

2023

Finding the High-Performance Border Enforcement Agent

Douglas Allen A'Hern
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Walden University

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Douglas A. A'Hern

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2022

Abstract

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by

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MPhil, Walden University, 2020

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

January 2023

Abstract

There are well defined systemic challenges to managing, recruiting, and retaining the best border enforcement agents available amongst given candidates. The ability to identify and define specific attitudes and attributes within those agents who are considered high performers is something that could be of tremendous value to law enforcement agency managers. The need for information to cultivate the highest level of performance is magnified given the events in the United States that followed the death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement in May of 2020. In the effort to identify those attributes within high performance border agents, twelve different agents were interviewed who were considered high performers by their agency. The primary purpose of the interviews was to extract data related to their general worldview and life experiences, outside of law enforcement. The subsequent analysis revealed several distinct common experience and responses to external challenges amongst all or most of the participants. The study revealed that most participants felt that their experience in law enforcement had been able to assist them in developing better resistance to antagonism and that they did not respond to provocation. These data can be used as a tool to better understand those high performers and to help identify the same in existing staff or new applicants. By identifying and retaining the officers who can perform in the field at exceptional levels, you can effect positive social change by fostering the relationship between those agencies and those who are policed.

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Dedication

This work is for the improvement of all of us who live under the agreed rules of our great society. It is in the hope that it helps inspire others to evaluate and assess our structure to resolve conflict for the betterment of all.

Para el amor de mi vida, this is but one in a long of list of life's accomplishments that would have never been possible without you.

For my "pops" and The Princess, may this inspire you to follow your dreams and never be told that you cannot do something. You, my children, will always be my greatest accomplishment and gifts to the world.

For my brother, my mother and my father who passed before he could see this, we do because we can. Always "do".

"They deem him their worst enemy who tells them the truth. -Plato, philosopher (427-347 BCE)"

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To this day, I feel unbelievably lucky that I was selected by Dr. Barbara Palomino de Velasco, to serve as my committee Chair. I am blessed to have her influence in my life and on this work. If you know her, you will know what I mean. My Methodologist, Dr. Christie A. Nelson devoted countless hours of her life to help me achieve this personal goal, and I cannot ever begin to repay her. I promise to forever have the right spacing after the periods. If this dissertation is, in any way, found to be worthy, it is because of the teaching, the passion, dedication and professionalism of Dr. Palomino de Velasco and Dr. Nelson.

I want to thank every teacher I have ever had, especially my English teacher from RL Turner High School, Mrs. Nancy Perrotta. You saw something in me, I didn't see in myself.

Finally, my academic advisor, Mr. Prentice Moore. Mr. Moore is likely happier to see me finish my work at Walden than even me. Mr. Moore deserves special recognition of guiding and pushing me forward through all the challenges of life and school. Thank you, sir.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Problem Statement

Employees have long been recognized as the most important asset of any company (Pease, 2015). The ability to locate, recruit, train, and retrain the best candidates for a job is of critical importance to the success of an organization (Rigg, 2015). The identification of the person most suited for the job during the hiring phase is possibly the key component of the endeavor (Morris et al., 2015). There is generally no greater need in that process today than in law enforcement (Koslicki, 2020). The essence of a law enforcement agency is not the brick-and-mortar buildings, the police vehicles, or commonly recognized tools of the trade; it is the people employed by that agency. Given that law enforcement is a profession loaded with the pressures of the demand of the job, identifying quality officers and avoiding problematic officers during the recruitment and training phase makes the building and maintenance of a quality police force more challenging than ever (Hilal & Densley, 2015). Society's relationship with law enforcement is rapidly changing. Since the very public death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the subsequent, ongoing civil unrest, there is a need to answer the public's demand for law enforcement reform (Sanchez, 2020).

U.S. protesters demanded police forces be defunded. Some municipalities began reducing budgets for police departments. The result is that these departments need to know officers are meeting new standards and are recruiting and developing police candidates with propensity to be high performers. Agencies must feel assured that candidates are low risk as liabilities for the department, cities or states that employ them.

There is also a need to identify those officers who are on the job already that display the highest performing traits.

Perceptions of a dangerous and low paid job are combined with very public criticisms of police tactics and actions, including protests and riots, underscore the need to use precision in the identification of a workforce that can rise to those challenges (Mullins & Thompson, 2020). There is extensive current literature that has been devoted to development of examination of psychological profiles not just for police officers under trauma and stress, but also to identify certain character traits that would allow for the eventual best leadership of police forces. Much of what has been developed over the past few decades revolves around a temperament and ability to adapt quickly to rising and volatile situations (Hilal, et al., 2017).

However, there has been a paradigm shift in the relationship between the police and the community it serves, and law enforcement entities need a reassessment of the people they need for these different services to be rendered. In recent months, the community being served is demanding evolutionary change in how law enforcement enforces the law and delivers those needed services (Communities United for Police Reform, 2020). Other major metropolitan departments are facing extreme budget cuts or being disbanded altogether (Associated Press, 2020).

Social change is happening and there is a need to provide information to the ranks of law enforcement officials to meet these changing demands. With reduced budgets will come less officers on the streets and those officers should be of the highest quality. There

is a need not to just identify those traits, but also identify traits of those officers considered high performers.

Another area that seems to be lacking is establishment of a concise and consistent set of criteria for evaluation of what truly defines a quality peace officer. Each agency, whether it be United States Customs and Border protection operations along the border with Mexico, or a three-officer department in a small town in Iowa, will all have their own criteria. A critical component of developing that evaluation process is identifying and establishing the character traits that are consistently present in low and high performing officers (Government Accountability Office, 2018).

Dr. Robin Inwald has developed personality inventories related to police emotional intelligence or suitability for employment along with other researchers such as Dr. Eric Ostrov (Inwald, 1988). This work can be refined to meet today's needs. Dr. Inwald is the author of the Inwald Personality Inventory (IPV) and an updated version Inwald Personality Inventory – 2 (IPV-2). They are standardized tests to identify traits and personality variances, both of which are used extensively in the assessment of law enforcement candidates (Inwald & Shusman, 1984). Dr. Ostrov is a licensed clinical psychologist who holds a doctorate in forensic psychology and is also a practicing attorney. In addition to his work conducting hundreds of psychological assessments related to litigation, he focuses on identification of law enforcement traits and the development of psychological screening standards for police applicants (Ostrov, 2013)

Dr. Ostrov's work includes assisting in the development of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) specifically designed for measurements for law enforcement officers and candidates (Grossman, et al., (1990).

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to research sustained, high performance, and results oriented federal law enforcement agents working with United States Customs and Border Protection along the U.S.-Mexico border in McAllen, Texas, in an effort to identify common character traits. The central phenomena are determining whether high performance can be predicted through study and examination of the officer's character, world view, and life experiences.

The intent of this body of research is to find those predictive characteristics and them to measure later performance with the eye towards recruitment and retention. At present, the identified participant pool is the United States Customs and Border Protection agents. There will be 15 to 20 biographic related interview studies and possible scenario reactions to delineate between the high-performance officers and others.

Background

The 2015 President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing revealed the need for trust between law enforcement agencies and the community as a core component to maintaining the strength of the United States. (Lum, et al., 2016). Law enforcement agencies have traditionally struggled to identify, hire, and retain the best candidates for the job of police officer. Border enforcement agencies suffer the same challenge.

Identifying the characteristics of high performers has been a continuous challenge for those who hire, train, and supervise, especially for the job of peace officer (Detrick et al., 2016; Inwald, 1984).

The literature review conducted as part of this study revealed ongoing efforts by researchers in the field, but work is needed to enhance and add to that research. Existing research that has previously identified character traits in police officers identified character traits in police officers is insufficient to meet the new demands for officers who possess compassion, open-mindedness, sensitivity, courtesy, patience, and decisiveness. Police agencies require a mechanism to identify officers and candidates who possess these and other traits, and possibly more importantly, those who do not. Moreover, there is a disconnect between what appears on the standard employee performance evaluations and the true measures of an agent's performance for things such as promotion and training opportunities (Government Accountability Office, 2018).

Walden Library databases, Google, Google Scholar, and Psych net were searched using term as police or law enforcement. I then joined the search with leadership, performance, standard, excel, exceed, morale, substandard, fail and others. One dissertation was found that addresses the performance of investigators through the prism of confirmation bias (Wallace, 2016). The Walden University student conducted a narrative study, interviewing investigators searching to determine the effect of confirmation bias in criminal investigative decision making (Wallace, 2016).

Other literature is available to researchers that speaks about job performance and training and the substance of what we seek (Mourtgos, et al., 2020). This will allow

recruiters to target culturally diverse people who come from common job training or life experiences, or worldviews (Weiss, 2010). If common denominators are available in the form of experiences in life, then recruiters can better predict those candidates that would make more appropriate employees in the future (Keech, et al., 2020). This will also allow recruiters avoid hiring those who may require more intensive or a different type of training (Gibbs, et al., 2020).

The gaps identified in previous research are finding those traits amongst the officers considered to be the higher performers, also the need to reevaluate the work done previously to update the traits that fit the new demands society has placed on law enforcement.

Framework

Various forms of trait theory have been developed over the years by the study of psychologists trying to better understand the personality of humans (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). Defining and labeling character traits are important because a researcher can identify certain reactions to prompts that determine the behavior pattern of an individual (Hiriyappa, 2018). These traits generally are consistent throughout the lifetime of the person. The study will also examine the applicability and usefulness of whole trait theory (WTT) and self-determination theory (SDT) in identifying those desired traits. WTT serves as a model of character traits identifiable when people react to different situations (Jayawickreme, et al., 2019). SDT observes how people react to a given situation to determine if the reaction is self-motivated and self-determined (Prentice, et al., 2019).

Developed in large part by Gordon Allport in the 1920s, the idea was to develop a list of certain elements within the character of a person that consistently drove much of their interactions with society (Allport, 1927). The concept of traits and the definition of character traits became an important component in later personality studies (Sturm et al., 2017). Some of these personality traits are the avoidance of harm, someone that is prone to be shy and uncertain; perfectionism, where a person must have everything a precise and exact way; agreeability, where they are much more cooperative and trusting, or obsession, where the person has the character trait of becoming fixated on one thing and inflexibility. All of these are examples of some of the patterns of behaviors given to the concept of traits (Goodwin, 2015).

In addition to the theories of personality traits, the trait theory of leadership that has developed that relate specifically to leadership and success including intelligence driven decisiveness, trustworthiness, and even creativity (Nichols, 2016). These are important points in behavior and understanding that for example, someone with self-confidence is more likely to display that self confidence in a moment of crisis and other people are more willing to follow that individual. That is partially what constitutes a good leader (Browning, 2018).

Research Question

What is the role of personal lived experiences and world view in the professional achievements of border officers?

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study will primarily use a narrative inquiry to obtain data that will be derived from a structured interview consisting of roughly 20 questions. The questions are focused on discovering the life and professional background of a border enforcement agent, as well as their current views on society, politics, and certain issues surrounding the job.

The narrative inquiry is aligned with other sections of this study, including the research question and the purpose of the study. The common characteristics or traits related to the world view and outlook of each one of these officers should provide a specific pattern and categories allowed to arrange the result responses.

Possible Types and Sources of Data

My professional background includes over 20 years working for the United States Customs Service, Customs and Border Protection, primarily along the U.S.-Mexico border south of McAllen, Texas and the US Navy. I plan to contact the senior managers of the port of entry to select 12 to 20 officers who will participate in the study. As an alternative, if management within the agency disapproves of the study, the local employee union can be approached for those very same officers as union members to participate in the same study. If that were to fail, there are fraternal organizations that consist of current and former law enforcement officers, although not border enforcement agents specifically, but officers in the Texas area, such as the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA).

Limitations, Challenges, and/or Barriers

No ethical issues, other than privacy and anonymity of the officers involved and the process of gaining access, have been identified to date. In the instance this does become an issue, Walden supplies tools and resources to identify and address those challenges on a sustained basis. The validity challenges include an intuitive understanding of possible expectations of responses. The interviews and questions from the study will be recorded to guard against any influence on responses from participants or others. It is important to capture the verbatim statements so that there is no researcher's understanding and experience that influences the outcome of the responses. Next, because of the recent challenges with law enforcement, there can be an emotional connection between researchers, the participants, and the job that they perform. It is important to the outcome of the study that researchers do not influence those responses with passion. Therefore, researchers must be mindful throughout all processes at all points of the study that potential bias be monitored and avoided. Another limitation is an agent's reluctance to be completely forthright as they still may not be certain sure how the information will be used, or if it will damage their career. Researchers must be clear in relaying that the study is completely anonymous and that answers will be safeguarded from any person in the agency.

This study will help identify the characteristics and traits of law enforcement officers that have shown success in the field. It will also help identify traits for the new and recent demands made upon law enforcement by society.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Private industry leaders typically understand that company employees are extremely critical to their success (Pease & Lai, 2015). Strong companies understand their employees both in the workplace and outside the workplace (Morris et al., 2015). Law enforcement is similarly situated. Understanding rank and file employees and officers is one challenge, but understanding the top performers is another (Hilal & Densley, 2015). Law enforcement is a difficult job to recruit for (Koslicki, 2020). Among the many reasons for this is the prominent perception of low pay and low of appreciation from the public (Koslicki, 2020). Given these challenges of law enforcement, the need to understand its employees is even more important (Koslicki, 2020).

Society has a consensus as to what they expect from their law enforcement officers, but the May 2020 death of George Floyd challenged that consensus, further complicating recruiting (Kurtz, 2020). Inside of the United States, demands to transform law enforcement activity have been an exceedingly dominant part of the national discussion (McCandless & McKay, 2020). The result has been decreased funding across-the-board for many law enforcement agencies (McCandless & McKay, 2020). Therefore, understanding the people currently working for the department and what constitutes a high performer is an even more critical component in the overall structure of managing the shrinking human resource (Samayeen, et al., 2020). It is imperative that police leadership attain a clear picture of their staff and personnel to better apply those with the top skills more efficiently (Gambler, 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative study is to interview select high-performance law enforcement agents within U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) along the U.S.-Mexico border. CBP is one of the largest law enforcement entities in the world, employing around 45,000 officers around the world (Government Accountability Office, 2018). The central phenomena of this research study are determining whether life experiences of these agents could be better identified, including some of the criteria for some of society's newer expectations. The intent of the body of this research is to identify those life experiences of high performing agents. The participant pool consists of U.S. Customs and Border agents who are currently serving along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The study will include conducting eight to ten biographic interviews and situational judgement scenarios. Law enforcement agencies are not immune to the requirements of maintaining an ethical and moral organization (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2017). Understanding the components of that organization from the top manager to the bottom employee is critical to achieving that requirement (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2017). This qualitative and phenomenological study does not need to be generalized into a larger body of potential recruits as the value of the standalone information will be of assistance to agencies that want to understand their agents and the ones they are hiring.

Some researchers identified character as an inherent trait for people as they move through life (Estroff-Marano & Yusim, 2018). Researchers are beginning to attribute character as something that is not just inherent, but also developed over a lifetime of experiences (Estroff-Marano & Yusim, 2018). Therefore, not only are internal issues in

the development of good character, but there are also external issues that help shape a person's moral character (Estroff-Marano & Yusim, 2018).

While this process was enlightening as to reveal several areas that can be significant to understanding how the world view and life experience of border enforcement agents can contribute to their work performance, they do not supply definitive reasons. However, even if the information cannot be used to apply across a broader universe of candidates, the value of understanding their own employees stands on its own merits.

Synopsis of Current Literature Reviewed

Psychologists have endeavored to build methods of analysis to assist law enforcement agencies with limited budgets to identify the most highly qualified candidates, and to train and retain those officers through character and personality trait assessments (Grossman et al., 1990). Experts in the field have developed several platforms to assess employment suitability, including those standardized tests that sometimes are required for law enforcement and other candidates (Emmerling, et al., 2012). These assessments can also be important parts of assisting in identifying the highest quality recruit (Emmerling, et al., 2012).

However, as indicated above, times have changed and the gap in literature reflects this. Society's agreement with authority for voluntary governance is dynamic and fluid, and those characteristics may no longer be relevant (Sobo, et al., 2020). In 2021, society is demanding police exhibit more compassion, open-mindedness, patience, and a commitment to equal justice (Pillay, 2020). Much of the newer literature involves the

inability to address rapidly changing situations, such as “shoot don’t shoot” simulators (Pillay, 2020). There are few qualitative studies that explore lived experiences and the worldview of those officers, and even less that detail life experiences for officers who have self-identified as high performers (Padhy, et al., 2015).

The literature review process reveals areas that can help to understanding how the world view and life experience of border enforcement agents can contribute to their work performance. Much of this has been incorporated into recruiting schemes. Yet, it has not revealed if that correlates to high-performance, nor to the more recent demands for change in law enforcement.

Literature Search Strategy

The primary sources for obtaining peer reviewed documents related to this study are the Walden Library databases, Google, Google Scholar, Tor, and Psych net. Some of the terms included were police or law enforcement, then those were combined with leadership, measurements, performance, self-report, standard, excel, exceed, diversity, morale, substandard, fail, intelligence, family, religion, incident, and reasonable.

The recurring categories include judicial temperament, traits, situational judgment applications, moral character, religion & spirituality, guilt proneness, character, stress, deviant behavior, officer self-view, military experience, education, leadership, performance measurements, use of force, public perception, diversity, and the recruitment process.

The gaps identified in previous research are finding those traits amongst the officers considered to be the higher performers, as well as the need to reevaluate the work

done previously to update the traits that fit the new demands society has placed on law enforcement. An effective organization requires that the managers understand the people who comprise the everyday work force, and a truly healthy organization is comprised of subordinates who understand the people for whom they work (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2017). There is a gap in research of managers simply understanding the officers and others that are employed under their command.

Theoretical Foundation

Various forms of trait theory have been developed over the years by psychologists trying to better understand the personality of humans (Scheffer & Heckhausen, (2018). Defining and labeling character traits are important because a researcher can identify certain reactions to prompts that determine the behavior pattern of an individual (Hiriyappa, 2018). These traits generally are consistent throughout the lifetime of the person. The study will examine the applicability and usefulness of WTT and SDT in identifying those desired traits. WTT serves as a model of character traits identifiable when people react to different situations (Jayawickreme et al., 2019).

WTT was originally developed to understand how a person reacts in a specific situation and identifying character traits in what may dictate those reactions. WTT uses inherent traits and social cognitive elements to explain the person's reaction (Prentice, et al., 2019). Whole trait theory seems to be applicable to this study based on some of the recurring literature review related to situational judgement (Jayawickreme, et al., 2019). SDT observes how people react to a given situation to determine if the reaction is self-motivated and self-determined (Prentice, et al., 2019).

