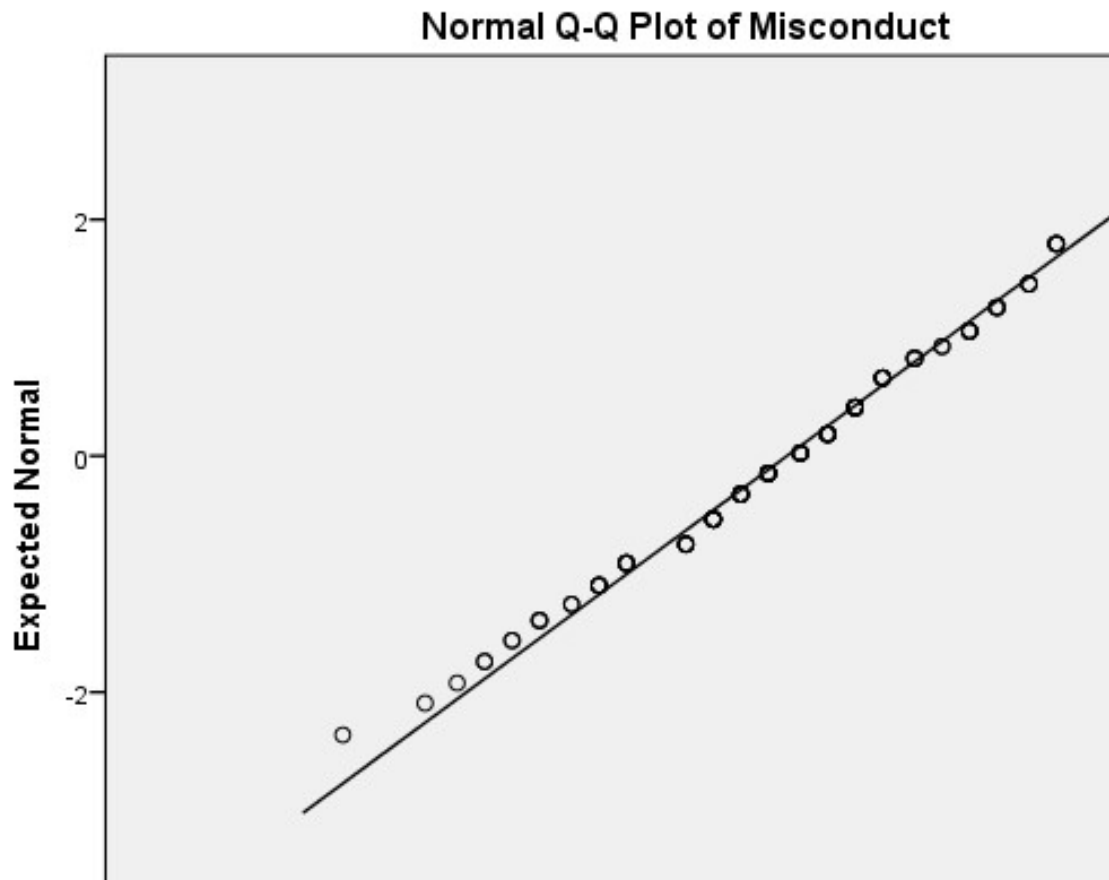
Figure 1

Boxplot of the Misconduct Variable
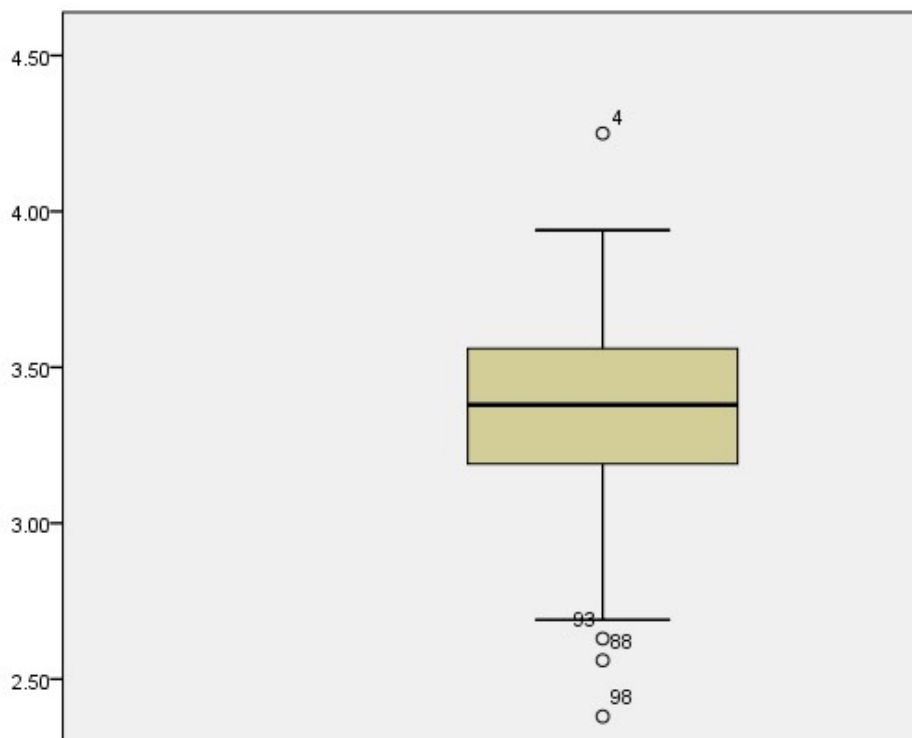
The next assumption tested in the analysis was the assumption of linearity. The normal Q-Q plot of misconduct variable was used to test whether the assumption of

linearity was met. As shown in Figure 2, the data points are along the line, which

indicates that the assumption on residuals was not violated.

Figure 2

Normal Q-Q Plot

Normal Q-Q Plot of Misconduct

I used a scatterplot to test the assumption of homoscedasticity. The result of the

scatterplot presented in Figure 3 showed that there was no pattern formed with the data

points. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

Figure 3

Scatterplot of Misconduct

Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Misconduct
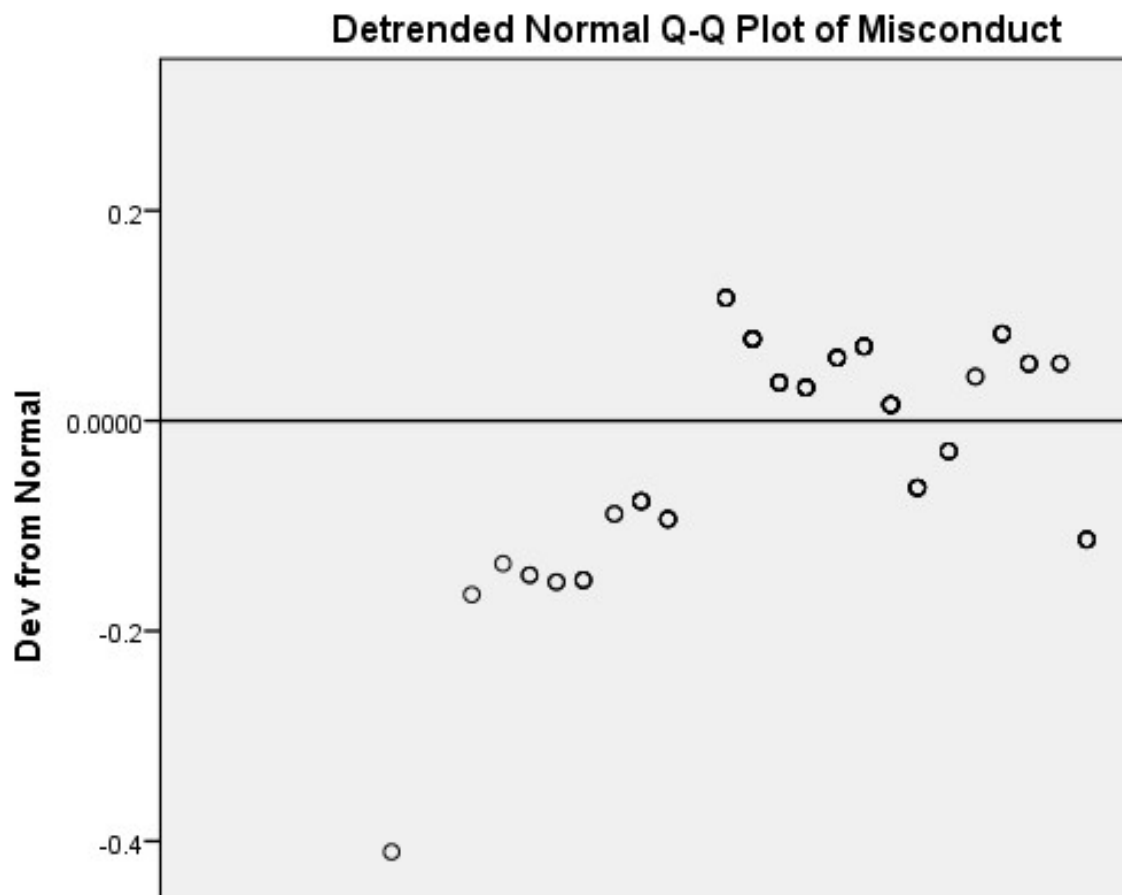
I used collinearity diagnostics to test the assumption of multicollinearity. The result presented in Table 2 shows that the VIF value is 1.359. A VIF value of less than 10 shows that there is no multicollinearity between the predictor variables. Therefore, the assumption of multicollinearity was met. Moreover, the Durbin-Watson statistic was used to test the assumption of independence. The Durbin-Watson statistic was at 1.5 indicating that the assumption of independence was met.

