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Police Officers' Perceptions of Spirituality for Managing Occupational Stress and Job Performance

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Abstract

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MS, Tiffin University, 2011

BS, Old Dominion University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Police officers are exposed to occupational stressors that can negatively affect their job performance. Spirituality has received scholarly attention as a potential therapeutic strategy to assist individuals working under stressful conditions. Research indicated that police culture often overlooks the spiritual well-being of police officers. Much of the police literature on stress and spirituality has been examined using quantitative methods of inquiry. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. Fry's spiritual leadership theory provided the framework for the study. Semistructured interviews with a purposive sample of 6 participants were analyzed for codes and themes using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. Findings revealed that participants used their spirituality to cope with police stress and improve job performance, which created a healthy work-life balance, enhanced decision-making, and provided a greater sense of self-awareness. Consistent with spiritual leadership theory, participants perceived police work as a noble calling and that spirituality through faith-based belief systems and a deep connection to the communities they serve had a meaningful impact on their well-being and commitment to the organization. Findings may encourage law enforcement leaders, administrators, and trainers to recognize the possible benefits of nurturing the spiritual dimension within officers and to consider incorporating spirituality into standard training practices, organizational policies, and employee wellness programs.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, John Melvin Massey, who died June 19, 2006. My grandfather played an instrumental role in raising me to become the woman I am today. I would not have reached this tremendous milestone if it were not for the qualities he instilled in me at a very young age to be a powerful and educated Black woman. May God rest his soul, and his memory shall forever live within me.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to all of the police officers who agreed to participate in this study. The success and completion of this dissertation would not have been possible if it were not for your bravery and honesty with sharing your personal experiences. Thank you for your service.

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To my grandmother, Virginia Massey, thank you for raising me and showing me the value of love, ambition, and hard work. You continued to push me throughout this doctoral journey, and I could not have done it without you. To my other grandmother, Mattie Robinson, thank you for being my light and always believing in me. To my mother, Karen Robinson, and my father, Lorenza Robinson, thank you both for your love, support, understanding, and guidance in my long academic journey. All I ever wanted to do was to make my parents proud. I'm glad that I'm able to share this victory with the both of you. To all my family members and friends, I could not thank you enough for the continuous support and kind words of encouragement you've shown to me throughout the years. I love you all, and I am forever grateful!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Research has shown that police officers are exposed to a variety of job-related stressors, rendering occupational stress a concern for the policing industry (Padyab, Backteman-Erlanson, & Brulin, 2016; Patterson, Chung, & Swan, 2014; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Roz & Raval, 2017; Singh & Kar, 2015; Yun, Hwang, & Lynch, 2015). Luceno-Moreno, Garcia-Albuerne, Talavera-Velasco, and Martín-García (2016) described factors that make police officers susceptible to stress, such as having regular interactions with the public and not always having complete dominant power over their surroundings. According to Violanti et al. (2016), some common police stressors are the constant dangers of the job, responding to calls for service, police culture, administrative tasks, and case workload.

Occupational stress has been associated with unfavorable outcomes for police officers, such as elevated health-related problems and poor job performance (Can & Hendy, 2014; Habersaat, Geiger, Abdellaoui, & Wolf, 2015; Hesketh, Cooper, & Ivy, 2015; Yun et al., 2015). However, Santa et al. (2018) mentioned that police officers do not perceive all stressors they encounter in their working environments as negative because they may have enticed them to the job. Also, police officers who sense their peers are encouraging of them often view their jobs not to be as stressful or demanding (Maran, Varetto, Zedda, & Franscini, 2014). Despite these findings, there is empirical evidence that occupational and organizational stressors embedded in the police organization could lead to long-term adverse consequences for police officers (Aleksandra Basinska, Wiciak, & Maria Dåderman, 2014; Lambert, Qureshi, Frank,

Keena, & Hogan, 2017; Naz, Gavin, Khan, & Raza, 2014; Padyab et al., 2016; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Santa et al., 2018). When it comes to coping strategies for stress, individuals tend to differ in their reactions and coping styles (Clifton, Torres, & Hawdon, 2018).

Spirituality has been acknowledged in various settings as a resource for individuals trying to manage stress-related symptoms (Arshad & Abbasi, 2014; Charles, Travis, & Smith, 2014; George & Park, 2017; Pandya, 2017; Plante, 2016; Ursa & Koehn, 2015). There is no "universal" accepted definition of spirituality (Shaw, Gullifer, & Wood, 2016, p. 313), but in this phenomenological study, spirituality was defined as "a state or experience that can provide individuals with direction or meaning, or provide feelings of understanding, support, inner wholeness or connectedness" (Salehzadeh, Pool, Lashaki, Dolati, & Jamkhaneh, 2015, p. 348). Using Fry's spiritual leadership theory, I explored police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality to manage occupational stress and high job demands as it relates to work performance. Jacobs and Van Niekerk (2017) indicated that law enforcement tasks consist of some aspect of spirituality because officers often risk their lives when they are in uniform.

This study was significant because findings were intended to help police leaders, trainers, educators, and administrators learn how spirituality can be used as a therapeutic strategy to assist officers in stress management, organizational effectiveness, and job performance. Researchers have discussed how police officers could benefit from spiritual training (Pandya, 2017). The study's results may encourage police leadership to recognize the influence of nurturing the spiritual dimension within officers as well as to

consider integrating spirituality into standard police training practices, policies, and programs. Chapter 1 includes the study's background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, nature, definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Since the 1970s, researchers have focused on the topic of stress caused by police work (Odunayo, Austines, & Kolawole, 2015; Tsai, Nolasco, & Vaughn, 2018). Studies have indicated that the police profession is one the most stressful occupations often viewed as an occupational hazard of law enforcement (Bishopp, Worrall, & Piquero, 2016; Chopoko, Facemire, Palmieri, & Schwartz, 2016; Dada Ojo, 2014; Kuo, 2015; McCreary, Fong, & Groll, 2017; Nandini, Karunanidhi & Chitra, 2015; Ramey, Perkhounkova, Hein, Bohr, & Anderson, 2017). Stuart (2017) examined how police officers often stigmatize each other when it comes to emotional and mental health issues, and this stigmatization has played a role in how officers react to stress.

Law enforcement is composed of a subculture in which police officers are trained in an environment that does not usually encourage them to admit to problems that would make them appear weak or vulnerable (Charles et al., 2014; Rose & Unnithan, 2015). Police officers believe that they and their fellow officers should be composed, suppress emotions, and maintain a level head at all times (Gutshall, Hampton, Sebetan, Stein, & Broxtermann, 2017; Stuart, 2017). For this reason, it is essential for police officers to have an additional outlet to channel frustrations and stressors that come with the nature of police work (Clifton et al., 2018).

Previous studies have addressed the origin of well-being among employees in occupations that contain high levels of stress (Lim & Kim, 2016). The concept of spirituality has gained some attention in the field of law enforcement as a viable strategy for managing work-related stressors (Charles et al., 2014; Dadernan & Colli, 2014; Hesketh, Ivy, & Smith, 2014; Malmin, 2013; Moran, 2017; Smith, Charles, & Smith, 2015). Jacobs and Van Niekerk (2017) conducted a qualitative study using a sample of 10 traffic law enforcement officers to study the role of spirituality as a coping defense mechanism. The results indicated that officers who used spiritual practices in the workplace reported less job stress and adopted effective coping skills. Likewise, Moran (2017) suggested that spirituality enables police officers to deal with stressors targeting their "wellness" and "safety" (p. 343).

In contrast, some researchers have not found evidence that spirituality is a source for increasing police officers' mental well-being, physical health, or levels of stress. Chopko, Facemire, Palmieri, and Schwartz (2016) investigated the relationship between different types of spiritual practices that police officers used to treat stress symptoms. Chopko et al. noted that the results of the study did not provide sufficient evidence that higher levels of spirituality contribute to lower levels of stress. Likewise, Rogers (2017) examined the sources of spirituality and whether it helped to relieve stress among African American and female police officers from a Maryland police department. Rogers found that a significant relationship existed between spirituality and stress among officers when monitoring for certain factors, such as occupational burnout and demographics.

The role of spirituality as a workplace strategy for managing occupational stress and organizational job performance is well-documented in the literature. Pandya (2017) investigated the influence of spirituality on police officers' insights about criminals, crime, and work-related stress. However, there was a gap in the literature on how this group uses spirituality to mitigate job stressors. Also, the existing research was inconsistent in specifying a clear sense of direction on how spirituality can be implemented into law enforcement practices from police officers' recommendations (Chopko et al., 2016). Using Fry's spiritual leadership theory, I addressed this gap by applying new knowledge to the field. A phenomenological study was needed to understand the experiences and perceptions of police officers to help law enforcement leaders, administrators, and trainers learn about the effects of spirituality on police officers' health and work ethic and to evaluate the need for spiritual training and oversight in policing.

Problem Statement

There are several pressing issues facing law enforcement officers, including the short- and long-term impact of occupational stress (Frank, Lambert, & Qureshi, 2017; Gutshall et al., 2017; Kuo, 2015; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Tyagi & Dhar, 2014). The stressors that police officers experience have been depicted in the literature as affecting their job performance, health, and personal relationships (Andersen & Papazoglou, 2015; Karaffa et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2017; Patterson et al., 2014; Verhage, Noppe, Feys, & Ledegen, 2018). According to Donnelly, Valentine, and Oehme (2015), police officers endure higher than normal levels of physical, behavioral, and mental health problems

compared to the general public, such as domestic violence, posttraumatic stress disorder, mental illnesses, heart attacks, alcohol/substance abuse, family conflict, and death.

The occupational "death rate of police officers is nearly three times that of the average worker in the United States" (Mumford, Taylor, & Kubu, 2015, p. 112). Also, police officers are more likely to commit suicide than their counterparts in similar occupations (Rouse et al., 2015). Tuttle, Giano, and Merten (2018) reported that "the suicide rates of police officers surpassed the civilian suicide rate at 17 suicides per 100,000 compared to 11 per 100,000 in the general population" (p. 246). Klinoff, Van Hasselt, and Black (2015) suggested that the suicide rates for smaller police departments are higher than those found in larger police departments because of the overload in cases working with fewer resources. As a result, the way police officers deal with occupational stress could have a significant bearing on their longevity in the profession (Frank et al., 2017).

Dåderman and Colli (2014) suggested that spirituality can be used to assist police officers in developing effective coping skills to combat stressful events. The problem is police culture often overlooks the stress-mitigating benefits of creating and maintaining a strong spiritual foundation (Moran, 2017). According to Elkonin, Brown, and Naicker (2014), most organizations place little emphasis on the concept of spirituality in professional development training. Moran (2017) indicated that a possible cause of the problem is the lack of conceptual clarity in defining the nature of spirituality in policing. For this reason, there has been a deficiency in the literature regarding the understanding and meaning of spirituality from police officers' interpretations and experiences. Also,

previous studies did not address police officers' perceptions of spirituality through the theoretical lens of Fry's spiritual leadership theory. Using this theoretical model as the foundation, I employed a phenomenological research design to investigate police officers' spiritual strategies for coping with police stressors and high job demands.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. Charles et al. (2014) found that police officers with higher levels of spirituality tend to report lower levels of stress and quicker executive functioning, making enhanced job performance a reasonable training goal for police officers. The current study addressed the phenomenon of spirituality in the breadth, essence, and meaning projected by the participants. The results of this study provided insight into how these officers used their perceived spirituality to adapt to stress, adversity, and workplace challenges.

Research Questions

I addressed one central research question in this qualitative phenomenological study: How does the perception of spirituality influence police officers' job performance and the way officers manage police occupational stress? Two subquestions were also addressed:

1. What are police officers' perceptions of incorporating spirituality into police academy training and standard training practices?

2. What are police officers' recommendations on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers?

Theoretical Framework

Fry's model of spiritual leadership theory provided a theoretical framework to guide this study. Fry's spiritual leadership theory originated from the works of Fairholm. Fairholm (1998) developed the phrase *spiritual leadership* to describe how individuals can fulfill their spiritual needs in the workplace. However, Fry is distinguished for developing the spiritual leadership theory in scholarly research (Jun-Yen & Chun-I, 2015).

Furthermore, Fry (2003) defined the concept of spiritual leadership as "comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership" (p. 695). The theoretical model addresses the importance of spiritual leadership on personal and organizational outcomes and has been used extensively in research studies as it relates to incorporating spirituality into the workplace. Fry's spiritual leadership theory is one of the most cited theories in the literature to explain the phenomenon of spirituality and the concept of spiritual leadership (Klaus & Fernando, 2016).

In 2003, Fry created the spiritual leadership theory model, consisting of four distinctive elements: vision, altruistic love, hope/faith, and spiritual well-being (Fachrunnisa, Adhiatma, & Mutaminah, 2014). However, Fry revised the theoretical model since then to include the concepts of inner life/mindfulness and life satisfaction

(Fry, Latham, Clinebell, & Krahnke, 2017). The elements that make up the spiritual leadership theory model are faith/hope, vision, meaning and calling, membership, organizational commitment, altruism, life satisfaction, and inner life/mindfulness (Fry et al., 2017; Novikov, 2017). Dandona (2013) explained how an employee could be stimulated naturally in the workplace through the experience of spirituality in striving to achieve more meaningful work and greater job satisfaction. Spiritual leadership theory was an appropriate framework for the study to explore how officers can create a meaningful vision through spiritual calling that may promote higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance and lower levels of stress.

Nature of the Study

I used an interpretive qualitative approach incorporating a phenomenological research design. Keeley et al. (2016) suggested that qualitative research promotes understanding and addresses specific outcomes that are significant to participants. I chose to use a phenomenological strategy of inquiry because it offered a more profound narration geared toward pinpointing the fundamental aspects of a phenomenon and participants' shared experiences (see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Phenomenology facilitated understanding of police officers' interpretations of spirituality through examination of the meaning that supports the essence of their lived experiences.

I collected data through in-depth semistructured interviews with six police officers in the state of Virginia to examine the role spirituality has in improving health-related conditions and job performance. Data saturation was reached with six participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that the ability to attain data saturation in a

phenomenological study is through the use of probing questions in interviews and designing a study that is free from judgment and bias. I transcribed interviews verbatim and analyzed the data for themes, trends, and patterns using Colaizzi's (1978) 7-step process for data analysis.

Definitions

Altruistic love: "A sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others" (Fry, as cited in Novikov, 2017, p. 82).

Connectedness: "A person's perception or belief that they are cared for, respected, valued, and understood" (Crespo, 2016, p. 1467).

Coping: "The perceptual, mental, or behavioral efforts that people employ to deal with situations deemed potentially difficult and stressful" (Jacobs & Van Niekerk, 2017, p. 2).

Inner life: *"*A quest for a source of strength that fuels hope and faith in a transcendent vision to love and serve others" (Fry et al., 2017, p. 24).

Job performance: "A dynamic process in which individuals control and allocate various resources to task activities" (Kim, Park, & Headrick, 2018, p. 776).

Law enforcement: A group of people responsible for maintaining "social order" and enforcing the laws (Barthelemy, Chaney, Maccio, & Church, 2016, p. 415).

Life satisfaction: "A global evaluation by a person of his or her life and is considered to be an important component of subjective well-being" (Fry et al., 2017, p. 24).

Meaning in life: "A critical facet of well-being referring to people's judgments that their lives are coherent, make sense, and are endowed with a sense of overarching purpose" (Henry et al., 2014, p. 222)

Mindfulness: An act of awareness that encourages and allows individuals to take into consideration the needs of others as well as their own "personal desires and sense of self" (Bush & Dodson, 2014, p. 197).

Organizational commitment: "Psychological attachment employees feel for their organizations, and it reflects employees' internalization and embracement of their organization's objectives, norms, values, and other characteristics" (Akar, 2018, pp. 102-103).

Police academy training: A 5 to 8-month classroom instruction period that transitions to hands-on field training and prepares police officers for their responsibilities and roles within the communities they will service (McCarty & Lawrence, 2016; Nevers, 2018).

Police culture: A system that encompasses "work-related principles and moral standards that are shared by most police officials within a particular sovereignty" (Steyn & Mkhize, 2016, p. 16).

Police job performance: "The quality of police service" (Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, Mcdevitt, & Posick, 2015, p. 339).

Police occupational stress or police stress: "Negative pressures related to police work" (Onkari & Itagi, 2018, p. 38).

Police officers: Uniformed sworn officers who are regularly asked by the public to provide social service delivery (Wang, 2015). "Social service refers to the behavior of police within the scope of police power, operation, promoting problem settlement, aid, and care not related to crimes and police law enforcement" (Wang, 2015, pp. 209-210).

Police subculture: "A strong sense of solidarity among police officers" (García-Buades, Ramis-Palmer, & Manassero-Mas, 2015, p. 725)

Spirituality: "A state or experience that can provide individuals with direction or meaning, or provide feelings of understanding, support, inner wholeness or connectedness" (Salehzadeh et al., as cited in Smith & Rayment, 2007, p. 220).

Spiritual leadership theory: "The values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership" (Fry, as cited in Salehzadeh et al., 2015, p. 348).

Spiritual well-being: A condition based on the organizational members' needs that consists of "calling" and "membership." A "calling" is having a purpose or meaning of how a person can make a difference in the lives of people, whereas "membership" relates to having a "sense of belonging" and being understood that usually comes from open communication and relationships via social interactions with others (Fachrunnisa et al., 2014, p. 17).

Spiritual wellness: The "development of spiritual dimensions at its fullest with the growth of inherent aspects" (Wagani & Golani, 2017, p. 338).

Stress: "A ubiquitous experience, impacting physiological, psychological, relational, and spiritual functioning" (Knabb & Vazquez, 2018, p. 37).

Stress management: A technique or strategy used by individuals to cope with and manage stress. Stress management may consist of motivational factors that can increase job performance among workers and organizations (Dimitriu & Mitovski, 2014).

Stressors: Adverse experiences that increase stress for individuals in the workplace. In the policing environment, there are two types of stressors: "operational stressors (i.e., job content)" and "organizational stressors (i.e., job context)" (Molines, Sanséau, & Adamovic, 2017, p. 49).

Transcendence: "Humans naturally seek outside of themselves in relationship with the other to find ontological identity, meaning, and fulfillment" (Hodge, 2014, p. 313).

Workplace spirituality: "Employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the context of community" (Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014, p. 381).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study:

- Police officers who participated in this study were consciously and unconsciously aware of what it means to be spiritual and have practiced spirituality.
- An individual can possess an inherent capacity to be spiritual despite the absence or presence of a particular religion or faith belief system.

- The empirical evidence reported by other researchers supports the reliability and validity of the spiritual leadership theory.
- The phenomenological approach was the most appropriate design to address the research problem and research questions.
- Face-to-face semistructured interviews were appropriate to explore police officers' experiences and perceptions of spirituality for managing occupational stress and job performance.
- Interview questions were phrased and articulated in a way that addressed the phenomenon being explored and allowed the participants to understand and answer each question.
- Participants' responses to the interview questions were truthful and a direct representation of their spiritual accounts and experiences.

Scope and Delimitations

The study participants consisted of six active police officers in the state of Virginia. Police officers were recruited from different law enforcement agencies across several cities using a purposeful sampling method. In this phenomenological study, I focused on officers' perceptions of using spirituality for managing stress, sustaining job performance, interacting with the public, engaging with fellow officers, and maintaining sanity while on the job. I also concentrated on the views of participants for integrating spirituality into police training practices as well as their recommendations for the police organization.

Excluded from participating in this study were retired police officers and officers who were not current employees of a police department or agency in the state of Virginia. Also, the study did not include family members, colleagues, or friends to eliminate potential biases and avoid coercion. The study was limited to active police personnel because little is known about "what accounts for variability in police responses to stress" (Schaible, 2018, p. 129). Also, much of the police literature on stress and spirituality has been examined using quantitative methods of inquiry. Rogers (2017) implied that previous research findings tend to either suggest that there is a positive or negative association between spirituality and police stress. However, quantitative research does not provide the deepness and intensity of data typically found in qualitative studies (Davis, Hook, McAnnally-Linz, Choe, & Placeres, 2017).

A qualitative method of inquiry was used for this study to explore a phenomenon in the present form to capture meaning, thoughts, and emotions through the lens of participants who had directly experienced it (see McLean et al., 2015; Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). I interpreted the research findings based on the spiritual leadership theoretical framework so that they could be compared with the results of other leadership and organization studies using similar populations and settings (see Abdolrahimi, Ghiyasvandian, Zakerimoghadam, & Ebadi, 2018). The need to explore the spiritual perceptions of active police personnel in the state of Virginia determined the scope of this study; for that reason, some of the experiences of the participants may not transfer to other law enforcement officers or populations working in different states and regions.

Validation for transferability depends on generalizing the research findings to different contexts and groups (Dwyer & Chauveron, 2016; Weis & Willems, 2017).

Limitations

There were several limitations to trustworthiness that surfaced from conducting this study. The first limitation was that the participants may not have been willing to discuss their spiritual experiences candidly. Spirituality is often a private experience, and police officers may have felt vulnerable when speaking on a sensitive and controversial topic with an outsider. Loyens and Maesschalck (2014) suggested that police officers tend to develop a "distrust to outsiders" (p. 149) or any person who is not affiliated with the police organization.

The second limitation concerned the sampling method. Although I made great efforts to seek more participants from various cities throughout the state of Virginia, I was able to recruit only six police officers from five city regions using a purposeful sampling strategy. Future study could include a broader sample from several states to obtain a better understanding of police officers' spiritual experiences and practices. Also, an additional or different sampling method could be used to recruit participants, such as the snowball technique.

