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Budget Sustainability Strategies and Practices in Correctional Institutions

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Darrel Fox

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University

2024

Abstract

Budget Sustainability Strategies and Practices in Correctional Institutions

by

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MBA, University of North Alabama, 2016

BBA, University of North Alabama, 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration, Specialization in Human Resource Management

Walden University

Student ID# A00634906

June 2024

Abstract

Over 80 billion dollars are spent annually incarcerating approximately 2.3 million people, yet correctional systems continue to encounter substantial barriers in maintaining budgetary sustainability. Correctional leaders are concerned with budget strategies' relevance to ensure that needed resources are allocated and utilized to enable correctional facilities' continuing effectiveness. Grounded in organizational capacity theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore effective budget strategies and practices used by midlevel supervisors in correctional institutions. The participants comprised five midlevel correctional supervisors from four state prisons in the Southeastern United States who successfully developed and implemented effective strategies to achieve operational budgets supporting the prisons' sustainability. The data were collected using semistructured interviews and archival documents. Through thematic analysis, four themes were identified: managing funding flows from outside entities, control of the operating budget, controlling inventory and resources, and effectively managing allotted budgets. A key recommendation is for state executive leadership to have a budget development process that includes input from correctional supervisors. The implication for positive social change includes the potential to increase the overall safety of the community by the potential reduction of inmate recidivism.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my late parents, Annie, and Jessie Fox, for their endless love, support, and encouragement throughout my life. This achievement will fulfill the dream they envisioned for me.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Department of Corrections funding streams include various sources such as privatization, taxes, and federal and state appropriations. For nearly 3 decades, the United States of America has been the consistent leader in incarceration rates worldwide. Per Matherson (2023), several structural social problems have contributed to this reality (e.g., the school-to-prison pipeline, the 1994 Crime Bill, and aggressive surveillance and policing of poor and minority neighborhoods). The leaders in correctional organizations need sustainability models for strategies and practices in correctional institutions.

Background of the Problem

Over \$80 billion dollars are spent annually incarcerating approximately 2.3 million people, yet correctional systems continue to encounter substantial barriers in maintaining budgetary sustainability (Weidner & Schultz, 2019). The cost of running correctional facilities in the United States has increased by 455% since 1972 (Baughman, 2017). Correctional managers have struggled to meet organizational expectations despite increased fiscal and procedural resources to increase financial efficacy and improve organizational performance (Baughman, 2017).

Problem and Purpose

The general business problem was that many correctional supervisors are unable to sustain a fiscal budget. The specific business problem was that some correctional supervisors lack strategies to achieve operational budget sustainability in correctional institutions. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to identify and explore effective operational budget sustainability strategies used by midlevel supervisors

in correctional institutions. The target population for this study was midlevel correctional supervisors from four Southeastern state prisons who have successfully implemented effective strategies to achieve operational budget sustainability. The implications for positive social change included the potential for correctional supervisors and administrators to improve public safety in local communities and reduce inmate recidivism by improving the delivery of correctional and rehabilitation services.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was correctional supervisors who have demonstrated success in developing and implementing effective budgets for medium and maximum-security prisons in a Southeastern state. I gathered the sample for this study using the criterion sampling method, a purposive sampling strategy that supports the qualitative method, and case study design of the research. I used criterion sampling to gather participants who play a specific role or meet some criteria within an agency or organization (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Nature of the Study

The three methods of conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Lee & Cassell, 2013). I used a qualitative method for this study because of data collection techniques, including interviews and field observations, which are tools that fit my study because of the scarcity of research on my topic. Qualitative method collection techniques are conducive to research topics that have limited academic evaluation or literature (Gog, 2015; Meier & Specter, 2014). I did not examine relationships between variables; mixed-method and quantitative method platforms for this study were rejected

on that basis. The quantitative research method provides researchers with a platform to measure relationships between variables related to the research problem (Gog, 2015). The mixed-method combines aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methods in research development and application (Muskat et al., 2012).

There are three principal potential designs in qualitative research: phenomenological, ethnographic, and case study design (Fetterman, 2010; Gill, 2014). As described by Gill (2015), the phenomenological design is used to develop an explanation or deeper understanding about a specific human experience or phenomena, so it did not fit the research question posed in my study. According to Fetterman (2010), ethnographic studies involve long periods of deep immersion in the subject matter that were not necessary for my study either. I chose the case study design for my study because of the allowance for a lived-experience exploration of a topic that does not have expansive previous research. Case studies involve a detailed investigation of observable phenomena in depth and within a practical context (Yin, 2014). The emphasis on practical applications for the data collected during a case study allows clinicians and professionals in the real world the ability to use that data in practice, in meaningful and impactful ways (Shekhar, 2014; Tumele, 2015).

Research Question

What operational budget sustainability strategies do correctional supervisors use to maintain organizational fiscal sustainability?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you used to sustain the resources of your operating budget?

2. What key barriers have you faced for implementing and adhering to those operational budget sustainability strategies?
3. How did you address the key barriers to implementing your strategies for adhering to sustainable operational budget practices?
4. What situations contributed to the sustainability of the operational budget at your facility?
5. What specific practices have proved successful in sustaining your operating budget?
6. What strategies have you used to help officers facilitate daily operations within the confines of your operational budget?
7. What would you like to add from your experience regarding operational budget sustainability that has not already been covered?

Conceptual Framework

Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined the inquiry paradigm as the critical lens through which researchers present and analyze information important and pertinent to the research. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigms define the perspective of the researcher and how they will interact with and conceptualize the phenomena. I used organizational capacity as the inquiry paradigm for my study.

The concept of organizational capacity is the ability of an organization to reach its greatest potential (Jurie, 2000). The key concept in organizational capacity is the ability to ascertain and maintain the resources required to reach organizational goals (Paynter & Berner, 2014). Correctional supervisors who understand and use organizational capacity as a guideline may be better able to achieve budget sustainability. Therefore, the concept

of organizational capacity was the ideal lens for understanding and analyzing the data collected in my study of the successful operational budget sustainability strategies of correctional supervisors.

Effective organizations include organizational capacity models that underscore organizational processes, adequate staffing, and efficient service delivery (Beck & Boulton, 2012). As described by Jurie (2010) organizational capacity is the ability of organizational leaders to manage resources and talent to gain and maintain a competitive advantage in their market (Paynter & Berner, 2014). Successful implementation of organizational capacity practices provides the crux of budgetary sustainability of any type of organization (Jurie, 2010). Correctional supervisors are in a prime position to drive the strategies that will optimize organizational capacity (Kwicien, 2012; Pritchard, 2010). Supervisors that act as strategic planners within their organizational system are key figures for increasing the success and sustainability of an organization (Labeledz & Lee, 2011; Pritchard, 2010). Correctional supervisors who use strategic planning approaches to increase organizational capacity can also increase fiscal sustainability and overall organizational effectiveness (Labeledz & Lee, 2011).

Operational Definitions

Correctional System: The correctional system in the United States includes residents of jails and prisons, as well as the people serving on parole or probation within the community (Etchells, 2015).

Fiscal Sustainability: Fiscal sustainability in the context of local governments involves whether the revenue provided by local, state, and federal government resources adequately fund public services (Ji et al., 2016).

Operating Budget: Resources from tax revenues, government grants, federal money, etc. that fund local government-provided public services and agencies (Arcelus et al., 2015).

Organizational Capacity: The measure of organizational leadership, financial strength, and operational strategies that demonstrate the ability of an organization to capitalize on its strengths (Paynter & Berner, 2014).

Strategic Planning: A process that implements explicit strategies that achieve the long-term goals set by an organization (Batra et al., 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In this section, I will discuss the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are generally accepted as facts by the researcher without empirical evidence to validate those assumptions included in the research (Ellis & Levy, 2009).

Assumptions form the basis that grounds research, but they also carry fundamental risks to the validity of the research (Ellis & Levy, 2009). One potential weakness regarding assumptions is the impact perception has on how people experience reality (Glinka & Hensel, 2017). Assumptions incorporated in this study included:

1. Prospective participants were interested in sharing their honest experiences and feedback regarding this study.

2. The correctional supervisors participating in this study wanted to improve their ability to execute operational procedures within the assigned budget.

Limitations

Limitations are inherent threats to the validity of academic research (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Every research study has limitations. However, researchers can mitigate potential harm by identifying, analyzing, and planning for potential limitations (Ellis & Levy, 2009; Zlatanovic, 2016). The findings may not apply to jails or community correction contexts. The exploration of this study was limited to the experiences of correctional supervisors and cannot be applied to the experiences of subordinate correctional officers.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study are the parameters of the goals of the research (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Delimitations function as a blueprint for the boundaries of the research project (Piekkari et al., 2009). The results of this study are limited to the selection of participants working in state correctional facilities in a Southeastern state. The participants in this study are delimited to correctional supervisors in publicly funded correctional facilities in a Southeastern state.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The expected contribution of this study is to provide business leaders and managers with insights regarding strategies to improve the fiscal sustainability of their organizational operating budgets. These insights might hold special significance in

organizations with stressful working conditions. The outcomes of this study might provide an effective foundation that correctional supervisors could use to implement sustainable business practices in correctional and other service delivery environments.

Implications for Social Change

Correctional institutions have focused on improving organizational capacity and fiscal sustainability to improve institutional outcomes (Ji et., 2016). Correctional facilities are expected to rehabilitate inmates, ensure the safety of the public, and meet these goals within the scope of limited fiscal resources (Orrick & Vieraitis, 2015). The findings from my study could be used to increase public safety by reducing inmate recidivism. The findings could affect positive social changes in public safety, prison reform, and improvement of the work environment for correctional officers. The potential positive effects of this study could also increase the overall safety of the community by the potential reduction of inmate recidivism.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a research base for analyzing the research questions, methodology, and conceptual framework for the study. The literature that had been published on the topic of budget sustainability strategies that are used by correctional supervisors is extremely limited. Therefore, I had to expand my research query to include related local government organizations, service delivery organizations, human resource management, psychological and sociological topics, and organizational management.