Table 2

Collinearity Diagnostics

	Collinearity Statistics	
Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Role conflict	0.736	1.359
Work-related stress	0.736	1.359

Results

I used a linear regression analysis to determine whether role conflict and work-related stress predict the correctional officers' misconduct. The result of the linear regression analysis presented in Table 3 shows that role conflict is a significant predictor of misconduct ($B = -.055$, $p = .038$). The result shows that an increase in one unit of the role conflict score result to a decrease of .055 in the misconduct of participants. Work-related stress was not a significant predictor of misconduct ($B = .095$, $p = .134$). The model was also insignificant in predicting misconduct. Moreover, the predictors explained 4.2% of the variance in the misconduct variable. Based on the results, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis because role conflict is a significant predictor of misconduct.

Table 3

Linear Regression Analysis Result for Misconduct

Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.297	0.175		18.892	0.000
	Role conflict	-0.055	0.026	-0.233	-2.106	0.038
	Work-related stress	0.095	0.063	0.168	1.511	0.134

a. Dependent Variable: Misconduct; $F(2,108) = 2.343$, $p = .101$, R-square = .042

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine whether relationships exist among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct for 107 correctional officers within the NJDOC institutions using the Job Stress Scale (Crank et al., 1995), the Role Conflict Scale (House et al., 1983), and the Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011). I sought to answer the following RQ in this study: What is the predictive relationship between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct? A total of 109 completed data were included in the analysis, which is above the minimum number of samples necessary for the study. Therefore, the 109 participants are sufficient to achieve statistically valid results. A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether role conflict and work-related stress predict the misconduct variable. The result of the analysis determined that role conflict is a negative predictor of misconduct while work-related stress is not a predictor of misconduct. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis posed in the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Correctional officer misconduct has been well documented within the United States (Fellman, 2017). Misconduct can range from inattention (Ross, 2013) to sexual or physical abuse (Clear et al., 2013; Worley & Worley, 2011). The extent of correctional officer misconduct remains unknown because inmates often do not report abuse due to lack of evidence or fear of retaliation (Fellman, 2017). Yet, inmates of correctional facilities retain the right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment as protected under the United States Bill of Rights (U.S. Const. amend. VIII) regardless of their crimes.

Prior research has suggested that correctional officers experience role conflict (Bezerra et al., 2016; Kinman et al., 2017) and work-related stress (Saunders et al., 2017; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). However, it is unknown whether these factors predict correctional officer misconduct. The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to identify whether relationships existed between role-conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct. I used linear regression analysis to analyze survey data from 109 correctional officers in New Jersey in response to the singular RQ of this study: What is the predictive relationship between role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct?