WTT was developed in large part by Gordon Allport in the 1920s (Allport, 1927). The idea was to develop a list of certain elements within the character of a person that consistently drove much of their interactions with society (Allport, 1927). The concept of traits and the definition of character traits became an important component in later personality studies (Sturm, et al., 2017). Some of these personality traits are the avoidance of harm, proneness to shyness or uncertainty; perfectionism, where a person must have everything a precise and exact way; agreeability, where they are much more cooperative and trusting; or obsession, where the person has the character trait of becoming fixated on one thing and inflexibility (Sturm, et al., 2017). All of these are examples of some of the patterns of behaviors given to the concept of traits (Goodwin, 2015).

In addition to the theories of personality traits, the trait theory of leadership that has been developed relates specifically to leadership and success including intelligence driven decisiveness, trustworthiness, and even creativity (Nichols, 2016). These are important points in behavior and understanding that for example, someone with self-confidence is more likely to display that self confidence in a moment of crisis and other people are more willing to follow that individual (Nichols, 2016). That is partially what constitutes a good leader (Browning, 2018).

Certain law enforcement applicant testing is strongly associated with social learning theory (Bandura, 2018). The simulation regulation process starts with attention actual modeled behavior (Bandura, 2018). Next, there is a focus on the ability to retain

that information, and the applicant must then be able to reproduce that learned and desired behavior (Bandura, 2018).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

The agreement of citizens to be policed by law enforcement is under challenge and great strain since the May 2020 death of George Floyd (Kurtz, 2020). The literature review here included over two hundred documents, but none filled the gap created by the new demand for police reform and need to understand how the worldview and life experience of officer effected performance. Some studies chosen are literature reviews, mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative. Some of the recurring themes identified include judicial temperament, traits, situational judgment applications, moral character, religion & spirituality, guilt proneness, character, stress, deviant behavior, officer self-view, military experience, education, leadership, performance measurements, use of force, public perception, and the recruitment process.

Judicial Temperament

One common theme found through the literature review could describe what is being demanded from police today. Some researchers have attempted to truly define judicial temperament. Judicial temperament is the demeanor, patience, and communication style of a judge presiding over a courtroom (Maroney, 2020). While illustrative and prone to provide a possible direction to answering questions related to the role life experiences and world view plays in a border enforcement agent's performance, these studies otherwise still fail to fill the gap that exists in a complete picture of that issue.

Judicial temperament is something that most judges would ascribe to as needing to display respect towards those that appear before the bench and those who often meet at the bench (Maroney, 2020). American Bar Association states that judicial temperament is, "compassion, decisiveness, open-mindedness, sensitivity, courtesy, patience, freedom from bias and commitment to equal justice" (Duffy, 2004). Others have described judicial temperament as neutral, decisive, respectful, and composed (Maroney, 2020).

Humility is a desired demeanor that people would expect from a judge when interacting professionally (Holmes, 1990). It is also something that could be a desirable part of a law enforcement officers' interaction with the community. Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Brett Kavanaugh was nominated to serve on the Supreme Court in 2018 several senators thought he lacked the proper judicial temperament (Kennedy, 2018). Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis is widely considered one of the justices who possessed the best temperament in the history of the Court, but when he was nominated, some stated he was utterly unqualified because of a lack of judicial temperament (Ross, 2009). Failure to exercise judicial temperament can be problematic, failing to appreciate positions of both parties, and the need to hold people accountable regardless of any bias (Kennedy, 2018). While not fully accounting for the role of life experience or worldview of the officers, these characteristics have been recurring categories during the literature review process.

Traits

The literature review revealed that there are aspects of the whole trait theory and other trait theories that can be examined to find links between these traits and behavior

such as aggression or compassion (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017). There was no information illustrating traits and behavior of law enforcement officers and job performance. That gap may be filled with a clearer understanding of how the life experiences of self-identified high achieving border enforcement agents contribute to their performance. There is a gap in determining if there is a link between traits and desirable behaviors. While illustrative and prone to provide a possible direction to answering questions related to the role life experiences and world view plays in a border enforcement agents performance, these studies otherwise still fail to fill the gap that exists in a complete picture of that issue.

WTT can sometimes be used to measure and understand the way that people react in each situation. This is important as inherent traits and why high-performance border enforcement agents react as they do can be better understood (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017).

Research related to traits and whether they are inherent to an individual is ongoing to expand understanding (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017). There is also information connected to character traits and world external influences (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017). For example, some previous studies sampling 284 Swedish participants have linked emotional or behavioral disorders to personality traits such as found in the five-factor model (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017). To continue making that connection, there have been studies that have shown empathy traits and personality factors do have a distinct connection, but only to at least two of the empathy traits (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017). The result of these efforts has been a strengthening of the

five-factor model for personality traits and the utilization of those models in diagnosis for certain personality disorders (Kajonius & Daderman, 2017).

The emergence of traits as a category in the literature review provides possible pathways to understand how the role of life experience or worldview of the high performing border agent, but a gap still exists in need of further study.

Situational Judgment Applications

The literature review revealed categories related to several studies dedicated to situational judgement and extended parallel process models. Situational judgement is where a person is confronted with a variety of possible circumstances to reveal their inherent instincts of reaction, but also the process of what their outcome will be (Jayawickreme, et al., 2019). There is extensive research indicating that situation judgement testing is a key indicator of future job performance (Jayawickreme, et al., 2019).

The long history of utilization of situation judgement testing with job applications applied to specific job centric scenarios has been important to the recruiting process for many years (Schlegel & Mortillaro, 2019). This is often used to identify the level of a candidate's practical intelligence for that job (Krumm, et al., 2015). There is growing use of predictor response process modelling. These are design capabilities to integrate situational judgement tests specifically into more specific existing case-based scenarios, that is then utilized for more realistic simulations (Chan & Schmitt, 2017).

Research related to situation judgement testing also exists in the field of law enforcement (Andersen, et al., 2016). There are several practical situations that can be

observed and tested, not just for new hires but also for police officers on the job (Andersen, et al., 2016). Researchers looking into military personnel that have survived and operated in particularly stressful situations can apply those same techniques for police (Andersen, et al., 2016). Given levels of training and preparedness, law enforcement can learn to enhance and refine their reactions to a situation (Andersen, et al., 2016). One researcher indicated that 64 participant officers were observed incorporating heart-focused breathing techniques to reduce stress while undergoing departmental training (Andersen, et al., 2016). Mentally preparing through self-induced focus training, yoga, or mediation can also prepare officers.

Although they do not necessarily address world view or life experience factors, other studies have shown when a candidate or officer is mentally prepared for a particular high stress situation, they will perform under the circumstances (McDaniel, et al., 2016). That research has focused previously on certain skills such as controlling breathing, certain relaxation techniques, and mental skill rehearsals - stimulating (McDaniel, et al., 2016). Findings revealed officers were more adept at dealing with the high stress situation if they were able to have advanced notice of more details of what they are entering (Chan & Schmitt, 2002). Therefore, the officers would visualize what they would expect and could rehearse out certain skills during those situations (McDaniel, et al., 2016).

Some law enforcement entities such as Department of Homeland Security, United States Customs and Border Protection use video based, job specific simulated scenarios to identify quality applicants (Cucina, et al., 2015). Applicants view job type scenarios

and are then asked questions at a later point to gauge recall and queries what the applicant believes was relevant and important (Cucina, et al., 2015). These video-based tests are different from viewing a photograph being asked what they think is important; it is recorded role playing of actors and demonstrating an ability to recall important information (Cucina, et al., 2015).

Situational judgement served as the backbone of a study of 53 participants examining connections between performance and officer fatigue (Blake & Cumella, 2015). This study indicated there is a significant negative impact on a police officer who lacks the proper sleep as it relates to decision making and reaction time in certain performance scenarios (Blake & Cumella, 2015). Those performance scenarios are generally related to studies that have measured the decision process especially in shoot do not shoot situations (Blake & Cumella, 2015). Officers with fluctuating schedules and varying times of sleep over extended periods have proven to perform much worse on these testing's than those who have a proper amount of rest (Blake & Cumella, 2015). These studies do not examine whether this lack of sleep also impacts other decision areas in the normal, day to day job capacity. (Blake & Cumella, 2015).

The prevalence of situational judgement studies related to work performance and law enforcement suggests prominent role in understanding the life experiences or worldviews of the high performing border agent, but a gap still exists in need of further study.

Moral Character

The literature review revealed studies related to instances where law enforcement displayed low moral character and other studies related to high character and quality decision making. The subject of moral character and the ethics of human beings is a topic that has been explored since the times of ancient Greek philosophers (Moore, 2015). Studies have addressed the ongoing disagreement among scholars of the role of ethics as an inherent character trait that predisposes the actions of a person, or of each situation bringing a new challenge (Moore, 2015). The role that ethics plays in work performance is an area that has also been studied (Moore, 2015). Researchers have come to understand that depending on the variance of the situation, even slight changes to the ethical make up of an actor could impact the outcome of the individual's response to the prompt (Moore, 2015). These differences are often because of the ethical stance of that person (Moore, 2015). Moreover, some basic ethical related character issues can dovetail into other areas being examined as compassion, honesty and ethically consistent behavior (Moore, 2015).

Another area of ethical behavior study examines bias in law enforcement and the influence on witnesses in investigations (Wallace, 2016). A law enforcement officer has a tremendous amount of power and sway in moving a particular investigative witness, into one direction or another. Participants consisting of 49 investigators were interviewed to determine if one reasonably believed law enforcement already had a suspect would steer and guide the witness into identifying that individual, even if doing so subconsciously (Wallace, 2016). This study narrowed the gap in literature by exposing factors common

to law enforcement that present challenges for ethical behavior to the actors as it is related to performance (Wallace, 2016).

While some do not address life experiences directly, they do examine the time pressure function stressors and performance (Prem, et al., 2017). Whether it be an investigation or is something more immediate, the pressure on law enforcement agents to address the crime at hand and close it out is a form of performance (Ask & Granhag, 2007). This time crunch is a stressor for law enforcement as is the abundance of workload (Prem, et al., 2017). Law enforcement agents have a never-ending task of preventing and investigating crimes (Prem, et al., 2017). Even as they are working diligently to solve one, there are other crimes being committed (Prem, et al., 2017). That build-up sometimes points an investigator or agent towards cutting corners (Prem, et al., 2017). The final issue addressed by researchers as for ethical behavior and high performance is the police culture that values officers who are decisive (Prem, et al., 2017). Those are the officers that are recognized and promoted because they are confident in their ability to make a quality decision (Prem, et al., 2017). However, bias can lead to an agent more reaffirming what they already believed as opposed to honestly undertaking an investigation (Prem, et al., 2017).

Aligned with the concept of character and ethical or moral behavior for law enforcement agents and on the job, productivity is development for the challenges of the job addressed through the family (Bertram, et al., 2011). Studies have found that almost every officer has either immediate family available to them through marriage and children, or extended family that serve as support structures (Bertram, et al., 2011). Those

support structures can be enhanced and used to assist the officer in quality decision making in ethical and morally challenging situations (Bertram, et al., 2011). The support structure helps to assume some of the burden of decisions and moral behavior of the officer and reinforces a climate of moral behavior.

As an example of when officers and families are unprepared for the challenges of the job was in New Orleans, Louisiana (Adams, & Stewart, 2015). After the flooding of New Orleans due to hurricane Katrina in August of 2005, a large percentage of first responders failed to report for duty and assist in their normal daily functions (Adams, & Stewart, 2015). A subsequent study of law enforcement agents in the Washington D.C. area shows that family preparedness and utilization of that support structure and a direct impact on the first responders' ability and desire to report for duty during a biological outbreak (Bertram, et al., 2011). In addressing the Officers' worldview and whether they would actually respond, it is important to understand that the individual officer generally will share a worldview with those immediate family members, and that worldview is often built upon the support structure that is now can be addressed by the law enforcement agency in particular (Bertram, et al., 2011).

Gaps were identified because none of the studies addressed external life influences and what role, if any, they may play in the performance of border enforcement agents. While illustrative and prone to provide a possible direction to answering questions related to the role life experiences and worldview plays in a border enforcement agents' performance, these studies otherwise still fail to fill the gap that exists in a complete picture of that issue.

Religion & Spirituality

Another constantly appearing category in the literature review was spirituality and religion. Law enforcement agents are often confronted with the most horrific experiences of any profession (Charles, et al., 2014). Over time, these experiences can impact the psyche of the border agent (Charles, et al., 2014). The impact can negatively affect their relationship with their families, as well as ongoing professional expectations (Charles, et al., 2014). It may be assumed that any person who is exposed to that type of daily trauma will deal with it similarly and not allow those experiences to negatively impact those relationships, but studies show that it is not necessarily true (Charles, et al., 2014). One study, involving in-depth interviews of thirty-three police officers from the United Kingdom, revealed that embracing religion and spirituality can work towards assisting a law enforcement officer to better deal with some of the more important and deeper challenges of the job or life (Charles, et al., 2014). Thus, religion and spirituality guide them through these unique challenges and is an important part of the threads of life experience (Charles, et al., 2014). Officers who are spiritually guided generally will not be the ones who are routinely calling in sick when they are not, not going through divorces that can impact job performance (Charles, et al., 2014).

While this study involving spirituality and religion in police officers allows for insight into the world view and life experiences of officers, it only begins to explain how those experiences affect job performance, if at all. Thus, further study is needed to fill that gap that exists in our understanding.

Guilt Proneness

Another area of life experience and inherent traits for officers that was a recurring category for the literature review is the concept of guilt proneness (Cohen, et al., 2012). To measure guilt proneness, researchers developed a Guilt and Shame Proneness scale from a previously existing Test of Self-Conscious Affect (“GASP”), (Cohen, et al., 2011). GASP has four specify constructs to measure guilt proneness and another twelve related issues (Cohen, et al., 2012). Through testing of 3,000 American participants, researchers have found that people who are prone to guilty feelings at a particular moment or guilty feelings over a period of time, are less likely to engage in bad behaviors that can affect the organization (Cohen, et al., 2012). Previous research attempted to identify predictors of guilt free behavior in situations where the person made decisions based on selfish reasons as opposed to moral quality reasons (Cohen, et al., 2012). In doing so, persons who are prone to guilt do not require as much supervision as those who lack that inherent trait (Cohen, et al., 2012). This is also known as moral accountability (Wang, 2020).

In the examination of guilt proneness as a possible determining factor of high-performance border agent life, we look to what researchers identify as guilt proneness. These factors include honesty, humility, gentleness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotionality, extroversion, openness to experience, and others (Cohen, et al., 2012). This concept of guilt proneness is important because tending to feel bad about doing something wrong means that in the long term, the employee’s honesty and accountability issues are much less likely to require absolute supervision (Cohen, et al, 2012). The

people who inherently feel bad from making mistakes or those who want to do more have an inherent integrity (Cohen, et al., 2012). Researchers identified some of the correlation of guilt proneness to past issues in the person's background (Cohen, et al., 2012).

Continuing with guilt proneness, there can be correlations between employee performance and whether the individual had ever been fired from a job or receive some type of disciplinary action (Cohen, et al., 2016). Using some of the same "GASP" scale measures, 155 participants job applicants were asked if they had ever utilized illegal drugs, were ever involved in offences in driving a motor vehicle or had ever had any type of legal issues (Cohen, et al., 2016). They further measured out the participants by age, and ability to solve problems, and whether they tended to make bad decisions, and even the depth of their vocabulary (Cohen, et al., 2016). Each trait showed some indication of a predictor of job performance. Those with higher ages had more of a conscious approach, more mature towards the job, while those with high problem-solving skills were generally better at the job (Cohen, et al., 2016).

Examination of guilt proneness can be a building block category for further study into the world view and life experiences of border enforcement agents, and how those experiences effect job performance, if at all. Standing alone, it does not fill the gap in research needed to answer that basic inquiry.

Character

Another concept category that arose consistently throughout the literature but differed from guilt proneness was character. In some studies, researchers have identified

other inherent character as a commonality that could be indicators of an employee that would be consistently dependable over time (Cohen, 2017). Each of these traits are inherent to the applicant and could serve as measurable guides on deciding whether that person would be a quality employee (Cohen, 2017). In this one study, character was found to be defined by three traits: honesty-humility, conscientiousness, and guilt proneness, the first two being part of six dimensions of previously identified personality model (Cohen, 2017). Moreover, some of these traits point to the recurring concept of leadership as being another clear indicator of someone's future performance (Cohen, 2017). The idea being that a person who is looked to by their group for cues on how to act in each situation is probably also the same type of person who would be a moral employee (Cohen, 2017).

Other researchers conducting extensive literature reviews on character have asserted that the concept of quality decision-making is something that is part of the person's personality (Fleeson, et al., 2014). What would make a person behave in a fair or compassionate manner is something that is situational and is based on that inherent morality (Fleeson, et al., 2014).

A further exploration of character and is found in the communication between two people; the border enforcement agent and the person that they are encountering (Goodwin, 2015). A person with a high-quality moral compass possesses a unique ability to identify people who do not have the same character, according to some researchers (Goodwin, 2015). That ability to detect an individual with bad character is something that would be critical to the performance of a border enforcement agent (Goodwin, 2015).

Character seems to be an important component in the actions and activities of people, and there appears to be some evidence that world view and life experience play a role in the development of character. This is a possible component category can be used to study if performance of border agents is linked to their life experience. This gap is also important in border agencies better understanding their agents.

Stress

During the literature review, there was a brief, yet important appearance of the impact of stress on law enforcement agents. Law enforcement is a remarkably high stressed behavioral employment situation (Keech, et al., 2020). Studies have shown a direct correlation between problematic high risk call response for officers and cumulative stress (Jetelina, et al., (2020). For decades, officers have dealt with seriously violent and deadly situations. Not all officers deal with the stress in the same manner (Keech, et al., 2020). Minimizing the stress relation on the job can overall positively impact not just the officer as an individual, but the organization (Charles, et al., 2014). Inherently, a person who does deal with stress well, will be in a better situation to be a high performer over a longer period than someone who does not (Keech, et al., 2020).

Daily stressors of the job are important parts of life experience and can shape the world view of border enforcement agents (Jetelina, et al., (2020). The unpredictability and rapidly changing expectations of police work only add to the accumulation of stress levels (Jetelina, et al., (2020). The civil unrest and other events surrounding the death of George Floyd in March of 2020 have undoubtedly increased the stress levels of police officers (Galovski, et al., 2018). How those stressors do or do not affect work

performance of those officers considered to be 'elite' remains unknown. This gap is also important in border agencies better understanding their agents.