The literature review for this study included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic dissertation papers, books, and government website data and research regarding fiscal sustainability in state correctional facilities. The literature included in this study focused on the concepts of fiscal sustainability, organizational capacity, organizational engagement, local government administration, motivation, leadership models, stakeholder engagement, budgeting methods in local government, and effective evaluation techniques. The materials for the literature in this review were accessed from the Walden University Library databases, including Business Source Complete, Sage, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and the Dissertation Electronic Database. Search terms that were used for this literature review included *organizational capacity*, *organizational climate*, *organizational brand*, *budgeting for service delivery organizations*, *correctional budgeting practices*, *change management planning*, *sustainable budgeting*, etc. Approximately 95% of the references were from peer-reviewed sources and 30% were from sources published within the last 5 years of 2024 which is the expected year of CAO approval of my completed study.

Correctional administrators and supervisors have faced increasing barriers adhering to the operating budget provided for prisons and jails. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze effective strategies and methods that increase the fiscal sustainability of criminal justice systems. The research question was based on the strategies correctional supervisors use to sustain their operating budget. The concepts of fiscal sustainability, organizational capacity, and strategic human resource management practices were critical to understanding how correctional supervisors can successfully

maintain institutional operations on the prescribed budget provided by the state government.

In my review of the literature, I examined organizational capacity for correctional facilities, emerging concepts regarding the importance of organizational climate in correctional systems, the impact of organizational brand on the overall performance of the organization, budgetary methods for service delivery organizations, the shared services model for organizations, human resource strategic planning, organizational change management practices, and fiscal sustainability development and implementation in the correctional environment. The literature review concludes with an analysis of how the literature pertains to the criminal justice system in Southeastern states.

Organizational Capacity

Organizational capacity is a conceptual framework that describes how organizations can use resources effectively and efficiently to fulfill their missions (Chongmyoung & Clerkin, 2017). Chongmyoung and Clerkin (2017) hypothesized a positive relationship between organizational capacities and the use of organizational outcome measures. The outcomes of the study supported a significant relationship between the effects of the political capacity of an organization and the use of outcome measures (Chongmyoung & Clerkin, 2017). Therefore, further research into organizational efforts to engage stakeholders is critical (Chongmyoung & Clerkin, 2017). This study was relevant to my research because it reinforces the importance of building organizational capacity in human service agencies such as correctional facilities. Financial resource management, operational practices, and leadership strategies are

consistent and effective indicators of organizational capacity and sustainability (Paynter & Berner, 2014).

Local government agencies have varying administrative structures that drive the culture, organizational processes, and responsiveness of those programs (Krause et al., 2016). There was considerable research regarding the application of the concept of organizational capacity in nonprofit contexts. However, a significant gap in research regarding the building and development of that capacity exists in the current research (Millar & Doherty, 2016). The incorporation of high-performance human resource practices (HPHRPs) had been posited as an efficient pathway for HRMs to achieve and maintain a strategic managerial role within organizations (Mitchell et al., 2013). These practices involved HRMs developing and applying organizational policies and practices that optimize overall performance and build organizational capacity (Mitchell et al., 2013).

Organizational Climate

Correctional staff work in a highly volatile environment that can lead to profoundly negative and costly outcomes for employees and the institution (Vickovic & Griffin, 2014). According to Vickovic and Griffin (2014), the dynamic and difficult working conditions in a correctional facility required officers with a high commitment to the institution to maintain safety and organizational sustainability. The most effective resource for developing a high level of organizational commitment was correctional supervisors (Vickovic & Griffin, 2014).

Increasing strategies that reinforced affective organizational commitment improves the overall success of correctional facilities (Garland et al., 2014). Correctional supervisors used engagement strategies with correctional officers to stimulate employees and maximize impact on their work environment (Gabriel et al., 2014). Correctional officers acted in dual roles of officers that protect the security of the institution and as street-level bureaucrats that deliver services and implement the policies of the organization (Shannon & Page, 2014). This dual role had a significant impact on the functionality of the institution in several different ways (Shannon & Page, 2014). Björk et al., (2014) demonstrated a positive correlation between organizational capacity and actual overall performance in local government agencies in Sweden. Björk et al., (2014) developed a service-neutral metric for organizational capacity that can be used to drive organizational resource allocation and drive the direction of organizational culture for agency operational managers in local government contexts. Bryan and Brown (2015) identified four interdependent levels of organizational capacity-building initiatives necessary in nonprofit and service delivery organizations: individual, group-cohort, organizational, and community. The most effective way to increase safety and control of the environment of prison was to reinforce the commitment to the organizational structure of the institution (Griffin et al., 2014). Callahan (2013) examined the influence of leadership practices, level of community engagement, and organizational structure on the achievement of financial sustainability in local government agencies. Two significant challenges encountered in the utilization of sustainability operational practices in local government agencies identified by Callahan (2013) were the unique and expansive

context of government agencies and the stagnant position of the mental mapping of the agency administration. The leadership in these agencies was reluctant to take appropriate and swift action due to fear of violation of organizational protocol (Callahan, 2013).

According to Callahan (2013), administrators should look at the business community for ideas regarding best practices for sustainability and adjust them for application in government organizations.

Kolind (2015) analyzed two kinds of power exercised by correctional officers concerning the influx of drugs in Danish prisons: institutional power and personal power. According to Kolind (2015), correctional officers may have an increased opportunity to exercise their overall power selectively regarding drug use within the prisons to improve safety for both inmates and staff. Correctional supervisors needed an increased understanding of how the implications of the officers' power can affect the safety of prisons (Kolind, 2015).

Beijersbergen et al., (2016) studied the impact of the physical architecture of correctional facilities on the relationships developed between inmates and officers. Officer-inmate relationships were fundamental to the successful management of the correctional environment on every operational level (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). Although academics and administrators acknowledged the impact of the architecture of the correctional facility on these relationships, limited empirical research has been conducted to investigate the potential implications for the field of criminal justice (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). Beijersbergen et al. (2016) theorized five characteristics of facilities' structure that would have the most significant impact on officer-inmate

relationships: facility size, unit size, year of construction, sightlines, and use of double-bunking. Multivariate analyses supported the significance of year of construction and use of double-bunking but demonstrated no meaningful association between the factors of facility size, unit size, or sightlines on officer-inmate relationships (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). The outcome of the authors' study could have critical implications in the construction and remodeling of future correctional facilities to elevate the successful operations of the facilities (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). The same authors' study also provided administration and correctional supervisors with suggestions on strategies to improve the organizational capacity of prisons and other correctional institutions (Beijersbergen et al., 2016).

Organizational Brand

Organizational branding has become a crucial component in the culture and practices of organizations that drive the modern workforce. Biswas and Suar (2016) identified three factors of employer branding: brand equity, employee and overall brand engagement, and talent recruitment. There was a positive relationship between the strength of an employer brand and both the organizational culture and financial performance of that company (Biswas & Suar, 2016). The outcomes of the authors' study strongly suggested that companies make employer branding a high organizational priority (Biswas & Suar, 2016).

Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012) examined the differences in human resource development practices between companies that demonstrated branding practices and companies that did not have an active brand. The hypothesis was that companies that

cultivated a brand demonstrated an increased ability to attract talent in the recruitment process (Kuchеров & Zavyalova, 2012). The outcome from the authors' study confirmed the original theory that there is a positive relationship between the cultivation of a brand and recruitment practices (Kuchеров & Zavyalova, 2012).

Vasta (2016) examined the concept of employer branding from the perspectives of both the existing and prospective employees. Internal branding practices involved adherence to organizational values, reinforcing organizational brand requirements that build on the organizational brand (Vasta, 2016). The study consisted of defining, identifying essential concepts, and analyzing the simultaneous development of internal and external branding practices (Vasta, 2016). Future studies regarding the concepts of internal and external branding development to improve employee retention and organizational branding are imperative for a deeper understanding of how branding influences employee recruitment and retainment (Vasta, 2016).

Leadership Styles

The leadership style of middle management correctional supervisors has had a significant impact on the resiliency of the organization (Valero et al., 2015). The three primary models of leadership styles are transformational, transactional, and laissez faire (Boehm & Yoels, 2009). According to Boehm and Yoels (2009), laissez faire leaders take a passive approach to leading and expect their employees to work with little to no guidance or direct management (Boehm & Yoels, 2009). Transactional leaders specify work expectations and the rewards associated with meeting those expectations for employees (Boehm & Yoels, 2009). Transactional leaders challenge and motivate their

employees to strive beyond the confines of their job descriptions in an effort to meet the organizational vision (Boehm & Yoels, 2009). Correctional supervisors can use transformational leadership techniques to build self-efficacy in correctional officers (Ancarani et al., 2021).

Valero et al., (2015) posited transformational leadership styles are more likely to produce resilient and sustainable organizations. Transformational leadership could be viewed through four intersectional dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Valero et al., 2015). Leaders that exhibit idealized influence project strong ethical standards and consistent behavior in the workplace (Valero et al., 2015). Leaders that project inspirational motivation motivated their employees through inspiring them to achieve or exceed personal and organizational expectations and goals (Valero et al., 2015). Transformational leaders exhibited individualized considerations when they integrate the personal needs of each employee into their overall decision-making process (Valero et al., 2015). Lastly, transformational leaders cultivated intellectual stimulation through encouraging innovation and creativity from their employees (Valero et al., 2015). Correctional supervisors that used these techniques to foster a collaborative and engaged work environment are more likely (Lin et al., 2015).

According to Kim (2018), local government administrators were highly concerned about implementing mechanisms that ensure they can meet their financial obligations and needs with limited resources. High quality public service providers, such as correctional facilities, depended on the resources and degree of financial sustainability they can

provide (Lin, 2018). Transactional leadership in the correctional setting increased the likelihood of fiscal sustainability because these leaders inspire subordinates to meet and exceed the goals and expectations of the correctional organization (Lin et. al., 2015).