The third limitation was the likelihood of response bias as a possible threat to the study outcomes (see Valente, Dougherty, & Stammer, 2017). Participants may have felt pressured to answer a question in a certain way that was socially acceptable within their group. I assumed that participants would answer all questions truthfully and honestly. The issue of interviewer bias can exist when there is some partiality regarding a

preconceived answer based on how the question is worded, phrased, or structured (Alby & Fatigante, 2014). I abstained from asking leading questions and making statements about personal experiences to avoid influencing participants' responses (see Alby & Fatigante, 2014). Before conducting the interviews, I prepared an interview guide to minimize the effect of interviewer bias (see Martínez García et al., 2017).

Significance

There has been a national public outcry in the form of community protests calling for police reform due to recent incidents of misconduct publicized in the media (Clifton et al., 2018; Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Terrill & Ingram, 2016). Kula (2017) suggested that the officers involved in these types of altercations could have suffered from elevated stress levels that impacted their ability to address the situations appropriately. As a result, members of society have accused police officers of becoming insensitive, lacking accountability, and lacking the capacity to govern the people (Moran, 2017). Dada Ojo (2014) cited public indifference as a factor that has created stress for police. Also, Dada Ojo implied that stress tends to heighten police officers' levels of frustration and aggressive behavior while undermining their ability to communicate effectively.

The current study contributed to increasing knowledge of spirituality in police practice, training, and culture. My research focused on how police officers view, understand, and experience the phenomenon. Much of the existing research concerning the relevance of spirituality in policing has been inadequate, with very few researchers attempting to go beyond quantitative realms. A qualitative study was conducted to address the problem of police occupational stress through the perceptions of police

officers who had practiced using spirituality to control stressors presented in the scope of their duties. Moran (2017) suggested that the process of spiritual integration is necessary for police officers to be whole and productive at work.

Chopko et al. (2016) implied that a lack of spirituality in policing might be connected to the maladjusted behaviors of police officers. It is essential for law enforcement leaders and administrators, police officers, police trainers, and other law enforcement officials to learn that there may be additional avenues to assist officers in channeling frustrations and stressors that come with the nature of police work (Jacobs & Van Niekerk, 2017). The findings from the current study added knowledge to criminal justice and police literature on spirituality. The study's results may be useful to other disciplines, such as public policy and administration, security, and public safety. The results of this study may lead to positive social change by helping police leaders, trainers, and administrators understand the effect of spirituality on police officers' health, morale, ethics, and job performance and to consider incorporating spirituality into standard training practices, organizational policies, and employee wellness programs.

Summary

The police profession is one of the most stressful occupations in the world (Bishopp et al., 2016; Dada Ojo, 2014; Kuo, 2015; McCreary et al., 2017; Nandini et al., 2015; Ramey et al., 2017). The short- and long-term effects of occupational stress is a severe problem facing police officers in the United States (Frank et al., 2017; Gutshall et al., 2017; Kuo, 2015; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Tyagi & Dhar, 2014). The concept of spirituality has been recognized in research as a credible source to assist police officers

with preserving their overall health and fitness (Charles et al., 2014). However, researchers have implied that the significance of sustaining a robust spiritual foundation within police officers is disregarded by police culture (Moran, 2017).

In this phenomenological study, I explored police officers' perceptions of using spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. Using a purposeful sampling method, I collected data through in-depth semistructured interviews with six participants. I transcribed interviews and analyzed data for themes, trends, and patterns using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method of data analysis. Findings may be used by police educators, trainers, administrators, and leaders to understand the possible benefits of nurturing the spiritual dimension within police officers and to consider investing in resources and training that suits the spiritual needs of officers.

In Chapter 1, I included a detailed introduction and background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a summary. Chapter 2, I include an introduction, literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, and literature review addressing the following topics: defining spirituality, religion and spirituality, the effect of spirituality on stress management and job performance, spirituality in policing, the existence of spirituality in police academy training, and an exploration of spirituality on police stress, police job performance, police culture, and what has been documented about police officers' perceptions of spirituality.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore six police officers' perceptions of using spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. Researchers have reported that occupational stressors can create life-threatening consequences for individuals due to untreated stress reactions (Padyab et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2014; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Roz & Raval, 2017; Singh & Kar, 2015; Yun et al., 2015). Some researchers have discussed spirituality as a feasible stress-management intervention strategy for police officers (Charles et al., 2014; Dadernan & Colli, 2014, Malmin, 2013; Smith et al., 2015). The problem is that law enforcement has given minimal attention to spirituality as a means to help police officers sustain their mental health stability and job performance (Moran, 2017).

In this chapter, I include a synopsis of the research strategies used to locate articles for the literature review. An extensive explanation of Fry's spiritual leadership theory is provided to demonstrate how the theory had been applied in previous studies and how it related to the current study. The remaining sections present a review of the literature that is broken up into several categories. The first part of the review highlights research defining spirituality and provides an overview of some of the most common notions of spirituality and religion. This section also presents an explanation of how spirituality and religion are often used as interchangeable terms in the literature (see Bester & Muller, 2017; Gubkin, 2016; Rogers & Wattis, 2015; Shaw et al., 2016). The next section addresses the influence of spirituality on stress management and job performance. This review also sheds light on spirituality in police academy training,

police culture, police job performance, police stress, and what is known about police officers' perceptions of spirituality. This chapter ends with a summary and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

The research for this literature review was retrieved using several different sources. The literature search strategies involved searching databases in the Walden University library, including Criminal Justice Database, ProQuest Central, SAGE Journals, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Taylor and Francis, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, SocINDEX, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Political Science Complete, and Business Source Complete. In addition, Google Scholar provided many of the articles needed for this review. The search terms included *occupational stress* and *spirituality, spirituality in policing, police stress* and *spirituality, police culture* and *spirituality, theory of spirituality, Fry* and *spiritual leadership theory, police* and *spirituality, stress* and *police culture, spirituality* and *police training, law enforcement* and *spiritual training, stress management* and *police academy training, spirituality* and *stress management, spirituality* and *job performance, spirituality* and *police job performance,* and *spirituality* and *religion.* Also, there was a thorough review of the authors' references to locate additional articles that the general search did not uncover.

Theoretical Foundation

There is increasing social awareness among researchers regarding the magnitude of the role spirituality has in organizations (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Kumar & Kumar, 2015; Lal, Pathak, & Chaturvedi, 2017; Loo, 2017; Maharana, Patra, Srinivasan, & Nagendra, 2014; Mubasher, Salman, Irfan, & Jabeen, 2014; Naidoo, 2014; Shinde &

Fleck, 2015; Vallabh & Singhal, 2014). In 2003, Fry developed the model of spiritual leadership to explain the influence of spirituality on employee and organizational outcomes such as stress, health, psychological well-being, productivity, and organizational commitment (Fry, 2016).

Spiritual Leadership Theory

Many researchers have given attention to Fry's spiritual leadership theory model and have focused on spirituality within the field of organization studies (Fry et al., 2017). Fry (2003) suggested that spiritual leadership is not only essential for transforming organizations, but it is also a necessity for continuous learning, development, and success. Naidoo (2014) explained that spiritual leadership provides organizations and workers with a blueprint to promote positive well-being and optimal job performance in the workplace. The desired results of higher commitment and productivity transpire when members of an organization are spiritually motivated through shared "values, attitudes, and behaviors" (Yishuang, 2016, p. 410).

Fry's spiritual leadership theory is based on the works of Fairholm, who was one of the first researchers to use the terms *spiritual* and *leadership* together to explain how employees can fulfill their spiritual needs at work through the power of spiritual guidance (Mubasher et al., 2017; Naidoo, 2014). Mubasher et al. (2017) and Naidoo (2014) explained how other researchers have attempted to reproduce Fairholm's model to generate a theory of spiritual leadership. In 2003, Fry created the spiritual leadership theory founded on an "intrinsic motivation model" that explores the concepts of "character ethics," "positive human health," and "psychological well-being" (Naidoo,

2014, p. 4). Fry revised the spiritual leadership model to include the concepts of inner life and life satisfaction (Fry et al., 2017). Fry's spiritual leadership theory is described to be more "conceptually distinct, parsimonious, and less conceptually confounded compared to other major theories of leadership and motivation" (Maharana et al., 2014, p. 289).

The model of the theory illustrates qualities of inner life or spiritual practice to foster traits that are required to encourage self and others through spiritual fulfillment in the workplace (Fachrunnisa et al., 2014). An aspect of the spiritual leadership theory places the focus on employees in organizations in which "the concern for the whole person is paramount in raising each other to higher levels of awareness and action" (Fairholm & Gronau, 2015, p. 355). An example of how Fry's spiritual leadership theory occurs in the work environment through a continuous cycle is provided in Figure 1. Also, a refined model of spiritual leadership theory is presented in Figure 2.

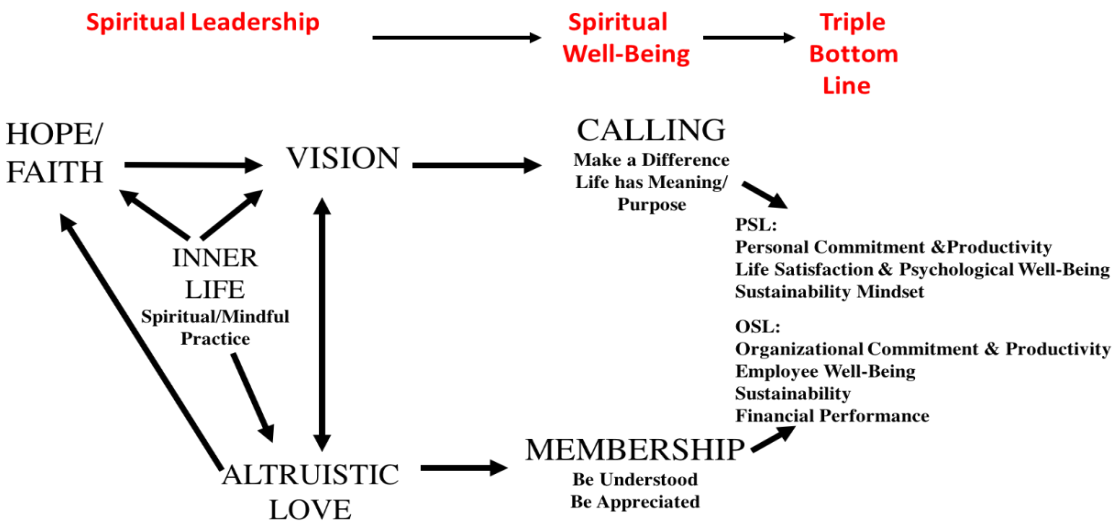

Figure 1. Cycle of spiritual leadership. *Note*. Reprinted from "Spiritual Leadership" by L. W. Fry, 2016, In A. Farazmand (ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, p. 4. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 2. Spiritual leadership theory model. *Note*. Reprinted from "Spiritual leadership as a model for Islamic leadership" by E. Egel & L. W. Fry, 2017, *Public Integrity*, *19*, p. 79. Reprinted with permission.

The spiritual leadership theory is a causal model that requires the following:

1. Forming a transcendent vision for workers to experience a sense of calling and meaning in their work to make a difference. Workers will become loyal and committed and will desire to stay in an organization that can satisfy their spiritual needs.
2. Establishing an organizational culture founded on morals of altruistic love that provides a sense of belonging and membership to both leaders and workers of an organization. This medium will motivate workers to improve productivity and help the organization succeed.
3. Fulfilling the aspect of life satisfaction that occurs when individuals feel that they have a sense of purpose and when they perceive their lives to be high in

value and productivity (Benefiel et al., 2014; Egel & Fry, 2017; Fry, 2016; Fry et al., 2017; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016, 2017)

The theory of spiritual leadership consists of traits that Fry suggested are needed to incorporate spirituality into the workplace (Egel & Fry, 2017; Fry et al., 2017; Mubasher et al., 2017). The theory implies that an individual's spiritual values influence patterns of behavior, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships (Fairholm & Gronau, 2015). The characteristics that make up the spiritual leadership theory model are meaning and calling, vision, membership, organizational commitment, altruism, faith and hope, life satisfaction, and inner life/mindfulness (Fry et al., 2017).

Hope and faith provide individuals with an image or sense of direction to accomplish their goals, which gives them the courage to face any challenge or adversity (Fachrunnisa et al., 2014; Fry et al., 2017). Vision refers to a clear picture that not only encourages hope and faith, but it also provides a direction of positive change and simplifies decision-making in an organization (Novikov, 2017). Altruistic love presents the foundation for creating an organization's vision and has personal outcomes that are important to an organization and its workers, such as joy, peace, high productivity, and organizational commitment (Mubasher et al., 2017). Spiritual well-being refers to how people make a difference in their work by serving others, which can lead to providing an individual with a sense of purpose or meaning in life (Lamis, Wilson, Tarantino, Lansford, & Kaslow, 2014; Fachrunnisa et al., 2014). The foundation of spiritual leadership is viewed as a spiritual practice that promotes hope/faith, vision, and altruistic love (Fry et al., 2017).

Spiritual leadership theory has been examined across diverse settings and cultures. The theory was designed so that it could be applied to both nonreligious and religious organizational settings (Benefiel et al., 2014; Egel & Fry, 2017). Spiritual leadership theory demonstrates how an individual can be engaged in work and simultaneously display high levels of positive health, organizational commitment, and proficiency (Maharana et al., 2014; Naidoo, 2014). Gotsis and Grimani (2016) explained that spiritual leadership gives employees the confidence to be who they are in the workplace and helps them to reach their maximum potential.

Research Application of Spiritual Leadership Theory

Previous research on the spiritual leadership theory has validated the authenticity of the theoretical model designed by Louis Fry (Benefiel et al., 2014; Egel & Fry, 2017; Mubasher et al., 2017). For example, Mubasher et al. (2017) conducted a review of the literature, which consisted of 62 research studies that have investigated the theory in various contexts. Findings revealed that there was a high consistency between the spiritual leadership traits of altruistic love, faith, and hope; however, spiritual well-being and vision were the least verified dimensions (Mubasher et al., 2017). Results also indicated a need for rigorous examination of the spiritual leadership model in public sector organizations, such as law enforcement, military, and universities (Mubasher et al., 2017).

To address a gap in the literature, the spiritual leadership theory has been tested in the field of public administration studies. The results of these studies implied that the model of spiritual leadership is a theory that enhances the spiritual well-being of groups

(Fairholm & Gronau, 2015; Latham, 2014; Mahakud, & Gangai, 2015; Novikov, 2017; Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013; Smith et al., 2014). For example, Novikov (2017) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to analyze the relevance of the spiritual leadership theory within an Army management program. The program's leader was interviewed to explore his experiences and views on using characteristics associated with the aforementioned theory. Through the process of thematic coding analysis, the findings indicated that the program manager depicted all of the qualities supported in Fry's theoretical model. In addition, Novikov reported that the success of the program and the employees' dedication to the company might correlate to the leader's constant demonstration of spiritual leadership traits.

Fry suggested that the improvement of job performance and achieving desired goals are critical tenets of the spiritual leadership theory (Samad, Reaburn, Davis, & Ahmed, 2015). Concerning this, there is a plethora of research (Benefiel et al., 2014; Egel & Fry, 2017; Fachrunnisa et al., 2014; Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Pawar, 2014; Wahid & Mohd Mustamil, 2017). For example, Fachrunnisa et al. (2014) used the spiritual leadership theory to investigate the impact spirituality has on job satisfaction and performance among government field workers. Findings signified that spirituality coupled with creativity is essential to increase job satisfaction and organizational performance in the workplace. Likewise, Wahid and Mohd Mustamil (2017) reported similar findings in a quantitative study, which the researchers examined the relationship between the spiritual leadership dimensions and production of a telecommunication company. The results suggested that businesses and organizations that implement

procedures based on spiritual leadership values have the potential to boost profitability and proficiency (Wahid & Mohd Mustamil, 2017).

However, the spiritual leadership theory is not without detractors; some researchers argued that the theoretical model:

1. lacks "technique" and a proper framework on how to integrate spirituality in the workplace,
2. lacks a "historical" and "political" perspective of spirituality, and
3. poorly attempts to speculate and "operationalize" spirituality at work from a "hypothetico-deductive" viewpoint. (Mabey, Conroy, Blakeley, & Marco, 2017, p. 757)

Hypothetico-deductive reasoning is a systematic method based on assumptions that are assessed for suitability or fallacy by validating whether or not the results align with the "observed data" (Ju & Choi, 2018, p. 3). Researchers have suggested that there should be more qualitative research studies conducted on Fry's model of spiritual leadership to overcome any shortfalls of the theory (Nicolae, Ion, & Nicolae, 2013; Novikov, 2017). Spiritual leadership theory was selected for this qualitative study because previous studies did not examine police officers' spiritual experiences inserted and evaluated under Fry's spiritual leadership theoretical model. Spiritual leadership theory was an appropriate framework for the study to explore how officers can create a meaningful vision through spiritual calling that may promote higher levels of psychological health, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance.

Defining Spirituality

Spirituality has been evolving rapidly in the research literature. However, there has been a great deal of confusion among researchers on the definition of spirituality because of the subjective nature of the term (Afful & Williams, 2015; Smith et al., 2015; Smith & Robinson, 2015; Yishuang, 2016). The origin of spirituality derives from the Latin expression "*spiritus*" that signifies "breath" or a "living thing" (Gupta & Singh, 2016, p. 392). Afful and Williams (2015) described spirituality from an "intrinsic-origin" viewpoint, which contends that the source of spirituality "originates from the inside of an individual" (p. 53). Whereas, the definition suggested by Bent-Goodley and Smith (2017) implied that spirituality is "what informs and shapes one's sense of self, purpose, and direction" (p. 95). However, Sperry (2016) defined the construct as "the direct experience of one's connection and unity with others and the world" (p. 222).

Scholars have referred to spirituality as a vehicle for individual communal identity and responsibilities. For example, Moore et al. (2016) indicated that "spirituality gives a person a sense that there is something greater than self and helps an individual understand that they are not the center of the universe, but rather inextricably connected to all other humans" (p. 258). Conversely, other researchers have discussed how spirituality is connected to religion as individuals may assess their faith or religious beliefs as the foundation of their spirituality (Rogers, & Wattis, 2015; Stein, Kolidas, & Moadel, 2015).

Literature concerning the two is apt to treat spirituality and religion as the same. A rationale for this association might lie in the notion that spirituality may involve "a

search for the sacred", which can be expressed in the form of religious practice or tradition (Elkonin et al., 2014, p. 120). Roof (2015) implied that spirituality is characterized as a "transcendence that reflects a power beyond the individual, incorporating God or a divine, holiness or the sacred, and which may also include prayer, meditation, reading scripture, or religious practices" (p. 587). Comparably, Kennedy Campbell and Siew Hwa (2014) defined spirituality as "a multifaceted construct concerned with finding a connection to something meaningful that transcends our ordinary lives" (p. 116).

In addition, the literature on spirituality now encompasses both personal perspective and the newer focus shift to employee well-being (Mahakud et al., 2015; Munda, 2014; Roof, 2015). Spirituality allows an individual to feel mentally connected in the workplace and instigates a cultural transformation beginning with "behavior, decision-making, and resource allocation" (Kennedy Campbell & Siew Hwa, 2014, p. 117). Munda (2014) explained that there is a change and awareness among workers in organizations as they discover ways to "find more meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in their work" (p. 1150). The term has been coined workplace spirituality, which describes the process of applying one's spirituality through labor (Baldacchino, 2017). Van der Walt and De Klerk (2014) defined workplace spirituality using Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) definition as "the recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (p. 381).

Spirituality and Religion

Some individuals may turn to their spiritual and religious beliefs for strength, comfort, or to make meaning out of stressful life events (Barnett, 2016; Johnson & Armour, 2016; Van Tongeren et al., 2018). Religion and spirituality are often linked in the research literature to reduce levels of mental illness, promote positive health, and tends to serve as a moderator for individuals who suffer from high levels of stress (Lassiter & Parsons, 2016; Nadal, Hardy, & Barry, 2018). For example, Nadal et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the roles of religion and spirituality among college students. Nadal et al. found that individuals who reported being "spiritual" and "religious" had healthier psychological results compared to those who self-identified with being "religious" and not "spiritual" (p. 30).

Although spirituality and religion create, for some, a Venn diagram of meaning in the literature, it is imperative to note that there are clear distinctions between the two terms (Correa & Sandage, 2018; Gupkin, 2016; Zsolnai, & Illes, 2017). Davis et al. (2017) defined religion as a belief system or practice that consists of a church covenant, where members are in agreeance of what is being worshiped. Religion is considered to be more confined than spirituality because it follows a more structured philosophy or belief system connected to either a Higher Power or God (Mthembu, Ahmed, Nkuna, & Yaca, 2015). Lassiter and Parsons (2016) stated that religion is described within the context of set restrictions, which there are specific rules and conditions established for "engagement with the sacred" (p. 462). The emotional reactions of hope, faith, purpose, meaning, or "search for the sacred" often takes place within a specialized custom, tradition, or

institution that encourages the "means for the search" (Post, Wade, & Cornish, 2014, p. 54). Dossey (2014) argued that religion should not be linked with spirituality because religion is a practice shared among "like-minded individuals" (p. 30).

While spirituality is believed to be more freeing than religion, as it is an individual belief that may or may not take place within the scope of an institutionalized religion, which is why some individuals identify with being spiritual and not religious (Correa & Sandage, 2018; Kidwai, Mancha, Brown, & Eaton, 2014; Mthembu et al., 2015; Post et al., 2014). Kennedy Campbell and Siew Hwa (2014) informed that spirituality does not require an association with a particular religion; instead, individual beliefs and morals serve as foundational markers. The feeling of spirituality in the human form is a personal experience that varies from one person to another (Baldacchino, 2017; Lassiter & Parsons, 2016).