Deviant Behavior

Researchers who have sought to identify deviant behavior in the workplace have also identified that moral character and moral based behaviors are key indicators not just of success, but for employees that avoid problematic situations (Kim & Cohen, 2015). Some of the key concepts related to workplace deviance include the models of personality structure, such as conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability but also guilt proneness and moral identity internalization (Kim & Cohen, 2015). All these concepts work towards a better understanding of a highly moral person as an employee, but also conversely an immoral person as a bad employee (Kim & Cohen, 2015).

While not 'deviant' behavior, so much as ethical missteps, one dissertation was found that addresses the performance of investigators through the prism of confirmation bias (Wallace, 2016). The Walden University student conducted a narrative study, interviewing investigators searching to determine the effect of confirmation bias in criminal investigative decision making (Wallace, 2016). Confirm bias is a naturally occurring issue among investigators, collecting evidence to support a conclusion. However, the process is not complex and is recognizable, thus can be guarded against and can be controlled to avoid the associated wrongful convictions (Wallace, 2016).

Understanding the reasons behind deviant behavior, or ethical missteps of officers is an important part of avoiding conduct challenges. Filling the gap with a better

understanding of the world view and life experiences of officers can help to bridge that need.

Officer Self View

The literature review revealed an important category in officers self-view or self-perception, especially as it relates to performance. Consistently, studies showed differences in responses to study questions when posed directly or as part of a self-report.

One study involved studies that examined the thoughts and ideas of performance from the officers and employees themselves, but differentiated between gender (García-Buades, et al., 2015). While diversity serves as its own distinct category, self-perception of work performance is a standalone metric. Focusing on research that would include an officer's self-view is an important part of understanding the difference between a high and low achiever (García-Buades, et al., 2015). In one study, five thousand officers over 30 municipal departments were requested to participate, with 148 male officers and 69 female officers providing scaled answers to 40 job performance categories (Kakar, 2002). The results showed that generally, male and female officers work well together and agree on how to become a successful officer (Kakar, 2002).

One area where the genders differ in self-perception was in supervisory responsibilities as well as administrative skills (García-Buades, et al. 2015). There were also significant differences in job satisfaction with women having much less job satisfaction than their male counterparts (García-Buades, et al., 2015). Some of those questions look at the individual's ability to take the right action whether they could manage extra work, accept specific suggestions from others, quality decision making,

working within deadlines, satisfaction with the department overall, knowledge of the law, stress, witnessing in court and knowledge of department rules (García-Buades, et al., 2015).

These two important findings on self-perception and gender differences are important points, especially given the diversity of law enforcement. Border enforcement agents who may or may not be high performers will reflect many of these findings and filling the gap of this knowledge.

Military

In 2014 there was a shooting involving an unarmed black teenager by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri (Koslicki, 2020). Shortly thereafter, there were number of riots and those riots were generally race based. There are many police officers who have prior military service and almost every department in the country utilizes a quasi-military command structure. After the riots themselves, more studies were focused on whether the police should concentrate on a military type of vision of governance of their duties. Researchers found that while there are some quality efforts that can provide for a good foundation, it is better that a department does not focus on military style structures and especially tactics. Military and law enforcement ultimately has a completely different set of responsibilities (Koslicki, 2020).

In understanding the life experiences and world views of border enforcement agents, military experience or immersion into the quasi-military command structure can affect work performance. The results of military influence on policing have been mixed and it appear more that the conflicting types of missions may have a negative influence

over policing (Klein, et al., 2015). Even something as seemingly innocuous as police receiving surplus military protective and operational equipment could have negative effects on the community (Gunderson, et al., 2021). A more comprehensive understanding of this category will allow for managers and agencies to better understand their agents.

Education

The effort to examine the life experience of a law enforcement officer and how it plays into the performance of that officer can sometimes be tied to whether the officer has college education and none (Paoline III, et al., 2015). One seminal study, critical to the field, surveyed police administrators nationwide on the value of higher education on their workforce. Researchers solicited 205-line officers from local departments to rate their own performance and level of education (Krimmel, 1996). Findings indicated that a college education for a police officer is beneficial as they tend to be less authoritative and generate fewer complaints and injuries (Krimmel, 1996). More importantly they are less likely to be assaulted and they make more arrests indicating a more effective day (Krimmel, 1996).

This is indicative that a college education provides more of a sense of professionalism (Paoline III, et al., 2015). Those links involve the idea that education equates to professionalism, and professionalism is, “education is related to professionalism, educated police professionals should have; more support for a service function; independence from supervision and more discretion; autonomy in decision making; greater value on ethical conduct; greater support for lateral entry; less support

for maintaining organizational secrets, and value placed on efficiency” (Krimmel, 1996, p. 87). Professionalism means that they are more independent from supervision and exercise discretion more carefully (Paoline III, et al., 2015). Those who have a higher degree of professionalism tend to value ethical conduct, demonstrate weakened support for maintaining organizational secrets, and tend to place increase value on efficiency and effectiveness (Paoline III, et al., 2015).

Researchers found officers with higher educations rated themselves higher on self-reports (Paoline III, et al., 2015). Those who were holders of degrees of higher learning rated themselves higher than those who did not have those degrees in areas such as, “knowledge of the law, preparedness for court, quality of work assignments, level of problem-solving ability, level of arrest analysis, level of confidence with supervisors, quality of written work, quality of oral presentations, self-image, arrest report quality, investigative report quality and interpersonal relationships” (Krimmel, 1996, p. 92). It is unknown if this means that officers with higher degrees are better performers, but they certainly seem to be persons of higher self-efficacy. (Paoline III, et al., 2015).

Education and achievement of advanced degrees are both large parts of a person’s life experiences and activity that shapes their worldviews. Agencies who seek to better understanding of their people need to fill the gap in the connection between education and performance. It is clear from the studies, that education is beneficial to police performance.

Leadership

Leadership was a recurring category in the literature review, even overlapping with other categories. While leadership can be a trait, it can also be part of life experiences such as being a shift team leader or playing team sports that may be part of what constitutes a high-performance border agent.

Leadership was a recurring category in the literature review, even overlapping with other categories. While leadership can be a trait, it can also be part of life experiences, and that may be part of what constitutes a high-performance border agent.

Leadership is often defined as an inherent quality that is difficult to teach but is one that exists throughout history as an important component to the survival and advancement of our species (Bennis & Thomas, 2020). Schools such as the United States Military Academy or the Naval Academy strive to produce students' leaders every day. Leadership is an area that has been studied extensively, and certain studies work to identify the type of leadership which helps an organization to become more creative and innovative (Bennis & Thomas, 2020). Persistent questions for those in command who identify leadership qualities in their people are, 'to what degree of autonomy should a leadership role require? What challenges are involved in managing the people who possess these leadership qualities? And how to maximize for organizational and individual growth for those leadership qualities?

Further studies of leadership related to special operations military have identified other traits that found in identified leaders and superior performers (Kuronen & Huhtinen, 2015). Those involve greater self-awareness, self-regulated positive behaviors,

and self-development (Kuronen & Huhtinen, 2015). There is trust and integrity in identified leaders, with researchers concluding that self-regulated positive behavior is a critical component of leadership in law enforcement (Kuronen & Huhtinen, 2015). Some other identifying characteristics discovered through self-report questionnaires as well as interviews with team members are emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in dangerous situations (Schriesheim, 2006).

Another study queried 224 special operations military members found that great leadership stems from both psychological capabilities, a heightened self-awareness, and exhibiting positive behaviors (Arnatt & Beyerlein, 2014). A large component of leadership was found to be instilling trust in others and others trusting you through showing integrity (Arnatt & Beyerlein, 2014). Leadership also involves emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to deal with deadly situations, and the true leaders are also great team members (Arnatt & Beyerlein, 2014).

Law enforcement efforts are often exceedingly difficult as well as stressful and traumatic (Keech, et al., 2020). Sometimes there are some stressful events that can negatively impact a career as well as the life of officers (Keech, et al., 2020). The ability of a leader in a law enforcement capacity mirrors the military challenges (Arnatt & Beyerlein, 2014). Studies show leaders overcome those events, most often surviving and even thriving (Arnatt & Beyerlein, 2014). This does not mean there are not lingering mental challenges for law enforcement officers that require therapy and professional services.

Other studies related to leadership have found that “servant leaders” are leaders that tend to have “hard edges” as they have lived through difficult experiences and have surpassed many tests (Badger, 2019). Servant leaders have a developed resiliency because they have honed themselves through exercise of physical, mental, social, and even spiritual training (Badger, 2019). At the same time, leaders are expected to be flexible and adaptable to the changing environment (Badger, 2019). Leaders teach others by exhibiting strength and flexibility at the same time at the same time, which improves team members abilities in managing a crisis. (Badger, 2019). Some of the behaviors of leaders were identified as successful stress management, creative problem solving, solving difficult work situations, completing assignments, interpersonal adaptability, cultural adaptability, and physically oriented adaptability (Badger, 2019).

A study at the United States Military Academy at West Point graduates in 2013 provided more insight into the category of leadership (Bartone, et al., 2013). Researchers sought to monitor “psychological hardiness” of the 694 participants from when they began school, through three years after graduation (Bartone, et al., 2013). They utilized Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, and a composite indicator of leader potential (Whole Candidate Score) with the Pulakos adaptability taxonomy as scaled measures (Bartone, et al., 2013, p. 200). The results show that leadership involves a process of influencing and motivating others to achieve these common goals (Bartone, et al., 2013). There are certain elements that are required of leaders, such as self-awareness and actively seeking to be optimistic especially in front of those who you wish to shape and change (Bartone, et al., 2013). Leaders must invest attention in the personal lives of their employees and

strive to maintain balance (Bartone, et al., 2013). Leadership theories have common personality characteristics (Bartone, et al., 2013).

Emotional intelligence appears enough times during the literature review that it is eligible to be a standalone category, but it was mostly linked to leadership. Leadership challenges exist in the law enforcement community, and one area of leadership that has been identified essential to the development and success of leaders is emotional intelligence (Campbell, Jr., 2011). In 2011, a Walden University student sampled 139 of 1,214 regional members of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police, asking a series of survey questions about law enforcement leadership styles and emotional intelligence (Campbell, Jr., 2011). The results show emotional intelligence is important to effectiveness and the impact it has on the employees (Campbell, Jr., 2011), (Browning, 2018). Participants responded that leaders confront dynamic challenges with an ability to adapt, facing those challenges with emotional intelligence for desired outcomes (Campbell, Jr., 2011).

Other studies have focused on leadership as a human resources issue (Campbell & Smith, 2010). Talent management is the effort for an organization to identify and recruit the most valuable employees for the future success of that organization, and leadership is part of the assessment process (Campbell & Smith, 2010). This leadership pipeline can identify those who are most likely to succeed and manage the challenges of the job (Campbell & Smith, 2010). One interesting finding was that 94% of the self-identified high-performing employees are aware that they are high potential leaders (Campbell & Smith, 2010).

Researchers studying leadership have identified emotional intelligence as, "... the ability to monitor one's and other's emotion, to discriminate among them, and to use to information to guide one's thinking and action" (Kumar, 2019, p. 6). People who self-report high levels of emotional intelligence had higher levels of self-awareness and ultimately were found to be higher performers in work environments (Kumar, 2019). A significant finding shows the connection between emotional intelligence and job performance is leadership (Kumar, 2019). This may be because effective leaders are better able to build and maintain relationships within all levels of an operation (Kumar, 2019).

Another element of leadership discovered in the literature review is that the rank and file often trust people who they can relate to on a personal basis (Choi, 2018). People who are willing to get in and do the work personally oftentimes gets the respect of those who do the work daily (Choi, 2018). It is part of building an elite team of workers who recognize the role of leadership in the group and that leadership is one that must be earned (Choi, 2018).

Another revelation from this literature review showed that through the trait theory of leadership, most strong leaders are self-identified (Colbert, et al., 2012). Additionally, those that are more successful are those who have a strong personality comprising of leadership traits (Colbert, et al., 2012). Previous studies use the 5-factor model of personality in examining the relationship between the leadership capability and the individual themselves (Colbert, et al., 2012). This involves identifying traits such as being extroverted (Colbert, et al., 2012). People who exhibit conscientiousness openness

and emotional stability are generally those who have that characteristic and trait (Colbert, et al., 2012).

According to some studies, the most effective measures of leadership and identification of leadership comes from multi-source feedback (Dayan, et al. 2008). The literature review revealed that managerial or subordinate self-ratings have been identified as quality places to identify leadership skills (Dayan, et al. 2008). Those researchers also found that defining leadership can be elusive because measurements are difficult to identify (Dayan, et al., 2008).

Like emotional intelligence, self-awareness appears enough to be a standalone category for analysis, yet it too appears most often in conjunction with leadership. One study indicated that self-awareness is a critical component of being high performer (Tjan, 2012). A leader and high performer understand that a quality performance delivery is an important part of delivery of expectations (Tjan, 2012). In law enforcement is where one officer may effect arrests of ten people that had warrants or small amounts of marijuana, compare that to a high performer that may arrest 10 people for armed robberies. What effort is more impactful on society, thus which is more desirable? Self-aware officers understand the distinction (Tjan, 2012). The next issue is identifying that the high performer and the people that are self-aware often continuously develop their skills and are fearless in making decisions on the job (Tjan, 2012). They ask for unconditional input from others in how to make things better but remain self-directed and communicating with others around them especially in moments of high stress (Tjan, 2012).

The literature review has revealed that leadership in relation to emotional intelligence and self-awareness appear to be especially important parts of any study of job performance. How those components apply to the role that life experiences and world view plays in a border enforcement agent's performance remains unanswered.

Performance Measurements

It is routine for applicants to law enforcement to reveal their life history as part of suitability determinations, and those revelations include life or work experiences (Gallo, 2011). Generally, the applicant has been weighed and measured against standardized criteria to determine their level of performance in other jobs (Gallo, 2011). That work performance is an integral part of understanding the nature of the person on the job (Gallo, 2011). There are a wide variety of comprehensive academic studies related to work performance (Gallo, 2011).

Studies have found high performers work hard, but it may be difficult to detect these efforts (Gallo, 2011). High performers do all the required tasks to ensure that they have fulfilled their responsibilities (Gallo, 2011). They do not wait to be told what to do and they often work very quickly (Gallo, 2011). Work high performers seek to learn as much of their profession as they possibly can, and they look for new ways to do the job (Gallo, 2011). At the same time the highest performers know how good they are and often will not work for less money and will not be treated as the same as low performers (Gallo, 2011). Sometimes they can be management challenges (Gallo, 2011). When dealing with high performers you are often getting more feedback from that employee than you are from others especially concerning difficult assignments. The high performer

often does not like working with people who are not confident at working at that same level (Gallo, 2011). The high performer also has a vested interest in working with less supervision and even completing projects that managers sometimes themselves have found difficult (Gallo, 2011).

However, simply working harder does not equate to being a high performer (Gallo, 2011). Spending time and energy chasing after nothing and not knowing when to relinquish pursuit is the telltale sign of a low performer who does not understand the requirements of the job (Gallo, 2011). The lower performers, even though they can spend boundless energy, they do not focus on things that they can control (Gallo, 2011). They often end up using energy of those around them without rewards (Gallo, 2011). A low performer is reacting to things around them as opposed to making things happen (Gallo, 2011). They allow other people to determine what their values are and sometimes find themselves unhappy with the results of their work (Gallo, 2011).

Understanding the mechanics of job performance measurements is something expected for border enforcement agents, and they have certainly played a role in shaping the world view of those agents. A gap does exist in connecting the performance measurement issues identified in the literature review and actual performance.

Use of Force

A component of the job requirement for any law enforcement is appropriate understanding and application of use of force (Ariel, et al., 2015). A review of literature concerning the use of force was conducted with two subtopics, when the use of power is necessary and legitimate. Law enforcement agents have experience with the use of force

either before, during or after their employment and there are numerous studies available for literature review concerning the use of force and the officers or agents involved. A key element of being a law enforcement agent is the use of power to quell disturbances and to enforce peace (Ariel, et al., 2015).

One common term associated with use of force in legal studies as well as law enforcement involves reasonableness (Ariel, et al., 2015). In instances of the use of force, even to the point of deadly force, whether that force was used reasonably is a primary concern (Ariel, et al., 2015). For understandable reasons, the concept of reasonableness can often be very subjective (Ariel, et al., 2015). One study used body worn camera and instances of use of force to try to ascertain those levels of reasonable use of force (Ariel, et al., 2015). The study focused on the use of force on situations and the individual psychological situation of the officer, the organization and its dynamics of encounters involving those being policed (Ariel, et al., 2015).

Part of that study revealed that certain psychological theories involving the use of force indicate that some officers have inherent psychological traits that identify a consistent pattern of resorting to force more swiftly compared to other police officers who are more likely to not react. (Ariel, et al., 2015). The results vacillate between whether those officers are aggressive and tough minded through a 16-personality factor questionnaire (Ariel, et al., 2015). That same study attempted to link those character traits to connections in the minds of the officer to the police organization itself to possibly uncover whether its officer would be more likely to want to protect fellow officers in remain silent when witnessing abuses (Ariel, et al., 2015).

Aggressiveness and use of force examinations are important part of understanding the officers under command. In most law enforcement agencies, there is a “shoot / don’t shoot” training that separates a first day trainee reactions to prompts of danger to that of seasoned veterans (Davies, 2015). This mechanism measures the aggressiveness of initial responses and the speed with which an officer can process information before reacting (Davies, 2015). We do not know the role played in rookie officers’ reactions. A gap exists in studying whether incidents of use of force have changed an officer’s world view and life experiences and whether these have impacted job performance.

Public Perception

Public perception of police, their training methods and their work was a prominent response category in the literature review. It is an area that provides numerous studies to gauge the external impressions of police on what the public considers to be good or bad policing.

There naturally exists a tense relationship between those being policed and those policing (Abbey-Lambertz & Erbentraut, 2015). Given the events of spring of 2020 – riots and protests over police abuses related to the death of George Floyd – that relationship is strained more than ever (Dreyer, et al., 2020). For these and other reasons, there are calls for reform and restructuring of law enforcement (McCandless & McKay, 2020). There has been civil unrest based on incidents of police abuses; 1935 Harlem; 1943 Detroit; 1965 Watts; 1980 Miami and others (Carter, 2016). After learning lessons from past police related protests, many agencies are cognizant of the mood of the public and seek to rebuild that trust and bond once again with those in the community (Abbey-

Lambertz & Erbentraut, 2015). Police are trying to change that narrative from the inside (Abbey-Lambertz & Erbentraut, 2015). They recognize that some officers often have jaded views of the community because of negative experiences, but that just means change is more important (Abbey-Lambertz & Erbentraut, 2015).

