

11-10-2025

Examining Social Workers' Perceptions of Collaborating With Police Officers to Foster Community Trust in Oklahoma

LaShonda Lanette Dale
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

LaShonda L. Dale

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. George King, Committee Chairperson,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Lois Woods, Committee Member,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2025

Abstract

Examining Social Workers' Perceptions of Collaborating With Police Officers to Foster

Community Trust in Oklahoma

by

LaShonda L. Dale

MA Philosophy CJ, Walden University, 2023

MA Science CJ, Walden University, 2020

BS Science CJ, Langston University, 2019

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

October 2025

Abstract

The current study was administered in order to examine Oklahoman social workers' perception of collaborating with police officers to foster community trust. The goal was to determine whether the collaboration amongst social and police officer fostered trust when collaborating during services calls. The theory of planned behavior and policing (TPBP) studied by Ishoy and giving credit to Ajzen's were the foundational theory used to support this study. Collaboration among social workers and police officers can foster community trust and benefit both parties. Such collaboration could also lead to joint training and education, as well as alleviating public fears and misconceptions. TPBP is relevant to the study, since the framework predicts the factors influencing individuals' intentions to engage in specific behavior. I used purposeful and random sampling techniques in order to recruit participants for this study. There were 12 participants interviewed using Microsoft Teams audio recorded only, and no interview was in person. All participants were asked three demographic questions and 12 research interview questions, and thematic analysis was used to make this study significant. All participant interviews were collected as data and manually coded. Participants suggest that educating the community about the roles of social workers and police officers could build trust and improve collaboration outcomes. This study can promote positive social change by encouraging social workers' collaboration with police officers in communities they serve.

Examining Social Workers' Perceptions of Collaborating With Police Officers to Foster

Community Trust in Oklahoma

by

LaShonda L. Dale

MA, Philosophy CJ, Walden University, 2023

MA, Science CJ, Walden University, 2020

BS, Science CJ, Langston University, 2019

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

October 2025

Acknowledgments

I grant honor to God the Highest for giving me the strength to accomplish the task of completing my dissertation, Psalms 119:133-135. To my children, Dona'te and Deonta, who have been there for me through good days, exhausted days, and have been so helpful and humble through this entire journey; days I could not be out with them, spending momma time, and straight falling asleep from being tired. Through it all, they never complained. They both told me and would remind me, "We're glad you are with us, Momma." That meant a lot to me on this tedious journey. To all my participants, thank you for taking time out of your busy personnel and work schedules to be a part of this journey with me. I can't thank you all enough. I can't forget my niece Laqueshia Powell Kelley and my best friend Victoria Smith, who were each other's accountability partners and read each other's dissertations and gave ideas, guidance, and constructive feedback (I cherish our work together through this process forever).

To the best of the best, I especially like to thank my committee chair, Dr. George King, and committee member, Dr. Lois Woods, who spearheaded dedication, determination, and commitment to helping me get across the finish line. To all my family, friends, and church family at First Baptist Church North, Cushing, Oklahoma, who have been there for me, even if it is just a check-in, how are you, an invite for a movie, a ladies' day out, an invite to a restaurant, or just a call to vent. I truly cherish and acknowledge you all for that. The acknowledgements helped me along the way, especially when the time of my dissertation process got tough, or life situations were challenging. Thank you to all for the encouraging words during this long and tedious

journey. The road to this destination has not been easy for me. From the loss of my second oldest sister during this journey, other family members and friends passed along the way. Again, thank you to all who stuck this emotional journey out with me from my heart. I love and appreciate all. God bless each one of you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	3
Problem Statement.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Question	9
Theoretical Framework.....	9
Nature of the Study.....	10
Definitions.....	13
Assumptions.....	14
Scope & Delimitations.....	15
Limitations	17
Significance.....	18
Summary	20
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	22
Introduction.....	22
Literature Search Strategy.....	24
Theoretical Foundation.....	25
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts.....	28
Legitimacy by Social Work	31

Social Workers and Police Officers Collaboration	33
Less Arrests and Less Use of Force	37
Community-Oriented Policing (COP) and Community Trust	39
Social Work and Public Safety	42
Training, Education, and Support for Each Other	44
Success and Challenges Versus Providing Direct Services	47
Summary and Conclusions	51
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	56
Introduction.....	56
Research Design and Rationale	56
Role of the Researcher	58
Methodology	60
Participant Selection Logic	62
Instrumentation	63
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	65
Data Analysis Plan	67
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	69
Ethical Procedures	71
Summary.....	73
Chapter 4: Results	75
Introduction.....	75
Settings.....	75

Demographics	76
Data Collection	77
Data Analysis	79
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	89
Results.....	92
Theme 1: Police Officers Ensuring Safety.....	93
Theme 2: Support to Each Other and the Community.....	94
Theme 3: Building Trust in the Community.....	95
Theme 4: Mutual Understanding of the Community and Each Other	96
Summary.....	98
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	101
Introduction.....	101
Interpretation of the Findings.....	102
Limitations of the Study.....	103
Recommendations.....	104
Implications.....	105
Conclusion	106
References.....	108
Appendix: Data Collection Instrument	118

List of Tables

Table 1 *Demographic Information*..... 77

Table 2 *Measurable, Effective Ways for Social Workers and Police Officers Collaborate to Foster Trust*..... 98

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Social workers' and police officers' career fields are very distinct but often intersect within the same populations they serve. The current study examined the perceptions of social worker personal experiences when they have collaborated with police officers amid service calls within Oklahoma communities. There is a need to explore obstacles that would hinder social workers and police officers when responding to specific calls. Social workers are bound by virtue with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2024); this identified societal issues and voices their concerns for individuals in need. The occupation of social work may lead to mental and emotional exhaustion in the field with the lack of support from peers and community partnership. Social work is known for its high stress levels, often leading to burnout due to the many daily tasks for the practitioners (Ratcliff, 2024). Social work ethics emphasize human relations, while law enforcement ethics prioritize crime prevention (Springfield, 2022). The profession of policing and law enforcement, the primary goal is protection and safety of the public; human services in social work are to nurture individuals' well-being and aid in meeting basic needs (Droubie, 2020). Training social workers in mental health and trauma can benefit officers in resolving difficult situations and ensuring everyone's safety.

Social workers' presence alongside police officers may lead to more successful responses to individuals experiencing mental health crises, providing trauma support to victims, and aiding police officers. Police agencies have benefited from the inclusion of

social workers in their departments, as they contribute to increased effectiveness in law enforcement dealings with individuals experiencing mental illnesses (Stone, 2023). One potential outcome of this collaboration is that citizens may positively cooperate with police officers, fostering trusting relationships in communities across Oklahoma, where service connection is essential.

Social workers are trained to assist police officers in handling crises from social and emotional perspectives, addressing a common area of criticism directed towards officers in the media. Specific news media reports highlight factors related to the self-sufficient institutional civility of metropolitan police departments, emphasizing police camaraderie, loyalty, and a “show of force” approach in response to challenges to a police officer’s capabilities (Goble, 2021). The literature illustrates instances where social workers respond to calls alongside police officers to facilitate connections between citizens and community resources. Perry (2022) noted that police officers often refer individuals to social workers following interactions.

In addition to the current study, a potential positive outcome of integrating social workers with police officers is the increase in officers’ effectiveness in dealing with individuals experiencing mental illness (Goble, 2021). Consequently, social workers may demonstrate concern for citizens with social problems based on their training in service provision. Social workers will pay unparalleled attention to individuals in the community who are at risk of being victims of crime or involved in criminal activity. Moreover, social workers responding to specific calls often adopt proactive approaches, aligning with the principles of community policing.

Chapter 1 encompasses this study's background, problem statement, purpose, definitions, limitations, significance, and summary. Furthermore, Chapter 1 will address the research questions, conceptual framework for analysis, definitions of key concepts, population, sampling methods, and how it impacts positive social change.

Background

Social work has been a profession in the United States for over 100 years. Social workers have advocated for improvement to ensure civilians have opportunities and resources to meet their basic needs (NASW, 2024). NASW (2024) maintains ethical standards of social workers' presence to ensure that the needs of individuals in crisis are met. However, the significant social problem in social work is greater access to services. Social justice values require social workers to voice their concerns for individuals in the community and connect them to services (NASW, 2024). The significance of social workers' collaboration with police officers can foster trust and a good rapport for community policing. Social workers have steered a wide range of vital socioeconomic enhancements, including the protection of civil rights for all, the provision of financial safety nets like unemployment benefits or welfare, the compassionate care of people with mental illness, and the prohibition of child abuse and negligence (Regis, 2023).

While the literature reflects social workers going out on service calls with police officers, the significance of a multidisciplinary perspective amongst both is to connect individuals with the services they need. The literature also indicated that additional research is needed to examine social workers' perceptions of teaming up with police officers in the community. In Providence, Rhode Island, the first development of the co-

response relationships amongst social workers and police officers began in the 1990s (Grieder, 2022). Few communities focus on reforming the role of police in favor of alternative public health approaches to maintaining community wellness and safety (Grieder, 2022).

The Bloomington, Indiana Police Department (IDP) started and funded its police social worker program in 2019. Stone (2023) mentioned that this approach is for more service rendering and fewer arrests of citizens when it comes to a new approach to community-oriented policing (COP). The IDP program began with one social worker and has grown to three full-time social workers in their department, having good reports (Stone, 2023). The movement towards social workers responding to calls along with police officers has gained momentum over the years as different organizations sought more effective ways to promote public safety and trust.

Recent events involving the use of intolerable force by police officers to de-escalate issues with individuals have led to a lack of trust among citizens in some communities (Cole, 2022). Excessive use of force can result in police misconduct or violence towards citizens and civil rights violations. Public criticism often targets police officers for their response to community challenges. In Providence, Rhode Island, police officers address these situations by partnering with civilians, such as social workers or licensed mental health clinicians (Grieder, 2022). Social workers are recognized for their extensive training in human services, which is invaluable for community support. In cases of prolonged distress or dysfunction, individuals may frequently seek assistance. DeAngelis' (2021) study revealed that police officers sometimes resort to excessive use

of force that may result in brutality, escalating conflicts, non-compliance with police orders, and discrimination. As a result, there have been allegations that police lack sensitivity or requisite skills in de-escalating and managing incidents that involve citizens experiencing crises. In such situations, alternative actions beyond the use of force or making arrests should be considered (Frankham, 2020).

The lack of community trust in police officers can have serious consequences. In response to these concerns, many police departments have employed social workers or called on social workers from other agencies to assist police officers in managing these situations (Husband, 2023). Social workers can be helpful to police officers on service calls because of their intervention training, education on assessing the situations at hand, and other emergency responses (Goble, 2021). Social workers and police officers collaborate in rendering services for people with mental health disorders, child abuse cases, domestic violence, and juvenile offenders. Also, medical professionals administer care, treatment for physical and mental symptoms, social workers customize suitable supportive services, and police officers assess whether there is a breach of the criminal code (Notko et al., 2022).

Research has explored the role of social workers, along with police officers, in responding to service calls. The findings from Husband's (2023) study can aid in developing intermediation that social workers can employ to tackle the social inequities experienced by minority populations due to policing. Social workers accompanying police officers to incidents where persons appear to be in a mental or physical crisis may help improve resources for the citizens of Oklahoma in need. Social work and police

collaboration originates from community policing, which entails regular contact between police officers and the public, who collaborate to combat crime (Cole, 2022; Husband, 2023; Springfield, 2022). Social workers can play a role in COP by building confidence and trust in the police. Public members can play a role in crime prevention and antisocial behavior through effective collaboration with the police. (Cole, 2022; Husband, 2023; Springfield, 2022).

Although researchers have investigated how police interact with the public, it is essential to develop and implement a COP program that is indeed focused and committed to the community it serves (Cole, 2022). In this study, I explored how the collaboration between social workers and police officers during service calls in the communities they serve helps foster trusting relationships. This research is needed and has not been examined from social workers' perceptions of partnering with police officers when responding to service calls.

Problem Statement

Recent research involving the use of excessive force by police has led to a lack of trust among citizens in some communities (Husband, 2022). This has also resulted in accusations that police lack sensitivity or skills in de-escalating or managing incidents where citizens in crisis need interventions beyond the use of force or arrests. Data shows that 80% of calls to the police are social service-related (Carroll, 2023). Police officers frequently act as first responders in situations involving people experiencing homelessness, substance use, or youth-involved crime. Police often work to de-escalate disturbances and connect individuals with social services (Carroll, 2023). In response to

these concerns, many police departments have employed social workers to assist officers in managing these situations.

There is little known about the perception of social workers on how successful their working relationships with police officers are in fostering community trust. For example, the literature indicates that an integrative approach between social workers and police is essential to deterring police mayhem (Patterson & Swan, 2019). Wallace (2020) highlighted the importance of social workers' recognition and interpretation of sensory information when speaking about their experience of responding to calls for service with the police. Blair (2022) mentioned that trust and legality are vital for police forces everywhere.

The current work of this study illustrates that the relationship between police officers and social workers is entrenched in discretionary acts to best help individuals in their community. Social workers and police officers' career fields are held accountable by placing policies and regulations to ensure they are meeting the needs of people in the communities they serve. There is various amount of information exploring social workers' perceptions and experiences of police officers' partnership together in the community. An important component of the partnership between social workers and police officers is to understand the perception of social workers on fostering community trust through their working relationship with police officers.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study aims to gain insight into social workers' knowledge who have collaborated with police officers in fostering trusting relationships in the

communities in which they work. Social workers are advocates in the community. They work on equivalent approaches to assisting individuals, aiming to resolve obstacles that may impede individual treatment (NASW, 2024). Social workers have training that allows them to work in collaboration with the police to help citizens in the community manage psychosocial aspects of societal issues, such as homelessness and mental health issues. More research needs to be conducted on the perception of social worker's lived experiences, especially those who collaborated with police officers on service calls within Oklahoma communities. Professionals working in the community must be conscious of practical ways to intervene and reduce harm to health, well-being, and security.

This study explored how social workers perceived the collaboration between officers and social workers when responding to service calls and working alongside police officers. Social workers support police officers in safeguarding the welfare of citizens through social-level mediation. Lawrence (2021) asserted that police departments and social workers support the brink of a new era of policing and examine efficient ways to serve communities through leadership, coalition building with advocacy groups and community partners, and administering straightforward policies. Social workers and police officers' positive interactions with individuals in the community can help improve community connections instead of arresting persons who may benefit from receiving social services.

Social workers and police officers' collaboration could lead to better outcomes of trust and working relationships in the community. Considering past events, the Raleigh Police Department seeks social work specialists to strategize new programs and connect

to what is working to ensure a healthy and flexible workforce (Lawrence, 2021).

Herranz's (2010) logic model framework has clarified the coordination and performance of networks by outlining the expected connections between networking activities and the outcomes of non-profit and public organizations. Social workers' unique skills can help them identify with people who suffer from mental crises and substance abuse disorders, along with those with special needs. Also, social workers' skills help officers respond to various types of calls related to mental health and physical crises.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

RQ: What are social workers' perceptions of how collaborations with police officers on calls establish trust from the people in the communities of Oklahoma?

Theoretical Framework

The theory that grounds this study includes Ishoy's (2016) theory of planned behavior and policing (TPBP), which credits Ajzen's 1991 TPBP. Ajzen's focus was on how the attitudes, behaviors, norms, and perceptions of control influence how police officers exercise discretion and make decisions. The researcher used the thoughts of social workers to generate ideas about how to foster trusting relationships in the communities they serve while on a call with the police. Furthermore, Chapter 2 will explore Ishoy's TPBP in more detail.

The commonalities among the frameworks demonstrated an explanation of how humans behave, along with the research questions that guide this study, and understanding what social workers perceive from working with police officers

responding to certain community service calls. The underpinning of this framework, planned behavior, is to predict an individual's intention to engage in behavior at a specific time and place.

Nature of the Study

The approach chosen for this research is a phenomenological design, which will allow readers to gain knowledge of the perception of social workers responding to specific calls with police officers. Umanailo (2019) asserted that phenomenology is a retrospective passageway for the study and developed to establish a basis of validity so that hearsay and doubtfulness easily overcome it.

My intention in this study is to examine a wealth of knowledge about social workers' perceptions of responding to calls with police and to help the public understand the collaboration. Data as it applies to the intersections of criminal justice and social work career fields is limited. Research is needed on the police and social work collaboration on how to support each other to serve the community. Underpinning the philanthropy of the information in this study allows me to argue the validity of support for those in the police and social work career fields. Merging allowed me to successfully analyze and approach the potential abnormalities and a possible solution to the problem (Young & Brewer, 2019).

I addressed the research questions in this qualitative study, the research design proposed a minimum of 10 to 15 participants, or until data saturation is achieved, all of whom social workers live in Oklahoma. The participants who responded to my invitation participated in one-on-one interviews; after emailing me back they consented to

interview. Participants knew of their rights and privacy regarding the nature of this study and was reassured of their rights before each interview started. Walden University Office of Research and Doctoral Services (2024) specified that the research will not use participants' knowledge outside of the current research study. Matters of ethics can arise when failing to protect participants' rights that could cause them any harm, in this study no harm or issue were reported by participants. The one-on-one interviews help guided the assembling of the lived experiences of social workers working with police officers in which 12 interviews were conducted.