The result of the analysis showed that role conflict is a negative predictor of correctional officer misconduct while work-related stress is not a predictor of misconduct. Following is an interpretation of these results within the context of the current literature and theoretical foundations of this study. Additionally, I will discuss

limitations and offer recommendations for future research. Finally, implications for positive social change and recommendations for practice will be provided.

Interpretation of the Findings

Role Conflict

The result from the linear regression analysis indicated that role conflict is a negative predictor of correctional officer misconduct. This result suggests that as perceived role-conflict increases, correctional officer misconduct decreases. This result contradicts prior research by Chiu et al. (2015) who found that role conflict was positively associated with organizational and interpersonal deviance. Similarly, the results of this study contrasted those of Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) who found that participants of their study who reported increased work-related stress resulting from role conflict were more likely to be the victims or perpetrators of workplace bullying than those who did not experience role stress. Further, role conflict was positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors such as hostility toward customers, frustration, organizational neglect, and aggression, which also counters the current research (see Bowling & Eschleman, 2010; Spector & Fox, 2005).

There are several possible explanations for these contradictory results. First, the sample populations are distinct from the current study. Chiu et al. (2015) surveyed Taiwanese customer service employees, whereas Bowling and Eschleman (2010) and Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) surveyed employees from a variety of professions that did not include correction officers. These populations differ from the current sample population, correction officers working within the state of New Jersey.

A second possible explanation is that the results from the current study are invalid due to participant biases. Survey-based research of sensitive or controversial topics such as misconduct is particularly vulnerable to response bias (Larkin, 2021). Social desirability bias and nonresponse bias are two likely reasons that results may be invalid. I will further discussed this topic in the Limitations of the Study section.

A third reason results may differ from previous studies can be attributed to a low response rate. The desired sample size for this study was 107 correctional officers based on the use of multiple regression analysis with two predictor variables, a minimum effect size of .15, 95% power, and a .05 probability error (Faul et al., 2009). Ultimately, 109 participants were included in the data analysis. Although the sample size was sufficient for data analysis, its small size may have affected the accuracy of the results. I will also further discuss nonresponse bias in the Limitations of the Study section.

Work-Related Stress

Data analysis showed that work-related stress was not a predictor of correctional officer misconduct. This result differs from prior research that has established a connection between work-related stress and misconduct (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Chiu et al., 2015; Worley et al., 2017). However, previous studies described an indirect relationship between work-related stress and correctional officer misconduct. For example, Chiu et al. (2015) explained that role conflict creates work-related stress that, in turn, may cause an individual to engage in unwanted behaviors. Further, Worley et al. (2017) reported that when a correction officer perceives a coworker's officer-inmate boundary violation, their perceived stress increases. Worley et al.'s finding was supported

by Boateng and Hsieh (2019), who shared evidence that suggested correction officers who reported high perceptions of distributive justice also reported lower perceived stress and had fewer misconduct-related complaints than correction officers who perceived lower levels of distributive justice.

Results from the current study and the evidence provided from the literature review suggest that work-related stress in and of itself does not directly result in correction officer misconduct. Multiple variables relative to unethical behavior and to one another create a complex relationship that can make it difficult for researchers to identify which factors are critically important (Larkin et al., 2021). Ineffective supervision (Ellis, 2001; Fellman, 2017), inadequate peer or supervisor support (Misis et al., 2013; Worley et al., 2017), coworker misconduct and boundary violations (Worley et al., 2019), low levels of perceived organizational justice (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Viotti, 2016), and demographic characteristics (Misis et al., 2013; Worley et al., 2019) have all been associated with increased stress or deviant behavior. Although it was outside the scope of this study to examine all of these variables in relation to work-related stress, the current result underscores the difficulty in identifying predictors of correction officer misconduct.

Theoretical Foundation

I used a combination of theories to inform this research and provide a theoretical foundation for this study. The transactional theory of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984), role theory (Rizzo et al., 1970), and general strain theory (Agnew, 1992) combine to

explain the motivating factors behind correction officer misconduct. Following is a

discussion of the current results in relation to each of these theories.