Like law enforcement, private industries seek ways to measure what productivity is in administrative and managerial fields. One area of measures is adaptability to external change (van Engen, 2017). Private industry often looks to customer satisfaction and other type of external surveys to gauge how the public perceives the work being performed, especially in the course of change (van Engen, 2017). Law enforcement is subject to the same pressures (van Engen, 2017). Law enforcement is exposed to change and change often causes stress on all employees (Abbey-Lambertz & Erbentraut, 2015). This is especially true of constant changes which causes even more stress (van Engen, 2017). Private industry researchers have identified a phenomenon known as “general policy alienation” (van Engen, 2017, Page 513). General policy alienation is one method that workers use cope with stress of change (van Engen, 2017). Essentially, general policy alienation is when workers ignore new polices and directives (van Engen, 2017). Applied to law enforcement, this could explain why some forces adapt to the new demands of modern policing and some do not.

Other studies have outlined efforts to track the use of awards and other public recognition systems to enhance and measure performance (Federman, 2020). Often, those awards are initiated because of public recognition (Federman, 2020). In the desire to determine if police agencies are meeting the needs of the community, the same type of

studies have been applied to law enforcement (Federman, 2020). One key question is if good performance is being recognized (Federman, 2020). Previous studies are not clear that internal or public rewards impact performance, or are just reflective of real measures (Federman, 2020).

While public perception is revealed as a category for methods of measuring performance and adaptability, it does not answer the fundamental probe of the role life experiences and world view plays in a border enforcement agents' performance. While certainly a component, these studies otherwise still fail to fill the gap that exists in a complete picture of that issue.

Diversity

Of interest in this literature review was the comparative nature of diversity. Diversity in law enforcement is an important component to successful public relations, as any department should reflect the public it serves in race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (Druart & De Corte 2012). This study used metrics such as crime clearance rates, developing partnerships with communities, regular meetings, citizen feedback, and other measures to evaluate performance (Federman, 2020). The researchers harvested data from ten California law enforcement agencies, produced over a period of seven years and over 3,000 data points (Federman, 2020). When drilled down to individual officer, sex of the officer was a discernable metric (Federman, 2020). The study did find there is a connection between performance, accountability, and genders with female officers trending towards a higher of accountability (Federman, 2020).

Police agencies have traditionally had difficulty in identifying quality candidates especially women and minorities (Gibbs, et al., 2020). Studies have shown that because women and minorities often do not associate with police officers, it is a distance between those groups and the police department who seeks them as possible officers (Gibbs, et al., 2020). The study outlines that people who had friends or families that were police officers are much more likely inclined to call police when needed (Gibbs, et al., 2020). This meant that until diversity hiring reflects the community at large, law enforcement will continue to suffer from these challenges (Gibbs, et al., 2020).

Police must reflect the community they serve, and some studies have explored how to maintain a level of quality of recruitment and achieve those diversity goals (Druart & De Corte, 2012). One method of study looks to the setting and achieving of specific goals as a measurement of success for candidate or employee and directly target those with those qualities (Druart & De Corte, 2012).

Having a diverse police force is only one part of police administration effectively managing the workforce and interacting with the community (Bury, et al., 2018). Understanding diversity and the cultural issues of those being policed are critical components to effective policing (Bury, et al., 2018). Literature is available to researchers that speaks to job performance and training that allow agencies to target culturally diverse candidates who come from common job training or life experiences, or worldviews (Bonner & Johnson, 2017). This is especially important for them to understand the role that diversity plays in the hearts and minds of the officers under command (Miles-Johnson, 2016). A gap does exist, however in the examination of the

part diversity and opinions of diversity play in an officer's world view and life experiences and whether these have impacted job performance.

Recruitment Process

There were studies that revealed the recruiting process as a consistent category topic. There is little consistency in how departments recruit, but examination of those processes may reveal germane information. Because there are new demands on police for better service, people have changed their view of police and hiring of police is also under review ever (Dreyer, et al., 2020). Previously, some researchers have studied to make a connection between the performance of law enforcement officers and the expectations by the community via community policing (Donovan, 2015). Community policing comes with challenges, such as the need for an officer from counselling someone to making a split-second decision on the use of force (Donovan, 2015). The ability to do so effectively means that and that selection and training for these officers is something that is extremely critical (Donovan, 2015). Part of the hiring practice now involves tearing down the barriers of communication between the police and the community and understanding that during the recruitment and hiring of officers that they seek to achieve those goals and those people have those qualities as well (Donovan, 2015).

In other efforts, government agencies will often conduct self-reviews or external examinations to determine if they are recruiting correctly (Government Accountability Office, 2018). In one such effort, the Government Accountability Office examined United States Customs and Border Protection efforts to recruit and retain officers, and coming strategies was asked to initiate an exit interview process to determine why

officers leave (Government Accountability Office, 2018). GAO examined the focus on centralized recruitment, established events, had resulted in increased applications. (Government Accountability Office, 2018). GAO examined CBP's efforts of hiring outside recruiting contractors and began a process to enhance recruitment data focused on reducing time of hiring and increasing the number of hires from a given pool of applicants (Government Accountability Office, 2018). While CBP has reduced its time-to-hire and made efforts to improve its hiring process for law enforcement officers, CBP officials have noted that the hiring process remains lengthy, which they said directly affected the agency's ability to recruit and hire for law enforcement positions (Government Accountability Office, 2018). Even with the changes, there appears to still have room for improvement (Government Accountability Office, 2018).

Recruitment has been identified as one of the most important parts of human resource work (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Some important theories emerge through studies related to recruits who withdraw their application before any decision to hire is every made (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Recruitment withdrawal and the reasons for it seem to have been studied little (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Just obtaining the information was part of the issue of studying the issue (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Social identity theory and the theory of planned behavior are two areas that have emerged to explain this phenomenon (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). The study merges portions of TPB and SIT to explain why people would withdraw from the hiring process once initiated (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Theory of planned behavior explains that people take a course of action that provides the maximum value for that person, including possibly finding a new job before

the hiring is complete (Griepentrog, et al., 2012). Social Identity Theory can be used to explain early withdraws based on the desire to disassociate with the organization where they applied (Griepentrog, et al., 2012).

Hiring the right people is critical, but hiring the wrong person is likely more critical to avoid for law enforcement than others because of the damages a single bad actor can inflict on the community (Hilal &Densley, 2015). Researchers in one study interviewed several law enforcement leaders for a list of qualifications for new recruits (Hilal &Densley, 2015). The responses involved, “unblemished character; high-quality work ethic; excellent communication skills; technical expertise; capacity to think independently and evaluate a situation; first-rate problem-solving aptitude; exceptional interpersonal skills; analytical and customer-service abilities; and common sense” (Hilal &Densley, 2015, p. 729). They also agreed that that people do not necessarily learn these qualities in schools or any type of training regimen (Hilal &Densley, 2015). Another key area identified was life experience (Hilal &Densley, 2015).

Some studies have identified signaling during interviews can be an important part of the selection process (Hilal, et al., 2017). Other researchers have examined efforts to reduce attrition and turnover as a mechanism to find the highest performers (Hilal & Litsey, 2019). The important take away from that study have been “leadership training, clear and transparent processes, permanent light-duty assignments, shift flexibility, improved morale, and more focus on personal wellness” (Hilal & Litsey, 2019).

This category does provide insight into our study as it provides some of the characteristics that law enforcement employers expect in high performers, there is a gap

that exists to identify what level of understanding exists or what gaps exist is to examine the actual recruitment process itself.

Constructs, variables, or concepts

The quest for the information sought in this study related to examining the worldview and life experiences of border enforcement agents and how that relates to performance is something that has been pursued for some time. While those exact and precise goals have not necessarily been the focus of study, that does not mean that researchers have not attempted to better understand the psyche of law enforcement and to determine how life experiences and worldview apply to performance. This literature review finds consistency with prior methodology and other methods of examination such as the long-time work of Dr. Robin Inwald and Dr Eric Ostrov (Inwald, 1988). Through the development of personal inventory battery examinations, the two research psychologists have sought to better understand the mental makeup of candidates for positions as law enforcement.

This research and literature study is of critical importance for two reasons. First, the new dynamic relationship between the police and those that are being policed demand a new review and fresh look at officers that are on the front lines every day. Secondly, even if no change were being demanded by the public that is served by law enforcement, any police agency would be of benefit to better understand their officers, especially their high-performance officers.

Through the examination of some of these key characteristics, this literature review provided researchers with great insight into much of the work that has been

performed to date. Even while the literature review did provide specific layers of understanding law enforcement and their performance and interaction with society, it also helped to establish the gap in the literature for examining the worldview and life experience of officers at how it applies to job performance.

Summary and Conclusions

As this literature review was conducted, multiple studies of different types of research projects were harvested for full review. Categories for each began to emerge based on the queries that were made in obtaining the documents. The recurring categories included judicial temperament. They also included human traits, situational judgments, and moral character. The officer's religion and spirituality are important categories for exploration. Also, the concepts of guilt proneness, inherent character, and deviant behavior become truly relevant large topics. An officer's character and self-view are also important components in understanding their life experiences. Also relevant are issues such as military experience and education are also categories that play a role in understanding border enforcement agents. Leadership was a very prominent category for all parts of not just law enforcement but also private industry. Finally, there were public perception, the recruitment process, use of force and performance measurements all assist in helping to explain performance between different officers.

Each of these topics provide a level of precise detail as to what would be expected to exist in the mind of a law enforcement agent conducting their duties on a routine basis. There are other topics such as deviant behavior that are important to understand because an agency must know the types of characteristics today want in the type that they do not

desire. What remains unknown is how the worldview and life experiences of the officer's impact work performance.

This present study will fill the gap by thorough examination of the border enforcement agents in finding some of the parameters of consistency with those that the agency has deemed to be high performance agents. That connectivity is expected to be revealed through other categories identified and other patterns to be explored. This present study will fill that gap by thorough examination of the border enforcement agents in finding some of the parameters of consistency with those that the agency has deemed to be high performance agents. That connectivity is expected to be revealed through other categories identified and other patterns to be explored.

The next chapter explains the research design and alignment of the study. Explored is the rationale for utilizing the qualitative method, the role of the researcher, the logic behind the selection of each participant, the methodology utilized to harvest the information, the instrumentation utilized to document the data. Also explored are the procedures to be utilized for the recruitment and participation of the border enforcement agents themselves, issues of trust worthiness, as well as the ethical guidelines and parameters to be used to ensure that no harm come to.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine what role life experiences and their worldview play in the job performance of federal border enforcement agents. The study will focus on high-performing federal law enforcement agents working with United States Customs and Border Protection along the U.S.-Mexico border in McAllen, Texas. The central phenomena are determining if there are consistent traits for higher-performing officers.

This study intends to allow managers to better know and understand their employees with an eye towards recruitment and retention. It also considers recent changes in demands for performance from law enforcement from the public it serves. At present, the identified participant pool is the United States Customs and Border Protection agents. There will be 15 to 20 biographic-related interview studies and possible scenario reactions to help delineate between the high-performance officers and others.

Preview of Major Sections

This section of the study will cover several areas including research design and rationale. Also discussed will be the role of the researcher and the chosen methodology to utilize. There is a thorough explanation of participant selection logic to be used. A full section is devoted to explaining the Instrumentation that will be used to capture the data. Procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection details the process of

participant selection logistics. The study then details any challenges or issues of trustworthiness, with details of efforts to ensure ethical procedures are followed.

Research Design & Rationale

The research question for this study was: What is the role of personal lived experiences and world view in the professional achievements of border officers? The central concept of the qualitative study will be a narrative inquiry to obtain data that will be derived from a structured interview consisting of roughly 20 questions. The questions are focused on discovering the life and professional background of a border enforcement agent, as well as their current views on society, politics, and certain issues surrounding the job.

The narrative inquiry is aligned with other sections of this prospectus, including the research question and the purpose of the study. The common characteristics or traits related to the world view and outlook of each one of these officers may provide a specific pattern of categories and themes allowing researchers to arrange the resulting responses.

Research Tradition

Because the purpose of this qualitative study is to determine what role life experiences and world view play in the job performance of border enforcement agents, the best research tradition will be narrative research methodology. The idea behind narrative research methodology is a design through narrative inquiry that stimulates a discussion between the qualitative researcher drawing on the experiences of the participant (Bruce et al., 2016). The challenges to the data collection and analysis process

are that narrative inquiry can sometimes lead into unintended areas that require further explanation for exploration and researchers seek to stay on topic (Bruce et al., 2016).

Another research tradition is the process of combining narrative inquiry with radical reflection (Dua, 2020). Radical reflection is research focusing on the participants' original experience to help answer some of the basic questions in human science.

Qualitative researchers often use that narrative approach to examine the life stories and life experiences of participants to understand how the stories are ultimately constructed (Hickson, 2016). Critical reflection is a framework for the examination of those life stories and thinking about assumptions of knowledge gained and how a participant may view new information (Hickson, 2016).

The important part is to capture the personal narrative through inquiry in qualitative interviewing (Goodall, Jr. 2018). The researcher should provide the questions to the participant in a clear and precise manner as to engage in a larger conversation, however always with the notion that it needs to steer the conversation back to the original purpose for the study (Goodall, Jr. 2018).

Rationale for the Chosen Tradition

Narrative inquiry is an excellent method to satisfy the purpose of this qualitative study in determining what role life experiences and worldview play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. According to the American Psychological Association, the narrative inquiry has been an important part of the qualitative study for years (Gergen, et al., 2015). There are many prominent movements within qualitative studies that allow for inquiry and critical examination (Gergen, et al., 2015). Beyond

simply examining the normal knowledge base via empirical study, the enriched knowledge allowed through understanding the responses behind the questions cannot be understated (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The quality of questioning and answers enriches the entire study process because it creates many more avenues for study than does traditional study such as quantitative (Gergen, et al., 2015). Understanding the role that narrative inquiry plays in qualitative studies is an important component of social understanding today (Gergen, et al., 2015).

Qualitative methods allow a researcher to study issues deeper through open-ended questions and capturing the ideas without having simply preselected responses, and the information captured is much more detailed (Butina, 2015). When the data is captured, it is analyzed to find categories of responses, and this allows the researcher to develop classifications in the case studies (Butina, 2015). The narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research where the story is the raw data (Butina, 2015). The participants tell their narrative stories, and it is captured through audio and written notation as well as sometimes video (Butina, 2015).

When a researcher has developed the study outline and identified the participant pool, they must use maximum flexibility in the structure of their questions so that the widest and deepest harvesting of information can be undertaken (McAlpine, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

This qualitative study is designed to explore what role life experiences and worldview play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. Qualitative research is used to gather knowledge about the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of

participants so a future researcher can use much of that same information for further study (Sutton & Austin, 2015). While it is possible to use mixed-method type research, pure quality research is the responsibility of the researcher to extract that information in its purest form (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Qualitative research attempts to understand the meaning of lived experiences which is a phenomenon (Peat, et al., 2019). The researcher must try to interpret the meaning of the context of the information, then they could look at the scope of the information and try to understand the world view from the perspective of the participant (Peat, et al., 2019).

The cornerstone to quality in qualitative studies is observing. The researcher must use their senses while listening to and observing the participant and documenting the subtle clues that can be observed (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). It is important to understand the inquiry itself as well as the setting. It is a discussion (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). Therefore, there are multiple conduits of communication that are available to the researcher (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018).

Personal & Professional Relationships of the Researcher

The pool of participants is coming from an existing group of border enforcement agents in the McAllen, Texas area. At one point in time, the primary researcher was employed as an agent, senior agent, supervisory agent, Chief agent, and Assistant Port Director at the same location as those who may be participants. However, that has been attenuated away for over 15 years. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any conflicts.

If any researcher bias other power unbalance in participant and researcher would arise, it is anticipated that the participant would no longer participate, and that the researcher would move to a different individual.

Researchers have not identified any immediate ethical challenges. The primary concerns will be the privacy and protection of the data, as well as the safeguarding of the anonymity of the participants. Researchers have identified tools and resources available from Walden University to assist in addressing those basic challenges.

Researchers have identified three possible validity issues. First is the anticipation of participant responses. That comes from researcher familiarity with the work of border law enforcement. To guard against this, the researchers will exhaustively record the interviews and document them to monitor for that influence.

Secondly, the 2020 demands for change in the manner that law enforcement interacts with the community can be a difficult topic for both those in favor of those changes and those who are not. Researchers and participants are not immune to those emotions. Given the basis of this study, neither could nor try and influence the others based on those views. Those views must be captured as part of the data, if appropriate. But the objective is to discover, not persuade or convince. Again, strict documentation is key to ensure that it is not a threat to validity.

The final issue is the anonymity of the participant. There may be some hesitation for agents to be fully candid if they felt that there could be damage to their career or other issues. Safeguarding of the data is done electronically and physically and Walden provides tools to assist researchers to ensure that this is addressed and safeguarded.

Methodology

The study will be conducted via narrative inquiry. This method is proper to meet the purpose to determine what role life experiences and world view play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. The process to determine the correct research methodology and methods is an extremely critical component of the research outcome (Durdella, 2017). The design of the study must align with the research question and process of achieving the data (Durdella, 2017). Because this is a qualitative research study, there are several methods including focus group and participant observation. But this research plan only includes another qualitative method, the narrative in-depth interview. The data will be collected in the form of written field notes, audio recordings, transcripts of those recordings, and possibly video recordings (Durdella, 2017).

Qualitative method interviews allow for a participant to provide a narrative of their experiences which provides the researcher a wealth of information and data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This generation of data is important as it can provide not only substantive responses to the questions posed but can also supply responses that the researchers likely had not expected (Sutton & Austin, 2015). It is not uncommon for new study research topics to spurn from qualitative interview study responses (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

One issue is whether those interviews are conducted in person or via video or telephone (Johnson, et al., 2019). Often, there will be communication and information transfers that a researcher may not take note of if the interview is not conducted where body language can be observed (Johnson, et al., 2019). The researcher should strengthen

their observation skills and enhance their ability to utilize follow-up questioning to steer the interview, especially when they cannot observe body communication (Johnson, et al., 2019).

Participant Selection Logic

This study is designed to find what role life experiences and world view play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. Primary researchers in this proposed study have work experience over 20 years combined United States military and 17 years of working for the United States Customs Service which is now the US Customs and Border Protection. Most of that experience was serving along the border in far South Texas along the Mexican frontier.