This study involved social workers who hold bachelor's degrees or higher from various majors and are actively working. Because of the complexity of their work, social workers usually require extra help from external sources such as community partnerships. Social workers are trained to provide services to individuals and to decrease misconduct for broader societal reasons. Therefore, social workers must acknowledge their barriers to service during specific calls with police officers and sponsor their rights to seek pathways to fostering trusting relationships with civilians. NASW (2024) Code of Ethics invigorates social workers to be advocates for individuals who are unable or unwilling to advocate for themselves. Advocating for social workers' rights would mean a greater availability of resources for service rendering. Participants of the current research were assured that I would not influence their perspectives as a researcher and social worker. Participants received study invitations via email. Researcher data collection was obtained through discussions in one-on-one interviews with each social worker using a semi-

structured interview process. Noko et al. (2022) asserted that developing practices and procedures by sharing knowledge among agencies and professionals is essential.

One-on-one interviews were used to gather data from social workers about responding to service calls and their observations working with police officers. Husband (2023) recommended that it is essential to highlight mediations that will address various qualities in policing and substitutes for policing. Several considerations have shown the importance of collaborative and cross-disciplinary practice among changing interaction barriers (Noko et al., 2022). The researcher used NVivo to transcribe data collected in a Word document.

There is a lack of literature on social workers' perspectives regarding their collaboration with police officers during service calls (Fixler et al., 2024; Giwa, 2018). This study seeks to provide more knowledge and guidance on social work practices, transdisciplinary partnerships between social workers and police, and community involvement to foster trusting relationships (Fixler et al., 2024; Giwa, 2018).

Information management, along with software for data visualization, was used to uncover more precise perceptions and create clear outcomes that can be articulated, defensible, and supported by rigorous research. Coding was used to help aid descriptive labeling to identify related content. Coding must stay close to the meaning given by the researcher's interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Definitions

Arrest: Arrest is to seize, capture, specifically to take or keep an individual in custody by authority of law, the apprehension of a person suspected of criminal activity (Goble, 2021; Husband, 2022; Oxford Languages, 2024).

Community-oriented policing (COP): is a system for developing trust and understanding between the people who live in a particular area and the local police to reduce crime in that area. (Husband, 2022; Oxford Languages, 2024).

Police officer: Police officers must constantly carry out the duty imposed upon them by law to assist the public and safeguard every individual from unlawful acts, persisting with the highest level of accountability necessary through their profession (Droubie, 2020; Oxford Languages, 2024; Ratcliff, 2024; Springfield, 2022).

Social worker: an individual whose duties are to connect people in a particular area with social exclusion or personal issues. Also, social workers connect people in the community by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, deal with their partnerships, and solve personal and family predicaments (Droubie, 2020; Oxford Languages, 2024; Ratcliff, 2024; Springfield, 2022).

Support: Support means enabling and assisting someone in functioning or acting upon their abilities. Support is to take care of, help, and be a source of strength, comfort, and corroborate (Carrol, 2023; Cole, 2022; Scott et al., 2023; Stone, 2023).

Trust: A firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. To have confidence in somebody; to believe that somebody is good, sincere, and honest. (Oxford Languages, 2024; Stone, 2023).

Use of force: A course of action to maintain safety in a community when other practices are impotent (Oxford Languages, 2024; Goble, 2021; Yakam, 2019).

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made while developing this study. Overall, these assumptions underscore the philosophy behind adopting the qualitative methodology for this research, acknowledging the complexities of the research topic and the need for an in-depth exploration of social workers' objective experiences and perspectives on service calls with police officers rendering service. Scholarly literature is essential for agreement on the primary belief about what matters, considering favorable research (Agosto et al., 2017). Qualities of this research that are considered but may not be accurate on trusting relationships fostered by social workers working with police officers in the community of Oklahoma. Another assumption may be that police officers' use of force creates distrust with the public. In this research, the volunteers are expected to answer each question candidly and verbalize their understanding in English.

Additionally, the research participants were expected to precisely recognize what they believe will be the most effective strategies for service rendering and building trust. The research also implies the effectiveness of social workers and police officers in providing a support system to the community for service rendering and fewer arrests of citizens, which links to the proper training and resources available to citizens (Goble, 2021).

Finally, research participants unequivocally have knowledge of their role in the study and that any data gathered throughout the interview process was mainly in favor of

the stated research purpose. Suppositions are essential to uncovering patterns, notions, and themes about social workers' perceptions of collaborating with police officers to foster community trust in Oklahoma.

Scope & Delimitations

This study examined social workers' perspectives and experiences regarding joint responses to service calls with police officers, as well as policies and practices in Oklahoma. The research focused on social workers in Oklahoma communities to understand their perceptions of working with police officers. I interviewed participants about their experiences working in the community, which helped guide the researcher's phenomenological approach (Ruben & Ruben, 2012). I initiated the one-on-one interviews by sending invitations by email for research participants to consent.

Specifically, the study focuses on the perception of social workers' current response plan supporting police officers' preparedness, coordination, and communication among various departments and agencies during service calls. I asked complex, open-ended questions to identify and draw conclusions from current social workers who have accompanied police officers on specific types of service calls. By delving into these critical areas, the research aimed to present a comprehension of service rendering and support inherent in collaboration and response with police officers (Husband, 2023). It is important to acknowledge certain delimitations inherent in this study.

Firstly, the research is limited to social workers' perspectives, excluding the viewpoints of other stakeholders such as police officers, administrative personnel, and citizens. Secondly, these perspectives are valuable and may offer additional insights. The

research focused on social workers' perceptions regarding the implementation of collaboration policies and practices in Oklahoma. Lastly, the research used qualitative methods, primarily interviews, to examine social workers' perceptions.

While qualitative methods offered an in-depth context to data collection, they provided a different level of generalizability than mixed methods or quantitative approaches (Akanle et al., 2020). Akanle et al. (2020) reported that academic writing differs from mere composition writing because it states the investigated facts in the research and provides evidence of knowledge claims. Therefore, the outcome of this research must be specific for the participating compartments and may only be directly transferable to other contexts if carefully considered by the unique organizational dynamics and factors at play.

The study is limited to Oklahoma social workers within the central parts of the United States, specifically in all parts of Oklahoma that are particularly susceptible to participants. The state of Oklahoma was chosen due to the frequent exposure to service calls to aid police officers, the recent experiences with global health crises, such as the pandemic with COVID-19, and the need for social workers to respond (Droubie, 2020). By concentrating on this specific geographic region, the study provided a more detailed and relevant analysis of the perception of social workers responding to service calls with police officers.

Collaboration practices varied across different locations based on factors such as how severe the call is, resource availability, and availability of police staff, depending on the jurisdiction (Akanle et al., 2020). While efforts were made to collect diverse

perspectives within the selected sample, collaboration findings were similar across each jurisdiction. Overall, by delineating the possibilities and demarcations of this study, the research provided transparency and clarity regarding the boundaries and limitations of the inquiry (Akanle et al., 2020). Despite these delimitations, the study endeavors to contribute valuable insights to the career of social work in Oklahoma. The social worker's skill set involves providing needed support for individuals, improving the support needed for the community, and improving initiatives to enhance the service rendered during service calls.

Limitations

In social work, Husbands (2023) and NASW (2024) promoted respecting the dignity and self-worth of the person or people needing service. Analyzing limitations may pose challenges due to several factors. Firstly, the research could be constrained by a small number of participants, limiting the data available. Participants withdrawing from the study at the last minute could also impact its scope. Other potential limitations include biases influencing the study and difficulties in accessing relevant data. Furthermore, reliability issues may arise if the research cannot be replicated consistently, leading to inconsistencies in findings (Walden University Office of Research and Doctoral Services, n.d.). Having Competency is another value identified in the NASW Code of Ethics (2024) that correlated with this study.

When social workers and police officers respond to a call for service, the social worker's response is to connect with individuals to identify their long-term goals. The social worker follows this by connecting civilians in need with adequate remedies, like

connecting to housing, mental and behavioral assistance programs, substance abuse treatment, and treatment for any medical needs. The social work team then administers follow-up to see if the referred services meet all the civilian needs, and further referrals are made if required. In contrast, police officers' jobs and responsibilities are different. When on duty, police officers do administrative tasks, meet with community partners, and prepare for court. Police officers are not on calls looking to make arrests, but to be on guard and render other services if required. Police officers respond to calls to protect people and keep the peace. Police officers also make referrals to other agencies to render service to individuals and make arrests if laws are broken (Lawrence, 2021).

Biases can influence the outcome of this study. A bias that may affect the study can include the participants giving answers they think are socially desirable, participants altering responses due to study awareness, and biases of publications by researchers only reporting positive results. I mitigated potential bias through a carefully designed study and transparent reporting practices. Identifying the limitations of this study helped me acknowledge potential biases in data collection and analysis. The limitation of this study ensured transparency about the study's measures and potential constraints, which enhanced the credibility of the study.

Significance

This study is meaningful in that it fills a gap in associating social workers' views and perceptions regarding working relationships with police officers. I gained knowledge and understanding of the effects of the delivery of services on communities. Building trust and legitimacy are crucial for police forces worldwide in fostering community

relationships and aiding police officers in rebuilding positive rapport (Blair, 2022). Police and social services departments are rapidly changing their history of attempts to serve their communities by examining how to serve best using supervision, partnership development with alliances and interest groups, and implementing equitable policies (Lawrence, 2021). Wallace (2020) asserted that although social workers aim to assist individuals in need in, all have the right to make their own determination concerning the remedy. Social workers can do their due analysis by teaching and supplying resources to police officers without impacting their discretion. Social workers, with respect to the honor of police officers, begin by staying unbiased; this method reduces tension in seeking treatment and increases comfort with social workers (Wallace, 2020).

Consequently, this research may lead to social change by aiding police officers and social workers in building relationships that foster quality services to the communities in which they work. Social workers and police officers can foster trusting relationships in areas where citizens have raised concerns. The concerns are raised regarding the behavior of police in terms of the use of force, as well as racial, socioeconomic, and emotional insensitivity demonstrated by some police officers when responding to specific service calls. Positive social change could result from interviewing social workers' perceptions of their experience in responding to calls for service with police officers. When social workers and police officers work together, the possible outcome can lead to increased civilian cooperation and a more practical approach to crime prevention and public safety. Social workers and police officers demonstrate good outcomes in responding to specific service calls in Oklahoma (Malley & Grace, 2021).

Summary

Social workers interact with individuals from multiple disciplines throughout their daily encounters, including police officers. According to the NASW (2024) and Husband (2023) Code of Ethics, social workers are to ensure that all individuals are treated equally and can receive treatment without prejudice. I will explore social workers' perceptions of interacting with police officers during service calls to build trusting relationships in the communities they work.

Despite the professional relationship between social workers and police officers, police are usually the first to arrive on the scene of traumatic events. Police are also first responders responsible for de-escalating disturbances and connecting people with social services (Droubie, 2020). Engaging in partnership and collaboration with social workers to shift focus to these problems can lead to resources that address current issues. Current research is a potent tool for driving social change as it contextualizes social workers' experiences within Oklahoma communities, leading to evidence to guide specific actions and advocate for policy recommendations. Current research can develop improvement plans for social change in five key areas: trust, healthy conflict resolution, rapport building, accountability, and better outcomes.

This research can potentially drive social change by influencing how social workers perceive collaboration with police officers to address shared challenges. It emphasizes the active role social workers can play in shaping the world. Social workers working alongside police officers can be helpful to the well-being of those officers. Social workers have gained the trust of sworn officers when responding to calls for

service, and those same officers have turned to social workers for assistance with their emotional well-being and other nonwork-related problems (Perry, 2022).

Exploring the effectiveness of social research involving the lived experiences of social workers who responded to specific calls with police may result in social change. Programs nationwide show that social workers are reducing call volumes to police (Stone, 2023). Social change can occur based on information to identify patterns to address what works due to social workers' interventions, while connecting citizens to needed services rather than resulting in arrest.

As a researcher, my role was to collect data and logically report the data to those who participated in the study to present the findings. Social workers were asked this question in a one-on-one interview. I then analyzed data from one-on-one interviews to identify themes and address service gaps. I will use the literature and participant feedback to suggest strategies to improve the overall response to collaboration in building community trust.

Chapter 2 will explore in detail the current literature related to this topic. I will analyze existing scholarly research related to the current study and the gap in the literature. I will discuss the literature research strategy, relevant theories to the research, phenomena, themes, and a summary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of existing literature on social workers collaborating with police officers. Criticism from the public often targets police officers for their response to community challenges. Social workers' perceptions of collaborating with police officers aim to build relationships that enhance community services, fostering trust in areas where public concerns are prevalent. The use of excessive force by police in recent incidents has led to a lack of trust among citizens in some communities (Husband, 2022). This study aims to understand the perception of social workers in Oklahoma in collaboration with police officers, fostering community trust. Recent data has shown that 80% of calls to the police are social service-related (Carroll, 2023). Collaboration between social workers and police is increasingly common in Oklahoma communities, enhancing the likelihood of improved service delivery to individuals. With social workers present, police officers can also benefit from discussing their stress responses on calls.

In addition to the study, the literature review examines existing research on collaboration among social workers and police officers. Police officers are responsible for upholding the law, serving the community, and safeguarding individuals from unlawful acts, reflecting the high level of accountability inherent in their profession (Droubie, 2020; Oxford Languages, 2024; Ratcliff, 2024; Springfield, 2022). The literature review of Ajzen's 1991 theory of planned behavior and policing is fact-based regarding the roles of social workers and education and training when it comes to planning interactions or collaboration.

Recent studies indicate that many police departments have begun collaborating with social workers; however, there is a lack of comprehensive data regarding the precise number of departments engaged in such partnerships. Some police departments have shared success stories about their collaborations with social workers, while others are contemplating hiring social workers within their agencies (Goble, 2021; Patterson, 2022; Stone, 2021). This current research is significant in the literature as it examines how both licensed and unlicensed social workers are employed by police departments responding to specific service calls, thereby aiding community service, and fostering trust with civilians.

The literature review targets fact-based roles within the social work field, in which Ajzen's 1991 TPBP will explain in more detail how individual behaviors are planned or thought out. The purpose of the fact-based roles is to help the citizens who call 911 and have some other social needs that officers may not specialize in within their scope of job experience. This literature will explain social workers' perception of responding to calls from police officers in Oklahoma and their perceived outcome once the response is complete. I gathered information from social workers about their organization's policies when collaborating with police officers. Also, the I learned the lived experience of social workers and their perception of collaborating with police officers in the community to gain knowledge about the phenomenon.

In Chapter 2, this study will comprehensively review the literature regarding the key concepts in this current study. This study will utilize many peer-reviewed qualitative articles and journals surrounding the topic of social workers responding to calls with

policing while reviewing the literature. Chapter 2 will present a literature strategy, keywords, and databases to locate articles. Chapter 2 will explain in detail the theoretical foundation of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior and Policing (TPBP). Chapter 2 will also provide a research analysis of the chosen theory related to this study. In Chapter 2, I will explain why TPBP is applied to the current study and how the theory relates to the research question. Chapter 2 discusses the central themes identified and add to the existing knowledge about the topic. This study transitions into Chapter 3, where the methodology starts.

Literature Search Strategy

The current literature review will inform readers of social workers' perceptions of working with police officers to build community trust in Oklahoma. Husband's (2023) study supports the current research topic because social workers' ethical responsibility is to challenge social injustice. Husband utilized mixed-method research to gather one-on-one interviews among 12 social workers in Texas. Husband recruited through purposeful sampling using questionnaires on candidates' competent demography, among police officers, and view of the Code of Ethics (NASW, 2024).

I conducted a comprehensive search of various databases for the written works analysis of this research, including the investigated qualitative research that delivers insights into collaboration between social workers and police officers. The databases searched are Walden University Library, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Sage, ProQuest, Criminal Justice Database, Social Work Abstracts, and Scholar Works. Search terms used for research are *police and social work*, *social workers and police officers*, *social workers*

and community relations, crisis intervention, social work and police collaboration, community-oriented policing, and community trust. The terms used were searched in combination and individually to pinpoint a controllable number of journals and articles for creative writing. This study includes additional search terms: *training and education in police social work, police and social work ethics, police social work professionalism, crisis intervention team (CIT), and history of social work.* The literature provided a background of social work referencing experience collaborating with police officers and interactions with citizens in the community.

Theoretical Foundation

In 1985, Icek Ajzen introduced the Theory of Planned Behavior and Policing (TPBP). TPBP originated as a connection to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which Ajzen co-developed with Martin Fishbein; fundamentally, Ajzen built upon the existing concepts of the TRA to incorporate the additional factor of “perceived human behavioral control” into the TPBP. Ajzen’s study, alongside Ishoy’s (2016) conceptual framework of the TPBP, examines how attitudes, behaviors, norms, and perceptions of control impact the discretionary decision-making processes of police officers. Ajzen (TPBP;1985, 1991, 2011) suggested that these factors influence a person’s behavioral intention, even though they may not consciously reflect during decision-making.

I chose TPBP as a theoretical foundation because it provides a comprehensive understanding of how attitudes, social norms, and perceived control over a behavior influence an individual’s intention to perform that behavior (Ishoy, 2016). I perceive that

TPBP would be a valuable tool for predicting and explaining various behaviors across various contexts, especially when designing interventions to change behavior.

TPBP is highly relevant to this study because it provides a robust framework to understand and predict the factors influencing individuals' intentions to engage in specific behavior. In this case, the target behavior under investigation is building community trust in Oklahoma with social workers and police responding to calls by examining the interplay between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the researcher can identify what motivates or hinders participation in the behavior of citizens, allowing for individuals to receive interventions from social workers and police officers (Ajzen, 1985, 1991, 2011; Ishoy, 2016).