Transactional Theory of Stress

The transactional theory of stress developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1984)

describes stress as a consequence of transactions between a person and the environment

(see also Miller & McCool, 2003). The request to participate in this study may have

represented a stressor to correction officers resulting in a low response rate: Asking

correction officers to consider their misconduct or that of other officers may have

triggered a stress response resulting in refusal to participate in the study or to drop out of

the study before completion of the survey. The correctional officers try to avoid shame

and conviction by exhibiting a code of silence; they may find themselves in

compromising position (Clear et al. 2013; Finn, 2000; McShame, 2008). The remaining

participants may have represented a group of correction officers who chose to act

ethically or who worked in environments that supported ethical behavior thereby skewing

the results of this study. Role conflict, for example, was found to be a negative predictor

of correction officer misconduct, a result that contradicts prior research examined in the

literature review (e.g., Clear et al. 2013). I will discuss this type of response bias, called

nonresponse bias (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008), in the Limitations of the

Study section.

The transactional theory of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984) also helps explain

why work-related stress in and of itself was not found to be a predictor of correction

officer misconduct. Stress responses are highly individualized and dependent on many

factors, including cognitive and affective responses to the environment (Miller &

McCool, 2003). Multiple factors identified in the literature review may enhance stress-

related responses. I did not include factors that may have had a moderating effect on the

relationship between stress and correction officer misconduct in this study.

Role Theory

The basic tenet of role theory is that individuals engage in different behaviors

depending on their environment, their previous experiences, or their perceived social

identities (Biddle, 1986). Risso et al. (1970) theorized that when an individual assumes

two or more roles with incompatible expectations, the individual experiences role

conflict. Modern-day correction officers are often asked to perform the roles of rule

enforcers, who are charged with the supervision and control of inmates, and

rehabilitators, who participate in preparing an inmate for reintegration into society (Clear

et al., 2013). The transition from enforcer to rehabilitator can cause role conflict (Clear et

al., 2013; Dowden & Tellier, 2004). Role conflict has been previously associated with

workplace deviance (Chiu et al., 2015). Within the context of role theory, the current

results are unexpected; increased role conflict resulted in reduced correction officer

misconduct.

General Strain Theory

According to the presumptions of the general strain theory, individuals experience

strain when facing negative stimuli, the removal of positive stimuli, or failure to

accomplish essential goals (Agnew, 1992). When individuals experience this strain and

do not have appropriate coping mechanisms, they can become angry, frustrated, or

depressed (Agnew, 1992). The results of this study contradict the basic tenets of general strain theory. Stress was not found to be a predictor of correction officer misconduct. Moreover, role conflict was found to negatively predict correction officer misconduct. As theorized prior, these differences may be a result of response biases that will be fully discussed in the following section.

Limitations of the Study

This study contained several limitations that challenge the validity of the results. Primarily, the low response rate limits the validity of these results. According to a power analysis (Faul et al., 2009), the targeted number of participants needed to achieve 95% power was 107, yet 109 participants were included in the study. The results of the post hoc power analysis determined that 109 participants are sufficient to achieve a power of 95.5% (Faul et al., 2009). Therefore, the results of the regression analysis are considered as statistically valid.

Further, survey-based studies are often limited by response biases that may skew results (Larkin et al., 2021). Survey-based studies of misconduct are particularly susceptible to social desirability bias because the topic is sensitive or controversial. Social desirability bias occurs when participants perceive an answer to be more socially acceptable than others and choose that response instead of answering truthfully (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). However, the anonymous nature of the survey encourages participants respond honestly.

The Self-Report Deviance Scale (Worley & Worley, 2011) was chosen to measure correction officer misconduct. This scale was perceived to minimize social

desirability bias because the items included were nonthreatening. Further, anonymity was stressed in the informed consent email to reassure participants that their responses would remain confidential. However, it remains possible that social desirability bias did occur which brings internal validity into question.

Another form of bias, non-response bias, poses a threat to the validity of this study. Non-response bias occurs when subjects who refuse to participate or drop out before completing the survey represent a portion of the sample that is different from those who participate fully (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In this case, correction officers who engaged in misconduct may have been uncomfortable completing the survey. Although 107 participants were targeted, 158 participants completed part or all of this study. Among the 158 participants, 49 participants did not complete more than half of the survey questions. This represents only a 54.5% response rate. Non-response becomes problematic when response rates fall below 70% (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

This study is further limited by the survey-based design. Studies that rely on survey instrumentation to gather data have difficulty making causal inferences (Larkin et al., 2021). In addition, the scales chosen to measure role conflict, work-related stress, and correction officer misconduct do not control for the multitude of variables that may confound results. Therefore, the results of this study should not be generalized.