The plan for participant selection is to contact senior managers at a port of entry to select 12 to 20 officers. As a possible alternative to that selection, there are employee unions that can be approached and requested participation for the same study. If both of those options were unavailable, there are fraternal law enforcement organizations that have current and former law enforcement officers such as the federal law enforcement officer's associations that can be contacted.

Sampling Strategy

The purpose of this study is to identify what role life experiences and worldview play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. There is any number of sampling techniques such as stratification or random sampling over quotas, systemic random sampling and so on that can be used. However, in the process of this qualitative study, we are simply taking a random population from a non-probability sampling

technique (Sharma, 2017). That means that essentially the researchers will not be making the selections.

It is not any more random than allowing someone else to make the selections (Reed, et al, 1996). We will ask that the managers of the port of entry or the employees union identify the highest performing officers. From that pool of officers, there will be a process of requesting 12 to 20 volunteers to participate in the study. Of the 12 to 20 volunteers, there might be some who are willing to participate, and it may be alphabetical or every other participant applicant. We may ask for 20 participants and there would only be 20 volunteers (Sharma, 2017).

Participant Selection Criteria

The criteria for higher-performing officers would certainly be known to the agency that monitors and tracks those officers' performance (Vasileiou, et al., 2018). The selection criteria for the special operations units are publicized through CBP (Vasileiou, et al., 2018). One of the criteria is sustained superior performance. The same issues could be identified through the Union (Vaileiou, et al., 2018).

The criteria by which the participant is selected is to be internal performance measures. Both the managers of CBP and the union measure performance (Baillie, 2015). By contract, the union members have a right to participate in the process of performance award systems (Baillie, 2015). It is expected the highest percentage of participants will come from that pool of high performers, especially if those performers come from the specialized units, which is also selected by agreement based on performance (Baillie, 2015). The participants are known to meet the criteria because each agency and field

office at headquarters tracks and monitors the level of activity for every officer. That includes the number of searches, of persons or cargo, or vehicles that are targeted by the officer and the percentage of those that are found to have contraband. Therefore, performance-wise, the precipitation criteria are inherent to that job (Majid, et al., 2017).

Participant Numbers & Rationale

In a narrative interview for qualitative analysis, it is important to understand that vast amounts of data can be achieved from one participant (Malterud, et al., 2016). To achieve the information that is most desired for further study, a minimum of ten participants should be sufficient to supply the level of data that is required to draw specific scientific conclusions (Malterud, et al., 2016). Participants over 20 may well serve to be too difficult to manage that vast amount of data and category separation (Malterud, et al., 2016). A medium number of 15 participants can satisfy both required numbers of people come up while ensuring the level of data is still available (Malterud, et al., 2016).

Saturation & Sample Size

Qualitative sample size varies depending upon the number of people you may ask. Some researchers have indicated that as few as five are sufficient while others suggest you have at least 50 participants even for interviews (Vasileiou, et al, 2018). Each researcher makes the decision, but it is important to note the amount of data itself will determine what is a successful amount and what is saturation (Vasileiou, et al, 2018). At some point, you may have the information that you need to answer the research questions

with seven participants, for example, and the next three become repetitive (Vasileiou, et al, 2018). This will not be known until the study is underway (Vasileiou, et al, 2018).

Instrumentation

There are a variety of instruments that can be used to collect data from a participant in a qualitative research study (Collins & Cooper, 2014). The purpose of the study is to determine what role life experiences and world view play in the job performance of border enforcement agents, so interviews, focus group documentation via video, audio, even archive data, and discussions with other individuals are all proper (Collins & Cooper, 2014). However, most consistently, the most important tool for the interview and data collection is the researcher (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

A quality interviewer needs to have the technical ability to document thoroughly all elements of the interview (Collins & Cooper, 2014). They must also have the skills to interact in a manner with the participant so that they are eliciting the best quality information (Hsiung, 2008). The researcher must also know how to steer the conversation while exploring interesting areas (Collins & Cooper, 2014). All of this must be accomplished while the researcher is avoiding personal bias (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Viewing the researcher as a collection instrument, researchers must be aware of their strengths and limitations as well as their level of emotional intelligence, skills in conducting interviews, and precision of documentation (Collins & Cooper, 2014).

While it is yet to be determined the precise process of researcher post-interview analysis, researchers should have flexibility (Clark & Vealé, 2018). The normal doctoral research process is to plod through the data collection completely and then initiate the

analysis as a secondary part of the research process (Clark & Vealé, 2018). This can lead to a rigidity that can lead to researchers limiting analysis opportunities (Clark & Vealé, 2018). The data and handwritten notes, for example, can be reviewed and examined as a data source well before they are transcribed (Clark & Vealé, 2018). This does not mean, however, that some of the basic rules of study do not need to be followed. For example, every Researcher should give a certain period after an interview to complete as many notes as possible (Clark & Vealé, 2018). The researcher should give specific attention to where the interview is conducted, whether there was natural chemistry between the participant and interviewee, what type of eye contact and interaction occurred during the interview, and whether the interview felt natural (Clark & Vealé, 2018).

Source of Data

There are different types of data collections and there are also different types of data being collected (Lester, et al., 2017). For example, there is researcher-generated data such as with this study where the researcher probes questions to a participant in a variety of forms (Lester, et al., 2017). Those responses form the data. There is also naturally occurring data and even data that exists in literature form (Lester, et al., 2017). For researcher-generated data collection, some challenges should be addressed before any study is to begin (Lester, et al., 2017).

When conducting live interviews, researchers have found several key areas that demand focus. First, the nature of the data sets themselves, do they contain the information for the needed themes and categories (McLure, et al., 2014)? Next, how was

the data collected; were there individual interviews, focus groups, where they recorded, and other questions (McLure, et al., 2014)? Next, researchers are encouraged to understand how that participant seeks to have their responses managed (McLure, et al., 2014). Do they agree to be recorded? Maintaining the data and the privacy of the participants is a critical part of designing your study (McLure, et al., 2014). Some researchers have found it beneficial to make that data public. This, of course, is a separate privacy issue and one that is not a discussion for this research project (Mills, 2018).

Sufficiency of Data Collection Instruments

A researcher has several things that are required of them to ensure that the data collection instrument is sufficient to answer the actual research questions. For example, they must meet time and budget restrictions as well as any other issues related to consistency and fair reporting (Bastos, et al., 2014). Whether the researcher is using some type of questionnaire or interview record, it must be consistent from participant to participant to be valid and reliable data (Bastos, et al., 2014).

Ensuring the sufficiency of the data collection instruments is part of the trustworthiness determination process (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Researchers must be vigilant for opportunities to improve the data collection which affects the accuracy and reliability of the findings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). They must be aware of new techniques that become available to collect data (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). There is no one set of rules that could be installed which guarantee that the work is done correctly (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Researchers concerned with establishing the sufficiency of

the data collection instrument to answer the research question must recognize that it is an ongoing effort (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Researcher-developed Instruments

The researcher will be generating all the data to be used in this study for analysis. Data, especially collected through narrative inquiry in a qualitative study can be vast and difficult to manage (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2016). Another instrument may be necessary to measure academic achievement. Researchers will utilize transcripts and tools such as xl spreadsheets applications to identify recurring groups and categories (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2016). Walden University supplies a number of these and other tools for the analysis of qualitative interview-based data (Walden University, 2021). Researchers will validate the data collection and analysis tools through multiple layers of analysis (Mallinckrodt, et al., 2016). Other resources are available through the American Psychiatric Association, the Educational Testing Services, but is not anticipated the researcher will need to develop those available tools (White, 2017).

Content Validity

Content validity is one of the most important parts of clinical research (Almanasreh, et al. 2019). Standards require that the data must be captured with verified tools and assurances that the information being relied upon is valid, thus the outcome is valid (Almanasreh, et al. 2019). Content validity is the evidence that the conclusion is correct given the context of the study (Almanasreh, et al. 2019). The validity must be measured and enforced at each stage of the process including the point of development of

the study, the process of collection of data, during the analysis phase, and during the revision and review phase (Almanasreh, et al. 2019).

While there are many types of tools and contracts to monitor and enforce content validity, there remain five basic tenants of content validity. The first is content – the actual data collected must have a harvesting process that ensures that it is being collected correctly with the original intent of the participant (Yusoff, 2019). The original response process documentation is equally as important as if given the opportunity, the participant would substantively change the response (Yusoff, 2019). The internal structure of the study is of vital importance because there must be constructed consistency to have construct validity (Yusoff, 2019). While each participant in a qualitative study can expound on a certain question, they must nonetheless stay within the constructed parameters for all participants (Yusoff, 2019).

The next construct validity to measuring a response or series of responses from participants against other response's relation to other variables (Yusoff, 2019). If there are 15 participants and three answer a particular question with a yes or no answer, while the rest provide lengthy and detailed response, it was a failure of the researcher to push that response thus for a portion of that data collection (Yusoff, 2019). The result is reduced construct validity. Finally, the product has a level of validity that can be tracked back and verified against the other parts of the process (Yusoff, 2019).

Sufficiency of Data Collection to Answer the Research Questions

The sufficiency of data collection instruments remains a preview of the faith of the researcher and those who approve or deconstruct the research through academic

institutions or peer review (Assarroudi, et al., 2018). Every researcher has a responsibility to establish the sufficiency and validity of the data collection instruments that they use to collect their research (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017). One such issue involves telephone and video interviewing of Participants (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017). The 2020 Global Pandemic demanded social distancing from all persons and researchers were impacted in their ability to conduct face-to-face interviews (Pandey & Pal, 2020). There are multiple criteria to determine the suitability of research for qualitative interviews. Researchers studying the sufficiency of data collection instruments studied 50 managers and had semi-structured interviews with them via telephone, computer-based audio, and face-to-face (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017). They found no discernible difference in the quality of the content insufficiency of data collection between the telephone interviews and face-to-face (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017). It remains up to the researchers to evaluate if they are confident of the ability to use the telephone, but they also take certain efforts of standardizing the questions so that the conversational styles remain the same (Farooq & De Villiers, 2017).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, & Data Collection

Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to identify what role life experiences and worldview play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. The primary method to collect data will be the narrative interview. Interviews are a staple method used in qualitative research (Oltmann, 2016). Many authors hold face-to-face interviews to be the gold standard, or the assumed best mode in which to conduct interviews (Oltmann, 2016).

Interviews have been used for qualitative research for many years. Interviews allow for dialogue that can attain a vast wealth of information not available on standard questionnaires (Oltmann, 2016).

There is to be a structured interview of 10 or more questions. The primary researcher joined the Navy in 1986 and then went to work for the United States Department of Treasury, United States Customs Service in 1991. For the next 17 years, they worked at duty stations along the United States border with Mexico, including stints in district offices, headquarters in Washington, DC, as well as investigations and intelligence work. The plan for this study is to first contact senior managers of the port of entry to select 15 to 20 officers who will participate in the study. Absent that, researchers will contact local union officials who can provide the same. If, barring that, contact will be made with some of the local law enforcement retirement entities to speak to officers who are no longer active but can still provide insight.

The study will use narrative inquiry for detailed interviews of the participants. It is preferred that the participants be from some of the specialized enforcement units. By national agreement with the Union, only those most qualified for those positions are selected. Normally, the selection criteria are based on enforcement productivity (NTEU & CBP, 2017).

Who will collect the data?

The credibility of any study starts with a strong foundation. That foundation is established when the planning is underway, including the selection of researchers (Bengtsson, 2016). The primary researcher was employed by CBP, formally the United

States Department of Treasury agency, United States Customs Service since 1991 along the United States border with Mexico. As an external source, researchers can have extensive experience in the work being performed and some of the criteria for participant selection (Bengtsson, 2016).

The consistent presence of researchers is an important part of the success of the project (Bengtsson, 2016). That researcher will be part of the question development and have more an intuitive idea of where a participant response may be heading before it goes there (Bengtsson, 2016). This process of content analysis pushes a researcher to either form a full broad review of the data (*a manifest analysis*), or deeper diving into a particular topic (*a latent analysis*) (Bengtsson, 2016). For this study, it will remain a manifest analysis.

Frequency

Data collection frequency is an important consideration for any clinical study (Dempsey, et al., 2016). Previous literature reviews have developed criteria to measure data reliability of semi-structured interviews which can assist in answering how many interviews need to be conducted per participant (Galvin, 2015). This study will only incur the need to collect data one time. It is possible that the researchers would need to recontact a participant in the event some response for a line of thought was unclear (Galvin, 2015). However, it is incumbent upon the interviewer at the time of collection to attain that.

Duration

Sufficiency of data for any study is an important part of the plan (Guest, et al., 2020). Saturation of data is also an issue that good planning can help avoid (Guest, et al., 2020). Answering the question of whether a researcher has enough qualitative data is still an issue for any research project, and qualitative research has its special challenges (Guest, et al., 2020). This holds when determining if you have enough data before, during, and after the data collection process (Guest, et al., 2020). For this study, it is anticipated that one round of questioning will be sufficient.

Data Recordation

Data can be preexisting for the researcher to collect, such as pictures, documents, or other items. photographs, documents, and artifacts (Nordstrom, 2015). Data can also be generated, as in the case of this study, by researchers asking probing questions (Nordstrom, 2015). In doing so the data will be collected through field notes, audio recordings, and video capture.

Follow-up Plan

If the participant pool is too small to meet the data supply needs for the study, or if management within the agency disapproves of the study, the local employee union can be approached for those very same officers as union members to participate in the same study. If that were to fail, there are fraternal organizations that consist of current and former law enforcement officers, although not border enforcement agents specifically, but officers in the Texas area, such as the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA).

Participants Exiting the Study

Literature reviews have been conducted to determine the usefulness and applicability of using exit interviews, mostly focused on comparing strategies or perceptions of usefulness (Dufrene & Young, 2014). In this qualitative study, the researchers will use a short question and answer session following the interview to follow up on any issue arising from the interview, the study, or any other question they may have (Weinbaum & Onwuegbuzie, 2016).

Connection of Data to a Specific Research Question.

Researchers must touch back with the original purpose of the study and align that with the research questions to ensure the data collection is the most appropriate one for this study (Mayer, 2015). In many studies, they use triangulation methods where you have observations, document reviews, and surveys to form the basis of the harvesting and extraction of information, all of which can be compared for consistency (Mayer, 2015). While only one method is to be used here, the structure and direction of the questions are critical, even more so when the interview may turn in an unexpected direction (Maxwell, 2008). Traditional methods of “cross walking” the research questions to specific methods of collection will all align with the one method of in-depth interview (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

Type of and Procedure for Coding

Coding is particularly important in qualitative research as it allows data to be categorized that which makes it easier for consumption not just by the researcher but also by the readers (Williams & Moser, 2019). When the research team finalizes all the interviews, and those interviews have been transcribed and check the process of coding can begin (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The process of coding is to identify the topics that are consistently present within each participant interview. Also, coding will reveal major differences in that data (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

It is an important part of this process to compare the field notes that were collected during the interview and compare those to the transcriptions (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Sometimes, researchers will be impacted by certain elements of the interview that did not necessarily find their way onto the data transcription or are overrepresented in the data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Those codes then become the basis of management of the data transcriber (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Software can be utilized to help to manage that data, but certain areas will reveal themselves as being present and revealed during the interview that cannot be ignored. Those primary categories are important in the final analysis of the information (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Once the categories are identified and you find the major reoccurring categories, they could be elevated to the status of themes (Sutton & Austin, 2015). A recurring theme is something crucial in assisting to answer the research question (Sutton & Austin, 2015). For example, if after structured interviews or open-ended interviews with 20 participants and the same basic questions being asked, you have a category that is present in three of

those participants, that is a valid category (Sutton & Austin, 2015). If you have a category that is present in 90% of all the interviews, you have found a theme (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Software

There are a variety of software applications to assist researchers with the collection, processing, and analysis of data collected during interviews. Walden University hosts a number of these applications at no or reduced cost to students. They include Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) platforms such as NVivo, Compendium, Weft QDA, and others. It is anticipated that researchers will utilize one or more of these products for data management and assistance in the study (Walden, 2021).

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are much like negative cases (Hackett, 2015). A negative case does not meet the participant criteria but is used regardless (Hackett, 2015). Same with discrepant, but the degree with which they do not meet the criteria is less than a full negative case (Hackett, 2015). The research literature provides this example. If you are studying students who drop out of high school in the 11th grade and include students who have graduated, that is a negative case. Those who dropped out in the 9th or 10th grade would be discrepant cases (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Researchers can choose to sample these cases or not.

Researchers envision that this will not necessarily be an issue for this study. When they seek permission to interview participants, either from management, the union, or the

fraternal order of police, they will be asking for officers who have been assigned to the specialized enforcement units. Those enforcement agents who are assigned to these positions are specifically selected under national labor agreements based on their enforcement records (NTEU & CBP, 2017). By default, those participants pools have 100% participant pools that meet those criteria needed for the research question.

If researchers do have discrepant case participants, researchers intend to utilize those for trustworthiness (Booth, et al., 2013). Those sampling can lead to other possible theories or areas for research, and at the same time can be used to compare with current research data findings (Booth, et al., 2013).

Issues of Trustworthiness

The purpose of this study is to identify what role life experiences and worldview play in the job performance of border enforcement agents. Trustworthiness is one of the most important aspects of this or any scientific research (Connelly, 2016). A specific challenge to researchers conducting qualitative research is that they do not generally have access to the same instruments that track and measure reliability and validity (Connelly, 2016). Those aspects are used by quantitative researchers to establish trustworthiness.

For qualitative researchers, four things establish the trustworthiness of research. The first is credibility. How confident is the researcher or the reader in believing the findings? How do we know that they are accurate (Connelly, 2016)? The next element of trustworthiness is transferability. How does the information obtained in your study become useful in other studies or other contexts with similar phenomena or participation (Connelly, 2016)? The next element of trustworthiness is confirmability. Confirmability

is dependent upon the bias and personal motivations that the researcher has in influencing the outcome of the study (Connelly, 2016). If the researcher is manipulating the findings in the data to reach a particular conclusion or support a preconceived conclusion, then the inclusions cannot be confirmed (Connelly, 2016). The last element is dependability. The dependability exists in the opinions of other researchers (Connelly, 2016). Generally, it is thought that if someone wanted to completely replicate the study, they could do so and would come with the same findings if your work is dependable (Connelly, 2016).

Through the process of submitting the qualitative proposal, there is an expectation that you will document and establish the protocol for monitoring the trustworthiness (Amankwaa, 2016). The document details how the study was to be conducted and providing the precision of the efforts taken to ensure that the established plan (Amankwaa, 2016). This trustworthiness plan can showcase the protocol ensuring that the plan is followed (Amankwaa, 2016). That detailed plan must follow academically rigorous standards. That means that from the point of drafting the actual questions to be asked of the participants, through the participant selection process, to completely documenting the interview and data process, the analysis of that data into the conclusion process it must follow established standards and procedures that a review board easily recognizes (Amankwaa, 2016).