The leadership style of a correctional supervisor affected the way correctional officers perceive red tape and bureaucratic processes in the work environment. Moynihan et al., (2012) concluded supervisors who exhibit transformational leadership qualities create an environment that encourage organizational engagement, innovation, and accountability so that officers are more tolerant and compliant with of the procedural, so-called red-tape activities and procedures because the overall work environment fosters positivity and efficacy. Transformational leaders encouraged collaboration and engagement with employees in an environment that fosters shared ideas and identify ways to meet the needs and goals of the organization (Valero et al., 2014). Correctional supervisors used a variety of positive communication techniques to establish and facilitate transformational leadership qualities and skills (Cepiku & Mastrodascio, 2021).

Kim (2018) examined the relationship between leadership styles and the financial sustainability of local government agencies. Collaborative leadership realigned the paradigm from a hierarchical, traditional perspective to a more cooperative and network building approach (Kim, 2018). Collaborative leadership style fostered cooperation among stakeholders, external organizations, administration, and employees to ensure that the resources required for organizational sustainability are available (Cepiku & Mastrodascio, 2021). Collaborative leaders could either reduce their costs by exchanging

and sharing resources with other local service providers and/or reduce their operating costs by working with other service providers to deliver services (Kim, 2018).

High stress law enforcement environments, such as correctional facilities, have had a history of low morale, low staff engagement, and high turnover (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021). One of the most effective ways of improving job engagement and commitment in correctional officers was to instate supervisors who exhibit transformational leadership qualities (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021; Shim et al., 2015). Most correctional facilities have had leaders who display authoritarian leadership styles in response to the highly structured bureaucratic environment and authoritative of correctional facilities (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021). According to Thomas and Cangemi, (2021), authoritarian leadership resulted in officers feeling devalued by their supervisors, a greater resistance to organizational change, and an emphasis on their individual needs and interests, as opposed to the interests and goals of the correctional facility. In contrast, transformational, leaders inspired and motivated their employees to strive towards exceeding organizational expectations (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021). Correctional supervisors who displayed transformational leadership qualities can help align officer goals and expectations with the mission of the overall organization (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021). This focus on transformational leadership often helped correctional facilities meet their ultimate goals: organizational success and program sustainability (Thomas & Cangemi, 2021; Shim et al., 2015).

Budgetary Methods for Service Delivery Providers

According to Levi-Faur (2014), service delivery providers fell under two major categories: a welfare state or a regulatory state. The welfare state referred to the role of the federal government as the driver of the creation and implementation of social policy and programming (Levi-Faur, 2014). The regulatory state, in contrast, referred to the role of the federal government as an entity that governs social policy and programs from a distance (Levi-Faur, 2014). The regulatory state encouraged self-regulation from social programs through compliance systems, codes of practice, and legal avenues (Levi-Faur, 2014).

According to Kalambokidis (2014), governments could create sustainable programs by focusing on taxation and spending policies on remedying market failures and addressing fairness within the social welfare context. The United States Congress exacerbated the financial crisis in 2011 by failing to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate the growing budget deficits (Kalambokidis, 2014). The financial recovery could have been stronger if Congress had not focused on austerity measures over social investment (Kalambokidis, 2014). The implications of this study were important to my research because Kalambokidis (2014) emphasized the significance of balancing social outcomes with strict fiscal and cost analyses when running social programs. The State of Michigan currently employs a 10-point fiscal indicator test to measure the financial progress and sustainability of municipalities. Michigan created this tool in 2002 after the previous 30-point system became too cumbersome to maintain (Crosby & Robbins, 2013). However, there are serious concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the

new scale that must be addressed (Crosby & Robbins, 2013). A new scale with 10 revamped indicators was developed to address the identified problems with the current method (Crosby & Robbins, 2013). The outcomes of this study applied to my research because they provide a blueprint on how to develop a scale to measure fiscal progress and sustainability in local government agencies.

Barrientos and Reilly (2016) examined the importance of analyzing the potential social, as well as the fiscal, outcomes to determine the true worth of the overall organizational successes. Administrators and leaders of local government organizations faced unique challenges in developing and implementing effective budgetary methods that reflect best business practices while adhering to the policies and procedures that dictate service delivery programs. Service delivery leaders understood that increased fiscal accountability is imperative for program sustainability but demonstrates a reluctance to base their budgets on strictly performance measures due to the social responsibilities of service delivery agencies (Ter Bogt et al., 2015). State-run correctional facilities were an example of a common-pool resource agency that receives revenue from a common pool, such as tax collection. Creating well-defined organizational boundaries, ensuring proportional equivalence between program cost and benefits, collective choice arrangements, well-defined monitoring, and accountability systems, graduated sanctions, and creating intrinsic conflict-resolution mechanisms can circumvent the potential budgetary problems that are inherent in common-pool resource agencies (Tang et al., 2014).

Manetti and Toccafondi (2014) further examined the potential role of stakeholder engagement and participation in the sustainability practices of nonprofit organizations. Stakeholder management theory is a key concept in the accounting methods of organizations in both the public and private sectors (Manetti & Toccafondi, 2014). Stakeholder engagement was a process within stakeholder management that emphasizes the interaction between the organization and stakeholders based on the prioritization level of their relationship (Manetti & Toccafondi, 2014).

Local government agencies had varying administrative structures that drive the culture, organizational processes, and responsiveness of those programs (Krause et al., 2016). Recent media attention on the serious consequences that resulted from inmates who obtain contraband or engage in sexual relationships with the correctional staff has underscored the fiscal and societal devastation that the community can incur (Worley, 2016).

Shared Services Model

Selden and Wooters (2011) described the shared services model as an approach that maximizes efficiency by sharing resources and expertise among different organizations, departments, and agencies. Sharing services in government service delivery agencies can reduce duplication of services, streamline public service and procedures, and improve efficiency (Valkama et al., 2016; Selden & Wooters 2011). There are risks with implementing a shared services model. According to (Valkama et al., 2016) there are potential institutional, strategic, and operational risks associated with shared services platforms in state government agencies. These risks can be mitigated with

an evolutionary transition to sharing services that includes approval, acceptance, and consistent communication between staff, administrators, and service providers (Valkama et al., 2016; Dennis & Walcott 2014). Risk management should be an integral part of the transition and implementation plan for a shared services organizational platform (Plume et al., 2018).

There are several methods of sharing services between service providers and organizations. These methods can range from loose associations of information sharing to complete partnerships among agencies (Hoorbeek et al., 2019). Many organizations begin the shared services process by employing shared services to a specific program or department, such as Human Resources, and progress towards end-to-end process within the organization (Dennis & Walcott, 2014). To ensure a successful and efficient transition, a detailed and well-developed communication plan needs to be in place (Hoorbeek et al., 2019).

Valkama, Asenova, and Bailey (2016) proposed four types of shared service models in state and local government agencies. The public model, which involves local authorities hosting a joint working method like the arrangement of private companies (Valkama et al., 2016). A private-public partnership comprises a private collaborator to provide information, resources, or expertise to a state agency (Valkama et al., 2016; Plume et al., 2018). A single local agency or authority model provides services, resources, or information to a private organization (Valkama et al., 2016). Local agencies can also pool their funding and resources together to outsource their services to private organizations (Valkama et al., 2016).

Human Resources Strategic Planning

According to Smith (2014), the evolution towards sustainable practices has resulted in strategic role changes for administrators and leaders across organizations. Strategic planning is a dynamic process that integrates that involves active input from all the parties that are impacted by the performance of an organization (Batra et al., 2016). Sondhi and Nirmal (2013) posited that strategic planning is a critical component of success and sustainability for all organizations, including not-for-profit and service delivery agencies. Incorporation of high-performance human resource practices involves developing and applying organizational policies that optimize overall performance and increases the strategic role of human resource leaders within correctional organizations (Mitchell et al., 2013).

Narine and Persaud (2003) suggest that the key to long-term sustainability in service delivery organizations lies in the ability of their leaders to engage in successful change management strategies. Human resource leaders can make a vital impact on change management practices by identifying and addressing barriers to change, employee engagement, and communicate the goals, policies, and procedures of the change management plan to employees and the public (Browning, 2015).

Human resource management initiatives have historically been identified as a crucial driver in the modernization of public sector organizations (Bruns, 2014). However, there is limited literature regarding the specific factors that are driving the relationship between human resource practices and organizational change (Bruns, 2014). Strategic human resource management practices have been posited as potential drivers in

the correlation between human resource strategies and organizational strategy. The research design implemented in this study is a multiple case study in six local government organizations in Germany. Bruns (2014) posits a positive correlation between strategic human resource initiatives and organizational strategies. Research has demonstrated a relationship between human resource strategy and organizational change management, but there is limited academic literature regarding the reasons behind that relationship (Bruns, 2014). The outcomes of this study apply to a correctional context because the research was conducted in local government organizations.

Cascio and Graham (2016) posit human resource professionals can further develop the concept of employer branding to help set themselves apart from their competition in a positive way. Cascio and Graham (2016) identified the origins of branding in the human resource field, connected it to similar concepts in marketing and industrial psychology, and theorized that the future lies in the utilization of social networking platforms. Lastly, human resource professionals have a variety of resources and skillsets to lead organizations towards improved employer branding and organizational culture (Casico & Graham, 2016). The outcomes of this research provide human resource managers with several practical strategies to develop and maintain an effective employer brand (Casico & Graham, 2016).

Human service organizations have an increasing repertoire of skills and knowledge that improve practices and performance. However, this information requires a format that will improve service delivery in a correctional environment (Dill & Shera, 2015). Dill and Shera (2015) provided practitioners, managers, and administrators with a

potential framework that describes and drives best practice guidelines. This study is important because it reinforces the importance of collaboration and communication between human resource professionals and executive management to ensure the successful completion of organizational goals (Dill & Shera, 2015). This study applies to a correctional environment because it describes how human service organizations can utilize universal best practices, including human source strategies, to drive effective service delivery (Dill & Shera, 2015). Further research into the best practices for change management plans, policies, and practices is needed to drive continuing strategic human resource practices in correctional institutions (Dill & Shera, 2015).