There are a few alternatives in the literature on how to define spirituality in context. The three consistent words often used to describe spirituality are connectedness, meaning, and purpose. For instance, Nedelec, Richardson, and Silver (2017) cited Burkhardt and Solari-Twadell (2001) who defined spirituality as the "integration of meaning and purpose in life through connectedness with self, others, nature, or a power greater than oneself" (p. 343). However, religion and spirituality does not have to be viewed as separate entities or opposing belief systems (Joseph, Ainsworth, Mathis, Hooker, & Keller, 2017; Krentzman, 2017). Amato, Kayman, Lombardo, and Goldstein (2017) explained that religion could be expressed as a system for managing spirituality so that individuals can experience both together in any setting. Religion can also serve as a

facilitator for spiritual development among individuals (Zsolnai & Illes, 2017). While there are people that may experience spirituality in the context of their religion, it is essential to acknowledge that not all people do (David et al., 2017).

Spirituality, Stress Management, and Job Performance

Scholars and practitioners have suggested that spirituality is a moderator for diminishing stress and increasing job performance (Daniel, 2015; Iyer & Deshmukh, 2018; Shinde & Fleck, 2015; Paul & Saha, 2016; Tejeda, 2015). Spirituality helps individuals to control the adverse effect of perceived occupational stress (Maheshwari, 2015). This section is categorized in the following subsections: stress management and job performance.

Stress Management

Spirituality has been acknowledged in research as a means for individuals trying to manage stressful life events (Behera, & Dash, 2015; Daniel, 2015; Knabb & Vazquez, 2018; Malmin, 2013; Martis & Westhues, 2015; Mason, 2017; Mishra & Bisht, 2014; Shine & Fleck, 2015; Uwland-Sikkema, Visser, Westerhof, & Garssen, 2018). Other studies have explored in-depth the role of spirituality in dealing with symptoms of stress linked to mental health and physiological trauma (Currier, Holland, & Drescher, 2015; Glen, 2014; Hodge, Zidan, & Husain, 2015*;* Huang & Chen, 2015; Jun, Lee, & Bolin, 2015; Keefe, Brownstein-Evans, & Rouland Polmanteer, 2016; Reutter & Bigatti, 2014; Subica & Yamada, 2018). For example, Corry, Tracey, and Lewis (2015) conducted a qualitative study to explore the influence spirituality had on individuals experiencing stress and trauma, which the outcome resulted in developing a mental illness. The

findings of the interviews with 10 participants indicated that spirituality changed their negative thinking to positive ones and provided them with a reassuring outlook to handle life stressors. Similarly, Lal, Pathak, and Chaturvedi (2017) found that individuals who use spirituality to manage life problems are healthier and more equipped to control stress.

Spirituality is also, according to the existing literature, a vital stress intervention technique or practice to utilize in counseling and therapy sessions. Studies have indicated that spirituality is the key to effective counseling, specifically marking clients' preference for the integration of spiritual necessities into sessions (Bannister, Park, Taylor, & Bauerle, 2015; Currier, Holland, & Drescher, 2015; Currier, Kuhlman, & Smith, 2015; Currier, Pearce, Carroll, & Koenig, 2018; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016; Sherman, Harris, & Erbes, 2015; Subica & Yamada, 2018; Post et al., 2014). A strength of some of these studies is in the large sample sizes utilized to conduct the research. For example, Currier et al. (2018) used two independent samples that consisted of 1,124 military veterans to investigate their preference for including spirituality into treatment practices. The results indicated that 20% of the veterans preferred spirituality incorporated in their counseling sessions. However, one limitation of the study is that it did not provide reasons as to why some of the veterans supported integrated spiritual practices in counseling sessions while others did not. This weakness could be due to the circumstance that the researchers conducted online surveys to measure veterans' preferences. If the researchers had employed an open-ended questionnaire along with the survey, it might have elicited causal and effective responses from participants.

Researchers have suggested that spirituality could have an adverse impact on stress for individuals who are suffering from negative spiritual coping (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Smith-MacDonald et al., 2017). Negative spiritual coping can include factors, such as not knowing one's purpose in life, despair, resentment, spiritual breakdown, and feeling isolated or abandoned by God or Higher Power (Buser, Buser, & Rutt, 2017; Smith-MacDonald et al., 2017). For example, there was a case study performed that explored nursing students' perceptions of spirituality for coping with stressing demands and pressures of working in a hospital setting (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2014). Results indicated that the students suffered from negative spiritual coping, which they struggled to make sense of their role as a caregiver. One limitation of the study is that the students' spirituality and spiritual experiences were assessed using essays they had written recalling stressful events that took place in the hospital. Partially structured interviews with the participants for further examination might uncover greater insights into their spiritual accounts (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2014).

Previous studies have explored different types of spiritual methods and techniques that are effective in managing stress. The spiritual practices described in the literature deal with aspects connected to the mind and body, such as yoga, tai chi, martial arts, and mindfulness meditation *(*Kopacz & Connery, 2015; Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017; Woods-Giscombe & Gaylord, 2014). These spiritual practices and techniques make up what some researchers and practitioners have termed spiritual fitness *(*Kopacz & Connery, 2015; Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017*).* Spiritual fitness is an essential coping resource to help promote resilience, find meaning in distress, and improve health

outcomes for individuals who suffer from negative spiritual coping (Kopacz & Connery, 2015; Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017). An example of this can be found in the United States Army Soldier program, which incorporates spiritual fitness as part of their instruction and training curricula (Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017). The United States Army Soldier program was created to enhance spiritual development among Army soldiers who have experienced symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder from war deployment (Engelhard, Lommen, & Sijbrandij, 2015).

Job Performance

There have been numerous studies to investigate the impact of spirituality on employees' job performance. The results of these studies proposed that spirituality has considerable influence on workers because it strengthens their performance and engagement (Afsar & Rehman, 2015; Anandarajah & Roseman, 2014; Bickerton, Miner, Dowson, & Griffin, 2015; Choerudin, 2014; Fachrunnisa et al., 2014; Godwin, Neck, & D'Intino, 2016; Gupta; Kumar, 2015; Kumar & Kumar, 2014; Kumar, & Singh, 2014; Pradhan & Jena, 2016; Saini, 2017; Scherer, Allen, & Harp, 2016). In addition, researchers have asserted that organization that encourage spirituality report better employee outcomes, such as low job turnover rates, less conflict, enhance morale, and fewer absences (Gupta & Singh, 2016; Khemani & Srivastava, 2016).

Previous studies have addressed spiritual development as a strategic focus area for growth and improvement when it comes to evaluating an employee's job performance (Chawla, 2016). Chawla (2016) reported that is it constructive for companies to consider their employees' spiritual needs because this type of approach will produce thriving

workers and lead to more fulfilled consumers. Likewise, Smith and Futrell (2014) conducted a quantitative study to investigate spirituality in the context of work using a sample of 161 salespeople in the auto dealer industry. Smith and Futrell reported that increased levels of spirituality found within salespersons were significantly connected to higher levels of encouragement and sales performance. Whereas, Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal (2015) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to explore the influence of spirituality on workers' behavior, health, and performance in an employee wellness program. Findings indicated that spiritual wellness improved productivity among employees. A strength of this study is in the research methodology and data collection instrumentation used to elicit real-life experiences of the workers. Semistructured interviews revealed the participants' depth and breadth of their individual experiences using the program. One possible weakness of the study is that the sample consisted of South African workers. The findings may not apply to employees working in other countries due to the possibility of cultural variances.

Other studies have explored the connection between spirituality and job performance in diverse cultural settings. For example, Pong (2017) conducted a mix methods study to investigate the link between spiritual well-being and academic achievement among college students in Hong Kong. Pong found that spirituality was to some extent positively correlated with the success of students' academic performance. Whereas, Shinde and Fleck (2015) explored participants' perceptions of spirituality in the field of management. The findings illustrated that spirituality is an important resource for managers to adapt, because it is connected to high organizational performance.

Alternatively, Albuquerque, Cunha, Martins, and Sá (2014) conducted a quantitative experimental study using a sample of 276 health care workers to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and job performance. Albuquerque et al. found partial support that spirituality contributes to improved work performance among employees.

In contrast to research studies that indicated a positive relationship between spirituality and job performance, Kennedy Campbell and Siew Hwa (2014) did not find a connection between the two concepts in their quantitative study using a sample of 376 staff workers employed at a university. The area of job performance was assessed using specific key performance indicators, such as the number of books and journals produced by the academic staff. Findings contradicted previous research and demonstrated that spirituality did not necessarily have an impact on the high-performance scores among the academic faculty. The demographics of the college faculty such as gender, age, and ranking contributed to the high scoring of the performance markers.

Previous studies that have examined the relationship between spirituality and job performance were conducted from a predominately quantitative or measurable outlook (Albuquerque et al., 2014; Chawla, 2016; Kennedy Campbell & Siew Hwa, 2014; Smith & Futrell, 2014). Findings confirmed that there is an evident relationship between a high degree of spirituality and increase performance levels. However, the existing research revealed several gaps and shortcomings in demonstrating how practicing spirituality in the workplace leads to the enhancement of job performance. There is a need for more qualitative studies to fill in this research gap. Davis et al. (2016) explained that qualitative

approaches often capture the complexity and richness of a phenomenon or concept in a way that would not be possible with quantitative instruments.

Spirituality in Policing

Traditionally, chaplains provide police officers with needed spiritual care (Afful & Williams, 2015; Dunlop, 2017; Gouse, 2016; Joubert & Grobler, 2013; Van Wyk, & Terblanche, 2018). For instance, chaplains may offer counseling services to assist officers who are struggling with a crisis or stress-related issue (Gouse, 2016; Wasserman, Meiring, & Becker, 2018). One aspect of chaplains' duties is to coach police officers in the area of "stress management" (Gouse, 2016, p. 196). Police chaplains serve in the capacity of volunteers assigned to various law enforcement organizations (Dobrin, 2017; Dobrin & Wolf, 2016). Every law enforcement agency is not equipped with chaplains; therefore, it is not an option for all police officials. For example, there are more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide; however, approximately 5,000 of those agencies are using volunteer officers in some form (Cordner, 2017, p. 12; Dobrin & Wolf, 2016, pp. 221-222).

The professional psychological support services that are offered by police departments may not be useful to all officers, especially for individuals who lack awareness of how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health (Donnelly et al., 2015). Andersen, Papazoglou, Koskelainen, and Nyman (2015) surveyed Finnish police officers' understanding of the link between health, trauma, and stress. The results indicated that police officers lacked the training on how trauma is connected to mental health. Andersen et al. reported that most officers involved in the study were aware of the

impact police work had on their physicality. Findings also revealed that police officers are willing to learn and engage in stress-reduction methods for healing.

Researchers and practitioners have been trying to develop effective stress management interventions in the policing arena as well in the criminal justice field (Ekman, 2015; Patterson et al., 2014). Previous research emphasized that prevention techniques and intervention strategies that involve aspects of connectedness and mindfulness might facilitate with reducing stress, maintaining mental health and well-being, and building emotional resilience (Bluth & Blanton, 2014; Bush & Dodson, 2014; Kopacz & Connery, 2015; Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017). Researchers have found that police officers who participate in training focusing on mindful-based resiliency have reported a decrease in stress levels, better control over anger impulses, and low turnover rates (Christopher et al., 2015; Griffin & Sun, 2018). According to Arble, Lumley, Pole, Blessman, and Arnetz (2017), "greater mindfulness predicts less depression over the first year of service" (p. 2) for the police population.

Bush and Dodson (2014) suggested that the police profession should adopt a "peacemaking approach" that embrace spiritual elements, such as "connectedness, care, and mindfulness" (p. 197). Bush and Dodson noted that this type of approach would help improve police and community relations. Mindfulness refers to the process of being consciously attentive of stressful and unpleasant experiences without trying to shun away from them (Akin & Akin, 2016). Connectedness refers to a process or a state of mind that provides individuals with an active and cognizant bond to self and others (Lee, 2014). This process could be defined as what researchers have expressed as "spiritual

connectedness" that tends to be grounded in the larger framework of spirituality (Lee, 2014, pp. 302-303).

Spirituality has been regarded as a foundation for resiliency that promotes faith, strength, and meaning among police officers (Fyhn, Fjell, & Johnsen, 2016; Mountz, Capous-Desyllas, & Pourciau, 2018). Sofinet (2014) implied that solidarity creates the spirit within police officers that encourages collaboration and commitment. Much of police traditions and practices consist of spiritual values, such as "discipline, duty, loyalty, and patriotism" (Sofinet, 2014, p. 84). An integration of spirituality in policing correlates to a dramatic increase in the perception of comradery between officers and those they serve (Moran, 2017; Pandya, 2017). The idea of police forming relationships with people outside the organization is essential because researchers have suggested that there is a "disconnect between law enforcement officials and the communities" (Barthelemy et al., 2016, p. 413).

There has been mixed reviews of spirituality as it relates to implementing the construct in the workplace. Smith et al. (2015) addressed viewpoints from other researchers that claimed spirituality should not be used as a technique for the sole purpose of increasing greater productivity, commitment, or engagement among employees. Researchers have advised that the integration of spiritual methods or practices in this way would be impractical for organizations. Naz et al. (2014) contended that the professional support services available to police officers, such as support groups and meetings with clinical specialists, are considered more beneficial than spiritual healing methods. However, Papazoglou and Andersen (2014) argued that many police officers do

not seek mental health services out of "fear" of being stigmatized and facing negative reactions from their peers (p. 104).

In addition, Donnelly et al. (2015) surveyed the use of organizational support systems among police officers, specifically the employee assistance program (EAP). Police officers may elect to use EAP for issues related to stress, family conflict, and mental health (Donnelly et al., 2015). Donnelly et al. found that most officers were aware of the EAP offered by their department, but they admitted to either not using the service or not knowing enough information on how to gain access to the program. One possible limitation of the study is that a survey was used to measure police officers' awareness and usage of the EAP (Donnelly et al., 2015, p. 211-212). For this reason, the officers could not provide detailed answers to explain the lack of knowledge of their agency's EAP, or why some of them chose not to use the program as a resource.

Researchers have documented that spirituality should be incorporated into the workplace because it promotes a sense of awareness, responsibility, and dedication among employees (Zsolani & Illes, 2017). Zsolani and Illes (2017) cited other researchers who argued that an organization that lacks spirituality triggers "greed" and "exploitation" (p. 197). Fourie (2014) maintained that there is empirical evidence that spirituality in the workplace strengthens employees' sense of motivation and engagement. Overall, the police literature on spirituality has acknowledged the significance of the phenomenon as an effective resource strategy for helping police officers to deal with stress exposure (Dåderman, & Colli, 2014; Malmin, 2013; Pandya, 2017). The health and wellness of

police officers may be dependent upon the police organization addressing the spiritual needs of officers (Moran, 2017).

Police Academy Training, Stress Management, and Spirituality

Police academy training has been portrayed in the literature as a stressful environment (Patterson, 2016). Chu and Chang-Chi (2014) implied that the police academy is where recruits are first introduced to the organization and create their "professional socialization" (p. 324). Professional socialization is a formalized process whereby individuals learn and transmit the values, behavior, and beliefs of a particular profession and its culture (De Schrijver & Maesschalck, 2015; Seron, Silbey, Cech, & Rubineau, 2016). Typically, police recruits must pass a rigorous academy training and field training before being fully integrated into the police profession (Annell, Lindfors, & Sverke, 2015). The average length of police academy training is about 19 weeks long (Rossler & Suttmoeller, 2018, p. 109). Police cadets undergo an intensive training process that focuses on topics, such as firearms, investigations, physical tactics, communication skills, criminal and traffic law, fitness, mental development, ethics, and stress management (De Schrijver & Maesschalck, 2015; Hope, 2017; Moran, 2017; Patterson et al., 2014; Patterson, 2016; Rossler & Suttmoeller, 2018).

Previous studies have explored various coping strategies used among police officers for managing police stress (Balmer, Pooley, & Cohen, 2014; McCarthy & Lawrence, 2016; Patterson, 2016). Arble et al. (2017) reported that police officers often lack using adaptive coping strategies for dealing with police stress. For example, Patterson (2016) conducted an exploratory study that investigated coping behaviors

among police recruits in an academy training program over seven months. The study's findings indicated that 81 police cadets who completed the training used fewer coping strategies to manage stress. Some participants chose to use a problem-focused approach, which may not be the best coping style for managing stress in cases when the problem is not straightforward (Patterson, 2016). Similarly, Balmer et al. (2014) noted that police officers prefer using "problem-focused" approaches instead of using "emotion-focused" methods to handle their stress reactions (p. 271).

Police academies tend to differ in their training and instruction on stress management (Rossler & Suttmoeller, 2018). Police academy trainers spend the time of allocating approximately six hours on the topic of stress management; however, they require an average of 49 hours of instruction focusing on physical health and fitness (Moran, 2017, p. 357). According to DeNysschen, Cardina, Sobol, Zimmerman, and Gavronsky (2018), police academies put a great deal of emphasis on officers' being physically fit due to the nature that fitness has a tremendous influence on their "health, job performance, career longevity, and work safety" (p. 67). Given that, there is a need for more extensive stress management training for police officers (Blumberg et al., 2015; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Patterson et al., 2014; Ramey et al., 2017).

Researchers have addressed spirituality as a critical element for creating an overall sense of well-being and positivity among police officers (Charles et al., 2014; McDonald, 2015; Padhy, Chelli, & Padiri, 2015; Pandya, 2017). For this reason, police officers could benefit from spiritual training (Pandya, 2017) that should perhaps begin in the academy (Moran, 2017). A reason for this suggestion is previous studies addressed

attitudinal changes experienced among police recruits that take place from when they first enter the academy to after they leave the academy (Blumberg et al., 2015; McCarty & Lawrence, 2014; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Patterson, 2016; Rose & Unnithan, 2015). Findings suggested that police recruits reported higher levels of motivation, excitement, job satisfaction, and commitment to the profession before entering the academy, which tends to diminish throughout their training.

Recent research has revealed that police training has been unsuccessful in addressing the spiritual nature of police officers (Moran, 2017). Moore et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive search of police training curricula and discovered that there were no classes offered on spirituality. As a result, scholars have recommended that police educators and trainers should implement training programs that are designed to encourage the practice of spirituality for police officers (Moran, 2017). Researchers have implied that police training should focus on producing a "modern collaborative police force" that is equipped to handle the pressures of being a functioning police officer in today's society (Aguilar-Moya, Melero-Fuentes, Navarro-Molina, Aleixandre-Benavent, & Valderrama-Zurián, 2014, p. 698).

Police Stress and Spirituality

The innate stressors linked to police work may stem from organizational burdens, such as shift work, prolonged work hours, work overload, scarce budget resources, ineffective policies/procedures, and undesirable job experiences (Brown & Daus, 2016; Kim, Wells, Vardalis, Johnson, & Lim, 2016; Rajakaruna, Henry, & Fairman, 2017; Ramey et al., 2017; Robinson, MacCulloch, & Arentsen, 2014; Sayyad, Sayyed &

Sayyed, 2016; Webster, 2014). Previous studies have emphasized that there are gender differences reported between men and women police officers' exposure to occupational stress. For example, Leigh, Wills, and Schuldberg (2016) found that female officers reported substantially higher levels of stress compared to their male counterparts. Conversely, Violanti et al. (2016) reported slightly significant gender differences when examining the sources of stress among female and male police officers. Violanti et al. found that women officers experienced more stress from a superior's lack of encouragement than their male colleagues did.

Researchers have discussed the effects of policing on police officers' health and wellness (Andersen et al., 2015; Judith et al., 2015; Papazoglou & Anderson, 2014; Patterson et al., 2014; Tuttle et al. 2018; Tyagi & Dhar, 2014). Specifically, some authors have examined the relationship between police stress and police-community relations (Rotenberg, Harrison, Reeves, 2016). For example, Rotenberg et al. (2016) explored police officers' trust in the police organization and their perceptions of the public's trust in the police. Findings revealed that the officers perceived that citizens view them as untrustworthy. Results also indicated there was a significant relationship between police officers' trust in the organization, physical well-being, and workplace stress. Rotenberg et al. advised that it is crucial for police leadership to promote strategies to aid officers who have such little morale and trust in the public and police organization, because it may weaken their "psychological adjustment" (Rotenberg et al., 2016, p. 639).

The levels of stress reported by police are typically high, and it becomes a central concern for law enforcement agencies (Farr-Wharton et al., 2016). Researchers have

suggested that spirituality could help ease some of the stressors police officers face on a daily while performing tasks (Charles et al., 2014; Jacobs & Van Niekerk, 2017; Pandya, 2017; Trombka et al., 2018). Chopko et al. (2016) argued that scholars tend to promote spirituality for officers but neglect to offer recommendations for implementing the concept into police practices. Hesketh et al. (2015) recommended that organizations could promote the welfare of their employees by offering training in which workers can utilize the learned material in their daily routines and tasks.

Police Job Performance and Spirituality

Research has shown that a lack of managerial support has a significant influence on police officer's organizational commitment and job performance (Butorac, Orlovic, & Zebec, 2016; Can, Holt, & Hendy, 2016; Indrayanto, Burgess, Dayaram, 2014; Van Gelderen & Bik, 2016). Johnson (2015) found this to be evident in his study that investigated the effect of perceived organizational support and manager feedback on police officers' commitment to the profession. The results of the study indicated that manager encouragement has immense power on officers' loyalty and allegiance to the organization. Researchers have suggested that higher levels of commitment and increased levels of organizational job performance are correlated (Perez, Bromley, & Cochran, 2017).