Another often overlooked aspect of the establishment of trustworthiness is the ability for the researcher to avoid problems in the data collection process (Stewart, et al., 2017). Often, there will be strategies in place to avoid issues, but the researcher will fail to follow much of what has been put in place. The responsiveness of the researcher is a

critical component because through the response of this comes documentation (Stewart, et al., 2017). Documentation becomes the ability to verify what a person is seeing when they see the finished product (Stewart, et al., 2017). All aspects of the interview should be documented through video if possible so that the researcher can understand context, sensitivity in exchange with the participant in the interview (Morse, et al., 2002).

Credibility

Multiple strategies can help a researcher to establish credibility in their research process and findings (Leung, 2015). Credibility is simply confidence in the truth of those findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility begins with using the appropriate tools and processing to collect the data (Leung, 2015). Another tool to establish and maintain credibility is to ensure the design of the study is appropriate for the methodology (Leung, 2015). Does the sampling process a process that is widely accepted in the academic community? The sweeping aspect of understanding the core elements of a research process is specifically designed to enhance the credibility of the researcher and their subsequent conclusions (Leung, 2015).

Another specific strategy to establish and maintain credibility in a research study is prolonged engagements. Prolong engagements is the researcher providing themselves enough time in the field of research to understand, in context, the phenomenon being studied (Stewart, et al., 2017). Whether this means observing from a distance or engaging in relationships and immersing themselves, each research is unique in that period (Stewart, et al., 2017).

Triangulation is another method to ensure the credibility of findings.

Triangulation is the use of different data sources to produce a better understanding of the results (Connelly, 2016). A single method of data collection may be adequate, but it may not necessarily provide the whining scope needed to understand what the research is trying to explain (Connelly, 2016). In one example, researchers used the narrative inquiry as the primary method extracting data, however, there is room to build in fact-based scenarios to present to the participants to gauge what their reaction may be. In this manner, the data is triangulated.

Even within the process of triangulation, there are multiple types of triangulations (Abdalla, at al., 2018). For example, you can have both qualitative and quantitative data in a particular research paper and that means you have triangulated different methods of data collection. Next, you can have a triangulation of sources. This means that you may have participants with different viewpoints, participants of inner viewed in different intervals of time, and so on (Denzin, 1978). Sometime there is data analyst triangulation where a different data analyst review's finding as opposed to a single researcher (Abdalla, et al, 2018).

Another method of establishing credibility is through peer debriefing. Peer debriefing is a process where the researcher exposes the process for review by one of their peers (Connelly, 2016). It is a method to uncover flaws in research bias before they become problematic (Connelly, 2016).

As mentioned before, there are also negative and deviant cases where the researcher can purposefully collect data outside of the scope of the intended participant

pool to understand whether the attained responses are consistent but not identical (Hackett, 2015). Assuming that the responses from the near-identical participant pool are like the intended pool, the researcher can assume that the data that has been collected is credible (Hackett, 2015).

Referential adequacy is a method to ensure credibility where sections of data are harvested, placed to the side, and then produced later to run the same analysis and compared to the first findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member Checks are credibility devices where the conclusions and analysis are shared with the original participants to ensure that the data was collected correctly (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some researchers feel this is a critical component while others point to possible confusion or objection to the use of the data during the latter stages of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Another critical component of trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability is very simply an ability to show that the findings of your study apply to other studies and another context of scientific study (Kyngas, et al., 2020). Some methods and strategies will assist the researcher to establish that transferability (Kyngas, et al., 2020). The first strategy is a thick description. The thick description applies to external validity. It is a document and detailed account of the process that the researcher through to describe social and cultural issues in context so that they can be used to apply to other things (Holloway, 1997). By contrast, is the thin description which is generally very shallow. It does not explain why certain things exist.

Another method to enhance transferability in establishing trustworthiness is to vary the process of selection of participants (Kyngas, et al., 2020). That would mean that the scope of the selection process can be so narrow that another researcher what have difficulty replicating that study because it is so finite in your ability to obtain participants (Kyngas, et al., 2020). In the casework at hand, because there is already a limited specific pool of participants, this variation is accomplished by the participants' expected diversity in life experience.

Dependability

In clinical quantitative research, reliability is the ability to exactly replicate the same process and achieve the same results, but in qualitative research that is difficult to achieve (Connelly, 2016). The data being collected in qualitative research does not lend itself to the same measures and testing as you find in quantitative research (Connelly, 2016). Therefore, dependability is the qualitative part of reliability that qualitative research provides. Dependability in qualitative research is about consistency (Morse, et al., 2002). Consistency in the questions provided to the participants is important, as is consistency in the method and manner of capturing the data, and so on (Leung, 2015).

Earlier, there was a discussion about triangulation and triangulation also assists in establishing the dependability of information being analyzed (Connelly, 2016). In addition to triangulation, one of the key methods of establishing reliability is through external audits. External audits are when a researcher is removed from the research process and an outside source review the process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This strategy allows a researcher to not only find the dependability of the information being

harvested and the subsequent trustworthiness but also depending on the timing of the external audits, can save themselves tremendous amounts of time and effort (Connelly, 2016). External audits allow for the outsider to challenge the process in summarize preliminary findings ensure that the data collected is adequate for the study, outline some of the preliminary results of the study, and provide that feedback to the researcher which could lead to additional data gathering or can also strengthen the faith in the trustworthiness of the study and its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some researchers are not as comfortable with external auditing because much like member checking, there can be a different interpretation and perspective from one researcher to another. This may do nothing more than create confusion and possible hostility (Creswell, 1998). A researcher's interpretation is often a large part of the gravitas that the study brings with it and so they are reluctant to make changes (Connelly, 2016).

Confirmability

The remaining section for the establishment of trustworthiness is confirmability. Confirmability is the counterpart to objectivity for qualitative reviews that are used for qualitative research (Connelly, 2016). To establish confirmability, qualitative researchers use some strategies including audit trails or peer review (Connelly, 2016). Detailed documentation in steps of data analyses to explain to others including those involved in peer review the reasons are made for decisions in analysis (Connelly, 2016).

The process of establishing confirmability and objectivity in the data, the process in the research findings is a pragmatic undertaking can include a systematic sampling of participants information (Leung, 2015). It can also include proper categorization and

theme identification, triangulation, audit trails, and documentation, as well as a constant comparison of data between participants (Leung, 2015).

External audits are included in the same positive aspects compared to the negative aspects can also be considered to assist in confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An audit trail is another method to maximize confirmability. The audit trail involves systematic and concise document retention for things such as field notes (Gill, et al., 2018). The audit trail includes the raw data, condensed notes, and products generated from analysis (Leung, 2015). The process of documenting the work to explain how the raw data then becomes seems in categories is also an important part (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additional instrumentation such as scheduling and optimization of documentation tools utilized are important parts of that audit trail (Gill, et al., 2018).

Triangulation is the multiple uses of data sources, and as explained before there is an inherent triangulation that would be using multiple participants for in-depth interviews (Connelly, 2016). One participant source can provide information that can be compared to other participants' responses (Connelly, 2016). When common denominators are found they are categorized and labeled as well as themes developed (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The identification of outliers is an indication that the data collection process may have problems while consistency in responses indicates that data likely was harvested correctly (Gill, et al., 2018).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a method to ensure confirmation ability by ensuring that all steps of the research process have a consistent and quality review and reflection throughout the

entire process to identify potential bias and beliefs or values of the researcher creeping into the findings (Xerri, 2018). Researchers indicate that preconceiving of an answer or an idea about research findings before they reveal themselves naturally are not necessarily bias unless the researcher fails to document those preconceptions (Malterud, 2001).

To enhance reflective research design, a researcher should consider having other team members engage in that process for one another, a kind of external ongoing audit (Xerri, 2018). The researcher can create a reflective journal that serves as a diary with entries into a log as they proceed through the entire research process (Xerri, 2018). Challenges, successes, and other observations must be documented for proper reflection in the future (Xerri, 2018). This should be undertaken for each participant in the process. A researcher should be able to go behind the primary researcher and find replicated documentation for each respective participant so that they can ensure that it was done methodically and consistently (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Verification Strategies

A final issue towards ensuring trustworthiness that is not necessarily listed previously category is a method to verify that all the above goals are being met (Morse, et al., 2002). The strategies of verification involve the validity and reliability of the data, as well as the sampling and the development of the theories and ultimate conclusions (Spiers, et al., 2018).

The first verification strategy is method coherence. Method coherence shows the dependence of the research question on the components of the method. As the research

process moves forward the data must match with the method sampling plan (Spiers, et al., 2018). This also may be recognized by those familiar with alignment.

Next, the sample itself must be appropriate for the research. You must have participants who have the greatest amount of knowledge on the research topic. The researcher must avoid saturation and not only sample adequately but sample correctly (Spiers, et al., 2018).

Third, the collection and analysis of the data should run concurrently (Spiers, et al., 2018). An effective researcher should avoid collecting data for long periods and not review what they have collected (Spiers, et al., 2018). Memory cognition avoids burying the importance of the data being collected and should capture that memory through precise field notes (Spiers, et al., 2018).

Finally, new information comes from the data that is already collected during the analysis process. The researcher must look at all the possible context conclusions that could come from the decisions that are being made for that analysis (Spiers, et al., 2018). The ability to think about the data and how it applies to the bigger picture is a difficult but important process (Spiers, et al., 2018).

Ethical Procedures

Agreements

The researchers intend to utilize the exact consent form supplied by Walden University.

Treatment of Human Participants

Researchers have identified participants that are federal law enforcement agents, professionals who work along the border areas between the United States and Mexico. Some of the lines of questioning are expected to be well beyond professional responsibilities and to delve into the life experience of these agents and see the shape of their world views. Therefore, researchers will design the questioning and research the Walden University Research Ethics and Compliance Policies. Walden University's Office of Research Ethics and Compliance provides several tools that are available to students and researchers focusing on the school's Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement to avoid ethical challenges, to begin with. (Walden, n.d.).

Those policies include preventing ethical breaches, breaches of privacy, and a commitment to the integrity of the study and participant safety through the adoption of all Walden University ethics procedures. Every researcher will be fully educated on all Walden ethics policies and procedures, as well as guidelines and expectations from the Institutional Review Board. Those procedures include the self-assessment process, direct interaction with the ethics department for oversight of study design, submission of a plan to the review board with monitoring, and ethics oversight built-in (Walden, n.d.). Once the plan has been established, researchers will monitor the entire process of collection of data to avoid breaches. Moreover, researchers intend to use the Institutional Review Board audit process to compare the study to other completed studies to verify full compliance. Finally, the study plan will include a reporting mechanism that will

immediately notify the committee chair of any ethics violations, true Serious Adverse Events, or even questions concerning ethics challenges. (Walden, n.d.).

Institutional Permissions

Researchers will follow the guidelines established by the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB), utilizing the research ethics approval checklist as a touchstone. As the element at Walden that ensures ethical standards and federal law compliance, the review process must be intertwined with the work of the study (Walden, n.d.).

The first step of the process is to finalize the proposal and submit that through the doctoral committee chair. This is followed by finalizing Form A, the Description of Data Sources and Partner Sites form to the IRB. Next, a Research Ethics Support Specialist from the IRB will provide the researchers with the documents and possible partners to be utilized moving forward. As researchers have already identified the possible data sources, those specific steps and a list of contacts will be provided to the IRB. After researchers submit the completed documentation, they will in turn receive the Preliminary Ethics Feedback guidance back from the IRB. This supports the effort to address any potential ethical challenges or other conflicts resolved well ahead of any proposal or beginning of data collection. This serves to protect the institution, the participants, the participants' organizations as well as the integrity of the study (Walden, n.d.).

This approval process mirrors the IRB ethics office supplied Research Ethics Approval Checklist. The compliance required includes some considerably basic questions such as how privacy will be ensured, how the data will be stored, how long will it be used, and how will it be secured? Other issues are participant-centric to verify that the

precise details of the participants, the questions, the location, and the time of any interviews, and are detailed to the organization providing permission. Will the participant's identities, demographics, or agencies be made public? How will the data and any findings be shared with the organization or participants? What, if any are the risks to the participant for inclusion in the study? Are the consent forms adequate to protect the organization, the participant, the researchers, and the school? This is not the entire, exhaustive list of concerns, but it does contain some of the basic and most critical issues for the IRB (Walden, n.d.).

Next, once the proposal is approved, the IRB will coordinate with the researchers and committee if there are outstanding issues that require resolution with any of the submission documentation. The final stage is when the IRB reviews that last submission, and barring any changes, will give preliminary approval via e-mail to begin the recruitment of participants and the data collection phase (Walden, n.d.).

Researchers do not anticipate any issues with the IRB and sensitive issues. The participant pool is groups of professional law enforcement agents and specific topics of challenges on the job, or encounters and is to be avoided. The focus of the study is their life experiences outside employment and demographic information such as race, religion, or others will be collected if the participant wishes.

Hesitancy from potential participants that responses could be used against them professionally can be answered with avoidance of actual quotes with attribution and other individual identifiers. Instances of concern about responses from participants that could represent a reportable issue such as self-harm, addiction, criminal behavior, and so on

will be immediately discussed with the study chair and in consultation with the IRB, a determination will be made what, if anything to do with that information (Walden, n.d.).

Ethical Concerns Related to Recruitment

Researchers have identified no discernable ethical issues, other than the privacy and anonymity of the officers involved and the process of gaining access. Researchers will not collect demographic personal information, nor will they allow anyone outside of the reach team to connect participants to responses.

Ethical Concerns Related to The Data Collection Process

Researchers were previously employed with US Customs and Border Protection, but at least 13 years have passed since that time. There are no issues with power or control in the researcher and participant relationship.

Once the data is collected, it will be primarily stored on the singular laptop of one researcher. The laptop is secured physically by lock and key access and secured via encrypted password entry. There will be a backup process that mirrors the main process.

There will be a labeling process that keeps all responses linked to a particular participant that is not labeled by the name of the person. That secured sheet keeping that information confidential will remain under lock and key maintained by only the researchers. Data will be disseminated to no one person beyond discussions with the committee chair, the IRB member, and the 2nd chair.

Summary

In summary, this is a qualitative study is designed to explore what role life experiences and world view play in the job performance of border enforcement agents.

This chapter provides the anticipated Research Design and Rationale. Also included in this chapter is a guide through what role the researcher will occupy in the relationship between them and the participant. After that, the data collection and analysis methodology of the narrative interview is explored, as well as the logic of how the participant will be selected. Researchers disclose what instrumentation is expected to be utilized and how, exactly the participants will be recruited, and what the parameters of that participation will be data. Collection and analysis are also devoted sections of the chapter. And then, importantly, the role of ethics in the planning and execution including trustworthiness and ethical procedures are defined.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore what role certain life experiences and attitudes played in the job performance of federal law enforcement agents at the border. Specifically, the study looks at high-performance federal law enforcement agents with U.S. customs and border protection in and around McAllen, Texas.

Research Question

What is the role of personal lived experiences and worldview in the professional achievements of successful border enforcement officers?

Setting

Participants met with the primary researcher at public locations throughout the McAllen, Texas area. We had originally set an office location, but many of the officers were more comfortable meeting at public locations such as restaurants. Each area was selected in consultation with the participant and the researcher questioned the participant if they approved of the setting before any interview. At least three participant interviews were conducted via telephone as COVID-19 concerns precluded in-person contact. It is not believed by the researcher that the actual location of the interview – in the cases of telephonic conversations – impacted the outcomes of the study.

Two setting issues may have influenced this study. First, a man named George Floyd died at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May of 2020. On May 25, 2020, at “Cup Foods”, a 46-year-old African American man named George

Floyd sought to purchase a pack of cigarettes. The clerk suspected that Floyd used a fake \$20 bill and called the police. What transpired of the course of the next 30 minutes captivated a nation. Minneapolis police responded, and as they attempted to resolve the issue, Floyd became uncooperative and agitated. He was detained by officers led by officer Derek Chauvin. Floyd was pinned to the pavement with Chauvin primarily placing his weight on Floyd's torso while others surrounded Floyd and pinned his legs. A crowd gathered and noticed that Floyd began to have a medical issue and was gasping for breath. The crowd implored officers to care for the detainee, but those pleas were ignored. As Floyd was pinned down for 10 minutes, he became unresponsive and never recovered. (History.com Editors, 2021).

Based on the release of the video of the death of George Floyd, there was widespread civil unrest that resulted in increased public scrutiny of law enforcement. This event and subsequent public sentiment impacted some participants. Most participants expressed growing dissatisfaction with law enforcement employment in general because of the manner that the public now perceives them. It was described to the researcher that in years past many of these same agents were heralded as heroes on a routine basis and now face the scorn of the public. Therefore, certain questions concerning some of the enjoyment related to the job may be influenced by this issue, as well as recommending law enforcement as a career.

Secondly, a few participants expressed dissatisfaction with the culture of the local workplaces and pointed to actions by Customs and Border Protection managers as the cause. A few of the people interviewed were managers themselves and some others had

issues with management previously. This was not all participants, but it was disclosed. Researchers are unsure how this may impact the results of the study as many of the questions were more historical and reflected on the life of the participant.

Demographics

Male and female participants were solicited equally, but every participant in this study was male. The length of service as federal law enforcement ranged from seven to 20 years. Each participant served on a specialized type of enforcement unit. All but two of the participants were Hispanic in ethnicity. Few had family connections or ties to another country. Almost all speak a second language, predominately Spanish. Very few engage in social media beyond Facebook, which is used to connect with family.

Data Collection

There was a total of 12 interviews. Each interview ranged from between 30 minutes to one hour, with the longest being just under one hour. The interviews were conducted largely in person in public locations in and around the McAllen, Texas area between January 14th, 2022, and February 10, 2022.

The data was collected in person in all but three instances. Those instances involved a telephone interview. Each interview was recorded with a handheld Phillips recorder. The questions and responses were also handwritten. The interviews were then transcribed into Software available known as Otter, then completed with handwritten notes and recordings.

The only unusual circumstance with the data collection was that this interview process happened towards the end of the covid strict restrictions. Many of the officers were still wearing masks as was the interviewer.

Data Analysis

Almost all participant responses were different in that different in the life experiences of each range dramatically. Some participants had lived in the small geographic area of McAllen Texas, for example, while others had lived around the world. However, through the inductive analysis and coding process initially being processed initiated the primary researcher was able to organize do organize the responses into smaller clusters.