Strategic human resource management initiatives have been cited by research as the driving force in the evolution of the HR field towards an organizational leadership role that is critical to the operations and performance of the business. However, there is still not a universal set of guidelines for the practice of strategic human resource management (Dutch, 2013). Dutch (2013) created a model that expands the contingency perspective to analyze and measure the relationships between business strategy, human resource management, and organizational culture. Competitive advantage is sustained in practice by aligning human resource activities with business strategy and incorporating the resource resulting from the strategy (Dutch, 2013).

Change Management

Change management models and processes are another aspect of strategic human resource management that can improve the overall practices within correctional facilities (Caballero & Soto-Oñate, 2015). Understanding the models and processes of

organizational change is critical to the development of effective change management plans (Caballero & Soto-Oñate, 2015). (Straatmann et al., 2016) developed a framework that measures employee reactions to organizational change. The outcomes of the research confirmed predicted relationships between change management variables and employees' reactions to those changes (Straatmann et al., 2016).

Kurt Lewin was an early influential researcher in the field of change theory.

Lewin developed a three-step change management process that consisted of: 1. Unfreezing of current behavior, 2. A transition from the old and the new behavior, and 3. Refreezing of improved behaviors (Burnes, 2020). Embedded in those steps are concepts that researchers and organizations currently use as a foundation for change management plans and processes. Lewin posited that the change process must begin with a situation or event that motivates the need for change, a detailed analysis of what is not working, and defining the barriers that prevent success and necessitate the need for a change (Galli, 2018). Lewin expected resistance from employees within the organization to implementing changes in procedures or behaviors so the second step in the plan includes plans to actively engage and train employees in the process to facilitate the transition (Galli, 2018). The third step in Lewin's change process involves solidifying the new policies, procedures, and operations that will guide and perpetuate the new and improved behavior (Galli, 2018).

According to Galli (2018), Kotter expanded on Lewin's model by emphasizing the importance of the role leaders have in developing the change management plan, demonstrating forward movement for motivation to drive the change, and in maintaining

the new behaviors once the change has been implemented. Kotter developed an eight-step change management process: 1. Create a sense of urgency around the need for the change, 2. Create a core coalition of leaders to drive the change forward, 3. Develop a well-developed strategic vision around the change, 4. Communicate and share the plans with all parties that will be impacted by the change to increase transparency, 5. Empower and motivate employees with opportunities to act on that vision, 6. Generate short-term successes that will demonstrate the success of the plan to employees to mitigate potential frustration, 7. Consolidate those gains and use the momentum to produce more change, and 8. Embed the changes in every layer of the organization (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). The basic concepts of change management put forth by Lewin and Kotter are important because they can provide a framework that helps supervisors implement new budgetary policies and procedures.

Fiscal Sustainability Development and Implementation in the Correctional Environment

Sustainability development entails addressing equity, economy, and environmental issues simultaneously to ensure the administration of government programs and service delivery organizations can persist in the long-term (Saha, 2009). The concept of sustainability development can be applied to the successful and efficient administration of correctional facilities. The economic crisis of 2008 illustrated the need for government agencies to implement programs that are financially sustainable (Navarro-Galera et al., 2016). However, the end of the economic crisis did not result in the dissolution of the focus on the financial sustainability of government programs. Rose

(2010) posited that governments should have been addressing financial sustainability long before the fallout of the financial crisis. State and local governments were on an “unsustainable trajectory” (Rose, 2010) due to the increasing budget obligations and decreasing revenues to pay for those obligations.

The most pressing question is how local and state governments plan to bring the expenditures in alignment with the actual projected revenues available to pay for the programs and services they provide citizens (Ward & Dadayan, 2009). The disparity between budgets and revenues is one of the biggest obstacles government administrators face in sustainable development (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2019). The prevailing method government administrators have used to mitigate this issue has been to focus on the efficiency of program processes (Drew et al., 2016). It would seem natural to assume that efficiency would lead to greater sustainability. However, (Drew et al., 2016) argued that efficient programs may not be necessarily sustainable. Local and state governments face barriers to efficient budgeting and program planning and administration that complicate the relationship between efficiency and sustainability. Past instances of poor planning and variations in communities’ populations have had a direct impact on developing and maintaining sustainable programs (Drew et al., 2016). The need for reassessing the goals and planning process for state and local governments may be necessary to assure effective sustainable development in state and local government contexts (Kaufman, 2017).

Local government programs and agencies are increasingly implementing policies and procedures that improve efficiency, effectiveness, and fiscal sustainability (Bleyen et

al., 2015). The academic literature regarding the fiscal sustainability of state government programs and agencies has focused predominantly on the long-term implications and outcomes. However, the increasing deficits and debts incurred because of the Great Recession will continue to have a huge impact on the resources that are available for continued state government funding allocation (Abeysinghe & Jayawickrama, 2013). Abeysinghe and Jayawickrama (2013) implemented a regression model for examining outcomes with dynamically different periods of the debt process into consideration.

The financial devastation that resulted from the Great Recession of 2007 demonstrated the complexity of assessing true financial sustainability, particularly in local government agencies and social service delivery entities (Caperchione et al., 2014). According to (Tang et al., 2014), leaders in local government agencies must anticipate and plan for potential declines in revenue and resources, understand the importance of fiscal fluency for overall sustainability, focus on organizational structure, build strategic partnerships, recognize that strategy is key to sustainable practices, and develop a culture of sustainable practices within the organization. Correctional professionals have addressed the issue of fiscal sustainability in several different ways. Li (2014) examined the recent trend of shifting revenue sources from traditional state-run resources to community-based and/or private correctional models to address the increased demand for financial resources from correctional institutions. The impetus to privatize prisons has also increased dramatically since the Great Recession in response to the increased cost of running a correctional facility (Nicholson-Crotty, 2004).

The incorporation of sustainability has been a growing movement within local governments across the United States (Krause et al., 2016). There has been significant research regarding the development and implementation of sustainability practices in local government, but further focus on how these programs maintain those practices in the long term is needed (Krause et al., 2016). Krause et al. (2016) examined the relationship between the organizational structure and assignment of sustainability practices and activity within local governments and found that the direct implementation of a sustainability unit within a line department increased the successful incorporation of sustainability practices (Krause et al., 2016). Bolívar et al., (2016) suggested that prisons should place a high priority and commitment to sustainability by employing a unit to promote and monitor adherence to the sustainability goals of the institution. Recent financial crises in public finances have resulted in the emergence of financial sustainability as a critical issue to national and local government organizations (Bolívar et al., 2016). Bolívar et al. (2016) examined variables that affect the risk factors and drivers that affect sustainability efforts for local governments. The outcomes identified high unemployment rates and a largely dependent population (under 16 years old) as the two social variables that had the greatest negative impact on the fiscal sustainability of a local government (Bolívar et al., 2016).

The fiscal sustainability of public service programs, including correctional systems, centers on the perpetual fiscal growth of revenue resources (Bailey, 2015). Miragaia, et al., (2017) analyzed the efficiency of business practices within non-profit organizations and found that non-profit agencies need to diversify revenue sources and

maintain a positive relationship with communities to improve overall sustainability and viability. Tang et al., (2014) discussed several critical conclusions regarding successful fiscal sustainability practices including that leaders must anticipate and plan for potential declines in revenue and resources, that fiscal fluency is crucial for sustainability, that organizational structure and collaboration are key to effective planning, effective partnerships are crucial, a relevant strategy is the heart of successful sustainable practices, and sustainability should be embedded in the organizational culture. Kersbergen and Hemerijck (2014) argued that an approach that balances social investment with austerity measures may be more beneficial towards achieving and maintaining fiscal sustainability. Ostermann and Caplan (2016) demonstrated the importance of providing inmates with programs and resources that would improve their ability to reenter the social and professional fabric of society and lessen the chance of their return to prison for committing another crime. These programs can be expensive to implement and their overall benefit difficult to measure in the short term. However, understanding the potentially significant positive impact of preventive and rehabilitative initiatives in the long term is the keystone of sustainability in correctional institutions (Ostermann & Caplan, 2016).

The financial crisis of 2008 changed the way that organizations strategize, implement, and report on corporate social responsibility (CSR) procedures and practices (Benau et al., 2013). According to Burns et al., (2015), organizational leaders are critical in providing the foundation for implementing practices that promote fiscal sustainability. MacLean (2013) examined the practical aspects of running sustainability departments

within organizations. The implementation of a sustainability unit within a line department increases the successful incorporation of sustainability practices in local government agencies (Krause et al., 2016). The authors' findings suggest that prisons should place a high priority and commitment to sustainability by employing a unit to promote and monitor adherence to the sustainability goals of the institution. Therefore, correctional supervisors are extremely influential in the implementation and maintenance of effective sustainability practices within their organizations (Wang et al., 2014).

Following the Great Recession of 2007, state governments experienced significant revenue gaps that triggered apprehension regarding the sustainability of the state's fiscal resources (Mahdavi, 2014). During the Recession and Recovery, the states had to engage in massive borrowing, and seek federal financial assistance, to remain operational and meet the needs of the citizens. Such a significant event resulted in increasing calls for states to implement sustainable and responsible practices and procedures. Several factors that are expected to continue to affect the sustainability of the states' budget are pension and retirement benefits for state workers (Mahdavi, 2014). Bohn's test of fiscal sustainability was applied to the states' operating budgets in the times before and after the Great Recession to determine the actual sustainability of their practices with the resources provided to them (Mahdavi, 2014). The outcomes of the study indicate that the states demonstrated sufficient conditions for continuing fiscal sustainability before the onset of the Recession (Mahdavi, 2014). This finding was promising because it provided evidence that the states' budgetary practices were adequate for long-term success (Mahdavi, 2014).