TPBP has been applied previously in ways similar to the current study. Compton et al. (2023) observed several interesting findings in TPBP during their study. First, the direct and indirect measures of the three predictor constructs contrasted substantially with the two groups, revealing that CIT-trained officers had a more confident attitude toward facilitating mental health referrals, greater intuitiveness for doing so, and higher apprehensions of control for making referrals (Compton et al., 2023). Current articles were used in the research to ensure that the information reflects current social work and criminal justice information. This study used some information that may be outdated because the current topic is understudied.

TPBP by Icek Ajzen in 1985 was used to predict human behavior. The TPBP posits that people act rationally based on their attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. These factors influence a person's intentions, which determine their

behavior. The TPBP became one of the most frequently cited and influential models for predicting human social behavior (Ajzen, 2011,1991,1985; Ishoy, 2016). Ishoy's 2016 TPBP and policing will aid in understanding what social workers perceive and interpret from the behavior of police officers as they collaborate with them in responding to specific calls for service from the community.

Ishoy (2016) stated that subjective norms regarding enforcement behaviors are essential. When faced with challenging cases, a social worker may feel constrained to the legitimate options that influence other decisions, which may become far less critical than incidents involving minor offenses. Minor incidents tend to be characterized by high levels of police officer discretion (Ishoy, 2016). Legitimate options may open a broader choice for social workers to handle service calls, making the decision process much more susceptible to determining a macro variety of situational, legal, and other factors. An excellent example of TPBP is someone who likes fishing because it is exciting and relaxing; the individual will be more than likely to plan and go often. Similarly, in the context of TPBP, if social workers perceive their collaboration with the police as successful, they will be more likely to rely on this collaborative approach for future services and support.

TPBP predicts human behavior. It assumes that people act rationally based on their attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. These factors influence a person's intentions, which determine their behavior. The TPBP became one of the most frequently cited and influential models for predicting human social behavior (Ajzen, 2011,1991,1985; Ishoy, 2016). Ishoy's 2016 TPBP and policing will aid in

understanding what social workers perceive and interpret from the behavior of police officers as they collaborate with them in responding to specific calls for service from the community. Ishoy concluded that subjective norms regarding enforcement behaviors are essential.

When faced with challenging cases, a social worker may feel constrained to the legitimate options that influence other decisions, which may become far less critical than incidents involving minor offenses. Minor incidents tend to be characterized by high levels of police officer discretion (Ishoy, 2016). Ishoy discusses that this may open a broader choice of options for social workers to handle service calls, making the decision process much more susceptible to determining a macro variety of situational, legal, and other factors. An excellent example of TPBP is someone who likes fishing because it is exciting and relaxing; the individual will be more than likely to plan and go often. Similarly, in the context of TPBP, if social workers perceive their collaboration with the police as successful, they will rely on this collaborative approach for future services and support.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

TPBP predicts human behavior. It assumes that people act rationally based on their attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. These factors influence a person's intentions, which determine their behavior. The TPBP became one of the most frequently cited and influential models for predicting human social behavior (Ajzen, 2011,1991,1985; Ishoy, 2016). Ishoy's 2016 TPBP and policing will aid in understanding what social workers perceive and interpret from the behavior of police

officers as they collaborate with them in responding to specific calls for service from the community.

Ishoy (2016) stated that subjective norms regarding enforcement behaviors are essential. When faced with challenging cases, a social worker may feel constrained to the legitimate options that influence other decisions, which may become far less critical than incidents involving minor offenses. Minor incidents tend to be characterized by high levels of police officer discretion (Ishoy, 2016). Ishoy discusses that this may open a broader choice of options for social workers to handle service calls, making the decision process much more susceptible to determining a macro variety of situational, legal, and other factors. An excellent example of TPBP is someone who likes fishing because it is fun and relaxing; the individual will be more than likely to plan and go often. Similarly, in the context of TPBP, if social workers perceive their collaboration with the police as successful, they will rely on this collaborative approach for future services and support.

Social workers and police officers become better at rapport building and service connecting. The conceptual framework is relevant to this study because it explains how social workers' perception of the behaviors and actions of police may aid in determining how they also perceive the efficacy of their collaborations in servicing and gaining the community's trust.

The logical connection between the framework presented is understanding what social workers perceive from working with police officers responding to specific calls for service from the community and fewer arrests. The foundation of this framework planned behavior is to predict an individual's intention to engage in behavior at a specific time

and place. Ishoy, giving credit to Ajzen's 1985, 1991, and 2011 theories of planned behavior and policing, focuses on how the attitudes, behaviors, norms, and perceptions of control influence how police officers exercise discretion and make decisions. Social workers' perceptions may generate ideas about fostering trusting relationships in their communities while on a call with police officers.

When police officers respond to specific calls within the community, they aim to serve the community with dignity and respect. Key concepts help within this subject matter because the researcher and readers will gain conceptual knowledge, factual knowledge, and skills created in a distinct subject discipline through which learners can progress.

Del Pozo et al. (2021) and Compton et al. (2023) studied TPBP in ways that are similar to the current study; police agencies support programs that offer treatment as an elective to arrest individuals or prosecution to those who have had bad encounters with police as opportunities for harm reduction. De Pozo et al. discuss that TPBP thrives on the assumption that one's aspiration may authentically anticipate one's behavior. They developed survey items based on the rudimentary work of Ishoy's 2016, which secured the works of Compton et al. 2021.

Del Pozo et al.'s (2021) study revealed that police officers or superiors have control over discretion enforcement, their enforcement actions in various circumstances, and their attitudes strongly influence decisions about minor infractions. When a police officer arrests someone, that does not mean that they are not human beings and do not

care about others. Nevertheless, changing an individual's perception of the community is essential to building trust.

While Ishoy's theory is dated 2016, it is still prominent today in discussing the organizational culture in law enforcement concerning TPBP. Del Pozo et al. (2021) and Compton et al. (2023) concluded that TPBP, when appropriately implemented, can be used to analyze the effects of perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and attitudes on police detectable purposes. Compton et al. concluded that analysis of TPBP applies to a traditional theory to a new line of inquiries, producing data that can be used for future analyses on a large scale and helping to develop police harm reduction training, new policies, and other interventions. Again, I chose the TPBP framework because it has been researched in other studies and is consistent with current research.

Legitimacy by Social Work

Social work legitimacy comes from its role in helping individuals interact with their environment, including social systems and society. Social workers can act on their knowledge based on skills, methods, and training in sociology, social policy, and psychology. Social work, in general, is provided to individuals as an ongoing connection to service, directed by a set standard of ethics, along with conducting a literature analysis of the ethical codes that are important to the well-being of individuals. Ethical concerns are "ethical dilemmas" (NASW, 2024). An ethical dilemma in social work is when two or more professional ethical conflicts present challenging situations for the social workers.

Social work focuses on professionalism and rational approaches, or the reasoning processes of professional team members. Social workers believe in the importance of

human relationships in civil society, that each person has dignity and worth, and that everyone has the right and potential to lead a productive and fulfilling life (NASW, 2024). The social work profession's preamble goal is rooted in six core values. The six core values acknowledged by social workers throughout the profession's history are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective on service, social equality, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and proficiency (NASW, 2024).

The career field in social work aims to help individuals in their personal and interpersonal lives accomplish social development efforts and pursue social change to meet their daily needs. Daggenvoorde et al. (2022) utilized an interpretive phenomenological study with in-depth interviews among eight police officers and eight mental health crisis team (MCT) members. Daggenvoorde et al. showed that it takes two agencies to de-escalate individuals suffering from confused behavior, and collaboration can be challenging for both.

Both police officers and MCTs are willing to communicate and respond to specific calls (Daggenvoorde et al., 2022). Malley and Grace (2021) suggested that social capital offers a theoretical lens on the potential and actual benefits of multi-agency work that emerge from the relationships between agencies, such as social work and policing, engaged in partnership. Social capital describes a co-location model of multi-agency collaboration that will bring social workers and police officers together from separate organizations into a shared physical space, along with shared training, which is consistent with the current research. Malley and Grace's relational dimensions refer to social

relations between individuals, including hope, norms, commitments, aspirations, and distinctiveness.

Husband (2023) mentioned several times after finding that further research regarding police and social work collaboration is needed. In this study, I conducted interviews for qualitative purposes for participants' perception of social workers' moral expectations, perception of the relationship between police officers and confounded groups, an alliance of social work and policing values, means to approach harsh police methods, and social workers' role in responding to on-call with police. Husband's (2023) findings included five main categories with general responsibilities as members:

- Social work profession.
- Responsibilities expressed by the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Responsibilities to engage in macro practice.
- Responsibilities to engage with law enforcement.
- Perception of the relationship between police officers and confounded communities.

Social Workers and Police Officers Collaboration

In this study I searched various databases to learn about social workers collaborating with police officers on specific calls. The focus of this research is to understand social workers' perceptions as they work alongside police officers when responding to certain types of calls for service. Droubie (2020) asserted that the research demonstrates that social workers and police officers are open to collaboration. Tatem (2021) studies social workers working with police officers who are police social workers.

Social workers respond to specific calls, such as service calls, to keep the peace with people in the community and police officers. Ban and Riordan (2023) asserted that there are police officers who are also social workers are professionally trained social workers with related academic degrees, such as a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate in social work, who will provide a wide range of direct services, such as crisis counseling, along with mediation to individuals and families experiencing social problems, and many others.

Droubie's (2020) study identified overlapping roles and duties of police officers and social workers, along with exploring professionals' attitudes regarding this potential partnership and barriers to implementing a formal collaboration. During the current study, Droubie asked the participants about their department's crisis response methods and their perception of collaborative crisis response. Social workers can complement the police force's role by providing expertise in areas such as mental health, addiction, and family crises. Droubie asserted that future studies are needed to continue exploring this partnership and provide opportunities for the two professions to work together. When social workers and police officers collaborate, they can respond more effectively to social issues.

Collaboration between social workers and police officers can lead to more effective responses to social issues and better support for vulnerable populations. Many police agencies have benefited from the inclusion of social workers in their departments, as they contribute to increased effectiveness in law enforcement dealings with individuals experiencing mental illnesses (Stone, 2023).

The Bloomington, IDP started and funded its police social worker program in 2019. Stone (2023) mentioned that this approach is for more service rendering and fewer arrests of citizens when it comes to a new approach to COP. According to good reports, the IDP program began with one social worker and has since increased to three full-time social workers in their department (Stone, 2023). Community Care programs exist to explore how social workers could contribute to less punitive, more COP practices (Allen et al., 2023). The objective of this study embodied the understanding of social workers' perceptions when responding to certain types of calls for service.

Daggenvoorde et al. (2022) applied edifying phenomenological research within structureless, detailed interviews of eight police officers and eight members of an MCT. Ban and Riordan (2023) asserted that police social workers are professionally trained social workers with related academic degrees, such as a master's in social work, who provide a wide range of direct services such as crisis counseling and mediation. Police social workers (PSW) provide services to those experiencing social problems such as mental illness, alcohol/ substance use or abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and many others. News media reports highlight factors related to the unique organizational culture of urban police departments, emphasizing police solidarity, loyalty, and a 'show of force' approach in response to challenges to a police officer's authority (Goble, 2021).

Ban and Riordan (2023) research findings are vital to the present research because they conclude that the two agencies' social workers and police officers have conflicting perceptions after responding to specific calls. Ban and Riordan collaboration between social workers and law enforcement can be quite challenging due to different visions and

expectations, leading to frustrations that may arise in collaboration. Police and social work training and education together may lead to better collaboration strategies.

Potential partnerships between social work and public safety collaboration have much capacity to build to provide a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to serving the community. Husband (2023) asserted several times after finding that further research is needed. For qualitative purposes, interviews of participants' perception of ethical responsibilities, the relationship between law enforcement and marginalized populations, alignment of social work and policing values, ways to address oppressive policing, and social work's role in policing.

Ban and Riordan (2023) qualitative case study examined practice rather than theory to help police officers serve the communities in which they work. Social workers may activate a positive connection among (COP) by developing confidence and trust within the police community. What has been in the media is that the use of excessive force by police officers has led to a lack of trust among citizens in some communities (Husband, 2022). Social workers responding to service calls may have less of a chance of an individual getting arrested by the police. Learning the foundation of comprehension in this illustration will allow me to argue the validity of support for the social work and policing career field. Gaining the perception of social workers' collaboration with the police will allowed me to specify and tackle where a deficiency may lie, along with achievable solutions to the obstacle (Young & Brewer, 2019). Police and social workers often work with mutual populations and respond to similar situations within the

community. This study is needed within the social work and policing career fields to support each other and serve the community with fewer arrests and use of force.

Less Arrests and Less Use of Force

The goal of the collaboration between social workers and police officers is the potential for positive outcomes of integrating social workers with police officers, with the potential increase in officers' effectiveness in dealing with individuals experiencing mental illness (Goble, 2021). To comprehend how the identity of social workers responding to calls with police officers' perceptions, Stone (2021) indicated there were 115 Police Social Work (PSW) referrals for Bloomington Indiana Police Department (BPD) in 2019, 265 in 2020, and 142 between January and June of 2021, totaling PSW client interactions increased, with 740 in 2019, 2,185 in 2020, and 1,389 through the first half of 2021. Furthermore, the most common concerns of referrals are mental illness, housing, concerns of the aging and elderly, and juvenile or family concerns (Stone, 2021). The study's authors suggested that those members of PSW who interacted with police officers in the community were satisfied for various reasons. The most important among those are fewer arrests and less use of force. The findings indicate that the primary concern was how citizens within the community perceived authority and how their interactions may affect the rendering of treatment or service.

There is a significant decrease in arrests and use of force when social workers collaborate with police because they can de-escalate situations by addressing underlying social issues in which they are trained and educated. Police officers know they have social workers that they can call on regularly to help them on the scene to de-escalate

many situations. Rather than arrest, if the cultural gap expands between police officers and social workers, an arrest can occur later only if necessary. Goble (2021) asserted that the history of treating police officers as the enemy must stop. To hope for change, we must all work together if we ever want to see a change.

Recent events in the new media involving the use of excessive force by police have led to a lack of trust among citizens in some communities (Cole, 2022). In such situations, alternative actions should be considered beyond using force or making arrests (Frankham, 2020). Excessive use of force can result in police misconduct or violence towards citizens and civil rights violations. Public criticism often targets police officers for their response to community challenges. Use of Force is an essential plan of action to restore safety in the community when other practices are ineffective, and the individual is noncompliant with directives (Oxford Languages, 2024). When social workers collaborate with police, there is often a significant decrease in the use of force because social workers can de-escalate situations, identify underlying social issues contributing to a crisis, and connect individuals with needed services, thus providing alternative solutions to police intervention that might require force.

When police collaborate alongside social workers, it can foster trust in the community, especially in marginalized populations, leading to more cooperation and less resistance. Notko et al.'s (2022) data comprised 16 focus group interviews involving 67 interviewees from social and healthcare professions and police officers. The results specify that successful interprofessional collaboration requires comprehensive knowledge and education on domestic violence, different professionals' duties, tolerance, and

flexibility in their joint efforts. Social workers may also struggle with the fact that racism impacts the social work field, as it does in policing (Goble, 2021). Social workers specialize in crisis intervention and communication techniques that can help calm individuals in distress, reducing the need for police to use force.

Although researchers have investigated the use of excessive force by police officers, it is essential to develop and implement a COP program that is indeed focused and committed to the community it serves (Cole, 2022). Social workers can continue bridging the gap by facilitating healthy dialogue initiatives with the police. Social workers can also serve as mediators in conflict, workshops, and training by advocating, encouraging mentorship programs, and advocating for COP.

Even though the similarities may not be obvious, social workers have many traits in common with police officers. Both professions are for advocating in communities for the well-being and safety of individuals and fixing problems that make life difficult for people. Social workers and police officers venture to help people and improve the world. The police agencies' goal is to make the communities safer, and social workers use society's safety nets to stabilize people's lives and allow society to progress constructively.

Community-Oriented Policing (COP) and Community Trust

Social workers can identify the root causes of social issues in communities and identify what causes underlying social issues, such as mental health problems, substance abuse, or housing instability, which might be driving a person's behavior, allowing for a holistic approach to resolving conflicts (Goble, 2021). Social workers can connect

individuals to resources by connecting them to appropriate social services and other agencies, according to individual needs. Social workers can prevent escalating situations requiring police intervention by fostering community engagement with police officers.

Collaboration between social workers and police officers can foster better community relationships, fostering trust and cooperation between social workers and police (Droubie, 2021). More recently, social workers and police officers have historically worked together to deal with community-related issues. McKinley and Jones' (2022) studies show that social services provision has always played a crucial part in policing, operating to render service to victims of crimes and the enforcement of the law upon offenders. Improving community relations today comes with many challenges. A healthy relationship with the community is necessary, not just beneficial for social workers and police officers, but also the foundation for effective service rendering and policing. For the community to trust social workers and police officers, a good rapport can lead to a firm belief in reliability, truth, ability, or the strength of sincerity of someone or something (Oxford Languages, 2024; Stone, 2023).

Blair (2022) discusses building community trust and ways to help police officers rebuild good rapport, trust, and legitimacy, which are vital for police forces everywhere. Most individuals believe they have an intrinsic right to respect and dignity of treatment once received by social workers. However, when treated with respect, they are inclined to act more positively when not treated according to their expectations. Blair's research includes six subsections covering policing practices: community policing, hot spots (or

“saturation”) policing, body-worn cameras, procedural justice and soft skills, integration and descriptive representation, and militarization.

COP is a collaborative approach that can help build trust between social workers, police officers, and the community they serve. COP is the idea that trust and respect are essential for effective policing in the community. Many police departments have implemented COP programs to improve relationships with community partnerships and the communities they serve (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019). Social workers and police training remain true and make clear the importance of a thoughtful division of labor in establishing community stability. Sometimes, control and force are necessary when individuals become noncompliant. Social workers may calm emotions, build trust, solve social problems, and be more effective for nonviolent issues.