All of the responses were collected and then all were analyzed over three weeks. The responses were aligned with the exact question asked to every participant for continuity and accuracy. The data were reviewed and analyzed in each transcript and compared to written notes. The specific codes, categories, and themes emerged from the data using quotations as needed to emphasize their importance. Except for the noted three interviews conducted via telephone conference due to COVID-19 concerns, there were no variations in data collection from the previously described plan.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

One key factor in establishing and maintaining the credibility of many of the findings was to use probing questions on certain responses. When it became clear that the response might have been an issue for the researcher, the researcher would then ask the participant to expand on the response. In each instance, the participant was willing and

able to comply with those requests. The resulting detail-oriented response for each participant was very credible.

Another was the data collection process. Every interview was tape-recorded contemporaneously. Handwritten notes were also captured during the interview. The interview was then transcribed, and the handwritten notes and tapes were used to clarify each statement.

Transferability

Researchers believe that some of the common themes that emerged from the study can be transferable. For example, in one sense or another, every single participant had felt that they had faced challenges in their life, and each had overcome those challenges in different ways. However, fortitude was the testament to the officer of being able to overcome certain struggles was a common theme amongst all.

Next, it became clear that while each participant was able to able to handle every situation differently, almost all have been involved in physical confrontations where there was an inherent danger of injury. Some were willing to fight. Some would talk their way out of things. Some would engage in both. However, all the participants did indicate they had not run from the confrontational situation and had dealt with it accordingly.

Dependability

The same questions were posed to each participant in the same sequence. The only deviation would be if a deeper discussion emerged on a particular topic. The data was captured and analyzed using the same tools. Evidence of dependability can be found in the length of time of each interview.

Reliability

Each participant is providing data that is subjective to that person and their experiences. However, reliability in responses and the procedure that was undertaken to capture those responses can be found in the patterns that emerged from the data. Those patterns were readily identifiable and were often a common string between participants. Those participants were not provided questions in advance and had not discussed the questions with others ahead of the interview.

Confirmability

When three, four, or five participants were all given similar strong-type responses to a question, there emerged themes. Those themes that emerged here in this study point to conformability because of the consistent presence of these themes. Further, there were not five; there were twelve and yet the patterns and themes remained consistent.

Verification Strategies

Each interview was taped using a handheld device. That device was the same used for every interview. The interview was also subject to handwritten notes during the interview. The voice recording was then transcribed using Otter dictation software and a transcript was produced. Using the tape recording and handwritten notes, corrections and changes were made for a full transcript and correct transcript to be revealed. Then singular analysis was done using the Otter software and by the researcher individually.

Results**Categories**

Following the interview with each participant, the audio was reviewed and compared to the written notes to verify accuracy. There were no discrepant cases. Each participants interview responses was examined for analyzed by the researcher for constantly recurring ideas, phrases, thoughts and words. Those are represented here.

Participant 1

Job, paycheck, pride, brother, knockdown, cowboys, school, parents, carry, ambition, challenge, work ethic

Participant 2

Enjoy, challenge, push, school, work, family, support, friends, promotion, track, honesty

Participant 3

Basketball, married, dad, family, job, push, carry, military, fellow officers, stand up, misusing, kids, pride

Participant 4

Graduate, military, high school, dad, marriage, family, well-liked, college, forward, job, barbeque, accountability

Participant 5

Baseball, valley, job, school, family, kids, parents football, bully, fight, pride, police,

Participant 6

family, kids, football, upstate, valley, discrimination, fieldwork, dad, Mexico, challenge, job, pay, benefits

Participant 7

family, kids, basketball, RGV, social life, parents, maintain, challenges, focus, school, enjoy

Participant 8

Mexico, McAllen, Bike, school, rough, fights, talk, college, parents, family, kids, divorce, gym, military, character, job, benefits, pay, pride,

Participant 9

Younger, dad, love, college, Rio Grande Valley, sports, daughters, carry, military, marriage, work

Participant 10

People, years, divorced, seizure, career, sports, military, outdoors, supervisor, football, family challenges, moved, happy

Participant 9

College, work, wife, family, parents, military, waffling, dad, schedule, tackle, taste.

Participant 11

Family, fights, school, work, college, Customs, travel, training, sports, family, pride

Participant 12

People, RGV, military, daughter, divorce, border patrol, mom, dad, job, teach, gun, challenge, pride

Themes

As analysis was conducted on the recurring words, the following themes emerged:

- Education
- Overcoming challenges

- Family
- Law Enforcement/military career
- Sports Participation
- Self-Enrichment
- Work Ethic
- Self-Control
- Attitudes towards social media

Education

One of the patterns that did emerge was education and the importance of school for each participant. Each participant indicated that their parents had influenced them greatly to continue their education and they in turn almost all had children that were either going to go to college or are in college. School and education were a very important part of every participant's life.

Overcoming challenges

The schooling and background of each participant also revealed an emergent pattern. That pattern dealt specifically with challenges in school. Each participant indicated that they had suffered some type of personal challenge in school either being bullied for being overweight, or for example or not being able to speak Spanish in some instances. However, each one of the participants found a way to deal with the challenge and overcome those challenges. Some of them engaged in a physical confrontation. Some engaged in diplomacy and talked their way out of a confrontation, but all found a way to

manage those challenges. This ability was one of the primary themes that emerged from this study and were a common experience for all participants.

Family

Another emerging theme was the importance of the nuclear family. Very few participants had experienced divorce among their parents and very few had experienced divorce in their household. However, their social lives revolved around their hold on their nuclear families and their immediate families as well.

Law Enforcement Careers

Not all participants would encourage their children to go into law enforcement even though most of them had had some type of encouragement themselves from some family member whether it be a mother or father or uncle. Researchers had noted that there had been recent issues where the public was scrutinizing law enforcement actions. This had put tremendous stress on all participants and participants not encouraging their children to go into law enforcement might be a byproduct of this. Almost all indicated that they would encourage their children to go into the military, regardless of if it was a male or female child.

Sports Participation

Almost every single participant had engaged in sports activities in their younger days and even today. Those activities ranged from organized sports in high school and scholarships in college to nothing more than pick-up type baseball or basketball. Every one of the participants had used those sports as a means of social inclusion and each thought that sports had been a major positive part of their life. All but one participant

engages in some sort of sports fandom today and encourages their children to participate in sports activities. It is unknown what impact having all participants being male had on the development of this theme.

Work Ethic

None of the participants felt that most of their fellow officers worked as diligently as they do. Each had felt that they rightfully earned their position in the specialized units. They all recognized that there was a requisite amount of effort that was required for the job and that the rewards such as promotions and special opportunities came at opportunities came because of those efforts. All the participants felt that by and large, it was a fair process and that the rewards system available was across-the-board correct.

Self-Enrichment

Every single participant found law enforcement work to be particularly rewarding and something that they took a lot of pride in. Again, researchers noted some of the difficulties with law enforcement as of late and noted that there was a level of pain with each participant in the disappointment in the way that the public seemed to not appreciate their efforts as they had in the past. That did not however diminish personal pride in the work and effort that they had involved themselves in.

Self-Control

Some participants felt that they still would sometimes get angry and traffic or in confrontations, but it was not a consistent pattern. Most felt that their experience in law enforcement had been able to assist them in developing better resistance to antagonism and that they did not respond to a provocation as they might have in the past. This

connected to the participants' experiences in overcoming adversity and emerged as an important theme and recurring trait amongst all participants.

Attitudes Towards Social Media

None of the participants effectively engaged in social media except for Facebook. Facebook was a common theme throughout, but Facebook was used to interact with family members as well as military friends as an example.

Other results

The following themes also emerged from the analysis and are noted for importance and information, although they did not recur with the same frequency as those noted above.

Original Career Goals

Only a fraction of the participants had envisioned themselves being in law enforcement. The ones that had generally influenced their lives were already law enforcement. Some had desired to go into the work because it would be fulfilling and rewarding while others recognize the pay and benefits.

Relationship With Managers

Some of the participants had personal conflicts with managers and supervisors that resulted in a different viewpoint as far as the way they felt management may protect them. Almost all felt that if they had gotten into trouble that they would essentially be on their own with very little support from any agency.

Military experience

There were about half of the participants had served in the military. Almost all had some type of strenuous job opportunities before becoming law enforcement. All felt that the previous job experience benefited them going into law enforcement. All of them had expressed that they felt law enforcement was a large and easier job than the work they had performed before.

Firearms

Approximately half of the participants were involved in firearms off duty. Some chose to carry off duty daily while others rarely carried any type of firearm.

Outside Activities

Almost all the outside activities away from the work involved family. This was from caring for ailing parents to family barbecues and to travel teams of sports for children.

Geographic living experiences

Each participant was born in a different area of the United States, and some had lived in the Rio Grande Valley for many years. Some moved around and some lived in a consistent place in a consistent place but there was no commonality among the participants. Very few had any connectivity back to Mexico or any other foreign nation.

Languages

There were very few common language issues while some had grown up speaking Spanish in the household, for example, others learn Spanish in school regardless of any ethnic lineage.

Summary

The worldview and background of border enforcement agents play a role in the success of their careers.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Purpose and Nature of the Study

In the year 2020, the relationship between the governing and those governed in the United States began to transform and law enforcement officers became a focal point of the population's unhappiness (Reny & Newman, 2021).

Being a law enforcement agent has traditionally been an exceedingly difficult job, and that was even before society's demands for reform (Koslicki,2020). There is a real or perceived lack of adequate pay, high stress, inherent dangers, and high burnout rates that made law enforcement unattractive as a career (Koslicki, 2020). Simply the idea of employment with long hours, continuously moving calendar days off, and shift work is daunting to most people and makes hiring and retention that much more of a challenge (Riedy, et al., 2021). Police officers and other law enforcement have been retiring in vast numbers at a rate that the hiring to replace them could not keep up even before 2020 (Corpuz, 2019). The impact of the civil unrest in 2020 with the law enforcement reform drive spread throughout the United States for months has further impacted the rank-and-file officers (Reny & Newman, 2021). It seems that society does not want law enforcement to enforce the law – or at least certainly to enforce the law differently than they have been (Benet & McMillan, 2021). With that has come to a definitive breakdown in the respect for law enforcement in many sectors of society and it often will occur in public, under the watchful eye of a camera phone, with any encounter uploaded onto the internet (Mourtgos, et al., 2022). Society's demands for reform and the demands for these changes have taken a toll on law enforcement organizations which can be measured by

the rate of retirement and the inability to recruit or retain law enforcement officers (Copeland, et al., 2022).

Since the inception of professional law enforcement in the United States, the questions of how much, how little, what level of force, what level of communication with those in the community have existed (Grossman, et al., 1990). Following the death of George Floyd, calls to defund the police, the chant of "All Cops Are Bastards" seems to have broken a barrier of trust and admiration between the communities and the police. That denigration of respect between those two groups has left a lingering animosity between both (Copeland, et al., 2022). These real-world challenges should be considered in the management process of retaining, recruiting, and training agents.

Every officer and candidate officer undergoes several examinations to determine suitability for that employment (Emmerling, et al., 2012). However, one thing that does seem to be lacking is an explanation of why some officers become high-performance officers while other officers struggle in mediocrity according to whatever measurement from the law enforcement agency. Rhetorically, if two officers are provided the same training and the same exposure to potential success, why do some officers seem to find success on the job while other officers often do not?

The purpose of this study is to explore whether the outside world views and life experiences of high-performance border enforcement agencies have had an impact on that job performance. The researcher conducted a qualitative interview of approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length with federal law enforcement agents assigned to high-

performance enforcement units in and around McAllen, Texas – along the United States border with Mexico.

The resulting information is invaluable to agencies for targeting recruiting, retention, and promotion within their ranks at any type of law enforcement organization, and possibly any organization. Simple background investigations only determine whether a person has led a life making reasonably good decisions. It does not project or predicts performance. It does not project out or predict whether that person is suitable for the job beyond just the basics. Given the restrictions of recruiting and retention of these agencies, simply hiring an officer who adheres to the basics is almost a liability.

Truly understanding some of the commonalities with officers who have a proven sustained superior performance is critical because agencies facing challenges of recruiting and retraining officers need to identify their highest performers and they need to identify the highest potential performing candidates. These challenges were prevalent even before the George Floyd protests, and since that time it is even more critical

At an absolute minimum, the results of the study can assist managers of law enforcement entities to better understand the people who work for them and to better maximize that human capital.

Summary of Key Findings

Almost all of the key themes listed in order below ~~that~~ emerged from the data collection mirrored those same traits found in the gaps in the literature review.

Interpretation of the Findings

Self-Control

The peer-reviewed literature previously had exposed several themes when identifying some of the attributes of successful law enforcement agents. Those included character traits that were formulated by existing temperament as well as additional models of what constituted quality character traits. Self-awareness and temperament control can be organic. (Luby, et al., 1999). A law enforcement officer is required to exhibit self-control multiple times per shift. That learned behavior is much more readily adopted when the same officer has inherent traits of self-control. Another like and similar trait that had emerged involved situational judgment. When confronted by rapidly changing challenges, the officer would consistently make quality decisions and defuse hostile situations.

The study revealed that most participants felt that their experience in law enforcement had been able to assist them in developing better resistance to antagonism and that they did not respond to provocation. That experience comes from dealing with horrific criminal situations, hostile crowds, internal disciplinary processes, administrative audits, and other periods of high stress and pressure. This study has revealed that it is just as likely those experiences were life experiences before time in service as much as service related.

The literature reveals a related trait; leadership. Although leadership is reflective as a trait, the idea that a high-performing border enforcement agent would be seen as a leader amongst their peers compared to others is identifiable. Being "cool under pressure"

inspires confidence in those around you (Fitzgerald, 2022). When a high-performance officer exhibit self-control in high-stress situations, other officers recognize that attribute and will gravitate towards that natural leadership (Muller & Niessen, 2018). Any commander in a law enforcement agency would recognize this trait as an invaluable commodity to operations and a component of success (Tangney, et al, 2018).

Work Ethic

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that participants were aware of their superior work ethic. None of the participants felt that the majority of their fellow officers worked as diligently as they did. Each had felt that they rightfully earned their position in the specialized units. All participants believed that the agency process was a meritocracy. Rewards such as promotions and special opportunities came as a result of those work efforts. All the participants felt that by and large, it was a fair process and that the rewards system available was across-the-board transparent.

This belief is akin to moral character and guilt-proneness – both of which appear in the literature review as traits discovered associated with job performance. The moral character was essentially doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons. Guilt proneness was a common theme that emerged from the literature studies indicating that people who inherently do the right thing are subject to feeling guilty when they did not do the right thing. This tracks into the concept of character overall for successful law enforcement agents and desired traits.

High Performance

The literature review discovered that there will be different performance measurements depending on the type of law enforcement that has involved (Sparrow, 2015). For normal traditional city police departments with patrol officers, that measurement may include response times. For law enforcement entities that are required to house and supervise detainees, the performance measure could be a lack of incidents among inmates. A measurement may also include a lack of incidents that indicates that the officers assigned to the jail are more attentive to the needs and avoidance of conflict (Davis, et al, 2015). For federal border law enforcement agents, they are required to process millions of arriving passengers and cargo and with skill, timing and luck, they can find the needle in the haystack violation in a wave of legitimate travelers (US Customs and Border Protection, 2022). For those officers employed by CBP, the measure of high performance is based on interceptions of narcotics, fugitives, firearms, or currency mostly. In the study, every agent interviewed was involved in some type of special operations unit and was dedicated solely to intercepting these law enforcement actions. This was indicative of a way that the agency measured people's performance because only high performers were eligible for those types of jobs. For this study and selecting this group of participants, the measures for performance – thus the ability to identify 'high performance' agents is a simple process. CBP and the union that represents the employees have agreed that the criteria for selection to a specialized unit are largely based on interceptions of narcotics, undeclared money, weapons, and fugitives. This means that if an agent is assigned to a specialized enforcement unit (i.e. Contraband Enforcement Team or Anti-Terrorism Team) then they are by agency definition “high

performance”. This is why the researcher focused on participants who are assigned by CBP to these groups for the study. The participants of this study are assigned to specialized units with CBP based on interceptions.

Self-Enrichment

Every single participant expressed that the work of law enforcement was particularly rewarding. Personal pride in the work and effort was a consistent theme.

In the literature review, one of the areas identified was the fact that many officers were experiencing emotional pain because of the diminished view of their work in the eyes of the public as a result of the death of George Floyd and the resulting civil unrest and protests (Sanchez, 2020). But the public’s anger towards perception of police abuses had been simmering for many years before May 2020 (Applewhite, 2020). Participant officers consistently expressed to the researcher that they became officers to help others and that their standing in the community was a type of reward for that effort and sacrifice. At the same time, they bemoaned the fact that law enforcement was once a profession that was recognized publicly with appreciation days as at a local baseball game, but that the public recognition had diminished since the civil unrest of 2020 after the George Floyd death (Sanchez, 2020). While the reality is that many still recognize the importance of law enforcement, the perception and sting of disappointment linger for participants (Katcher, 2022). The participant's expression of self-enrichment or self-fulfillment intersects with other themes identified by the study results such as overcoming challenges.

Overcoming challenges

This is likely the single most significant and telling response researchers discovered during this study – clearly an emergent pattern. That pattern dealt specifically with challenges in school and growing up. Each participant had indicated that they had suffered some type of personal challenge in their younger years, either being bullied for being overweight, for example, or for not being able to speak Spanish in some instances. Each of the participants found a way to deal with the challenge and overcome those challenges. Some of them engaged in a physical confrontation. Some engaged in diplomacy and talked their way out of a confrontation, but all found a way to manage those challenges. The theme of overcoming challenges has been identified as a critical trait needed in law enforcement today (National Institute of Justice, 2020).

Akin to this from the literature review was the ability to deal with high levels of stress. This is an important part of the duties and responsibilities of law enforcement. They often endure many verbal and physical provocations and are not expected to resort to violent responses except on rare occasions, bound by the confines of the agency use of force continuum and jurisdiction statutes (Terrill & Paoline, 2013).

Another important theme that coincides with the participant's response to overcoming challenges is the literature review-revealed the trait of self-awareness. The officer's honest view of one's capabilities and limitations – the ability to observe one's actions and how it impacts other – was a quality reviewed. This ability to self-perceive seems to also be an important part of a successful law enforcement agent.

Sports Participation

Sports participation was not specifically an emerging theme in the literature review, but there are more important components to sports participation that were present in the study. Almost every single participant had engaged in sports activities in their younger days and even today. Those ranged from organized sports in high school and even scholarships in college to nothing more than pick-up type baseball or basketball. All had used those sports as a means for social inclusion and each conversely thought that sports had been a major positive part of their life. This includes sports fandom today and encouraging their children to participate in sports activities. It is unknown what impact having all participants being male had on the development of this theme. That would be an area for possible future study.