Transition

Section 1 of this study contained the background, nature, context, and supporting academic literature regarding the central research question of what operational budget strategies do correctional supervisors use to maintain organizational fiscal sustainability. However, correctional administrators have experienced increasing difficulties maintaining operations within their budgets. Fiscal sustainability, organizational capacity, and strategic planning have become crucial to developing strategies that will help administrators adhere to the correctional operating budget. I will lay the groundwork for the planning, implementation, and analysis of the research data in Section 2. I will present my findings and discuss the application of my results to professional practice in Section 3.

Section 2: The Project

The general business problem for this study was that correctional administrators and supervisors need to improve their application of operational resources to increase overall organizational effectiveness. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to identify and explore effective operational budget sustainability strategies used by midlevel supervisors in correctional institutions.

The target population for this study was five midlevel correctional supervisors from four Southeastern state prisons who have successfully implemented strategies that maintain the daily operations of the facility within the confines of their operating budget. The general business problem for this study was that correctional administrators and supervisors need to improve their application of operational resources to increase overall organizational effectiveness. The implications for positive social change include the potential for correctional supervisors and administrators to improve public safety and reduce recidivism by enhancing the delivery of correctional services.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to identify and explore effective operational budget sustainability strategies used by midlevel supervisors in correctional institutions.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to act as the research instrument (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010). According to The *Belmont Report* (1978), the boundaries between researcher and practitioner needed to be concrete so that the

protection of participants can be adequately addressed. Adhering to the guidelines in *The Belmont Report* increases the likelihood that the benefits of the study can be maximized, while also minimizing the potential for harm to the participants (Bromley et al., 2015). To mitigate these potential threats, researchers can always ensure complete transparency and authenticity with participants, as well as applying a reflexive approach to the implementation of the research (Sanjari et al., 2014).

I have worked in the field of corrections for 15 years and I am currently a correctional captain at a work release facility. I wanted to ensure that the participants feel comfortable enough, to be honest, forthright, and engaged in this study. To increase the validity of the research, I emphasized ways that the participants felt like they were an integral and critical partner in the research, and that they were a part of improving their work environment because of their participation (Awenat et al., n.d.).

Participants

The participants in this study were five supervisors employed by Southeastern state prison department(s) with the rank of captain who have demonstrated success in addressing the specific business problem. I obtained permission to research with this population from the Southeastern state prison department(s). I approached correctional supervisors, explain the study, verify prior permission regarding their participation from Agency Leaders and obtain informed consent for their agreement to participate in this research. I employed a purposeful sampling technique to ensure that I obtained data from individuals who meet the criteria of the research question.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The three methods of conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Lee & Cassell, 2013). I used the qualitative method for this study because of data collection techniques, including interviews and field observations, which are tools that were expected to support my proposed study's purpose because of the scarcity of research on my topic. Qualitative method collection techniques are conducive to research topics that have limited academic evaluation or literature (Specter & Meier, 2014; Gog, 2015). Using the quantitative research method provides researchers with a platform to measure relationships between variables related to the research problem (Gog, 2015). The mixed-method combines aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methods in research development and application (Musket et al., 2012) I did not examine relationships among variables; mixed-method and quantitative method platforms for this study were rejected. All research should reflect the sincerity of the researcher and demonstrate the credibility of the methodology of the study (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010).

Research Design

Three principal potential designs in qualitative research are: phenomenological, ethnographic, and case study (Fetterman, 2010; Gill, 2014). The phenomenological design method was rejected because of limited opportunities for data collection methods involving interviews and surveying methods with correctional supervisors. Ethnography is the process of immersion into the culture of a population to gain perspective of a research problem (Fetterman, 2010). Ethnographic researchers focus on the culture of an

environment, so I rejected the ethnographic design for use in this study because I needed to get baseline data on this subject.

I chose the case study design over the phenomenological or ethnographic designs because of the significant allowance for thematic exploration in increasing budgetary sustainability in a correctional context. Case studies involve a detailed investigation of observable phenomena, or the case, in-depth and within a practical context (Yin, 2014). By emphasizing practical applications for the data collected during a case study, clinicians and professionals in the real world have the ability to use that data in practice in meaningful and impactful ways (Shekhar, 2014; Tumele, 2015). As described by Gog (2015), using a case study design results in a platform conducive to a retrospective, as well as a prospective, inquiry for adding sufficient capability for data analysis. Tumele (2015) defined case studies as detailed, scientific examinations of observable phenomena. According to Aczel (2015), the case study method is ideal for investigating phenomena in which the facets of that relationship are not known and allows the researcher flexibility to utilize and analyze data from several different techniques. I chose the case study design because of the significant allowance for thematic exploration in increasing budgetary sustainability in a correctional context. According to Yin (2018), using multiple case study research designs increases the assurance of validity for the findings obtained in a study. To increase the assurance of validity and facilitate the determination of generalizability of my research for this study, I therefore chose the multiple case study design instead of the single case study design.

Data Saturation in Qualitative Study Designs

Data saturation is a crucial requirement for ensuring that qualitative research is reliable and valid. The failure to achieve data saturation could have a profoundly negative impact on the validity of qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). While researchers agree that data saturation is a good way to measure sampling adequacy and improving validity, there is no universal agreement on how to ensure that data saturation is achieved in qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Methodologically sound qualitative research requires data that are collected and analyzed from multiple methods and platforms to achieve data saturation (Wray et al., 2007). Therefore, the point of data saturation is dependent on the research design of the study.

Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested that data saturation is generally achieved by collecting an abundance of good, rich data during the fieldwork stage of the research process. Rich data are multilayered, complex, distinctive, and detailed (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). According to Brod et al., (2009), rich data must be collected from various sources and instruments to achieve data saturation. I ensured that the data collected during my study were complex, rich, and collected from a variety of platforms and media.

Population and Sampling

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) posited that sampling and sample sizes are critical to sound qualitative research. The parameters of a good sample size are developed according to the purpose and design of the research (Boddy, 2016; Tuckett, 2004). To

ensure the validity of the research, the sampling must be extensive enough to reach the point of data saturation (Banning & Gumley, 2013).

Defining the Population

The population for this study was five correctional supervisors from four distinct facilities who have been employed by Southeastern state prison systems in a supervisory role for a minimum of 1 year. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained before work with this case population began.

Sampling

The sample for this study was drawn using the criterion sampling method, a purposive sampling strategy that supports the qualitative method, and case study design of the research. The criterion sampling method draws participants who play a specific role or meet some criteria within an agency or organization (Palinkas et al., 2015). According to Palinkas et al. (2015), these participants should be able to provide a significant amount of information based on these criteria.

Ethical Research

Ethics is a system of principles and standards of behavior that dictate conduct. This applies to all the phases of the research process as well. My IRB approval number for this study is 03-14-23-0634906.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines for research participants are developed to protect them from any harm that may result in their participation. Cascio and Racine (2018) suggested those guidelines include respect for the autonomy of participants, recognition of broad

contextual effects of the research, importance of the individual, emphasis on the relationship between researcher and participants, and ownership in the direction of the research.

Rani and Sharma (2012) encouraged building a foundation of ethics in the design of the study. Questions and assessments of ethical behavior should be embedded in every stage of the research process. This will mitigate the potential for inadvertent harm to participants. The researcher has a dual role in qualitative research: to act as the research instrument, as well as the researcher (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010). This dual role can lead to potential ethical complications that must be considered to preserve the ethical standards and validity of the research (Bromley et al., 2015).

Informed Consent

The long and sordid history of unethical research studies has a considerable influence on the current academic and research community. Researchers should develop a detailed plan to avoid that tradition and ensure ethical research practices. That plan should be available to participants so they can make an informed decision regarding their level of participation in the study (Rani & Sharma, 2012). This will create and reinforce trust and engagement with the participants. The informed consent document should provide the participants with the following information: the research goals, data collection methods, nature of participant commitment, potential benefit, potential risk, pledge of confidentiality, statement of voluntary consent, right to withdraw information, and contact information for the researcher. The data collected from this study will be kept

in a physically secure, locked file for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of participants even after the study.

Procedures for Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

In adherence to agency policy, there were no monetary or tangible incentives for participation in this study. Participants were not penalized in any way for withdrawal from the study at any time. Participants could have initiated the withdrawal process by contacting me verbally, or by email, requesting to be withdrawn from the program from the point of contact through the duration of the project.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. As the primary data collection instrument, I used reflection throughout the research process to ensure that I did not corrupt the data with my own personal biases (Pearson et al., 2015). I was responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting all of the data related to this study. I conducted this primarily through interviews with the participants. The secondary data collection instruments were semistructured interviews and field notes. The tertiary collection instrument was a process of examining the organization through archival documents. I used member checking and transcript review to enhance and assure the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument and process. The interview protocol is provided in Appendix A.

Data Collection Technique

I explored the operational budget sustainability strategies supervisors use in correctional facilities for this study. The data that I used to explore the associated

research question included interviews with correctional supervisors, field notes, and direct observations. Semistructured interviews were the primary data collection technique for this study. Semistructured interviews consist of strategic, yet open-ended questions that facilitate a deeper discussion of the subject area between the researcher and the participant. Semistructured interviews are an effective data collection technique when the researcher carefully constructs the questions, ensures engagement and active dialogue with the participants, and reflects on the entire interview process (Martin, 2000). The semistructured interviewing process has three critical phases: development, interviewing, and analysis (Baumbusch, 2010). The interview protocol is included in Appendix A.

The primary advantages of using semistructured interviews, field notes, and observations include improved reliability and validity of the data collected and the outcomes of the research. Potential disadvantages include possible subjectivity of the data and the time needed to effectively conduct these methods (Clark & Vealé, 2018). I embedded mechanisms that increase my objectivity and decrease my subjectivity while analyzing the data collected, such as member checking. Member checking is the process of engaging the interview participant as an important component of the research team and confirming that the data recorded by the researcher is correct from their perspective (Bocquillon & Derobertmeasure, 2018).