COP developed policing and community partnerships, transformed the police organization from traditional policing, and adopted new problem-solving strategies with police leadership backing the police in finding ways to help policing (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019). COP philosophy focuses on ways police departments are regulated and directed, along with how the infrastructure can be changed to support the growth and development of COP. Blair (2022) states that trust-building and legitimacy are significant to police forces worldwide in fostering community relationships and aiding police officers in rebuilding positive rapport in COP. Social services and police departments are rapidly changing their past attempts to serve their communities by examining how to serve best through leadership, coalition building with advocacy groups and stakeholders, and creating and implementing equitable policies (Lawrence, 2021).

Social workers respecting the dignity of police officers means remaining neutral to support each other to serve the community and increase the comfort of police officers and the public in social workers. Wallace (2020) asserted that although social workers aim to help people in need, all individuals have the right to make their own decisions regarding treatment. Rapport building in the COP collaborative approach, police officers can become familiar faces in the community by participating in events, interacting with residents, and addressing the root causes of issues in the community (Perry, 2022). Within COP, social workers can integrate social work core values and address the socioeconomic characteristics that contribute to criminal behavior and inadequate mental health services. Social workers' values can complement police work by promoting restorative justice, community enrichment, and transformative practices (NASW, 2024). When community members feel comfortable approaching the police, they are more likely to report wrongdoing or provide tips.

Social Work and Public Safety

Historically, social workers' obligations to the NASW Code of Ethics include helping individuals in need and identifying social problems. NASW (2021) consists of the social work profession, is the macro voice for citizens, and has become more influential with leaders, policymakers, and employers to make changes supporting the profession and society. However, NASW requires social workers to advocate for vulnerable populations, address any daily living issues of individuals they encounter, and ensure individuals' access to resources (NASW, 2024). Social workers continue to assess

and address the needs of society and bring the nation's social problems to the public's attention.

Today, individuals get many privileges because early social workers saw hardship and injustices and acted, inspiring others along the way. Many benefits were because social workers worked with families and other organizations and institutions, speaking against abuse and neglect (NASW,2024). Benefits granted today because of social workers addressing societal needs (NASW, 2024):

- Civil rights, regardless of race, age, religion, or sexual orientation, are protected.
- Individuals can receive unemployment insurance, disability pay, workers' compensation, and Social Security.
- Individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities receive humane treatment. Medicaid and Medicare are for medically needy, disabled, and older adults who can access health care.
- Prevent child and vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- Treatment for individuals suffering from substance abuse is available.

Daggenvoorde et al. (2022) concluded an illustrative phenomenological study with unstructured, in-depth interviews of eight police officers and eight members of an MCT. Ban and Riordan (2023) studied police and social workers as professionally trained social workers with related academic degrees, such as a master's in social work, who provide a wide range of direct services such as crisis counseling and mediation. Police social workers provide services to those experiencing social problems such as

mental illness, alcohol/ substance use or abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and many others. Ban and Riordan's research findings are vital to the present research because they discuss the two agencies' social workers and police officers having conflicting perceptions after responding to specific calls. Ban and Riordan's collaboration between social workers and law enforcement can be quite challenging due to different visions and expectations, leading to frustrations that may arise in collaboration.

Training, Education, and Support for Each Other

Oklahoma CITs (2020) experiences of service provided in the community have acknowledged the necessity and effectiveness of the program. Oklahoma CIT collaborated with police to contribute the most effective training significance, where police officers participate in a five-day, 40-hour CIT training program. Social work, police training, and education may lead to better collaboration strategies.

Oklahoma CIT (2020) professional provider training program consists of many classes taught by various instructors, including psychiatrists, substance abuse specialists, social workers, police officers, and representatives globally. Police and social workers should receive ongoing education and training to work together effectively. This education and training can include scenario exercises, de-escalation techniques, and cultural competency training.

Allen et al. (2023) argued that Community Care programs should explore how social workers could contribute to less punitive, more COP practices. Blair (2022) discussed building community trust and ways to help police officers rebuild good rapport, trust, and legitimacy, which are vital for police forces everywhere. Most individuals

believe they have an intrinsic right to respect and dignity. However, when treated with respect, they are inclined to act more positively when not treated according to their expectations.

Potential partnerships between social work and public safety collaboration have much capacity to provide a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to serving the community. Social workers and police officers can collaborate in training in several ways, such as Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), mental health de-escalation techniques from both sides, social work training, and competencies can be integrated into the police academy curriculum, and related legal issues (Scott et al., 2023). There is a need to give social work training to police officers and to give social workers an understanding of police work (Abbas et al., 2021). Social workers and police officers can educate and train together in various ways to improve public safety, support each other, and foster community trust in Oklahoma.

Recent research indicates that police officers and other professionals collaborate in responding to emergency calls, clearly defining their roles when supporting each other. More recently, social workers and police officers have historically worked together to deal with community-related issues. McKinley and Jones' (2022) studies show that social services provision has always played a crucial part in policing, operating to render service to victims of crimes and the enforcement of the law upon offenders. McKinley and Jones' study creates a contemporary collection of literary evidence about police officers' well-being and the impact COVID-19 had on them. A victimological lens prevents problems from arising or protects police by informing them of what may occur within their career.

McKinley and Jones identified that without bias or interpretation, many police officers became disillusioned, mentally unwell, and took time away from work for two reasons: the dangers of day-to-day policing and management or leadership styles. Abbas et al. (2021) concluded that authorities are responsible for ensuring the quality of police staff's work life so that they will enjoy their organization and accept their work duties effectively.

Scott et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study that aligns with the current study because social workers need to respond to specific calls with police, such as service calls. Scott et al.'s study discussed that when service calls come through dispatch and the police's perception of having a social worker on board for the response, the researchers used a cross-sectional survey research design to describe the need for social workers to merge with police work by utilizing 335 leaders of police agencies as participants to gather data. Scott et al. asserted that 94% of senior leadership reported that an on-site social worker would help police officers with addressing challenges that individuals struggle with, such as alcohol and drug abuse and suicide risk, which police officers are on board with having social workers integrated. Carroll (2023) specifies that there is tremendous potential to expand the collaboration, continue to positively influence police culture, and support other organizations of social work across the country to develop similar initiatives in their communities.

Research shows that about 80% of calls to the police are related to social services (Carroll,2023). Notko et al. (2022) examined the collaboration among social workers, healthcare professionals, and police officers to focus on the practices and conceptions

concerning domestic violence interventions. Professional relationships shift the focus from an organizational and structural challenge of interprofessional collaboration to individual interactions (Notko et al., 2022). Police and social workers often work with mutual populations and respond to similar situations. Social workers, like police, are primarily in the community to serve and connect to the services needed for citizens' well-being. In addition, the values of social work emphasize full inclusion, self-determination, the development of all people, the importance of human relationships, antiracism, and social justice (NASW, 2024).

Droubie (2020) asserted that social workers and law enforcement officers are open to collaboration during their study, with future studies needed. A collaborative response can initiate a dialogue that benefits police by enhancing their understanding of mental health issues. Community members reported that social workers and police officers responding to specific calls together are less stressful and stigmatizing than traditional police responses (Anderson et al., 2022; Goble, 2021; Jones & McKinley, 2022). Social workers and police officers play considerable roles in bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community's welfare to overcome community challenges.

Success and Challenges Versus Providing Direct Services

Social work core values can aid social workers and police officers in building rapport and developing trust through COP with proper and effective methods of communication, which is the importance of human services. Additionally, police agencies prioritize adopting emerging technologies, such as predictive analytics, artificial

intelligence, and data-driven policing; these technologies may enhance investigative capabilities, improve operational efficiency, and enhance public safety (Tabanejad, 2021). Social workers and police officers can succeed by effectively evaluating and addressing problematic community issues through combined expertise, particularly in crisis intervention and prevention.

Both Ban and Riordan (2023) along with Daggenvoorde et al. (2022) studied the success of social workers responding to specific calls with police officers. Daggenvoorde et al. discussed the lived experiences of police officers and mental health crisis team social workers (MCT). Ban and Riordan, on the other hand, discusses the challenges facing policing and the issues that necessitate equally complex and dual responses, along with solutions provided by agencies staffed by individuals with extensive expertise and training in areas of need.

The cultural gap may bridge between police officers and social workers' collaboration; an arrest can occur later only, if necessary, because an arrest or use of force should not be the first solution. Social workers and police officers' collaboration may face challenges like differing professional cultures, confidentiality concerns, and navigating the delicate balance between enforcement and social support, requiring effective communication protocols and a shared commitment to community well-being to be genuinely effective (Goble, 2021). The model of COP has emerged. Police agencies are examining ways to build rapport with citizens so that individuals perceive the police as legitimate beings they can trust. Individuals may become more willing to communicate, obey the law, and report crimes to the police, with possible success in

response to increasing public awareness of the limitations of traditional policing methods, particularly in dealing with non-violent or non-criminal emergencies (Blair, 2022; Cole, 2022; Patton et al., 2022).

Social workers can play an increasingly vital role by focusing on prevention, intervention, and the well-being of community residents in promoting public safety and building trust between police and the community. Anderson's (2022) collaboration is essential to addressing frequent and diverse logistical challenges, including overly restrictive eligibility criteria, mistrust between police and service providers, and coordination across different neighborhoods. Ongoing education and training are critical components of success in working together and overcoming any challenges in the communities they serve.

Police departments are the first line of service for state and local law enforcement. They perform various social service functions to keep community residents safe. More recently, qualitative data were collected in the Community Care programs' first year, citing successful referrals to peer support, housing programs, and mental health services connecting individuals to ongoing services, in which many citizens voiced strong support for the program (Allen et al., 2023). Perry (2022) concluded that police officers referred individuals to social workers after interacting with sworn officers for direct services to meet their needs. In contrast, the social workers' caseload has increased and calls for service have decreased. Perry's study showed data outcomes of how the help of social workers has decreased the calls for service and services rendered to individuals in the community, in response to social workers' efforts.

The collaboration between social workers and police officers in response to specific calls can help directly support each other's well-being. Social workers and police officers have a history of working together to ensure the safety of their communities. Social workers and police officers' positive interactions with individuals in the community can help improve service rendering to persons who may benefit from receiving social services (Lawrence, 2021). Providing services to individuals in the community is essential because it involves ongoing training, research, and collaboration to develop advanced strategies for serving the community. Providing direct services in the field of social work grows continuously, with new and upcoming social workers; experienced social workers should continue to push the envelope in approaching the complex dynamics between youth, communities, and police.

The study of social services has become necessary in COP, as police officers do much more than enforce laws and fight crime (Cole, 2022). Police officers assist in maintaining the welfare of individuals by monitoring community health and safety issues, preventing brutality or the use of force, and intervening on a social level when it comes to providing direct services to the community. For instance, the pandemic and opioid epidemic have caused police officers around the nation to have constant involvement in the lives of those affected by the crisis (McKinley & Jones, 2022).

Police officers often aim to provide treatment resources to those looking to overcome addiction; police help render first aid in providing direct services to citizens and youth about the dangers of gang or gun violence and help families connect to services. Social workers and police officers work to provide direct services to victims and

families of communities in need of crisis intervention by defining the problem, examining options, and creating a safety plan (Cole, 2022). Social workers and police officers also serve as expert witnesses, often in family court proceedings.

Providing direct services in the field of social work grows continuously, with new and upcoming social workers; experienced social workers should continue to push the envelope in approaching the complex dynamics between youth, communities, and police. Lawrence (2021) asserted that police agencies and human services stand on the verge of a new era of policing and must examine effective ways to serve communities through leadership, coalition building with advocacy groups and stakeholders, and implementing equitable policies. Lawrence (2021) asserted that human services and police agencies stand on the verge of a new era of human services and policing and must examine effective ways to serve communities through leadership, coalition building with advocacy groups and stakeholders, and implementing suitable policies.

Summary and Conclusions

Husband's (2023) interviews are necessary for qualitative purposes for participants' perception of social workers' ethical responsibilities, perception of the relationship between police and marginalized populations, alignment of social work and policing values, and the ways to address oppressive policing, and social work's role in policing. Husband utilized a mixed-method study to gather data from 12 social workers in Texas through a purposeful recruiting sample using questionnaires of participants' professional demographics, relationship with police officers, and view of the NASW Code of Ethics. Husband's findings showed across five main categories such as general

responsibilities as members of the social work profession, responsibilities expressed by the NASW Code of Ethics, responsibilities to engage in macro practice, responsibilities to engage with police, and perception of the relationship between police officers and marginalized populations in which all participants shared perception of social workers having the ethical responsibility to challenge police oppression. Husband asserted several times after finding that further research is needed.

Social workers can identify what causes underlying social issues (Droubie,2020). Bringing the gap between social workers and police collaboration can prevent escalating situations such as a lack of trust, which may lead to a lack of service. Community engagements, social workers, and police officers can foster better community relationships, fostering trust and cooperation in the community they serve (Droubie, 2020).

Ajzen's (2011, 1991, 1985) TPBP, further researched later by Ishoy (2016), suggests that intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms examine an individual's behavior. According to TPBP, the intent was to predict behavior and intentions to perform a given behavior based on attitudes, subjective norms, and ideal behavioral management. TPBP was proposed by Ajzen (2011, 1991, 1985), suggesting the study of individual behavior by an individual's intentions, attitudes, and subjective norms. According to Ishoy (2016), the TPBP's intent was to predict behavior, intentions to perform a given behavior determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and ideal behavioral management.

Additionally, police officers are to fulfill the duty imposed upon them by law by serving the community and protecting all persons against illegal acts, consistent with the high degree of responsibility required by their profession (Droubie, 2020; Ratcliff, 2024; Springfield, 2022). Every community has different dynamic challenges, requiring Human service and police agencies to adapt, listen, and engage instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach. Collaboration between social workers and police officers responding to specific calls can connect various individuals with direct support services to assist those who may need resources. In some cases, an arrest is necessary when a police officer has a warrant for arrest signed by a magistrate, which must be shown to the accused, although anybody may endure arrest under prescribed conditions (Anderson et al., 2022; Giwa, 2018; [Oxford Languages](#), 2024; Ratcliff, 2024). COP involves regular contact between the public and individual police officers, and members of the public working together with the police to prevent crime and [antisocial](#) behavior (Cole, 2022; Husband, 2023; Springfield, 2022).

Use of force is different than deadly force. DeAngelis's (2021) study revealed that police officers sometimes resort to excessive use of force that may result in brutality, escalating conflicts, non-compliance with police orders, and discrimination. As a result, there have been allegations that police lack sensitivity or the necessary skills to de-escalate and manage incidents involving citizens experiencing crises.

The goal of COP is to render service, create a safer community environment for everyone involved, and build rapport (Yakam, 2019). When social workers and police collaborate, the aim is not to use force but to address any underlying social issues that

might lead to conflict. Injuries or death may occur in the event a police officer has to use force; police officers should ensure that those injured receive medical aid and that the injured or deceased person's family is notified (Yakam, 2019). Also, social workers can assist people by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, both personal and professional (Droubie, 2020; Ratcliff, 2024; Springfield, 2022).

Transparency and communication intersect when it comes to social workers and police collaboration. Transparency is about making information obtainable in a timely and consistent manner, from agency policies to community incidents (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019). Divulgence is about communicating information clearly and invariably, which is suitable for building rapport and trust. A lack of transparency, miscommunication, insufficient training, historical grievances, and more can prevent citizens from building rapport with social workers and police officers.

Police officers spend most of their time on the job resolving conflicts, responding to disputes, and providing other services to the community. Police departments sometimes need assistance with serving the community, and when adequate funding is available, they hire trained social workers to address any service-related issues. Many police agencies have seen the benefits of having social workers on staff to increase policing effectiveness when dealing with individuals experiencing mental illness (Stone, 2023). This study extended the body of knowledge to other researchers and viewers distinguished in ways that will fill a gap in understanding the views of social workers and their perceptions of their working relationship with police officers and how their collaboration affects the delivery of services to communities they serve. By obtaining

data from social workers instead of police officers on their perception of collaboration, there is micro research on social workers' perception of collaboration than macro research on police officers' perception of collaboration (Fixler et al., 2024; Husband, 2022)

Chapter 3 includes the role of the researcher, methodology, research and rationale, and the procedures for the study; this will allow readers to evaluate the reliability and validity of the study. Chapter 3 will also detail the recruitment process, data analysis, and use of trustworthiness in research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

My purpose for this study is to understand the perception of social workers who collaborate with police officers in fostering trusting relationships in the communities of Oklahoma. Social workers advocate for services rendered to individuals in the community and aim to find pathways to prevent barriers from stopping treatment (NASW, 2024).

This study established which protocols and procedures of social workers' and police officers' responses work well, and pathways to improve barriers to building community trust and response. Social workers responding to calls from police officers are gaining more momentum in research and study. This study obtained knowledge from social workers on improving measures of responses that hinders community trust when it comes to human services and the criminal justice system.

Chapter 3 will further discuss the selected methodology, the research design, and the role of the researcher. Chapter 3 will also explain the data collection procedures according to Walden University, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of the research. Finally, Chapter 3 will explain ethical issues and conclude with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research question guided the study, "What are social workers' perceptions of how their collaborations with police officers on calls establish trust from the people of the communities in Oklahoma?" I addressed the research question in this qualitative study, with the research design that involves 10 to 15 participants, or until data

saturation is complete, who are social workers who have collaborated with police officers (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Qualitative research also focuses on human actions and behaviors. It questions why people do what they do and helps make sense of social issues that arise or are already at bay.