Recommendations

Identifying influences of correction officer misconduct is challenging, not only because of the many potential variables involved but because of response biases that may

invalidate results (Larkin et al., 2021). To confirm the presence of non-response bias in the current study, the disciplinary records of respondents should be compared with the disciplinary records of non-respondents (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). If significant differences are found between the disciplinary records of the two groups, non-response bias would be confirmed and the study results would be invalidated.

Further, future researchers should employ a research methodology that addresses social desirability bias. While measures were taken to reduce response biases, including providing informed consent that ensured confidentiality, social desirability bias is recognized as a limitation in survey-based research of misconduct or other morally questionable behaviors (Larkin et al., 2021). Larkin et al. (2021) recommended a mixed-methods approach to misconduct research; by combining survey data with archival behavioral field analysis, the effect of response bias is limited. Archival data demonstrating undesirable behavior such as attendance records, misconduct violations, or termination records.

Implications

This study has potential implications at the individual, family, organizational, and societal levels. While the results of this study did not align with prior research, they do underscore the importance of addressing misconduct in correction facilities. Additionally, response rates to the emailed survey bring the validity of results into question, yet inferences can still be made to provide recommendations for practice. Further, this study moves research in the field of unethical behavior closer to identifying effective instruments of measuring misconduct. Therefore, some implications stem solely from the

research included in the literature review and only somewhat from the results of this study.

Individual

One notable conclusion stemming from the results of this study and supported by prior research explored in the literature review is that stress in and of itself is not a predictor of correction officer misconduct. Therefore, the implication to the individual is that working in a correctional facility, which is an inherently stressful environment (Saunders et al., 2017; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015), does not necessarily mean that a correction officer will engage in misconduct. Supervisory support (Worley et al., 2017) and high levels of organizational justice (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Viotti, 2016) are two factors relevant to reducing a correction officer's misconduct. Ethical individuals wishing to pursue a career in corrections should seek organizations that imbue these characteristics.

However, stress has been associated with misconduct in prior research. Edmondson et al. (2010), for example, found correction officers who witnessed fellow officers' misconduct exhibited symptoms of stress that may elicit physical or mental consequences. Thus, eliminating acts of misconduct would protect the physical and mental health of correction officers.

Finally, eliminating acts of correction officer misconduct would improve the lives of inmates. Fellman (2017) documented many types of abuse perpetrated against inmates including physical and sexual assault, drug trafficking, and facilitating inmate acts of

violence towards one another. Ensuring a safe, drug-free environment may protect inmates and help them successfully navigate the rehabilitation process.

Family

Identifying the precursors to misconduct to eliminate unethical behavior would impact the families of the correction officer. An officer charged with misconduct may face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (Worley et al., 2019) and even incarceration (Fellman, 2017). This would impact the families of the officers emotionally and financially. Additionally, officers who witness misconduct may exhibit symptoms of stress (Edmondson et al., 2010) that can damage interpersonal relationships (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Therefore, eliminating misconduct protects correction officers' families in a variety of ways.

Organization

The potential impact of reducing correction officer misconduct to organizations is primarily financial. Correction officers that engage in misconduct face disciplinary action, including termination (Worley et al., 2019). Organizations must then incur the cost of hiring and training a new employee. In addition, officers who experience stress as a result of witnessing misconduct (Edmondson et al., 2010) or who perceive low levels of organizational justice (Lambert et al., 2019) may exhibit unwanted behaviors such as absenteeism or reduced productivity. While this study did not find evidence supporting a relationship between stress and correction officer misconduct, it does underscore the importance of eliminating officer misconduct and moves the field closer to identifying effective research methods in the field of unethical behavior.