However, Phillips (2016) argued that the blame for high-stress levels among officers has much to with police work being mundane, which the atmosphere can create unpleasant consequences for job performance leading to occupational stress. Researchers have implied that it is important for law enforcement leaders to recognize the stressors

embedded in the police organization and make an effort to lessen the effect it has on police job performance (Kuo, 2015; Molines et al., 2017). As a result, police commanders received guidance to implement useful policies and procedures that would improve organizational performance (Kula & Guler, 2014).

Spirituality has been a central focus of inquiry in the research literature for increasing job involvement (Indartono & Wulandari, 2014) and heightening job performance (Salehzadeh et al., 2015) among police officers. Hesketh (2014) stated that spirituality is a "lens" for individuals searching for a sense of "purpose" or "meaning" to feel more fulfilled in the workplace (p. 154). The attribute of "meaning" may be noteworthy for police officers because policing being considered a "calling" is eminent (Hesketh, 2014, pp. 157-158).

Police Culture and Spirituality

Police culture has been discussed in the literature as an atmosphere that has created stress for police officers (Chi-Fang Tsa, Angelique, Nolasco, & Vaughn, 2018). Most early studies on police culture described it as traditional, monolithic, and militaristic in structure usually rooted in collective norms and behaviors among officers (Agocs, Langan, & Sanders, 2015; Braithwaite & Gohar, 2014; Kula & Guler, 2014; Paoline & Gau, 2018; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Saskia Bayerl et al., 2014). Police cultural studies have indicated that cynicism, hostility, need to be in control, competitiveness, mistrust, and code of silence as the norms of police culture (Agocs et al., 2015; Karaffa et al., 2015). Vuorensyrjä (2014) stated, "Police organizations share some behavioral patterns

or cultural traits that explain the relatively strong presence of organizational stressors in these organizations" (p. 860).

Recent studies on police culture have suggested that diverse and sundry subcultures influence the greater whole within police agencies (Kula & Guler, 2014). Researchers have insinuated that the stress and insecurities of police culture create and inform these subcultures, which expresses itself as a defensive tactic for guarding police against outside threats (Chen, 2016). Maskaly and Donner (2015) implied that the police subculture creates solidarity among police officers that promotes the "us versus them mentality", which they are trained to view every person and situation as a potential risk (p. 217). Police officers are "socialized" into this subculture at the beginning of police academy training and during on the field training (Rose & Unnithan, 2015, p. 281).

The lack of spirituality in policing may be attributed to police culture (Moran, 2017). Bent-Goodley and Smith (2017) argued that law enforcement has not accepted or encouraged spirituality. According to Hesketh et al. (2014), many organizational leaders tend to undervalue the aspect of spirituality and overlook practical strategies that could be implemented to utilize the phenomenon in work settings. Smith et al. (2015) discussed a recommendation made by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary that there should be some level of consideration from law enforcement officials to address the spiritual nature of police officers without having to offend personal beliefs and tenets.

Police Officers' Perceptions of Spirituality

Police officers' perceptions of spirituality have been addressed in the literature. One of the earliest works documented is that of Adebayo, Akanmode, and Udegbe (2007)

who used a survey to investigate the impact of spirituality on police officers' perceived cynicism. The findings revealed that spirituality was only significant among female officers and not male officers. Smith and Charles (2010) conducted a systematic synthesis of two research studies that explored the significance of spirituality in police work. Implications of the results demonstrated that there should be more of a spiritual focus in police training.

Likewise, Charles et al. (2014) reported findings from two research studies that explored the role of spirituality in helping police officers to manage police stress. One of those studies was qualitative which the researcher interviewed 33 active police officers on their perceptions and experiences with the phenomenon. Results revealed that the officers who reported higher levels of perceived spirituality had lower levels of stress. In short, the literature pertaining to spirituality in policing indicated that spirituality improves health-related conditions, relieves stress, provides a liberal worldview, and increases job performance among police officers (Charles et al., 2014; Chopko et al., 2016; Hesketh et al., 2014; Joubert & Grobler, 2013; Kaiseler, Queiros, Passos, & Sousa, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Pandya, 2017).

There are a few recent studies that have examined the influence of spirituality on police officers' cognitive thought process. For example, Pandya (2017) conducted an experimental study using a comparison group to investigate the effect of spirituality on police officers' assessments of crime, criminals, and stress. The sample involved 1,698 officers employed in police departments from 15 different countries who were selected to participate in a spiritual training program. One group of officers received spiritual

program treatment, while the other group did not. Results indicated that police officers who participated in spiritual training had a more generous disposition towards crime and criminals and comparatively lower levels of occupational stress than the group that did not.

However, the existing research exploring spirituality from a police officer's perspective remains limited (Charles et al., 2014; Hesketh et al., 2014; Joubert & Grobler, 2013) and outdated (Feemster, 2007; Karakas, 2010; Smith & Charles, 2010; Smith, 2011). Implications for future research proposed that scholars should explore whether certain spiritual beliefs or practices used by police officers assist with stress relief (Charles et al., 2014; Chokpo et al., 2016). Moran (2017) recommended that further examination is needed to evaluate how spirituality resolves "peace, conflict resolution, and violence" (p. 360) for police officers. Chokpo et al. (2016) suggested that a mix-methods or qualitative approach could help disclose police officers' spiritual experiences. Using Fry's spiritual leadership theory in a qualitative phenomenological study, I focused on the research gap by applying new knowledge to the field of policing and police administration. It is worth noting that, to my knowledge, no study to date has attempted this specific examination.

Summary and Conclusions

Scholars and practitioners have indicated that spirituality is a reliable source for diminishing stress and improving job performance (Daniel, 2015; Iyer & Deshmukh, 2018; Shinde & Fleck, 2015; Tejeda, 2015. Previous research studies have supported the claim that higher levels of spirituality tend to improve health, reduce stress, build

resilience, and boost job performance among the police population (Charles et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Moran, 2017; Pandya, 2017). Despite these findings, spirituality appears to be neglected from police training curricula (Moore et al., 2016) and law enforcement practices (Bent-Goodley & Smith, 2017), which researchers have implied that police culture has much to do with the absence of spirituality in policing (Malmin, 2013; Moran, 2017).

The existing research exploring spirituality from a police officer's perspective remains limited (Charles et al., 2014; Hesketh et al., 2014; Joubert & Grobler, 2013) and outdated (Feemster, 2007; Karakas, 2010; Smith & Charles, 2010; Smith, 2011). The uniqueness of this current research study is that previous studies did not address police officers' perceptions of spirituality through the theoretical lens of Fry's spiritual leadership theory. Using this theoretical model as the foundation, I employed a phenomenological research design to investigate police officers' spiritual strategies for coping with police stressors and high job demands.

In Chapter 2, I included an introduction, literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, and literature review addressing the following topics: defining spirituality, religion and spirituality, the effect of spirituality on stress management and job performance, spirituality in policing, the existence of spirituality in police academy training, and an exploration of spirituality on police stress, police job performance, police culture, and what has been documented about police officers' perceptions of spirituality. Chapter 3, I include a description of the research design, the rationale for the chosen

research design, the role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and a summary.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this qualitative study, I explored six police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality for managing police occupational stress and job performance. This chapter presents the chosen methodology and procedures used to assist in understanding participants' spiritual experiences. I include a detailed description of the research design, the rationale for the chosen research design, the role of the researcher, the selection methods for the participants, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. I conclude with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

In this section, I present the research questions for this interpretative qualitative phenomenological study. I also discuss the research tradition and the rationale for the research design. This section is categorized in the following manner: research questions, research tradition rationale, and phenomenological research design rationale.

Research Questions

In this phenomenological study, there was one central research question: How does the perception of spirituality influence police officers' job performance and the way officers manage police occupational stress? Two subquestions were also addressed:

1. What are police officers' perceptions of incorporating spirituality into police academy training and standard training practices?
2. What are police officers' recommendations on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers?

In this study, spirituality was defined as "a state or experience that can provide individuals with direction or meaning, or provide feelings of understanding, support, inner wholeness or connectedness" (Salehzadeh et al., 2015, p. 348).

Research Tradition Rationale

For this study, I used a qualitative research tradition to explore the spiritual experiences and perceptions of police officers. A qualitative approach was selected because it provides "richness and depth of description" to understand the meaning behind a phenomenon (see Mthembu et al., 2015, p. 2181). A quantitative method was considered for this study; however, it would have been ineffective in answering the research questions. A quantitative method is an approach for testing hypotheses or theories to assess the cause-and-effect relationship between variables usually measured through the use of instruments and statistical tests (Christenson & Gutierrez, 2016; Davis et al., 2016). Therefore, a quantitative method design was not used for this study because it would have been difficult to explore police officers' perceptions, thoughts, and lived experiences using standardized instruments.

A mixed-methods approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative strategies of inquiry to obtain a more detailed understanding of the research topic (Davis et al., 2016; Zhang & Watanabe-Galloway, 2014). Hesse-Biber (2016) explained that a researcher may choose to conduct a mixed-methods study because of triangulation, which involves using more than one method to facilitate validation of the findings. I used a qualitative strategy of inquiry (e.g., interviewing) to explore the spiritual practices employed by police officers to manage police stress and improve job performance. I

could have also incorporated a quantitative strategy of inquiry (e.g., survey) to assess police officers' spiritual preferences and to employ statistical tests (e.g., linear regression) to determine whether there was a significant relationship between preferred spiritual practices, job stress, and job performance among police officers. However, a mixed-methods approach was not needed to answer the research questions.

Phenomenological Research Design Rationale

Five qualitative research methods were evaluated for this study: case study, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology (see Levitt et al., 2018). After a careful review of all five qualitative research designs, I selected the phenomenological design. Grossoehme (2014) stated the purpose of phenomenological research is searching for meaning regarding what an experience means to a group of people. I chose to use a phenomenological design to explore the essence of police officers' experiences regarding the use of spirituality to manage police occupational stress and job performance.

The other methods of qualitative inquiry were taken into consideration; however, I decided that the other four possible choices would have been less effective. In a narrative study, an individual tells stories to convey lived experiences (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015; Kruth, 2015). This approach would have involved too narrow a scope for one police officer. An ethnographic study is used to explore the way of life for a shared cultural group by either observing behavior or interviewing participants (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015). Although police officers represent a police culture (Kula & Guler, 2014),

spirituality is not an experience that is shared and practiced collectively among police officers in an isolated community.

A grounded theory approach is used to generate a new concept, idea, or theory based on the data gathered in the study (Wu & Beaunae, 2014). This approach might have worked for this study if the spiritual leadership theory had not adequately informed what these police officers encountered or experienced. The grounded theory approach was less applicable to this study because, unlike a phenomenological study, a grounded theory study does not address the meanings of lived experiences through the lens of the participants (see Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). Instead, grounded theory researchers seek to create a theory based on the data and "social process" participants go through to find a resolution for their primary concerns (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014, p. 839).

The final method of investigation that I considered for this study was a case study. A case study is the examination of one or more cases over a period of time that may include an event, an individual, or a series (Kruth, 2015). This method of investigation was not selected because the purpose of this study was not focused on what was happening over time, but what was occurring in the present moment as the result of the phenomenon being explored.

Role of the Researcher

The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data (Ritanti, Wiwin, Imalia Dewi, & Tantut, 2017; Trainor & Graue, 2014). Rodham, Fox, and Doran (2015) explained how qualitative researchers usually take on multiple roles in a study. I served as an observer-participant during the

interviewing phase of this study. I recruited participants and collected data from semistructured interviews. I also transcribed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted the interview data. Rossetto (2014) described qualitative researchers as "equal partners in an intersubjective storytelling experience…[who] participate in the joint construction of meaning" (p. 483) through informative dialogue.

In phenomenological studies, there are naturally occurring biases of the researcher that may present a threat to the study outcomes (Le, 2017). Therefore, qualitative researchers should conduct a study with a "fresh perspective" (Foster, Kornhaber, McGarry, Wood, & Edgar, 2017, p. 1253) and an objective lens (Le, 2017). Le (2017) suggested that specific biases need to be addressed by ensuring that the assumptions of the study are not directly associated with the topic being researched. For example, a potential presumption of this study was that the participants had a faith-based or religious belief system to experience spirituality or be spiritual. However, I assumed that an individual could possess an inherent capacity to be spiritual regardless of the absence or presence of a particular religious belief system or faith. Likewise, I engaged in the process of reflexivity, which is being self-aware of my predispositions of the phenomenon and how they could influence the study outcomes (see Gemignani, 2017). Reflexivity is defined "as the active acknowledgment by the researcher that his or her own actions and decisions will inevitably have an impact on the meaning and context of the experience under investigation" (Rodham et al., 2015, p. 62).

In addition, I engaged in bracketing by revealing and suspending my knowledge, preconceptions, beliefs, and experiences as they related to spirituality (see Sorsa,

Kiikkala, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2015). I documented in a reflective field journal my actions, thoughts, and assumptions throughout the entire data collection stage. Tuval-Mashiach (2017) explained how it is vital for qualitative researchers to practice transparency and promote reflexivity. For instance, I agree with researchers who have suggested that police officers would benefit from spiritual training, and the organization should incorporate spirituality into police practices (see Moran, 2017; Pandya, 2017). However, I did not voice, coerce, or exploit this view on participants during the interviews. The opinions, experiences, and views expressed by participants were respected and accurately reflected in the data collection and analysis process.

Methodology

The methods used to conduct my research are discussed in this section. I provide description of the research methods so that other researchers can duplicate the study. The methodology section is organized in the following subcategories: participant selection logic; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and data analysis plan.

Participant Selection Logic

I used a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit police officers who met the selection criteria for inclusion in the study. Purposeful or purposive sampling was used to identify participants "whose experiences or qualities of the phenomenon facilitate an understanding of the research question" (Foster et al., 2017, p. 1251). Purposeful sampling is the most common sampling approach used in qualitative research studies

(Foster et al., 2017; Palinkas et al., 2015). The eligibility selection criteria for participation in this study included the following:

1. active police personnel,
2. local police officer employed with a law enforcement agency in Virginia,
3. willing to share personal spiritual experiences, and
4. willing to provide consent for the interview to be audio recorded.

The recruitment of participants for this study posed a barrier because I was not a member of a law enforcement agency. Therefore, I partnered with public safety officers and chaplaincy programs in the area who had direct access to law enforcement officers. A letter in the form of an e-mail was sent to the public safety officers and chaplaincy programs informing them of the nature of the study and requesting assistance in recruiting police officers (see Appendix A). The recruitment arrangement involved asking the partner organizations to distribute research invitations in the form of a flyer on my behalf (see Appendix B). In addition, I posted the recruitment flyer on my social media Facebook account to recruit more potential participants. The interested participants who contacted me were sent a participant invitation letter with a set of screening questions to ensure they met the eligibility criteria (see Appendix C). The participants who met the selection criteria were e-mailed separately to move forward in the interview process.

Compared to quantitative research, there is no “power analysis” to calculate the sample size to determine the minimum number needed in a qualitative study (Fugard & Potts, 2015, p. 670). The sample size in qualitative studies is usually much smaller than

the ones used in quantitative research studies (Sailakumar & Naachimuthu, 2017). Fugard and Potts (2015) cited Sandelowski (1995), who suggested the sample size in qualitative research should be "small enough to manage the material and large enough to provide a new and richly textured understanding of experience" (p. 670). Beail and Williams (2104) suggested that inexperienced researchers use at least two to four participants in phenomenological research; while, Hagaman and Wutich (2017) advised that other researchers recommended as little as six to 10 participants for phenomenological studies.

For this phenomenological study, six participants were used to identify themes and trends from participants' spiritual descriptions and experiences. Beail and Williams (2014) indicated that the number of participants in interpretative phenomenological studies tends to differ, and the process of thematic analysis may even involve a smaller number of subjects. The idea of recruiting enough participants in a qualitative study is to attain data saturation, which is often used as a validation for choosing a specific sample size (Boddy, 2016). Data saturation is defined as the extent of collecting more data will not lead to any new findings of information that is needed to fully answer the research questions (Lowe, Norris, Farris, & Babbage, 2018). Upon completing all six interviews, I detected a significant amount of similarities in the police officers' responses with very little discovery of new data. Therefore, I determined data saturation was reached in the study with six participants when the data exhibited repeated patterns of information, and no new themes emerged (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). However, Beail and Williams (2014) addressed that saturation is not a valid attribute of an interpretative phenomenological

study because participants are not recruited to "represent" a group but rather to signify an experience (p. 90).

Instrumentation

According to Guest, Namey, Taylor, Eley, and McKenna (2017), interviews are considered an industrial source for collecting data to reach saturation in qualitative research studies. The data collection instrument and sources used for this phenomenological study consisted of a digital audio recorder, field notes, and an interview protocol. An audiotape recorder device was used to record all information expressed verbally during the interviews (see Ritanti et al., 2017). Field notes were utilized to document "nonverbal" or emotional cues displayed by participants while recalling their experiences (see Ritanti et al., 2017, p. 101). I created a researcher-developed interview questionnaire to conduct partially structured interviews with participants (see Appendix D).

I prepared an interview guide comprising of 13 open-ended questions to expand on the research questions for the study. The interview guide consisted of questions based on the purpose of the research study that was converted into a set number of items. Specifically, interview questions were derived from the central research question and two subquestions to encourage discovery of participants' perceptions of spirituality and their spiritual experiences. I designed the questionnaire to obtain information about police officers' practices of using spirituality for managing occupational stress and job performance. The interview guide was structured to inquire participants to engage in expository dialogue that reflected on their insights of integrating spirituality into police

training practices, and to provide recommendations for the police organization. Through open-ended questions, I also assessed the qualities of the spiritual leadership theoretical model so that participants could explicitly discuss the depth and scope of their experiences with using spirituality in the workplace.

An interview questionnaire using open-ended questions to conduct semistructured interviews with participants was a sufficient data collection instrumentation to address the research questions. Das, Angeli, Krumeich, and Van Schayck (2018) explained that this type of instrumentation allows an interviewer to engage in the technique of probing which allows participants the opportunity to yield any information that is important to them. Semistructured interviews contain a set of predetermined interview questions; however, it is structured in a way to allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions to explore the topic of interest further (Murphy, MacCarthy, McAllister & Gilbert, 2014). Alby and Fatigante (2014) suggested that interviewers who are looking to avoid potential interviewer bias tend to prefer using semiformal interviews.

The content validity of the researcher-developed instrument was established to ensure that the tool was a clear representation of the construct being explored. Content validity is defined as "the extent to which an instrument contains the relevant and important aspects of the concept it intends to measure" (Matza et al., 2016, p. 433). There are several ways to confirm content validity for a researcher-developed instrument through:

1. advice from experts knowledgeable in the field,

2. a thorough assessment of the research literature to find current sources of information relevant to the phenomenon or concept,
3. interviews with participants under investigation, and
4. coding and classification of the interview data. (Pandey & Chawla, 2016, p. 344)

A careful review of instruments in the research literature examining the concepts of spirituality and Fry's spiritual leadership theory were assessed for the development of the interview questionnaire. Partially structured interviews with participants were conducted using the researcher-developed interview questionnaire protocol. Pandey and Chawla (2016) explained that interviewing participants is a logical form for verifying content validity as the meetings with participants should address the research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I contacted public safety officers and chaplaincy programs who work for law enforcement agencies to ask for assistance in recruiting police officials. I asked the partner organizations to post my recruitment flyer on bulletins in their buildings and send a public announcement to officers regarding the study. In addition, I posted the recruitment flyer on my personal Facebook social media account in hopes to recruit additional participants. The information on my recruitment flyer consisted of details regarding the nature of the study, eligibility participation qualifications, study requirements, and my contact information. The individuals who contacted me were sent a participant invitation letter through email with a set of screening questions to ensure they met the selection criteria.

Next, participants were instructed to complete the screening questionnaire and return responses to me by email at their earliest convenience. I contacted participants who met the selection criteria separately through email to schedule an appointment to conduct one face-to-face interview. From the 10 police officers who were initially contacted, six officers participated in the study. I was still able to move forward with conducting the research study using six participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) cited researchers Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) who suggested that data saturation in qualitative studies might be attained with as few as six participants contingent upon the total number of subjects in the study. If the recruitment had resulted in too few participants, I would have considered incorporating a second sampling strategy, such as the snowballing technique. Snowball sampling is a strategy in which a researcher asks the originally selected participants to help recruit other potential subjects for the study (Alloh, Tait, & Taylor, 2018; Griffith, Morris, & Thakar, 2016).

Data were collected through partially structured face-to-face interviews with six officers. The interviews were used to explore "the various ways in which informants conduct their lives, process their thoughts, and interact with their environments and their peers" (see Nowak & Haynes, 2018, p. 430). The interviews took place in a private meeting room at a public library. Interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 45-60 minutes. The average length for interviews was 51 minutes collectively.

During the first part of the interview phase, I explained to participants the purpose of the study and rules of confidentiality were discussed. I asked each participant to read and sign a hard copy consent form. The consent form highlighted the nature of the study,

rights of participants to depart freely from the study at any time, assurance of privacy, and that no monetary compensation would be offered for participation in the study. Before the interviews began, I answered questions and addressed concerns that participants had while they read over the consent form. I provided participants with a copy of the consent form to keep for their records. Next, I proceeded to explain to participants what will take place throughout the interview.

After each interview concluded, I thanked the participants for their participation and cooperation, and then they were debriefed on the next steps. Participants were informed that if they happened to experience any discomfort while recalling events, they could seek free counseling by calling a human services treatment center in the area. I communicated to participants that the audio recordings would be transcribed immediately following the interview, and they will receive a copy of the transcription along with their audiotape recordings by email to review for accuracy and confirm the data (see Penman-Aguilar, Macaluso, Peacock, Snead, & Posner, 2014).