The current phenomenology study helped readers understand a phenomenon and how it is perceived by those who experienced it. The central phenomenon is the lived experiences of social workers who have collaborated with police officers on measures to develop community trust in Oklahoma. Qualitative research allows readers to understand and provide meaning from their firsthand experiences (Rogo, 2024). Qualitative research allows participants to provide their lived experiences from their environment (Kraus et al., 2022).

This qualitative research study allowed for meaningful insight into participants live work experience in the community they serve. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) concluded research information on a review by researchers, who found that saturation was often reached between nine and 17 interviews. To better understand the phenomenon, this study used a narrative approach to obtain social workers' perspectives (Ranse et al., 2020). In this study employed the phenomenology research design with a narrative approach to conduct one-on-one interviews with at least 10 and 15 participants. Qualitative research has small sample sizes, and saturation is completed between five and 25 participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

With the lack of trust in human behavior committed by individuals in the community, social workers' perceptions will be explored using a phenomenological

design (Krau et al., 2022). The phenomenology design allowed for a connection with participants using open-ended questions to gain insight into participants lived experiences of collaborating with police officers (Williams, 2021).

Role of the Researcher

According to the Walden University research policy, I will seek to create a trusting environment in hopes that the participants will feel safe to share their experiences without being revealed or judged. For this study, I will utilize a computer or cellular device to transcribe data, record answers to interview questions, and use the thematic analysis of responses. I was used as an instrument within the study to gather participant data (Collins & Stockton, 2022). During this study, I acknowledged any biases that may affect the study's outcome by publishing facts only about the research and any preconceptions that may influence data from the research.

Participants in this study knew beforehand that all consent was needed be gathered in order for me to collect information and guard the privacy of all participants (Godskesen et al., 2023). I ensured that the research performance is within ethical standards and that participants can withdraw from the study without being penalized. This study explored different concepts and ensured no harm to participants (Collins & Stockton, 2022; Godskesen et al., 2023). During this study I noted on any affiliations I have with any agencies that participates in this study, including personal relationships with participants and awareness of sensitive subjects (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

As a student researcher, I have current personal affiliations with the participants because they work for the same organization. However, there may be potential bias

because of the sensitivity of the social issues in the study. During this study, I managed bias by having an external review of the researcher's data and having another student proofread the current study. Along with this study, I asked the participants to review the researcher's findings for validation. Triangulation helped me manage bias by verifying primary data when evaluating and analyzing data to ensure that the data has no judgments and is legitimate for the study's reliability and validity. For the research, any judgments or assumptions about the topic was written down and placed aside so that the study's outcome will not be affected by influencing participants' perceptions (Thomas & Sohn, 2023). Therefore, there was not any conflict of interest that compromised the judgment within this study.

In this study it will show that I am knowledgeable about conducting interviews and recruiting participants, which will be shown further. While conducting this study, I set aside biases about the study to manage researchers' biases, which is consistent with phenomenology research designs (Thomas & Sohn, 2023). I managed bias during this study by asking indirect questions, keeping a detailed journal of any biases that may be present, and letting participants review the results. This study demonstrated that I am able to conduct scholarly research using standards and requirements aligned with Walden University. As a student researcher, I also have six years of being responsible for work duties as a social worker and have collaborated with police officers to provide direct services and support to individuals and their loved ones. As mentioned, I only have current personal affiliations with the participants because they work for the same

organization. However, there was no potential bias because of the sensitivity of the social issues.

In this study I evaluated the research questions to ensure that the questions have no judgments or biases. This study employed a phenomenological research design using one-on-one interviews of 10 and 15 social workers to obtain knowledge about social workers' perception of collaboration with police officers to foster trust in the communities of Oklahoma until no more themes emerge. Hennink & Kaiser (2022) used sample sizes of 5 to 25 in their study of phenomenology designs. Saturation in a research study refers to the point at which no new information or themes emerge from data collection and analysis. When participants repeat the same information in interviews, saturation occurs in the study with no new themes occurring in data collection or analysis (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Methodology

During this study, I used the current study's sampling to identify social workers. This study used phenomenology research to determine the meaning of social workers who have developed measures and departmental-specific policies to combat the lack of trust in their communities and render services (Ataro, 2020). In this study, I used a phenomenology design to select participants who meet the chosen criteria before conducting the research study (Ataro, 2020).

The requirements selected for participants include social workers, whether licensed or not. Participants must have completed training for interviewing and rapport building, have knowledge of specific department policies on connecting individuals to

services, and have developed measures in their department for combating the lack of trust in the communities they service. Springfield (2022) utilized 15 licensed social workers in the United States who are currently working in the field of social work while conducting a semi-structured study. In the current study I used purposive sampling because it allows for selecting 10 to 15 social workers who have experienced the phenomenon and could provide a wealth of knowledge about the topic. Husbands (2023) concludes that the mixed-method study gathers data from 12 social workers in Texas recruited through purposeful sampling using questionnaires on participants' professional demographics, relationship with law enforcement, and their perception of the NASW Code of Ethics.

During this study I securely stored the quality data obtained from social workers in Oklahoma who have firsthand knowledge about the phenomenon with more than 6 months of experience. While I prepared for this study, I used the organization directories for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services or social workers collaborating with police officers within their service community. This study required an introductory letter in which the researcher will notify the participants by email, explaining that there are no incentives for participating in the current research. This study required me as the researcher to contact the Oklahoma Department of Human Services leadership and administration, provide them with an introductory letter, and see if they would let the social workers participant in the current research.

Along preparation of this study I sent out personal invitations to all participants for this research by email separately to ensure privacy and provide the predetermined criteria, contact information, and insurance to keep the study confidential. The research

participants are all confidential; conducted one-on-one interviews are for their privacy. Another step for preparation of this study I individually email participants separately to maximize their privacy and protect all participants. All participants knew ahead to make sure there were no background noises during team interviews and knew they would not be required to participate in this study. Participants of this study are aware they are not subjected for retaliation or actions that cause pending participation or non-participation.

Participant Selection Logic

In this study, I used a phenomenology design to recruit participants who meet the inclusion criteria chosen for the study (Ataro, 2020). I used purposive and random sampling to gather a variety of viewpoints and experiences of participants, including unlicensed or licensed social workers in Oklahoma, from a diverse perspective. This study's criteria for participants included unlicensed or licensed social workers in Oklahoma, with no allegations of the lack of collaboration; all participants have completed training for interviewing and rapport building, have specific department policies on the interviewing process, and or have developed measures in their department for initiating collaboration with police officers and building trust in the community. In this study recruited participants currently employed as social workers across Oklahoma and conduct one-on-one interviews until saturation occurs. Participants with less than six months of experience in social work will not be used in the research.

This study required an ethical awareness that police officers are a vulnerable population because of the prominent levels of stress and traumatic experiences that they encounter regularly (Enang et al., 2019). Social workers oversee the mental health and

well-being of others, so gaining their insight is necessary. Purposeful sampling was used in the current research to obtain participants of this study wealth of knowledge about the topic and who have experience with the phenomenon. This study used the phenomenology research design to provide meaning from social workers with firsthand experience about the phenomenon (Ataro, 2020).

In qualitative research, saturation means that enough data is collected, and further data collection is unlikely to produce new insights, meaning the sample size is adequate (Akanle, 2020). In this study my plan is to interview at least 10 to 15 social workers, using one-on-one interviews until saturation. Noko et al's (2022) study showed that developing practices and procedures by sharing knowledge amongst different agencies and professionals is essential there is a need to notice the critical points for successful action and to find solutions to problems together. While the sample size is 10 to 15 participants who are social workers in the study, a larger sample size may increase the likelihood of reaching saturation by providing a more comprehensive range of outlooks and revealing more significant themes. Once saturation occurs, additional interviews will not be needed to add to the study, as saturation means that it is unlikely that new or different themes will emerge.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation tools or methods in research are used to collect data, such as testing, surveys, and questionnaires. During this study I will be used as the instrument in qualitative research and gather data from participants using one-on-one interviews in person, Teams, or Zoom if participants cannot meet face-to-face (Collins & Stockton,

2022). While conducting this study I asked questions in the same order rather a different order than what is displayed in the interview guide to allow for an open-ended approach and flexibility while conducting the interviews (Dunwoodie et al., 2022).

I create a data collection instrument for this study that is vital in academic research, as it allows for the precise alignment of data collection methods with the specific objectives and context of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), developing tailored instruments can enhance the validity of the research findings by ensuring that the measures used are directly relevant to the research questions and the population studied. This customization helps capture the nuances of the investigated phenomena, leading to more meaningful insights.

Instrumentation also helps with the reliability and validity of the research process, establishing whether that instrument accurately measures what is needed to measure, confirming its reliability and validity in the research (Creswell, 2018). The reliability and validity of research depend on how the instrumentation works, meaning that the results reflect the phenomenon studied and other factors do not influence the study. Essentially, ensuring the research captures the correct concept and not something else entirely, it is all about the accuracy of the research findings. One-on-one interviews are appropriate for this research because they support the authenticity of qualitative research and allow the researchers to ask participants questions already created before the interview (Dunwoodie et al., 2022). This study used an interview guide to ask questions, which will help uncover different phrases and themes as they emerge during research.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

This study required recruiting social workers from across Oklahoma with firsthand experience of the phenomenon. Daggenvoorde et al. (2022) assessed the validity of the hypothesis by conducting a hermeneutic-phenomenological study, which involved unstructured, in-depth interviews with eight police officers and eight members of a Mobile Crisis Team (MCT). The MCT is a group of mental and behavioral health social workers who assist individuals facing crisis through different resources (Daggenvoorde et al., 2022). This approach contributed to bridging the gap between the two professions. While conducting this study I used different divisions of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services directories to locate social workers in Oklahoma.

During this study it required me to contact different department heads and leadership, providing them with an introductory letter of the study, asking participants about their interest in participating in this study, and letting the staff, who are social workers, know of the study so they can respond. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that all Walden University research complies with the university's ethical standards and U.S. federal regulations to approve all Walden-affiliated studies before participant recruitment, data collection, or dataset access (Walden University, 2024). While conducting research I will sent out separate emails to ensure privacy and professionalism; participants were provided with set a criterion, contact information, and assurance to keep the study confidential. The research was on Teams and in a private setting away from any noise or distraction which was my home office.

The current study occurred in Oklahoma via Teams or Zoom, and as the researcher I analyze themes after the study. As mention before, I am a trained social worker who still works in the field and collects information through interviews regularly and will collect data from all participants. As a student researcher, I conducts interviews regularly for work and observes different behaviors of citizens who lack social skills. The frequency of interviews will be multiple times per day and throughout several months, possibly; a set period per observation could be 30 to 45 minutes or less. This study was recorded by Teams on my computer and also recorded and transcribed by my cellphone using the data collector. This specialized software recorded the occurrence and duration of targeted themes until saturation is complete.

While conducting this study my follow-up plan is that recruitment results in fewer participants than expected through OKDHS, the backup plan was to reach out to other agencies with social workers who assist police with service calls. Before the interviews started, the participants got a participation number, meaning what number they are, for private reasons, because names will not be mentioned. Once each interview was completed, I allowed all participants to ask any questions and then debrief each participant so they can exit the study. If notes or recordings are unclear, they can get cleared by having participants review the transcripts for accuracy. The only reason to schedule more interviews is that the researcher has not reached data saturation, depending on the number of participants. After each interview I reviewed every transcript to see if data saturation has occurred, looking for themes and patterns. Participants knew that this

study is solely voluntary on, with no cash payments, and participants can withdraw from the study at any time without being questioned or retaliated.

Data Analysis Plan

Before I began the interview proceedings with each participant, I composed a series of brackets that may lay out the researcher's experience with the phenomenon before listening to each social worker's lived experiences throughout the interview process. Bracketing or epoch will assist me in setting aside any foreknowledge or beliefs to focus on the participant's knowledge while being as unbiased as possible in the role of the researcher. Epoch helped me during this study gain more knowledge about the lived experience of study participants as well as accountability for biases. This study allowed participants to be asked research questions in the same order, with nothing added, and allow open-ended responses.

The study's research questions ensured that participants understand concepts without biases (Robert, 2020). During this study I conducted interviews for an estimated 30 minutes or less in person, on Teams, or by Zoom. Participants chose their preferred interview process. In this study, participants had the right to end the recording while the study is being conducted (Roberts, 2020). During this study I gathered data in an environment where social workers can share their perceptions of collaboration without judgment and without being noticed.

While conducting this study I interviewed social workers individually using an interview guide and a cellular device or laptop computer for recording, which is password-protected for participants' privacy and the accuracy of the recording (Roberts,

2020). Once I conducted each interview, I stored all data securely to protect participants' privacy and maintain confidentiality (Morina, 2021). Once the current research was completed all data and recordings are stored for five years to follow the University of Walden requirements and for scientific integrity.

During this study I completed all interviews with social workers and allowed participants to review and proofread their transcripts for the study's accuracy. I completed peer debriefings and reports after individual interviews with participants and conduct peer debriefing with another researcher from Walden University to ensure the study follows Walden research guides ethically to identify any issues that may have gone unnoticed (Simoni et al., 2019). Also, I planned to use NVivo to code participants' data since it is widely used in social science for this study (Nelson et al., 2021).

In this study I reviewed participant transcripts and placed the data in various categories and patterns for saturation. The data collection program I wanted to use in this study was NVivo to distinguish patterns and themes in the data collected. Data is placed in categories or patterns to determine themes. Saturation means that no new patterns or themes emerge. NVivo would have been able to code a document in Microsoft Word to organize the data using thematic analysis. NVivo is an easy-to-use, collaborative, qualitative analysis software that allows researchers to import, organize, connect, explore, and collaborate on data to reveal more significant insights from gathered data.

Also, I provided a preliminary overview of the study regarding seeking participants. I started this process by preliminarily reaching out to the Deputy Director, Assistant Deputy Director, Field Manager, and Community Aging and Protective

Services (CAPS) Supervisor to explain how long the interviews of their staff may last, which is no more than 45 minutes, and discuss the rights of participant to withdraw at any time. Actively seeking the deviant case is correctly regarded as a hallmark of trustworthiness in qualitative research and can strengthen the findings by exploring potential limitations (Booth et al., 2024). Exploring potential limitations may provide a broader comprehension of the phenomenon investigated. Booth et al. (2024) often explain why these cases deviate from the overall pattern and incorporate their insights into the final interpretation of the results.

In treating discrepant cases after initial data collection is complete, I used the most appropriate approach to identify, analyze, and discuss these cases within the study. The deviant cases allow me to evaluate competing explanations by enabling them to understand and define the limitations of the findings from the research. Identifying the deviant cases involved me selecting cases that serve as examples but do not fit emergent patterns that require strategies that complement and extend the initial sampling strategies (Booth et al., 2024). In this case, I was able to develop a stronger, more profound understanding of the phenomenon in this manner, further lending credibility to the resultant research account.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The researcher designed the research questions to ensure and capture the concepts of what is in the study without biases (Robert, 2020). During this study my goal was to conduct interviews for an estimated 30 to 45 minutes or less in person or virtually in which they were all virtual. While preparing for this study I gave participants an option to

set up their choice of virtual or in-person for their comfort and rapport building during the research. During this research I interviewed social workers individually using an interview guide, a cellular device, and laptop computer for recordings, which is password-protected for participants' privacy and the accuracy of the recording (Roberts, 2020). In this study, participants have the right to end the recording while the study is being conducted (Roberts, 2020). While conducting this study I sought to gather data in an environment where social workers can share their perceptions without judgment and without being noticed.

In this study, I briefly overviewed the study, explaining how long the interviews will last, and discussed the rights, privacy, protection, and the participant's right to withdraw at any time (NIH, 2024). After conducting all interviews, the data is store in a secure location to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants (NIH, 2024). The data I collected, and recordings are stored for 5 years to follow the Walden University requirements and for scientific integrity.

While obtaining data for this study I use prolonged contact, member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review to establish credibility. My strategy for this study is to establish transferability, such as purposive sampling, are described. This research used dependability strategies, such as audit trails and triangulation. Appropriate strategies to establish confirmability in this research, such as reflexivity, will allow me to examine their biases, values, and experiences to understand how personal perspectives can influence the research process and findings. I used purposeful sampling for transferability, allowing readers to understand the value of the context and judge the

possible applicability of the research findings. Purposeful sampling in transferability represents a diverse range of participants' perspectives within the research.

Lastly, in this study, intercoder reliability is essential in qualitative research and can vary between researchers. Intercoder helps measure the level of agreement among multiple coders who independently code the same data using the same coding scheme.

Ethical Procedures

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design to align the study. For this study I recruited social workers from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services who have collaborated in the community with police officers by emailing invitations to each participant individually. Recruited participants received an email with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form attachment to read, sign by replying to the email the researcher emailed. This study required emailing participants' informed consent forms to be signed before the study starts and having them returned (Xu et al., 2020). The form will include a study description, a disclaimer that the interviews are recorded and transcribed, and a statement that no recognizable information will be used in the final study to maintain confidentiality. Outside sources will not be given any information with personal or identifying knowledge of this study in this study. Also I will leave the study participants anonymous from other study participants without concerns about confidentiality exposure to other participants or others not a part of the research. Whether data is anonymous or confidential, and any concerns related to protection for confidential data storage will be double-locked passwords and in a lock box; the participants will all be anonymous.

The data was disseminated and advocated through the department chair and Walden University staff, who will have approval for future studies or research purposes for those who can benefit from the study. Only Walden University staff and I as the study researcher have access to the data in which I plan to dismantle when I have permission from my department chair at Walden University. During this research no ethical issues arose. To alleviate any bias, I did not conduct the research within my work environment, have people related that would conflict of interest, or power differentials.