Society

Implications to society stem from an inmate's ability to fully rehabilitate within a correctional institution that fosters misconduct. Worley and Worley (2009) reported the efficacy of inmate rehabilitation is negatively impacted by acts of deviance committed by correctional employees. If inmates are not fully rehabilitated, they may spend longer time in prison, thereby increasing the financial burden placed on taxpayers. Additionally, some inmates may be released back into society and repeat or escalate their crimes. Clearly, reducing correction officer misconduct would have positive implications for society.

Methodological

Correction officer misconduct is a prevalent issue within U.S. correctional facilities that jeopardizes the protection and management of inmates (Fellman, 2017). Yet, the extent of correction officer misconduct remains unclear due to insufficient instruments for measuring misconduct (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Larkin, 2021) and officers' and inmates' reluctance to report misconduct (Fellman, 2017). Identifying ineffective research methods for determining predictors of correction officer misconduct moves the field closer to more effective methods through a process of elimination. The current study employed a survey-based research design that was susceptible to response biases (Larkin, 2021). The low response rate may indicate non-response bias that brings the results into question. Future research should rely on a mixed-methods approach to identify predictors of unethical behavior. A survey, bolstered by an archival behavioral field analysis, may prove ideal in this particular domain.

Recommendations for Practice

Correction officer misconduct is a controversial and sensitive topic that many officers are uncomfortable discussing (Fellman, 2017). Correction officers' unwillingness to report misconduct is evidenced by the low response rate to the email request for participation in this study and the drop-out rate of those that did not complete the survey. Therefore, it is recommended that correctional institutions implement an anonymous tip line where officers can report misconduct with complete confidentiality and without fear of retaliation. A confidential reporting tool creates a culture of accountability at all levels of the organization (Fellman, 2017).

Ineffective supervision (Ellis, 2001) and managerial bullying (Dowden & Tellier, 2004) can lead to destructive behaviors on the part of subordinates. Conversely, perceived supervisor support was associated with decreased stress among correction officers (Bezerra et al., 2016). While the current research did not investigate supervision in relation to correction officer misconduct, evidence from the literature review suggests effective supervision is vital to reducing undesirable behaviors and minimizing role conflict. Therefore, it is recommended supervisors receive training specific to their role. Training should focus on ethical leadership (leading by example), active management (knowing your staff and regularly auditing performance), and setting clear expectations to reduce role conflict (Fellman, 2017).

Finally, it is recommended that correctional institutions utilize hiring assessments to weigh the risk factors of each applicant. Risk factors may include age and sex (Worley et al., 2019), as well as a history of substance abuse, discipline at previous jobs, or poor

credit history (Department of Justice as cited in Fellman, 2017). Assessments represent a proactive approach to limiting correction officer misconduct by eliminating high-risk candidates from consideration.

Conclusion

Correction officer misconduct remains a problem within the United States (Fellman, 2017). Determining antecedents to correction officer misconduct has proven difficult for researchers due to the nature of the problem. Correction officer misconduct is a sensitive and controversial topic that some officers may not wish to discuss (Larkin, 2021). Further, survey-based designs typically applied to investigate predictor variables of correction officer misconduct are limited by response biases (Larkin, 2021). Yet, determining predictors of correction officer misconduct to reduce its occurrence has important implications.

At the individual level, a reduction or elimination of correction officer misconduct would improve the physical and mental health of officers and the inmates they are charged with supervising. At the familial level, emotional and financial strain resulting from correction officer misconduct could be avoided. Reducing correction officer misconduct would positively impact organizations financially through employee retention and increased productivity. Finally, society would benefit from the elimination of correction officer misconduct with the increased rehabilitation of inmates.

This study incurred several limitations due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the sample population's unwillingness to discuss the matter. Low response rates and potential response biases bring the results into question. However, identifying ineffective

research methods, such as survey-based methods for collecting data of controversial material (Larkin, 2021), is necessary to move the field closer to more effective measures like mixed-method studies that incorporate behavioral field analysis. Additionally, the decision to engage in misconduct is a complicated path from cognition to behavior that is influenced by multiple factors (Miller & McCool, 2003). Therefore, research must continue so that an understanding of the factors influencing correction officer misconduct can be reached to curtail these unethical practices.