Data Analysis Plan

Meredith (2016) suggested that the use of transcripts in qualitative studies assists with the data analysis process. To analyze the interview data against the central research question and two subquestions, I converted the interview audio recordings into text format to assist with coding analysis. I transcribed all interview audio recordings using Microsoft Word processing software (see Ormsby, Dahlen, Ee, Keedle, & Smith, 2018).

After the transcription process, the data were imported into a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software called Quirkos. Quirkos is a system used to group

nodes and code data which permits interview data sets to be merged, organized, and classified (Ormsby et al., 2018). Quirkos allows research participants to be more involved in the data analysis process with the researcher (Fielding, 2016). Quirkos was used to assist in the thematic coding of data in conjunction with Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method of analysis. In a phenomenology study, "the meaning of a participant's life experience comprises the key thematic points in the findings" (Ritanti et al., 2017, p. 102).

Colaizzi's (1978) strategy of data analysis is often used in phenomenological studies to elicit deep understanding and form meanings from the text (Chuang, Yin, Hsu, & Shu, 2018). In this study, Colaizzi's analytical approach was applied to construct meanings and establish themes derived from participants' descriptions, experiences, and interpretations (see Chu, Park, & Kim, 2017). This data analysis method consists of the following steps:

1. Read and reread each transcript thoroughly to acquire an overall sense and feeling of the content (i.e., participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon).
2. Review each transcript carefully to extract significant statements relevant to the phenomenon being studied.
3. The extracted significant statements should be used to construct formulated meaning units.
4. The formulated meanings should be organized into a cluster of themes and categories.

5. The results should be integrated into an exhaustive and rich description of the phenomenon or lived experience.
6. The exhaustive description of the phenomenon should be presented as a clear and unambiguous statement of identification as possible.
7. Ask participants to validate the findings as a way to ensure that the researchers' descriptive results truly reflect the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. (Foster et al., 2017; Hong, Guo, & Chen, 2015; Kornhaber, Wilson, Abu-Qamar, & McLean, 2014; McLean et al., 2015; Tow & Hudson, 2016)

The manner of treatment of discrepant cases was considered in this study throughout the data analysis process. One aspect of this study was to explore the relevance of the spiritual leadership theory to uncover if the spiritual perceptions and experiences of police officers align with any of the characteristics associated with the theory. The purpose of doing this allowed me the ability to see if the findings from this study supported, confirmed, or contradicted any of the previous results in the literature that have used the model as a theoretical lens (see Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2018). During the data analysis process, I found no discrepant cases.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Researchers have discussed the importance of ensuring the trustworthiness or rigor of qualitative studies (Grossehme, 2014; Jeffers, 2014). The quality of a research study is "strengthen by its trustworthiness" (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 121). Hadi and Jose Closs (2016) indicated that the appropriate terms to use to judge the value of qualitative

research is credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability which are similar to the terms internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity used in quantitative studies. This section is organized in the following subcategories: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures.

Credibility

As an equivalent concept to internal validity, credibility pertains to the researcher's confidence in the truth of the research findings (Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, & Gonzalez, 2018; Moon, Blackman, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, & Adams, 2016). Several strategies can establish credibility; these include triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checks, peer review, and reflexivity (Amankwaa, 2016; Garside, 2014; Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). In this study, I established credibility through member checking, source triangulation, reflexivity, and prolonged engagement. Through member checking, the participants had the opportunity to review their interview audio recordings and transcripts for data validation. Researchers noted that a way to enrich a body of qualitative data is through the process of transcribing audio material and participants' review of the transcriptions (Alber, 2018; Nichols, 2015).

I also source triangulated the data by crosschecking the consistency of the information from one participant to another (see Papautsky, Crandall, Grome, & Greenberg, 2015). I practiced reflexivity or "researcher positionality" by revealing all biases and assumptions as it relates to spirituality and accepting the research results as it was presented (see Kohl & McCutcheon, 2015, p. 752). The dissertation committee for the study served as independent peer reviewers by verifying the entire process at every

research stage and provoking thought as both members are experts in the policing field. Morse (2015) stated that it is vital for researchers to be able to listen to different point of views but take full responsibility for the results and implications.

Transferability

As an equivalent concept to external validity, transferability pertains to generalizing the research findings so that it may be applied to other contexts, situations, or individuals (Dwyer & Chauveron, 2016; Weis & Willems, 2017). One strategy to achieve transferability in a research study is through thick descriptive data (Morse, 2015). In this phenomenological study, I ensured transferability by providing vibrant descriptions of the study's context, methods, participants, and their spiritual experiences with the phenomenon. However, Grossoehme (2014) stated that a phenomenological study is a duller tool of generalization. Grossoehme asserted that the expression of experiential validity within the study and through the aforementioned methodology maintains priority over establishing a cross contextual and multiethnic representative generalization.

Dependability

As an equivalent concept to reliability, dependability refers to how consistent would the results be if the study was repeated using similar methods (Chowdhury, 2015). Garside (2014) suggested that dependability could be promoted with an audit trail that documents all the processes that were performed for the study (e.g., methodology, data collection, data analysis, development of interpretation). A detailed methodological description will allow future researchers to replicate and analyze the findings of the study

(Chowdhury, 2015). In this phenomenological study, I established dependability by keeping a clear and thorough audit trail. The audit trail consisted of written notes that depicted my thought process during the research phase and how the data were interpreted using the audio files, interview field notes, and transcripts (see Jeffers, 2014). The audit trail was made available to the dissertation committee for peer review to ensure the adequacy of the research project (see Garside, 2014).

Confirmability

As an equivalent concept to objectivity, confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings are based on the actual experiences and preferences of the participants and not that of the researcher's predispositions (Moon et al., 2016). Some strategies used to establish confirmability are audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity (Amankwaa, 2016). I demonstrated confirmability through reflexivity in the form of a reflexive field journal based on Maxwell's (2005) Researcher Identity Memo (see Appendix F). The journal entailed reflecting on my initial biases and assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Moon et al. (2016) argued that such transparency does not eliminate bias; however, it demonstrates that the researcher is aware of how preconceived biases might potentially influence the research findings.

Ethical Procedures

I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research human research protections web-based training course to assist with the proper understanding of the rights and interests of the participants in this study (see Appendix E). Before engaging in the recruitment of participants and data collection, I submitted an

application to Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) seeking approval to conduct the study. The IRB is responsible under federal law to oversee any research study involving human subjects to ensure the ethical protection of research participants (Lynch, 2018). The IRB application was approved, and the approval number for the study is 10-12-18-0548789. After IRB approval to conduct the study was received, the data collection process stage began. The data collected presented no associated risks or harm to the human subjects participating in this study. However, if participants were to experience any harm from recalling stressful events and experiences, I provided a referral to a local counseling treatment service.

I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines thoroughly to uphold ethical standards by protecting the rights and interests of participants in this study. Before I began each interview, I asked participants to read and sign a consent form as an agreement to participate in the study. The consent form addressed that participation in this study was strictly voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw or depart from the study at any time without consequence. In the consent form, I also outlined how I would protect participants' rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Participants' identities were kept private, their personal information was not disclosed to other parties, and any identifying information obtained during interviews was removed from transcriptions (see Mondada, 2014). In addition, I assigned each participant with an alias code of "Officer" followed by letters from the alphabet to respect participants' privacy (e.g., Officer A and Officer B).

There were other procedures put into place to safeguard all confidential information that was obtained from the data collection process. I've kept all data and audio recordings stored on a USB flash drive and a back-up drive on my password protected laptop computer. The paper files of the interview transcriptions were all labeled using participants' alias codes. I have kept all transcripts, written notes, digital audio files, research journal, and demographic information secured and stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. All of the data will be locked up for five years per Walden University guidelines. During this period, I will be the only one to have access to these files. After five years, I will properly dispose of and destroy all data.

Summary

This chapter evaluated the research design, methodology, and procedures that were used for this qualitative research study. I described the methods for participant selection, data collection, and data analysis so that other researchers can duplicate the study. I conducted a phenomenological research design to explore police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality for managing occupational stress and job performance. I recruited participants for the study using a purposeful sampling strategy. Data were collected through in-depth semistructured interviews with six police officers from several police departments in Virginia.

Interview data were managed and analyzed through Quirkos in conjunction with Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method of analysis. I followed all ethical guidelines to protect the rights and interests of participants in the study. In Chapter 3, I included a detailed description of the research design, the rationale for the chosen

research design, the role of the researcher, selection methods for the participants, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and a summary. In Chapter 4, I include the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results, and a summary.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to provide insight into how police officers use spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. The data gathered from the in-depth semistructured interviews with six participants were used to answer the primary research question and two subquestions. The central research question for the study was the following: How does the perception of spirituality influence police officers' job performance and the way officers manage police occupational stress?

The two subquestions considered for the study were the following:

1. What are police officers' perceptions of incorporating spirituality into police academy training and standard training practices?
2. What are police officers' recommendations on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers?

Chapter 4 includes a description of the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Setting

The interviews took place from October 2018 through November 2018. Interviews were conducted at a public library and held in a private meeting room on the second floor. The door was kept locked and secured to prevent any distractions, noises, and interruptions. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experiences that may have altered the interpretation of the findings.

Demographics

There were initially 10 participants who were contacted to participate in the study. Of those 10 participants, six police officers participated in the study. Four police officers decided not to be involved in the study due to time constraints and scheduling. To protect the identities of research participants and confidentiality of the collected data, I assigned each participant with an alias code of "Officer" followed by a letter of the alphabet in chronological order. The police officers are from various police agencies and departments in the state of Virginia. The level of experience for officers ranged from 10 to 16 years. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographics and background information for the six participants in this study.

Table 1

Demographics and Background Information

Participants	Race/Sex	Police Rank	Department/Unit	Years of experience
Officer A	Hispanic Male	Sergeant	Operations	11
Officer B	White Female	Detective	Special Victims	10
Officer C	White Female	Sergeant	Internal Affairs	16
Officer D	White Male	Lieutenant	Operations	14
Officer E	Hispanic Male	Detective Supervisor	Auto Theft	16
Officer F	Black Male	Patrolman	School Resource	10

Data Collection

The data collection process for the study began after I received Walden's institutional review board approval to move forward to conduct my study. E-mails were sent to public safety officers and chaplaincy programs with various law enforcement agencies in the area requesting assistance for recruiting police officers for the study. I asked the partner organizations to post my recruitment flyer on bulletins in their buildings and send out a public announcement to police officers regarding my study. Also, I posted the recruitment flyer on my Facebook social media account to solicit additional participants for the study.

Within a week I received multiple requests through e-mail from police officers expressing interest in my study. Next, a schedule was established to conduct individual face-to-face interviews with those officers who met the selection criteria. I began collecting data toward the end of October and completed all interviews in the middle of November. I interviewed six police officials during that period.

Interviews were conducted at a public library in a private meeting space. The interviews started with participants reading and signing a consent form to participate in the study. Then, I collected demographic information from each participant and addressed all questions or concerns the officers had about participating in the study. All participants consented to the interview being audio recorded and were comfortable with me taking written notes during the interview session. I used my journal to record any nonverbal behavior and emotional cues displayed from participants as they recalled experiences, such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. Interviews

were recorded using the digital audio recorder application Pro Voice Recorder. I decided to use this voice recorder application because it automatically saves the audio files into .mp3 format and makes them readily accessible to upload onto a laptop computer for the data analysis process. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

I used a researcher-developed interview questionnaire guide to conduct the interviews (see Appendix D). The questions were intended to focus on topics related to participants' background as police officers with the purpose of putting their work and spiritual experiences into context. Questions were structured so that participants could talk freely and elaborate on their experiences. Follow-up probing questions were asked to ensure that I obtained the richest and most descriptive data possible. This technique allowed for the participants to disclose the meaning of their lived spiritual experiences in a way that was significant to them in their own words. Way, Tracy, and Kanak Zwier (2015) stated that probing questions often encourage participants "to reflect on, explain, and modify initial statements" (p. 723).

I assigned an alias code to each participant to maintain their confidentiality. Also, this code was used to help identify the participants' audio recordings and interview transcripts. After interviews were transcribed, I e-mailed participants a copy of their audiotaped recordings and transcripts to review for accuracy. Participants confirmed the accuracy of their transcripts and no corrections were made. Also, I invited participants to engage in open dialogue with me through e-mail, telephone, or a one-on-one meeting to provide additional insight and feedback on their experiences.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) methods of phenomenological data analysis. This data analysis method consists of the following 7 steps:

1. Read and reread each transcript thoroughly to acquire an overall sense and feeling of the content (i.e., participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon).
2. Review each transcript carefully to extract significant statements relevant to the phenomenon being studied.
3. The extracted significant statements should be used to construct formulated meaning units.
4. The formulated meanings should be organized into a cluster of themes and categories.
5. The results should be integrated into an exhaustive and rich description of the phenomenon or lived experience.
6. The exhaustive description of the phenomenon should be presented as a clear and unambiguous statement of identification as possible.
7. Ask participants of the study to verify the findings as a way to ensure that the researchers' descriptive results truly reflect the participants' experiences with the phenomenon (Foster et al., 2017; Hong et al., 2015; Kornhaber et al., 2014; McLean et al., 2015; Tow & Hudson, 2016).

After interviews were conducted, I listened to each audio recording several times to obtain a general sense of the material. I identified each participant's answers to the

central research question and two subquestions to gain familiarity with the overall content. During the audio listening session, I noticed some words and phrases that were used frequently by participants and I jotted those down in my journal. I used in vivo coding to draw attention to developing themes while listening to audio recordings. In vivo coding refers to the process of using "a word or short phrase from the actual language in the qualitative data" (Masso, McCarthy, & Kitsom, 2014, p. 1017).

Next, I transcribed the audio recording files into a Word document. The process of transcribing the interviews allowed me to hear and review participants' responses, which represented Step 1 of Colaizzi's method of data analysis. I read each transcript numerous times and highlighted significant statements and recurring words of the phenomenon from participants' experiences. This technique was the second step of Colaizzi's method of analysis, and it became instrumental in the process of creating themes from significant statements, meanings, and concepts. Then, I used Quirkos qualitative research software to organize and code the uploaded interview transcript text data. All of the highlighted data extracted from the journal field notes and interview transcripts that revealed meaningful statements, textual descriptions, and recurring phrases were used to formulate meaning groups and generate thematic categories (see Yambo et al., 2016).

I organized the cluster of themes into categories according to the subject matter and placed them into colored bubbles using Quirkos. This method represented Colaizzi's third and fourth steps of data analysis. Quotes and descriptive textual statements were taken from the interview transcripts and coded according to the central research question

and two subquestions. This process allowed me to integrate participants' experiences from their actual words into a rich description of the phenomenon (see Yambo et al., 2016). This step represented the fifth and sixth steps of Colaizzi's method of data analysis. Some of the themes and categories that emerged for the central research question were Through Faith and Prayer, Creates a Healthy Work-Life Balance, and Enhances Decision-Making. Some of the subthemes that developed for the two subquestions were Should be Welcomed; Improved Training Practices, Curriculum, and Instruction; and Educate Police on Spirituality.

The final step of Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological data analysis was to have the participants validate the findings and to incorporate any changes requested by participants in the final narrative of the results (see Yambo et al., 2016). After the results were analyzed, I provided participants with a comprehensive draft of the research findings through e-mail so that they could verify the data. Also, the officers were invited to submit their feedback and were given the opportunity to add, remove, or change their responses. I presented participants with their specific alias code so that they could identify their answers to the research questions. I validated the results of the study based on the feedback that I received from the six participants. There were no major adjustments made by any of the participants in the final description of the results. However, some participants did request to fix a word or arrange a couple of words in a sentence. Also, a few participants wanted to add more information and details to their responses. These minor corrections and additions did not result in altering the meaning of the phenomenon being explored.

The manner of treatment of discrepant cases was considered throughout the data analysis process. For example, one aspect of this study was to explore the relevance of the spiritual leadership theory to uncover if the spiritual perceptions and experiences of police officers align with any of the characteristics associated with the theory. During the data analysis process, I found no discrepant cases.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Birt, Scoot, Cavers, and Waters (2016) stated that qualitative researchers serve as the "data collector" and "data analyst," which poses a potential threat for "researcher bias" (p. 1802). Because of this imminent threat, qualitative researchers seek to determine if the quality of the research findings are rigor and credible (Johnson & Rasulova, 2017). Rapport, Clement, Doel, and Hutchings (2015) argued that it is important to dissect a research study to determine its authenticity, trustworthiness, and to generate practical results. I have guarded against an erosion of the aforementioned aspects of this research study with four preventative measures. They are as follows: the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (see Garside, 2014).

Credibility

Credibility refers to how confident the researcher is in the "truth of the findings" (Johnson & Rasulova, 2017, p. 266). I established credibility through member checking, triangulation, prolonged engagement, and reflexivity. For example, I engaged in performing source triangulation of the data by crosschecking the consistency of the information from one participant to another (see Papautsky et al., 2015). I compared the

participants' interviews with the findings in the literature as a way to increase the credibility of the study results (see Masso et al., 2014).

Furthermore, I performed member checking with participants by having them review their audiotape recordings and transcriptions to confirm the accuracy of their interview responses (see Birt et al., 2016). I participated in the process of prolonged engagement by offering participants a platform to have an open dialogue with me and provide any additional feedback during the entire data collection and analysis stage (see Abdolrahimi et al., 2018). Through reflexivity, I revealed all bias, assumptions, and personal experiences related to spirituality. Berger (2015) suggested that the process of engaging in reflexivity allows researchers to self-monitor the influences of their own biases as a way to increase the credibility of the research findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to applying the findings of the study to other similar situations, contexts, and individuals (Morse, 2015). I established transferability by providing pictorial and vivid data of the participants and their experiences. I directly quoted and provided vivid passages of text from the interview transcripts that consists of participants' actual responses in the demonstration of the research findings. This step of providing thick, rich descriptions of the participants and their spiritual experiences would allow readers to fully comprehend and compare the research findings with other studies (see Abdolrahimi et al., 2018).

Dependability

Dependability is a concept used to increase the reliability of qualitative research studies (Morse, 2015). I established dependability by keeping a clear and thorough audit trail. The audit trail consisted of written notes that depicted my thought process and how the data were interpreted using the audio files, interview notes, and transcripts (see Jeffers, 2014). I also provided a detailed methodological description of the exact processes used for data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. Chowdhury (2015) suggested providing a clear and thought out explanation of the methods employed for the study would allow researchers to duplicate the study using similar approaches.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the term objectivity that ensures the research findings are based on the actual experiences and preferences of the participants and not that of the researcher's predispositions (Johnson & Rasulova, 2017; Moon et al., 2016). Some strategies used to establish confirmability were audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity (see Amankwaa, 2016). I maintained confirmability throughout the entire research process by practicing neutrality when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. I interpreted the research findings based on the theoretical framework of this qualitative phenomenological study to verify the trustworthiness of the research results. I also demonstrated confirmability through reflexivity in the form of a reflexive journal based on Maxwell's (2005) Researcher Identity Memo (see Appendix F). The journal consisted of reflections on my initial biases, assumptions, and experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

Results

Based on the analyzed data, there were a total of 11 themes and six subthemes that emerged. A description of the themes along with supporting quotes from interview transcripts is provided in the next section to reflect the essence of police officers' spiritual experiences and perceptions. I organized this section in the following manner: central research question, subquestion one, and subquestion two.

Central Research Question

How does the perception of spirituality influence police officers' job performance and the way officers manage police occupational stress? Based on the analyzed data, six themes emerged. In addressing the central research question, all the participants were asked to describe their spirituality in-depth and give their perceptions on how being spiritual has helped to manage occupational stress and job performance. This subsection is organized by the six themes presented in the study. The themes are listed and displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Perceptions of Spirituality for Managing Stress and Job Performance

Themes	Total frequencies (N = 6)	% of frequencies
Through faith and prayer	5	83%
Being connected and helping others	3	50%
Creates a healthy work-life balance	5	83%
Work as a "calling"	6	100%
Enhances decision making	5	83%
Provides greater self-awareness	6	100%

Note. Several participants' responses fall under multiple themes and categories.

Theme 1: Through faith and prayer. Five out of six participants expressed that their perceived spirituality is founded through the context of their faith or 83% (see Table 2). The officers described how they often use their faith systems to help cope with the daily pressures of police work. Majority of the officers stated that they usually expressed their faith through the spiritual practice of prayer to assist with relaxation, resilience, maintaining optimism, finding comfort and strength in distress, survival, guidance, conflict resolution, and reducing feelings of fear and anxiety.

Participants noted that practicing spirituality provides them with a sense of peace and calmness, which leaning on their faith has allowed them to find perspective on stressors. Notably, some of the police officers expressed that time spent meditating and praying before shifts help to alleviate stress and perform better in their roles. Officer A shared:

> I think my spirituality, practicing my Christianity, and my prayer has helped me throughout the last few years, temper me quite a bit. Help me look at things on a broader perspective and calm me down. But for the most part, foundationally my

> spirituality is how I try to carry my life, not necessarily here at the job, but also outside of my uniform. You have to exercise your mind, and you have to exercise your body. (personal communication, November 2, 2018)

Likewise, Officer C stated that she practices spirituality through her Christian faith, which has helped her to face adversity and "cope with feelings of anxiety, depression, and hyper-vigilance." Officer C is a police sergeant who works in the Internal Affairs Unit of the police department. The participant explained that there was a time in her career where she had to go up against many people in the profession. Officer C proclaimed that she was so disillusioned by her fellow officers' dishonesty that she almost left the job. However, the officer stated that it was her spirituality-based faith and her husband that reminded her she could not give up or be forced out.