Before I conducted this study the participants knew that there would be no incentives for this research. Agreements to access participants or data included actual documents in the IRB application, which human participants and social workers received by email once I gained the IRB approval. All study participants were asked the same interview questions in a pre-written Word document. As the researcher, I treated all participants with compassion and kindness. Institutional permissions for students to conduct research included needing IRB approvals, such as the proposal, checklist, PowerPoint presentation, and relevant IRB approval numbers. During this study I had no ethical concerns regarding recruitment and research plans, as I had first consulted with the agency leadership to discuss the study.

All interviews with social workers were conducted in the same order and allowed participants to review and proofread their transcripts for the study's accuracy. Potential participants who have not signed up through IRB approval was not allowed to be a part of the study or will not be interviewed. After the research I completed a debrief report after individual interviews with participants and conduct peer debriefing with another

researcher from Walden University to ensure the study's performance and ethically identify any issues that may have gone unnoticed (Simoni et al., 2019). Also, during this study I use coding of participants' data since it is widely used in social science (Nelson et al., 2021). I reviewed participant transcripts and placed the data in various categories. I did not get to use NVivo coding as planned documenting in Microsoft Word to organize the data using thematic analysis.

Summary

While the study may include between 10 to 15 social worker participants or until saturation has occurred, issues will be at a minimum by including a variety of participant social workers willing to discuss their perceptions of collaborating with police officers. This study aimed to address the potential of understanding the perception of social workers who collaborate with police officers in fostering trusting relationships in the communities in which they work.

An overview of the study explained how long interviews may last, the I discussed participants' rights and privacy, and participants knew they can withdraw at any time. In the current study I examined a phenomenological qualitative study to fill this gap in literature. Interviews was conducted with social workers in the communities of Oklahoma using a predetermined set of questions to determine if more education and training by social workers and police officers are needed to further identify any issues that would hinder community trust.

As mentioned, the information obtained in this study is for research purposes only. The participants in this study's personal and identifying information is confidential

to outside sources. Those who received email invitations only was a part of the interview process. During this study I used social workers' perceptions across Oklahoma to establish what policies and measures developed by NASW work well and do not while combating the lack of trust among individuals in the community toward authority.

Also, I conducted multiple interviews during this study with social workers from different divisions of OKDHS to gain different perspectives. The perceptions of social worker collaboration are growing, and the research adhered to the components required for ethical research. Another thing I have thoroughly described the phenomenon under study transparently and comprehensively.

Chapter 3 covered the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. In this chapter, I explained procedures for collaboration, data analysis, and the use of trustworthiness. In this phenomenological study, I have examined the perception of social workers who have responded to calls along with police officers who are either licensed or unlicensed social workers in Oklahoma.

I have presented the instrumentation and research questions in Chapter 3. I explained the procedures, recruitment, data collection, and data analysis in detail before transitioning to Chapter 4. Chapter 4 will summarize the research findings in more detail.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The focus of this research is to examine social workers' perceptions of collaborating with police officers to foster community trust in Oklahoma. This research involves social workers who are still employed in their careers and have collaborated with police officers with more than six months of experience in their field. All participants were at least 18 years old and qualified to work as social workers. The proposed question that guided this research was: What are social workers' perceptions of how collaborations with police officers on calls establish trust from the people in the communities of Oklahoma? Chapter 4 presents the setting and demographics of the participants involved in this research. During this study, I addressed the accuracy of participants' interviews and described major themes. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed explanation of the data and how it was analyzed, evidence of trustworthiness, the study's results, and a summary. Once the summary of this chapter was completed, it was interwoven with Chapter 5.

Settings

This research was conducted in the state of Oklahoma during the Fall semester of 2025. All participants remain in their career field as social workers, holding various rankings and responsibilities within their respective agencies. All participants were interviewed in one-on-one interviews using Teams, with audio recording only, and no video recordings were made. Participants had my permission to forward the invitation to any other social worker who may want to participate. There were no participants who

chose in-person or telephone interviews as a method of data collection in this study. This study was conducted in a quiet location in the researcher's home office and occasionally in a work office with minimal outside interruptions. There were no circumstances before, during, or after the interviews that influenced the study results other than the data collected.

Demographics

In the following section, I will describe the demographic categories by the participants' age, education level, and working experience with their agency. Overall, there were a total of twelve participants. The ages ranged between 36 and 60 years. The participants' educational level varied between bachelor's degree, master's degree, and double master's degree. Participants' experience in social work at their agency ranges from two years to 20 years and eleven months. I choose not to ask whether participants identify as male or female or their race as this would mask the identity of the participants for privacy. The demographic was described in section one of the interview process (see Table 1).

Table 1*Demographic Information*

Age	Education	Length of time worked in social work
50	Bachelor's	20 years
45	Bachelor's	8 years
59	Master's	2 years
45	Bachelor's	18 ½ years
43	Bachelor's	15 ½ years
46	Bachelor's	4 ½ years
60	Bachelor's	4 years
36	Master's	2 years
39	Master's	2 years
55	Master's	2 years
37	Bachelor's	3 years
60	Bachelor's	8 years

Data Collection

Over the course of this research, I collected data from all participants over a 2-week period in September 2025. My approach to collecting data began by using the agency directory to randomly sample a selection of participants by division and title. The reason I searched for division and titles of participants is that it would give me an indication that, at some point in the participant's career, they have collaborated with the police. I sent out 25 invitations with consent forms by email individually to each participant, asking them to reply to the email if they consented to the research. Seventeen out of 25 participants responded to the email invitations and provided their consent. I did not use the other five participants that responded to my email invitations and consented, because they didn't sign in for their interviews on Teams or did not respond to the call I made through Teams call when I tried calling each participant. There were 12 research

interviews conducted. If they consented to the study, the researcher sent the participants a Microsoft Teams invitation with dates and times that worked for them, taking into account their schedules. This research comprised a total of twelve social workers who have collaborated with police officers as needed as part of their work.

I used Teams to audio record only interviews, along with a Samsung A16 voice recorder for the accuracy of recording and transcribing data. Originally in Chapters 2 and 3, Nvidia software was the data collection software I orchestrated to transcribe data, due to the expense of the software I did not use. All interviews varied due to the participants' schedules and other obligations. All interviews lasted between 11 seconds and 22 minutes, which was shorter than the researcher had expected, typically between 30 and 45 minutes.

Before the interview began, each participant was assigned a pseudonym by the researcher, rather than using their real name. I used pseudonyms, which is a code for N equals SW00, for masking participants' identities. The researcher debriefed with participants after interviews and emailed each participant a copy of their interview transcript. I asked all participants to review the email transcript, giving them 72 hours to respond with feedback and accuracy.

After transcribing Interviews 1 through 12, the researcher analyzed the data and determined that saturation was reached at eight, which is a standard for the phenomenological qualitative research method. However, I chose to include the other four participants in the interviews for a more robust study. Two participants inquired during the study whether anyone higher up in the agency would be aware that they had

participated, and another questioned whether any of the participants would meet with the researcher or other participants for reassurance of their privacy. I assured all three concerned participants of their privacy both during and after the study.

Data Analysis

Before I began each Microsoft Teams interview with participants, I provided them with a brief introduction of myself and the study. Before I started recording, all participants were encouraged to ask questions at any point during the study, have me repeat or explain the question for better knowledge, and were reminded of their rights as participants. Then, I started recording each one-on-one interview. Data analysis for this study began when the transcribing of participants' responses started. For the data collection process, I used Microsoft Word to preserve and organize the data, and then manually filtered it into themes. Additionally, I utilized the Samsung A16 smart noter AI to record and capture themes as they were transcribed. During this study, I used the interview guide, audio recordings, and transcribed transcripts, which were then converted into written text in a Word Document.

This research involves multiple steps during the data analysis process, including the creation of themes that correlate with each research question. The first involves asking social workers for their demographic information during this study, which includes their age, education, and length of time working in social work. The second approach engages the researcher in asking each participant the same 12 research questions sequentially. The third is that I kept a log of all of my emails and data collection. The last involves the researcher categorizing the data into recurring themes as

connected to each research question. All transcripts and personal notes I made during the Microsoft Teams interviews were reviewed, and I cannot account for any data analysis discrepancies.

During RQ1, which was also similar to DQ 3, I asked each participant how long they had been with their agency, which was the same as demographic question three. Eight participants reported holding bachelor's degrees: SW001, SW002, SW004, SW005, SW006, SW007, SW011, and SW012. Three participants reported having master's degrees, SW003, SW009, SW010; and one participant reported having a double master's degree, SW008. All participants got their educational background from different universities. The researcher did not ask participants about their majors in their educational background to maintain participant anonymity, as there was no direct link to potentially identifying participants.

RQ2: I asked the participants about their agency's policy on responding to calls with police officers and why it is in place, to which all participants responded similarly. Some participants reported that there is no formal policy; the common themes were a process for emergencies or urgent referrals, which are called different people out of concern for citizens, particularly when there are potential dangers or safety concerns at the home of a person of interest, to ensure the safety of both social workers and citizens involved. During the interview for question two, SW002, SW003, SW004, SW008, and SW0012 mentioned that their agency has concurrent jurisdiction with the police. They sent out a notice to law enforcement, just to make police aware that they are investigating in their area, typically the county. SW001, SW004, SW006, SW008, and SW0012 are no

longer front-line staff; they must meet with police officers because they have been promoted to leadership positions as social workers. Common themes included the absence of a formal policy, client concerns, safety concerns, potential dangers, and safety issues.

RQ3, I asked the participants how often do they go on calls with police officers and their perception of the collaboration? Participants SW001, SW005, and SW006 responded before assuming leadership positions as social workers, and on several occasions, they have met with police on calls. Participant SW003 expresses a positive relationship with the sheriff's department, noting their quick response and effective collaboration. Participants SW006 and SW0011 had mixed experiences with police collaboration, which can be both helpful and challenging. Participant SW006 mentioned some positive and one negative incident. Participant SW0010 reported that they may respond to a call with a police officer twice a month and mentioned that the crossover between the two entities can be challenging, depending on the officer who responds. SW007 reported that one out of every 20 referrals would be accompanied by a police officer, and their perception of working with police officers is that they're there for service and safety, and they rely on that. All participants say they don't mind working with police officers; this could be very helpful, on a positive note, for both sides and for the community, as sometimes people view social workers and police officers as bad people. All participants reported that they evaluated the need for police presence on a case-by-case basis to avoid unnecessary escalation. Participants SW005 reported that it can be challenging or difficult to work with police officers, depending on the jurisdiction.

The common themes that emerged were not often beneficial, but can be difficult, helpful, and positive.

RQ4: I asked the participants if there is training and education in response to service calls, and if they receive training with police officers at their agency on service calls. Ten participants reported that they have never attended joint training sessions with police officers. Participants SW008 and SW0012 mentioned that Program Field Representatives for their agency continue to train and educate law enforcement agencies on collaboration with social workers to build better relationships all around. The common themes that emerged were a lack of training, education, better understanding, and improved relationships.

RQ5, I asked the participants to explain if the outcomes of service rendering are always successful, considering that all participants describe service outcomes as inconsistent, or it depends on the case when visiting their clients for service rendering. All participants mentioned the importance of understanding the people they serve' needs and assessing their capacity to make decisions. SW004 discusses the challenges in achieving successful service outcomes, noting that success often depends on the client's willingness to participate in recommended actions, such as counseling, which impacts the effectiveness of interventions. SW005 reported assessing client needs, making it a client-centered approach, which allows for tailored support and better outcomes for those they serve. SW007 believes service outcomes are generally successful due to police involvement. SW009 reported that the success of service outcomes is often client-led, meaning success depends on the client's willingness to engage with services. The

common themes that emerged were ‘no’, service, understanding, needs, success, client willingness, and success, which depend on the case.

RQ6, I asked all participants what measures they find in your agency to be the most effective in serving the community. Eight participants reported that the individuals they serve involve social workers assessing the client’s decision-making capacity and needs assessments, which are highlighted as an effective measure in serving the community. SW001 highlighted the importance of visiting clients in their natural environments for effective delivery service. SW004 enlightens me on the clients they meet, needs assessment, and their capacity to make safe decisions, which is, most of the time, effective service rendering. SW005 emphasizes the significance of face-to-face interactions, and assessing individuals’ capacity to make decisions is an effective way to serve the community. All participants emphasize the importance of listening to clients, their families, and involving them in service planning, which aids in addressing their unique needs and circumstances. Common themes included assessing needs, decision-making capacity, effective ways, and measures, as well as service.

RQ7 asks participants about their perceptions of working more closely with police officers in the community. Out of 12 participants, ten participants’ responses were similar or verbatim, that while police presence can be helpful in certain situations or depending on the situation, it may also be perceived as threatening by clients and those involved. Out of 12 participants, 10 stated they are neutral about working more closely with police officers, are fine with it, or are interested in some training with police or deputies, and would like to have them participate in social work meetings. Out of 12 participants, two

provided similar responses to RQ7, with SW004 elaborating further on question seven. Participant SW004 shared that even though they have positive experiences with police officers, they share concerns of racial dynamics that may affect interactions within the community itself, which can also affect the outcome of service rendering to clients and collaboration.

Participant SW009 responded that they feel like, without some sort of clear lines of responsibilities drawn from both sides, knowing that the social worker is going to do this part, the police officers are going to do that part, and so everything doesn't get jumbled because some officers lack good communication skills, and then nothing works for our clients. Participant SW009 prefers not to discuss working more, but mentions that expressing a desire for improved collaboration amongst social workers and police officers to better serve clients would be beneficial with some training together, such as annual or quarterly meetings.

SW006 shares mixed experiences with police collaboration, citing one positive & negative incident, and would prefer to work cases alone. Firstly, SW006 responded to the lack of training in some police officers on substance abuse, people skills, or mental health, and when it comes to joint response, it can be a hindrance to everyone involved because some officers seem confused about rendering aid. Secondly, SW006 describes the success of service outcomes as variable, depending on police officers' training, interpersonal relationship skills, and approach to rendering aid. Lastly, SW006 says that face-to-face interaction with clients, mental health & substance abuse services are highlighted as effective measures for community service, not much as police

collaboration. The common themes were training, meetings, being neutral about working more closely with police officers, being fine with, being interested in, and finding it helpful to work more closely with police, depending on the situation, rendering aid, interpersonal skills, and service.

In RQ8, I asked participants if there were any barriers to responding to or going out on calls with the police. All participants discussed the same verbatim that logistical barriers, such as a large coverage area or a jurisdiction with insufficient help from both sides, or a lack of police officers to respond at times. Participant SW002 explains that a lack of direct training on how to interact with police officers or vice versa during service calls can be a barrier if either the social worker or the police officer has not had sufficient experience collaborating with each other. Additionally, seven participants acknowledged that a common barrier to rendering services and achieving successful outcomes for citizens is not always successful, particularly when clients have the decision-making capacity to refuse services from social workers and police officers. The same seven participants expounded or said verbatim that it does not matter about any other diagnoses; an individual over the age of 18 years may be a hoarder, homeless, or having a conversation with them, as long as they are not a threat to themselves or anyone else and are able to make their own decisions.

During RQ8, the same seven participants stated that a client's decision-making capacity differs from mental health or behavioral health; it is a functional ability to make choices and the client's right to choose. It is also in their policy, and it is the law. Five of the same seven participants mentioned similarly that when a person, who is a client in

their case, can recall or understand different events of their life, follow up with upcoming events, and can tell the social worker or officers pretty much all about their history or present situation, that is decision-making capacity. The same five participants mentioned similarly that if clients understand their personal, medical, and financial needs and recognize the risks associated with neglecting or failing to take care of each, they can understand the effects it can have on their daily living. Six participants mentioned that, in rural areas, response time and rapport building were barriers to collaborating with police officers. The common themes in RQ8 included a large coverage area or jurisdiction, insufficient support from both sides, training, experience, policy, law, decision-making capacity, neglect, rural areas, and rapport building.

In RQ9, I asked the participants to expound on their perceptions of how social workers and police officers can collaborate to build community trust. All participants reported that they must educate each other about their roles and build rapport with one another as social workers and police. In RQ9, most participants stated, “promoting coordination meetings and training with police officers is a pathway that can be beneficial to all, providing great support to the community, as well as support to one another, and being supportive of each other’s roles in the community.” Three participants mentioned formal policy changes on services, and a better financial budget system from the federal and state governments could be a pathway to building trust or better relationships in the community. Two participants mentioned that better pathways can be built through effective communication on both sides and educating people in political offices about their roles and the importance of these roles in helping the community. The

common themes in RQ9 included coordinating meetings, training, support, community, education, building trust and rapport, and fostering better relationships.

During RQ10, I asked the participants if trusting relationships within the community can be fostered through collaboration between social workers and police. Some participants had mixed feelings about fostering a trusting relationship in the community, given how individuals may feel about police officers or social workers. Ten participants believe that trusting relationships within the community can be fostered, depending on the situation, and through regular collaboration training with police officers. The same 10 participants noted that understanding roles, educating each other, and holding meetings between social workers and police officers can be ways of building trusting relationships in the community.

SW007 elaborated on R10 that training on enhancing mutual understanding of each other's roles in the community and the community they are about to collaborate with to serve can foster trust. There were two participants, SW006 and SW009, who felt that it would take more than collaboration between social workers and police to build trust, such as improving effectiveness in responding to community needs and changing attitudes about helping. SW008 reported that long wait times for police response to collaborate with them can delay immediate action in critical situations, which can impact the effectiveness of the social worker's interventions for clients and erode rapport. SW006 reported that challenges in collaborating with police, particularly when legal actions are not pursued by them or the courts, can affect families' views on how they receive assistance from social workers or police officers. In RQ10, the common themes were ten,

yes, depending on the situation, including social workers, police officers, the community, trust, understanding, challenges, and rapport.