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Appendix A: G*Power Score
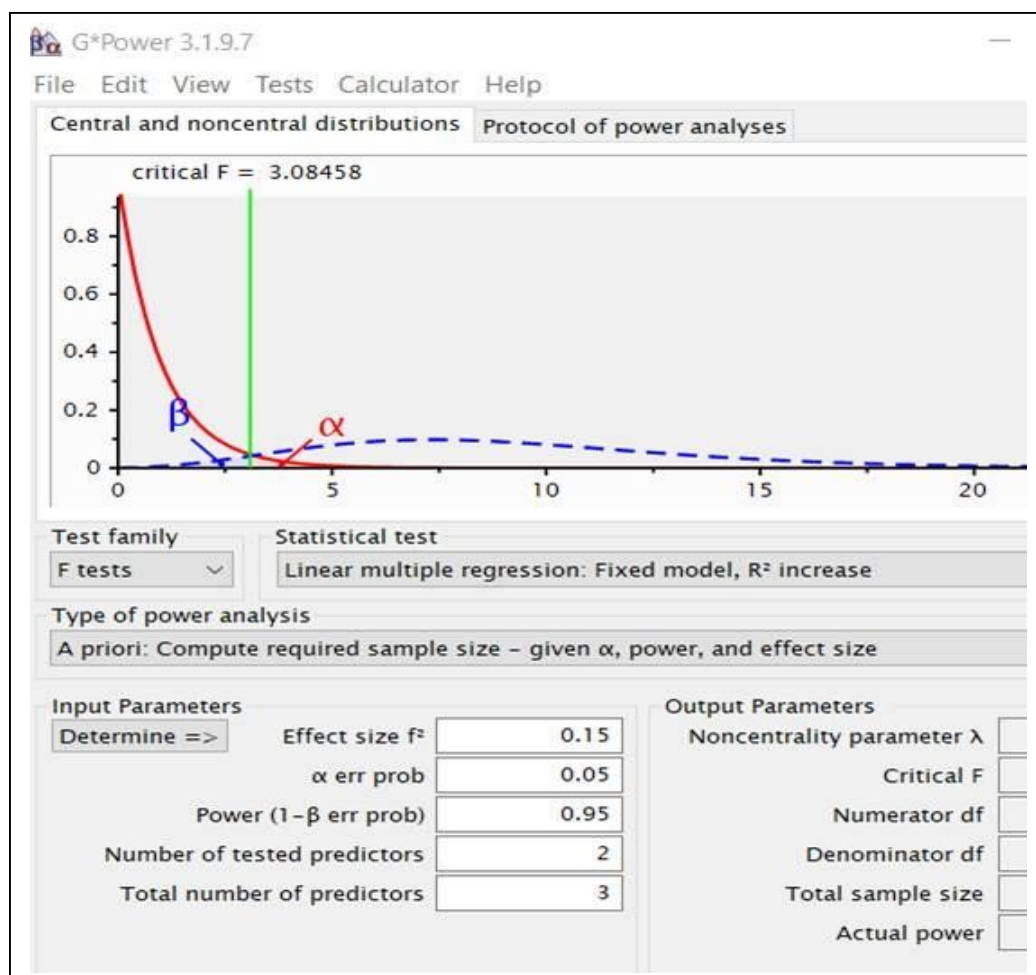
Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Flyer

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study. I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study to find out if relationships exist among role conflict, work-related stress, and correctional officer misconduct for correctional officers.

You may participate if you
(a) are 18 years or older
(b) are currently employed as an officer at one of the following institutions: Northern State Prison, Edna Mahan State Prison for Women, New Jersey State Prison, or East Jersey State Prison
(c) have completed one year or more of service in the correctional institution.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to complete anonymous survey questions regarding your feelings about your job stress, possible role conflict, and misconduct.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes for you complete.

To volunteer for this study, please follow the provided link below.
Please use a secure internet link to protect your privacy.
Please select a private and safe room from which to participate.

URL: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FHF2RLX

Survey will close once the participant number has been reached.

For more information about this study,
please contact:
Donald Dula
doctoral student at Walden University
at
Phone: [redacted] or
Email: [redacted]

The study has been reviewed and approved by the
Research Ethics Review Board, Walden University.