Data Organization Technique

Data collected for this study included both paper and digital formats, and protocols for using, analyzing, and storing those documents were established and followed. Gog (2015) recommends that the physical data that come directly from the

participants, such as consent agreements, and audio recordings, be stored in a locked file cabinet to prevent access or misuse from unauthorized parties. Gog (2015) also recommends that electronic documents, such as digitally recorded interviews, transcription analysis, scanned documents, etc., be stored on an encrypted USB external drive to protect the integrity of the data and the identity of the participants. That USB external drive was stored in a locked file cabinet along with the other physical forms of data. The data will be stored in the locked file cabinet for 5 years, after which time, all of the data will be destroyed. The digital versions will be erased and physically destroyed, and the paper versions will be shredded and disposed directly in a dumpster. Advantages for using both paper and digital formats include accessibility and redundancy (Baskarada, 2013). Using both digital and paper formats ensured that if one type of format is damaged, lost, or destroyed accidentally, there was another format to access the data (Lee & Cassell, 2013). Disadvantages include storage and potential breach of data material (Lee & Cassell, 2013). I utilized the security measures listed in the above paragraph to mitigate these potential issues.

Data Analysis

The focus of this qualitative descriptive single-case study was on the successful strategies that correctional supervisors and administrators use for operational budget sustainability in correctional institutions. The qualitative method will provide the means for exploring, analyzing, and identifying the information garnered in the course of this study. The information collected through semistructured interviews will facilitate the discovery and comprehension of the subject phenomena of this study. Data collected

from interviews will be used to understand strategies, processes, and tools correctional supervisors develop and use to adhere to a sustainable budget. The analytical methods that will be used in this study to analyze the derivative data include content analysis, member checking, and methodological triangulation.

Content analysis is a significant subset of grounded theory (Lowe et al., 2018). Content analysis can provide an approach to organize and contextualize data based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants in the study (Crowe et al., 2015). The steps for conducting content analysis on the data collected during interviews are:

1. Familiarization with data through transcripts
2. Creation of initial thematic codes
3. Searching for thematic patterns in the data
4. Reviewing identified themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing a thematic map or network
7. Reporting and comparing those themes (Watkins et. al., 2017).

Member checking is most effective when used at two points in the research: first to check the transcripts of the participants' interview, and secondly, to check the final interpretation of the data (Varpio et al., 2017). Member checking can ensure validity of interview transcriptions, help build rapport with participants, and provide participants with a sense of empowerment over the research process (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

Triangulation is a critical research tool for validating findings from studies about complex social and managerial processes within a public sector environment like a

correctional facility (Hancock & Raeside, 2009). According to Renz et al., (2018), triangulation has the potential to increase the validity of the research, reduce the potential for research bias, and improve the applicability of the findings to other areas of research. Triangulation adds depth and content to the data collected in qualitative research (Fusch et al., 2018). Methodological triangulation involves analyzing several types of data such as interviews, field notes, and direct observations (Carter et al., 2014). Methodological triangulation will be used study to assure the reliability and validity of my study's findings. Excel software will also be used to code data and identify themes in the research.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability of qualitative research can be achieved through employing measures that address the requirement assuring the proposed study's reliability. Approaches that assure the reliability of qualitative research include refutational data analysis, continual comparison of data, using comprehensive data, and inclusion of graphical representations of the results of analytical measures (Leung, 2015). Methodological triangulation is one process that qualitative researchers use to improve the reliability of research.

Methodological triangulation involves employing multiple types of data to improve understating of a phenomenon (Birt et al. 2016).

Dependability

Dependability of research involves consistent and reliable data and outcomes (Bleyen, et al., 2015). Reliability and dependability are interconnected in good qualitative

research (Abdalla et. al., 2018). According to Langtree, et al. (2019, p.2) dependability “refers to the stability or consistency of the research processes used during the study”. I will assure the dependability of the data collected by adhering closely to the qualitative case-study data collection and analyses processes.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research refers to the relevance of the method, design, analytical tools for developing the final outcomes of the research (Leung, 2015). Member checking is an important means of assuring interpretive validity in qualitative research. Member checking, or member validation, is the process that researchers use to verify interpretation of participant information directly with the participants (Harvey, 2015), and is crucial for ensuring the information that is recorded and interpreted is accurate and reflective of the data provided by the participants. I will be using member checking as a mechanism to increase the validity of the data and outcomes of my research.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent that research is suitable and transparent for the data reported in that research. Credibility in qualitative research can be achieved through active and sustained engagement with participants, continual observation in the field, persistent researcher reflection, and member checking (Morrow, 2005). Credibility can also be established through the background, qualifications, and professional experiences of the investigator (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1986) posited that research that is from a naturalistic paradigm increases the credibility of the research because the research will have a direct impact on the researcher. To increase the credibility of my research, I

will record my interventions that demonstrate participant engagement, field observations, continuous reflection, and member checking.

Transferability

Research transferability is the process that readers use to apply concepts they are already familiar with to new contexts. The transferability of the data and results of research is a crucial measure of qualitative research because it increases the scope of the applications to future research and practical policy and management in organizations (Moon et al., 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1986) maintained that the paradigm of the research perspective should be explicitly stated and discussed within the research to increase the applicability to a broader context. Varpio et al. (2017) posited that clearly defining the process and reasoning behind decisions related to methodology, design, and data analysis will enhance the transferability of the research data. If researchers have a good grasp of how their research fits in the larger context, the results will be transferable across many platforms. To enable other researchers' determination of the transferability of my study, I have defined the processes and reasoning that I used throughout this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research demonstrates that the results of the research can be replicated by other researchers (Moon et al., 2016). Confirmability verifies that the outcomes of the research are not influenced by researchers' bias (Langtree et al., 2019). The investigators must explain the steps taken to ensure the research is based on the information, viewpoints, and experiences of the participants as opposed to that of the

investigator (Moon et al., 2016). I plan on ensuring the confirmability of my research by inviting academic peers to review and critique my research thoroughly.

Data Saturation

According to Guest to et al. (2020) data saturation is achieved when no additional information can be gleaned from the data. Data saturation can be challenging to accomplish in qualitative research because there is not a concrete line or definition for data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2016). Guest, et al. (2020) provide a template for assessing and calculating data saturation based on three components: base size, run length, and new information threshold. I will use that template to establish data saturation in my research by demonstrating data saturation was achieved when no new relevant data emerged from the data collection and analysis processes.

Transition and Summary

The role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population, data collection, data analysis, reliability, and validity of the research were addressed in Section 2. The presentation of the research findings and results will be addressed in Section 3. The application of those findings to professional practices, the implications of those results for social change, and recommendations for further action will also be addressed in Section 3.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to identify and explore effective operational budget sustainability strategies used by midlevel supervisors in correctional institutions. The specific target population for this study was midlevel correctional supervisors from four state prisons who successfully developed and implemented effective strategies to achieve operational budgets supporting the prisons' sustainability. The implications for positive social change include the potential for correctional supervisors and administrators to improve public safety in local communities and reduce inmate recidivism by improving the delivery and effectiveness of correctional and rehabilitation services.

Organizational capacity was the conceptual framework for this study. The concept of organizational capacity is the ability of an organization to reach its greatest potential (Jurie, 2000) and the fundamental construct in organizational capacity is the ability to determine and sustain the resources required to reach organizational goals (Paynter & Berner, 2014). Improving organizational capacity by increasing the input and influence correctional supervisors have on budget planning and implementation improves organizational outcomes by incorporating the following strategies: (a) a review of organizational structure for efficient operations through a focus on resource allocation, (b) an operation budget review on how it's controlled, (c) a review of institutional inventory while supporting personnel, and (d) effective management of allotted budgets.

The research question for this study was: What effective operational budget sustainability strategies do correctional supervisors use to achieve operational budgets supporting the prisons' sustainability? Fiscal sustainability has become one of the most important requirements of government fiscal policy over the past decade (Moeis, et al., 2022). Domokos and Pulay (2020) described fiscal sustainability as balancing the financial solvency of the government and the sustainable financing of the relevant public debt. Participants included five captains, from each of the four prisons, who have fiscal responsibilities in the department of corrections in the Southeastern United States. According to Mills and Kanavos (2020) one of the most important methods for ensuring fiscal sustainability is setting an organizational budget. Key findings gleaned through participant interviews, organizational interviews, organizational data, and document review were used to address the research question. Data sources included semistructured interviews from correctional facility leaders and corresponding public documents and related financial documents from four prisons in the Southeastern United States. Using the interview protocol (Appendix A), I achieved data saturation after five interviews which included three participants from the first institution and one from each of the other three participating prisons.

All the participants worked in the department of corrections in the Southeastern United States for decades and had access to the historical data and documentation detailing both the funding levels of the department of corrections which resulted in the corresponding operational budgeting strategies the participants used to enable the institutions' leader to sustain effective operations. Figure 1 contains the demographic

data collected from the participants during the semistructured interviews.

Figure 1

Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Experience	Education
P1	49	16 Years	B.S. Degree
P2	49	20 Years	H.S. Diploma
P3	42	20 Years	B.S. Degree
P4	39	14 Years	H.S. Degree
P5	55	21 Years	B.S. Degree

Themes

The following three principal themes emerged from the data analyses.

Emergent Theme 1: Managing Funding Flows From Outside Entities

The data I collected from the participants' interviews, as well as the review of related historical documents facilitated the identification and exploration of effective strategies and processes used for sustainable budgeting in the correctional facilities. As noted by Cable (2020), the data obtained from the study could provide a baseline for future changes in U.S. Federal Government cost estimating methods. The strategies to address the business problem included facility leaders having more control over the maintenance and operational budgets, which have proved beneficial in the past. Engineers and state government administrators currently control the budgeting planning, deployment, and auditing process for the participating correctional facilities. The participants discussed the organizational changes in the operations of the maintenance

departments in their institutions in 2022. They focused on addressing and objectively defining the financial needs, operational requirements, and maintenance for all branches of the department of corrections. Ultimately, the findings provided a new lens on how sustainability efforts in correctional organizations can omit including correctional managers in achieving efficiency, effectiveness, and cost reduction and avoidance in a constrained fiscal environment (Alibasics, 2013). Strategies identified by the participants used to improve the funding flow process included: (a) reviewing organizational structure for efficient operations of the allocation of resources to the midlevel supervisors, (b) managing the operational budget, and (c) identifying and addressing equipment and maintenance repair.