RQ11: I asked participants do they feel individuals respond more positively to collaborations between social workers and police officers than they do to cases handled alone. All participants share their experiences working with police officers, and a common theme that emerges is one of infrequent but generally positive interactions. All participants stated that it depends on the person they are in contact with, as some may already have a good rapport with the police and will listen to police officers before listening to social workers. Some participants mention having people on their caseload for whom they receive frequent referrals, and they have built rapport or trusting relationships with certain clients, who will listen to the social worker. Four participants expressed that the population they deal with is case by case, and some dislike both social workers and police officers. All 12 participants mentioned that they had never taken the time to think about it or had not considered whether clients responded better to collaboration between social workers and police than to working on the case alone. Two participants prefer working independently but acknowledge the necessity of collaboration with police officers for safety. Common themes that emerge include the person they are in contact with, rapport, trusting relationships, safety, and a preference for working independently.

Lastly, during RQ12, I asked participants if they had ever responded to an urgent call with police officers, and what was the outcome? All participants responded yes or agreed to respond to urgent calls where police may need social workers' assistance in

rendering or offering service to an individual. Some participants described how they responded to an urgent call involving police officers, and many reported positive outcomes. Participant SW006 expressed challenges in working with police officers on cases, particularly when legal actions are not pursued, and they know for certain that a client has been offended, yet ongoing safety issues persist, affecting family assistance.

In RQ12, participants SW002, SW003, SW005, SW007, SW008, SW009, SW0010, SW0011, and SW0012 elaborated on how they were able to go in with the police to help individuals needing urgent services and get the individual to safety in the moment until other services were put into place for the individual. It was a good outcome. The common themes that emerged were, yes, good outcomes, safety, rendering service, and assistance.

During this process, I employed inductive coding as a method for gathering data from participants. Additionally, during the coding of the collected data, each interview was analyzed separately, with the participant discussing their perceptions of collaborating with police officers. Upon completing all interviews and reviewing each separately, I saw themes and keywords that emerged repeatedly.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In Chapter 3, I described credibility strategies and refinements. When evaluating the trustworthiness of this study, it was assessed against four established criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, I proposed a sample size of 10-15 participants, which is typical for a qualitative phenomenological study. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) noted that qualitative research often employs small

sample sizes, with saturation typically reached between five and 25 participants. In the current study, data saturation occurred after the eighth participant was interviewed, as no new themes emerged during the data collection process.

As mentioned earlier, I used all participants who responded to the email invitation. I sent an email stating that they had consented and logged on to the Teams meeting at the scheduled time for the interview, which was for twelve participants individually. Additionally, as the instrument of this study, I remained engaged during the interviews and remained aware of any potential prejudgment, bias, and post-knowledge, referring to the phenomenon being studied. Through this study, participants used similar redundancy to describe their perceptions about the phenomenon.

In Chapter 3 of this study, I explained transferability, along with any implementation strategies that may have occurred during the process. Additionally, in Chapter 3 of this study, I mention Teams interviews conducted without video, but with audio recorded in a quiet location, such as my home office or work office space. I conducted all 12 interviews via Microsoft Teams. Nevertheless, according to Walden IRB, this study required me, as the researcher, to obtain permission granted from the agency from which I planned to sample participants for research, unless participants were recruited externally. In that case, I obtained permission through the agency's own IRB team and their subcommittee. I gained consent by email from all participants.

In this study, I used respondent validation to enhance credibility by allowing each participant a chance to review their interview for accuracy, and 3 days to respond for feedback. Credibility in this study was used to ensure trustworthiness by obtaining

participants' perspective after debriefing to alleviate any biases that may have been formed during the interviews. I designed all research questions to ensure and capture concepts of what is in the study without any biases and consideration of the participants and their schedules (Robert, 2020).

The current study also utilized transferability due to a sample of 12 participants meeting the study's criteria. I employed a qualitative phenomenological design to select participants who met the specified criteria prior to conducting the research study (Ataro, 2020). Transferability was corroborated in the current study by incorporating a structured description of participants' perceptions, experiences, and significance of the phenomenon being studied in the in-text. I maintain dependability in this study by a logical, clear & completely documented, verifiable research process that was ordered and can be examined by another researcher with similar contributing factors, which may lead to similar findings. All of my interviews were recorded with Microsoft Teams and Samsung A16 Smart Noter AI to record and capture themes as it transcribed. I took handwritten notes while interviewing participants, then reviewed each transcript and put them into a Word Document.

Dependability in this study gave detailed description about the phenomenon along with the stability and consistency of the findings of this study if it was repeated. When it comes to dependability of this study, I ensured research questions were answered, I maintained detailed recordings, and made a reflection note in my journal. Dependability was maintained throughout this study by way of keeping a clear, detailed, and orderly

description of how data was collected so that future research can replicate (Creswell, 2018).

Confirmability in this study was maintained by me extensively documenting the steps used during data collection. I would verify the data collected by re-verifying it, gaining an understanding of the data received during interviews. I achieved accuracy by reviewing participants' responses to the email of their transcripts after they had reviewed them, giving them 3 days to confirm and provide feedback on any errors they found during the interview for accuracy. I also examined my personal experiences as a social worker. I kept a log of data collection, including notes on participants' perceptions of collaboration. I also used field notes and reflection to ensure that the narratives emerging from the findings were based on the participants' perceptions.

Results

The results of this study demonstrated that social workers' perception of trusting relationships within the community can be fostered through regular collaboration, training, and meetings between social workers and police officers. For this qualitative study, I sought to explore collaborative strategies for building community trust. To foster community trust from a social worker's perspective, social workers and police officers must be willing to overcome any biases about the situation and communicate openly with clients to achieve successful outcomes.

After analyzing the data, I identified several recurring themes that emerged during this study. During this study, a thematic analysis of the data revealed four common themes: police ensuring safety, providing support to one another and the

community, and fostering trust in the community by enhancing mutual understanding in all areas. Some participants highlight the lack of rapport or trust between individuals in the community and social workers and police officers in some areas, stemming from negative experiences. Nine participants emphasize the importance of overcoming biases from both sides and communicating openly with clients to achieve successful outcomes, although not all cases they work on, including those involving police officers, result in improved client situations.

Most participants perceived educating the community as a way to understand both the roles of social workers and police officers in the community, which can foster trust, and why they are present at individual homes. Participants perceived that implementing future trainings on collaboration, along with trust- or rapport-building trainings, and meetings with police officers can foster trust among themselves and with people in the community.

Theme 1: Police Officers Ensuring Safety

All 12 participants discussed verbatim their awareness of agency policies regarding police collaboration, noting there is no specific policies but emphasizing the importance of police presence for safety during calls. Ten participants expressed a generally positive perception of police involvement, highlighting the police's role in ensuring safety during collaborative efforts. Participant SW012 described their agency's joint response policy for urgent situations and safety, including when to involve police officers, such as during investigations of abuse or neglect, and the concurrent jurisdictional considerations for safety reasons.

During RQ11, participant SW008 expounded that the presence of law enforcement helps ensure safety and allows the social workers to perform their duties without fear. SW008 mentioned that police are seen as a de-escalation mechanism in potentially criminal situations for safety. SW003 and SW009 mentioned officers may be called if there is a perceived danger. Although all participants discussed safety training within their agencies, noting that while there is significant training for investigations or service cases, there is no specific training for police officers on collaborating for service calls or for safety.

Theme 2: Support to Each Other and the Community

Ten participants believed that service outcomes are generally successful due to the supportive role of law enforcement in ensuring safety during collaboration. All participants identified communication, support, police officer availability, and community outreach as the most effective measures for serving the community and building trust. Participant SW0010 emphasized the need to support and communicate the positive role of police officers to clients, highlighting the importance of police departments focusing on service responsibilities to improve community relations.

Although all participants' views about collaborating with the police are positive, they do not see a need for increased collaboration, stating that the current level of collaboration is sufficient. SW003 expresses a desire not to detract from police officers' primary duties in the community, and social workers should be supportive and ready to assist police officers. Participant SW005 views collaboration as helpful, especially when

assessing client needs, and they appreciate the support police can provide in certain situations.

Theme 3: Building Trust in the Community

Ten out of 12 participants' views suggest that working towards pathways for building community trust and service delivery through collaboration with police officers can be effective and, most of the time, positive when rapport or relationships are established. Participants SW006, SW007, SW009, SW0010, and SW0011 suggest that regular communication and meetings between social workers and police officers can foster community trust, improve communication between citizens, and/or build relationships, especially when the officers' attitude towards helping others is positive and they possess good people skills.

Participant SW0012's perception of fostering trust is that the Program Field Representatives of the agency, who are also social workers, should establish a training program for social workers to collaborate with law enforcement agencies. SW0012 noted that they believe their agency should explore ways to increase collaboration with police officers, as the balance of care and authority police have can benefit the community, given that they are first responders, and social workers are third-party responders.

There were two participants, SW006 and SW009, who felt that it would take more than collaboration between social workers and police to build trust. Eleven out of 12 participants' views are that they would first evaluate the need for police presence on a case-by-case basis to avoid unnecessary escalation or negative response from citizens in order to foster trust or build trust. The SW001 view emphasizes the importance of

alleviating public fears and misconceptions about social workers and police by educating the community about the roles of social workers and police officers, which could build trust and improve collaboration outcomes. SW007 and SW0010 reported potential barriers to collaboration and support, including the availability of police and the possibility that police presence may intimidate people, which can impact trust-building efforts.

Theme 4: Mutual Understanding of the Community and Each Other

All 12 participants' views are similar, suggesting that police officers and social workers should have a mutual understanding of each other's working backgrounds or careers. All participants suggested that such training and education with police officers could be beneficial, allowing them to gain a better understanding due to their diverse work backgrounds.

Participants stated that, similar to SW001, SW002, SW004, SW006, SW007, SW008, SW009, SW0011, and SW0012, social workers and police officers emphasize the importance of understanding the community's needs when meeting with each other.

Participant SW004's view is that cultural understanding may differ between social workers and police officers, which may impact the success of collaboration in certain situations. The SW008 view is that social workers and police officers must understand that long wait times to respond to client or those concerned calls can delay immediate action in rendering aid, noting that the delay can impact the effectiveness of the social worker's interceding services to individuals.

While each of the participants had similar perceptions but various experiences with how they collaborated with police officers, the most common agreeable themes to RQ10 fostering community trust with no discrepancies were ensuring safety, support for each other, and mutual understanding of each role when responding to a call, along with educating each other and the community about their roles. All participants noted, most importantly, that the client and their loved ones or caregivers have the right to learn and understand why social workers and police officers collaborate at their home.

There were SW008 and SW009 participants who mentioned that the police officers and social workers do not just show up at people's homes because they want to be nosey or pick some home to stop by and harass individuals, but someone had concerns enough to call and report to the state for the individual or individuals, because sometimes it can be more than one person involved. Participants SW006 and SW009 emphasized the need for better coordination between social workers and police officers to foster trust among themselves and with the community. Section two describes the background of the most measurable effective ways in which social workers and police officers collaborate to foster trust in the community (see Table 1).

Table 2

Measurable, Effective Ways for Social Workers and Police Officers Collaborate to Foster Trust

Participants	Policing, ensuring safety in the community	Support to each other and the community	Collaboration can build trust in the community	Mutual understanding, roles, and educating the community and each other
SW001	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW002	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW005	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW006	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SW007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW008	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW009	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SW0010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW0011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SW0012	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the perception of social worker collaborations with police officers in the communities of Oklahoma as they interact with citizens. This qualitative research will enable participants to shared their lived experiences within their work environment (Kraus et al., 2022). There was one research question that guided the research: What are social workers’ perceptions of how collaborations with police officers on calls establish trust from the people in the communities of Oklahoma?”

In addition, the participants' responses were analyzed and put into a Word Document when it comes to participants' responses about collaborating with police officers, and there were four common themes identified: ensuring safety, support, building trust or rapport in the community, and finding a way of enhancing mutual understanding of the community and each other. When I asked RQ3 how often they go on calls with police officers and their perception of responding to calls, three participants responded that they have probably been on a handful of calls with officers.

Participants discuss the frequency of working with police officers, which varies depending on the case's level of danger. Some participants described verbatim how cases are flagged for potential danger, prompting coordination with police officers. Some participants reported that service outcomes are not always successful, as they depend on the client's willingness to accept help. Most participants reported that success in rendering services to individuals in the community is subjective and varies based on individual client needs and desires. Overall, the 12-participant interview underscored the importance of collaboration among social workers and police officers in ensuring safety and effective service delivery.

Based on the findings, most participants indicated they would consider implementing joint training sessions and educating with police officers to improve collaboration. Some of the participants mention that while some officers are supportive, others may be reluctant to assist them on home visits with clients where there may be potential for danger. Some participants mentioned that a barrier to police officer and social work collaboration depends on the location or jurisdiction, potentially in rural

areas. The participant mentioned during the interview that the response time for a police officer to collaborate on a case is a barrier, as it poses potential dangers to the social worker or anyone involved in rendering services or aid to citizens. Gathering from this study, social workers and police officers can both render services to individuals, creating safer communities for everyone, and build rapport among citizens through quality training and education. In Chapter 5 of this study, I will present the interpretations of the findings, discuss the study's limitations, provide recommendations, and outline the implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was for me to understand, evaluate, and describe the perceptions of social workers who have collaborated with police officers. While analyzing data from this study revealed four key factors: (1) Annual or semiannual trainings and meetings between social workers and police officers. (2) Social workers and police must overcome any biases about the situation. (3) Educate and communicate openly with clients and people in the community. (4) Social workers and police responding to referrals or calls effectively in a timely manner can foster community trust. The current study aligns with previous research, which demonstrates that social workers and police officers are open to collaboration (Droubie, 2020). Participants noted that collaboration between social workers and police officers can be more effective in addressing social issues and providing better support for vulnerable populations.

This current study was conducted to gather insights from social workers and police on collaboration for fostering trust in Oklahoma communities. Husband (2023) concluded several times in their findings that further research is needed regarding police and social work collaboration. Additionally, I sought to explore strategies for collaboration between social workers and police officers, as well as ways to overcome any barriers in responding to calls. The participants shared their experiences working with police officers, noting mixed feelings, but overall, the experience is generally positive. All participants reported during data collection that the population of individuals

they deal with on a case by case, have a dislike for both social workers and police officers. The data confirmed by all participants that the outcomes of service rendering are not always successful, considering that all participants describe service outcomes as inconsistent, or it depends on the case for each service rendering.

Interpretation of the Findings

This has provided a wealth of knowledge on measures that can improve community trust. This phenomenological qualitative study examines the lived experiences of social workers' perceptions of collaborating with police officers. First, I am an examined participant who shared their experiences working with police officers, noting mixed feelings. Participants of this study suggested that educating the community about the roles of social workers and police officers could build trust and improve collaboration outcomes. Droubie (2021) concluded that collaboration between social workers and police officers can foster better community relationships, thereby promoting trust and cooperation between the two groups. Most believe that increased collaboration with police officers could benefit both parties by providing different perspectives and improving service delivery.

Chapter 2 further describes how the study of social services has become a necessity in COP, as police officers do much more than enforce laws and fight crime (Cole, 2022). What intersects social workers and police collaboration is transparency, service, and communication. Focusing on participants' experiences and perspectives on agency policies during this study, participants reported that collaboration with police officers emphasizes safety concerns. Participants indicated that training and education for

police officers and social workers could be beneficial in every area of relationship building, as it would provide a better understanding of each other due to their different work backgrounds. This study aligns with the findings of Abbas et al., who asserted that providing social workers with training for police officers enhances social workers' understanding of police work. Participants noted that the collaboration of social workers and police officers in responding to calls can be supportive of each other's well-being and for the safety of the social workers or anyone else involved with police presence.

Limitations of the Study

I employed phenomenological research design with a narrative approach to conduct one-on-one interviews with at least 10 to 15 participants. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) concluded that in qualitative research, a small sample size of five to 25 participants can achieve saturation.

While this study adds a wealth of knowledge about the perception of social workers' collaboration with police officers to foster community trust, there were a few limitations. Firstly, the timing of how long participants can speak is limited due to their busy daily schedules, including work and family responsibilities. Secondly, I wished I could have conducted face-to-face, one-on-one interviews with all participants, but due to inflation affecting everything, including gas prices, I chose to use Microsoft Teams.

Secondly, this study could not identify any policies, training, and education with police officers and social workers on collaborations besides safety. This study required ethical awareness that police officers are a vulnerable population because of the prominent levels of stress and traumatic experiences that they encounter on a regular

basis (Enang et al., 2019). During this study, some participants concluded the importance of police officers listening to clients, their families, and involving them in service planning, which aids in addressing their current situations and needs.

Lastly, the waiting process for participants to respond to email invitations and the wait for accuracy to properly code themes simultaneously. Asking questions in the same order to all participants was another limitation to the study due to the researcher not knowing if information about the research was being passed along to other possible participants who became participants.

Recommendations

For future purposes, most researchers should not work for a company or agency that they will use for participants, but they do, they should find out if they have an IRB team. I recommend learning and asking as many questions as possible about the agency or any organization, with the idea participants in mind, when it comes to gaining IRB approval. When I began this research, I was unaware that the agency had an IRB team until after the research Proposal was completed, and I spoke with the Field Managers and Deputy Directors about the agency participants used for research.