Similar to Officer A and Officer C, Officer F stated his faith through Christianity has given him the mindset to "live a lifestyle that is pleasing to God in every role, whether that be with friends, personal relationships, or work relationships." The officer revealed that he starts his day off with prayer before he goes on his shift, which he prays over his school, safety, well-being, and for his colleagues. Officer F expressed that his spirituality has changed the way he handles conflict, especially with his peers. He declared, "My spirituality has helped me and gave me the confidence to speak up, stand up, and be the calm one in certain situations with my fellow officers when emotions and tensions are high." Furthermore, Officer F shared that his spirituality has allowed him to deal with stressors better because it provides him with the understanding that random

things do not happen. The participant stated, “For the most part, it was supposed to happen for whatever reason or purpose.”

Officer D expressed that his spirituality, which is also established in his faith, has not only helped him to manage stress but it has been his source of survival in the profession. Officer D is a Lieutenant assigned to the Operations Division, where he goes out in the field to manage street-level supervisors. Officer D eagerly described his spiritual experiences:

> The things I’ve experienced in this job, I believe I’ve had a lot of grace and survival, and I would attribute it to spirituality more than just luck. So maybe from the agnostic perspective, it’s very different. But for me, I often seek prayer or have faith in the belief of what’s going to occur. In turn, I’ve often had positive outcomes or even in the negative outcomes that I’ve had, I’ve learned lessons that I thought were pretty timely and it happens so frequently that I don’t believe coincidence is the only answer. So for me, my spirituality gives me a way to relieve anxiety and to offload some of the stress that I do carry. I often seek emotional and spiritual support to get through the hard times. (personal communication, November 6, 2018)

However, Officer E shared that he practices his spirituality through his faith-based belief system as a protection technique to shield him from unseen and evil forces. Officer E is a detective supervisor who works in the auto theft unit of the police department. Officer E explained:

> At times when I become overwhelmed, my outlet is God. I go to church and make sure that I pray. Even during work, when I was working the streets or before I interview a suspect, at times, I would go to the bathroom and pray real fast. I pray for guidance, strength, and protection. Because I knew I was dealing with evil forces and dealing with stuff that not every average person could deal with on this level. I would pray and ask God to guide my hands and thoughts and use me as an instrument of justice. When I say instrument of justice, I do not mean just locking people up. It means serving others and being able to understand and see things. (personal communication, November 16, 2018)

Theme 2: Being connected and helping others. Adherence to a particular dogma or belief system is not a prerequisite for spirituality (David et al., 2017). Some individuals may use their spirituality as a way to connect to something greater or look beyond self, which may increase a sense of responsibility for a wider community (Moore et al., 2016). This notion was apparent in the responses provided by participants Officer B, Officer C, and Officer F. The theme, being connected and helping others, received three out of the six total participants' responses or 50% (see Table 2).

A few participants revealed that some stressors seem easier to manage in the workplace when they can connect with a group who can offer strength and perhaps even solutions. This statement is evident in Officer B's case who perceived her spirituality to be connected to the victims she helps; although, she had a difficult time trying to explain her spirituality. She stated, "My spirituality, it's like a subconscious thing because I do not think it comes naturally." Officer B is a police detective who investigates sex and

abuse crimes against adults and children. She passionately shared that she was raised Catholic; however, she does not self-identify with a particular faith or religious system. The officer stated that it is hard to believe in a higher power, or anything for that matter, when bad things happen to innocent people, especially children. Officer B explained:

> I was raised Catholic, but since being here, you know, it's made me pretty negative in that sense. I believe in God, but I don't go to church, and I don't practice any beliefs. I feel like I'm not very religious. So, I would say that I may be more spiritual. However, I don't know how to explain it, and I don't know the correct words to use. It is kind of along the lines of everything happens for a reason. I try to see the silver lining in everything, and I especially use it with my cases. It's hard to believe in anything positive when you see four-year-olds and five-year-olds being sexually abused all their lives. But, I try to see myself as like a "saving grace." It's hard, and I don't want that kind of attention, but that's how I try to talk myself through things. I guess like I try to tell myself like you are what they have. If there is a higher power or if there isn't a higher power, that higher power is putting you here to help them. I'm connected to them in that sense. (personal communication, October 25, 2018)

Comparably, Officer C disclosed:

> Spirituality for me recognizes that there's something much bigger and more important than me. I recognize that my sole purpose in life is to help others and that is my job. However, it doesn't mean to the point where I have nothing left to give because I'm depleted. I still have to take care of myself and the gifts God has

> given me. And also create barriers for those that will try to take advantage of that willingness to help others as well. (personal communication, November 9, 2018)

Similar to Officer B and C, Officer F disclosed that his spirituality has allowed him to understand that there's a level of excellence expected of him, and he has people watching and depending on him to do good by them. The participant described how his spirituality had created a level of compassion, in regards to how he deals with citizens of the community that he did not have instilled in him as a child. He was raised very hard, rigid, and strict with the belief if you broke the law then you suffer the consequences of what you do and there was no fine line. Officer F has been with the police force for 10 years and is currently serving as a school resource officer as his specialty assignment. The officer feels he was "purposefully" selected for this mentorship over the younger generation. Officer F revealed:

> My spirituality and faith helped me to speak on some things that I would not normally say in that atmosphere because I don't know how it would be accepted or if I will get reported. But it's like, no, I need to say what you need to hear to change your life. That's what led me to the student officer role because in my heart I want to stop crime. Crime starts primarily at the adolescence. I said to myself if I can get into these kids, then I can redirect the cost of their lives and the community before they have a chance to fall off track. (personal communication, November 16, 2018)

Theme 3: Creates a healthy work-life balance. More than half of the participants mentioned that their perceived spirituality helps them to create a healthy

work-life balance. This theme received five out of the total sample size or 83% (see Table 2). The participants shared that spirituality grants them a post-mortal perspective outside of the daily demands of their occupations. To that point, Officer A stated, "The most important thing is that spirituality has made me realize that there's more to life outside of this job." Similarly, Officer C explained:

> So, my spirituality allows me to open up, vent, and be friends with people outside of the profession. Also, I'm very big on fitness and working out to help me cope with feelings of anxiety, and what it does to the body because that kind of stress can really put you in a depressive mood. So, I'm really big on trying to factor in all of those areas of my life to try to keep some balance. And you have to balance it. Because this job will chew you up, spit you out, and won't even remember your name if you let it. (personal communication, November 9, 2018)

Participants believed it is necessary to be able to balance a police career and home life to sustain positive health and longevity in the profession. Both Officer A and Officer D explained that law enforcement is an occupation where personal identities become lost behind the badge. Officer A shared:

> Many officers put this first and don't realize that the organization cannot help you. What I mean by the organization, the organization is a thing. The organization is not a human, and the organization cannot feel for you. The organization is run by a group of people that have their own thing going on. Therefore, putting this first before everything else and even yourself is fatal. That's why you get people that stay in this profession, well past the time they're

> supposed to stay here, and they end up dying a couple of years later. When they retire or lose this, then they are in dire need of change meaning like when a person leaves this profession, they crash and burn. It's more to life than just coming here logging on, doing your job, go running and gunning then go home vegetated, and come back here. That's just not healthy. That doesn't mean I'm not going to work hard, but that means that I need to be connected spiritually and do other things outside of this that will help me grow. (personal communication, November 2, 2018)

Similar to the sentiments of Officer A, Officer D disclosed:

> Policing is one of those professions where people label themselves as if they are the officer, they're not a person that is a police officer, their officer such-and-such and they've bonded with that, but unfortunately here sort of unhealthy part. So for me, I have a very healthy focus on my home life. I personally focus on my family, my morals, my spiritual recharging so that I can be effective in my home life and effect that at work. (personal communication, November 6, 2018)

Officer B stated that she uses her spirituality as an outlet to lessen job stressors and home-life stresses. Officer B suggested that policing is a very demanding and dangerous lifestyle that may lead to police officers abusing alcohol and even drug substances. She noted that it is imperative for police officers to find something that they enjoy doing outside of work, but "don't go home and just sit and start drinking." Similar to Officer B, Officer E stressed how integral to his well-being it was that he learned, from his spirituality, to appreciate and value his life and time outside of the precinct. The

officer revealed that he took a part-time job that he loves at a movie theatre, because it provides him with the opportunity to see a different side of society where couples and families are happy rather than the destructive and toxic persons with whom he deals as an officer.

Theme 4: Work as a calling. Many of the officers felt that their lived spiritual experiences, personal values, and childhood upbringing lead them to this line of work in policing. The theme, work as a calling, received six out of the six total participants' responses or 100% (see Table 2). Participants wanted a career where they would be able to make a real difference. Collectively, participants believed that they were "called" to do this job, which ultimately heightens their sense of purpose, dedication to the profession, and makes it easier to cope when faced with job stressors. Fry's spiritual leadership theory focuses on the aspects of spiritual well-being and organizational commitment that occurs when individuals feel that they have a sense of purpose, calling, and belongingness (Fry et al., 2017). The wide range of participants' responses strengthened this assumption.

- I decided I wanted to be a police officer based upon as funny as it is, it started with Ninja Turtles. Also, one of my childhood friend's father was a police officer. He was a state trooper, and he would come by and spend time with the kids in the neighborhood. So, from that and other things, I knew I wanted to be a police officer. Basically, I was called to this job. (Officer A)

- My dad was a police officer. My stepdad was a police officer. My mom works here as an administrative assistant, so I think mainly my whole life this is what I was called to do. (Officer B)
- I got into this profession because I don't like bullies. I don't like to see people who take advantage of other people, so my passion always been crimes against persons. (Officer C)
- I thought about what could I do that would help people and make a difference. When you join the police department, you join with such altruism and excitement that you dedicate yourself to it. (Officer D)
- I wanted a job where I could make a difference, influence others, and that was going to challenge me. I like the little bit of danger plus something that was going to be physical that was going to ask a lot of me. (Officer E)
- My father was NYPD (New York Police Department), and he did that for seven or eight years. He was shot in his knee and forced to retire, so we moved here to Virginia. So, he helped me from the academy and even now. But, ultimately when I think about it mentally, I'm in this profession not randomly but "purposefully." This was a calling and a seed that was planted. (Officer F)

Theme 5: Enhances decision-making. Several participants noted that their perceived spirituality had influenced their decision-making abilities in the profession because it provides them with a moral compass to do what is right. The officers rationalized that because of their spiritual beliefs and values they can make informed

decisions in their roles, which ultimately improves their job performance. The theme, enhances decision-making, received five out of the six total sample size or 83% (see Table 2). The variety of participants' responses supported this theme.

- I try to obey the tenants you know and how I interpret God would want you to treat people is the way I go about treating people now. The other thing is, I do my best to think before I act. (Officer A)
- I think that's where my spirituality comes into play because there's plenty of opportunities in this profession where you can do things that are unethical, inappropriate, or illegal. So, if you don't have those moral guideposts or sense of victimization, then that can breed greed. (Officer C)
- Spirituality for me, I would say defines how much that belief in your deity influences your daily actions or your moral compass. If I'm in a bad spot to where I can't make those decisions consciously at work, and I need something to lift me up right then, ultimately at the end of my day, I will pray. I'm going to a ceremony this Friday for a situation, where I could have very easily shot and killed somebody. There were lives of the people that I have entrusted the care for, and I feared that the suspect would possibly start shooting at the residents. But, spiritually it hit me in the core of that I did not want to kill anybody. So, it guided me in that way. I had a feeling of calm. I was unstudied in my decision. When I saw my team approach the suspect and we didn't have the sage in the group, immediately, I knew that I must get it. Because if we

have a way to resolve a situation without killing someone that's the path I want to take. (Officer D)

- If I didn't have that spiritual connection, I don't know how I would have gotten through some of the things I've experienced while in this job. During my time as a police officer, there have been situations where my spirit has been tested and also my decision-making. But, a big thing that helps me with that is my spirituality and knowing that a lot of the times the attack and anger that I'm receiving is because of the uniform and not me personally. So, I have to be able to separate that and show that I'm better in those situations. Because, whatever my actions are when I'm in uniform or when I'm representing my fellow officers, because we are a family, whatever I do is going to reflect on others if I act a certain way. (Officer E)
- Spirituality has helped me to do things not only in the best way but most appropriate way, because it is righteous and it's the right thing to do. I try to see how I can change a situation beyond what we're just normally trained to do. I pray that the decision I make be the best decision that can come to my remembrance and the best action. And even when I don't know what I'm doing, it's just knowing that I have faith that I'm going to respond to rise to the occasion. Also, I'm willing to take correction. (Officer F)

Theme 6: **Provides greater self-awareness.** Majority of participants in this study are official precinct superiors with varying degrees of their respective spheres of influence and authority. Specifically, two of the participants are police sergeants, one

holds the title of lieutenant, and the other is a detective supervisor. The officers expressed that their spirituality, in many situations, has allowed them to self-reflect and be more aware of how their leadership abilities influence others, particularly their subordinates. Notably, the participants believed that having greater self-awareness builds character giving them the capacity to lead with a sense of purpose, authenticity, care, trust, and openness. Even the officers in the study, who do not hold a high-ranking position, described how spirituality had assisted them in stepping up as a leader, being more open-minded and understanding people better. The theme, provides greater self-awareness, received six out of the six total sample size or 100%. The wide range of participants' answers validated this theme.

- I don't jump to conclusions, and I try not to sweat the small stuff. One of the things that I had to do was I had to work on my temperament. It wasn't like I was a guy that yelled, I never yelled or anything like that, but I do know that communication, body language, and tone are very important. One of the most important for me is exercising my spirituality, staying faithful to the church, and continually enhancing that is how I keep it, and that helps me to lead and to govern a way that I believe I'm supposed to. (Officer A)
- I think what I try to do now is to give myself more knowledge and continue to be open-minded. But also use my outlets to talk about things, because I don't think anything should be kept inside. If something is stressing me out, talk about it. (Officer B)

- So I had to learn to, again, talk to folks, and using my spirituality has allowed me to remember that there is a lot of good in the world because the slice that I'm looking at most of the time skews my perception of the rest of the world. My lens can be very narrow sometimes, so my spirituality helps me to remember that I'm still human and I cannot fix everything and be everything. (Officer C)
- I try and return people back to altruism. I think that being a real human, and being authentic is important in policing as well. I have never feigned away to communicate with someone or to falsely empathize with someone's experience. I'll acknowledge their experience and listen through communication. I'll listen to it. I'll repeat it back to make sure that I heard it right and I'll even tell people to please correct me if I'm wrong. But this is what I'm understanding is the problem. And I try and preach those skills because I think it's the decency, kindness, and grace that is supported in my religious and spiritual beliefs are some of the keys to success. (Officer D)
- So, spirituality has helped me a lot, because when I'm dealing with someone who's in a crisis or what not, I will try to not only investigate or try to deal with what I see but also spiritually to try to feel what's going on with the person. (Officer E)
- My spirituality has helped me to be a leader. I don't look at people for what they are, black and white. But I realized, okay, there's a different color to things that I can observe. It doesn't mean they don't get the consequence of

their behavior. But now I can see things from a different level and perspective. (Officer F)

Subquestion 1

What are police officers' perceptions of incorporating spirituality into police academy training and standard training practices? Based on the analyzed data from Subquestion 1, there were two recurring themes and three subthemes that emerged. This subsection is organized by the following themes: Theme 1: Should be welcomed and Theme 2: Not be accepted. Themes and subthemes are listed and displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Police Officers' Perceptions of Spirituality in Police Training Practices

Themes	Total frequencies (N = 6)	Subthemes	Total frequencies (N = 6)
Should be welcomed	6	Present spirituality as an alternative coping mechanism strategy	5
Not be accepted	5	Separation of church and state	5
		Police culture	4

Note. Several participants' responses fall under multiple themes and categories.

Theme 1: Should be welcomed. All participants noted that spirituality should be welcomed as an aspect of police academy training and in-service training, although they were pessimistic that it would ever happen. This theme received six out of the six total sample size (see Table 3). However, some participants felt that spirituality should not be forced on police officers, because not everyone has a desire to be spiritual or religious.

This theme has one subtheme: present spirituality as an alternative coping mechanism strategy.

Subtheme 1: Present spirituality as an alternative coping mechanism strategy. More than half of the participants recommended that spirituality should be presented in police academy training and on the field service training as an optional or alternative coping mechanism strategy for police stressors. This subtheme received five out of the six total sample size (see Table 3). The wide range of participants' responses confirmed the theme should be welcomed and the subtheme present spirituality as an alternative coping mechanism strategy.

- Yeah, so my personal thought is spirituality should be welcomed. I'm not speaking for the organization, but a person that has been in government for a very long time. So, of course, anything can be taught, right? But, thinking about how to teach spirituality in the way I'm thinking about spirituality as far as something holistic, self-preservation, or coping mechanisms, absolutely, that should be taught in the academy. (Officer A)
- I went to a training, where the guy talked about police officers coping with stress and the way that police officers may choose to cope, alcohol obviously aggression. Like there's a lot of negative things that are used to cope with the things that we see and deal with on a regular. The psychologist that comes in here has talked to us about different coping mechanisms. I think she might have talked about spirituality, now that I think back on it. Spirituality is definitely something that should be welcomed, and the organization should

consider it because coping mechanisms are necessary for everyone. So, I think that would be a good thing. (Officer B)

- One thing I guess I left out with culturally in police work, we tend to cope a lot with awful things by laughing and joking. That's a huge coping mechanism, which can get us in trouble because there are cameras everywhere. However, it's not that police officers are joking about a dead body or whatever the case may be, but it's just a coping mechanism to kind of detach from it when you see it so often. So, I think personally, it's a great idea to incorporate spirituality into police training. Maybe they'll remember that at some point in their career when they're at rock bottom that at least I think if we're introducing spirituality in the academy, it could help with that. I'm just hesitant to be optimistic that it's a reality. (Officer C)
- I love it, and the reason being is that instead of reaching whatever religious tenets someone may or may not attached to their definition of spirituality, you're not doing that. But, you're offering it as an alternative by advocating for a healthy life outside of policing that needs to be done all around and abating that problem by having people maintain the healthy life that they had before they joined. (Officer D)
- I would love for that to happen. I do not know if that will ever happen. It's kind of sad that you have to be careful about talking about religion or spirituality because there are people that don't believe in God and you have to respect that. (Officer E)

- I think it would be great. So, my answer would be that the police department should incorporate spirituality into police training and even field training. I think right now our department is doing the best that they can in all phases of our training. But, this an aspect of training, which a squad leader or even mentor doing one-on-one street or field level training where there is a stressor or coping type thing can encourage if the officer has a faith, belief, or spiritual practice to help manage stress, health, and even mental health. However, it's going to be hard to get it in here and tell somebody to be spiritual if that's not their thing. (Officer F)

Theme 2: Not be accepted. While the participants shared that spirituality should be welcomed and incorporated into police training, they noted that generally spirituality would not be accepted in police practices. The officers described the process of integrating spirituality in police training as "unreal" and "challenging." Participants offered various reasons as to why spirituality will not be acknowledged in the police organization. This theme received five out of the six total sample size (see Table 3). This theme has two subthemes: separation of church and state, and police culture.

Subtheme 1: Separation of church and state. Majority of the participants believed a reason for the lack of acceptance for spirituality in policing is strictly "political," and goes back to the argument between separation of church and state. This subtheme received five out of the six total sample size (see Table 3). Participants provided their thoughts on the personal nature of spirituality and its frequent correlation to an individual's religious beliefs and faith. The wide-ranging of answers from the

participants' responses further strengthens the theme, not be accepted, and subtheme 1 separation of church and state.

- However, it won't be accepted either, so it won't be welcomed meaning there won't be a warm reception for spirituality. How does a government bring in spirituality? Spirituality is not very welcomed, because spirituality is like politics, right? People argue over it, and it's easier not to bring it in because it's ugly. I think from a human resources standpoint; it will be challenging to incorporate practicing spirituality or religion in any organization. (Officer A)
- I don't think it would be the majority welcomed. So, I'll probably say yeah, let's do it. But, maybe most other people wouldn't be on board. (Officer B)
- I think it's a great idea. But, I do see some people rejecting it and probably be offended by the thought of it. There is very much a separation of church and state, and they see spirituality as church and state versus spiritually doesn't always mean church. Spirituality means so much more and a lot of different things for so many people. (Officer C)
- Integrating spirituality in policing would be unreal, and it would be difficult. I think that there are implementation processes and if maybe you label it with religion, as I do, it's challenging. I think it goes back to the separation of church and state. But, unfortunately, because we're government, I don't see them connecting religion with government. (Officer D)
- But, I don't know how politically correct integrating spirituality into police training would be, which is very unfortunate. (Officer E)

- I don't really see any avenues of spirituality being generally accepted in police work because it's very political. It's at a point where we don't want to infringe, and we don't want to deter, but we also don't want to necessarily encourage. So, I guess it's the organization's way of being unbiased. (Officer F)

Subtheme 2: Police culture. A few participants revealed the police culture was an additional reason spirituality would not be accepted into police training. This subtheme received four out of the six total sample size (see Table 3). Participants shared that police culture consists of traditional individuals who tend to be resistant to change. Participants expressed that implementing spirituality into police training practices would have to start with the "higher ups" and executives. Officer E stated, "That's when you have leaders and formal leaders who should identify what needs to happen." Other participants shared:

- Lack of spirituality is not just a police culture thing; it's a society thing as well. However, that's going to be something that people who are well above us are going to have to decide. Those who are at the executive level and things like that. (Officer A)
- Police work as a whole and the culture is very closed-minded. There's a lot of new age police officers and a lot of old school police officers. I think that we're still struggling with changing the way that the police culture is. I mean there's a lot of old disgruntled police officers and, unfortunately, they're teaching the younger ones. I think over time, if it's implemented, it will grow

and it will be more of a common thing for police officers to use spirituality. I just think it'll take a while and that's just the way it is. (Officer B)

- There are times where you'll see that "us versus them" mentality and that's cynicism. We typically see it in about the seven-year mark. Also, because you want to fit in you will get sucked into the culture, and if you get with the wrong person or mentality, it can create a dysfunctional unit on the mindset of our mission. We see the effects of it physically, spiritually, and emotionally. I think it's really going to depend on who we have as a chief and our executives. (Officer C)

Subquestion 2

What are police officers' recommendations on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers? Based on the analyzed data, there were three themes and three subthemes that emerged. This subsection is organized as follows: Theme 1: Improve training practices, curriculum, and instruction; Theme 2: Offer more immediate spiritual support services; and Theme 3: Nothing. Themes and subthemes are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Police Officers' Recommendations for Police Organization

Themes	Total frequencies (N = 6)	Subthemes	Total frequencies (N = 6)
Improve training practices, curriculum, and instruction	3	Educate police on spirituality	3
Offer more immediate spiritual support services	5	Employee health and wellness units	1
		Online wellness resources	1
Nothing	1		

Note. Several participants' responses fall under multiple themes and categories.