Developing Cost Estimates

Engineers employed in the participants state have significant control over improvements to the maintenance, repair, and operation of the facilities. The engineers conduct all the planning and final decisions, then provision down to the correctional institutions. According to Cable (2016), in developing better cost estimates for design service contracts, engineers need to address manufacturing cost of all parts of the production. According to Al Zarrad (2014) the engineering and construction (E&C) industry has tried to address cost estimates through numerous approaches. Most current approaches for material risk assessment are deterministic which means that they treat variables such as price as static and fixed. Participants discussed current resolutions such as addressing the need for the engineering department to enable them to participate in controlling projects' implementation. Furthermore, the knowledge and experience of

the correctional supervisors could be embedded in the both the project planning and implementation processes for cost estimating and implementing for future projects. The participants have been creative in developing strategies to implement new ways to improve the aesthetic appearance of the facility as well as the overall functionality of the facility, for example, by using existing paint, and limiting the amount of waste. The participants also discussed repurposing staff to help with personnel shortages in the maintenance department. The participants have suggested areas for additional management inclusions which included analyzing completed projects, including the original estimates for materials cost, the actual materials cost, and then considering inclusion of a particular hedge that impacts the outcome for the contractor. Leadership can use the augmented engineering cost estimate data to prioritize maintenance projects, combine projects, restructure maintenance schedules, and discontinue projects.

Reviewing Cost Estimates for Improved Planning

According to Bryant (2020), both existing research and empirical evidence have established that leaders of SMBs lack access to adequate finance to fund their operations and growth. The widespread phenomenon referred to as the *funding gap*. However, without finances or mandated policy, programs such as these have little chance of survival (Humerick, 2020). In 2008, the governor issued a state of fiscal emergency because of the state financial deficit, and in 2009, the legislation amended the law to address the budgetary concerns (Robinson, 2018).

The participants noted that finance is critical to the operating budget but emphasized the benefit of having the money available to the head of the facility.

Participants listed project cost estimation as one of the most important tasks in the development of effective projects' budgets (see Al Zarrad, 2014). The participants distinguished the difference in the operating budgets based on the size of the facility. The bigger the facility, the bigger the budget; the smaller the facility, the smaller the budget. Cable (2015) suggested inclusion of management in the planning and execution process can assist U.S. Federal Government's leaders in governance and budget control. Since the participants' have extremely limited control over the planning and implementation of budgeting procedures, the participating organizations' leaders have had to develop creative ways to restructure projects and organizing responsibilities and financing projects when money became available. Projects that are less critical have been placed on hold until money became available. An effective budgeting strategy implemented by the participants was to ensure that the wardens', accountants', and maintenance departments actions are aligned through morning meetings that have ensured policies, strategies, and procedures are coordinated and uniformly enforced. Having all staff involved has helped to mitigate delays and budget overruns.

The participants emphasized the importance of supporting the three outside entities that control the maintenance operating budget. A key theme that was echoed throughout all the interviews is the need for maintenance director, the engineering department, and the finance department work together to improve and streamline the process for applying the budget to required projects, repairs, and operations. A resolution to this concern that was implemented by participants was by opening the communication channels Correspondingly, Myeni (2018), recommended the

institutions' leaders need to ensure that there is both budget-centric, external (information transfer from outside the organization), and the transfer of budget-centric information sharing within the organization) for effective budget development and management.

Emergent Theme 2: Executing Control of the Operating Budget

Public enterprises may not be operating efficiently. However, their net assets are not necessarily negative and the liabilities that they pass on to the government do not always exceed the capital gains that they offer (Hoe. 2004). According to Merryman (2001) The result is that spending on prisons has continued to increase and making correctional budgets one of the fastest growing components of state budgets. Merryman (2001) further noted there are many costs that are not accounted for in correctional budgets; the public correctional budget understates the actual cost to the government of operating a prison. The participants noted the importance of being included in the dynamics of the facility needs, and for implementing a process to improve the sustainable budgeting strategies for correctional facilities.

Kline (2023) describe the budget is an expression of a governmental entity's goals and objectives. It details the estimated inflow of financial resources and establishes legally binding expenditure limits. According to Munsamy et al. (2023) with limited supply, time sensitive decisions need to be made with regards to needed critical/non-critical services. Kleiman (2001), also concluded such factors should be combined to establish policy relevant conditions that create windows of opportunity for improving the budgetary process. As noted by Kline (2023), if public administrators are to be fiscally responsible for the efficient and effective utilization of limited financial

resources, developing and implementing a budgeting process that measures proposed expenditures against projected programs and activities is beneficial.

The participants discussed having limited control of the operational budget. The operating budget is issued to the facilities by the organizational leadership. The participants noted that when monetary funds are allocated to the facility before the intended purpose, several processes and procedures must be approved before the participants can operate the allotted budget. The operating budget is issued to the supervisors by the facility leadership. The participants noted that when monetary funds are allocated to the facility before the intended purpose, several processes and procedures must be approved before the participants can implement the allotted budget. During the interviews, the participants reiterated that the accounting department and the business managers currently control how and when the mid-level supervisors could use the budgeted funds and identified the need to develop and implement a process to improve the sustainable budgeting strategies for correctional facilities.

Emergent Theme 3: Controlling Inventory and Resources

Identifying and Addressing Equipment Maintenance/Repair Costs

The disconnect between administrators on the state level and correctional leaders at the facility level provides significant challenges in overseeing equipment maintenance and repair costs for correctional supervisors (Faubert, 2019). One strategy used by the participants for the housing units is to coordinate with the maintenance department, categorize requirements that can be addressed in-house, services needing to be ordered items and services that have been ordered. For example, one participant stated “Again, we

do maintenance checks periodically to try to lower the cost and try to fix it before it becomes a significant issue.” The participants identified one of the largest challenges to complying with their operational budgets was keeping up with and sustaining equipment effective operational status. One participant stated that this challenge results from the time it takes for the approval process to move through the channels.

According to Ufford (2019), correctional officers are subjected to countless hours of pre-service training on issued equipment (firearm, baton, handcuffs, pepper spray, and Taser). This is often followed by yearly state mandated in-service training on the equipment described. The participants stated that the officers' inability to maintain their equipment, mainly their radios, was a continuous and cumbersome burden on the operating budget. Furthermore, the budget cuts affected the purchase of much-needed equipment, vehicles, and other tools necessary to maintain residents' and visitors' safety Mackey (2022). Currently, this issue is being addressed by the department of corrections with the approval of two new state-of-the-art mega prison complexes to house approximately 5,000 inmates at each facility. The two new prisons have received support from the legislature, and their construction has begun. The new facilities will address the currently strained departmental budgets and allow resources to be allocated and distributed more efficiently.

Managing Resources

Correctional supervisors do not feel that state administrators understand the importance of effective and realistic resource and inventory management currently. (Okorhi et al., 2019). Cahyo et al., (2014) posited that effective asset management is

crucial for maintaining a sustainable budget, especially in a government service organization. The participants stated they manage their budget and use their resources at the appropriate time. One participant stated that " ---it goes back to the process of using the when to and how to use it at what time or when it's cost efficient, and you can't use these things when you get ready. Whenever it is a beneficiary, we would use it. Use your resources when it is most necessary so we can have enough to continue throughout the work schedule day." This requirement is especially relevant in times of unforeseen disasters or budget cuts (Kunz et al., 2014). According to Benjaafar et al. (2015) organizations that manage their resources on a strict allowance, like correctional facilities, require adequate planning and multiple streams of input to ensure the organization remains functional and operational. Another participant stated during Covid: "So, at that time, we had to minimize how we used resources, reuse, rewash, and different aspects of the uniforms to effectively sustain operations."

Emergent Theme 4: Effectively Managing Allotted Budgets

Overtime

Overtime is a large portion of the participating department of corrections budget. Overtime is a common and important component of a law enforcement officer's job expectations (Peterson et al., 2019). The reliance on officer overtime to run law enforcement agencies, including correctional facilities, points to flaws in administrative planning and public policy under normal circumstances (Lira & Edwards, 2022). However, law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities do not operate under normal circumstances and must ensure continuing operations at all costs (Lira &

Edwards, 2022). Reliance on overtime also has a negative impact on the organizational culture of correctional facilities, as well as the mental and physical health of the officers (Gutschmidt & Vera, 2022). Overtime demands have been listed as a top occupational stressor for law enforcement and correctional officers (Gutschmidt & Vera, 2022).

Many states and cities exempt peace time officers from occupational and safety limitations on overtime, so officers are obligated to work overtime when ordered to by administration to cover staffing requirements (Thomas et al., 2019).

The participating midlevel supervisors emphasized how overtime significantly affected their operating budgets. The participants' proposed solution to this issue is to give the supervisors an allotted budget for overtime and allow them to manage the overtime based on the facility's needs.

A repeated concept during the interviews was how supervisors at the state executive level affected the ability of these midlevel supervisors to maintain and control the budget. Another participant stated part of my budget strategy is, "You know, if something breaks, instead of keep running it, well shut it down. Fix it the right way. If you do not fix it correctly, you will fix it repeatedly. Let's say you have a kitchen appliance that is not working; instead of taking the time to fix it, you want to put some duct tape on. So, you can continue to use it instead of just trying to fix it".

Resources

The subject state cannot spend more than the allotted annual budget according to the state constitution. To avoid this, the state legislation mandates reducing spending on departmental resources. Cheng and Yang (2018) suggest that significant budget cuts

such as these are not conducive to budget sustainability. All the participants described situations in which they must engage in creative resource management strategies to contend with departmental reduction of resources. One participant stated “Let the facility have the budget. If it's coming down to the end of the quarter and another facility needs new lights, I have \$3000. That is a resource for the state, but don't leave me sitting here with a penny in the bank.” Another participant noted, “---the schedule is important from the time you feed, what time you do medical, what time you do mail call scheduling, what time they report to duty, what time they leave work. We build in different type overtime aspect of accomplishing some of these goals to help the other shifts in shortage and staff shortage, and we make it work from there”.