Some of the participants had prior military service instead of sports participation or a combination of the two. Many of the same positive attributes found in sports participation such as rules, practice, authority, discipline, structure, and social inclusion are also found in military service. Law enforcement structure is a mirror of the US military in rank titles, organizational structure, insignia, and formal processions. In the literature review, a theme emerged regarding prior military service or a desire for militarized structure or an organized vision of governance. This study has revealed that most participants spoke of sports participation as a fundamental source of guidance in their life and that may tie into the team concepts of law enforcement. This indicates that military service, sports participation, and successful law enforcement careers may be linked and that could be the subject of future studies.

Education

Another major theme from the study and the gap in the literature that rivals "Overcoming challenges" as the most prominent aspect of this study was education and the importance of school for each participant. Each participant indicated that their parents had a great influence on them to continue their education and they in turn had children that were either going to go to college or are in college. School and education were a very important part of every participant's life.

This finding mirrors the literature review. Education, either formal and traditional, or professional related is a key component theme identified through the literature review.

The recurrence of this important theme of law enforcement officers who are successful in placing value on higher levels of education could provide another possible theme for future studies.

Relationship With Managers

Industrial and organizational psychologists have long asserted that the highest performers in an organization are often the most difficult to manage, in part because most are very, very good at what they do and understand their value (Knight, 2017). Some of the participants report having personal conflicts with managers and supervisors that in a loss of trust, straining the relationship.

Studies have indicated that high performers would benefit from managing them differently until commonalities and quality communication can be established (Knight, 2017). Almost all participants felt if they had run afoul of agency rules and regulations that they would not likely receive the support of agency managers. There was no parallel

literature outlining a lack of trust between high-performance agents or law enforcement officers and managers identified in the literature review. This may be attributed to the previous research findings related to all law enforcement employees having an internal distrust and sensing a lack of support from the administration, not just high performers (Johnson, 2015).

Firearms/Use of Force

Approximately half of the participants carried firearms off duty. Some chose to carry off duty daily while others rarely carried any type of firearm. The results of the study did not identify a clear pattern or connection between high-performance law enforcement agents and off-duty carry of firearms.

Connected to the issue of firearms is the concept of the use of force in law enforcement. This is an officer's tool to reduce resistance and achieve compliance using the mere presence of the officer, through intermediate weapons such as a Taser to deadly force (Wolfe, et al, 2020). Interestingly, the use of force was an issue that was addressed, and every participant officer understood that need may ultimately exist during their tenure and that they must rise above the level of the threat to stop the threat.

Public Perception

How the public perceives law enforcement officers who are conducting their jobs is an important component in the identification of the literature review.

As reported here, the events around the United States following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, radically altered some Americans' perception of law enforcement (Reny & Newman, 2021). The impact felt by these officer participants in the

shift of that perception – largely negative – was an important point of findings. The participants who had previously responded that they take great pride in the work performed had largely enjoyed a public position of respect and admiration, and the events of summer 2020 challenged that belief. However, the public perception of the officers and the work they do remains an important part of job satisfaction and appears to play a role in their success.

Geographic Living Experiences

In the study, each participant revealed that they were born and raised in a different area of the United States from one another. Some participants had lived in the Rio Grande Valley for many years. Some moved around and some lived in a consistent place in a consistent place but there was no commonality among the participants. Very few had any connectivity back to Mexico or Mexico or any other foreign nation.

There was no connection between where an agent was born or raised and their success on the job. This is reflective of the literature review's absence of geographic experiences related to law enforcement success.

Attitudes Towards Social Media

Participants were asked about their social media activity preferences. While there was no correlation between law enforcement performance and social media identified in the literature review, it was an important area to explore.

A distinct commonality was revealed in that **none** of the participants effectively engaged in social media except for Facebook. None of the participants showed any real interest in the use of Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Tik Tok, or other platforms. Facebook

was the only common theme throughout, but Facebook was used book was used to interact with family members as well as military friends as an example. Any other correlation between social media use – or an absence thereof – and success in a law enforcement career could be the basis for further study

Law Enforcement Careers

Not all participants would encourage their children to go into law enforcement even though most of them had had some type of encouragement themselves from some family member whether it be a mother or father or uncle. Researchers had noted that a push toward defunding law enforcement and real reform of law enforcement activities and the ensuing public scrutiny had put tremendous stress on all participants (Reny & Newman, 2021). When the interview revealed that participants would not encourage their children to seek a law enforcement career, it is believed that that attitude may be a byproduct of the current environment. Almost all indicated that they would encourage their children to go into the military regardless of if it was a male or female child. Considering the similarities between the type of careers – military and law enforcement – this seeming contradiction is an area for possible further study. The literature review did not reveal any studies gauging law enforcement officials' opinions on career goals for their children, thus a literature gap has already been identified.

Original career goals

Only a fraction of the participants had envisioned themselves being in law enforcement. The ones that had generally influenced their lives were already law enforcement. Some had desired to go into the work because it would be fulfilling and

rewarding while others recognize the pay and benefits. There was no reciprocal literature review finding.

Limitations of the Study

The most glaring limitation of the study was the fact that all the participants were male. Male and female officers alike were solicited, but only males responded.

Unofficially, the United States Border Patrol component of United States Customs and Border Protection (operating between the Ports of Entry) counts female agents as approximately 14% of the overall field agent workforce (Zippia Careers, 2022).

Officially, the Office of Field Operations component of United States Customs and Border Protection (operating at the designated Ports of Entry) counts female agents as approximately 19% of the overall field agent workforce (US Customs and Border Protection, 2021). This is a significant percentage of the overall workforce. The responses to many of the same questions may be similar but could also be radically different. This could be an area that could be further developed in a study, focusing on just female officers.

Secondly, this study can be applied to any other type of law enforcement entity. The basic responsibilities of the participants in this study to carry out law enforcement functions daily, do not differ significantly from that of any other law enforcement officer (US Customs and Border Protection, 2021). However, there are differences related to population densities, mission priorities of the department, demographics, and other differences that could impact the results of another study. For example, a Customs and Border Protection officer from Field Operations at a land border port of entry may be

involved in upwards of 1,000 "traffic stops" or "traffic encounters" daily (US Customs and Border Protection, 2021). A regular patrol officer in a small town may stop five or fewer vehicles. A federal enforcement officer with CBP may encounter and stop many more vehicles, but otherwise the work duties are exceedingly similar. This study was conducted solely focusing on border enforcement federal agents and this study can be replicated for other law enforcement entities-

Recommendations

Almost every employee that is hired for any job goes through some type of assessment for job suitability (Daher, 2015). For many, that includes background information. This is true for those in sensitive positions and those to be selected for a position of power such as law enforcement, including psychological screenings (Kwaske & Morris, 2015). Human resources officers work to develop tools to readily identify people that are most suited for a particular job (Daher, 2015).

Once the individual is already working for the entity, and they distinguish themselves with any measure of elevated and sustained superior performance, a competent manager will want to try to identify the character traits and reasons for that person sustained success. This leads to the creation of training and mentoring opportunities for other employees in the hope that others can emulate that sustained level of success (Daher, 2015). This is a normal and reasonable desired outcome for those who evaluate and recruit candidates and those who manage employees.

Law enforcement recruiters and managers have the same desires and goals. It is important to accept that fact each candidate, and in the context of this study – border law

enforcement agents - undergoes the same training and is exposed to the same opportunities to demonstrate success great success, but with varying results. This should demonstrate that training and experience are not the only factors to consider when trying to build and retain a cadre of sustained superior performing officers. If it were those two factors alone, it is reasonable to conclude that all officers would have the same degree of success. But they do not.

At least one other component is found by delving deeper into the lived experiences and learned behavior of those candidates to ascertain if they possess inherent traits that are found in the organization's sustained superior performers. A study interview, such as the one conducted here, that examines the background and personal lived experiences of high-performing officers can be beneficial to apply to an organization's success. That is especially true when budget constraints and shallow recruiting pools are common challenges.

Those identified traits can then be used to help to recruit better candidates and to develop officers already on the payroll.

This Researcher recommends that a similar interview process such as was demonstrated here can be standardized and replicated for any law enforcement entity to be used in the recruiting and retention efforts. Each entity will have a unique standard of how to measure superior performance and an interview can be drafted to highlight those desired results.

Then, the on-site manager can have access to the information related to that particular officer they will know what motivates their officers and understand what their

officers observe and how they might respond. This means that the manager will have better information to individually develop the existing cadre of officers into higher degrees of success.

In addition, broader studies can be conducted in other departments or federal agencies to give managers a better understanding of the officers.

Implications

One potential impact for positive social change from this study is hiring. When any organization hires any new employee for a job, they are seeking the highest quality person and candidate that they can find. For over a year, Americans witnessed a loud outcry for police reform, and the impact of that outcry permeated into the American psyche (McCandless & McKay, 2020). Even though many of the cities that sought to defund law enforcement have now stepped back to examine the wisdom of that decision, and it seems that based on the responses from these participants, the talent pool for candidates continues to be impacted. The talent pool of future candidates observed how a percentage of society was not willing to reward them with some of the admiration that study participants responded they expected to find when serving in the law enforcement profession.

But law enforcement is not an institution or a building. Law enforcement is people. Those people interact with other people in a very unique relationship. The public's need for law enforcement is not going to disappear, and the need for quality officers is more important than ever (Communities United for Police Reform, 2020).

Because the need for quality law enforcement agents exists, a major factor to be considered in the hiring process is identifying candidates who exhibit the skill of avoiding overreaction to certain provocations. Those provocations can be seen in photos of citizens screaming, spitting at, and throwing materials at officers during unrest following the death of George Floyd (McCandless & McKay, 2020). Those provocations can be seen in videos of numerous citizens challenging the legality of traffic stops, trespass enforcement, and even arrests (Arkusha & Torbas, 2021). As this study illustrates, the highest performing officers have shown consistently that they have demonstrated a mechanism to deal with confrontations and challenges that do not always result in some type of violence but more often seek a calm and equal resolution. This can lead to a conclusion that identifying officers who can or are enforcing the law every day who are the least likely inclined to engage in some type of violation of the rights of the public can be an important component of hiring and retention. This was found in the recurring themes such as overcoming challenges, self-enrichment, job satisfaction, self-control, work ethic, and even attitudes towards social media.

Positive social change is achieved when agencies identify the learned and inherent character traits of those officers who you want to serve as a model for that agency and recruit targeting others with the same or similar traits.

Another issue of great importance in examining the phenomena is that many officers take tremendous pride in the work but would not necessarily encourage their children to take up the same profession.

This was a troubling theme that came from the study for researchers because it is unknown if it was simply the response to many of the demands for police reform after the death of George Floyd or if it is something that is more long-term and systemic. Is there specific professional anxiety in the loss of perception of heroes and protectors of the community (McCandless & McKay, 2020)? This has not been answered by this study. Had this study been conducted before the events of May of 2020 the results may have been different. However, an important question remains whether the answers would have been similar following the outcry of George Floyd's death.

The reason that this is important is that it goes towards recruiting and retention. If a person has dedicated their entire professional career to being a law enforcement agent and they have enjoyed all aspects of the job it would be reasonable to assume that they in turn would recommend that same profession to others, and this includes loved ones. The fact that no participants would possibly recommend the job to their children, but they would possibly recommend military service could serve as the basis for other long-term studies.

But what this does indicate is that the high performance and quality law enforcement officers will be more difficult to recruit. Is the answer to recruitment and retention a command of higher salaries – through education attainment – because ultimate better talent is the better talent? This study does not answer that question, but further interviews of other high-performance officers could hold the key. This impacts not just recruiting, but training and retention as well. Focusing on questions such as motivation for the job, and what they find most rewarding can assist to find the officer that is better

suites to deal with the challenges and provocations for police reform, even before the death of George Floyd.

Lastly, we know that high-performing employees can often present the greatest challenges for managers (Knight, 2017). If the interviews and study conducted resulted in simply having managers' better understanding of those higher performing employees, this could prove to be invaluable information. Every employee is to be treated equally and fairly, but avoiding what can trigger anger and resentment, or finding what is best suited to reward them is an individual exercise (Knight, 2017). Having the information of what is learned and inherent in those officers – finding out what each hold as important to them – is a major step in keeping high performers happy at the workplace and retaining them.

Conclusion

Throughout western history, political philosophers such as Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and others developed a theory of social governance whereby the people relinquished a certain amount of freedoms in exchange for structure and rules (Muldoon, 2016). The resulting "social contract theory" had an impact on the framers and drafters of the Constitution of the United States (Zoller, 2016). The general public agreed to abide by the rules and regulations promulgated by their elected representatives, and over time have also agreed to expend tax monies to pay for professional law enforcement. The same public that entered into that agreement willingly remains a voice and how that law is enforced, however.

It is evident from the events of May 20th, 2020 that the public expressed their voice and that there was a demand for change. The events of May 20, 2020, and the ensuing protests that swept through the United States highlighted a schism between law enforcement and those in the public. The relationship between the governing and those governed in the United States has been impacted by the death of Floyd, but the issue existed well before this time. It is not reasonable to expect the public to change, therefore it is the police who need to absorb those experiences and determine how to accomplish their basic mission without alienating those they serve.

As a result, law enforcement agencies saw the need to reestablish a positive relationship with the public and reasonably incorporate many of the demands for reform into their daily activities. They must be able to rely upon those officers on the job every day to carry out those priority missions.

October 23rd, 2022, it was revealed that the Minneapolis Police Department had been reduced to 33% of its original size following George Floyd's murder and that in 2022, only 57 people had applied to the department compared to 292 in 2019. "Hundreds of officers quit the Minneapolis police department after George Floyd was killed. The department is reportedly still struggling to recruit (al-Arshani, 2022).

On August 8, 2022, the Associated Press released a story titled "'Overwhelmed': Cops combat violent crime as ranks dwindle" (Baccus, et al, 2022). That story mirrors many of the issues addressed by law enforcement in this study today and moving into the future. The story indicates that following the civil unrest in the summer of 2020, there was a rise in violence among most major cities in the United States. At the same time,

more officers are retiring or resigning from their positions as police officers. Often, they leave faster than they can be replaced (Baccus, et al, 2022). Departments impacted have been reexamining how they provide law enforcement services and what Ares to reduce efforts. The Portland Police Chief Chuck Lovell is concerned that there might not be enough officers available to "...recruit enough people to serve our cities" noting that the Portland Police "lost 237 sworn officers through retirements or resignations since 2020" (Baccus, et al, 2022). Noting the fall in available police, Portland experienced over three times as many homicides than normal which follows with patterns seen in most major cities (Baccus, et al, 2022).

Pointing to the findings and assertions of the study that the impact of the social unrest and possibly the pandemic making long-term changes to societies' perceptions of policing, the study shows that this is a real challenge. The writers further indicate that while the departments do not know exactly why crime has increased, it seems to be a combination of issues (Baccus, et al, 2022). "The problem is you see cities where they didn't do any of those things where crime also went up and you'll see rural areas where crime also went up as well," said Ben Struhl, executive director of the Crime and Justice Policy Lab at the University of Pennsylvania. "There's a lot of evidence that something bigger is going on than the social justice protests that happened, and it's probably more than one thing," said Struhl, whose center has worked with Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Oakland to reduce gun violence (Baccus, et al, 2022).

These real-life happenings indicate that the better prepared and equipped officer in the field is more likely to conduct themselves and react to situations within the confines of the new demands and job realities facing them in 2022. Finding and retaining those quality law enforcement officers is a critical component to the success of any law enforcement entity. Agencies are evaluating all aspects of their operations and the priority must be the people that serve as the face of the organization in the streets. It is the responsibility that the best and most talented candidates are at the forefront and that they seek means to fill the ranks of future officers to come.

Researchers believe that the model presented in this study will be a major step in providing the tools to the managers and decision-makers of those law enforcement agencies to better identify quality candidates and to enhance training retention and daily management capabilities. The result will be to advance social change and law enforcement.

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Appendix A

Questions:

Where were you born?

How long did you live there?

- Tell me about a typical day there?

How many areas have you lived in?

- Have you ever lived outside of the United States?
- Tell me about a typical day there?
- Do you have relatives outside of the United States?
- Do you identify with that culture or country?
- Languages Spoken
 - o Formal training in that language?

How did you like living in each location?

- Explain any problems adjusting

How far did you go in school?

- What degree from University?
- What is your degree in?
- How many times did you change your major?
- Ever been expelled or disciplined?
 - o Why?

Family

Where are your parents?

- Were your parents divorced?
- Did your parents often argue or fight?
- Any police calls?
 - o What happened?
- Parents ever married?

How many siblings?

- Do you have a large family?
- Do you feel that you have a smaller family?
- Do you fight with your siblings?
 - o Why?

Do you think of yourself as close to your family?

How long have you been married?

- Ever been divorced?
- Was the divorce acrimonious?

Do you have children?

- Are they in school?
- What type of job you ever envision your children could have?
- Would you encourage your children to go into law enforcement?
- Would you encourage your children to go into the military?

- Would you encourage your children be in sports activities that some consider to be violent such as football?
- What is your definition of discipline for your children?

Job

How did you find out about the job with Customs and Border Protection?

Is this the kind of field of work that you envisioned yourself doing?

Do you feel enriched by the job? Is it rewarding?

Is this type of work match what your education is?

How are your supervisors?

Do you see other officers working hard?

Do you feel there is promotion capabilities?

Do you want to be promoted?

How can you get promoted?

Did you ever have a goal growing up of being law enforcement?

Any training opportunities on the job?

Special operations?

Ever selected?

Why or why not?

You have any family members who were in law enforcement?

Did you ever see time me the military?

Did any family serve time in the military?

What other jobs have you had?

What type of activities?

Any activities that help at CBP?

Do you carry a gun off duty?

- Why?

Does your spouse have a firearm permit?

How many guns do you have in the house?

What types?

Ever get angry in traffic?

Ever get into any verbal altercations?

Outside Activities

What are some of your favorite activities outside of work?

Did you ever compete in any type of sports activity?

- Would you rather participate in this activity yourself or sit and watch?

- Any boxing or MMA?

Are you a current fan of any type of sports-related activities?

Is your family closely associated with those types of sports activities?

Social Media

Are you engaged in any type of social media activity?

- Do you have Facebook?

Twitter?

Snapchat?

- Do you find yourself posting family memorabilia or do you have discussions with other people on those social media platforms?
- You ever find yourself arguing with other people via social media question work has social media ever caused problems in your family?
- Has social media ever caused problems on your job?