Theme 1: Improve training practices, curriculum, and instruction. Several participants recommended that the police organization could utilize more spiritual values to modify organizational training practices, curriculum, and instruction. The theme received three out of the six total sample size (see Table 4). This theme had one subtheme: educate police on spirituality.

Subtheme 1: Educate police on spirituality. A few participants felt that most police officers are quick to dismiss spirituality, because they lack adequate knowledge and understanding of the term. The subtheme received three out of the total six total sample size (see Table 4). The wide-ranging of answers from the participants' responses supported the theme and subtheme.

- First thing is to identify and the second thing is we're going to have to get quite a bit of education and bring outside people in here**.** We need to have an

open conversation about spirituality. I think we can start it and we can spearhead it in here with some of the people who are educated and have some sense of what they think is going on. We have to recognize that something is lacking in our organization. (Officer A)

- I think in the same sense if we don't understand what spirituality can do or what it means, then it's just we're naive to it. I think learning more about it would probably be helpful. (Officer B)
- We are not endorsing a specific religion, but we are giving them those resources to choose because nothing and nobody's a cookie cutter. We're all different and what somebody else's needs are may be entirely different from mine. So, I think if we do it from a holistic approach in training and curriculum to include health and wellness with a nutrition component, finance component, and spirituality component. Also, we need to do a better job of inserting more spirituality at the beginning of the academy following them in field training as well. That it's not just about their neighborhood project, and you know how they're policing that neighborhood, but also stepping them back into the reality of support systems and so forth, and then educating and empowering our field training officers with that. (Officer C)
- If it is preached in the academy about spirituality saying, whatever your spiritual values are you need to hold on to it, it is your core. However, we train officers to view people differently, because when you go through the police academy for six months, one of the side effects is that you're always

subject to ambush. The message is that there are people that are out there to kill you, and so one bad mistake can be the end of life, so there's a lot of paranoia. There is no emotional coaching support in police training to refresh officers that the outside world exists on the positive, which is why I do think that the need for spirituality would be crucial. (Officer D)

- It's almost like that's how you're trained; you're always looking for things that are out of place to protect yourself. In the academy, they teach you not to show emotions, because emotions could get you hurt and be viewed as a sign of weakness. However, it is important that officers are trained to be mentally and spiritually strong. (Officer E)

Theme 2: Offer more immediate spiritual support services. Many officers recommended that the police organization should offer more immediate assistance and spiritual support services for law enforcement officers. Officer E stated, "I don't think we have any spiritual support services in place." This theme received five out of the six total sample size (see Table 4). Several of the participants admitted that their respective departments offered counseling through police chaplains; however, it is a volunteer position, and they are not always available on site.

In most cases, the chaplains are on call for the citizens instead of the officers. Officer A noted:

Chaplains are not full-time positions, because chaplains are volunteers. Our chaplains go out to calls and service the people who are in need, now as far as

> officers using chaplains, I do not know. I never had an officer tell me that they needed to see a chaplain. (personal communication, November 2, 2018)

Similar to Officer A, Officer B explained, "They're not 24/7 and it's not looked at as they're here for us, it's looked at as they're here for the citizens when we respond to calls for service." The theme, offer more immediate spiritual support services, has two subthemes: introduce employee health and wellness units, and online wellness resources.

Participants described how officers are provided with the options of an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) and peer support groups. Officer C noted, "We have some things in place like EAP, peer support, and peer support counselors." EAP is known as police officers' official support system for stress or day-to-day issues. The EAP is offered through the officers' insurance, which they are allowed "five free sessions per issue." The second option is the peer support group that is set up through the organization, which an officer can speak about their issues with a peer one-on-one. Officer A shared:

> Yeah, so our official support system for stress or you know day-to-day issues is something called EAP (Employee Assistance Program). The program is beneficial to officers, and it is for the most part free. The reason why I say, for the most part, is because it's through your insurance and your insurance allows you five sessions per issue. So, one issue could be stress; another issue could be depression or whatever the case may be; they will allow you five sessions per issue. There's also something called a peer support group you can go to and basically set that up through the organization, and it would be someone you can talk to mostly peer-

> on-peer. However, that is seldom used, and the EAP is more so used than peer support. (personal communication, November 2, 2018)

Similar to Officer A and Officer C, Officer D described:

> So, we have an employee assistance program where if you're in crisis, just having a bad time, or heading toward crisis, there is counseling services and a formal psychologist that's offered by Humana. However, I think you have up to five sessions, where you do not have to pay, and so those are confidential not shared with the command. This is something that the employee can elect to attend. Additionally, we have something called the Peer Support Group. (personal communication, November 9, 2018)

However, most of the participants revealed that their department's immediate spiritual support assistance program is deplorably deficient. Some officers explained how EAP and peer support counselors are often overbooked, and that there is no such thing as a "right now remedy" in the police organization. In other words, these resources are ineffective for a majority of officers' needs. For example, Officer A shared:

> So, I just scheduled something with EAP, and I'm not knocking EAP, EAP is good, but the person is so booked. So, there are multiple people you can go to, and you can pick anybody you want. The person I go to is female. I made that appointment last week, and her earliest she could see me was on the 30th of November. So, if this were a significant crisis, I would be in trouble. (personal communication, November 2, 2018)

Subtheme 1: Employee health and wellness units. One participant felt that although EAP and peer support counselors are great resource tools, they tend to neglect the spiritual wellness component. Therefore, the officer recommended that the police organization should provide more awareness to their workers through employee health and wellness units that encourage spiritual practices for reducing workplace stress, which ultimately could improve officers' job performance. This subtheme received one out of the six total sample size (see Table 4). The officer provided her recommendation on how law enforcement agencies should go about developing these employee health and wellness units. The participant revealed that her department is working on a task force to get this established. Officer C explained:

> So, we are trying to figure out right now how we can provide more support to police officers. I think if we do it from a holistic approach where it's not just spirituality, but it's the fitness, it's the nutrition, and it's the behavioral talk support therapy as needed, all of those under health, wellness, and resiliency type of unit and get a case manager assigned. For example, if officers are dealing with something traumatic and heading down a bad path before their work performance suffers, I'm going to send them to this unit for the next two weeks, then follow up and offer additional resources. (personal communication, November 9, 2018)

Subtheme 2: Online wellness resources. One participant suggested that the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers by creating online wellness resources that encompass spirituality. This subtheme received one out of the six total sample size (see Table 4). The officer explained how her department is spearheading an

employee website where officers can discuss their concerns related to mental health, wellness, and nutrition. However, Officer B suggested that the website should also feature aspects of spiritual wellness. Officer B shared:

> We have a captain that's trying to get a website kicked off for just police that will have the employee assistance program on it, which would be if you need a counselor or a therapist. That goes along with a lot of things like nutrition and wellness. However, I think that the spirituality component would fit in well with it because I'm sure there are people in the department that would want or need something like that. So, I think that would be helpful. (personal communication, October 25, 2018)

Theme 3: Nothing. While, most participants recommended that the police organization should provide more spiritual support services for police officers; interestingly, one participant did not share this sentiment. Officer F stated he could, at no cost to him, just as easily provide the same care for himself that is available through the department. This theme received one of the six total sample size (see Table 4). Officer F shared:

> We got a chaplain. They have other EAP resources if you feel stressed or whatever. I'm sure they offer it, but I've never needed them. I do not think it's the police organization's job to meet my spiritual needs. They do not stop me from practicing my spirituality or how I practice it. I got just enough time in a day to take five minutes and pull out my devotional to get that encouragement and reinforcement. So, if an officer wants to think that the department has to do more

for them, then I have to ask them, what are you doing for yourself? (personal communication, November 16, 2018)

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore six active police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality to manage police occupational stress and job performance. The central research question and two subquestions guided the study. Through semistructured interviews and Colaizzi's (1978) methods of phenomenological data analysis, 11 themes and six subthemes emerged in addressing the research questions.

Findings related to the central research question indicated that participants expressed that meditating and praying before shifts help to alleviate stress. Participants disclosed that job stressors are easier to manage in the workplace when they can connect and help the citizens of their communities. In addition, the officers stated that it is essential to achieve a healthy balance between police work and home life to maintain positive well-being and longevity in the profession. Participants rationalized that because of their spiritual values they can make informed decisions in their roles, which ultimately enhances their job performance. Findings also indicated that the officers expressed that their spirituality, in many situations, has allowed them to self-reflect and be more aware of how their leadership abilities influence others. Results were consistent with the spiritual leadership theory. Participants perceived police work as a calling, and knowing that heightened their sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Findings related to Subquestion 1 revealed that the participants felt spirituality should be welcomed in police training practices. Participants suggested that spirituality should be presented as an alternative coping mechanism strategy for stress management in police academy training and continuing into field training. However, participants expressed implementing spirituality into police training would generally not be accepted in the organization due to factors, including individuals often equating spirituality to religion, separation of church and state, and the current structure of police culture.

Results related to Subquestion 2 indicated that participants recommended that the police organization should modify organizational training practices, curriculum, and instruction to incorporate spiritual values. Participants proposed that the organization should start by educating the police on spirituality. Participants expressed that police officers tend to reject the idea of spirituality because they lack knowledge and understanding of the term. Findings related to Subquestion 2 also revealed that participants advised that the police organization should offer more immediate support services that embrace the spiritual dimension by developing employee health and wellness units and creating online wellness resources. However, one participant inferred that the police organization is not responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of officers. In Chapter 4, I covered the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results, and a summary. In Chapter 5, I discuss the interpretation of the research findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, implications for practice and social change, and concluding observations that capture the key essence of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this phenomenological study, I explored six police officers' perceptions regarding the use of spirituality to manage occupational stress and job performance. I collected data through in-depth semistructured interviews with six participants. Previous researchers had examined the influence of spirituality on police stress, but few used a qualitative approach. This deficiency provided a gap for further research. My research focused on how police officers view, understand, and practice the phenomenon of spirituality. Also, no study to date had addressed police officers' perceptions of spirituality through the lens of Fry's spiritual leadership theory.

The study was designed to answer one central question and two subquestions. Using Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological data analysis, I concluded that 11 themes and six subthemes emerged from the analyzed data. Findings related to the central research question indicated that meditating and praying before and during shifts helped participants alleviate job stressors and perform better in their roles. Specifically, the officers disclosed that their perceived spirituality enabled them to cope with adversity, enhance decision-making, create a healthy work-life balance, and provide greater self-awareness. Findings related to Subquestion 1 indicated that participants felt that spirituality should be welcomed and integrated into police training practices. Results related to Subquestion 2 indicated the need for more immediate spiritual support services in police departments, improved training curricula and instruction at the police academy and continuing into field training, education on the spiritual dimension, information on employee health and wellness units, and online wellness resources that embrace the

spiritual human aspect of police officers. Findings related to Subquestion 2 also revealed that one participant suggested that the police organization should not be held accountable for meeting the spiritual needs of officers.

Findings were consistent with the spiritual leadership theory. Participants perceived police work as a calling, and knowing that heightened their sense of purpose and meaning in life. This chapter provides viewpoints on police officers' lived spiritual experiences. I also discuss the interpretation of the research findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications for practice and social change, and concluding observations.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this interpretative phenomenological study, I sought to uncover the lived spiritual experiences of six active police officers and explore the phenomenon of spirituality through the lens of participants. The results of the study were interpreted using the peer-reviewed literature and Fry's spiritual leadership theory. The study was designed to answer one central research question and two subquestions. This section is organized in the following categories: central research question, Subquestion 1, and Subquestion 2.

Central Research Question

How does the perception of spirituality influence police officers' job performance and the way officers manage police occupational stress? Findings from the central research question are consistent with what was found in the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. Participants in the current study shared that they practice

spirituality through their faith-based systems in the context of religion. In the literature, researchers found that individuals tend to assess their faith as the foundation of their spirituality, which is often linked to religion (Elkonin et al., 2014; Rogers & Wattis, 2015; Roof, 2015; Stein et al., 2015). Also, participants shared that they often use the spiritual practices of prayer and meditation to assist with finding comfort and strength in distress, peace, conflict resolution, survival, maintaining positive health, reducing feelings of fear and anxiety, depressive moods, and decreasing levels of stress. As explained in Chapter 2, researchers reported that spiritual and religious practices facilitate lower levels of mental illnesses, increase levels of health and psychological well-being, and serve as a moderator for individuals who suffer from high levels of stress (Lassiter & Parsons, 2016; Nadal et al., 2018).

A few participants shared that their perceived spirituality is bigger than religion; it is about being connected to something more superior than self, which increases a sense of purpose, meaning, and accountability. Davis et al. (2017) suggested that an individual does not have to experience spirituality in the context of religion. Likewise, Moore et al. (2016) noted that "spirituality gives a person a sense that there is something greater than self and helps an individual understand that they are not the center of the universe, but rather inextricably connected to all other humans" (p. 258).

In the current study, participants expressed that using spirituality in the workplace has helped them manage occupational stress and boost job performance through (a) producing a healthy work-life balance for sustaining positive health and career longevity, (b) supplying a moral guidepost for making ethical and informed decisions, and (c)

providing a greater sense of self-awareness through reflection. The literature supported the claim that increased levels of spirituality tend to improve health-related conditions, relieve stress, promote resiliency, and provide a more liberal worldview among police officers (Charles et al., 2014; Hesketh et al., 2014; Indartono & Wulandari, 2014; Jacobs & Van Niekerk, 2017; Joubert & Grobler, 2013; Kaiseler et al., 2014; Mountz et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2015; Pandya, 2017). Findings from the central research question extend knowledge in the field by describing the ways the officers were able to use spirituality to adapt to work-related stressors, adversity, and workplace challenges.

The results for the central research question may be accredited to Fry's spiritual leadership theory. As cited in Yishuang (2016), Fry suggested that the desired goals of greater commitment and productivity are achieved when members of an organization are motivated through shared principles, attitudes, and actions. The results for the central research question indicated that the perceived spirituality for officers in a managerial position allowed them to be more mindful of how their leadership abilities influence others, especially their peers and subordinates. One participant shared that as a leader he tries to restore "people back to altruism." These findings were also related to Novikov's (2017) findings on the potential significance of the spiritual leadership theory within an Army management program. Novikov found that the level of commitment demonstrated by the employees of the program might have been influenced by the manager's constant display of the traits associated with the spiritual leadership theoretical model (i.e., vision,

faith/hope, altruism, calling and meaning, membership, organizational commitment, and productivity).

Subquestion 1

What are police officers' perceptions of incorporating spirituality into police academy training and standard training practices? The results for Subquestion 1 indicated that spirituality should be welcomed into police training practices. This finding extends knowledge in the discipline as participants recommended spirituality should be presented in police training practices as an alternative coping mechanism for stress management. Findings from Subquestion 1 are also related to Patterson's (2016) study, which indicated that 81 police recruits who had completed police academy training relied less on effective coping strategies for handling work and life stressors. Rose and Unnithan (2015) reported that there is no emotional coaching support in police training. Balmer et al. (2014) supported the view that police recruits tend not to use emotion-focused coping strategies when managing their reactions to stress.

Findings from Subquestion 1 also indicated that spirituality should be inserted at the beginning of the police academy training and should follow officers into field training and in-service training. As explained in Chapter 2, some researchers indicated that police officers would benefit from spiritual training (Moran, 2017; Pandya, 2017). A reason for this suggestion is previous studies addressed attitudinal changes experienced among police recruits that take place from when they first enter the academy to after they leave the academy (Blumberg et al., 2015; McCarty & Lawrence, 2014; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Patterson, 2016). Findings suggested that police recruits reported higher

levels of motivation, excitement, job satisfaction, and commitment to the profession before entering the academy, which tends to diminish throughout their training.

The current study's findings for Subquestion 1 indicated that participants believed spirituality in police training would not be accepted because of the current state of police culture. Participants described police culture as being made up of mostly old-fashioned and disgruntled individuals who tend to be very close-minded and resistant to change. This finding is consistent with the peer-reviewed literature on police culture that described it as traditional, monolithic, and militaristic in structure usually grounded from deep collective norms and behaviors among police officers (Agocs et al., 2015; Braithwaite & Gohar, 2014; Kula & Guler, 2014; Paoline & Gau, 2018; Saskia Bayerl et al., 2014). Similar to what was reported by Maskaly and Donner (2015), the participants in the current study shared how police culture creates solidarity among police officers that promotes cynicism and an "us versus them mentality" (p. 217). Literature supported the notion that police officers are usually "socialized" into this culture at the beginning of police academy training and during field training (Rose & Unnithan, 2015, p. 281).

The current study's findings for Subquestion 1 addressed some of the misconceptions about spirituality and could be attributed to the skepticism found in the literature surrounding Fry's spiritual leadership theory. One main criticism from researchers about the spiritual leadership theory is that it lacks a political and ethical perspective of integrating spirituality in the workplace (Mabey et al., 2017). In the current study, most of the officers reported that the lack of acceptance for spirituality in police training is political and goes back to the argument between separation of church and

state. Participants further explained how the police organization is considered government, and it would be difficult to connect religion or spirituality with the government. Similar to what Kennedy Campbell and Siew Hwa (2014) found, a few of the participants articulated that spirituality is not necessarily about religion or trying to convert individuals to follow a particular belief system. Fry's spiritual leadership theory took into account individual beliefs and was constructed so that it could be applied to both nonreligious and religious organizational settings (Benefiel et al., 2014; Egel & Fry, 2017). Rutjes (2017) discussed how researchers tend to develop theories that outline specific "historical patterns" regarding the controversy that the church and state debate promotes, particularly when it comes to considering the "religion-secular divide" (p.410).

Subquestion 2

What are police officers' recommendations on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers? The literature in Chapter 2 addressed the position that previous studies tend to promote "spiritual development" for police officers; however, the studies lacked a clear "direction" of how to integrate the concept into policing (Chopko et al., 2016, p. 365). The results of Subquestion 2 indicated the need for improving training curricula and instruction; educating police on the spiritual dimension; offering more immediate spiritual support services for police officers; developing employee health and wellness units, and creating online resources to include spirituality and spiritual wellness. Findings related to Subquestion 2 extend knowledge in the discipline as it provides recommendations from police officers' perceptions of how spirituality could be integrated into the police organization.

Results from the research concerning Subquestion 2 indicated the need for an improved training curriculum and instruction that would include spiritual values. It is worth considering that these might be similar to the findings in Moore et al. (2016). Moore et al. (2016) conducted a thorough search of police curricula and discovered that there were no courses offered on spirituality. Moore et al. suggested that the intended benefit of exposing officers to spiritual training was to help increase police-community relations. As reported in the literature, the idea of police connecting with citizens of the community is essential because researchers have implied that there is an apparent divide between police officers and the public (Barthelemy, 2016; Moran, 2017; Schaible & Six, 2016). Similar to what was reported by Dada Ojo (2014), the participants in the current study described public indifference as a factor that has created stress for police officers. A statement made by Officer B demonstrated this perspective:

> Obviously, the way the media is now it's hard to be in the police culture. Nobody likes us, and I mean it's hard. There's a lot of us that are trying to do good, and then there's a lot that is doing wrong that everyone sees, which makes it harder for the ones that are doing good. So, it's very stressful in general. (personal communication October 25, 2018)

The current study's findings for Subquestion 2 also indicated that several participants suggested the police organization should train officers on the concept of spirituality. Participants perceived that most police officers are quick to dismiss or be offended by the thought of spirituality because they lack knowledge and understanding of the term. One participant stated, "We do not understand what spirituality can do or what

it means, so we're just naïve to it." Results from the research concerning Subquestion 2 indicated the need to educate police officers on spirituality might be attributed to the results Bent-Goodley and Smith (2017) and Moran (2017) presented. Bent-Goodley and Smith (2017) suggested that law enforcement has not accepted or does not encourage spirituality. Moran (2017) mentioned that police training has failed in addressing the spiritual needs of officers because spirituality is subjective, making it challenging to integrate into law enforcement practices.

The current study's findings for Subquestion 2 revealed that participants recommended the police organization should offer more immediate spiritual support services. This finding may be attributed to the suggestion made by Andersen et al. (2015). Andersen et al. reported that police officers would be willing to engage in alternative therapeutic practices if offered by their department or agency. Some of the participants in the current study shared how their respective departments have police chaplains, employee assistance program (EAP), and peer support groups. Similar to what was reported by Donnelly et al. (2015), the participants in the current study were aware of the EAP accessible through their police department, but the findings from Subquestion 2 extend knowledge in the field as the participants provided reasons as to why officers chose not to use the program. In the current study, participants noted that the employee assistance program is not readily available to officers, who are struggling with an immediate significant crisis, because an appointment has to be scheduled in advance to speak or meet with a counselor. One participant revealed because counselors often suffer from heavy caseloads, it might be weeks or even months before an officer can get a one-

on-one session. The officers also shared that they are limited to five free sessions per year for every issue because the program is billed through their insurance.