According to Smith et al. (2019), managing resources requires five basic concepts: (a) identifying the required resources, (b) understanding organizational culture and levels of authority, (c) planning the budgetary processes, (d) managing allotted income and expenses, (e) understanding the significance of collaboration and transparency in this entire process for all levels of administration.

Correspondingly, the participants suggested the need for more of their input in the process of identifying resources when and how to use them, at what time, or when it's cost-efficient to improve budget sustainability.

Applications to Professional Practice

The results of this study could serve departments of corrections executive leaders throughout the nation with effective strategies including: (a) a review of organizational structure for efficient operations through a focus on resource allocation, (b) an operation

budget review on how it's controlled, (c) a review of institutional inventory while supporting personnel, and (d) effective management of allotted budgets to support operational budgets to maintain organizational sustainability by addressing reductions in state appropriations. During states' fiscal crises, budgets for discretionary budget categories are typically reduced to help balance state budgets and make additional revenues available Kleiman (2001). These budget strategies are based on the identified solutions by the department of corrections leaders participating in this study to the defunding of corrections.

As noted by Alibasic (2013), governance, through active policy making, and practical applications of sustainability, leads to the development of specific measures and to a potential sustainability paradigm for organizations' strengthening their core resiliency and adaptability to societal and environmental threats. Department of corrections executive leaders could use the identified strategies to: (a) reviewing organizational structures to identify opportunities to develop more efficient operations through a focus on resource allocation, (b) conducting an operation budget review on how it's controlled, (c) reviewing institutional inventory for supporting personnel, and (d) effectively managing allotted budgets to address and resolve the issues of budget sustainability practices in correctional facilities. All the participants noted a positive change in their organization through a focused review of the stakeholders' needs. Throughout the organizational change process, implementing an increased business-centered approach through data-driven actions has enabled correctional staff to develop, implement, and improve their effective budgeting compliance strategies.

Implications for Social Change

The exploration and findings of strategies to support organizational budget sustainability in prisons is important to ensure organizational sustainability of the institution, but also in support of the growth and economic stability of the state. According to Bryant (2020), the collective efforts of the leaders of nonprofits, foundations, businesses, government, and communities are required to cooperate in addressing these economic and societal issues to develop robust solutions. Adams (2021) suggested today, the prison-industrial complex is a billion-dollar industry. It is a mixture of government and government businesses including the federal prison industries (FPI) and private businesses that make a profit on the incarceration and use cheap vulnerable prisoner labor to make a corporate profit Adams (2021).

As a result of this study, implications for positive change include providing value, providing budget sustainability strategies and practices in correctional institutions, and economic development within the communities. Leaders must align budgets and performance because it presents the primary purpose for which funds are allocated and sets measurable objectives, for example, funds distributed for business purposes such as personnel, program, and operations costs (Bryant (2020)). As the budgets increase, employment with the Department of Corrections may increase as citizens in the community seek an employable skill, allowing them to become productive members of the community. The findings from this study could help to reduce recidivism as well as improve the safety of the community. The findings could affect positive social changes in public safety, prison reform, and improvement of the work environment for correctional

officers. The potential positive effects of this study could also increase the overall safety of the community by the potential reduction of inmate recidivism.

Recommendations for Action

Departments of corrections executive leaders should review the results of this study to facilitate developing an action plan to identify and implement budget sustainability strategies and practices for meeting correctional facility requirements. As recommended by Okorhi et al. (2019), such strategies can be developed through a formal strategic planning process, or they evolve through the activities of the various functional sectors of the agency. The action plan should include a multiple-step process to include an review of their organization's culture for addressing resistance to change. Deng (2020) suggested that the solution to change or improve this situation cannot rely only on policies (as they usually compromise broad political interests, which are less effective, efficient, and time-consuming). Leaders should begin this planning process by reviewing their organization's structure and budgetary commitments.

State executive leadership should review correctional supervisors' operational budget sustainability practices. The next step includes a budget analysis review with all midlevel supervisors and a review of all state-operated correctional facilities for determining what budget items can be reduced, eliminated or combined. A thorough review of all the facilities with their managers will enable leaders to make informed decisions about the organizational structure and future budget sustainability practices. As a final step, leaders, and captains should communicate the budget adjustments they have faced and the direction they plan to take for the future.

As recommended by Youn (2009), analyses of individual state data are necessary to help states understand the paths for implementing their current fiscal policies and choose the most effective fiscal policies. States' executive leaders should make decisions based on the needs of the midlevel supervisors of the correctional facilities, the effect of their decision on the prisons, and their implications for the "bottom line". I also recommend department of corrections leaders create a process for middle management to identify, prioritize and acquire the resources needed to institute a contingency line item into the budget, and for keeping an open line to communication with the leadership staff.

As budget expenses increase, leaders should review the need within the department and either increase departmental resources or allow another entity within the organization to obtain the resources that have been lost. Leaders should also review operational budgets to ensure the offerings are conducive to the work force needs, the allocated revenues from the leadership are sufficient to support the expenses, and for enabling the midlevel supervisors to meet their objectives. As recommended by Kleiman (2001), the process of setting priorities manifests itself in the realm of budgeting where certain programs and departments are given greater state resources to address what are deemed as prioritized problems. Leaders must develop and implement a strategy and derivative process for identifying and addressing unanticipated delays in funding projects, or if departmental revenues decrease. This planning should anticipate administration changes which can affect priorities Sawyer (2022).

The findings from this study could be helpful to correctional leaders throughout the Southeastern United States and potentially the United States. The numerous federal,

state, county, city, and privately - owned correctional facilities require various mandates, funding cuts, and goals, but the underlying question of sustainable futures is paramount. States' prison business leaders can share the results and concomitant sustainability strategies at leadership conferences and higher education journals. I will disseminate the findings to the study's participants, the leadership of the institution I serve, and various colleagues among the correctional facilities in the Southeastern United States area.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study included only sustainability practices from leadership from four correctional facilities in the Southeastern United States. Because there are 137 state-operated correctional facilities in the Southeastern United States and 1,566 across the United States, it is recommended that the study's population be expanded to determine their transferability to other correctional facilities. I explored multiple areas of sustainability through a review of operating budgets, organizational structure, and operational decisions. However, the participants introduced chronic concern for more input in sustainability decisions. Further research into the business practices of state and private prisons could benefit the sustainability of correctional facilities in the Southeastern United States and across the nation.

Research focusing on the growing competition among state-run facilities and privately owned prisons is also needed. As defunding continues and unfunded mandates increase, correctional business leaders must react to the inmate populations' prioritized needs for their service areas. Department of corrections leaders are challenged with the need for offering maintaining a safe and secure environment for offenders in their

custody. However recently a safe environment has become more challenging to maintain as technologies such as cell phones, drones, and cash applications have penetrated the perimeter of correctional facilities and are creating more competition for already strained budgets. Research for addressing these technology-centric challenges is therefore recommended.

Reflections

Before beginning the Doctor of Business Administration Program, I thought I was a time management master. In addition to working full-time and being a single dad, I had taken on the enormous task of completing my doctorate. I soon realized that to attain this dream, I would have to restructure my life in a way that would best help me reach my goals. I was amazed by the support I received when I started this journey.

I have been working in my profession since 2002; before entering the program, I did not have any ideas for budget sustainability strategies. However, during the data collection, the participants shared insights that were like my own. The participants did not introduce some of my perspectives, such as combining resources, creating project development projects, and partnerships with other correctional facilities to expand opportunities. I avoided personal bias of suggestions for a sustainable future and stayed focused on the participants' perspectives.

I was confident I would complete the program within six 8-week sessions after completing the coursework. I went through many personal and professional obstacles; the process took longer than initially anticipated, but the additional time enabled me to focus more closely on attaining my goals. The new opportunity also allowed me time to accept

that I will face obstacles in life and some things are beyond my control. Regardless of the plan, an individual may develop, change, and reorganize as a part of completing the process.

Completing the doctoral study has allowed me to further my knowledge of leadership and practices for successful operations and sustainable futures of correctional facilities. Throughout the process, I have shared the knowledge gained with leaders of the institution I serve, colleagues, and my staff. I have also been fortunate to share the experience with my family, clearly instilling why pursuing higher education is beneficial and worthwhile for my daughters.

Summary and Study Conclusions

In this era of budget reductions and an increasingly evolving workforce, program productivity and accountability are crucial elements to program sustainment and success Williams (2013). Department of corrections leaders must consider the implications of serving the community and providing safe confinement for the inmates in their care. To assure organizations' sustainability, leaders must develop effective strategies to support budget decisions and ensure their efficient implementation.

Finally, state law-enforcement training programs around the nation are interested in the best training methodologies and retention strategies Williams (2013). In moving forward, correctional leaders need to complete system-wide reviews of their operations to ensure sustainability-focused strategies are in place while seeking to increase correctional facility success and retention. Through reviewing and addressing the findings and recommendations the findings from this study, correctional facility executive leaders can

better develop and implement effective strategies to continue operations as prison systems continue to evolve.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What you will do	What you will say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage	Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Are you ready to begin?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in depth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strategies have you used to sustain the resources of your operating budget? 2. What key barriers have you faced for implementing and adhering to those operational budget sustainability strategies? 3. How did you address the key barriers to implementing your strategies for adhering to sustainable operational budget practices? 4. What situations contributed to the sustainability of the operational budget at your facility? 5. What specific practices have proved successful in sustaining your operating budget? 6. What strategies have you used to help officers facilitate daily operations within the confines of your operational budget? 7. What would you like to add from your experience regarding operational budget sustainability that has not already been covered?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	Thank you for your participation in this study.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	Can we follow up with another interview in a month to go over your answers and check for the accuracy of my summary and interpretations?