Based on the literature in Chapter 2, I recommend conducting research on the lack of databases for the outcomes of collaboration between police officers and social workers, as well as the frequency of such collaborations. I learned that along the way, as I prepared for Chapter 4 as a first researcher, the agency had its own IRB team and Subcommittee, which posed seven questions and suggested some changes to the researcher. The invitation to participate and the consent form were modified accordingly.

During this research, the agency's IRB Team requested that the researcher include a caveat for their staff to participate, stating that there is no intent to seek confidential client information and that no confidential client information should be shared during the interview process.

Additionally, I suggest that future research investigate other geographic areas, perhaps by interviewing law enforcement for their perspectives, or consider a quantitative study on the results of interactions where social workers were present versus when they were not. Another suggestion would be to find out as early as possible whether their agency has its own IRB team. Agencies that have their own IRB team can also approve any research if it aligns with your school's policy and procedure. Furthermore, I recommend that a predetermined set of questions be developed for police officers to determine if additional education and training from social workers and police officers are needed to further identify any issues that may hinder community trust.

Implications

Over the years, social workers have gained the trust of police officers for assistance during responses to calls for service, and those same officers have turned to social workers for support related to their work, seeking emotional assistance and help with personal issues (Perry, 2022). This study supports Walden University's commitment to social change, as it will enable people in the community to gain a deeper understanding of the collaboration between social workers and police officers. The collaboration of social workers with the police officers may assist citizens in the community with

managing psychosocial aspects of societal issues such as homelessness, social disparities, and mental health issues.

Social change can occur based on the effectiveness of social workers' collaboration with police officers and vice versa, as reflected in their lived experiences. Social workers and police officers collaborate to address what works and what doesn't work for citizens during interventions, while connecting them to needed services rather than resulting in arrest. This research can potentially drive social change by highlighting the active role of social workers, influenced by their perceived collaboration with police officers to achieve shared outcomes, or vice versa.

Conclusion

The obligations of the human services and criminal justice systems differ, but they share the same goal of providing equal and fair treatment to those they serve in the community. Based on the current findings of this study, social workers and police officers should collaborate to enhance their response times and address immediate situations more effectively. Some participants believed that increased collaboration with the police would be beneficial for the community and clients, enabling them to build trust, safety, and mutual understanding. Participants acknowledged that service outcomes are not always successful, citing factors such as client cooperation and waiting time for police to respond as barriers to collaboration.

All participants emphasize the importance of citizens' willingness to cooperate with social workers or police officers. On the other hand, some participants reported that when it comes to service rendering, and if child safety is involved, the decision-making is

usually in the discretion of the social worker. When it comes to effective measures for community service, the participants highlighted the importance of connecting clients with community resources, such as food banks and affordable housing. Participants emphasize the importance of informing citizens about available resources and assisting them with the application process for benefits.

Additionally, at an administrative level, social workers and police officers should consider exploring additional education and training opportunities to handle diverse situations together. All participants mentioned that their agency does not have a formal policy for responding to calls with police officers. Participants reported that decisions for clients are made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation and the potential involvement of a social worker or police officers. This flexible approach may allow for tailored responses to each unique case. Barriers to collaboration between social workers and police officers, as identified by participants, include the availability of police and the importance of effective communication. Leaving biases about the situation aside during collaboration can potentially enhance community trust.

References

- Agosto, V., Hicks, T., & Wolgemuth, J. R. (2017). Unpacking assumptions in research synthesis: A critical construct synthesis approach. *Educational Researcher*, *46*(3), 131-139. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17703946>
- Ajzen, I. (2011). The theory of planned behavior: Reactions and reflections. *Psychology & Health*, *26*(9), 1113–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2011.613995>
- Allen, K., Odell, B., Student, M. S. W., & Caravelis, C. (2023). Community care: A field education-based model for police social work in rural communities. *Field Educator*, *13*(1).
- Anderson, E., Shefner, R., Koppel, R., Megerian, C., & Frasso, R. (2022). Experiences with the Philadelphia police assisted diversion program: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, *100*, 103521.
- Ataro, G. (2020). Methods, methodological challenges, and lessons learned from phenomenological study about OSCE experience: Overview of paradigm-driven qualitative approach in medical education. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, pp. 49, 19–23.
- Ban, C. C., & Riordan, J. E. (2023). Re-Envisioning Public Safety Through an Embedded Police Social Worker (PSW) Model: A Promising Approach for Multidisciplinary Resource Delivery and Diversion. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *39*(4), 537-554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10439862231189423>

- Barnett, Joe Michael (2024). Understanding How Those Affected with Autism Spectrum Disorder Unintentionally Enter the Justice System. *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 15596. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/15596>
- Blair, R. A. (2022). Policing practices to build community trust and legitimacy in the global south1. *Brown University*.
<https://www.nationalacademies.org/documents/embed/link/LF2255DA3DD1C41C0A42D3BEF09>
- Booth, A., Carroll, C., Ilott, I., Low, L., & Cooper, K. (2013). Desperately seeking dissonance: Identifying the disconfirming case in qualitative evidence synthesis. *Qualitative Health Research*,23, 126-41.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732312466295>
- Carroll, M. (2023). *Innovative USC collaborative brings social work skills to law enforcement and public safety*. USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. <https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/news/innovative-usc-collaborative-brings-social-work-skills-to-law-enforcement-and-public-safety>
- Cole, T. M. (2022). Community-oriented policing: Building trust and collaborative relationships with the Black community. *DSW Capstone Projects*. 6.
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/csw_grad_reports/6
- Collins, C. S., & Stockton, C. (2022). The theater of qualitative research: The role of the researcher/actor. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, p. 21,
<https://doi.org/16094069221103109>

- Compton M. T., Krishan, S., Broussard, B., Bakeman, R., Fleischmann, M., Hankerson-Dyson, D., Husbands, L., Stewart, T., D’Orio, B., del Pozo, B., & Watson, A. (2021). Using the theory of planned behavior to understand how crisis intervention team (CIT) training facilitates police officers’ mental health referrals. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 58(6), 1112–1120. Health. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-021-00920-8>
- Daggenvoorde, T. H., van Eerden, M., van den Heuvel, S. C., Gijssman, H. J., Vermeulen, H., & Goossens, P. J. (2022). Emergency care to ‘persons with confused behavior’: Lived experiences of, and collaboration between, police and members of a mobile crisis team – A hermeneutic-phenomenological study. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 68(3), 649–655. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0020764021994606>
- Del Pozo, B., Sightes, E., Goulka, J., Ray, B., Wood, C. A., Siddiqui, S., & Beletsky, L. A. (2021). Police discretion in encounters with people who use drugs: Operationalizing the theory of planned behavior. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 18, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-021-00583-4>
- Demirkol, I. C., & Nalla, M. K. (2019). How does police culture shape officers’ support for community policing? *Policing & Society*, 29(6), 692–705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2017.1410149>
- Dolamore, S., Edwards, L., & Sowa, J. (2022). Depicting the work of police foundations on social media: A visual communication analysis. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 8(2), 168–194. <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.8.2.168-194>

- Droubie, T. (2020). Police Social Work: Potential Collaborative Responses to Crisis Situations. <http://libjournals.unca.edu/ncur/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/3355-Droubie-Trisha-CFINAL.pdf>
- Dunwoodie, Karen & Macaulay, Luke & Newman, Alexander. (2022). Qualitative interviewing in the field of work and organizational psychology: Benefits, challenges and guidelines for researchers and reviewers. *Applied Psychology*, 72, 863-889. 10.1111/apps.12414.
- Eikenberry, J., Mancini, M., Linhorst, D. M., Schafer, J. A., & Brown, J. (2023). Stress and trauma among police officers: Implications for social work research and practice. *Qualitative Social Work*, 23(4), 682-704. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250231214512>
- Enang I, Murray J, Dougall N, Wooff A, Heyman I, Aston E. Defining and assessing vulnerability within law enforcement and public health organisations: a scoping review. *Health Justice*. 2019 Mar 1;7(1):2. doi: 10.1186/s40352-019-0083-z. PMID: 30825016; PMCID: PMC6717956.
- Fixler, A. L., Jacobs, L. A., & Davis, C. D. (2024). Police-Social Work Collaboration and the Ethical Practice Paradox: Perspectives from Social Work's Next Generation. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10428232.2024.2446084>
- Giwa, S. (2018). Community policing in racialized communities: A potential role for police social work. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 28(6), 710–730. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2018.1456998>

- Goble, C. (2021). Social Workers to the Rescue? An Urgent Call for Emergency Response Reform. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, Vol.48 No 4.
<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2847&context=ulj>
- Godskesen, T., Björk, J., & Juth, N. (2023). Challenges regarding informed consent in recruitment to clinical research: a qualitative study of clinical research nurses' experiences. *Trials*, 24(1), 801.<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-023-07844-6>
- Grieder, K. (2022). Co-Response: How Police and Mental Health Worker Are Answering 911 Calls with Care. *Article of National Police Institute*. [Co-Responder Models in Policing: Better Serving Communities - National Policing Institute](#)
- Grossoehme, D. H. (2014). Overview of Qualitative Research. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 20(3), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854726.2014.925660>
- Hennink, M., Kaiser, B. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Husband, J. (2023). Social Work's Role In Addressing Police Oppression: Social Workers' Perspectives. Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations. 1635.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1635>
- Ishoy, Glen. (2016). The theory of planned behavior and policing: how attitudes about behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control affect the discretionary enforcement decisions of police officers. *Criminal Justice Studies*. 29. 1-18. 10.1080/1478601X.2016.1225362.

- Vaughn-Johnson, Demeko S., "How Youth Mentoring Programs Impact Criminal Behavior Among Black Males" (2023). *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 15085. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/15085>
- Kraus, S., Breier, M., Lim, W. M., Dabić, M., Kumar, S., Kanbach, D., Corvello, V., Pineiro-Chousa, J., Liguori, E., Palacios-Marques, D., Schoavone, F., & Ferreira, J. J. (2022). Literature reviews as independent studies: guidelines for academic practice. *Review of Managerial Science*, 16(8), 2577-2595. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-022-00588-8>
- Lawrence, Rob. (2021). IACP Quick Take: Social work and law enforcement: A crucial collaboration. *Newsletter of Lexipol*. <https://www.police1.com/iacp/articles/iacp-quick-take-social-work-and-law-enforcement-a-crucial-collaboration-9TD6u2pjLCmMBxm2/>
- Lee, J., Lee, J.; Hoover, L.T. (2017). What Conditions Affect Police Response Time? Examining Situational and Neighborhood Factors. *Police Quarterly*, 20(1), 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611116657327>
- Linklater, K. (2022). Inclusion Capital: How Police Officers Are Included in Their Workplaces. *Societies*, 12(128), 128. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12050128>
- Oklahoma CIT. (2020). Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). *Newsletter of The State of Oklahoma*. <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/recovery/criminal-justice/cit.html>
- Malley, L. & Grace, S. (2021). Social capital and co-location: A case study of policing anti-social behavior. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/14613557211026931>

- McKinley, A., Jones, S. (2022). Police emergency: career survivability navigating trauma, the impacts of COVID-19 and mental illness for police. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy, and Practice*. 10.1108/JCRPP-10-2022-0049. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366670579_Police_emergency_career_survivability_navigating_trauma_the_impacts_of_COVID-19_and_mental_illness_for_police
- National Association of Social Workers. (2024). Social Work History. *Newsletter of National Association of Social Workers*. <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Facts/Social-Work-History>
- Nelson, L. K., Burk, D., Knudsen, M., & McCall, L. (2021). The Future of Coding: A Comparison of Hand-Coding and Three Types of Computer-Assisted Text Analysis Methods. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 50(1), 202-237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124118769114>
- National Institute of Health. (2024). Principles and Best Practices for Protecting Participant Privacy. *Newsletter of National Institutes of Health*. <https://sharing.nih.gov/data-management-and-sharing-policy/protecting-participant-privacy-when-sharing-scientific-data/principles-and-best-practices-for-protecting-participant-privacy>
- Notko, M., Husso, M., Piippo, S., Fagerlund, M., & Houtsonen, J. (2022). Intervening in domestic violence: Interprofessional collaboration among social and health care professionals and the police. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 36(1), 15–23 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2021.1876645>

Oxford Languages. (2024). Definitions all from Oxford Languages Dictionary. Google

Search.https://www.google.com/search?q=trust&rlz=1C1JZAP_enUS1040US1046&oq=trust&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyDAGAEUYORixAxiABDIQCAEQLhjHARixAxjRAxiABDIKCAIQABixAxiABDIKCAMQABixAxiABDIKCAQQABixAxiABDITCAUQLhiDARjHARixAxjRAxiABDIKCA YQABixAxiABDIGCAcQRRhB0gEINDc4NGowajeoAgiwAgE&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Patterson, G. T., & Swan, P. G. (2019). Police social work and social service collaboration strategies one hundred years after Vollmer: A systematic review. *Policing: An International Journal*, 42(5), 863-886. [10.1108/pijpsm-06-2019-0097](https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-06-2019-0097)

Patton, D. U., Aguilar, N., Landau, A. Y., Thomas, C., Kagan, R., Ren, T., Stoneberg, E., Wang, T., Halmos, D., Saha, A., Ananthram, A., & McKeown, K. (2022). Community implications for gun violence prevention during co-occurring pandemics; a qualitative and computational analysis study. *Preventive Medicine*, 165, 107263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107263>

Perry, N. (2022). IACP 2022: The benefits of employing social workers in your law enforcement agency. IACP 2022: The benefits of employing social workers in your law enforcement agency (police1.com) <https://www.police1.com/mental-health-outreach/articles/iacp-2022-the-benefits-of-employing-social-workers-in-your-law-enforcement-agency-e8xeOjThHD8ShKbR/>

Ranse, J., Arbon, P., Cusack, L., Shaban, R. Z., & Nicholls, D. (2020). Obtaining individual narratives and moving to an intersubjective lived-experience description: a

way of doing phenomenology. *Qualitative Research*, 20(6), 945-959.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120905988>

Ratcliff, Michelle. (2024). Social Workers, Burnout, and Self-Care. *Delaware Journal of Public Health*. 10. 26-29. 10.32481/djph.2024.03.05.

Regis College. (2023). The Fascinating History of Social Work in the US. *Newsletter of Regis College*. <https://online.regiscollege.edu/blog/history-of-social-work/#:~:text=The%20efforts%20of%20social%20workers,of%20child%20abuse%20and%20neglect>

Roberts, Rosanne. (2020). Qualitative Interview Questions: Guidance for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*. 10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4640.

Rogo, E. J. (2024). Exploring Qualitative Research. *Journal of Dental Hygiene: JDH, Vol. 98(4)*, 56–61. [Exploring Qualitative Research | Journal of Dental Hygiene](#)

Scott, M., Sabatini, S., & Mama, R. (2023). Defund the police? Or reimagine the police? Leaders in law enforcement’s perspective on the role of social workers in law enforcement. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 20(2), 241-257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26408066.2022.2156831>

Simoni, J. M., Beima-Sofie, K., Amico, K. R., Hosek, S. G., Johnson, M. O., & Mensch, B. S. (2019). Debrief reports to expedite the impact of qualitative research: Do they accurately capture data from in-depth interviews? *AIDS and Behavior*, 23, 2185-2189. DOI; [10.1007/s10461-018-02387-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-018-02387-3)

- Springfield, Adrian, "Social Workers' Perceptions on Partnering with Police to Address Violent Police Encounters towards African Americans" (2022). *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 13113.
<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/13113>
- Stone, M. (2023). The Benefits of Embedding Social Workers in Police Departments. *Newsletter of Lexipol*. [Podcast: The benefits of social workers in police departments](#)
- Thomas, S. P., & Sohn, B. K. (2023). From Uncomfortable Squirm to Self-Discovery: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Bracketing Experience. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231191635>
- Umanailo, M. & Basrun, C. (2019). Overview Phenomenological Research. 10.31226/osf.io/ntzfm. [Overview Phenomenological Research](#)
- Walden University. (2024). Academic Guides.
<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/c.php?g=678599&p=4783248>
- Williams, Heath. (2021). The Meaning of "Phenomenology": Qualitative and Philosophical Phenomenological Research Methods. *The Qualitative Report*. 10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4587.
- Yakam, L. T. (2019). Police officers' perceptions of the people's complaints regarding police use of excessive force in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. *Contemporary PNG Studies*, pp. 30, 21–41. [Download citation of Police officers' perceptions of the people's complaints regarding police use of excessive force in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea](#)

Appendix: Data Collection Instrument

The following research question(s) will be addressed:

RQ 1: How long have you been with your agency?

RQ 2: What is your agency's policy on responding to calls with police officers? Why is this policy in place?

RQ 3: How often do you go on calls with police officers? What is your perception of working with police officers?

RQ 4: Is there training and education in response to service calls? Is there training with police officers at your agency on response to service calls? If so, why, or why not?

RQ 5: Are the outcomes of service rendering always successful? Why or why not?

RQ 6: What measures do you find in your agency to be the most effective to serve the community?

RQ 7: What are your perceptions of working more with police officers in the community?

RQ 8: Are there barriers when it comes to responding to or going out on calls with police?

RQ 9: What are your perceptions of pathways social workers and police can collaborate to build community trust? Why?

RQ 10: Can trusting relationships within the community be fostered during social worker and police collaboration? If so, in what ways?

RQ 11: Do you feel individuals respond to social workers and police officer collaborations more positively versus doing cases alone? Explain why?

RQ 12: Have you ever responded to an urgent call with police officers? If so, what was the outcome?