Findings from Subquestion 2 also indicated that police chaplains might offer spiritual guidance to police officers; however, the participants explained how chaplains are employed on a part-time voluntary basis with law enforcement agencies. This finding is consistent with what was found in the peer-reviewed literature that indicated police chaplains serve in the capacity of volunteers within police departments (Dobrin & Wolf, 2016; Dobrin, 2017). One alarming finding of the current study is that one participant shared that he never witnessed or heard of any of his officers or colleagues going to see a police chaplain for personal or mental health-related issues. This finding could be attributed to what Papazoglou and Andersen (2014) reported that police officers might not seek out mental health professionals because they are afraid of being stigmatized or facing negative reactions from their peers.

The current study's findings for Subquestion 2 revealed that participants recommended the police organization should provide more awareness to police officers through programs that encourage spiritual practices for reducing workplace stress and improving job performance. One participant suggested that police task forces should form employee health and wellness units that consist of spirituality, health, fitness, resiliency, and behavioral therapy with assigned case workers on site. Another participant recommended that the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers by creating online wellness resources that embrace the spiritual wellness component. These recommendations are consistent to what was found in the literature regarding the United

States Army Soldier program that incorporates the aspect of spiritual fitness to improve health, mental growth, and traumatic stressors among Army soldiers coming from war deployment (Lukoff & Strozzi-Heckler, 2017).

Results from the research concerning Subquestion 2 indicated the need to establish employee health and wellness units and online wellness resources for police departments that promote spirituality might be contributed to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal's (2015) study findings. Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal employed a qualitative phenomenological study using South African workers to investigate the influence spirituality had on employees' behavior, health, and job performance in an employee wellness program. Results of Vyas-Doorgapersad and Surujlal's study indicated that remedies in the workplace that involved aspects of spiritual wellness improved job performance among workers.

The current study's findings for Subquestion 2 may also be accredited to Fry's suggestion that the concern for the whole person and spiritual well-being are essential in an organization through the depths of continuous improvement of learning, development, culture, and delivery of service (Fairholm & Gronau, 2015; Fry, 2003; Fry et al., 2017). Similar to what was reported by Moran (2017), many participants in the current study shared how the police organization is lacking when it comes to taking care of officers emotionally and spiritually. Comparably, Smith et al. (2015) advised that the police organization should have resources available to meet the spiritual needs of police officers. However, one particular finding from Subquestion 2 disconfirms the statement made by Smith et al. and what was found in the peer-reviewed literature. In the current

study, one participant shared that it is not the police organization's responsibility to meet the spiritual needs of officers. Officer F stated, "If an officer wants to think that the department has to do more for them, then I have to ask what are you doing for yourself?"

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to trustworthiness that surfaced from conducting this study. The first limitation was the representative sample of police officers in the study. The sample size consisted of two White females, one White male, two Hispanic males, and one Black male. The sample of police officers did not include Black female officers, Hispanic female officers, Asian-American male officers, or Asian-American female officers. However, the sample for the study was somewhat comparable to the current national representation of officers in the United States police force. Ozkan, Worrall, and Piquero (2016) reported that in 2013, the police force in the United States was made up of "73 % White, 12 % African-American, 12 % Hispanic, two percent Asian, and one percent other" (p. 404). Moran (2017) reported, the current "racial demographics of officers revealed 80% were White, 16% Black, 13% were Hispanics, and 2% were Asian" (p. 344). Male police officers' percentage ratio was 88% higher than the female police officers' percentage ratio in the United States (Moran, 2017, p. 344).

Second, the study was limited to active police officers employed with a police department across several cities in Virginia. Concurrently, the sample size was relatively small using a purposive sample of six police officers. Due to the small sample size and geographical location, the findings may not apply to police officers or other law enforcement officials in different states, territories, or districts. However, some

researchers have proclaimed that qualitative data is not meant to be generalized (Beail & Williams, 2014). Barratt, Ferris, and Lenton (2015) implied when a population sample is recruited through purposive sampling methods; it is deemed "inappropriate to draw inferences from the sample to a greater population" (p.8). An additional or different sampling technique could be used to recruit research participants, such as snowball sampling.

The third limitation was the likelihood of response bias as a possible threat to the study outcomes (see Valente et al., 2017). Participants may have felt pressured to address or answer questions in a certain way so that they can be viewed in a positive light. However, I assumed that participants would be forthcoming with their personal experiences and answering all questions truthfully.

The fourth limitation concerned the data analysis approach. Data were analyzed using an interpretive phenomenological method. Therefore, the data presented were subjected to my interpretation and analysis. I made great efforts to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings. For example, the interview transcriptions, audio recordings, interpretation of data, journal field notes, and results were provided to participants so that they could perform member checks and validate the authenticity of the findings.

Recommendations

Four recommendations for future research are grounded in the strengths, limitations, and the peer-reviewed literature in Chapter 2. First, as noted in the limitations of the study section, the sample size was small using a purposive sample of six officers

from a single region across several cities. Future study could increase the sample population across several states to obtain a general understanding of police officers' spiritual experiences for managing occupational stress and job performance. An additional or different sampling technique could be used to recruit research participants, such as snowball sampling. The results of that study could be compared to the findings of this study to determine if there are similarities across situations, settings, contexts, and groups.

Second, there were no Black female officers' or Hispanic female officers' perceptions of spirituality represented in the study. Rogers (2017) indicated that minorities, particularly African Americans and women, self-report higher levels of spirituality. When monitoring for certain factors and through quantitative analysis, Rogers found that a significant relationship existed between spirituality and stress among officers. However, Rogers reasoned that it would be inappropriate to suggest that spirituality has an influence on all stressors experienced among African American officers and female officers. Similar to what Rogers indicated about African Americans and women, the Black male participant and two female participants in the current study reported high levels of spirituality. The officers were able to vividly explain their spiritual experiences with managing different kinds of police stressors through the process of qualitative interviewing. Future research could focus on African American female officers' and Hispanic female officers' perceptions of using spirituality to manage police stressors and job performance by employing a qualitative methodology, and the findings could be compared to what was found in this study. Comeau, Escoffery, Freedman,

Ziegler, and Blumberg (2017) indicated that qualitative data aims to provide deeper meaning about experiences that are absent in quantitative methods.

Third, there were no Asian American male or female police officers represented in the sample of this study as well. Martin (2014) indicated that the spirit and democratic belief practices of Asian police tend to differ compared to those of other cultures. Future research could focus on Asian American male and female police officers' spiritual practices for coping with occupational stress and job performance, and findings could be compared to the results found in this study to determine if there are any cultural variances or similarities.

Fourth, most of the participants in the study held senior ranking leadership positions, which the level of experience ranged from 10 to 16 years. However, research is limited that focuses on spirituality as a coping strategy for managing stress among police recruits and rookie-level officers. Previous research has examined stress management intervention practices that discussed ways police cadets could improve coping strategies for work-related stressors by using different stress reduction techniques, such as physical fitness (Patterson et al., 2014). Future research could focus on police recruits' or rookie-level officers' perceptions of spirituality and their spiritual practices for managing job stressors and job performance. Those findings could be compared to what was found in this study, which may provide additional support for spiritual training and oversight in policing.

Implications

Implications for Practice

To support the spiritual well-being of police officers, participants recommended the need for improved training practices, curriculum, and instruction; presenting spirituality as an alternative coping mechanism strategy for stress management in police academy training and field training; educating police officers on spirituality; changing aspects of police culture; and providing more immediate spiritual support services. These recommendations have several implications for law enforcement executives, law enforcement leaders and administrators, police officers, and other law enforcement officials. It is imperative that police leaders, trainers, and administrators are open to understanding that officers' well-being and health may be dependent upon addressing their spiritual needs and concerns (Moran, 2017).

Participants referred to improving training curricula and instruction as one aspect of educating the police on spirituality. The officers recommended that teaching police officers on the topic of spirituality should begin in police academy training following into on the field level training. Since police trainers and educators tend to have initial contact and prolonged exchanges with police officers, then they should consider incorporating spirituality into their training curricula. Papazoglou and Andersen (2014) implied that police educators could influence officers' health, well-being, and careers through the type of training provided in the academy.

The current study's findings indicated that specific dynamics of police culture would have to evolve if there is going to be a possibility of integrating spirituality in the

policing environment. Participants described the police culture as being made up of conservative individuals who tend to be very closed-minded and resistant to change. Papazoglou and Andersen (2014) suggested that acknowledging the stigmatization and barriers embedded by police culture is crucial when it comes to new implementation processes and strategies.

Majority of the participants revealed that the police organization is lacking in the area of providing immediate assistance to aid officers in need of spiritual support. One participant suggested that police task forces should form employee health and wellness units to include health, fitness, resiliency, behavioral therapy, and spirituality with a mental health case worker readily assigned on site. While, a second participant recommended that police departments should create online wellness resources that encourage the spiritual dimension to assist officers with their issues or concerns. As Frank et al. (2017) explained:

> The allocation of funds to pay for programs and administrative changes that help officers perform can be balanced against the high costs associated with replacing officers who terminate their employment due to physical and mental disabilities that result because of stress. (p. 362)

The statement provided by participant Officer D adds further insight into the suggestion made by Frank et al. (2017):

> However, systematically seeing how many cynics we create through policing, it's obviously not effective at the department level. There's a lot of core principles that could help somebody at the human level, one of them being stress

> management. When it comes to the human aspect of maintaining healthy stress levels in policing, there's not enough adequate focus on it according to my perspective. I think it's a professional hazard that we haven't developed a solution. I would sacrifice some of these annual long firearms training and reduce in some form from all these overall physical tactics trainings back to the importance of having a healthy aspect on your daily basis, stress, and spiritual plus emotional recharging. (personal communication, November 6, 2018)

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change are intended for police educators, trainers, administrators, policymakers, and law enforcement leaders to learn the potential benefits of nurturing the spiritual dimension within officers. The findings from the current study added knowledge to criminal justice and police literature on spirituality. Along with the criminal justice and policing field, the study's findings might be helpful to other fields, such as public policy and administration, security, psychology, social work, human services, and public safety. Findings from this research study may also be useful to federal, state, and local training academies and agencies.

By focusing on reducing workplace stress and improving job performance for police officers, this may encourage more attentiveness and education on effective coping strategies and stress management skills among this group. More research in the area of spirituality in policing for managing health and wellness could bring forth the inclusion of more spiritual support services for officers in police departments. Also, the potential benefit of exposing officers to spiritual training may perhaps help to improve police-

community relationships. In addition, the results of this study could be used to create and increase awareness of the importance of spiritual care. Findings from this research study may also raise awareness of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the human spiritual dimension. Participant Officer B shared:

> I don't really understand what spirituality means. So, maybe if I knew more of what that means or how to define it, then I could explain my experiences a little better. However, I am very open-minded, but the culture is very closed-minded. So, I think nothing could hurt to learn more about spirituality for all of us and police work as a whole. (personal communication, October 25, 2018)

Conclusions

My research intent was to promote understanding, raise awareness, and to clear misconceptions of spirituality from police officers' perceptions, interpretations, and experiences. The lack of comfort, understanding, and knowledge of spirituality in law enforcement may be overcome by training and practice (Moran, 2017). Results from this phenomenological study supported previous research findings that confirmed spirituality is a resource for increasing job involvement (Indartono & Wulandari, 2014), enhancing job performance (Salehzadeh et al., 2015), and reducing levels of stress among police officers (Charles et al., 2014).

The perceptions and experiences revealed by police officers in the study demonstrated the reality that law enforcement is lacking in the areas of providing emotional support and spiritual care. Participant Officer A stated, "We're good at disciplining officers, but we are terrible when it comes taking care of police officers."

Federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations may find this study beneficial for training and development purposes towards spiritual integration in policing (Moran, 2017). Findings from this study could be used to promote positive social change with changing aspects of police culture; educating police officers on the spiritual dimension; and integrating spirituality into law enforcement training practices, policies, and programs. Frank et al. (2017) suggested, “Investment in these types of policies and reforms have been found to lead to higher work engagement, employee dedication to job tasks, and improved performance” (p.362).

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Appendix A: Letter to Partner Organizations

Date

Partner Organization Contact Information

Dear (Partner Organization Name),

My name is Licole Robinson, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I'm researching for my dissertation police officers' perceptions of spirituality for managing police occupational stress and job performance. A few studies have discussed the positive and negative impact spirituality may have on police officers' overall health and perceived stress levels. However, little is known about police officers' spiritual lived experiences and perceptions in the modern day era of policing as it relates to improving stress, job performance, and police officer training.

Since I do not have direct access to the police population I am writing to you to ask for your assistance with conducting this research. If willing, could you send out an announcement regarding my study to fellow police officers at your police department that may be interested in participating in my study? I've attached a flyer to this email that includes information detailing qualifications, participation requirements, and how to contact me directly as the researcher to be considered or learn more about the study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the process at any time.

I appreciate your help with this matter. I would welcome a telephone call from you to discuss any questions you may have concerning this study or your role in the recruitment process. I can be reached at [telephone number redacted] or by [email address redacted].

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my research project.

Sincerely,

Licole Robinson

Walden University
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

POLICE OFFICERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH STUDY

What is this study about?

The goal of this study is to obtain a better understanding of what potential role police officers' perceived spirituality has in the scope of police work, overall health/well-being, and police training.

Who can participate?

You quality to participate if you:

- Are active police personnel
- Currently employed at a police department in the Hampton Roads area
- Are willing to share personal spiritual experiences and perceptions with the researcher

What's involved?

- Complete a brief screening questionnaire (5 minutes)
- Participate in one face-to-face interview (45-60 minutes)

What are the benefits of participating?

- Participation in the study may help other fellow officers and bring about the inclusion of more spiritual support services for officers in police departments.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants' identities will be kept confidential!!!

***The final results of this study will be included in a dissertation for a PhD from Walden University.

Contact Information:

To learn more about this study, or to participate in this study, please contact the researcher:

Licole R. Robinson
Cell: (757) 705-XXXX
Email: [email address]

Appendix C: Participant Invitation Letter

Dear (Participant's Name),

My name is Licole Robinson, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I'm researching for my dissertation exploring active police officers' perceptions of spirituality for managing police occupational stress and enhancing job performance.

I realize due to the nature of your work that your time is precious, and I appreciate your consideration to participate in this study. Your participation will consist of one face to face interview, which will take approximately 45-60 minutes at a private meeting location and time that is convenient for you. Also, you will be given a consent form to review and sign before the interview. This form outlines your rights as a participant in the study and that all information gathered in the interview will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me by [email address redacted] or by telephone [phone number redacted].

If you are interested in participating in this study, please fill out the screening questionnaire below and return to me via email at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and assistance with my research study.

Sincerely,

Licole Robinson

Walden University
Doctoral Candidate

Screening Questionnaire

1. What is your name and contact information?
2. Are you currently an active police officer employed at a police department in the state of Virginia?
3. Would you be willing to share your perceptions about spirituality in the scope of your police work in a 45-60 minute face-to-face meeting?
4. If you decide to participate in the study, would you agree to sign a consent form and agree to the interview being audio-taped recorded?
5. After the interview, are you willing to verify the accuracy of the material on your interview transcript that will be emailed to you once the audiotape recording is transcribed?

Appendix D: Interview Guide

1. Tell me about the time when you decided to become a police officer and why?

2. Please tell me about the nature of your work as a police officer.

3. What is your support system for when you become overwhelmed with your work as a police officer?

4. What does spirituality mean to you?

5. What is the source of your spirituality?

6. How do you cope with the stressors or suffering that you may encounter in the nature of your police work?

7. How has your spirituality influenced the way you handle stress from your police work?

8. How has your spirituality influenced your job as a police officer, specifically working with other police officers and serving the public?

9. Please describe some of the spiritual practices you use while on the job. How has it helped you?

10. What spiritual support services are currently offered by your police department?

11. What are your thoughts of incorporating spirituality in police academy training and standard police training practices?

12. What do you recommend on how the police organization could support the spiritual needs of officers?

13. Is there anything else I should know, or you wish to share with me?

Potential Probing Questions

- Could you give an example?
- That was a great example, but could you elaborate more?
- In what ways? How so?

Appendix E: NIH Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Licole Robinson** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 09/20/2015

Certification Number: 1499610

NIH National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research

Appendix F: Maxwell's Researcher Identity Memo

Exercise 2.1

- What prior experiences, beliefs, and assumptions about topic or setting emerge from this? What goals have emerged from these experiences? How have the experiences shaped the choice of topic? Why are you doing this?

- What advantages/disadvantages do the goals, beliefs, and experiences described have for your study? How will you deal with the disadvantages?

(Maxwell, 2005, p. 28)

Prior Experiences

- *When I was an undergraduate student at Old Dominion University, I did a ride-a-long with a local police department in the area. My ride-a-long consisted of patrolling the community streets for two 8-hour days with Officer Conway. I remember vividly the stories Officer Conway told about the cases he had when he was a police homicide detective for 20 years before he went back to being a patrolman. He stated that he would see dead bodies of children that were abused and cases of domestic violence where women were badly beaten. I asked him, "How are you able to stay in a profession where you experience so much danger and turmoil?" He stated if it is was not for his faith and spirituality, he would not have lasted in the police profession as long as he did. So, my experience with Officer Conway is what lead me to pursue and study the topic of spirituality in policing. Also, I'm a very religious and spiritual person. I believe because of my faith and spirituality; it has given me purpose and meaning to do what I do in my profession as a Campus Crime Safety Coordinator in a higher education institution. I usually seek the spiritual practice of prayer, when I feel I'm getting anxious from completing a task or investigating a campus safety violation. Also, I often spend time reflecting, meditating, and praying before I start my day to ensure not only my safety, but the safety of the students, faculty, and staff at my campus. I pray that I'm able to perform my best in my role every day. I believe by doing this; it has allowed me to be successful in my position as well.*

Advantages/Disadvantages

- *As a direct result of my spiritual experiences, I carry presumptions that could be viewed as an advantage and disadvantage. I believe that spirituality is an effective strategy for handling stress and improving job performance. Also, I'm able to relate to the participants in this study on a personal level, who happen to use their spirituality in the context of their work. Because of my*

own spiritual experiences and my ride-a-long experience with Officer Conway, I believe police officers would greatly benefit from spiritual training. However, this may not be the views or opinions expressed by the participants in the study. As the researcher, it is vital that I'm aware of these preconceived biases, and I do not let that influence the way I ask or structure questions in the interviews. Also, it is important that I do not allow my assumptions and beliefs of spirituality influence the interpretation of the research findings. Great efforts will be made to work with the participants of this study so that I'm able to tell their perceptions and experiences directly through their lenses. Member-checking and feedback will be strategies I'll employ to increase the credibility of the research findings. I will also work closely with my committee during every stage of the research process.

Appendix G: Copyright Permission Letter

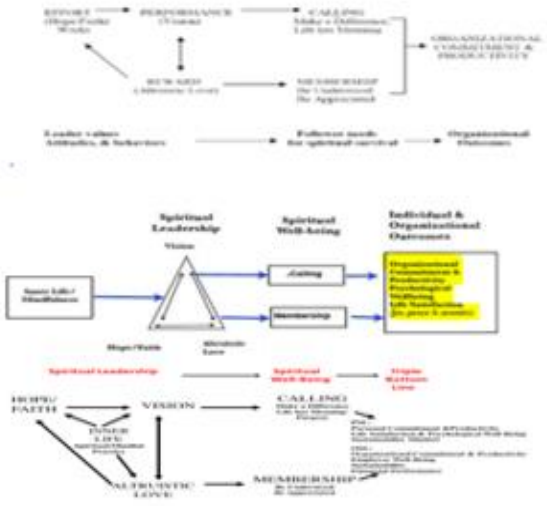
Dear Dr. Fry:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Walden University entitled "Police Officers Perceptions of Spirituality for Managing Occupational Stress and Job Performance".

I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following:

- Fry, L. W. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*, 693-727. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001
- Fry, L. W. (2016). Spiritual Leadership. In A. Farazmand (ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. (pp.1-6). Springer International Publishing Switzerland. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_2353-.
- Egel, E., & Fry, L. W. (2017). Spiritual leadership as a model for Islamic leadership. *Public Integrity, 19*(1), 77–95. doi: 10.1080/10999922.2016.1200411

The excerpts to be reproduced are: The images of the spiritual leadership theory model **(see below).**



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Sincerely,

Licole Robinson

Licole Robinson

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE.

Date: 01/27/2019

Louis W. Fry

Appendix H: Copyright Permission

Sun 1/27/2019 3:51 PM

To: Licole Robinson

Licole,

You certainly have my permission to use the latter figure. However the top figure is outdated and doesn't represent the latest version of our SL model.

You may be aware but you can find most of research on our IISL site, especially a bibliography of the major work on spiritual leadership.

https://iispiritualleadership.com/resources/

All the best,

Louis W. (Jody) Fry, Ph.D.
Professor of Management & Leadership
https://www.tamuct.edu/directory/dir-coba/fry-jody.html
Program Director: MS One Planet Leadership Program
http://catalog.tamuct.edu/graduate-programs/ms-one-planet-leadership/
Chair of Governing Board: One Planet Education Networks (OPEN)
https://oneplanetbusiness.org/
Founder: International Institute for Spiritual Leadership
http://iispiritualleadership.com/